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**LOCAL ORGANIZING AND POPULAR THEATRE:
CASE STUDIES FROM
NAMIBIA AND SOUTH AFRICA**

by

HEATHER LYNN FARROW, B.A.

A thesis submitted to

The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

in partial fulfilment of

the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

September 1992

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**"LOCAL ORGANIZING AND POPULAR THEATRE: CASE STUDIES
FROM NAMIBIA AND SOUTH AFRICA"**

submitted by Heather Farrow, B.A. (Honours)

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

Popular theatre exists throughout the South as a local organizing strategy whereby specific groups of people collectively express their histories and aspirations through the creation of a drama or story. Popular theatre is a process which builds self-confidence, self-esteem and analytical skills. It can help make the connections between theory and practice, and between local and global phenomena.

The study reviews popular theatre in anglophone sub-Saharan Africa within the framework of participation theory as opposed to more dominant 'development' theoretical frameworks. A three-pronged typology is developed in order to analyze popular theatre.

Two popular theatre case studies, Platform 2000 from Windhoek, Namibia and Action Workshop from Cape Town, South Africa comprise the empirical findings. In both cases, the popular theatre process studied uses type 2 and type 3 popular theatre ('community' popular theatre and 'liberating' popular theatre) and not type 1 popular theatre ('the well-developed travelling play').

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
FOR THOSE ON DEATH ROW

As you stand in the dock
exposing the myth
which covers the truth
you are surrounded by
the children
who die from Kwasiorkor, before they can breathe the word
"Flower".

The women
who work the soil of the homeland
till their fingers bleed the word
"Freedom".

The men and women, who toil, relentless lying in the fever
of the mines and the factories.

As your chains shackle from the courtrooms at night
after a day which turned justice into a sick joke
cells full of hot steel
haunt the dreams of the madmen
the madmen who are frightened
sleepless
the madmen who hunt like the outcasts of a pack of wild dogs.

Hunt, in the streets of poverty
dragging with them corpses
still echoing with hunger.
As you sit alone at night
your thoughts spilling across the pulse of your heart
you shape the poetry of liberation
and write the music of defiance.
You are the rhythm
for the drums that spread the message:
"We are one step nearer
one step nearer
We salute you comrades
salute you comrades!"

Namibian Poem, 1990

The preceding poem helps me to dedicate this thesis to those who have fought, and continue to fight, the struggle in Namibia and South Africa. All those involved with Bricks Community Project, Platform 2000, Action Workshop and The Sister Collective must be especially thanked for their patience, help and time.

I also wish to acknowledge my family and friends who have helped me through the past three years, especially: Barb S., Janice, David, Nana, Aunt Ollie, Dad, Barb, Brad, Steve W., Susan G., Mona, Sharon, Pete, Keith, Lisa G., Rick, Sally, Joanne, Nancy, Mag, Steve B., Pam, Jacquie, Dale, Lisa J., and in Namibia and South Africa;

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I also want to dedicate this thesis and acknowledge my late mother Helen Margaret (Farrow) Raspberry and my grandfather, the late Cecil Baker, who encouraged me to continue with my studies and to strive for justice and a sense of community.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Popular theatre exists throughout the South as a local organizing, mobilizing and empowerment strategy whereby specific groups of people collectively express their histories and aspirations through the creation of a drama or story. 'Officially' originating in Brazil, as Augusto Boal developed the ideas of Paulo Freire, integrating the 'conscientization' process with collective drama creation, the popular theatre methodology has also been pursued throughout Africa.

Local organizing work within Namibia and South Africa has incorporated the popular theatre approach. Using popular theatre, local groups attempt to educate, mobilize and empower others from within their community. Two such groups, Platform 2000 within Namibia, and Action Workshop from South Africa, practice popular theatre. Consequently, the research task for this thesis is to examine to what extent popular theatre within Platform 2000 and Action Workshop is occurring as a local organizing strategy for working towards sustainable, participatory and egalitarian development within the context of Namibia and South Africa. In the thesis I argue that popular theatre can be used as a local organizing tool as well as being empowering in itself if control of the process and product is shared amongst those people who are marginalized. I will develop the argument that the drama workshops

and drama creation process of Platform 2000 and Action Workshop demonstrate 'liberating' popular theatre with Action Workshop being a stronger example than Platform 2000.

This thesis will also strive to analyze the concept of 'development' and argue that most Western theorizing has created a distorted version of the term. Instead, participation and local organizing is argued as a suitable alternative, while analysis concerning 'development' must consider the natural environment integrated with a gendered socio-economic and political understanding of the situation.

This chapter will serve as an introduction to the thesis. After an analysis of participation and local organizing, the value of popular theatre will be discussed. The importance of this process in relation to the Namibian and South African situation will also be addressed with an introduction of the two popular theatre case studies. Finally, the research question and methodology will be outlined followed by a brief description of the organization of the thesis.

1.1 Participatory Development/Liberation and Popular Theatre

The framework within which popular theatre is situated in this thesis is participatory development/liberation theory. Unlike dominant development theories framed within Western classical economics and cultural thought, participatory development/liberation theory argues for local organizing efforts and an end to cultural appropriation and imperialist development strategies. Although it does not

deny the necessity of global, regional and local structural and policy changes (Watts,1989:6), 'development from within', as Taylor (1992) indicates, is effective since it advocates an approach to development which local people themselves control (see also Oakley and Marsden 1984, McCall 1988). Such an approach can address fundamental inequalities both between and within community groupings (Mackenzie,1992:27). In doing so, local organizing efforts are often more successful since they are based on a specific and holistic understanding of the situation, instead of relying entirely on external analyses (McCall 1988). As a result, the environmental repercussions can also be more positive than large-scale, externally-controlled, capital-intensive development programs (Redclift 1987). It is argued that people who live in an area are to control the social change processes through local organizing, which also contributes to the likelihood of a sustainable environmental impact since local people themselves would be the first to feel the negative environmental repercussions.

The means of participation, or local organizing efforts, must be evaluated within an understanding of struggle and resistance (Scott 1986). Participation can be a "coping mechanism" where "the practical needs of everyday life" are the aim, or strategically significant where "social structures" are "challenged through a reconstruction of gender or of 'class'" (Mackenzie,1992:2. See also Molyneux,1985).

As well as being a means, local organizing is beneficial as an end in itself. Participants increase their self-esteem and confidence and can be involved in self-education through the growth of a 'critical consciousness', (or a deeper understanding

of their situation), when they are in control of a project. In this way, oppressed people discover "dignity as beings of worth", an empowering process where strategic action could result from this latent potential (Goulet, 1989: 175; see also McCall, 1988; Oakley and Marsden, 1984; Freire, 1970; Verhelst, 1990a,b).

Building on this argument, this thesis examines one example of 'development from within', popular theatre. I argue in this thesis that popular theatre should be considered significant as both a participatory development/liberation tool and as an empowering process in itself. The creative use of drama for self and group expression is significant as a humanizing act. Popular theatre provides a forum for valuing oppressed people's own description and analysis of their situation in an active and empowering way. As a collective process, popular theatre also has the potential to create and perpetuate democratic group processes and structures while marginalized people's own cultural art forms emerge and are reinforced.

The popular theatre process has the potential of mobilizing and organizing formerly unorganized people or strengthening existing organizational structures. As a type of local organizing strategy or one of the strategies a local organization may employ, popular theatre is significant as a participatory development/liberation effort.

1.2 Popular Theatre, Namibia and South Africa

In Namibia and South Africa popular theatre has been used both as a tool in the liberation struggle and as a means of self-education and empowerment. The two groups studied in this report are Platform 2000 based in Windhoek, Namibia and

Action Workshop from Cape Town, South Africa (See Maps 1.1, 1.2, 1.3). Both groups work with so-called township and rural residents by creating plays for them and by facilitating drama workshops with them so that the oppressed majority may create their own dramas. In the following section I will attempt to analyze the Namibian and South African situation briefly in order to contextualize the work of the two popular theatre groups studied. A gendered socio-economic and political analysis which also integrates the impact on the natural environment (as argued in Chapter 2) will be used.

1.2.1 Namibia and South Africa: Who gets power and how?

Beginning in the early 1900s, the patriarchal apartheid-capitalist system in South Africa and later in Namibia, began to be entrenched. Founded upon the idea of 'separate development', apartheid meant that four basic control measures were enacted by the state. Firstly, laws were passed which restricted where each ethnic group was to live under the Group Areas Act. In the rural areas, black people were forced to live in infertile sections called 'homelands' or 'bantustans' according to ethnicity. This ensured that the second 'pillar' of apartheid, the cheap male migrant labour system, could occur. Pass laws and labour bureaux helped to perpetuate a short contract labour system whereby black men temporarily moved to work in the mines or in the urban areas while women, children and the elderly stayed in 'the reserves' serving a 'reproduction' function. This system supposedly allowed for black men to only receive a 'subsistence' wage. Thirdly, to ensure that low wages were maintained, the state made it illegal to strike while black and coloured trade unions

Map of Namibia

Map 1.2
Map of South Africa

Map of Cape Town, South Africa

were not recognized. Fourthly, control of this system through such institutions as the security police and the army was also exercised (Wolpe,1972). Thus apartheid was an institutionalizing and legitimating "mechanism for maintaining cheap labour" which tightly interlaced capitalism with race and gender relations and created and perpetuated super exploitation (ibid:454).

Changes in the construction of gender, (which refers to the way 'male and 'female' are socially constructed), occurred through the male migrant labour system and the transition to apartheid-capitalism in South Africa and Namibia. The fact that black women, and not 'the family', took the "full responsibility for the maintenance of a social system [which was] under increasing and devastating attack", meant that there was a re-organization of "the male-female division of labour in African societies in South Africa" and subsequently changes in the construction of gender (Bozzoli,1983:146). Social cleavages based on gender have also been perpetuated through "the legal system, wages, [and] access to positions of power and authority" (ibid:140) in Namibia and South Africa whereby female oppression occurs through many women's multiple role of wage worker, domestic labourer and care giver (Berger,1986:217).

The emerging patriarchal apartheid-capitalist system in South Africa and Namibia also impacted negatively upon the way individual and groups both perceived and treated the natural environment. Those in power perpetuated the commoditization of land as the formal economy developed in agriculture and mining. Through land intensification practices and population pressure, initially "barren and

unproductive" land was degraded further in the so-called homelands and bantustans, to which, in South Africa, 3.5 million people were "forcibly removed" between 1960 and 1985 (Facts and Reports Vol.22, No.K May 29,1992:10).

The system in Namibia and South Africa did not emerge solely as a result of internal forces. Its creation and perpetuation is tightly intertwined with international capital. Foreign investment, especially in the mining sector, has played a significant role in developing the system. For instance, by 1984, there were 350 major U.S. firms which had directly and indirectly invested \$15 billion in South Africa. Trade with the West is also very active. It is estimated that South Africa supplies between 40 to 90 percent of the world's exports of chromium, platinum, vanadium, manganese, cobalt, gold and diamonds (Grundy,1991:20).

Thus, a system developed where fewer and fewer people came to control the lives of the majority of Namibians and South Africans. The following section will explore the impact of this social system and the extent to which changes in the power structures have occurred both in Namibia and South Africa, respectively.

1.2.2 Organized Resistance: The Mass Democratic Movement

In defiance to this power structure, the people most oppressed by the system, 'blacks' and 'coloureds' (South African regime's term for a person who is both 'black' and 'white'), resisted through forming organizations. Action was taken largely under the aegis of the ANC (African National Congress) in South Africa and SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organization) in Namibia. Public demonstrations, refusing to pay rent, taxes, etc. to the state, consumer boycotts, strikes ('stay-aways'),

and guerrilla warfare were some of the resistance measures taken by what is known as the MDM or mass democratic movement in South Africa and Namibia (Levin,1987).

As articulated in the 1969 Strategy and Tactics document of the ANC in South Africa, the goal of popular struggle is to destroy "the existing social and economic relationships" so that "a correction of the injustices perpetrated against the indigenous majority" can occur (Levin,1987:12). However, within the MDM there has been debate concerning the means of achieving this end. The SACP (South African Communist Party) and the ANC argued for an approach termed 'populism' where two stages of struggle would occur; first a national democratic struggle which would be followed by a struggle for socialism (ibid). 'Workerism', articulated by certain sectors of COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) forwarded a 'one-stage' strategy whereby socialism and nationalism were to be achieved at once (Callinicos,1992:31). By May 1990, however, when COSATU, the ANC and the SACP officially created the tripartite 'Revolutionary Alliance', all three groups adopted the strategy of populism and what is known as 'The Freedom Charter', a document which argues for the guarantee of people's fundamental rights (ibid:32). In Namibia, SWAPO also organized around the aims of "political independence, economic independence, social revolution, and cultural regeneration" where wealth and power were to be redistributed (Mbuende,1986:158).

Incorporation of other important struggles against exploitation and oppression have not necessarily been integrated into the MDM in either South Africa or

Namibia. Although SWAPO on paper committed itself to "the need to free Namibian women from male domination as well as colonial oppression", women were not integrated into the main decision-making bodies while the SWAPO Women's Council was relegated to a supportive role in the struggle for political independence (IDAF (International Defence and Aid Fund), 1989:84). In South Africa, only recently (May 1990) has the ANC's National Executive Committee released a statement which argued that "the emancipation of women" must be "addressed in its own right within our organization" as it is not necessarily a "by-product of a struggle for democracy" and even then there has not been much real movement on this issue (Saul, 1991:39). The first Gay pride march on the African continent (October 13, 1990 in Braamfontein, South Africa) also signifies a very recent beginning of integrating the eradication of gay oppression in the struggle against exploitation and racism (Auerbach, 1991:1).

'People's culture' and cultural art forms also play a role in the struggles of South Africa and Namibia. 'People's culture' is a "culture of resistance" to the status quo (Serote, 1983:26), where there is a "sense of identity" and solidarity (Dingiswayo, 1989:2) as those who subscribe to the ideas of the MDM create and perpetuate common behaviours such as:

the "three-grip" handshake when greeting, addressing fellow activists as "comrades" and the singing of freedom songs, most of which are in an African language. Symbols include the clenched fist, Nelson Mandela and the national anthem "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika"...[and] the dynamic toyi-toyi chant-dance with its leader-response format (van Graan, 1987:5).

However, recently, cultural workers have argued that the people's culture should be

more than a culture of resistance (culture as struggle) but also "a site of struggle in its own right" since a creation of alternatives needs to occur (Ngoasheng,1989:34). "Culture is us, it is who we are, how we see ourselves and the vision we have of the world...A purely instrumental and non-dialectical view of culture" is damaging (Sachs,1990:3). Therefore, cultural art forms (visual art, drama, music, dance, poetry...) are both a weapon and a vehicle for social change (a means and an end) in Namibia and South Africa.

1.2.3 Namibia and South Africa: The Contemporary Situation

In March 1990 Namibia finally became a politically 'free' country with the new SWAPO government and an end to the war in northern Namibia (Freeman,1992:1). Prior to taking control, SWAPO had called for "a transformation toward socialism" where "the major means of production and exchange" would be brought under "the ownership of the people" (Sparks and Green,1992:120). Wealth and land would be redistributed through a program of nationalization of the white farms, mining industry and the fisheries. However, as of June 1992 this has not occurred. Hage Geingob of the SWAPO Politburo in a 1989 paper to the Business International Conference has declared that "although SWAPO believes in the 'superiority of the socialist system,' it will, in the immediate future, opt for a mixed economy comprising state, cooperative and joint-venture enterprises plus a 'significant role' for private-sector undertakings" (Geingob in Sparks and Green,1992:120).

There has, however, been some positive change in the allocation of government funding and tax collection. For instance, in the first post-independent

budget the largest expenditure (no less than 41%) was for education, health, housing and social services thereby tripling the amount spent previously in the last colonial budget, while defence spending was reduced (Freeman,1992:30 and Sparks and Green,1992:119). Taxes on mines in Namibia are also regarded as 'tough'¹ (Freeman,1992:31).

Although to some degree discrimination has also recently been addressed, as the constitution states that "no persons may be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status" (Namibian Constitution, Article 10:2), the status of women, has not necessarily undergone a radical change. A discussion paper written one year after independence argues that this recognition has had "little practical effect" on the status of women (Hubbard,1991:4). For instance, there is no special Women's Ministry in the government, only a Department of Women's Affairs which was established in the President's Office six months after independence. As of 1991, two of the 18 ministers in Cabinet were women, while there was only 6 women of the 72 voting members of the National Assembly (ibid:5). Furthermore, for lesbian, gays, bi-sexuals and differently-abled people, there has been no legislation addressing their discrimination.

Although there have been many so-called reforms of state policy and powers recently in South Africa, the majority of people's access to and control over critical resources has not improved and in many cases has even become worse. As a result

¹ Two foreign mining companies Rossing and Tsumeb now pay 50-60% tax on profits while CDM (Consolidated Diamond Mines) pays 75% (African Analysis March 22,1991 in Freeman,1992:31).

of "white demographic decline, growing black militancy, foreign pressure, changes in the Afrikaner class composition [increasingly bourgeois], and the fiscal crisis of the South African state", some political and economic reforms have occurred (Giliomee and Schlemmer,1990:115). However, "reform-apartheid's ideological dimension: 'sharing' power without losing control" has not overthrown the patriarchal apartheid-capitalist system and thus has not led to any significant change for the majority of women and men, gay or straight (ibid:131 and Facts and Reports Vol.22, No.J, May 15,1992:6).

In the final analysis, the living conditions for the oppressed majority in Namibia and South Africa are bleak. The international and national recessions have meant that unemployment has been increasing. For instance mines in South Africa have been "shedding about 3,000 jobs a month" (SouthScan April 17,1992), while the ILO has estimated that nearly 2 in 5 workers are unemployed in South Africa which has "one of the highest rates of child labour in the world" (op.cit.,May 8,1992). Of Namibia's population of 1,401,711 people (720,784 female and 680,927 male), the ILO estimates that "52% of men have a job which pays a salary and keeps them in work while only 30% of women do" (Namibian April 7,1992). This means that more than half of South Africa's population lives "below the breadline" with "more than 2 million in dire need of food aid", while rural blacks in Namibia at independence earned "a mere \$63 [U.S.\$ annually] (including subsistence income), which was lower than Mozambique, the world's poorest country in 1988" (Freeman,1992:22).

Substance abuse (particularly alcoholism), low self-confidence, depression, and

high levels of violence and crime (especially against women and children), are increasing in both South Africa and Namibia (Hubbard,1988;Pomuti and Eiseb,1990; Coovadia and Jinabhai,1990;Pendleton and Du Bois,1990; Facts and Reports Vol.22, No.J May 15,1992). Schirnding (1988) has claimed that "the black townships are South Africa's most severely polluted environments" (in Coovadia and Jinabhai,1990:99). Without a human waste system and clean water, often combined with high levels of coal smoke, 'township' living is very hazardous (ibid). Housing shortages leading to over-crowding (especially considering the recent rural-urban migration increases), and transport problems are also severe (SouthScan March 6,1992).

1.3 The Research Task

As outlined above, there is a very real need for liberating development in South Africa and Namibia. Through local organizing efforts, the MDM in both South Africa and Namibia are working towards such ends. Popular theatre, as a specific cultural art form and organizing and self-educative process, is a part of the local organizing struggle.

The research fulfils a feminist agenda. Popular theatre as a democratic-group process attempts to give a voice to the formerly voiceless, who in many cases, are women. Secondly, it is a local organizing process which can be self-empowering while creating democratic and egalitarian creative group structures, which can be called an inherently 'feminist' and humanizing process. Thirdly, in the analysis of the popular

theatre projects I specifically address the question of who is involved and how in order to understand to what extent women are integrated. Therefore, feminism informs the research topic and process.

Furthermore, this thesis is focused on popular theatre as an empowering **process** and not on the specifics of the content or the drama product which is being created. There are two reasons for this. The research evaluates local organizing strategies within a geographical framework about participation not drama products. I do not discuss the forms of drama used. Secondly, the limitations of my being an outsider to the case study locations are such that I do not feel qualified to address the specific meanings of the plays created, nor am I interested in this particular kind of cultural appropriation. I only attempt to understand whose issues the play topics represent in order to determine whose interests they serve.

This research was chosen as a result of my background in anti-apartheid struggles and popular theatre in Canada. After learning about the struggles of Namibia and South Africa during an undergraduate degree (B.A. honours) at Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario, I visited South Africa during the summer of 1988. Touring so-called black townships and rural areas, I experienced first-hand the injustices there and began to see some of the connections between the Western world and the situation in South Africa and Namibia. As an active member, then co-coordinator of CAAAG (Carleton Anti-Apartheid Action Group) at Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, I both learned more about the MDM and South Africa and Namibia, and acted on my knowledge. During May-September 1990, I was

involved in a popular theatre project for the Status of Women's Office at Carleton University which initiated my interest in the popular theatre process. As a previous drama practitioner and social geographer, I was very interested in the benefits of such a process. Thus, research for this thesis began and with the greatly appreciated financial help of the CIDA Awards for Canadians, field work commenced February 1, 1991 for six months.

1.4 Thesis Organization

The thesis is organized into five main sections, beginning with a discussion on the theoretical framework that is used in this study. In this chapter I explore how Western theorizing and analysis has reduced the diversity and complexity of life into binary observable categories while creating a 'norm' against which everything is compared and how this phenomenon has shaped Classical Economics and Western Development Theory. Western Development Theory, from Modernization Theory to Marxism, is then critiqued while Participatory Development Theory, informed by political economy, feminism and an environmental analysis, is offered as a way forward.

In Chapter Three Popular Theatre theory is examined. After defining and explaining the concept of popular theatre, 'pre-colonial', colonial and 'post-colonial' theatre in anglophone sub-Saharan Africa is described. From a survey of the available literature about popular theatre in anglophone sub-Saharan Africa, a three-part typology for analyzing popular theatre is created; the 'well-made' travelling play

approach, plays for community development and liberating popular theatre. After an explanation of each type, an example is explained in detail to illustrate each approach. Liberating popular theatre is highlighted as the 'ideal' strategy and the theoretical framework which informs the analysis of the two case studies.

Chapter Four is a methodology chapter where the expected and actual methodology which was used for the research is provided. The research is located within a specific body of literature known as Feminist Participatory Action Research. I explain that the research is informed by a 'conscious partiality' approach while attempting to use a non-exploitative research methodology. How I, using a variety of approaches, came to understand the popular theatre case studies is discussed.

Chapters Five and Six explain and analyze the two popular theatre case studies: Platform 2000 from Windhoek, Namibia and Action Workshop based in Cape Town, South Africa, respectively. In each chapter the theoretical frameworks explained previously inform the analysis through the types of questions which are addressed, specifically, who is involved in the process, how and why this is significant.

Chapter Seven concludes the study by examining further the specific significance of Platform 2000 and Action Workshop and how the work of these groups reflect and develop the theoretical framework outlined for participation and popular theatre. Popular theatre, as explained through a specific typology in Chapter Three, is argued to be a significant local organizing strategy in Namibia and South Africa.

CHAPTER TWO

WESTERN ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPMENT THEORY: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

Can theory created within the West be universally assumed? Through our Western eyes have we really come to understand the global crisis, how it has emerged or what other countries should do as a result?

This chapter presents a discussion which attempts to analyze these questions, while advancing an alternative development analysis and strategy which proposes participatory development. It is structured in three sections: a critical assessment of the assumptions of Western analysis and theorizing as they pertain to development theory, an analysis and evaluation of Western development theory, and a discussion of Participatory Development theory which presents the theoretical framework for the local organizing strategy of popular theatre.

In the first section, 2.1, I show how reductionism, devaluing of diversity, and the overemphasis of material aspects of life have helped to shape Western capitalism and patriarchy. In this section I also argue that this Western power-knowledge system which devalues difference has shaped the production of knowledge while destroying other ways of knowing. Drawing on section 2.1, I will argue in section 2.2 how these distortions in Western thought have similarly distorted Western development theory

perpetuating some of the same problems which have occurred in the West. In section 2.2, I argue that instead of focusing on 'development' studies, the focus should be towards understanding the nature of exploitation in a specific and local way where connections are made between different scopes (intra-household, local, national and international) through a gendered socio-economic and political analysis which also considers how the environment is constructed and impacted upon. This section also argues for the consideration of non-material factors like identity and self-confidence and the understanding of human agency through struggle and resistance. Section 2.3 develops the argument that participation and local organizing theorizing is relevant as an alternative to previously criticized 'development' models.

2.1 Western Culture and Positivism

2.1.1 Reductionism and Newtonian Physics

The main conceptual problem buried deep within Western culture is the inherent tendency towards reductionism which seems to lie beneath most of the origins of Western thought. Striving to understand reality by reducing complex concepts to simple ones and basing scientific theories on this approach, has produced a distorted "perception problem" within Western culture (Shiva,1989:2).

Reductionism derives from the foundations of Western thought, Newtonian positivism. Newtonian physics and the positivist science it advocated were comprised of three main components. The first premise was that the world was seen to be a machine and all humans and animals were also machines, like clocks:

We see clocks, artificial fountains, mills and other similar machines which, though merely man-made, have nonetheless the power to move by themselves in several different ways...I do not recognize any difference between the machines made by craftsmen and the various bodies that nature alone composes (Descartes in Capra,1982:61).

The second assumption was that disorder or what was seen as chaos, always moved towards equilibrium, stability or anti-diversity. The object of social science then, was to move towards order and stability. This concept was shaped by the integration of the concept of evolution into Newtonian physics (Capra,1982:74).

Finally, the third basic concept of Newtonian thought concluded that all particles or all parts of the machine move independently of each other in absolute space and time. "Absolute, true, and mathematical time, of itself and by its own nature, flows uniformly, without regard to anything external" (Newton in Capra,1982:65). This idea was applied to people, who were separated from their environment or the space within which they acted.

2.1.2 Discouraging Diversity: 'Economic Man' as Norm

All of the 'scientific laws' of the Newtonian paradigm were stated to be 'strictly universal'. They were understood "to hold at all times and places, past, present and future" (Keat,1979:76). Consequently, this universal theorizing created a 'norm' in Western cultural thought against which everyone was compared. The idea of normal was epitomized by the concept of the 'rational economic man'. Western technological 'man' was seen to be a "uniform measure of the worth of classes, cultures and genders" (Shiva,1989:5).

Within the discipline of neo-classical economics, 'rational economic man' is

developed from the basic assumption of a free-moving, rational, economic 'man' which is based on the theory of individual agency. This economic 'man' would make 'rational' choices (in terms of material gain) without external or internal constraints. Total voluntarism described his actions (Barnes,1989:142 and Heilbroner and Thurow,1978:34).

Consequently, 'rational economic man' was free to sell his labour power in order for capital accumulation and production to continue in the public sphere. Thus production and labour were seen to occur in the public sphere only by economic rational man. Women were 'different', and as a result of the unequal sexual division of labour, were relegated to the 'invisible' sectors of society (Mies,1986:17).

Women's labour was different from the labour of 'rational economic man' and was undervalued and seen as unproductive. Maria Mies in her book Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale, describes this

narrow, capitalist concept of 'productive labour' [as] the most formidable hurdle in our struggle to come to an understanding of women's labour both under capitalism and actually existing socialism (Mies,1986:48).

It is this very definition of productivity and labour which is also fundamental to the system of exploitation of women under the male domination of Western patriarchy (Shiva,1989:4).

Seeing difference as unequal was also related to the way nature was viewed. Nature, like women, was seen as the "other...the passive non-self" (Shiva,1989:6). Other cultures were also compared to the norm of Western economic man, since this norm was universalized, much like Newton's theories which shaped it. Vandana Shiva

in her book Staying Alive, describes how this universalizing tendency has transformed reductionist science and Western culture into "a superior and universal tradition to be superimposed on all classes, genders and cultures which it helps in controlling and subjugating" (ibid:21).

Therefore, through the establishment of universal 'scientific' laws, a particular norm was developed against which people, cultures, and events could be compared. This norm was shaped by the concept of the 'rational' economic man and his 'productive' labour power. Anything which deviated from this norm was seen as 'other', "lagging behind", denoting lower worth or a "lower stage" (Mies,1986:211), a form of Social Darwinism (Mudimbe,1988:17). It was this form of dualism which perpetuated the ideology of seeing difference as an unequal phenomenon which, in turn, discouraged diversity and encouraged commonality and standardization around the norm which was set. For example, as the basis of capitalism, there needed to be a common market where a particular good could be sold in larger and larger quantities. Reductionism has, therefore, helped to reduce diversity and the value attached to it.

2.1.3 Economism: Observable Only

Newtonian science was based on the observable and only the observable. By watching the machine, like watching a clock, one could observe and understand the machine through the observation and understanding of its parts. This form of reductionism reduced all phenomena to their tangible or material parts. That which was tangible, material and observable was valuable and worth studying and

perpetuating. Intangibles, feelings, emotions and the immaterial were devalued and degraded.

The separation and unequal valuing of mind and matter, or rationality and feelings, shaped the concept of value-free science and the emphasis on the objective (Heilbroner and Thurow, 1978:25). Positivist science and social science did not take into account people's individual experiences and emotions and attempted to only use 'observable' data in an objective way. Positivism perpetuated the belief that the researcher could be totally objective in 'his' research (Keat, 1979:81-84).

The idea of the observable also perpetuated the notion that knowledge was understanding a particular moment in time. Positivism was based on the concept of the static and without concern for process. What one observed at any given time was a true reflection of reality. This lack of concern with process can be exemplified in the alienation from creative activity which the capitalist mode of production has implemented. All emphasis is on the product and not the question of who is responsible for its creation (Ollman, 1971).

The concern with production, producing and the product has greatly influenced what Western researchers have chosen to study and what has become valued in modern Western culture. Quantity has been valued over quality. More and bigger is seen to be better. This overemphasis on production has fueled the idea of infinite growth in neo-classical economic theory. Although we live in a finite natural eco-system, neo-classical economics assumes that growth can be infinite.

The result of this emphasis on observables and the material has contributed

to colonialism, imperialism and ecological disaster. By overemphasizing the material and economic benefits, Western culture devalues the intangibles, like emotions and feelings, which are uneconomic and non-material. This has created a severe distortion. Thierry G. Verhelst author of the book No Life Without Roots: Culture and Development suggests that we are all in a state of

underdevelopment and cultural up-rooting, of a need to go back to our roots and to grow and change. We are all victims of a dominant ideology that is bringing us to the verge of catastrophe (Verhelst,1990b:12).

2.1.4 Western Capitalism and Patriarchy

The predominant mode of production within Western culture is industrial capitalism. This form of capitalism has been based on property, individual rights, competition and dividing the economy into "visible" and "invisible" sectors (Mies,1986:17). Consequently, over time, individualism and competition have been overemphasized to the detriment of the collective society and cooperation amongst people. Through a system which always encourages individualism over the group and competition over cooperation, Western culture has been severely distorted (Henderson,1981 and Schumacher,1973). As well, 'capitalist-patriarchy' has also tried to perpetuate "women's exploitation and oppression" through a system of male dominance (Mies,1986:37).

Therefore, the basic epistemology and ideology which is fundamental to Western culture has perpetuated gross distortions detrimental to many people worldwide. I will summarize this 'power-knowledge' system of Western culture in the following manner:

- *an arrogant tendency to universalize assumptions and beliefs;**
- *a creation of a norm against which everything and everyone can be compared and contrasted in a dualistic and binary way;**
- *the devaluation and suppression of women, nature and different cultures (people of different sexual orientations, physical or mental ability, age...) which deviate from the 'norm';**
- *an overemphasis of the material and productivity which has produced ecological disaster and unhappiness for many within mainstream Western culture since feelings and emotions are devalued.**

The Western power-knowledge system is a political system where those in power and control produce or invent knowledge which they feel is valuable (Foucault,1979:27-28 in Stamp,1989:130). This system has constructed subjects and objects of knowledge (Stamp,1989:47). For instance, Africans, especially African women, have been objectified as objects of knowledge (ibid:130). The study of the 'third world' or the south is a "product of our will for knowledge, rather than theirs" (the people of the south) (ibid:147). The Western power-knowledge system has objectified through "epistemological ordering: a theory of understanding and looking at signs in terms of 'the arrangement of identities and differences into ordered tables'" (Mudimbe,1988:9-12). This follows the general premise of the 'Enlightenment' era that "[hu]men[s] are born unequal" (ibid:12). Through this process, the system has subjugated, devalued and attempted to destroy "other" ways of knowing through what Mudimbe, in his book The Invention of Africa, calls:

epistemological ethnocentrism ...the belief that scientifically there is nothing to be learned from 'them' unless it is already 'ours' or comes from 'us' (ibid:15).

Like Chandra Talpade Mohanty in her article "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses", I am not making a "culturalist argument about ethnocentrism" that only Western culture is ethnocentric, however I am "trying to uncover how ethnocentric universalism is produced in certain analyses" with particular reference to Western culture (Mohanty,1988:63).

This section has challenged Western thought and its main assumptions. In the following section, I will now attempt to show how similar distortions within Western analysis occur within dominant Western Development Theory.

2.2 Understanding Development

Western development theory such as modernization theory derives from Western classical economics. The following section will show how both classical economics and development theory have adopted and perpetuated similar distortions explained in section 2.1. A tendency to universalize concepts and theorizing while devaluing differences especially related to ethnicity, culture and gender, and intangibles like emotions and spirituality, is evident. The natural environment has also not been adequately conceptualized. As an alternative, I will argue that an understanding of exploitation should occur through an examination of the articulation of modes of production integrated with a specific historical gendered socio-political

and environmental analysis. In doing so, a better understanding of the nature of struggle and resistance can occur in order to conceptualize participation and local organizing.

Development theory began to emerge as theorists and academics wanted to analyze and devise a strategy for those parts of the world where there seemed to be poverty. The origins of development theory can also be traced to the Cold War of post World War II. In fact social scientists never really studied 'the third world' as a "social whole" until after World War II (Mudimbe,1988:9).

The term 'development' was chosen since within Western development theory history equalled progress. It is a "type of teleology, an end to which history is tending or should tend. So development is more than simply change or the passage of time; it is change in some particular direction" (Wilber and Jameson,1988:6).

2.2.1 Neo-Classical Economics and Modernization

Although, there was an "antineoclassical" thrust within development economics in the Western world during the 1950s, the 1960s brought a resurgence of the neo-classical paradigm which highlighted three main theories: Evsey Domar and Roy Harrod's growth model, W.W. Rostow and his stages of growth model and W.A. Lewis' structural dualism concept (Myint,1987:107).

Taken from John Maynard Keynes' macroeconomic stabilizing strategy of increasing a nation's expenditure which would then increase aggregate demand, economic activity and stimulate employment, the Harrod-Domar model called for developing countries to increase their savings and investment in order for their gross

national products to grow. It also proclaimed that the higher the national capital/output ratio was, the lower a nation's GNP would be (Blomstrom and Hettne,1984:12 and Todaro,1989:65).

If a developing country 'chose' to increase its economic growth (or GNP) through the mobilization of domestic and foreign savings and investment, W.W. Rostow proclaimed that a country would then follow his Stages of Economic Growth: "the traditional society, the pre-conditions for take-off into self-sustaining growth, the drive to maturity, and the age of high mass consumption" (Rostow,1960:1-12 in Todaro,1989:64). He argued that the north had already passed into the stage of "take-off into self-sustaining growth", whereas the south was only at "the traditional society" or the "pre-conditions" stage (Todaro,1989:64,65).

The third main influence of the newly emerged neo-classical paradigm was W.A. Lewis and his concept of structural dualism. Lewis believed that there were two basic sectors within the south: the "traditional, overpopulated *rural subsistence sector* characterized by zero marginal labor productivity" and "a high-productivity modern *urban industrial sector*" into which labor from the subsistence sector is gradually transferred (Todaro,1989:69). Lewis basically perpetuated the belief that the rural area was to be treated only as a labour reserve for the industrial sector (Blomstrom and Hettne,1984:18).

Therefore, the re-emerged neo-classical paradigm was based on the assumption that development equalled an increase in GNP, which would propel a country along a linear development path where the surplus labour in the agricultural

sector would stimulate industry. In other words, the industrial sector was the 'engine for growth' (Blomstrom and Hettne,1984:18).

If development did not occur, those who operated within this paradigm would blame certain internal obstacles which blocked the automatic process of "laissez faire" economics and hindered individuals from adopting rational and maximizing behaviour. These obstacles were labelled as: social/cultural/psychological constraints, traditional forms of economy, any interference with the free working of markets like government participation and regulation and the low level of development which caused imperfections in the market (Wilber and Jameson,1988:6). It was never thought that development did not occur because of this paradigm's emphasis of capitalist development models, which were inherently individualistic and competitive, and the integration into the capitalist world market which it assumed. The growing structural and social inequalities within the south and between the north and the south, and the increase in unemployment in the south, were not seen as problems which challenged this mindset (South Commission,1990:35-45).

Instead, the neoclassical paradigm developed in two main ways in order to address what it perceived as obstacles. There was a continued call for *laissez faire* economics while there were also those who argued that government planning was needed. The first response, as outlined in Bauer and Yamey's 1967 Economics of Underdeveloped Countries, calls for a sustained *laissez faire* approach since it basically denies that many of these obstacles exist. For example, this response questions the nonrationality of behaviour and dismisses the apparent market failures

as minimal or nonexistent. Government interference through policies like minimum-wage legislation and the setting of prices is seen to be negative and part of the problem of underdevelopment. Income inequalities are seen as necessary in order to provide incentives. Development is thought to occur if enough time is given since each country will continue to develop through the stages of growth (Wilber and Jameson,1988:9).

The second response to the so-called obstacles encountered by the neo-classical paradigm deals with government planning. It is thought that a government should intervene to "offset" the obstacles to development through various economic planning measures which deal with the country's economic structures (Furtado,1987:225 and Wilber and Jameson,1988:9). The World Bank's structural adjustment programs are evidence of this.

Stemming from this development of the neo-classical or orthodox paradigm, is a body of literature which can be categorized as the "growth-with-equity response" (Wilber and Jameson,1988:10). This group argues that although the developing world did grow economically during the post-war period in terms of increased growth rates of GNP, there have been three main failures, as benefits from this growth have failed to 'trickle-down' to the poor: increased unemployment (which is more severe than in the 1930s), increasing inequalities in income, and an increase in absolute poverty or "the inability for persons to provide for their basic needs" (ibid:10,11). The growth-with-equity group cites problems such as the creation of centralized and unequal structures, rural-urban migration because of the lack of 'development' in rural areas

and the disregard for basic agricultural policies or social and political mobilization and participation, and the creation of powerful elites, as obstacles to the approach of grow now, 'trickle' later (ibid:10-12).

Seven strategies have been proposed by this group; redirecting investment, human resource development, employment generation, agriculture-first development, integrated rural development, the New International Order and basic needs strategies (Wilber and Jameson, 1988:12). Although the New International Order strategy moves closer to the development paradigms of the left, many basic needs strategies have stayed within the neo-classical paradigm (ibid). For instance, in the mid 1970s, World Bank programs such as 'sites and services' and small farmer projects, helped to introduce private property and increase rental values; and increase the purchase of inputs and credit which also drew more farmers into the market, respectively. These basic needs programs still did not address structural inequality problems and perpetuated a 'top-down' approach (Sen and Grown, 1987:38,39 and Verhelst, 1990b:9). In fact, all the responses and modifications of the modernization or orthodox paradigm still derive from the basic philosophy of an ethnocentric 'catch-up' development idea that the south is to follow in order to catch up to the north.

Modernization theory which promotes capitalism has been developed within the north or by elites from the south who had been educated in northern schools. Basic unequal economic structures were never questioned and strategies often contributed to the south's increased role in the capitalist's world market where they were never an equal 'playing partner'.

I have argued in this section that liberal economics, modernization development theory and their derivatives have failed to alleviate poverty and in fact have exacerbated this worldwide problem. By forwarding a capitalist development framework which emphasizes competition over cooperation, product over process, while devaluing local knowledge and control; individualism, property rights and competition have been emphasized to the extreme as explained in section 2.1. However, as I explain in the following section, alternatives to capitalist theory were not without their problems.

2.2.2 Marxism and Modes of Production

Developed as an analytical critique to western industrial capitalism, Marxism based the analysis of society on the concept of 'mode of production'. The mode of production was the economic structure of society comprised of the forces of production and the relations of production. The mode of production was the determining factor of any society. Culture, ideology, religion etc. were part of the social superstructure which "does not exist on its own; its character is, in the final analysis, determined by the requirements of the economic base" (Blomstrom and Hettne, 1984:10).

Development in the south, according to Marx's 'stageist' approach, was to occur through colonialism and capitalism, since they were necessary evils which produced the social contradictions that stimulated the revolution towards socialism and eventually communism (ibid, Wilber and Jameson, 1988:18 and Freund, 1985:23). Often the Soviet example of cutting ties with other capitalist countries, redistributing

economic and political power through publicly owned enterprises, collectivized agriculture, centralized distribution of goods and planning, and a system of controls and incentives on enterprises, was pointed to as a specific model by neo-Marxists (Wilber and Jameson,1988:18).

Fueling the struggle towards social revolution is the 'bourgeoisie' as it is seen to be the class which will be the catalyst for the transition from feudalism, semi-feudalism or semi-capitalism (as the south is identified), to capitalism where there will then be a revolution for socialism and communism (Roxborough,1979:16). Consequently we can see such works as The African Bourgeoisie: Capitalist Development in Nigeria, Kenya, and the Ivory Coast edited by Paul M. Luheek in 1987, as an example of this interest.

The causes of underdevelopment for Marxists have to do with the obstacles in place which make it difficult for the socialist revolution to emerge. Because capitalism developed in the south the "Prussian way" or through the transfer of large-scale business from the north to the south, there has been a dearth of competition in the south which has not helped to produce an economic surplus. In this case, profits go directly back to the north, therefore leading to economic stagnation and a less developed capitalism in the south. Furthermore, "the prevailing social and economic structure breeds a system of social relations, habits, customs, and culture that retards social and economic development" (Wilber and Jameson,1988:16). Subsequently, Marxists argue that peasants and workers emit attitudes against change, similar to those of the ruling class, which does not want social change since it would

threaten their status and power (ibid). Therefore Marx and those theorists following him argued that underdevelopment is caused by the lack of capitalist development and the absence of the full emergence of capitalism's contradictions which would create the social struggle needed for a revolution.

Many authors have criticized the Marxist development tradition for perpetuating some of the same problems which are inherent in neo-classical development theories. Although Marxism has provided a positive step forward by turning the analytical and developmental focus to "the structures of oppression: state, family, and class" (Stamp,1989:17), there is a basic problem of 'vulgar' Marxism's reductionist tendencies. Oppressions based on ethnicity or gender are explained in class terms, as these types of oppressions are reduced to relations of production. For example, "women's oppression is a function of class oppression" since class oppression "supersedes all other forms of oppression" (ibid:16). As well, the definition of 'production' only includes 'public' production or that 'formal' waged work which has been historically performed by men. Women's 'private' reproduction and production work is not included in the analysis.

The problem is that all non-economic forms within society are only part of the superstructure and do not directly shape society or social relations. For instance, Goran Hyden in his book Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania criticizes pure Marxists for assuming "that the social alienation of [hu]man[s] was exclusively the product of capitalism" and that the "cultural superstructure is an overlay" (Hyden,1980:245,246). As well, the environment is not integral to the analysis (Redclift,1984).

Pure Marxists' concept of class and their conceptualization of class relations as they have been applied to the south are often ethnocentric. For instance, inferring the nature of class relations by the mode of surplus appropriation, the mode and timing of insertion into the world economy and the dominant mode of production, is "highly reductionist" since "how else can a mode of production affect the nature of class relations except as it is mediated by human experience and interpretation" (Scott,1986:42). This is one of the reasons why social scientists such as Patricia Stamp have questioned the appropriateness of "Western class categories and Western economic conceptions" (Stamp,1989:19).

Finally, Traditional Marxism is also ethnocentric and universalizing because of its unilinear stages approach and argument that capitalism is a necessary evil for the south. Marx's assertion that "the developed countries simply show the less developed countries their future" is again an example of development as Westernism (Marx in Wilber and Jameson,1988:14). Even David Harvey recognizes the problem of universalism in Marxism and the drawbacks of treating historical materialism as the only way of finding the "total truth" (Harvey,1989:355 in Dear,1991:536).

In response to these criticisms and others, Marxism has developed into two main areas: the neo-Marxists who advocate dependency and underdevelopment theory and the classical Marxists who advocate analysis based on the articulation of the modes of production.

Responding to the inadequacies of dependency theory such as the ignoring of internal social conditions, human agency, economic reductionism, and ahistoricity,

there has been a revitalization of Marxist theories of modes of production (Katz,1980:51,103). The mode of production has been redefined as "an articulated combination" of the relations of production and the forces of production, where the relations of production are the specific kind of appropriation of surplus labour and type of social distribution, and the forces of production are the kind of labour process used to convert raw materials into products (Hindess and Hirst,1975:9-10 in Katz,1980:52). Two types of mode of production theories have been advocated; the single-unity approach and the articulation approach. Stephen Katz in Marxism, Africa and Social Class: A Critique of Relevant Theories, argues that the articulation approach is preferable as it allows one to study class analysis. Articulation theory also provides "the scope necessary for the study of internal transformations within social formations" and "the complex and specific conjunctures of class struggles and social transformations which have occurred throughout Africa (Katz,1980:85).

It is the 'articulation' or the relations between modes of production which is significant here. The "conservation-dissolution thesis" where a mode of production (for instance world capitalism) to a certain extent conserves or dissolves another mode of production (for instance, an indigenous mode of production), allows one to understand the nature of exploitation between modes of production at the global, regional and local scales (Katz,1980:85).

This exposes the very unequal international economic structures which serve to perpetuate poverty and set major constraints on internal development in many countries of the south. The South Commission, chaired by Julius Nyerere, in its 1990

report The Challenge to the South, recognizes these problems of the north-south relationship, through its call "for a fundamental reshaping of the international system" by instating such policies which would change the now exploitative international financial, investment and trading system (South,1990:222). For these reasons, I do not believe a careful analysis of the situation in the south can be formed without analyzing the articulation of global, regional and local modes of production.

2.2.3 Gender and Development

In response to the invisibility of gender as a factor which shapes human experience and 'development' in the previously mentioned theories, many have attempted to reconcile this. 'Women-in-development', the term used for the body of literature which has attempted to 'add women and stir' to the basic modernization paradigm, has emerged along with other social theories which follow radical feminism and socialist feminism. The following section will explore these three main perspectives.

Even though many argued that development programs had been created to help both women and men, or that the benefits accrued to men would simply 'trickle down' to women, the reality suggested otherwise. Women continued to be the poorest of the poor in the south, while other writers suggested that development programs were exacerbating "inequalities between the sexes" (Maguire,1984:8).

Patricia Maguire in her 1984 report 'Women In Development: An Alternative Analysis', surveyed development industry publications that explained why they thought economic development had not occurred for women in the south. She created the

following list of "obstacles to women's increased participation" which the development industry believed was relevant:

- traditions, attitudes and prejudices against women's participation
- legal barriers
- limited access to and use of formal education, resulting in high female illiteracy
- limited access to labor force and preparatory vocational, technical or agricultural training due to illiteracy
- time-consuming nature of women's 'chores'
- lack of access to land, credit, modern agricultural equipment, techniques and extension services
- health burden of frequent pregnancies and malnourishment
- undermining of women's traditional position as economically contributing partners
- inadequate research and information on women which limited the ability of development planners to create projects relevant to women (Maguire,1984:13).

The development industry, therefore, basically understood women's failure to develop economically because of the obstacles blocking their participation in economic development programs which the development industry had created for the people of the south. As a result, women were seen to be slowing the process of economic development, as over 50% of the population was not being integrated into the process, and this was not seen as efficient (Maguire,1984:22).

In response, the strategy within the mainstream development industry was to integrate women into the development process by "treating" women and breaking down the obstacles to their economic development. "Programs targeted education, nutrition, family planning, income generation, training and employment"

(Maguire,1984:22).

However, this stream of women-in-development thinking assumed that the economic development programs that women were supposed to be integrated into were appropriate in themselves. The question of whether the whole economic program was appropriate or served to foster self-reliance etc., was not asked. This approach was and still is couched within the neo-classical, orthodox or modernization stream of development which is unquestioning of the status quo or economic structures and assumes that 'economic development' is all that matters (Stamp,1989:15,119).

The opposite extreme of the previous approach, which some have labelled as lying within the liberal feminist framework of working towards equality within the existing system, is the radical feminist approach. Radical feminism basically argues "that the primary motivating force of history has been men's striving for domination and power over women" and that the "sexual imbalance of power is biologically based" (Maguire,1984:26).

Although the work of radical feminists has had positive effects like the legitimizing of gender and sexuality as a focus of study and bringing the problems of sexual violence and pornography to the world's attention, it has also led to a distorted analysis (Stamp,1989:16). By arguing that all women everywhere and throughout time have been oppressed and exploited by men without variation according to class, culture, age, etc., radical feminism creates an ahistorical and ungeographic metatheory, which smacks of biological reductionism since it argues that the sex of

a person is the main factor which shapes her or his experience, or in other words, biology is destiny (Stamp,1989:17 and Maguire,1984:28). Assuming that women are "sexual-political subjects" before understanding how other factors shape their reality results in a disfunctional analysis (Mohanty,1988:61). Radical feminism, a Western construct, has also helped to give Western feminism the label of ethnocentric as can be seen when African women walked out of a 1980 conference in Copenhagen because Western feminists were lecturing them on the "barbaric patriarchal custom" of clitoridectomy (Stamp,1989:16).

In her 1987 book Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society, Ifi Amadiume explains how some Western feminists have wanted to assume "a universal subordination of all women at all times in African history" and exposes this idea as "erroneous and ethnocentric" (Amadiume,1987:189). In their search for a common universal oppression of women, some Western feminists seek a "false solidarity" (ibid:8). When African women are depicted as "generally oppressed and powerless" racism is only reinforced (ibid).

In fact, many Western feminist studies which have attempted to further the analysis about the south, while helping to create more appropriate development theories, have been based on what Patricia Stamp has called "poor science", since many of the underlying assumptions of these studies have been a distortion of the actual reality of the situation (Stamp,1989:113).

The first false assumption made by many Western feminists is the distinction between public and private spheres in the south. To assume that women dominate

private life while men mainly function within public life, is misleading. In fact, with particular reference to Africa, Patricia Stamp argues that "the public/private dichotomy is an inaccurate conceptualization of present and, even more so, past African life [which] needs asserting in the strongest possible terms" (Stamp,1989:113).

Often the way Western feminists have conceptualized and created the meaning of other concepts and terms has also contributed to a distorted version of reality. For instance, conceptualizing the family or household as an "undifferentiated unit" "with no internal divisions or contradictions" or to "reduce women's problems within the family to "male domination" - a vague and ahistorical notion" is misleading (Stamp,1989:116,117). It is ethnocentric of Western theorists to assume a Western concept of 'family'. An ahistorical approach to "tradition" is also a problem since it often creates a "false traditional/modern dichotomy" (ibid:121-124).

Therefore, although Western feminism has brought many positive insights which help to explain the reality of women's oppression, it cannot be assumed that Western conceptualizations can be universalized throughout time and space as originally argued in section 2.1.

A local, contextual analysis which strives to show how women and men are "constituted...through the complex interaction between class, culture, religion, and other ideological institutions and frameworks" like gender ideology, is needed (Mohanty,1988:63). This concept derives from a socialist-feminist theoretical framework which does not attempt to give priority to any one oppression or shaping factor (Jaggar,1983:124 in Stamp,1989:17):

Socialist feminist theory seeks to unite radical feminism's emphasis upon the centrality of gender relations ("the personal is political") with the theoretical rigor and focus on social organization of Marxism (Stamp,1987:30).

In this way, a basic socio-economic theoretical framework can be created.

This framework, however, must be established within a detailed historical and geographical analysis:

[W]e need to examine a specific reality to understand how ideology and the material interact and how class and gender are interconnected and socially constructed (Beneria and Roldan,1987:11).

This helps to explain socialist-feminists; like Patricia Stamp's argument for empirical research and the value of "critical liberal scholarship", a body of literature mainly by women from the south who describe from the "inside...common experience" which "is precisely what we cannot afford to assume" (Stamp,1989:20). Starting from the "international economic and political forces" of the area in question, critical liberal studies often "recognize that there are inherent contradictions in gender relations which Western liberals often do not notice", while describing a "complexity of gender relations and of women's positions" (ibid). Quite importantly, critical liberal studies often "challenge the hegemony of Western thought" (ibid). Stamp gives Ladipo's (1981) comparison of two women's cooperatives in Nigeria as an example (Stamp,1989:18-20). The case for empiricism is also taken from Foucault who maintains that the question "what happens" will help to free ourselves from "our own construction of reality" (Foucault,1983:217 in Stamp,1989:21). Thus, what is needed is a study which historically describes the geography, or the empirical reality of what is happening on the ground, in order to understand the gendered socio-economic and

political reality of an area. In addition to this kind of analysis, the conceptualization and impact of the natural environment must be integrated.

2.2.4 Environment and Development

Michael Redclift in his 1984 book Development and the Environmental Crisis: Red or Green Alternatives, argues that the environment has been omitted from "the political dialogue about development and the analysis of underdevelopment" within both the neo-classical or orthodox approach and Marxist thinking. Redclift argues that the environment "was rarely looked upon as a distributive issue. It was a 'given' in the development situation of most countries, over which they had little control" (Redclift,1984:1,2). Even within most women-in-development writing, the environment has been treated as a given, "a neutral, unengaged, and indifferent essence, timeless and "out there", apart from human lives" (Stamp,1989:124).

To 'correct' this assumption, and in response to the growing environmental crisis, a body of literature emerged which forwarded the concept of environmental conservation, since it was assumed that humans will always tend to misuse or abuse the environment. Examples of this thinking can be seen in many recent deforestation and fuelwood studies (Agarwal,1984 in Stamp,1989:125). However, Agarwal argues that this 'concept of conservation' is based on the assumption that nature is always seen universally and historically as "essentially cash generating" and devalues the notion that nature can be conceptualized as "support[ing] household and community needs" which non-Western societies throughout time may do (Agarwal,1984 in Stamp,1989:125-127). The concept of conservation has also been forwarded by

conservative agendas which continue to address conservation management as an "exercise, designed to ensure that a privileged population has access to a privileged environment" (Redclift,1984:130).

How the natural environment shapes and is shaped by socio-economic and other ideological structures within a society, is significant and should be integrated into a contextualized analysis. To this end, a broader concept of the term 'environment' can be formulated. Redclift (1987) argues that

the 'environment' [must] be looked upon as process rather than form, as the result of a set of relationships between physical space, natural resources and a constantly changing pattern of economic forces (Redclift,1987:79).

Conceptualizing how the epistemological understanding of the environment changes through the articulation of modes of production as, for instance, a given society articulates with the world capitalist system, is important in any analysis. How, in this example, nature is commoditized as "what was once 'nature' has become a product", and 'needs' are redefined, is crucial (Redclift,1987:112-119). As well, the impact of any society and mode of production must be evaluated vis-a-vis the environment. A good example of an integrated analysis at the local scale is Amadiume's Male daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society which outlines the "clear interrelationship between ecological factors, economic production and gender ideas" (Amadiume,1987:30).

Therefore, a thorough understanding of the nature of exploitation must integrate changes in the physical and conceptual understanding of the natural environment. Similarly, an analysis of exploitation must also consider non-material

human needs or what can be called spiritual human concerns unlike more traditional positivist analyses as argued in section 2.1.

2.2.5 Spirituality and Development

A very important aspect which is often omitted from a socio-economic analysis is the concept of a society's identity and roots. We must understand the importance of individual and collective self-esteem which, although linked to a person's or persons' relationship to socio-economic structures, is also influenced by the way in which people construct and how they feel about their identity and their cultural roots. This is one of the lessons from the Sarvodaya project in India (Macy,1983:93). "Cultural analysis must not replace previous economic, social and political analyses; it should complement and amend them", argues Thierry Verhelst, author of No Life Without Roots: Culture and Development (Verhelst,1990a:157). And similar to Amilcar Cabral, author and revolutionary leader, who argues that politics, economics and culture are all interconnected, since "strong, dependent and reciprocal relationships [exist] between the cultural situation and the economic (and political) situation in the behavior of human societies" (Cabral,1970:4), I argue that no analysis is complete without understanding how aspects like identity and cultural roots play a part in shaping a person's and a group's reality and vice versa. We must resist from conducting a binary analysis that Sivanandan insists has been perpetuated by capitalism which has "divided and separated 'the economic and cultural aspects of struggle - the standard of living and the quality of life'" (Sivanandan,1982 in Bourne,1983:4). We need to "struggle over the quality of life and restore that

dimension to class struggle generally" (Bourne,1983:4).

This analysis of identity and roots stems from an understanding of alienation and how socio-economic alienation shapes and is shaped by psychological or spiritual alienation. Like Marx, Frantz Fanon (the Algerian revolutionary theorist and psychiatrist), argued for liberation "and the de-alienated [hu]man" combining "a type of Sartre existentialism and personal alienation" with a socio-economic analysis rooted "firmly in the imperialist division of the world into poor countries and rich, exploiters and exploited, rulers and ruled" (Fanon in Cauter,1970:33-34). Fanon explained the inferiority complex of Black Africans as being "mainly economic in its origins; subsequently the black [person] internalized and epidermalized this economic inferiority" (Cauter,1970:37). Therefore, the process and phenomenon of alienation needs to be explored with regard to all its facets (socio-economic, psychological, 'cultural', spiritual) in an integrated and thorough way.

The whole concept of alienation is also developed from an understanding of Antonio Gramsci's work on "the importance of ideology and culture in class domination" and how the dominating forces in a society create and perpetuate their hegemony (Chabal,1983:182). A person's or a group's relationship to the hegemonic ideology and forces within society will also help to shape their alienation (or complacency) to the hegemonic dominant group. Therefore, we must, in analyzing contextual reality, progress beyond pure economic reductionism by understanding other 'non-economic' and more intangible factors which serve to shape experience, like hegemonic ideology. Otherwise, we fall into the same trap as positivism which

devalues immaterial factors as I have argued in section 2.1.

2.2.6 Struggle and Resistance

If we are attempting to strive for a contextualized analysis which is grounded in an empirical study that integrates all the factors mentioned previously, ideas about struggle and resistance need to be conceptualized. Contrary to much Marxist analysis, which historically have ignored human agency, understanding of the forces acting to change exploitation is crucial. The 'oppressed' do not only feel the factors which shape their lives, but also act in response such forces. As well, people also forward their own agendas. Therefore, the following section outlines the importance of possessing tools for the analysis of struggle and resistance.

I define struggle and resistance here from within a concept of hegemony developed from Antonio Gramsci who explained that hegemony was the "state's ideological apparatus [which] held an autonomous position" vis a vis economic factors (Chabal,1983:182). Hegemony is the control of ideology which is constructed around "culture, religion, education, and media" as well as class factors (Scott,1986:39).

Struggle and resistance must not only be seen in what Foucault has called the "juridico-discursive" model of power which emphasizes the binary dualism of 'oppressed and oppressor' (Mohanty,1988:71), but needs to be addressed with respect to the historical and particular reality of the human agents involved. For instance, it cannot only be assumed that oppression is occurring at all levels or scales (intra-household, local, regional, global) at all times (ibid).

Struggle and resistance needs to be evaluated within an understanding of the

extent to which people "actually accept the social order [or the hegemony] propagated by elites" (Scott,1986:41). However, "the forms of resistance may be extremely varied" as outlined by Laclau and Mouffe (1985:152), whereby "a polyphony of voices, each of which constructs its own irreducible discursive identity" (ibid:191) is considered valuable.

Struggle and resistance, then, are defined as a discourse with hegemony within particular circumstances as determined by the "historical, material and ideological power structures that construct" a given reality (Mohanty,1988:61) located in space and time. Following Scott, this definition not only focuses on forms of struggle and resistance which act to challenge class relations, material and ideological conditions, but those struggles whose intentions are directed to the same even though the acts may not achieve the given objective (Scott,1986:290). This means that there is inherent value in the process of struggle and resistance as the process itself empowers those involved. The process of struggle as an empowering strategy in itself is significant as it relates to participation theory and therefore popular theatre.

The previous discussion has outlined how the distortions of Western thought and analysis explained in section 2.1 have shaped negatively mainstream Western development theory. An arrogant ethnocentrism can be seen in the attempt to universalize linear social change models and analysis which have created exploitation, ecological disaster and disillusionment in the Western world. By overemphasizing material aspects of life, intangibles like identity and self-confidence are ignored.

Oppression is perpetuated when development theories ignore or devalue women, non-Western cultures and nature. More recent modifications of some Western theorizing, however, such as analysis of the articulation of the modes of production and socialist-feminism, have contributed in the understanding of the processes of exploitation at the intra-household, local, national and international levels.

Consequently, this section of the thesis has also argued for the value of specific and locally contextualized empirical studies in order to understand processes. Studies which provide a historical gendered socio-economic and political understanding of a situation and which integrate an environmental analysis can help in the struggle to understand exploitation and human agency which often results in resistance. Human agency and resistance are fundamental to the understanding of participation.

2.3 Participation and Local Organizing

Participation and local organizing are often very closely linked to struggle and resistance as groups of people grapple to change their lives. Unlike 'development' strategies initiated from outside an area or from the 'top-down' (as discussed in section 2.2), participation theory advocates local control and a more holistic approach to social change or 'development from within' as discussed in chapter one. The following analysis will attempt to outline the development and participation conceptual framework which informs popular theatre theory.

2.3.1 The Concept of Participation

Participation has been defined by Marshall Wolfe and the United Nations

Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) as "...the organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations, on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control" (cited in Goulet,1989:165). Participation, as explained in this context, is a means of achieving liberating development as defined by those involved in the participatory effort. Participation is also significant as an end, or a process which is legitimate in itself where individuals benefit from increased self-esteem and critical awareness (Oakley and Marsden,1984:27; Goulet,1989:166).

Four other factors need to be considered in order to understand participation more thoroughly. Who originated the participatory process (and why), and who exactly participated how and when, are significant. The "originating agent" of the participation can be from

three distinct sources: it can be induced from above by some authority or expert, generated from below by the non-expert [sic] populace itself, or catalytically promoted by some external third agent (Goulet,1989:166).

Goulet argues that usually 'authorities' or 'experts' want to begin 'facilitation' or 'mediation' types of participation (see Table 2.1) to serve their own interests, while 'bottom-up' participation may stem from the populace's resistance to the existing social situation:

To say NO is to open up possibilities for saying YES in a multitude of ways. Those who begin by saying NO to their oppressors soon feel the need to utter some YES of their own (Goulet,1989:167).

A third party who provides some "catalytic action" for participation may want to help people become conscious of their own strength as a group, as individuals, and of their

own ability to understand and act on situations (ibid).

Who participates and how are also very important. A homogeneous 'community' or 'group' should never be assumed. Differences related to 'class', gender, ethnicity, age, marital status, location (rural/urban), etc., can shape who gets what kind of power and when within any group (Mackenzie,1992:27). Analysis which draws on the theory of articulation of the modes of production, socialist feminism and an understanding of the existing 'power system', can help make group differentiation conscious.

The timing of the participation is also significant. Goulet argues that the quality of the participation depends on when it occurs. If participation occurs at the beginning of a process (ie. "initial diagnosis of the problem or condition"), the participation is more authentic (Goulet,1989:167).

Authentic participation is not a contribution or an input. It is not a means to 'facilitate' external policies which have been imposed 'from above'. Nor is participation a way to 'mediate' external policies in order that they reflect local needs with greater accuracy. Table 2.1 by Michael McCall serves to conceptualize how the purpose of participation can affect the extent to which it is empowering.

Related to notions of struggle and resistance, participatory efforts can be analyzed within a fluid continuum emphasizing participation as a "coping strategy" to participation as "strategically significant" (Mackenzie,1992:2 from Molyneux,1985). "Practical interests are usually a response to an immediate perceived need" and are seen to be coping strategies whereas "strategic" interests challenge the structures of

TABLE 2.1
OVERLAP BETWEEN THE THREE PURPOSES OF PARTICIPATION

<u>Facilitation</u>	<u>Mediation</u>	<u>Empowerment</u>
LESS → MORE		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explicit recognition of socioeconomic groups; - Emphasis on self-reliance; - Emphasis on action, especially collective action; - Emphasis on internal process; and - Requirement for political commitment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasis on inputs to decision making from lower down the power hierarchy (bottom-up); and - Participation as a process, having its own inherent value. 		

(McCall:1988,43).

oppression in a more fundamental way (Molyneux,1985:232,233). However, these definitions should not be seen as two distinct categories since what might begin as a coping strategy may develop into, or have some elements of strategic significance inherent within the participatory effort, while the opposite could also occur.

2.3.2 Effects of a Participatory Process

Where local people have control over the means of production of the participatory development/liberation project, a humanizing effect is created. Being involved in a creative act helps to fight against the feeling of alienation (discussed in section 2.2.5) and serves to build self-confidence and self-esteem (Freire,1970:27-28 and Ollman,1971). Participation is also a form of creative self/group education. Participatory projects can help to deepen one's knowledge about a topic or produce "conscientization" espoused by Paulo Freire.

Conscientization is where people deepen their understanding about their

reality by attaining a critical distance from it (through dialogue, flash cards, photos, and other types of codification). Unlike other animals, human beings are able to reflect critically. They can ask questions about the way in which they view their own thought, action and society (Freire,1979:28-30). They can then relate this to the wider society as a whole (Shor,1987:167). Therefore, conscientization is when people come to understand the economic, social and cultural contradictions in society through a 'decodification' process (Freire,1970:19).

However, many people know very well what forces are at play regarding the root causes of their problems or situation. Therefore, I do not believe that one can assume or forward conscientization as a process which will always occur during a participatory project. We cannot assume what people know or understand about their situation.

2.3.3 Participation as a Local Strategy

Participation at the local level is significant since it fosters programs and strategies which develop from the specific circumstances of a particular locality and culture. The specific context will shape the goals and means of a strategy or project. This characteristic is consistent with the South Commission's recommendation of "people-centred strategies of development" which "should not be antithetical to the culture of a people and should contribute to its internal evolution" (South Commission,1990:79). In doing so, popular participation will serve to foster those cultures which have been distorted, disfigured or destroyed by colonialism, imperialism and capitalism (taken from Fanon,1963:210 and Cabral in

Chabal,1983:183). Verhelst continues this idea:

By re-rooting itself in its collective memory, a people which has been dispossessed of itself can then try to reconstruct its identity and find the necessary assurance to fight urgent battles and make new starts (Verhelst,1990a:62).

Participation then helps to break the dominant ideological and cultural hegemony (Cabral in Chabal,1983:182).

Participation is also important since it is a process which values and fosters 'other' ways of knowing and local knowledge. Local people's non-western scientific knowledge and in-depth knowledge about the local situation "have been overlooked for too long" (Verhelst,1990a:157). Often this knowledge has been subjugated and devalued while Western science and knowledge about an area is portrayed as the only way forward (Stamp,1989:129). Through participation, those involved can contribute what they know about a particular topic such that their knowledge base is being valued and fostered which "helps create self-belief" while the project itself will also benefit from being created within a better understanding of the situation (McCall,1988:69).

Therefore, for this research, I am defining participation as a "collective effort in a decentralized, non-hierarchical way" (Mies,1986:212) where people work towards gaining more control over their lives and bodies while enjoying the emotional and psychological benefits of a participatory process. By working towards this goal, people (whether they be women, men, or both) are striving to maintain or gain greater access and control over material and nonmaterial factors which help them construct their "human integrity and dignity" (ibid:230). The material factors may be critical

resources, while the nonmaterial factors may have to do with spiritual development and cultural roots. By striving to gain greater control over their bodies, individuals develop more autonomy and self-reliance. With respect to women, for example, "body politics implies a struggle against all forms of direct violence against women" which includes economic structural violence (Mies,1986:230). In this way, participation works towards liberating development which is often more likely to be environmentally sustainable than externally directed projects (Redclift,1987).

Fighting against metatheories where often ethnocentric universal assumptions are made (as explained in section 2.1 and 2.2), participation theory argues for local efforts which utilize a specific contextualized analysis of exploitation and struggle. As 'development from within', such strategies may prove to be more successful and sustainable.

Conclusion

Although ideas of participation and collective organization do not comprise the model towards development and liberation, participation is definitely a component. In the first part of this chapter, I have argued that as a result of Western culture's reductionism which discouraged diversity and compared all things to the 'norm' of 'rational economic man', the capitalist-patriarchal system emerged. It is this system which then informed Western development theory, whether modernization or classical Marxist interpretations, which in turn created an ethnocentric, reductionist, sexist, racist and environmentally destructive 'development' policy. From within a

renewed understanding of struggle and resistance, I advance the theory of participatory development. Participation, as a local, democratic and egalitarian process, creates the conditions for environmentally sustainable, locally controlled 'development'. The next section will discuss one strategy within the participation paradigm which can and has been used for development/liberation work: popular theatre.

CHAPTER THREE

AFRICAN POPULAR THEATRE

From analyzing development as a process of participatory and liberating practices in the previous chapter, the following will explore the practice of popular theatre and the extent to which popular theatre has been and can be used as an empowering and participatory strategy. After outlining a definition of popular theatre, I will discuss 'pre-colonial', colonial and 'post-colonial' popular theatre in sub-saharan anglophone Africa in order to trace the antecedents of present day popular theatre. Recent African popular theatre will be analyzed within three categories: the 'well-made' travelling play, plays for community development and liberating popular theatre. The final section of the chapter will discuss the elements or conditions of participatory, liberating popular theatre. The benefits of such an approach will also be examined.

3.1 Defining Popular Theatre

When defining popular theatre one must decipher between the two parts of the term: what is meant by 'theatre' and what is meant by 'popular'. Although the term 'theatre' is "loaded with certain dramaturgical and aesthetic expectations arising from the long history of Western theatre", which may appear to couch the process

within Western values and culture, grassroots activists do use the term (Kerr,1981:146). 'Theatre', then, refers to the variety of live performing arts used in popular theatre: oral narratives, dances, drama (the acting out of stories), music, and puppetry (Kidd,1984:265, Kerr,1981:146 and Bappa and Etherton,1983:127).

Defining the term 'popular', however, is much more controversial. Whose interests are at stake will determine how the term 'popular' is defined, which then influences the process. Only a few similarities between the resulting different types of popular theatre can be outlined.

What makes popular theatre 'popular' is its "mass appeal" and type of "literary form" which appeals to a large section of society (Desai,1990:66). The theatre must be based in "local social reality" and use local languages and idioms (Eyoh,1986:18) (Leis,1979:10-13 in Nunez and Nunez,1980:523). Popular theatre usually encourages some form of audience participation (Eyoh,1986:18).

However, since there is a great deal of ambiguity surrounding the term 'popular' in popular theatre, I will argue with Gaurav Desai's analysis that the term 'popular' should not be understood "*definitionally*, but *abstractly*". I will therefore use in this research Desai's definition of popular theatre as "a functional discourse which can legitimate or subvert the existing power structures of society", since there is a wide range of ways popular theatre can and has been utilized depending upon the ideology which perpetuates it (Desai,1990:65).

A more precise definition of popular theatre depends upon the "functional and normative dimension" of the term 'popular' (Desai,1990:66). Two main factors

determine this dimension:

- 1) the controlling political-economic interests which serve to shape the popular theatre's aims and objectives and**
- 2) the extent to which the popular theatre is participatory. In other words, if and how control of the process is shared (Kidd,1982:53 and 1984:280) (see Table 3.1).**

Each factor influences the other since the political-economic interests serve to shape the type of process and distribution of control, while the process and distribution of control can help to determine the political-economic interests the popular theatre serves. For instance, grassroots liberation/development activists funded through an non-governmental organization (NGO), who want to initiate an organizational process through democratic structures, may likely engage in a democratic and participatory popular theatre process. As well, a popular theatre process where exploited people are in control will most likely result in a different kind of political-economic interest and ideology being formulated than if elites within the society held the control over the process. Therefore each type of popular theatre, determined by who is controlling it and the extent it is democratic, will manifest itself in different ways. This phenomenon can also be seen through an analysis of the historical development of popular theatre in Africa.

TABLE 3.1

THEATRE AS PRODUCT/PROCESS		
Objective	To create a polished, "finished" play which can be presented to villagers	To facilitate a process of critical analysis through the villagers themselves making and remaking the play
Analysis	Static, fixed, shallow	Dynamic: continually deepening
Discussion	A single event in the process, a ritual tacked on at the end of a performance in which villagers are suddenly expected to take an active part (after remaining passive throughout the performance)	Discussion is a continuing part of a process of improvisation - analysis - improvisation. The discussion, the thinking takes place both within the improvisation and in analyzing it afterwards.
Villagers Participation & Control	Manipulated and orchestrated: limited control over the process. Villagers are expected to fulfill certain roles at certain stages of the process (eg. information-giving at the beginning; taking part in the post-performance discussion).	More control over the process: participation in all stages of the process (information-giving, and analysis; improvisation and subsequent discussion)

(Kidd, 1982:53)

3.2 'Pre-Colonial' Theatre

One of the important dimensions of the history of popular theatre in sub-Saharan anglophone Africa is just that, its history. Although the literature is not extensive, many authors argue that popular theatre develops and is built upon an African history of types of drama and theatre (Kerr,1989; Byram,1983; Ngugi,1986; Desai,1990). "Songs and praise poems, for example, have long been used to satirize deviant behavior or even challenge authority figures" (Byram,1983:54).

Even though records have been distorted by colonial academics or missionaries, there are two basic elements which are described as being significant in pre-colonial theatre in Africa and similar to present forms of popular theatre: the didactic purpose of the drama and audience participation as an inherent part of the experience (Kerr,1981:146).

Often pre-colonial African theatre served a social function as a didactic device.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o describes pre-colonial African theatre as:

part and parcel of the rhythm of daily and seasonal life of the community. It was an activity among other activities, often drawing its energy from those other activities. It was also entertainment in the sense of involved enjoyment; it was moral instruction; and it was also a strict matter of life and death and communal survival (1986:37 in Desai,1990:66).

This quote reflects how theatre was an integral part of the community through its involvement, although the literature does not articulate who exactly (women, men, children) in the community were involved and how.

Herbert Shore writes that "traditional theatre [in Africa] 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" (1969 in Kerr,1981:146). Audience participation in some form was a part of most dramatic events in 'pre-colonial' sub-saharan Africa.

Recent popular theatre experiences reflect the history of drama in Africa since they incorporate didactic elements and audience participation. Although popular drama in Africa was always constantly changing and developing during the 'pre-colonial' era, this experience was severely distorted and altered during the colonialist era.

3.3 Colonialism and 'Post-Colonial' Popular Theatre

With the onslaught of colonialism came adaptations and changes in popular theatre in Africa. A type of 'development' theatre was introduced and controlled by the colonial administration. Meanwhile, social conditions and power relationships helped shape a new type of popular resistance theatre in Africa.

Colonial so-called 'development' theatre attempted to teach 'the Africans' about new ideas which would help them to 'develop'. British colonial West Africa's Mass Education Campaign (formerly Gold Coast and Togoland) of the late forties and early fifties used primarily drama "to motivate a team of animators, as well as the communities, to take part in the education activities of the campaign" (Epskamp,1989:106). Topics such as literacy, child care, co-operation, and sanitation were made into short sketches by colonial agents (ibid). These were straight-forward skits whose message was simplistic and patronizing. As Kamlongera explains, "the

areas of propaganda ranged from hygiene to modern methods of agriculture" (Kamlongera,1981:208). Ross Kidd describes this type of popular theatre as mainly being used for "mass education and rural extension" work (Kidd,1984:269). During the colonial period, extension workers in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda would perform plays about agricultural techniques such as "cash crop production, soil conservation, cattle husbandry, literacy, sanitation, immunization, and civic education (Carr,1951;Pickering,1957 in Kidd,1984:269). Colonial 'popular' theatre most likely distorted people's perceptions of theatre.

Although there continued to be moralistic and religious aspects to African theatre during colonialism, theatre also became a "medium of popular resistance", while at times synthesizing aspects of both imported western culture and indigenous African culture (Desai,1990:67). Popular theatre became a medium aimed at "raising popular consciousness" and sometimes became an "integral element in transformative activism" (ibid). For instance, Ross Kidd describes how popular theatre was significant to the Zimbabwe independence process:

the *pungwe*, [was] an all-night cultural gathering in which the guerrillas and their supporters put on skits, songs, dances and poetry and discussed the issues of the war. It was highly participatory. People joined in the singing, contributed their own sketches, music, and dances, responded to the politicization talks with slogans and bursts of song, and participated in the discussion which punctuated the various cultural presentations. Villagers and the fighters acted out and danced their commitments and built up their strength and unity through collective music-making (Kidd,1984:268).

As well, colonialism affected African theatre through the dialogue between the imported colonial and African theatre. A theatre of "syncretic form - a molding of

indigenous and western elements" emerged (Kidd and Rashid,1983:30).

During the 1960s, in those African countries where there had recently been political independence, popular theatre suffered a temporary setback. As Kidd and Rashid explain, "bourgeois nationalism and neo-colonial (settlers') theatre monopolized the cultural field in Africa" and popular theatre was not as significant nor developed (Kidd and Rashid,1983:30).

By the end of the 1960s in these countries, "popular theatre re-emerged [often] as a weapon" as the effects of oppression and exploitation became increasingly evident (Kidd and Rashid,1983:30). However, more frequently, in the new politically independent nations, didactic (usually 'top-down') 'popular' theatre was used. For instance, in Malawi, the Ministry of Agriculture performed puppet plays for agricultural extension work, while in Botswana government officials have used this method for their literacy campaigns (Kidd,1984:270). In Uganda, the Makerere University Travelling Theatre which began in the mid-1960s, used a didactic 'popular' theatre approach which marked the beginning of 'popular' theatre in East Africa (Crow and Etherton,1980:571). In Kenya, the University of Nairobi Travelling Theatre, the Chancellor College Travelling Theatre in Malawi, as well as students in Botswana and Zambia, also developed didactic 'popular' theatre approaches (Ngugi wa Mirii and Gecau,1983:3, Kamlongera,1981:210 and Epskamp,1989:105).

3.4 Types of Popular Theatre

The following section of this chapter will explain each type of popular theatre in sub-Saharan anglophone Africa with particular examples throughout the seventies and eighties. It will also show how the interests of those in control affected the aims and objectives of the popular theatre and the distribution of control over the process, while the opposite relationship was also true.

Three types of popular theatre have existed in Africa and have developed from each other. The first kind of post-colonial popular theatre in Africa was the touring "well-made play" (also known as 'agitation propoganda'), which was usually initiated by a university and/or a local government that toured a didactic play around the country, playing usually to rural audiences (as explained in the previous section) (Crow and Etherton,1982:571). The second type of popular theatre tried to incorporate more popular participation either from a research process at the local level or by attempting to develop local 'grassroots' theatre groups (Ngugi wa Mirii and Gecau,1983:3 and Crow and Etherton,1982:572). The third type of popular theatre is much more concerned with a more equitable distribution of control over the process and product. These three methods relate to Pru Lambert's 1982 "Theatre for NFE (Non-Formal Education)-3 Methods" table (see Table 3.2), where the first type is "agitprop", the second "participatory" and the third "conscientization" (Lambert,1982).

TABLE 3.2

FACTOR	Theatre for NFE—3 methods		
	AGITPROP	PARTICIPATORY	CONSCIENTIZATION
Play, spectacle, production	produced by a professional group and oriented towards the people	produced by and for the people with spectators	produced by and for the people without spectators
Improvisation level	actors themselves respond to the local situation	within the specific parameters of the themes	throughout; direction never pre-planned
Consciousness (C) or awareness raising	C. raised from outside on specific themes e.g. hygiene, nutrition, human rights, family planning	C. raised from inside on specific themes e.g. social disputes, youth delinquency, VD, migration	C. raised from inside as group analysis of social reality/power relations e.g. landlessness, poverty, corruption
Action ensuing	Informal post-performance discussion may lead to individual action in short-term	organised post-performance discussion groups may lead to short and medium-term group action	continuous dialogue may lead to long-term organized collective action
View of Development (D)	D = planned behaviour change by individuals and families through NFE	D = planned change by transfer of knowledge and skills by NFE and follow-up.	D = structural change that can disrupt the status quo
Participation and continuity	no participation; spectacle as finished product; actors committed but art comes before development	participation = cooperation on cue; no grassroots control; scant explanation of problems' macro-origin; pseudo-conscientization	participation and control increase as catalyst pulls out; spectator becomes dramatic actor, then social actor

(Lambert, 1982:35).

3.4.1 The 'Well-Made' Travelling Play

This type of popular theatre, more popular in the 1960s, involves a touring 'well-made' play written by one person or the theatre group itself about a topic relevant to the group and/or their audiences. Whether the participants are actors or development 'extension' workers, the play has an implicit message developed by people external to the audience, usually with the idea that the audience can learn to change their behaviour by implementing the ideas of the play (Lambert,1982).

Touring with a play has many benefits. Firstly, the play will often attract large numbers of people who often have enthusiastic reactions. The play is also often identifiable since plays were usually Africanizations of European classics (such as Shakespeare's Julius Ceasar and Chekhov's The Proposal in the case of Makerere University Travelling Theatre in Uganda), or African plays. Audience participation is usually also part of the event. For instance, during tours throughout Uganda, actors from the Makerere University Travelling Theatre had to learn to expect audiences who "commented directly on what the characters were saying, or even spontaneously opened a dialogue with the characters" (Epskamp,1989:108).

However, this particular type of popular theatre has also attracted much criticism. Most criticism derives around the lack of 'community' participation or control of the entire popular theatre project. The first main criticism stems from the fact that this type of popular theatre is a top-down process where "outsiders' agendas and analysis" are imposed upon a particular group of people (Kidd and Rashid,1983:31, Kidd,1984:270 and Eyoh,1986:20). This can lead to a very

paternalistic - 'for your own good' - kind of message. The message is often geared to be implemented by "individualized adoption" instead of appealing to the audience as a group. For instance, the play may be intended to try to get individual male farmers to use fertilizer (Kidd,1984:271). As well, the analysis may not accurately reflect the particular reality within the local situation, since those most familiar with the situation have not been consulted. For instance, UNESCO, and other global funding agencies, too often generalize important problems as was the case in Nigeria with plays about the need for family planning, literacy and building pit latrines (Crow and Etherton,1982:576). Often short-term "pat solutions" are offered for complex social problems (Ngugi wa Mirii and Gecau,1983:3 and Crow and Etherton,1982:576). For instance, as Ngugi wa Mirii and Gecau argue:

the solution tacked on to the end of the play e.g. 'The child is getting sick. Do not go to the n'anga'. Go to a medical doctor!' 'Drink clean water! eat wholesome food!' etc...these so-called 'pragmatic' and technical solutions fail to answer such vital questions as

i) does the community have the **material** means to afford a consultation with a medical doctor? If not why? Are health services free? Is there a doctor within reach of the community? If not why?

ii) Is there clean water available to the community? If not, why? Can the community afford wholesome food? Do they have the means to produce it? Do they have land? the money for agricultural inputs?

iii) In any case, which is the community so ignorant as not to know about medical doctors? Clean water? Wholesome food? What type of opportunities, if any, have they been offered for **spiritual** as well as **material** development? (wa Mirii and Gecau,1983:4).

Very rarely is the status quo challenged, since structural issues are left unexamined (ibid:3 and Kidd,1984:271). This type of popular theatre for propaganda is, however, also used by critics of the existing structure and can be a problem:

agitprop theatre, in the hands of "ideologues" (Voigt and Jain,1981) can be just one of many communication channels capable of communicating an ideology, and can turn agitation into a sloganizing propaganda exercise, whether it be at the level of struggling for socialism or of family planning education (Lambert,1982).

Another major problem with the 'well-made play' type of popular theatre is that the 'audience' does not have any input into the creative process. The people the play is intended for do not participate in the process of this type of popular theatre at all. Consequently, communities are "robbed of doing their own thinking" (Eyoh,1986:20) since they have "no part in defining the issues" (Kidd, 1984:271) and people's own knowledge and "cultural strengths" go unrecognized (Eyoh,1986:20). The audience is treated as passive spectators - "rowdy and appreciative, perhaps, but nevertheless consumers of a finished product" (Crow and Etherton,1982:575). Although there is often a discussion session after the play has been performed, these sessions often take a question-and-answer format, "rather than an open-ended discussion of the issue and its implications for audience members" since the play's objective is usually persuasion (Kidd,1984:271).

Consequently, this type of popular theatre often fails "to achieve its educational and organizing goals" (Kidd and Rashid,1983:31) since there is no follow-up or organizational base within which 'solutions' can be implemented at the local level (ibid and Eyoh,1986:20). Therefore, along with reproducing a "culture of silence", as a community's dependence on outside forces is reinforced (Kidd and Rashid,1983:31), this type of popular theatre on its own does not serve to create any real social change.

3.4.2 Plays for Community Development

Other types of popular theatre being practiced in sub-saharan anglophone Africa are community or 'participatory' theatre. These types of popular theatre attempt to involve 'the community' or the group of people the theatre is intended for, although there are still spectators (Lambert,1982;see Figure 2). For instance, people in the community may be involved through a research process by the outside actors in defining the issues which the drama will address (Ngugi wa Mirii and Gecau,1983:3), and/or community members may actually act in the popular theatre plays and/or help to create them (Lambert,1982). Theatre is seen to be a "springboard" where it will "reflect the community to itself" and stimulate a process of 'development' or liberation (Kidd,1984:271). However, with this type of popular theatre the control of the process and product is still not equally shared among the non-acting participants. Control still largely lies in the hands of the outside initiators and/or actors. Participation is often "cooperation on cue" (Lambert,1982).

Popular theatre has recently flourished in Zimbabwe and South Africa in the more specific form of community popular theatre groups (Chifunyise,1990; Globerman,1990; Mooki,1986; Tomaselli,1983; von Kotze,1988). For instance, in Bulawayo, the capital of Matabeleland North Province in Zimbabwe, in 1990, there were thirty-four community popular theatre groups which is double the number that existed in 1986 (Globerman,1990:358). In South Africa groups like the Junction Avenue Theatre Company (JATC) of the East Rand and the Durban Workers Cultural Local (DWCL) use this kind of popular theatre where mainly male black

waged workers from oppressed communities create plays about their living conditions (Tomaselli,1983 and von Kotze,1988).

In sub-Saharan anglophone Africa, however, the best well-documented example of 'community' development popular theatre (where the entire process has been analyzed in the literature), is the 'Laedza Batanani' process in Botswana. Beginning in 1974 in the Bokalaka area, home to approximately 30,000 Kalanga people, Laedza Batanani was a one-week annual community theatre campaign where a play and discussion day were organized by government adult education and extension workers in each of the five villages of the area (Byram,1983:54 and Desai,1990:72). The focus of the campaign is partly explained in its title, where Laedza means "the sun is up. Wake-up - it's time to get moving" and Batanini means "let's come together and work together" (Kidd,1979:6). The campaign song translates as:

Awake and come together to build Botswana
 Build your villages together
 Leave staying at lands and build homes
 Attend meetings and hear what is happening in your country
 Men should work and give money to their wives
 Leave fighting in the Gumba Gumba
 Teach your children to respect adults
 Awake and come together to build Botswana
 (Kidd,Byram and Rohr-Rouendaal,1978 in Desai,1990:73).

Topics are defined at the "community planning workshop" where "the headman, councillors, extension workers and leaders of the VDC and other organizations from each of the villages" chose the themes which were then developed into an un-scripted play at the actor's workshop (Kidd, Byram and Rohr-Rouendaal,1978 in

Desai,1990:74 and 72). The actors were from the Bokalaka area, so they were not outsiders to the area (Kidd,1979:6).

Different than touring a 'well-made' play, the plays at Laedza Batanani were 'rough' theatre. Actors deliberately turned their back on theatre skills, which, if adopted, might inhibit villagers from acting out their problems" (Crow and Etherton,1982:573). Plays did not present 'quick-fix' solutions to the audience, but aimed at acting out the problems which had been determined at the community workshop so people would be "encouraged to look at their own problems, work out solutions, and take action themselves" (Kidd,1979:5). The "guiding principle" was "lots of action, less talking" so that the audience would be engaged in the action (Desai,1990:72). A "multimedia approach" where a synthesis of indigenous songs, drama and dances and imported media like puppets was used (ibid).

The motivation for this program came from government adult education and extension workers in Botswana. They were frustrated with their approach to education where they felt their work was "elitist" since it was only involving the wealthier people of the country and was not 'grounded' in the majority of the people's reality (Kidd and Byram,1982:2-5 and Byram,1983:54). They felt that they were "merely providing services and information" and thought that this was reinforcing "dependence and individualism rather than encouraging self-reliant and collective action" (Kidd and Byram,1982:2-5). The main driving force behind the program was to overcome apathy, since this was thought to be the reason why people were not coming to community meetings or the *kgotia* (Kidd,1979:6). An entertaining

medium such as theatre would attract many more people (Desai,1990:72).

The results of this popular theatre process have been that popular theatre is now used much more widely in Botswana by many different types of extension workers in their day-to-day tasks. In 1978, there was a national Popular Theatre Workshop for extension workers and theatre (as of 1983) is "an integral part of a resettlement education program" (Byram,1983:55) and "used in developing group solidarity among cattle-workers" (Kidd,1979:6). However, it must be remembered that this 'success' has been defined by those in government since popular theatre was seen by them to be excellent for conveying community development messages (Desai,1990:75). It was also defined positively since it was seen to be an 'African' pedagogy (even though it was a synthesis of different styles from different areas of the world) and a 'bridging' technique to help develop from 'traditional' life to more 'modern' lifestyles (ibid).

There were benefits to this particular popular theatre program. As well as the enjoyment of watching a drama, this popular theatre which recreated reality for the community to watch was very effective at "raising sensitive issues which might otherwise never be dealt with" (Kidd and Byram,1982:20). For example, issues concerning women's status have been raised:

Laedza Batanani is a good way of getting people to talk about problems - easier than wives on their own trying to argue with their husbands. The drama helps to show men what women don't like (Kidd and Byram,1982:20).

However, the literature does not address to what extent women were involved in the process of topic choosing and play creation.

In terms of popular theatre as a force for social change, the Laedza Batanani process is not a successful example. Even the initial writers about the process, Martin Byram and Ross Kidd, have re-evaluated their stance about the project and are now much more critical about its outcome. Although Kidd and Byram initially labelled the project as having a Freirian approach, it is now agreed that the programme "seriously misconstrued or misapplied the Freirian approach in its early years" (Desai,1990:72). There has not been any real change or action resulting from this project. One reason for this is the lack of follow-up and organizational support:

In Botswana's popular theatre programme the organizational strategy for moving people to action has been unclear. Most community organizations are weak and only represent elite interests in the community (Kidd,1979:7).

Another reason has to do with the lack of structural analysis in the plays themselves and confining the analysis to the village level. This often produces a "victim-blaming" approach (Kidd and Byram,1982:26). However, the key reason why this is not an example of a Freirian approach lies in the question: who has control over the process and the product (ibid,18)? Control stayed with wealthier sections of the community and community leaders such that topics like cattle theft could be on the agenda for play production while issues which would concern a larger majority of the rural poor were omitted (Kidd,1979:6). This meant that the main goal of the program seemed to be "to find ways in which people could be *normalized* into certain government-prescribed roles" (Desai,1990:73). Those in control legitimized the program in a dehumanizing way. They did not view the problems as being a lack of opportunity but as a lack of motivation and laziness as can be seen in the campaign song. They

thought that if villagers could be motivated and made to understand what was happening around them, then participation would increase and the problems would be solved. They also chose problems which "could be worked out by the people rather than by the government" (Desai,1990:73).

Therefore, although the Laedza Batanani community theatre process in Botswana represents a positive development from the touring popular theatre play and creates a different conception of theatre which is much more 'rough' and accessible, it still cannot be termed as an example of liberating-participatory popular theatre. The controlling political-economic and social interests of the government which shaped the purpose of the project (which was to overcome apathy), served to influence the popular theatre process and product which cannot be termed Freirian or emancipatory.

3.4.3 Liberating Popular Theatre

The third main type of popular theatre is what I call Liberating Popular Theatre since the process is empowering and transformative and, unlike the other two types, the theatre is produced by and for the people (see Lambert,1982). The community or the group in question controls the means of production (Kidd,1984:278). Control of the process and theatre product is shared amongst the participants who are the initiators and community members. Sufficient time is taken in order for a deeper analysis to occur which attempts to understand structural causes and make connections between local, national and even global issues.

Liberating popular theatre usually uses a 'codification-decodification' approach.

This is a development from the Freirian decodification-only idea previously discussed in chapter two (section 2.3.2). However, as Ross Kidd describes:

drama is a radically different type of code from, say, a drawing or photograph. It requires participation: members of the learning group or workshop are involved in *creating* the code as well as 'decodifying' or analyzing it. Drawings or photos, on the other hand, have tended to be produced for groups by specialists: learner participation has been minimal. (This has reinforced the top-down, 'massification' tendency which Freire's method set out to overcome) (Kidd,1984:274).

Figure 3.1 displays how this methodology works. As participants create the plays, or 'workshop' a play (further developing a play framework which has been written by an initiator), they are also analyzing and discussing the issues. This leads to a deeper understanding of the "underlying contradictions, motivations or rationalizations" about a problem or issue. Therefore,

the two processes are linked as dialectical counter-points, the one giving rise to the other in a cyclical way: the dramatized images of reality create the focus for discussion which then turns back to drama-making in order to reflect and concretize the analysis and so on (Kidd,1984:274).

FIGURE 3.1

CODIFICATION-DECODIFICATION

(Kidd,1984:275).

This idea developed from the work of Augusto Boal, a Brazilian educator who took Freire's ideas and extended them into popular theatre. Boal's form of rehearsal theatre uses this approach of mixing analysis and drama-making (Boal, 1979:142). Boal believed that:

all the truly revolutionary theatrical groups should transfer to the people the means of production in the theatre, so that the people themselves may utilize them. The theatre is weapon, and it is the people who should wield it (Boal, 1979:122).

Therefore, the popular participant is not a passive spectator but is transformed into an "actor and protagonist" (Lambert, 1982). This is crucial to liberating popular theatre. The emphasis must be on a truly liberating process, where the participants themselves have control, and not the product, although a finished product can result.

The play creation process within the community popular theatre groups from Zimbabwe and South Africa mentioned in the previous section follows the parameters for liberating popular theatre. Although the play performance involves 'non-participants' in the audience, the play creators from oppressed communities participate in the creative process as outlined above. As well, two particular examples from Zimbabwe and Malawi show how community development popular theatre (see section 3.4.2) can develop into liberating popular theatre as oppressed groups themselves develop their own plays and groups as a result of the catalyst from the outside community popular theatre group. In Malawi, a group of peasant women began a popular theatre process because of a community theatre process around health care issues sponsored by the Liwonde Agricultural Development Division (ADD) (a government subsidiary) and the Primary Health Care Unit (PHCU) (a

West German-funded project) (Kerr,1989). In Zimbabwe, women from the hostels in Mbare began a popular theatre process as a result of the initiative from the political theatre group, *Zambuko/Izibuko* ('the river-crossing' in Shona and Ndebele) and the community theatre process which was developed by students from the University of Zimbabwe enrolled in a course entitled 'Popular, Political and Community Theatre' (Kavanagh,1990).

However, the best documented example (in terms of process) of this type of popular theatre in sub-saharan anglophone Africa is the project at the Kamiriithu Community Educational and Cultural Centre in Central Kenya. Initiated by Ngugi wa Thiong'o from the University of Nairobi and a social worker Ngugi wa Mirii, this popular theatre process emerged from a literacy project at the community centre in 1976 (Kidd,1979:8). The community group, mainly comprising factory workers, poor peasants and primary school teachers (two thirds of whom were women), workshopped a play which was originally written by the initiators (Ngugi wa Thiong'o,no date:120).

Kamiriithu, which was a forced labour concentration camp during the 1950s in Kenya, was also situated within a labour reserve, supplying cheap labour to the adjacent tea and coffee plantations and industries (like the Bata shoe factory) in Limuru and Nairobi. Although it was a community of 10,000, the only social service was a community centre, which had been built by the community on land which had been originally set aside by the colonial government for 'social purposes'. The centre was made into a youth vocational training centre in 1963 after political independence

(Kidd,1983:291-292).

Since the people of Kamiriithu did not experience the benefits expected from independence, they decided to revamp the centre initially to "provide a meeting-place for the villagers and a programme of integrated rural development - adult education, study groups, cultural activity, economic production and health" (Kidd,1983:293). The centre was based upon democratic organization: "The villagers made the decisions and each decision was taken on the basis of extensive discussions among the membership" (ibid). The membership designed their own literacy study programme and recruited their own teachers. However, to involve everyone in the village, they chose drama as a medium. They were familiar with drama through their role-playing and short skits in their literacy classes and through the performance by the University of Nairobi's Travelling Theatre Group directed by Ngugi wa Thiong'o. They thought that the dramatic text could be used in subsequent literacy classes and that drama might provide a source of employment and a way of obtaining revenue for the centre (Kidd,1983:295).

The centre's literacy and cultural committee asked Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii to draft a script for them to workshop. The two university professors were to use the autobiographies which had been recently written in the literacy classes, and the discussions in the literacy and cultural committees, as their guide. The first play 'Ngaahika Ndeenda' (I Will Marry When I Want) reflected the real lives and aspirations of the people in Kamiriithu and developed from an extensive six month workshop and performance process where the original script hardly resembled

the final draft (Ngugi wa Thiong'o, n.d.:120).

Although the process was originally under the direction of Kimani Gecau, the entire process became a collective effort, where "the whole community collectively rediscover[ed] their past, each person reinforcing or correcting the views of others" and was controlled by those who participated in it (Kidd,1983:296). Discipline was decided upon by the members. For instance, when the women's group came to understand that alcohol was slowing down their progress, the group decided to impose on themselves a ban on drinking. This eventually spread to all groups including the audience (Ngugi wa Thiong'o, n.d.:121). Another ban on photographs taken by outsiders was decided this way (Kidd,1983:293).

The collective control of the villagers developed into the design and construction of a two thousand-person capacity open-air theatre, where, in October 1977, 'I Will Marry When I Want' opened. This play was performed to packed 'houses' each Saturday and Sunday for seven weeks. After this time, it was banned by the Kenyan authorities who claimed "it fomented strife between classes" (Kidd,1983:299). And after the arrest and detention of Ngugi wa Thiong'o several years later, and attempts to perform another play 'Maitu Njugira' (Mother, Sing To Me), "the District Officer for Limuru led three truckloads of heavily armed police and demolished Kamirithu's people's open-air theatre" on Friday March 12, 1982 (Ngugi wa Thiong'o, n.d.:128).

The key factor which makes the Kamiriithu Popular Theatre process liberating is its process where the participants themselves had control. The original script was

revised and reworked by the community group through the process of "communal practices of improvisation" or Boal's rehearsal otherwise known as forum theatre (Desai,1990:83). This meant that "psychologically, this was an enipowering experience in which actions were not *prescribed* by a given authority, that of the written text, but were *negotiated* between the performed and the written texts" (ibid). The process was one where the participants themselves had control.

The second reason why Kamiriithu was liberating popular theatre has to do with the content of the plays. The scripts originally drafted by Ngugi wa Thiong'o sufficiently expressed the problems of the area such that, after it was workshopped by the participants, the participants/actors could act like themselves in their roles. In fact, they were "both themselves and not themselves simultaneously" (Desai,1990:84).

The play *Ngaahika Ndeenda* ('I Will Marry When I Want') reflects the frustration with the Kenyan political-economic structures and the awareness that the Kenyan ruling class was betraying the majority of the Kenyan people which challenged the traditional 'victim-blaming' approach (Kidd,1983:303). The issue of the status and oppression of women is also addressed when the play's story revolves around oppressed people asserting themselves, who also include women. Lines such as: "Even before colonialism, we oppressed women, giving ourselves numerous justifications" (1982:105) help to address this problem while wife-beating is pointed out as being negative (1982:95). This play was presented "from the villager's point of view, using their local idiom and language and drawing upon their songs, dances, and mime traditions" (Desai,1990:82-83). Connections between everyday local problems

2

of women and men, and broader national and international issues were made (Kidd,1983:303).

Therefore, although popular theatre at Kamiriithu was 'closed down' by the Kenyan authorities, it was, for a time, a successful popular theatre project. At least three other plays and songs created by workers and unemployed youths in the area have resulted (Ngugi wa Thiong'o, n.d.:122). Desai's 1990 article explains that women tea leaf pickers at Kamiriithu demonstrate the success of the process as they have now organized for higher wages for their formal work (Desai,1990:85). Ngugi wa Thiong'o writes:

No amount of material well-being (such as giving three sewing machines to a village of 10,000 people as the authorities have recently done at Kamiriithu!) can compensate for the loss of a people's right to determine their lives, or at least have a say in such determination (Ngugi wa Thiong'o, n.d.:132).

However, the Kenyan regime cannot destroy what people have developed inside themselves at Kamiriithu.

Conclusion

In the final section of this chapter, then, I will attempt to synthesize those elements or conditions for liberating popular theatre which can be inferred from the analysis of the popular theatre example at Kamiriithu, Kenya, in order to develop the theoretical framework from which to base my analysis of the case studies Platform 2000 and Action Workshop. Most importantly, this section argues that attention must be paid to the elements of control and process.

For liberating popular theatre control of the process and product must be in the hands of the participants or the exploited workers be they women and/or men and/or children. This means that the popular theatre experience is much more than just participation, since "people can 'participate in their own domestication', i.e., be drawn into a process in which they take part but have no control, in which they are manipulated through their involvement to accept the status quo" (Kidd,1983:301). This means that exploited people themselves take a little more control over their own lives and become active decision makers about something which they value - a humanizing process which usually fosters self-confidence.

Decisions must be made through an egalitarian process within a democratic organizational framework. Being a part of a democratic structure ensures that the popular theatre will help to develop a process of organizing and social change. At Kamiriithu, it "is the organisation which has been the vehicle for popular control over the organising process. It is the organisation which gives the work continuity. Without it, the work would have stopped at the first sign of repression" (Kidd,1983:302). A democratic organization also ensures that the process will continue even though key figures have been removed, or in Kamiriithu's case, detained.

Liberating popular theatre also means that participants are involved in the drama creation process. Demystifying the drama creation process is an important step in transferring the means of producing drama to the majority of the population (Kidd,1983:297). The process of creating drama allows for a critical consciousness to form as there is a synthesis between theory and reality and since when formulating

the story, one must continually ask the question 'why?'. The process of 'codification - decodification' (see Figure 3.1) stimulates a deeper understanding of reality. "Drama-within-a-process" of organization building also helps to ensure that popular theatre participants are not in "an abstract intellectual exercise but in the process of building an organisation and struggling for their rights" (Kidd, 1983:302). Therefore, participant control over the logistics of organization building is important. However, like the six month rehearsal and performance period at Kamiriithu, this process takes time.

Finally, liberating popular theatre can help to stimulate and value local literary forms such as expression, dance, gesture, and song. This factor is becoming increasingly important as the onslaught of Western (mainly American) cultural art forms reach and attempt to dominate many different regions of the world.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Emancipatory social science must be premised upon the development of research approaches which both empower the researched and contribute to the generation of change enhancing social theory (Lather,1988:570).

Emancipate yourself from mental slavery. None but ourselves can free our minds ('Redemption Song', Bob Marley).

The preceeding two quotations both contrast and complement one another. To what extent can an emancipatory research methodology occur which does not exploit but empowers 'the researched', without becoming patronizing in a cross-cultural context of white 'researcher'- black 'researched'? In the following chapter I will explore this question as it relates to theories of participation and local organizing. If 'development from within' is seen to be more emancipatory and empowering than 'development from above', then to what extent can a research methodology advocate 'research from within' instead of 'research from above'. I explore this idea through a personal reflection of how I used a feminist participatory research methodology in order to uncover methodological problems which usually go unrevealed in cross-cultural, cross-gender research. Initially I examine why more traditional research epistemology and methodology was rejected and the approach and ways of knowing I subsequently adopted. Secondly, the intended research

methodology will be compared with the actual research experience in Namibia and South Africa.

4.1 Alternative Ways of Knowing

4.1.1 Conscious Partiality - A Political Act

Understanding how popular theatre is a liberating process and a social change tool is a political act. This research concerns "processes of individual and social change", arguing against the 'status quo' or the international, national, and often local and inter-household structural socio-economic constraints which have created an increasing degree of polarization between 'haves' and 'have nots', oppressors and oppressed (Mies,1983:126).

Unlike the claims of more traditional social science methods, feminist research recognizes that research is not 'value-free'. "Neutrality and indifference towards the research objects" of traditional social science (Mies,1983:122), where the researcher is "distant and detached" from the research 'subjects' (Maguire,1987:19) did not exist for me. For instance, Patricia Maguire in her 1987 book Doing Participatory Research quotes Eugene Stone who describes how research 'suffers' if the researcher 'gets involved':

To the extent that a field experiment requires the researcher to maintain prolonged contact with a system, the experimenter's objectivity in studying the system may suffer (Stone 1978:127 in Maguire,1987:19).

I felt that this 'objectivity' signified that I would have to be somehow detached from myself. This dehumanizing process meant that objectivity was "not neutrality, but

alienation from self and society" (Maguire,1987:19). This, I knew, I could not and would not, do.

Therefore, rather than following more traditional social science research methods, I chose instead what Maria Mies has termed "conscious partiality" as a guideline for my research and to base the research within feminist epistemology. I attempted to work within "a critical and dialectical distance" between myself and the research 'subjects' in order to go beyond mere "subjectivism or simple empathy" (Mies,1983:123). Therefore, my political biases and the critical distance needed for adequate reflection were both considered.

Falling into the dualistic trap of modernism which frames reality within an 'either/or' context (as explained in chapter two) is dangerous. Patti Lather in a 1988 article best describes this perspective:

While all this decentering and de-stabilizing of fundamental categories gets dizzying, such a relational, non-reductionist way of making sense of the world asks us to "think constantly against [ourselves]" (Jardine,1985:19) as we struggle toward ways of knowing which engage us in the pressing need to turn critical thought into emancipatory action (Lather,1988:581).

Like Stanley and Wise, I wanted a "non-deterministic attitude", remaining 'open' especially given the cross-cultural aspect of the research (Stanley and Wise,1983:202). Therefore, balancing this with the 'conceptual baggage' of having 'socialist-feminist' leanings was my aim.

With the acknowledgement of how I as a researcher affect the process and the product of the research, the writing style used is not only third person singular or first person plural that denies the researcher's existence, but an integration of third person

and first person singular which demystifies the research process allowing for reflexivity and self-critique while promoting accuracy (Maguire,1987:20 and Lather,1988). I also attempt in this research paper to use language which is "evocative and communicative, not jargon" (Reinharz,1983:183).

4.1.2 Non-Exploitative Research - The Importance of Process

There is an inherently unequal power relationship between researchers and researched within more traditional social science studies (Stanley and Wise,1983:195). Since researchers 'research on' people, they are in fact appropriating information through "rape research" (Reinharz in Lather,1988:570). I did not want to perpetuate this type of exploitation in my research.

Furthermore, if people (the 'researched') feel that they are being "interrogated" and exploited by the research process, the likelihood of collecting reliable and valid data is minimal. "Expected behaviour" or false interpretations result (Mies,1983:123).

I wanted to find an unobtrusive, non-patronizing, non-exploitative way of doing research which had the potential to empower both 'the researcher' and 'the researched', while working towards social change. I wanted to use a "praxis-oriented inquiry" immersed within the context of the research and the study area, where the research process was just as important as the research product (Lather,1988:572).

What Reinharz refers to as "a non-hierarchical, non-authoritarian, non-manipulative, humble relation to the 'subject' - perhaps the attitude of the student rather than expert" was adopted (Reinharz,1983:181). I realized, however, that this

was an ideal which could only be "approximated but never entirely achieved", just as "complete detachment" was also an ideal (ibid:182).

4.1.3 Contextualizing the Analysis

Couched within the ideology that "there is a social world which exists independently of people's subjective awareness of it", is the assumption that there is one set of "the facts" (Maguire,1987:2) which can be discovered through the measurement of observable phenomena (Kirby and McKenna,1989:34). However, behaviour cannot be separated from the contextualized socio-economic and environmental reality within which people live (ibid).

Likewise, one cannot understand the social world using similar methods used to understand the physical or natural world (Kirby and McKenna,1989:34 and Maguire,1987:18). Positivism, an epistemology and methodology used both in the natural and social sciences, recognizes

only "objective" facts and observable phenomena ("if I can see it, measure it, record it, it's true"), and is uninterested in the causes or ultimate origins of these facts...[positivism] neglects crucial aspects of life that cannot easily be measured (Maguire,1987:2).

By only using quantification methods a "simplistic and superficial nature" of the research occurs (Jayaratne,1983:152 and Hall,1975:25). The following quote from Scott's Weapons of the Weak explains the problem as follows:

Is it a twitch or a wink? Mere observation of the physical act gives no clue. If it is a wink, what kind of wink is it: one of conspiracy, of ridicule, of seduction? Only a knowledge of the culture, the shared understandings, of the actor and his or her observers and confederates can begin to tell us; and even then we must allow for possible misunderstandings...because it may be in certain people's interests to misrepresent their opinion, and thus interpretation may be tricky

(Scott,1985:45-46).

Contextualized qualitative data help to ensure that these types of "public" and "private accounts" are considered in the research (Wilson,1991:32). Otherwise, "public accounts usually fit the dominant ideology or present the person interviewed in a good light", and "private accounts", or that which a researcher can extract from the manner in which a 'subject' spoke, or the situation which informed when and how the information was given, helps to ensure that the research is rigorous (ibid). Therefore, I wanted to use more qualitative methods during the research process since "no matter how thorough the questions in quantitative research, quantitative data will yield findings which are superficial in nature, compared to *most qualitative data*" (Jayaratne,1983:153).

The use of large sample sizes in order to create a high degree of so-called certainty and predictability within the research conclusions was also not appropriate (Maguire,1987:21). I was not interested in making sweeping generalizations about popular theatre methodology but rather believed that I needed to focus on the uniqueness of "individuals and groups in the particular social context being investigated" in order to focus on process (ibid). Germane to this idea was the recognition of the "post-positivist/postmodern era" and an end for "the lust for absolutes, for certainty in our ways of knowing" (Lather,1988:570). I wanted not to give "definite answers" but to "keep the dialogue going" about the process of popular theatre (Reinharz,1983:183).

4.1.4 Participating in the Struggle Through Research

Consequently, in order to create more than "uninvolved 'spectator knowledge'", 'field work' was conducted in Namibia and South Africa with the financial help of a CIDA Award for Young Canadians so that an understanding "not acquired in the sheltered world of academic institutions" could occur (Mies,1983:124). I also wanted to adhere to "a new research ethic of participation" (Reinharz,1983:182). I wanted to conduct research with and for the people who are oppressed by unequal structures based on class, race, gender, social status, location, marital status, age etc. Participatory methodology and, more particularly, feminist participatory action research seemed to fit this requirement. Instead of 'research from above' which more traditional social science paradigms perpetuated, participatory research attempted to break the pattern of knowledge creation only being done by the privileged in northern countries which worked to create ethnocentrism, devaluing of the 'other' and racist and sexist practices which were often environmentally insensitive (as explained in chapter two). Participatory research argued that researchers were to work with 'the oppressed' since this theory valued local knowledge and said that the empowering nature of the knowledge creation process is important to be in the control of those who are oppressed by the system.

Participatory research has been defined

as a research process in which the community participates in the analysis of its own reality in order to promote a social transformation for the benefit of the participants, who are the oppressed. It is therefore a research, educational and action-oriented activity (Vio Grossi,1980:70).

The basic premise of participatory research is that all phases of the research process, from "knowledge of working area and initial planning and organization", "defining generative problems" (or the research question), to data collection, analysis and follow-up, are conducted both by 'the researched' and 'the researcher' (Maguire,1987:105-108). Control of the project's process and product is to be shared between the research participants and the outside researcher (Srinivasan,1979:82 and Knowledge and Social Change,1985:6). In doing so, the outside researcher, is placed in a much more vulnerable position (Klein,1983:91) especially in terms of revealing her/himself and accountability. Although this research process may take a longer time than more traditional methods (IDRC,1988:25-26), acknowledging biases within a contextualized research project which is non-exploitative, is the type of research pursued (Rahman,1983:14 and Vio Grossi,1980:71).

The main advantage of participatory research is that the research process has the potential to be empowering for the 'researched'. The research process may empower "the powerless...to take initiatives in their common interests. It makes them self-confident, skilled, aware and knowledgeable" (Knowledge and Social Change,1985:6). This occurs when oppressed people not only gain research skills but increase their analytical capacities (Rahman,1985). The creation of a 'critical consciousness' (a term developed from Paulo Freire's 'conscientization' process) is one of the main aims of participatory research. Ira Shor in A Pedagogy for Liberation explains this concept:

I understand critical consciousness as gaining reflective distance on your own thought, action, and society. This distance is a metaphor for

separating your consciousness from the dominant ideology socializing us in mass culture, daily life, and school. These are places where we internalize racism, sexism, and such values as self-doubt and love of the rich and powerful, which help wed us to the system (Shor and Freire,1987:167).

By bringing oppressed people "into the general scientific and social stream so that their voice can be heard and respected", local knowledge is not treated as an obstacle, but integral to the research process (IDRC,1988:3). Personal and 'everyday' knowledge is respected and valued (Klein,1983:91). Consequently, a more accurate type of knowledge is developed which is more useful to social change processes (Fals-Borda,1981:57).

Another reason for this increase in accuracy is the "relationship between social theory and social practice, or between political designs and their applications in everyday life" which occurs through the participatory research process (Fals-Borda,1981:55). The integration of theorizing and practice or action, is known as 'praxis' (ibid). A deeper understanding of a situation can occur through our attempts to change it using this "action-reflection rhythm" (Small,1988:93 and Fals-Borda,1981:61).

Through praxis, participatory research has a specific aim of mobilizing marginalized people for action. Findings of participatory research have been publicized in newspapers, television and theatre presentations, along with other campaigns (Society for Participatory Research,1985:65). Participatory research aims at building and strengthening oppressed people's organizations through analysis and action projects since people are to act as a result of the new knowledge and the

research process (Vio Grossi,1980:74).

Participatory research, then, can occur within a marginalized people's organization or without one. Some participatory research advocates argue that an organization is needed for participatory research (Vio Grossi,1980:75). Others argue that conducting participatory research with only established organizations again excludes formally unorganized people from an organizing process (IDRC,1988:22). Still others explain that participatory research can either "strengthen (or create where none exist) organizations of people" (Knowledge and Social Change,1985:6,9).

The feminist critique of participatory research delves further into the question of who is actually participating in the research, how and at what level of decision-making. The assumption of a "homogeneous community" of oppressed people is unfounded (Srinivason,1979:63). Often power is unequally distributed within a mixed gender group or as a result of differences of class, ethnicity, age, marital status, or location (Maguire,1987:51). In order to ensure that each person is equally incorporated into the research process, attention must be given to these differences and the power dynamics which result (ibid:105-108).

There are, however, limits or 'notes of caution' to participatory research. The first deals with the role and responsibilities of the 'researcher'. The 'researcher' must be committed to the goals of participatory research and social change, while also being 'anti-dogmatic' and 'open-minded' (Fals-Borda,1981:60). S/he must also be 'authentic' (ibid). To become what Gramsci has called an "organic intellectual", the 'researcher' must integrate into the popular organization and be reliable and

trustworthy (Vio Grossi,1980:76). Francisco Vio Grossi provides the following analysis:

In the field of the relationship between intellectuals and the popular organization, it is particularly difficult to offer "recipes". Anyone of us who has seriously worked with workers, peasants or marginal communities will agree with the assertion that indicates that people perceive easily the class origin of strangers. They are also particularly keen in evaluating the reliability of the newcomers. The level of communication that is established frequently relies upon the way that the community sees the services that the outsiders can provide and the degree of loyalty to the short and long run common goals of the group (ibid:75).

The amount of control the 'researcher' keeps is also a 'fuzzy' area. It is "manipulative" of the 'researcher' to keep too much control over the research process where participation is only 'on cue', or if participation is only to create a better research product (ibid:71). Participatory research, however, can also exist within academically 'established' frameworks such as feminism and historical materialism as Vio Grossi explains; "participatory research is not, and has never intended to be, a new ideological and scientific holistic system, an alternative to historic materialism" (ibid:73). This may or may not be the input of 'the researcher'.

The second warning about participatory research deals with the 'researched' and how the research process affects them. Firstly, assumptions around the process of emotional and intellectual "awareness" raising (or what has been previously termed as gaining a 'critical consciousness') need to be addressed (Knowledge and Social Change,1985:6). The 'researcher' cannot assume before the process begins what the 'researched' will come to learn as a result of the research process. The 'researcher' should not assume how people's consciousnesses need raising. Instead, in addition to

the previously defined concept of critical consciousness, the 'researcher' and the 'researched' should think of the process as a "return...of culture", where understanding develops through a kind of delayering process (Fals-Borda,1981:62). In this way, the "Gramscian concept of converting 'common sense' into 'good sense'" is realized (ibid:61). Secondly, the 'researched' will likely have less time than the 'researcher' to spend on the research process. The 'researcher' may have to conduct parts of the research on her or his own (Society for Participatory Research,1985:65).

Pertaining to the research product or the 'results' of the research, other warnings need to be considered. The 'researcher' and the 'researched' need to be accountable and ethical regarding the socio-political impact of the research 'results'. The research findings may cause "pressures [from] the established powers" (Srinivasan,1979:82). This speculated impact needs to be carefully considered when releasing research 'results' and processes. When evaluating the impact of the research findings and/or the actual action taken, the reality of operating within "the limits and opportunities that the system puts on participatory research activities in a given political situation...[from] room for manoeuvre [to] total resistance", must be considered (Vio Grossi,1980:76,77). Finally, it must be remembered that participatory research is a dialogue, and is not static, so that the 'researcher' and the 'researched' need to keep in contact for much longer than the actual research project (Hall,1975:29).

Therefore, careful consideration of the strengths and warnings about feminist participatory research helped to shape my intended research methodology.

4.2 Formulating the Research Methodology

Being a part of a master of arts program (M.A.) and being funded by outside sources to research a specific question concerning the nature of popular theatre in Namibia, placed certain constraints on following a feminist participatory research methodology. The first constraint was time. I had only six months to work in Namibia and cross-cultural feminist participatory research required a significantly larger amount of time. The second constraint, as a result of working within an M.A. program, was research ownership. If I researched together with other people, would I then be able to claim an M.A. only for myself? I also wondered if being funded by CIDA to research a specific research question meant that I would not be able to alter or change that research question after discussions with research participants in Namibia (as participatory research indicates). I chose to work closely with a Namibian research partner and consult two organizations, Bricks Community Project and the Sister Collective in Katutura and Windhoek (respectively) Namibia, about the research question and research design. Qualitative methods would be used for the majority of the data collection.

Through written correspondence with Professor Annemarie Heywood at the University of Namibia, I was able to acquire the address of a Namibian woman whom she thought would be an appropriate research partner. As well as being a research partner, this woman could also help with interpretation and translation since she spoke several languages. By working with someone whose life experience is closer to the research situation, I thought the research findings would be more accurate while

a Namibian would also benefit from learning research skills during this study, thus perpetuating the goals of feminist participatory research. I also wanted to incorporate a participatory approach through the discussions I would have with various members of the two organizations I would work with. I hoped that such persons would be able to sit down and discuss the research question and strategy in terms of how exactly they thought the data should be collected. I anticipated that I would use the following research tools: unstructured taped interviews, participant observation, informal discussions and a review of secondary sources. I expected to learn about popular theatre and the Namibian situation, and give something back to the 'researched', by actually working in the Bricks offices as a volunteer. Through correspondence with Bricks' members and discussions with Professor Colin Leys at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, I agreed to help co-ordinate the proposed May 1991 International Council of Adult Education's (ICAE) Popular Theatre workshop in Namibia as part of my volunteer position.

I also anticipated that I would be able to interview or talk with the actual popular theatre participants about their experiences and ideas on the popular theatre process. My research proposal explains that questions about popular theatre process and product would be discussed "with community theatre participants", concentrating on one specific popular theatre project that Bricks/Platform 2000 was running in southern Namibia. However, there were some variances between the intended research methodology and the actual methodology which was used.

4.3 The Research Experience

I arrived in Windhoek, Namibia February 1,1991 and subsequently worked there until May 12,1991. I decided to leave Namibia, after I found out that the ICAE conference I was supposed to be helping to arrange was to be postponed until August 1991 (instead of May 1991) when I was scheduled to be back in Canada. After discussing my departure with the Bricks members, I arranged, through contacts I had made in Windhoek, to spend approximately one month and do some volunteer work with Action Workshop in Cape Town, South Africa. This allowed me to learn about two popular theatre groups in the area which I feel has strengthened the research. The following offers an account of my actual research experience in the two research areas of Windhoek/Katutura, Namibia and the Western Cape, South Africa.

4.3.1 A Participatory Emancipatory Approach?

In attempting to implement a feminist participatory research approach I faced four main problems. The first had to do with my intended research partner. Upon arriving in Namibia, I found that my research partner had a full-time teaching job which she could not leave in order to work with me. I then tried to find someone else to work with, but the reality was that anyone who had the skills for such a job (ie. 'highschool' or some 'highschool' education), was already working, or had the potential to work at a more secure, higher paying job than I could offer. Once someone was working full-time, that person did not have the time to work with me. The other problem was that many people I talked to could not understand why I needed a research assistant. They felt that the research only required one person

since the Bricks activists spoke English. I subsequently abandoned the research partner idea in Namibia although I did collaborate with an Action Workshop activist who was also trying to write a research paper about Action Workshop.

The second hurdle was that the participatory approach I had previously anticipated was also altered. Neither working Bricks activists nor members of the Sister Collective could afford the time to sit down and actually discuss the research project and design with me. I felt embarrassed to think that I presumed they would have wanted to or had been able to given my status as an outsider. Instead, I managed to talk with them separately in short, often hurried conversations before or after a Sister meeting on Tuesday nights, or in the truck while driving to the Bricks office each morning. In this way I was still able to use a participatory approach albeit through informal means.

Thirdly, although I did manage to speak with a former Bricks member concerning the research design, I was not able to incorporate his ideas into the research. Although he encouraged me to change my research topic by broadening the scope of the research to 'Popular (read progressive) Art in Namibia', this topic was far too large given the time, personnel, and constraints of doing research about local organizing, so I subsequently kept with my original research question. In South Africa, my time and role at Action Workshop was discussed with the entire group during the first day I was there. Opinions and feelings of the group members concerning my time there and the research question, were voiced. Most members felt reluctantly comfortable with my presence and project. They only wanted to ensure that I would

not interfere and that the written research would reach them upon completion.

The fourth problem of implementing a feminist participatory approach was that the enthusiasm from the Bricks group about the research/volunteer project I had proposed was dubious. Although one activist had sent me letters in Canada which appeared to express an interest in having me visit, upon arrival I was later told that other Bricks activists had not been asked about their opinion concerning my work, while some felt very angry about the whole idea of an 'outsider' coming in to 'study them'.

Therefore, although the data were collected only by me, the research process, from shaping the specific research question to analyzing the data, was discussed as much as it was possible, with 'the researched' or research participants. Because of time and the specific constraints of this project, I had to maintain control over the research question and continue to pursue my original problem, albeit modified as a result of suggestions from the research participants. In terms of the participatory nature of the data analysis, my input throughout the process (when it was appropriate and appreciated) to the research participants' ongoing evaluation of themselves, and their input to my evaluation of their work, allowed for a collaborate and participatory data analysis process. Data analysis was done constantly throughout the process.

4.3.2 The Research Methods and Instruments

The idea of using unstructured taped interviews as the main method of data collection was also altered. In Namibia, the Bricks activists with whom I did manage to conduct a taped interview felt uncomfortable and intimidated by the process.

Although, these interviews were conducted too early into the research process to allow for a really comfortable atmosphere, I began to wonder about the reliability and exploitative nature of the taped interview process even with people more familiar to me. This specific point was articulated further as one Bricks activist consistently postponed any interview times I would set up with him. After two months of this, he finally declared that he did not want to be interviewed on tape. He found the process exploitative, felt he did not want to devote the time to it, and did not understand why I wanted to conduct a taped interview given that I already knew all the information he would describe through our informal conversations while working at Bricks. As well, other Bricks activists referring to specific visits we would make to school workshops or performances, would strongly suggest that I forget the tape recorder and not ask the participants direct questions since I did not know them.

This resistance to being taped must be viewed within the existing power dynamic. Internalized racism, classism and sexism often meant that people did not feel confident about who they were and were often threatened by me. Along with my direct approach, the taped interview process was seen to be exploitative and demeaning; one popular theatre activist told me that I was researching them "like they were animals in a zoo".

I was also not able to talk with drama workshop participants either on their own or with a popular theatre activist. Firstly, given who I was, a very unequal power dynamic occurred. People felt that I was the white 'American' woman, 'the rich and educated one', who wanted to find out about 'the poor and starving people'. People

did not want to give me the time or energy to what seemed to them to be outright exploitation. I did not blame them and decided not to explore that route. I chose not to start questioning people unfamiliar to me and have them feel exploited. The possibility of jeopardizing the workshop process for the popular theatre activists was very real since the drama workshop participants only barely trusted them. In South Africa, I again did not explore trying to question the drama workshop participants, although I might have been able to interview women in the South Africa Clothing and Textile Union cultural group, had I stayed longer there since their drama workshops were more ongoing.

Listening to the research participants' comments, subtle and not so subtle, while feeling uncomfortable and uneasy about being exploitative, I decided to stop trying to focus on taped interviews and instead concentrate on using participant observation and taking notes about what people told me and what I observed.

Participation involves direct contact with individuals and/or groups of people where they normally are and doing what they normally do...Direct observation of individuals and/or groups of people is likely to take place in the location where people are doing what they regularly do. Although the observer may feel outside the situation or interaction, that person's very presence involves at least a minimal level of participation (Kirby and McKenna, 1989:77,79).

This meant that I had to know that people understood that they needed to tell me explicitly if they did not want something included in the research, when they spoke to me since I was always recording what went on.

I participated by working in the Bricks and Action Workshop offices as a

volunteer¹. In addition, I also went to school, 'township' and rural workshops, joined the drama exercises when it was appropriate, and helped while attending all drama performances. Through participant observation, I learned about the process of popular theatre more thoroughly and accurately than by only using the interview method. Underlying power dynamics such as intricacies about who initiates what and how were exposed. The research process, as well, was much more enjoyable for both me and the research participants and non-intrusive as a result. For instance, when in South Africa, I learned from my mistakes in Namibia and chose not to ask for any interviews at first and just listened and learned. By 'backing off' and being humble, people came to accept me more, and even offered to be interviewed. One day, an activist sat down next to me on the floor and said, "So Heather, what do you want to know"? Near the end of my visit I interviewed two activists for approximately one hour each on tape. By this time they semi-trusted me and felt fairly relaxed talking with me. I learned much from those interviews.

In order to place this experience in a historical socio-political-economic and

¹ The original agreement with Bricks and Platform 2000 was that I would volunteer for their organization by helping to organize the International Council for Adult Education's (ICAE) popular theatre workshop in Rehoboth, Namibia in May 1991. I typed and took minutes, arranged meetings, booked venues, organized transportation and accommodation while keeping in contact with Dickson Mwanza in Toronto, Canada. For Platform 2000, I also helped create a play about rape, co-facilitated a women's drama workshop in Katutura and wrote an internal report for them while I was in Namibia. In South Africa, I typed play scripts for Action Workshop and helped to find financial support from Canadian organizations while back in Canada.

gendered analysis, I 'interviewed' and worked with as many community workers and university researchers as I could. I visited and sometimes worked with representatives from almost all of the Namibian women's groups. I also talked with other progressive artists in Namibia. In South Africa, I went to ANC youth league meetings with the women I lived with and attended mass democratic movement (MDM) rallies in downtown Cape Town. In this way, I gained a better and deeper understanding of the situation in each of the two areas I worked in.

As appropriate, I also conducted a short survey/questionnaire which was sent to those adult educators in Namibia who were being contacted regarding the ICAE workshop in May (which was then postponed until August 1991) (see Appendix "A"). Since I was mailing them information about the workshop, I asked the Bricks coordinator responsible for the event if I could also send a questionnaire which was then approved by him. He told me that most respondents would speak English, the language of his communication. Ten out of 32 forms were returned. The survey helped me understand further the nature of the interest in using drama for adult education in Namibia.

The final method of data collection was through the use of secondary sources. As well as books, academic and popular journals which were used, I conducted local newspaper searches while in Namibia and South Africa. Since popular theatre is usually performed publicly, newspapers reported about the event. This helped me, especially in Namibia, compile a historical account of the popular theatre plays.

Conclusion

During the research process for this project, I tried to use a feminist participatory research approach where the 'researched' could become increasingly empowered instead of exploited. Because of who I was and the situation I was in, this became very difficult and the very aspect of how I, as 'researcher', could even attempt to 'empower' anyone else or initiate an empowering process in such a short time, seemed uncertain. I constantly struggled with the dilemma of balancing my 'western' socialist-feminist values while striving to be 'open-minded' and sensitive to cultural differences. However, I did use a type of feminist participatory approach, albeit informally, as I was flexible and sensitive to the needs and wishes of the participants and 'gave up' a certain level of control over the research to them.

Although my increasingly flexible methodological approach enabled me to understand the popular theatre processes I witnessed better, I do not know to what extent the research process or the research product empowered (or will empower) the research participants. I do know, however, that my report contributes to an already ongoing self-evaluation the popular theatre groups themselves conduct in order to strengthen and further their work. A more 'popular' version of this thesis will be sent to the research participants.

CHAPTER FIVE

POPULAR THEATRE CASE STUDY #1: PLATFORM 2000, NAMIBIA

Popular theatre in Namibia has been organized within the Bricks Community Project based in Katutura. This chapter will explain the origins and objectives of Bricks and how and why this group chose to initiate the popular theatre sub-group, Platform 2000. Platform 2000's plays and drama workshops will then be explored using the theoretical frameworks of participatory development and liberating popular theatre outlined in chapters two and three.

5.1 Bricks Community Project

Reinforcing the development of SWAPO and other anti-apartheid forces like the CCN (Council of Churches of Namibia), a collection of semi-autonomous NGOs (non-governmental organizations) or CBOs (community based organizations), began to emerge in the early eighties in Katutura. One of the first of these CBOs in Namibia was the 'Bricks Community Project'. Bricks Community Project began in 1984 after fourteen "politicos, church workers and professionals" decided to divide and help the anti-apartheid network by joining various groups (Bricks Annual Report [BAR] 1986:12 and Interview A (see Appendix "B")). While some went to work with the trade union movement, others worked with civic groups or

student organizations (ibid). However, at the time, this move was controversial, since to be seen as 'anti-apartheid' was to be a member of SWAPO. Some claimed that people's organizations were confusing since if people began to improve their lives they would not work to end apartheid nor fight for liberation (BAR 1987:1). However, Bricks initiators argued that there was a need for grassroots organizing in alliance with SWAPO, yet separate from it:

Not one of us left our political organizations while working for Bricks. In fact, we saw and still see the two levels as complementing each other, bolstering the struggle, just as the relationship between the church and other levels of struggle are mutually reinforcing (ibid:3).

Subsequently, Bricks Community Project began after the first public meeting consisting of over 400 people in Katutura (ibid:2-3).

The group is situated in the so-called black township of Katutura and so-called coloured township of Khomasdal (where group members are from) in order to maintain their 'grassroots' connections. Existing as a small, non-hierarchical organization, the group helps other similar organizations to emerge, and greatly contributes to the process of local organizing and participatory development in the area.

Funding for Bricks mainly comes from international church-related organizations like Rue et Fraternité, Bisschopelijke Vastenactie, Christian Aid, and the World Council of Churches. However, groups like Oxfam and the Canadian Embassy in Windhoek have also donated money. In 1986 approximately 10-20% of the total funding was raised locally. Street braais (barbeques), raffles, dances,

rummage sales and t-shirt sales comprise local fundraising efforts (BAR 1986:23, BAR 1987:3 and BAR 1988:16).

Bricks began as an alternative grassroots newspaper organization whose newspaper covered Katutura community issues and other anti-apartheid events like no other newspaper in the area had before. Written in Afrikaans, English, Ovambo, Damaranama, Damara, (and other indigenous languages), the newspaper reached many more people than the expensive daily newspapers, which were written in only English and Afrikaans. Issues such as labour, education, community based organizations, health, advice, sport housing, political analysis, and more recently women's issues, are covered in the newspaper (BAR 1988:19 and Interview A). A Bricks member explains:

We identified the need for the people to have a mouthpiece. Something that could speak for them. Because then there wasn't a community newspaper which was covering the daily problems that people were facing, like youth delinquents. There was no newspaper covering unhealthy conditions, housing shortages, unemployment, and even problems which the workers were facing at their work (Interview B).

By 1991, Bricks was printing approximately 2500 copies ten times a year which were distributed by Bricks, other CBOs across Namibia and sent to subscribers (Interview A).

Developing from the Bricks Community Newspaper, the organization broadened its mandate and formed The Bricks Community Project in 1987 where six main aims and objectives were articulated:

(a) To publicise/popularise community based initiatives aimed at social justice and democracy;

- (b) To highlight issues not normally touched upon by the commercial press;
- (c) To foster unity among all age, language and regional groups;
- (d) To educate Namibians of all age and language groups (dialectically);
- (e) To combat social evils and damage in our community;
- (f) To provide training for Namibians involved in community organizations (BAR 1987:30).

Within its philosophy, Bricks encourages and helps the formation of other CBOs (BAR 1985:6). Bricks does not believe that duplication leads to "friction, animosity, lack of progress, etcetera" (BAR 1986:5). Members do not want Bricks to become too large where decisions and procedures would then become centralized (BAR 1988:17). They believe in the philosophy of "EACH ONE TEACH ONE" (BAR 1986:28). Educational workshops and seminars for community activists are organized by Bricks members, which help to transfer skills like writing, photography, typing, computers, and drawing. For example, in 1986, Bricks hosted the workshop "Development for Change", where community problem identification and the integration of theory and practice were discussed (BAR 1986:16-17).

Bricks' activities focus on the transfer of the means of production to exploited people. This includes the production of those items needed for organizing people. The Bricks Community Project, for instance, has its own dark room, silkscreening and poster printing equipment, and computer, to aid in this process. Various groups, as well as Bricks, make use of these facilities (BAR 1986:12).

Other activities of the Bricks Community Project include an agricultural project, oral history program, a resource centre and a cultural unit. Recently, a unit has been established to try to start an agricultural program in the Windhoek area. An

experimental-demonstration garden behind one of the Bricks' buildings exists as a beginning to this project. The objective is to try to get people to grow their own food on the plots where they live (Interview C and BAR 1986:21).

In contrast to earlier projects which had been directed towards the struggle for political independence, Bricks has now established programs which serve to reclaim Namibian people's history while working towards development. The Bricks' oral history project began in January 1990, attempting to uncover the histories of women and men who have lived and suffered under the apartheid regime. Many Namibians themselves do not know the history of their own people, and this project was implemented to help people learn more about themselves (ibid). A Bricks member explains the situation:

We are cut off from our history and we must get that historicity back. A people who are ahistoric are nothing. We've been manipulated and controlled by everybody in the world, and we don't have a sense of self, a sense of dignity, a sense of belonging and so on (Interview A).

The Bricks Oral History Project is trying to "create an authentic history" for Namibia (Namibian Nov.17,1990). The creation of a resource centre began in 1991 at the Bricks office in the Katutura Community Centre. Back copies of the Bricks newspaper, other Bricks publications (like Gael, a collection of township poems and stories about the struggle), magazines and books about Namibia, can be found there (ibid).

The Culture Unit of the Bricks Community Project began in 1986. The following section will outline how and why it became a part of Bricks as well as its aims and objectives.

5.1.1 Bricks Cultural Unit

Bricks Cultural Unit was formed in 1986 in order to use cultural art forms as a weapon against apartheid while helping to build indigenous cultural manifestations. Indigenous Namibian cultural art forms have been both destroyed and distorted by the patriarchal apartheid-capitalist system in Namibia (see Chapter One). The aims and objectives of the Bricks Cultural Unit are as follows:

- *to unify the different cultures in Namibia, and work towards a people's culture;
- *to use culture as an education tool, to improve the people's skills and talents;
- *to awake cultural resistance among the people in order to work towards a people's government;
- *to use culture for community organising and mobilization;
- *to reinforce the Bricks aims and objectives;
- *to use culture to combat crime by involving the youth in recreational programmes (Bricks Cultural Festival Memo 1990:2)

The cultural unit was founded because Bricks activists believed that culture in Namibia has been controlled by outsiders. Negative effects have resulted from "international monopoly capital designs which intensely promotes dependency akin to slavery" (Strauss,1989:6). They felt a cultural program "to free the colonial psyche" and liberate themselves "from mental slavery" was needed (BAR 1988:30). Bricks wanted a cultural project which would "give people back their real identity" (Interview B) but "move beyond confused 'traditionality'" which equates "the latter with ethnicity, tribalism and racism" (Strauss,1989:6). Cultural art forms could act as an educational tool. Bricks members felt that the community needed to understand their oppression so that a "change in attitude" would occur (BAR 1986:18). The program would facilitate "analytical thinking in the community"

(Interview B) so people could "start to question, not just accept" what was happening around them (Interview A). By producing their own art forms, the means of producing cultural manifestations would be demystified. Resistance culture as well as alternative culture could be created (Interview A). As explained in the 1986 Bricks Annual Report [BAR]:

This process [creation of cultural forms] can serve many purposes, inter alia - winning some lost dignity back, serve as a tool for fighting to stress and regain our rights, reinforce our solidarity and making us confident when we take the best from the past to build a better future (BAR 1986:22).

Since 1986, the Bricks Cultural Unit has promoted various performance and visual arts activities mainly within the Windhoek area. Since schools in the area did not offer visual art, the culture unit initiated The Uhuru Art School which began with a two-day art workshop for local school teachers in Katutura and Khomasdal. Teachers learned basic drawing and screenprinting skills while discussing the significance of teaching art at their schools (Namibian June 15,1989:6 and Observer June 17,1989:57). T-shirts, banners, posters, badges, and stickers are also created through the Bricks Cultural Unit (BAR 1988:31).

Dance classes have been offered through the Bricks Cultural Unit. Attended mainly by children, they usually occur twice a week at People's Place which is the centre for the Bricks Cultural Unit. At one point the numbers were as high as 80-100 youths coming to attend these free classes in Katutura (BAR 1989:11). One of the effects of this program has been the formation of the group 'Footloose' who "combine dance (fusion), acting and song in a very effective way which portrays

resistance art" (ibid).

In December of 1988, members of the Bricks Cultural Unit organized the first large grassroots cultural festival in Katutura. The following groups and artists "came together to present their art to the people": "Windhoek Players, Platform 2000, Action Workshop (from Cape Town, South Africa), MAPP (from Pietermaritzburg, South Africa), local poets, musicians, artists, and sculptors" (Bricks July/August 1990:12). Coordinating the National Arts Festival Committee and conferences like the International Council of Adult Education's (ICAE) Popular Theatre Workshop, also involves the Bricks Cultural Unit. Local bands use the rehearsal space at People's Place, while other events like poetry nights occur in this space.

As a result of the ever increasing importation of Western pop and other music into Namibia, the Bricks Cultural Unit has also helped to establish the Namibian Musicians Union. Without such a union Namibians are denied making a livelihood from music in Namibia. Accompanying the high cost of musical instruments, musicians are also exploited by music promoters who pay them a very low wage and deny them their rights. The union is beginning to help change the situation in Namibia through collective bargaining in order to "facilitate the development of Namibian music" (Musicians Union Memo, 1991:1 and Interview C). However, the most active and successful section of the Bricks Cultural Unit is the popular theatre group Platform 2000.

5.2 Platform 2000

In 1986, Platform 2000 began in Katutura as a community popular theatre organization. That year marked the visit of the South African popular theatre group, Action Workshop, whose trip was cut short by the police in Namibia, since the group was found by the police to be "a threat to the security of the state" (BAR 1986:32). However, their visits and discussions in Namibia helped to initiate the theatre process of the Bricks Cultural Unit such that popular theatre has become the most active and successful cultural art form strategy of the Bricks Community Project.

The Bricks initiators of Platform 2000 and present Platform activists have a specific rationale for choosing to use drama and popular theatre over other art forms. Firstly, Bricks activists knew that over 60% of the Namibian population was illiterate; consequently they wanted an alternative means of reaching the people (Interview A and BAR 1986:18). Many people in Namibia were not part of a 'reading culture' since oral traditions prevail. Secondly, drama was a medium which involved all of the senses in a much more integrated and direct way. It has the power to touch people much more fundamentally than the written word (Interview A). Thirdly, "anyone can perform drama" which makes it accessible to the general population of oppressed people (Bricks March/April Vol.3, No.2 1987:4). A Platform activist explains: "Most of the performances thus far held, most people join in spontaneously. This shows that almost anybody can act. It doesn't matter what age one is" (Bricks April/May Vol.3, No.3 1987:5).

Another key factor of popular theatre is its active nature. Whether through

creating the drama or as an active audience participant, popular drama is more of an active than passive experience. Bricks members chose this activity to help end the "dependency syndrome" since "people [often] wait uncritically for outside forces to come and free [them]" (Strauss,1989:6). They felt that drama helped people learn to "re-assert themselves" and find new vehicles of expression. This was important since the war and other oppressions had severely damaged people; subsequently, popular theatre was seen as a way of becoming "less tense", a kind of therapy: "this thing, it helps us to build, to unload, to create our intelligence, our possibilities" (Interview A).

A former Bricks co-ordinator explains one popular theatre process:

You go into a place like Arandis...where you have a group who are very self-conscious about their bodies for a lack of expressing themselves and after you have taken them through the basic steps they can then move their body, speak up, speak their mind, move, think. And after, they start to create plays (ibid).

Popular drama was also chosen by Bricks since it was a collective activity which could promote group creative processes and democratic structures. Bricks members argue that this is significant since the creation of alternative networks and structures in opposition to the dominant oppressive ideology of capitalist apartheid, must occur. Popular theatre was seen to be part of the creation of an alternative way of life: "We are seeing theatre as a process for development" (Interview B).

The popular theatre of Platform 2000 must also be understood within an analysis of the need for community work concerning this process. From a short written survey I sent to 32 adult education workers in Namibia, 10 returned the questionnaire. All ten adult education workers acknowledged that they either used

or wanted to use song, dance or drama in their programs. Two workers were actually using "spontaneous theatre" and "some plays", while eight did not but were "interested in learning how to incorporate people's art in [their] work" (see Appendix "A" for questionnaire). One respondent said that he would be interested in learning about drama "because it could be used to pose problems or important things to literacy participants for group discussion". Respondents identified "unemployed mothers" and "working women" as being the majority of participants in their adult education programs.

However, one of the main problems of using drama as a process for development is the lack of recognition, especially in some anti-apartheid activists' eyes, of its inherent value. Some people see it as "ruling class escapist entertainment" (BAR 1988:30). They do not understand the significance of healing and developing a person's intangible qualities. They do not see how developing self-confidence and self-esteem can be important to changing the dominant system or meeting a person's daily physical and material needs. Bricks is working hard to change this attitude.

Platform 2000 has developed a two prong strategy:

- 1) the production of plays within and without various organizational structures,
- 2) the organization and facilitation of drama workshops.

When producing the plays, Platform 2000 can have approximately 20 volunteers at any one time. The volunteer membership varies depending on the play produced. Members are drawn from the Katutura and Khomasdal high schools or

unemployed youth in Katutura. Both women and men comprise the group; however, mainly men receive the focus or dominant roles as can be seen in my later analysis of Platform 2000 plays. The full-time, paid members of Platform 2000, which has varied from three to five people, usually facilitate the drama workshops as well as help create and act in the Platform 2000 plays. Furthermore, these workers form part of the Bricks Cultural Unit and do other work for Bricks. To date, only one woman (Junior Facilitator/Administrative Assistant/Secretary) from Katutura, has been a full-time paid Platform 2000 activist. Another Platform 2000 activist lived outside Katutura and had some university level education, while still another activist was a recent high school graduate from Katutura.

Training of new drama workshop facilitators is also part of the Platform 2000 program. Training programs cover both practical and theoretical issues. Also, Platform 2000 activists visit different artistic institutions for further training. For instance, two male activists recently studied at the African Cultural Centre in Johannesburg, while another activist studied at The Community Arts Project (CAP) in Cape Town, South Africa (BAR,1988:10).

5.2.1 The Plays of Platform 2000

Platform 2000 creates and performs plays about topics of interest to themselves and to their community. A collective democratic process is attempted during the play creation and rehearsal procedure. These plays are then performed in so-called township and rural areas, in schools, community centres, outside under a tree or in a dried-up river bed. The following section describes and analyzes the

play creation process and content of the plays of Platform 2000 from 1987-1991 in order to understand to what extent the plays and the play creation process comprises liberating popular theatre and participatory development.

The incentive to create and perform a play can come from a community event or happening where mobilization is needed. For instance, one Platform 2000 play, in 1991, was created for a performance for the May Day assembly at a large soccer stadium in Katutura. Another was developed to be performed for the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) anniversary celebrations at the Katutura Community Centre (April 21, 1991). Other reasons for beginning the play creation process relate to an upcoming workshop session in Katutura or in a more rural community. Platform 2000 plays have been performed at these drama workshops which helps to show workshop participants how drama can be used (Bricks Vol.4, No.8, November 1988:3). The play creation process may also emerge from the desire to express opinions about a particular topic or problem in the community. For instance, the idea for the play "In the Army" about forced army conscription in Namibia came from a few young men in Katutura who felt strongly about the topic. A Bricks member explains: "[they] came into our office and performed a very critical play on forced conscription. We afterwards 'developed' the play in a workshop situation through critical evaluation and giving suggestions for 'improvement'" (BAR 1987:24). Therefore, Platform 2000 plays are not created in the abstract, but initiate from interactions with the Katutura community, from a need to express a certain problem either within or without an 'event' framework.

The process of creating a play from 'scratch' involves several different stages.

The 1988 Bricks Annual Report discusses this process:

- (a) We want to do a play. Brainstorm sessions follow and tentative topics are chosen;
- (b) Activists go into the community gathering information around the topic;
- (c) This information is sifted and reworked into a theme;
- (d) Another excursion into the community follows on a more critical level;
- (e) With this information the group writes the play, performs, gets again input from the community, uses the info, for workshops etcetera (BAR 1988:22).

Information gathering can take several forms. Sometimes research is done by going into a community like Katutura and conducting "door to door interviews" or by asking people questions in the street (Bricks Memo (Play Creating Process),n.d.:1).

When in Namibia, I was part of a process of creating the play "Presumed Guilty". This play was created about the problem of rape. After a brainstorm session to choose a topic, activists learned about the problem of rape through nonformally structured interviews with women from the sexual assault centre, asking people questions sporadically on the streets of Katutura, and from newspaper and article searches. The information collected was then displayed on large poster paper so that the group could work collectively with the information. Information about rape and violence against women was synthesized into two categories: the myth about rape, and how the play would defy this myth. After a group discussion session (with myself, one female and three male Platform 2000 activists), a synopsis was created by one individual which was later improvized by the group. After this initial improvization, one individual synthesized the sketch into written dialogue. The play "Presumed

Guilty" had then taken shape.

Plays can also change as they are performed before a live audience. In the case of the 1988 Platform 2000 play, "Bollie and His 'Happy' Family", the actors had decided to create the play without specific solutions to the problems experienced by the characters in their family situation. However this "open ended play" was not accepted generally by the audience (Bricks Vol.4 No.8, November 1988:3). A Platform 2000 member explained that people wanted "solutions to [the] objective reflection of our social reality" (ibid). Consequently, through an interactive process with the audience, the actors changed the play so that solutions were offered to the problems of job insecurity, unwanted pregnancy and family life conflict (ibid).

Thus, the play creation process does not occur separately from interactions with the Katutura community but firmly within 'the community'. In this way, Platform 2000 attempts to be sensitive to the needs and desires of its community.

The topics which have been chosen by Platform 2000 activists to create plays cover a broad range of issues which directly affect the Katutura community. The following section outlines and analyzes those topics which have been chosen, in order to understand better whose problems they are and the significance or impact of a Platform 2000 play concerning a particular issue. The section will be structured according to the following topics: plays concerning government policies, the socio-economic and environmental situation, issues resulting from the oppression of women, and the reclaiming of Namibia's history.

Firstly, there have been Platform 2000 plays about issues concerning

government policy and restrictions. The 1987 Platform 2000 play "In the Army" was created about the problem of forced conscription in Namibia. All eligible men over 18, during that time, were officially required by the South African regime to register for army duty either within Namibia or in southern Angola. This would mean that Namibian men would be fighting against other Namibian men involved in PLAN or the SWAPO defence section. "In the Army" expressed ideas against forced conscription (Bricks Vol.4, No.8, November 1988:3). In 1990, another play, "The Bars", was about the "atrocious conditions of Namibia's prisoners" (Observer July 7,1990:56). The play criticized the regime's treatment of political and non-political prisoners in Namibia, especially Windhoek jails (ibid). The 1988 Platform 2000 play, "Winter in Namibia", the 1989-90 play/mime "Turning Tables" and "Namibia 1990 In Pictures - The Year of Living Dangerously", are all political commentaries about Namibian government policy at the time of their creation. "Turning Tables" deals with "issues of decaying colonialism" and "warnings of the pitfalls of corruption" within the newly elected Namibian administration (BAR 1989:10). "Namibia 1990 In Pictures" comprises scenes which show the wealth of the independence celebrations while people are starving in Namibia, the contradiction of the new administration officially 'receiving' the Spaniards who have exploited Namibian waters for many years, ridicules the Namibian government's policy of 'reconciliation' and talks about the attempted Namibian coup of August 1990 (by the CIA and the South Africans) ("Namibia 1990 In Pictures"). Further children are described as dying in northern Namibia from old bombs which littered the ground from the war. A song in the play,

"Clean Up The North" exemplified this problem (ibid).

Problems concerning the socio-economic and environmental crisis are also examined in Platform 2000 plays. The problem of 'township' crime and gang violence arises in the 1989 play "Your Things and the One that Walks Away (Sax un En! Guk-hoes)" and "Namibia 1990 In Pictures". In 1990, Platform 2000 produced "The AIDS Play" about this problem. Growing food in your yard or food self-sufficiency was also a theme of the first year Independence celebrations of March 1991 where Platform 2000 was involved in a street theatre presentation in Katutura. Working conditions at the mines and factories have been expressed in such plays as the one which was performed at the May Day Celebrations in Katutura of 1991, the short 'gumboot' dancing sketch of 1987, and the dramatization of the poem "Our Labour. Your Wealth" in 1991. Job insecurity was also a theme in the play "Bollie and His 'Happy' Family" (Bricks Vol.4 No.8, November 1988:3). Worker-Owner collaboration of the 1990 May Day celebrations was criticized in the play "Namibia In Pictures".

Problems concerning the oppression of women have also been dramatized by Platform 2000. The 1988 play "Bollie and His 'Happy' Family" develops issues related to family life conflict and unwanted pregnancy (Bricks Vol.4, No.8, November 1988:3). "Presumed Guilty", a play explaining a situation whereby a woman's lover's friend rapes her, was created in 1991 during my visit. The play/mime "Turning Tables" also shows that although the 'tables have been turned' and Namibians are now in political control of Namibia, it suggests that men are still oppressing women (BAR 1989:10 and Namibian March 20,1990:47). As well, poems about 'Mother Africa' have

been dramatized which describe and value the contribution of women (YWCA Anniversary Celebrations, Katutura, 1991).

Finally, Platform 2000 has tried to reclaim Namibia's history by retelling history in order to highlight and legitimize Namibian resistance. To mark political independence in March of 1990, the play/presentation "Matutura" (meaning 'I want to go there - I want to be there' or the opposite of Katutura which means 'a place I don't want to be'), told the story of the history of dominance and resistance in Namibia. One actor in the play describes one of the sketches: "about the missionaries who came to Namibia in the early days of colonialism. They came with Bibles in their hands and left us with alcohol in ours" (Namibian March 27, 1990:6).

In order to understand the significance of these plays two questions need to be asked: 1) who benefits from a public dramatization of the issues chosen and 2) what impact do these plays have on their audiences, within the community and related to the popular theatre methodology? The following section will attempt to explore these questions.

Within Namibia, under harsh restrictions and constraints that capitalist-patriarchal apartheid has inflicted upon the region, a voice through drama for those who have been oppressed by this system is very significant indeed. The topics which have been dramatized by Platform 2000 mainly reflect the problems which many people disadvantaged by the system have experienced. Issues which directly affect those men working in the mines or in the factories have been dramatized ('Our Labour, Your Wealth', gumboot dancers, May Day sketches). A critical political

commentary which has expressed the interests of the oppressed has also been dramatized through Platform 2000 plays (ie. "Namibia 1990-In Pictures). However, more women-based issues have not been an integral part of Platform 2000's plays. Although the play about rape, "Presumed Guilty", was created while I was in Namibia, and unwanted pregnancy and family life problems were a part of the play 'Bollie and His "Happy" Family', women's status in society and, for instance, the problems they face at their waged work, (such as the 'double' or 'triple' shift of working at home, at the job and community organizing) have not been a part of the Platform 2000 play topics. Perhaps this fact has to do with the lack of equal female participation in the creation of these plays. Although women or girls are often part of the Platform 2000 volunteer collective, females seldom play key characters or actors in the plays themselves. Stories do not develop around female lead characters or women's lives. Consequently, 'black' and 'coloured' marginalized men have their problems publicized more than the equivalent women do. However a change is emerging as can be seen in the play "Turning Tables" which addresses the issue of women's liberation and the dramatization of poems like "Mama Africa" which values women's work. Issues about disabilities, gay, bi-sexuals and lesbian issues are also not integrated into the Platform 2000 plays.

The impact of Platform 2000's plays in the Katutura community and elsewhere in Namibia is very significant as it presents an alternative to mainstream television and radio which mainly air Western artists and cultural manifestations. Consequently, audience members usually enjoy what they watch since they identify with the actors,

situation, problem and setting.

The audience usually reacts positively to Platform 2000's plays through direct involvement or an expression of their enjoyment. For instance, the play "Bollie and His 'Happy' Family" caused a very emotional reaction from the audience, and the sketch "Die Standbeeld" "had the audience in stitches" before the play "In The Army" (Bricks Vol.4, No.8, November 1988:3). The only negative factor relating to the community impact of the Platform 2000 plays are the occasional small attendance figures. It seems that if a play is not connected to a larger organizational structure, for instance a YWCA anniversary celebration or a May Day rally, the attendance is poor. Transportation problems also hinder play attendance (BAR 1988:31).

Collectively created Platform 2000 plays form another part of Platform 2000's popular theatre strategy. These plays have addressed such issues as: critical analysis of government policies, crime and gangs, AIDS, food self-sufficiency, mine and factory working conditions for men, job security, worker-owner collaboration, unwanted pregnancy, rape, (in general) the oppression of women, and Namibian resistance.

5.2.2 The Workshops of Platform 2000

The other part of Platform 2000's work is the facilitation of drama workshops. In both rural and urban locations, Platform 2000 has organized and held drama workshops which teach drama skills as well as organizing and self-education procedures. The following section will describe and analyze the drama workshops of Platform 2000. After outlining the aim and objective of Platform 2000's workshops, I will describe the historical evolution of the workshops, including with whom and

where the workshops occurred. A thorough exploration of the workshop process will be given with particular examples from my research experience in 1991. Finally, the drama workshop's products will be analyzed before the general impact of Platform 2000's workshops is discussed.

Although the general aims of the Bricks Cultural Unit and Platform 2000 are incorporated, the specific objective of the drama workshops is to "take theatre to the people and make it theirs" (Bricks memo: 'Culture as Purposes for Decolonisation of the Mind' n.d.:3). The purpose of the workshop is articulated further in the following statement:

The name of the unit indicates its purpose and aim; that by the year 2000 each community in Namibia will have a community theatre platform to address their problems. This group of activists work within impoverished and oppressed communities around the country, disseminating theatrical and organisational skills to facilitate the establishment and development of community theatre groups (Platform 2000 Project Proposal, 1991).

Drama workshops are a means of transferring drama skills to the workshop participants where the long term goal is the establishment of a community theatre group in the particular geographical area of the workshop. Platform 2000 facilitators argue that a community theatre group is valuable since it acts as a forum for the expression and analysis of community opinions and experiences about their particular problems. Through this process, community development plans can become formulated in a very contextualized and specific way. Consequently, it is a Platform 2000 objective to use drama as a means to inspire workshop participants, in order that they will create organizational structures for their community theatre group (ie.

chairperson, treasurer, secretary ...) and possibly help the community in development planning.

The nature of Platform 2000's drama workshops has changed over time from working only with youth using a one or two-day workshop format, to workshops with a variety of people for a longer period of time. During the beginning of this process Platform 2000 did not have enough full-time staff to facilitate workshops both outside and inside Katutura at the same time. However, during my stay, ongoing workshops in Katutura were able to continue with one staff member, while two other drama activists travelled to other locations to conduct workshops outside of Katutura and the Windhoek area.

Platform 2000 drama workshops facilitated outside Katutura have occurred in the south, south-west and central-west areas of Namibia (see Appendix "C" for a list of workshops, locations and plays created). Initially, workshops facilitated outside Katutura were one or two days in length and were attended mainly by students. For instance, the first drama workshop occurred in Arandis, Namibia, a mining town on the west coast of Namibia privately constructed for the mine workers of the Rossing Uranium Mine, March 12-15, 1987. The workshop was organized through the local NANSO (National Association of Namibian Students Organization) branch and occurred for one full day with students. However, by 1989, during a trip to south Namibia, Platform 2000 was also working with "pensioners", employed adults and teachers with the help an activist from Action Workshop (George, 1989:3), as well as students. By my visit in 1991, activists at Platform 2000 had developed a one-week

drama workshop which they conducted with workers, students, teachers and the formally unemployed in the central and western parts of Namibia, while ongoing once and twice a week workshops were occurring in Katutura. Thus, Platform 2000 activists had begun to reach many different types of black Namibians for longer periods of time with their drama workshops.

Workshop Products

The products of Platform 2000's drama workshops are the exercises, short and long sketches, and plays which the workshop participants create themselves. From individual and group 'human statues', to very intricate and complex plays, these drama products reflect the participants' everyday reality and how they envision and grapple with the situations and problems they face. The following section will provide a description and analysis of the workshop play themes within four general categories:

- 1) issues related to women's oppression,
- 2) class and related socio-economic oppression,
- 3) race, age and environmental problems,
- 4) cultural identity themes.

All but one of the plays examined integrated issues related to women's oppression. In general, 'women's' direct concerns regarding mothers' struggles (being 'trapped' in the home, the power dynamics with spouses, struggling alone) (Arandis 1991), unplanned and/or teenage pregnancy (Arandis 1987, Outjo 1991, MLH 1991, Katutura 1991), sexual discrimination at school (specifically between male teachers

and female students) and in the home (Women 1991, MLH 1991, Arandis 1991), and violence against women (Women 1991, Okombahe 1991), were addressed.

Secondly, problems directly associated with apartheid-capitalism were also addressed in the workshop plays. Unemployment (Arandis 1987, Rehoboth 1991), the oppressive working conditions of domestic workers (Rehoboth 1991) and mine workers (Arandis 1991), urban over-crowding, malnutrition, high food prices, and housing shortages (Katutura 1991), were themes of the workshop plays.

The topic which reoccurred the most in the workshop plays was the problem of alcoholism. Choosing to create a play concerning alcoholism occurred with workshop participants from rural and more urban areas, women and men, young and old. This continues to be a widespread problem (Pomuti and Eiseb, 1990). For instance, plays from the workshops at Arandis 1987, MLH 1990, Outjo 1991, all covered the problems of alcoholism. An Okombahe 1991 play described a girl who goes to the hospital because of liver problems due to drinking. At MLH in 1991 a boy gets caught drinking and driving a stolen car in a workshop play. The husband is described as "always drinking" in the 1991 Arandis play. As well, the Rehoboth 1991 workshop play dramatizes how a woman's drinking friend is murdered.

Theft (Arandis 1991, MLH 1991, Rehoboth 1991, Katutura 1991), murder (Rehoboth 1991) and corruption (Arandis 1987) were also problems which were dramatized within the workshops.

Thirdly, issues concerning discrimination based on ethnicity and age, and environmental destruction were integrated into workshop plays. At Outjo (1991),

school children created a play expressing their frustrations about trying to integrate into a formerly all white school and the racism they faced, while school teachers created a play which dealt with tribalism and community gossiping. Of course, other socio-economic problems (over-crowding, housing shortage, malnutrition) are also related to racial oppression in Namibia (Katutura 1991). The issue of poor pensions for the elderly was also addressed in the workshop play at Outjo 1991, while environmental destruction was discussed in the student's street theatre play (Katutura 1991).

The final issue which was explored during a Platform 2000 drama workshop was the topic of witchcraft (see Appendix "C" for full description) (Okombahe 1991). As an outsider, this play is difficult to analyze because of my lack of 'insider' knowledge. However, the extent to which 'women's' power or status is repressed as a result of naming the woman/witch as an evil which must be killed, needs to be questioned. Why did the play not address the reasons for the witch's behaviour? Why is she portrayed as being inherently evil? Why is the man/witchdoctor the hero of the story? The impact of how this play re-roots the Okombahe community in its 'collective' past, as opposed to dominant cultural themes which constantly impose themselves upon the community, is significant within the consideration of the perpetuation of women's oppression.

The workshop play products created largely depended on who the workshop incorporated. For instance, if workshop participants were domestic workers, the lives of domestic workers were dramatized.

Workshop Process

In order to understand further the significance of the drama workshops of Platform 2000, the workshop process needs to be analyzed. The following section will be divided into four parts: an analysis of the initial phase of the workshop process, an exploration of who is maintaining control throughout the process, a discussion concerning democratic group processes, and remarks about performance and evaluation.

For the majority of the drama workshops, Platform 2000 themselves initiated the process. By writing to church groups, schools, making arrangements with NANSO, and adult education groups like the Rossing Adult Education organization about their drama workshop idea, Platform 2000 activists would create both a workshop program and schedule, which they would then attempt to find funding for from various, mostly church-based European organizations. Within Katutura, however, Platform 2000 has been approached by various schools about conducting drama workshops.

Once at the workshop location, however, the initial organizing which the hosting group had promised was often unfulfilled. This meant that Platform activists had to spend additional time trying to organize their participants to come to a particular location at a specific time to begin the sessions. For instance, in Okombahe during 1991, I and two Platform activists had to drive around the village telling people about a drama workshop they could be involved in since preliminary organizing promised by the local pastor did not occur.

As well, during the initial phase of the drama workshop, Platform 2000

activists were often asked to give lengthy explanations concerning the reasons why they were giving the workshop. This request from the participants can be understood given the former South African government's recent policy of WHAM (Winning the Hearts and Minds). Phony 'development' programs have been initiated in Katutura and throughout Namibia which only serve to placate residents. For instance, a 'youth program' in Katutura runs American television the entire day.

Built into the drama workshop program, however, Platform 2000 does explain each exercise and step of the workshop to the participants. They are very concerned that participants understand the purpose of each activity in order that they are not perpetuating a process where participants just 'blindly' accept what an authority figure tells them.

Ensuring equal participation of women and men (or boys and girls) by attempting to integrate everyone equally during workshops, varies. For instance, although initially the majority of the group was comprised of men in Okombahe, as the workshops progressed, an increasing number of women appeared until, during one workshop, two-thirds of the approximately twenty participants were women. The student workshops were also mainly comprised of a mixed-gender group (MLH 1991, Katutura 1991, Arandis 1991). However, often other mainly female groups were not organized for drama workshops. For instance, although both girls and boys comprised the student group in Arandis (1991), the other group which participated in a drama workshop were male mine workers. Adult women did not form part of a drama workshop. In Rehoboth (1991), however, the majority of the drama participants were

women. As well, I helped to facilitate a women-only drama workshop in Katutura during my stay.

Platform 2000 activists are also sensitive to the age and class characteristics of the workshop participants. If they are working with an adult group, they are sensitive not to treat the participants the way they would treat a group of younger people. Class differences also change the way Platform 2000 activists work with a group. For instance, during the workshops at Okombahe and MLH (which are situated close to each other), it was suggested that Platform 2000 activists facilitate the linking of these two drama groups so that each group could help the other. However, Platform 2000 activists were sensitive enough to understand that because MLH students were more 'middle' class than the Okombahe residents, this would probably not work. Instead, Platform 2000 activists decided to try to arrange links between a student drama group from the nearby public school and the Okombahe adult group.

However, Platform 2000 activists were less sensitive to gender differences. For instance, during a drama exercise at a student workshop in Katutura 1991, one student chose to be the 'predator' while the other was the 'victim'. In every student pair, the male student was the 'predator' while the female was the 'victim', thus reinforcing oppressive gender stereotypes. Platform 2000 activists were also not sensitive to differences in sexual orientation while they were more sensitive to differently abled participants.

During most of the drama workshops that I witnessed, the amount of control

the participants acquired concerning the workshop process increased over time. Although Platform 2000 activists created the workshop content and process alone, some drama exercises (for instance improvizations) would progress from the participants working with a given theme, to the participants being able to choose their own theme. Problem identification and analysis occurred with group brainstorming followed by clarification and discussion sessions. Facilitators would guide the discussion by asking questions such as: "what I want to know is exactly how does this happen?" (Platform 2000 activist, MLH 1991) and other questions which would challenge the participants to understand the issues in more depth, but would not control this process. Logistics concerning time, place and workshop length were constantly open to negotiation between the workshop participants and the facilitators. The facilitators repeatedly demonstrated their flexibility concerning logistical arrangements, structuring the workshops to fit the participants' schedules while listening to their concerns. Consequently, control moved from the facilitator to the participants, albeit with the facilitator ultimately deciding when and how much control he allowed the participants to have.

Thirdly, democratic group processes including decision-making were encouraged and fostered during the drama workshops. Constructive criticism of each sub-group's sketch by other drama workshop participants helped this process. Participants were encouraged to comment on drama style, presentation, structure and substance, and not to focus on individuals in the groups. Drama workshop groups were also encouraged to create their own group structures, although it was uncertain

whether any groups had maintained these structures after the Platform 2000 facilitators had left. To try to ascertain this, I did a follow-up trip on my own to Okombahe one month after the workshop had occurred where I found a very stagnant group.

Finally, workshop plays were sometimes, but not always, performed for the public or 'outsiders' to the drama creation process. Sometimes groups were divided and plays were performed only for other workshop participants. Workshop evaluation is supposed to be part of the Platform 2000 workshop process. However, often there is not enough time for in-depth evaluations since facilitators are required to move on to the next workshop venue. Usually, however, some form of evaluation did occur.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the case study of Platform 2000, the popular theatre group of Namibia, in order to understand to what extent this group's strategy comprises a liberating and participatory initiative (as defined in chapters two and three). Originating from within the organizational structures of Bricks Community Project, Platform 2000's popular theatre became the cultural art form and organizing strategy chosen by Bricks in order to facilitate community development and liberation. By creating their own plays based on community problems and a critique of government policies, while facilitating drama workshops for students, employed and unemployed adults in Katutura and other Namibian communities, Platform 2000 has begun to develop a successful popular theatre initiative.

Platform 2000 drama workshops have occurred in Namibia from 1987-1991. Although workshops have involved mainly students, recent workshops (1991) have also involved teachers, unemployed women and men, and formally employed people (ie. domestic and mine workers). As well, Platform 2000 workshops have begun to occur outside Katutura in the central-west, west and southern sections of Namibia. Plans are being created to conduct workshops in the north and east areas as well. Although the workshops began for one or two days in length, most workshops are now at least one week long with many on-going workshops occurring in Katutura with high school students. Depending upon who comprises the workshop group, the topics or themes from which the group decides to create a play or sketch, will vary, however, as participation theory suggests, what is significant is that the drama workshops do occur with 'oppressed' communities inside Namibia.

The drama workshop is a continuum which moves from facilitator to participant control. Participants gain more control over the workshop process over time. However, the facilitator still ultimately decides when and how much control the participants can have. The facilitator makes this decision depending mainly on the age, class and gender of the participants. However, the logistics of the workshop, when and where to meet and for how long, is under the participants' control. Facilitators have learned that they must be flexible in order to fit into the participants' lives or participants will not come to the workshops. Therefore, the drama workshops are mostly participant controlled as participation theory suggests, with total participant control being a goal of Platform facilitators.

Subsequently, based on the previous analysis, I argue that the plays of Platform 2000 fall within 'community development popular theatre' since they involve the audience in a very limited way or what has been termed 'participation on cue' (see section 3.4.2 in chapter three). This category best suits Platform 2000's plays because the play creators are not from outside an 'oppressed' community but from within it except in the cases where women have not been adequately integrated. The plays of Platform 2000 do not qualify as 'the well-made play' popular theatre variety as discussed in section 3.4.1 because of their interconnectedness to 'oppressed' communities. However, the play creation process for Platform 2000 plays does comprise liberating popular theatre (as discussed in section 3.4.3) since the actors share control of the play creation process and work collectively around issues concerning their communities. Similarly, Platform 2000's workshops are working towards liberating popular theatre. The workshop participants increasingly control the creative process and the drama product, which also serves to develop local cultural art forms. Although organization building is limited partly due to insufficient time for the workshop process, since the workshops outside Katutura have been too short to facilitate the development of autonomous community theatre groups, on-going workshops do occur in Katutura with students and there is beginning to be some follow-up work done with former workshop groups (ie. the return to MLH in 1991 after an initial workshop in 1990). Therefore, liberating popular theatre is gradually occurring as different people and different areas in Namibia are included in the drama workshop process over a longer period of time. To develop further the

analysis of popular theatre, the Western Cape group, Action Workshop will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

POPULAR THEATRE CASE STUDY #2: ACTION WORKSHOP, SOUTH AFRICA

One of the more progressive community popular theatre groups in the Western Cape region of South Africa is Action Workshop (AW). Since its beginnings in 1984, AW has been steadily working to create critical plays and constructive drama workshops with and for those people most oppressed by the exploitative system in South Africa. AW activists call themselves "a progressive community theatre resource organisation" (George, 1991:1).

The following section will give a historical background of AW with an explanation of its rationale and objectives. In relation to the popular theatre theoretical framework and participation theory described in chapters two and three, AW's plays and workshops will then be explored which will be followed by an analysis of the group's impact.

6.1 Action Workshop: A History

AW originated from the need to popularize the campaign against the 1984 racist whites-only elections in South Africa. The United Democratic Front (UDF) initiated the workshopping of a play by an informal group of activists and actors. The play "Time to Act", which ended with requests to sign a petition against the election,

was the result. This play toured the so-called townships and rural areas of the Western Cape and was so successful "that the coordinators of the production saw the need for a full progressive community theatre organisation that could transfer skills in the townships of the Western Cape region" (George,1991:1).

Consequently, AW began. Operating out of a member's house in 1985-1986, (and like the strategy of Platform 2000 which has been previously discussed), AW's strategy was and still is twofold: to create critical and educational plays, and to facilitate the training of new drama activists using workshops which empower people through drama.

In 1985, AW's main objective was to popularize the activities and views of the emerging progressive organizations in South Africa like the UDF and the ANC through original hard-hitting slogan-driven plays (Action Workshop report,n.d.). The physical repercussions of this objective can be derived from the following statement of an AW member:

Often we were in danger of physical harm. Often we had to scale school fences, or perform with armoured vehicles in close proximity, firing teargas and rubber bullets at students. Many times police video units filmed us (once from a helicopter). We were rather irritated by the noise but continued the performance (George,1991:1).

By 1986, as a result of the continuing repression by the state, AW members argued that it seemed as though cultural organizing was the only form of political work tolerated by the state. However, this was not always the case. For instance, a major cultural event organized by AW, 'Towards a People's Culture' Festival, was banned by the government under Emergency regulations. This event was to include

many different cultural organizations from the Western Cape. Although the actual festival itself was banned, the process of organizing such an event was not in vain.

The significance of the organizational process is explained as follows:

Growing out of an intense involvement in the banned Arts Festival '86 on the part of Action Workshop with other cultural groupings and representatives from various branches of CAYCO (Cape Youth Congress), PCS (People's Creative Space) filled an important gap in the cultural struggle as it served to focus attention on the necessity of the organisation and unity of cultural workers alongside political activists, for the formation of a strong and unified People's Culture (The Festival Document, Salt River, 1986).

Through this process, AW became better known in the area as serious political cultural workers.

In 1986, as well, AW added to their play productions and began conducting drama workshops. The first workshop AW facilitated was held in Katutura, Namibia to help begin the group Platform 2000. While in Namibia Action Workshop members were also arrested and deported before they were able to finish all of their intended program (Interview A, See Appendix "B").

AW, by 1987, had identified itself as the only progressive theatre group working in the Cape Flats and felt a need to duplicate itself in order to ensure "the long term continuity of [their] work" (George, 1991:2). As well as community drama workshops for different organizations, AW conducted a training course in order to attract new members as part of its theatre strategy.

Therefore, AW developed as a drama group from within the structures of the MDM in the Western Cape. Before drama workshops were a part of their program, overt political plays created for specific didactic purposes occurred.

Instead of originating from outside the community like more traditional 'development' theory implies, those who work as members of AW and the workshop participants are from 'working class' and other groups disadvantaged by the socio-economic system in the Western Cape area (Interview A). In 1991 there were seven part-time paid members of AW who came from black and coloured working class homes with the exception of one white woman. Three were women and four were men approximately aged 19-28. Three AW members were university educated, while the others had taken related training courses through AW or through other agencies in the area. Although AW facilitators may not come from the same specific so-called township as the groups they may be workshopping with, they usually come from similar neighbourhoods and shaping experiences as the workshop participants. In 1988 an education coordinator was appointed which added to the list of portfolios of AW's paid staff (See Appendix "D").

Before 1989-90, AW was accountable to a board of trustees comprised of older political activists within the MDM in South Africa. During general membership meetings, this board would assess and direct AW. However, many AW members felt that this approach was too 'top-down' and anti-democratic. Since then, AW's paid staff has been directly responsible to its membership which discusses and evaluates AW's progress during general meetings with its 20-30 volunteer and 7 paid membership (Interview B). International funders also add to AW's accountability process. Yearly reports are sent to donors, who are mainly Scandinavian church and other non-governmental groups (ibid).

Staff use democratic participatory methods of working and discussing during any group meetings or play production sessions. Attention to democratic processes was very evident during my time at AW, as will be discussed later.

6.2 The Aims of Action Workshop

Since its inception, AW has attempted to meet nine main aims and objectives in their work. They are expressed as follows in an Action Workshop document:

- 1.1 Drama is an educating tool. We need reflection on community struggles and attempt to find ways of solving problems
- 1.2 Promote mass-based organizations and unions with the development of people's theatre and culture in the Western Cape
- 1.3 Raise the quality of people's theatre through research, experimentation, training and facilitate the development of our people's creative space and culture in the Western Cape
- 1.4 Develop through drama a critical thinking amongst the audience and drama workers
- 1.5 Raise the awareness of drama as an accessible tool for raising consciousness and critical thought
- 1.6 Working towards unity between progressive drama groups and train progressives regionally and nationally
- 1.7 Liaising with other drama groups in the Western Cape
- 1.8 Attempting to establish a non-racist, non-sexist, non-exploitative and democratic method of working
- 1.9 To assist and initiate the process of creating platforms through which people can share problems relating to theatre work and cultural organisation (Action Workshop Annual Report, 1991a).

AW, like Platform 2000, attempts to use drama as both a means for development and liberation and as an end in itself as participation theory suggests. The following section will describe how AW explains its basic rationale and philosophy.

Members of AW argue that these aims and objectives originate from the

broader aims from within the MDM for the development of cultural art forms in South Africa. Those who are oppressed need to create cultural art forms in order that they may be able to express their "frustrations, ideals and aspirations" (Arts Festival Document, 1986). By creating drama, participants are to "build confidence, stimulate creativity and make aware the importance of drama as a tool to communicate their reality" (AW Children's Workshop Report, 1990). Through the drama creation process, people learn that they are not alone with their problems. By describing stories about specific problems participants have experienced, a "collective feeling" emerges where people can then find ways of dealing with the problem through strategies of struggle (Interview C). Drama is then functioning as a means for development when the emphasis is on the drama creation process.

Part of the aim of the drama product is to work towards creating a national identity. As one AW member explains, "apartheid has created a lot of hang-ups and freak-outs in our heads as South Africans...we need to use theatre for nation building" (Interview A). Drama helps to "recapture the spirit of community which has been broken by forced removals and cultural imperialism" (Arts Syllabus, 1987:20).

However, both the process of drama creation and the drama product should challenge "the status quo" and expose the lies "and the liars telling them", thus promoting a critical analysis (George, 1991:1). This informal means of education is most effective, however, when it incorporates cathartic "comedy and laughter" (ibid).

The other main objective of AW stems from their deep commitment to the betterment of living conditions of those oppressed by the South African socio-

economic system. AW hopes that by integrating itself within oppressed communities and integrating members from those communities, it can work towards the creation of democratic structures of organizing and social change where a democratic tradition of "discussion and debate" ensues (AW report,1991). In other words, AW sees itself as working towards liberating participatory development.

6.3 The Plays of Action Workshop

The creation of plays is a crucial component of AW's strategy. The following section will discuss how and why plays are created with an analysis of the content and impact of AW's plays as related to the popular theatre typology discussed in chapter three.

AW produces plays since they feel that it is one of their only "means of propaganda" against the vast and pervasive amount of state rhetoric which dominates the airwaves, televisions, newspapers and theatres (AW report,1990). AW is trying to create an alternative to art forms of the dominant culture without creating "art for art's sake" (AW report,1989). As one member expressed the situation, "we must demonstrate that socially conscious art that aesthetically sets standards is possible" (ibid). Plays are often meant to excite people "to use theatre acting as a stimulus towards workshops" (AW report,1990). Members of AW hope that their plays foster active learning instead of "parrot fashioned learning" by challenging people to think for themselves and by involving the audience (AW report,1991a).

Play topics are usually based on requests from other organizations within the

MDM (AW report,1989 and Interview B). For instance, the 1991 play "Forces at Play" was based on a request to popularize the call for a constituent assembly (AW report,1991).

Plays are created through discussions and improvizations by AW members. Although one member will then usually script the play, plays change and develop through the democratic rehearsal process.

The play creation process is becoming increasingly democratic and fully integrative of many AW members. For instance, during "Forces at Play", the full AW membership at the annual general meeting previewed and constructively criticized the play. After this process the play was rewritten and then showed again to a few 'outside eyes' who also constructively criticized it. Thus it was reworked again (ibid).

Play direction, the 'outside eye' or facilitator, is allocated to different people each play. When I was in Cape Town I observed that a new female AW member was the facilitator for 'Forces at Play' which gave her the experience and ability to help shape the final product. Lengthy negotiations and well-developed democratic processes inform the play creation process.

Older AW plays were created utilizing more of an 'agitation propaganda' style. Agitation propaganda is a theatrical style which sends a strong and simple message to the audience. Using "common struggle slogans" like 'down with gutter education', feelings are meant to be evoked from the audience (Interview C). However since 1989, AW has attempted to create plays which are much more intricate and complex than simple agitation propoganda. They wanted to create "more than two-dimensional

characters" in their plays by using "imaginative theatrical techniques" like variations and adaptations of the following drama styles: Jamaican rap, Brecht's style of alienation, Gorbansky, cabaret style, and mock television jingles (Interview A and AW report, 1989). However, AW's drama style focuses on the class experience of the "worker/player instead of emphasizing on the ability to portray characters" (AW report, 1991b:4). The development away from just strictly agitation propaganda "has not made our work any less political" (AW Annual report, 1991a). Therefore, both the integrated and more complex versions of agitation propaganda and AW's use of metaphors, help to stimulate the audience instead of pacify them.

AW's plays also attempt to involve the audience. Using the forms of stories and parables within AW's plays, impacts and challenges the audience to be critical and active thinkers in order to fully understand the message of the parable or narrative. Satirical humour is both cathartic and oriented towards audience involvement (AW report, 1991b:2). By presenting a contextualized situation which raises questions, the audience is challenged to think critically about the topic. As one AW member explains:

Spectators are encouraged to see themselves as judges or legislators while watching the performance as well as in their daily lives. The theatre event creates a new legal or social system as a real alternative to the existing one (AW Annual report, 1991a:7).

AW's 1991 play 'Forces at Play', for instance, was felt to be "revolutionary," since it challenged many of its audiences through the way it presented the content of the play (AW personal experience report, 1991). As well plays are presented with a minimum of props and costumes "to demonstrate that it can be done by grassroots people too"

and not just so-called elite actors (AW report,1990).

Audience participation is also encouraged through the use of actor placement (ie. actors begin a scene from within the audience), cathartic satire (which relaxes the audiences so they can concentrate), and direct questions posed to the audience. For instance, in "The Toy Factory", the audience is asked whether they would like to get rid of the toy factory owners who are exploiting the workers. As well, when the audiences are small enough, AW members try to "engage the audience in discussion in order to get feedback" (AW report,1990).

Workshop Products

Most of AW's plays devote their attention to analyzing state policy in South Africa critically. From criticizing police and state brutality to critiquing the inherent contradictions of South Africa's version of industrialized capitalism, AW's plays aim to expose contradictions and problems within South African life while pointing a way forward by suggesting potential solutions. From the 16 play scripts that I was able to attain (the majority in English), while using my minimal Afrikaans, I have analyzed the content of AW's plays, identifying five major themes: plays which critique South African state policy; plays which critique capitalism; plays which retell and reclaim South African history; plays which present an alternative for South Africa; and plays which constructively criticize the MDM.

One of the main themes of AW's plays is a critique of the policies of the South African state and police through dramatic satire. For instance, the "South African

Circus" is narrated by the leader of the circus, P.W. Botha (the South African president at the time), whose donkey is Buthelezi and who calls on the then minister of defence, Magnus Malan, to act for the crowd. Another example of how AW exposes the 'regime' is in the 1985 version of the "Living News" where the audience is told the story of how the police had to shoot innocent funeral members 'in defence':

This is the 6 o'clock news on S A T V read by Esme du Toit. 17 people of Uitenhage died today and many were injured after they were shot by the police in self defence. The minister of law and order Mr. le Grange said that the group of people were marching with petrol bombs and stones. They were told to disperse as the march was illegal. A warning was then given, but completely ignored. The police officer had no other alternative but to open fire in self defence.

The people of Uitenhage sing

We the people of Uitenhage
Were marching peacefully
Burying our dead comrades
Who were shot by the police

We did not hear a warning
Just suddenly some shots
We dispersed immediately
But some we left there dead

They say we had some bombs and stones
But they could not find any
But we are not afraid
and continue fighting on.

Other sections of this play satirize the declaration of the state of emergency while exposing the negative impacts of the state's declaration for "law and order" by comparing it to a 1932 Adolf Hitler speech. Mangasutu Buthelezi and other government puppets are exposed as such in this play.

The South African state's policy of 'divide and rule' is also analyzed and revealed as inherently evil within the plays. A 1987 University of Cape Town honours essay describes Action Workshop's play about the destruction of Crossroads:

After showing the collaboration of an important leader (Nxobonwana) with the police in the destruction of Crossroads, the actors stressed what all communities had to learn from these events: the need to be wary of the State's strategy of co-option and the urgent task of forging unity across the divisions that separate the oppressed people (Paklappa, 1987:118).

The state's policy of 'separate development' as the 'logical' conclusion of 'divide and rule' is also addressed throughout the plays and is especially evident in the children's play about Niki who "lives with her rich parents in a big house at the foot of a mountain". In this play Niki was never allowed to cross over to the other side of the mountain to visit the other children she wanted so desperately to see since she was so lonely. When she finally dared to cross over the mountain, despite her parent's and the police's wishes, Niki "had never been so happy before" sharing and enjoying the other children's company. As well as daring privileged children to take risks and challenge the status quo when the call is made for people to "stand up for your rights and do what you choose", this play also tells disadvantaged children that they have something very valuable in the form of each other.

Exposing the state's policy of pacifying the people and their resistance strategies, while redirecting people's focus away from their immediate problems can be seen in the 1989 play "June 16th - We Remember":

Now tell me. Did I buy this black and white battery - operated T.V. set to see that fool telling me about upheavals, revolution, blood and death in other parts of the world? What about the upheavals, revolution,

blood and death in our own doorstep?

This play also exposes how government officials use alcohol to forward their policies and to pacify the people as "300 truckloads of LION lager" arrives in Cape Town to buy the people's vote while television shows like "Dallas" from the United States diffuse resistance through escapist cultural art forms.

More specific policies of racism and 'divide and rule' like 'bantu education' are criticized in AW's plays. "Gutter education" and the events and people's experiences during the 1976 repression is one theme. This play comprises female and male black and white 'students' who talk about their different experiences of education. White students explain "we're collecting for a worthy cause" while the black students answer "we're pushing together and we'll open the doors" as they fight against the appalling conditions of their education. Against this contrast, there is also a government official who adds "if black parents cannot control their children - we will". A black and a white student tell about their different experiences during 1976 which provides a powerful contrast. However, black and white students also stand together delivering the line, "down with separate education", symbolizing the united fight against this oppression where whites can also be involved.

The more recent state policy involving so-called 'reform' is also critically evaluated in the 1990 version of "Living News". Here a F.W. deKlerk character is heard singing the 'reform rap':

I'm FW your reform man
I do reforms whenever I can

One step forward two steps back

Today reform, tomorrow attack

and that's how you do
the reform rap

The second main theme within AW's plays is a critical analysis of the capitalist mode of production within the South African context. By contrasting 'workers' living conditions with the quality of life for 'bosses', AW sends a strong message against the present socio-economic system which exploits workers. In AW's play about the 'South African Circus' there is a scene which describes the 'bosses' situation under recession showing how the boss is 'feeling the pinch' since he and his wife will not be able to travel overseas first class this year. As well, to keep profits very high for himself, he attempts to lay off workers and cut salaries. Scenes like this are contrasted with descriptions of workers' lives. In the play "The Lanie Takes a Train", Mr. Clive Chubby Checker Weil (a boss) must take the train home one night since his car, his wife's car, and his kid's cars, are not working. During the train ride with all 'the workers' Clive learns about the conditions workers face although he continues to espouse anti-union rhetoric. The workers respond by telling stories of how the union has helped them improve their living and working conditions. In "The Toy Factory" conditions of exploitation are explored during the boss' or owner's lines "one for you and ten for me" and "one for you, I mean two, I mean three, I mean four for you and twenty for me". Even exploitation by people and institutions not normally criticized is revealed in AW's plays. For instance during one play a character argues:

My dear Reverend. I know you are a man of God nê? I know you pray every night for our sins nê? I know it makes you happy to see us cleaning your garden nê? But it would make my wife happy to know

when you are going to pay me!.

However, AW also criticizes the international response at the state level to the South African state's policies. In the 1990 version of "Living News", particularly two scenes showing Maggie's (former U.K. prime minister Margaret Thatcher) African Safari to free Nelson Mandela (then still in jail as leader of the ANC) and 'chase the sanctions away', and American Jesse Jackson as a "black skinned white" who looks for 'black money' and 'black power' while supporting Mandela for his own purposes, illustrates AW's criticism of the international position.

A third main theme within AW's plays is the retelling of history in order to understand the effects of state and capital's repression so that a deeper and more relevant analysis of the present situation can unfold in order to find a way forward. For instance, the 1987 play 'Broken String' exposes the racism and elitism of the state's version of the beginning of 'South Africa', by creating a satire of how the whites supposedly 'civilized' the blacks of the area. The play actually tells the story of how the true string of history has been broken since people lived in Africa before the 1600s, with a closer relationship between each other and with the environment. The play dramatizes how the string of history was broken when Boers branded both the cattle and the people. The discourse of land battles are also an element of this play when it focuses on the history of resistance in South Africa. The play "1973 - Durban Strikes" retells the story of the over 100 firms and 90,000 workers who went on strike in Durban in 1973. The 1991 "Forces at Play" also presents an alternative version of recent events in Namibia. This play exposes the negotiations between

South Africa's administrator general of Namibia, 'the capitalist', and the leader of SWAPO, Sam Nujoma, where a 'resolution' was the result instead of a 'revolution'.

Through an alternative and critical re-examination of history, AW then, presents in its plays a way forward. Although the effects of state repression is represented in the play "Whispering Scene", as "the apartheid regime is tightening its grip on our throats" where the "tradition" of resistance is also highlighted, "a tradition gets passed down in whispers" where "a fuse is burning. There is strike talk". Many plays of AW stress that the way forward can only occur if all those who are oppressed work together. For instance, after each individual worker's situation is examined in the play "1973 - Durban Strikes",

the actors start forming a circle, one by one joining hands...The idea is for them to experience and show that if all of these workers' difficult situation is put together, joined together, they can do something about it as well as support each other. The circle starts quite wide, but by the last line it is a tight one.

As well, during the play "Strike" about striking women office workers, the slogans "divided we fall, united we stand...an injury to one is an injury to all" and "a victory to one is a victory to all", are dramatized. The play "The Seed" which is an adaption of a Cuban story about a leader of the Communist party who plants a 'seed of hope' even though he is about to be executed in French occupied Vietnam, also presents a message of continuing 'the struggle' since 'the seed' of liberation has already been planted within many people's hearts. Teaching about one specific way forward such as a South African constituent assembly is the main theme of "Forces at Play".

More recently AW has also decided to focus their plays toward constructive

criticism within the mass democratic movement (George,1991:3). The 1990 version of "The Living News" displays this when a character writes 'Dr. Struggles' complaining about his/her problem of being addicted to power and money. Dr. Struggles replies that the s/he is "suffering from a disease caused by the worm of CORRUPTION" and prescribes "an injection of humility immediately" since "it has been proven scientifically...[that] absolute power can corrupt absolutely". Further in this play a scene develops the idea that socialism is not something to be afraid of in South Africa and not to let the 'democratic socialist flower be drowned in American coca cola', even if "in the Soviet Union these flowers were red, but not democratic" causing their subsequent 'death'. The 1991 version of "The Living News" I observed being workshopped while I was in Cape Town, contained the song addressed to the mass democratic leadership, "when you gonna flush yourself down?!".

Similar to the analysis of Platform 2000's plays, and in relation to the theoretical frameworks outlined in chapter two and three, the following issues need to be addressed: whose issues do the themes in AW's plays represent, what is the impact of this and how were the plays created? Consequently, the following section will attempt to examine these questions. The topics which are addressed in AW's plays do challenge the status quo as they expose the contradictions between policy and reality as well as exposing the inherent negative effects and racist and elitist components of South African state policy. AW's plays creatively make the connections between general oppression by the state and private companies and the

specific ways people experience this oppression, repression and exploitation. For instance, the specific effects of the state policy of 'law and order' can be seen in the state's police brutality and killings at funeral proceedings. Other examples of how AW's plays address the specific effects of state repression have been previously discussed.

The 'people' who directly and indirectly experience the effects of this oppression are mainly 'black' and 'coloured' formally employed and formally unemployed 'workers'. The stories within AW's plays are the stories of such people. This fact in itself is very significant considering the vast amount of dominant cultural propaganda which undermines and glosses over the desperate reality of many people who are oppressed.

Within many of AW's plays, women and men's 'public' lives as formally employed 'workers' are integrated into the stories. For instance, the play "Strike" describes the story of a women office workers' strike. This is most definitely a progressive way forward in terms of play content. However, domestic struggles, oppression and exploitation which occur at the intra-household level, are not addressed in the AW plays I examined. The status of women compared to men in South African society and problems specific to women such as sexual assault and battery by men, are also not addressed in AW's plays. The connections between these sorts of oppression and oppression caused by other socio-economic state and private policies within South Africa's mode of industrialized capitalism, do not occur in AW's plays.

Crime, gangs and 'township' violence, very evident realities of the Western Cape, are also not addressed in the AW's plays I examined. The links between these phenomena and larger structural oppressions described previously are, unfortunately, not made.

AW tries to use Afrikaans as well as English. Other indigenous languages are also used at times, although not as often as English or Afrikaans, which has been identified by AW as one of their weaknesses (AW report, 1991). More plays need to be performed in the language the audience most easily understands.

Showing black and white people working together to fight oppression is also a significant factor of AW's plays since the South African state has created such a racist atmosphere in the country. As well as actors being both black and white, some plays are written which explicitly show black and white characters working together to expose the lies within the South African situation. For instance, this can be seen in the play "1976" when both black and white 'students' stand together to shout "down with separate education".

Therefore, striving for a democratic play creation process, members of AW have created plays from 1985-1991 which challenge the status quo and dominant power relations by telling the stories of those who are oppressed and exposing the inherently negative components of the socio-economic system in South Africa. These plays are not 'art for art's sake', but increasingly aesthetically pleasing art forms which serve to mobilize and challenge their audiences to critically evaluate their present situation. Although it is difficult to speculate the audience impact on such plays,

suffice it to say that there is some overlap between play performance venues and drama workshop requests. This falls in line with one of AW's goals of showing people what can be done with drama in order that they may then want to develop their own dramatic skills.

Therefore, the plays of AW exemplify 'community development' popular theatre from chapter three (section 3.4.2), even though AW began developing plays using an 'agitation propaganda' style more normally used in 'popular' theatre plays created through a 'top-down' approach (see section 3.4.1). Created following a participatory process, AW members who are from within 'the community' create plays about situations they face daily. The following section will explore the drama workshops facilitated by AW during the period 1986-1991.

6.4 The Workshops of Action Workshop

The second part of AW's methodology is the facilitation of drama workshops within oppressed communities. This section will describe the historical evolution of these workshops including their aims and rationale. Who is involved with the workshops and the process and content of the workshops will also be addressed¹.

AW decided to incorporate the facilitation of workshops into its methodology

¹ This section will follow as closely as possible the structure of the drama workshop section of chapter five although deviations may occur since the amount and type of information about workshops varies slightly with each case study.

in 1986. During a taped interview, one of the AW activists explains the workshop rationale:

We wanted to develop that kind [the Action Workshop kind] of understanding of theatre within the whole grassroots. To develop a whole new movement, a different way of looking at theatre, different from established kind of theatre. It was that need to duplicate ourselves (Interview A).

Through drama workshops, AW members felt that they would be able to duplicate themselves as cultural activists so cultural work could incorporate more people and cover more geographical area within the Western Cape.

An AW 1986/1987 report explains the aim of drama workshops as being an attempt to "pass on facilitation and democratic play building skills, attempting to empower the group to continue the work and again to pass on skills to their community and organization". In an interview, another AW member confirms that sharing dramatic skills and showing people how these skills can be used to address their own problems "like teenage pregnancy, alcoholism...", while convincing people that "anybody can act" is very important to AW (Interview C). In an 1990 AW report recognition is made of the intrinsic benefits of the drama creation process as part of the aim of the workshop; in other words "to facilitate the building of confidence through drama". In another section of the same report, the specific aim for a drama workshop for Anglican youth is "to show that drama could be used in conservative church structures to educate people politically in a subtle way and to take drama further from the passion play". Another aim of the drama workshops is to mobilize people; for instance, one of the main aims of the Bonteheuwel Anglican Youth

Drama Workshop was "to get this group to be involved with the activities of the community youth structure (SAYCO)" (AW report,1990).

Previously, workshops were given on a "one-off" basis where Action Workshop members would facilitate a workshop for one day or for one weekend only. State repression, transport, financing and other constraints contributed to the short length of such workshops. Now, with the 'liberated' political environment in South Africa which has allowed groups like the ANC to operate 'above ground', AW is facilitating workshops on an ongoing basis. For instance, one member meets with the group from SACTWU almost every Sunday afternoon. Another AW member meets with the Manenberg group once and sometimes twice a week. This specific Manenberg workshop has been running since 1987 (Interview A). AW members abandoned the 'one-off' workshop style since its impact was minimal: "Now we realize we can't have one-off workshops without any follow-up... We're more selective. We want to work on a more ongoing kind of basis" (Interview A).

Generally, the people who work together with AW are the very people who are part of the different organizations and structures which comprise the MDM (mass democratic movement) in the Western Cape. They are 'officially' categorized 'black' and 'coloured' people who have been relegated to living in certain disadvantaged and often unfit living areas by the South African white state. Workshop participants are also people who suffer socio-economic oppression from this racist 'categorization'.

Workshop Products

The themes which have been developed by AW's drama workshop participants comprise two main categories: issues related to women's oppression and themes about class and related socio-economic oppression.

Structural and intra-household violence against women have been themes during AW's drama workshops. During a 1990 SAYCO (South African Youth Congress Organization) workshop the triple exploitation of women was addressed (AW report,1990). Another 1990 workshop with FAWU (Federation of African Women) "produced a play dealing with the lives of working women in the factory. Shopstewards and other union members performed the play at their AGM" (ibid). An 1991 Lavenderhill workshop with 'homemaker' women produced the following poem originally in Afrikaans which was later dramatized:

Smash, bang, help
Pain, blood, pain, blood,
Is it the women's role to experience pain
Pain at work
Pain in labour
Pain after the games
Pain when he calls it making love

I hate and have to love him
The pain is not part of my life
Should I, shouldn't I
May I
Can I please
SHOUT (AW report,1991b).

This poem is a powerful example of some of the problems many women have.

The content of other sketches which have been created have mainly been about "issues of unemployment, gangsterism, and drug abuse" (George,1991:2) and other

problems having to do with class and related socio-economic oppression. For instance, from the workshops I observed while I was in Cape Town, the Masimanyane church group in Nyanga 'township' created sketches about a domestic scene where a woman is cleaning while the husband is drunk, a church corruption scene with one drunk in the congregation, and a scene where disabled people are singing busking in the streets. The facilitator of this workshop instructed me that they were soon to be creating a longer play about gambling, religion and economic constraints.

Workshop Process

Requests for drama workshops mainly initiate from different organized groups like unions, church groups, civic organizations and student groups within the so-called black and coloured townships (Interview B and C). One workshop which was initiated by the Commercial and Catering Allied Workers Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA) occurred after "a worker at a hotel was arrested, charged with theft and imprisoned for eating leftovers". The play the workers created was about "dismissed workers and their plight" (AW report, 1988:3). This shows the direct link between anger about injustice and the desire to express this anger through drama creation. AW has also facilitated workshops in Lavenderhill, "an impoverished ['coloured'] 'township' in the Steenberg/Retreat area" with women homemakers, with the Masimanyane church group in Nyanga 'township' (which I observed), with the South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union (SACTWU) (which I observed), with a street children's workshop in an area dominated by Xhosa speakers, and

workshops at the Manenberg cultural centre with older youths and children (personal observation and AW reports, 1987-1991).

Although all workshops are slightly different given content geared to the participant's needs, an example of a 'typical' workshop is given by the following description of an 1988 workshop with workers from the rural offices of the Advice Office Forum (AOF) group. For four evening sessions during one month, 40 people from 14 different rural areas participated in a drama workshop in a Cape Town 'township'. To begin the workshop there was an introductory discussion about the "roots of drama in Africa" and "the importance of a people's culture" and "the different ways it can be used". Following this, AW members performed examples of mime, agitation propaganda, and satire. Break-the-ice exercises were followed by small group creative exercises. A discussion about community drama and how it can be used most effectively led the participants to arrive at the following conclusion: "the group felt it [community drama] could be used to educate, mobilize, organize, entertain and fundraise". Since there were many different languages, the group decided to divide into language groups. Each group then created a sketch together about their own community problems, which was then followed by a session of constructive criticism.

Another workshop example is listed in Appendix "E". This 1991 workshop with women from SACTWU also illustrates how even focus and concentration exercises (listed as energising exercise (starboard)) are adapted to fit within the participants' experience. For this exercise, the participants use their bodies to take the pose of

what is called out by the leader. To work, clean the floor, catch the bus, and 'Amandla' (part of the rallying cry at mass meetings), are all directions and everyday occurrences the participants would be familiar with. Creating statues of female and male community characters and factory workers with which they are also familiar is beneficial. This further illustrates that AW is creating workshops which "begin with what the participants already know" (personal interview with AW member, 1991).

Problem identification and discussion sessions are often incorporated into the workshop methodology. During a taped interview one AW member explained the process to me:

There are different kinds of violence. We write violence on a big piece of paper and get people to write down what they think - out of their own experience - what violence means to them. Some said 'home violence', so we used that one example of one participant in the group. So we used the method of asking - why, why, why... ie. was your father drunk or your mother drunk because s/he was unemployed? Why is he unemployed? Why can't you go to the police? Because he is a black person? (Interview D)

By using questioning techniques to "elicit, expand, control, guide, inspire, calm, suggest and shape", facilitators attempt to challenge the participants to consider the problems identified in a deeper way (AW report, 1991b). This approach can often mean that the issues which are chosen by the participants to create plays around can begin as specific issues which then widen in scope as increasingly more connections are made about the problem. For instance, during the SACTWU and SADWU (South African Domestic Workers Union) workshops, issues which were chosen were originally internal union problems. However, as the process developed, links were made and other problems emerged like gangsterism and birth control (Interview E).

Along with problem identification, potential solutions are also discussed within workshops. However, previously there has been a problem of using too many "political cliches". During a taped interview an AW member describes that often people "want easy solution[s] and the work would one-dimensional as a result". He felt that "we would start losing people...We want to organize the people who are unorganized as well...They know what your politics are the way you relate to them in the workshops".

Often, an organizational committee is created to help the drama group continue its work after the departure of the AW facilitator. Through the example of the Masimanyane Drama Group, an organizational committee of stage manager, property person, costume person, organiser, secretary and a fundraising person were elected. This occurred after an Easter week-end play which demonstrated the need for an organizational structure. During the following June, the group constructed its own constitution (AW report, 1991a).

Over time, as the general workshop method developed, AW facilitators have paid an increasing amount of attention to democratic and participatory processes within the workshops and in the organizing of the workshops. As one member described to me, AW has more of a "process focus" and works within "the community" whereas other drama groups with more "liberal tendencies" are more "product oriented" (Interview C). Another AW member describes that workshops have progressed from being mainly controlled by the facilitator to "more participant control" (AW report, n.d.).

It is evident that AW members are working to establish participatory and democratic processes when constructive criticism within workshops concerning both the process and workshop substance is encouraged. Direct, honest and specific criticism within a group situation is often a difficult process. As one AW member explains, people are just "not used to that way of working" (AW report,1991b). However, in a participatory and democratic process, constructive criticism must occur. Consequently, an AW member explains:

Nevertheless there were many more gains than losses. Some people in the group gained confidence from criticising each other. This also helped in breaking the barriers between a facilitator and the participants (ibid).

When the facilitator is also constructively criticized like the participants, the 'power gap' between facilitator and participant closes which also contributes to a democratic process.

However, the relative power that the facilitator has in relation to the workshop participants, as a result of her or his education, social status, personality, race, age or gender, is always something which needs to be acknowledged and managed by the facilitator. In the AW report "What is the Way Forward for Community Theatre in the Western Cape", this is recognized: "the facilitator must be careful to prevent intimidation...speak the same language as the participants...know their situation...help those who feel inadequate to develop confidence" (AW report,1991b:3-4). Sometimes, however, this is difficult, as in the 1991 AW report one member explains how he felt that he was not part of 'the community' where the workshop participants came from, and how this meant that he was learning about the specific community and where it

was "at politically" through the sketches the children (the workshop participants) were creating (AW report,1991b).

The extent to which the facilitator guides the analysis within the workshops is also significant to the workshop process. One AW report suggests that there must be a balance between "probing, not planting ideas, guiding and sharing control...[and being] sure that the workshop does not only reaffirm existing knowledge" (AW report,1991b:3). Another report comments that:

We find that we often have to use discretion and guard against imposing suggestions on participants. We try not to coerce participants into seeing our viewpoint. We only suggest possible solutions. Often the outcome of a product is a reflection of the participants' level of consciousness (George,1991:2).

From the workshops I witnessed this was indeed the case. During the SACTWU workshop the AW facilitator mainly watched and only commented when asked, while during the Masimanyane workshop the facilitator controlled the process by having specific exercises ready for the participants. In the latter case, the participants were often able to choose the topics before creating the sketches.

However, integrating every participant equally is very difficult especially within mixed gender workshops. During the workshops I observed of the Masimanyane group, this was indeed a problem which has also been noted by the facilitator himself in an AW report since my visit. He wrote, "I also saw that there was less integration between males and females in the group that hampered their creativity too...I realized my mistakes...I ignored gender and age differences". When women and girls are not equally integrated into the workshop process any unequal power dynamics between

females and males are reinforced. However, it is excellent to see that this is something facilitators are acknowledging and working to change.

The workshops of AW exemplify 'liberating popular theatre' as explained in chapter 3.4.3. A participatory and democratic process emerges which challenges the participants' understanding of their own reality and transfers drama creation and production skills to them during workshops. Groups, such as SACTWU Cultural Group, have developed as a result of this process. However, it must be understood that the constraints upon this workshop process because of operating within the socio-economic 'climate' of apartheid-capitalism are enormous. Problems with transportation of workshop facilitators to the workshop location, maintaining regular participants who arrive on time to workshops, gangs interfering in the workshops, general disorganization inter alia, are all significant logistical factors which severely slow down and at times halt the workshop process. As a direct result of these factors, morale amongst the AW members regarding the workshop process was very low. As one member explained to me, the workshop process continues often with "little results" (Interview A). However, although I believe that tangible results cannot often be seen, the intangible benefits of the drama creation process are still evident and should not be dismissed.

Conclusion

AW is a successful example of how drama skills can be taught and used for community organizing and mobilizing purposes, education and for humanizing

purposes through the development of self-confidence. The drama creation process and its benefit as an expressive outlet through the creative act (as explained in section 3.4.3., 'liberating popular theatre') is significant. AW has increased the awareness of how cultural art forms, particularly drama, song and dance, can be used and its importance within the MDM of the Western Cape. Through their own education sessions, plays and within workshops, AW is constantly striving to make the links between political education and analysis, and drama.

As well, this group is creating an alternative process model to the individualistic and elitist art creation process of more 'mainstream' or dominant ideology art groups. AW is trying to implement democratic processes and structures within their play creation and workshop processes. This seems to be a very difficult task given the history and socio-economic context of the Western Cape region. For instance, during discussions, I observed that AW members would 'back off' and give the less experienced AW members a chance to 'come forward' and participate more fully. Creating and maintaining democratic structures is not easy!

The plays of AW do challenge the existing dominant ideology although the lack of integration of women's specific problems and the recent escalations in crime are not integrated. Although their plays add to the creation of alternative cultural art forms, this particular point is significant.

AW members also facilitate workshops where a great deal of attention is given to process. Over time Action Workshop realized the need and was able to implement more on-going workshops which have a greater impact than previous one or two day

workshops. Encouraging participants to value their own creative work, facilitating concentration, focus and creativity exercises, allowing people to dramatize their own experience and trying to get participants to focus on the process not just quickly rush to create a drama product, are also important and positive elements to AW's workshops (AW reports,1991). Conscientization occurs when participants are encouraged to question their reality.

The fact that requests for workshops come from within different organizations within the MDM seems to inform the entire workshop process positively. Since workshops are initiated by the participants themselves, the possibility of egalitarian power dynamics within the workshop process exists. People participate in the workshops because they want to and because they feel they may benefit from them. It is not again another example of people just 'doing what they are told' in a very powerless and oppressive way since organizers feel it may be 'for their own good'. There is some concern from within AW that they should strive to involve more formally 'unorganized' people so as to use drama to help create organizations. Although I feel that this is indeed relevant, I do not believe that AW's work within organizations should be dismissed given the many constraints on alternative organizing within the Western Cape. Drama can help to provide needed attention and enhancement.

At least three specific 'cultural' groups have emerged as a direct result of the workshops AW facilitated with them: the Inter-Cape Youth drama group, the Woster Vulilelo (sp.) drama group, and the SACTWU 'cultural' group. Other intangible

benefits of the work of AW have been outlined previously.

Although there are severe logistical constraints, AW is actively working towards social change in the Western Cape. Despite problems related to financial self-sufficiency, lack of safe methods of transport, some internal discipline problems, problems combining play creation, performance and workshop schedules and other outside jobs, and problems incorporating more 'indigenous' languages (like Xhosa) exist, the excellent work of AW continues.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Action Workshop and Platform 2000 exist in southern Africa as examples of a popular theatre process which is developing in that area. As a participatory liberating strategy, popular theatre has much to contribute in Namibia and South Africa.

This thesis sought to explore the process of popular theatre through a literature review of sub-Saharan anglophone African popular theatre and two popular theatre case studies evaluated from within the theoretical framework of participatory development. In this conclusion, I will outline the significance of the findings about popular theatre with particular reference to how they develop participation and popular theatre theory as outlined in chapters two and three and evaluate the methodology used in this study.

7.1 Participation and Popular Theatre in Southern Africa

Living conditions for the majority of people in South Africa and Namibia are bleak. The oppressive patriarchal capitalist-apartheid system has created a situation where severe inequality prevails. Although politically independent from South Africa, the majority of Namibians have yet to enjoy the fruits of their labour as wealth has

not been redistributed although some redirection in government funding of social programs has occurred. In South Africa, the fluid political situation means that the mass democratic movement requires all the organizing and mobilizing strategies within its grasp in order to push for democracy and the redistribution of wealth successfully. Therefore, I argued in this thesis that the need for useful participatory development/liberation strategies in both Namibia and South Africa is great.

In Chapter Two, the justification for participation strategies over other types of development was explained. It was argued that instead of focusing on Western development strategies which are ethnocentric and reductionist, local organizing initiatives should be better understood in order to learn to what extent they foster non-hierarchical, non-sexist, non-racist programs which are environmentally sustainable.

Participatory development is defined as being beneficial as both a means and as an end in itself. It is argued that participatory development can create the conditions for spiritual development where self-esteem and self-confidence are fostered. An egalitarian participatory process where decisions are made collectively involving every one of the participants is inherently empowering. Each person must operate as an autonomous critical thinker, instead of 'following the orders' of someone with more power than themselves, creating what one Bricks member has called a 'sense of self' (see chapter five). If the process also includes a critical analysis of the surrounding reality, conscientization can occur. A deeper understanding of oppression and exploitation can be powerful since through this identification or

'naming', people can then begin to look for strategies of resistance/development.

As an end in itself, participatory efforts can often be described as struggle and resistance even if a particular goal directed towards changing inequitable social structures has not been reached immediately. Therefore, it is difficult to establish to what extent efforts are 'coping' strategies or 'strategically' significant as struggle and resistance, especially from outside of the organization at any given point in time.

One such participation strategy is popular theatre. To develop this argument, I reviewed the literature concerning popular theatre in sub-Saharan anglophone Africa in Chapter Three. A popular theatre typology was created which outlined three different kinds: the 'well-developed travelling play', 'community development' popular theatre, and 'liberating' popular theatre. I argued that liberating popular theatre, as exemplified by the project at Kamiriithu, Kenya, can serve as a successful participatory development strategy. When sufficient time is taken and the process and product is participant controlled, liberating popular theatre is useful as both a means of development and as an end in itself. When those who are oppressed are in control, a critical analysis of existing socio-economic structures will eventually occur if participants continue to probe why oppression exists. Liberating popular theatre can also promote the creation or strengthening of democratic, non-hierarchical organizational structures as they are required in the group creation of popular theatre. The drama creation process itself means that theory and reality are integrated as people reflect on their own experience and relate it to local, national and global social structures during a process of 'codification-decodification' as

explained by Ross Kidd (1984). Participants develop their self-confidence levels while a Freirian 'conscientization' process may occur. Local cultural art forms are also developed through the popular theatre process.

In order to understand this type of popular theatre process a flexible feminist participatory research strategy was employed. In Chapter Four I outlined why I chose feminist participatory research and the extent to which I followed my initial methodological intentions. Pursuing feminist cross-cultural research, I endeavoured to be sensitive and flexible in the research approach. When methods such as taped interviews were seen to be intrusive and exploitative by the popular theatre group members, I chose to use participant observation supplemented with interviews when appropriate. The extent to which I was allowed access to the popular theatre groups' own documents and evaluations also enriched the research. By listening to the research participant's wishes, I was able to understand in a much deeper and thorough way the process of popular theatre as it is occurring in Namibia and South Africa with Platform 2000 and Action Workshop, respectively. With such a project, 'research from within' was much more suitable than 'research from above' or a more formally pre-determined research agenda which exploited and disempowered the participants.

7.2 Platform 2000 and Action Workshop

Although this thesis explores two popular theatre case studies in Chapters Five and Six, I did not attempt to compare each to the other. Since each group operates

within unique situations, a comparison study would have been very difficult. Instead, the research analyzes how and why Platform 2000 and Action Workshop conduct their popular theatre strategies and to what extent each is successful as defined by the theoretical frameworks from chapter two and three. In this way, a better understanding of popular theatre strategies emerges since the information learned from each case study is acknowledged where the differences between the two groups are not compared or contrasted with each other, but identified. Consequently, a better understanding of the popular theatre approach is constructed through the insights gained from each group's work. Furthermore, the analysis of the case studies focuses on the popular theatre process, especially since I did not feel qualified to assess the drama products as an outsider who only spent six months in the area and since this research is focused on local organizing strategies.

Significant to participation and liberating popular theatre theory, the drama creators should be people who come from 'oppressed' communities. Platform 2000 and Action Workshop activists are indeed from an 'oppressed' community in Namibia and South Africa, that of the so-called townships. Therefore, for the most part, members create plays about topics of which they have direct knowledge. However, Platform 2000 and Action Workshop members are usually slightly more educated and 'better-off' than the majority in the 'townships' (for instance, having a paid job). Also, Platform 2000's group members come from within the 'township' community, but those who are in control are men. Women do not hold positions of authority within the group and this is of considerable concern. In Action Workshop's case women and

men comprise the group and control is shared among both men and women members.

When women are not involved, cultural art forms are only being reclaimed and created by half of the 'oppressed' population. Since there are often many more constraints placed upon women's lives, more of an effort is needed in order to help women become involved. Constraints such as the ones described by Astrid von Kotze in the 1988 article "Women Workers and The Struggle for Cultural Transformations", hinder women's involvement:

double shift...lack of child care facilities...jealousy and possessiveness [by their lovers, parents, brothers, husbands]...control by husbands...transport problems after hours and threats of sexual harassment...[and] socialised lack of self-confidence (von Kotze,1988:52,53).

Therefore, as Nise Malange explains:

women and their anger must be taken seriously. Cultural activity is one way of working through the problems...[so that women can] realize their creative potential and extend their self-confidence as participants in the struggle for cultural transformation (Malange,1989:78,79).

Subsequently, in the case of Platform 2000, when women are not integrated as full member activists, the popular theatre process is distorted. The same argument can be made for the integration of gay, lesbian, bi-sexuals and differently abled people although even the mass democratic movement in South Africa is only beginning to integrate and understand these kinds of oppressions whereas in Namibia there is even less of a understanding.

Platform 2000's drama workshops are now on-going in Katutura and Khomasdal 'townships' where workshops are helping young women and men create

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plays about issues which concern them. However, as of yet, Platform 2000's one-week workshops in other locations have been in operation for too short a time to be able to help the people there to any great extent. Without sufficient follow-up or a longer workshop period, groups have not been able to exist after the Platform 2000 activists have left. Consequently, Platform 2000 has planted the seeds and is working towards developing truly liberating popular theatre, but as of yet, only the potential for this is evident. However, this does not mean that the one-week drama workshops are insignificant. Many community issues are raised and group structures begun and although the tangible impact may be minimal at present, further efforts towards establishing a community popular theatre process can build on these previous efforts.

The workshops of Action Workshop are no longer of the 'one-off' variety, or only one or two days in length. Action Workshop is involved with more on-going drama workshops with people near to their base location in one of the so-called 'coloured' and 'black' townships in Cape Town. This kind of liberating popular theatre is making a significant impact as groups have been formed and have emerged on their own as a result.

The plays of Platform 2000 and Action Workshop serve as an effective complement to their drama workshops especially when they act as a mobilizer. Although they can be classified as forms of 'agitation propaganda' (Chapter 3.4.1), since group members are mainly from the communities in which they perform, these plays also serve to show how drama can be used and that 'anyone' can act. Consequently, they are effective mobilizers for the groups' drama workshops. The

only drawback to the plays of Platform 2000 and Action Workshop is when they are performed in a language which is difficult for the audience to understand. For instance, in the case of Action Workshop, more of their plays need to be in one of the 'indigenous' African languages so that many more people can understand. The group was working on this problem through the implementation of Xhosa lessons.

Platform 2000 and Action Workshop are developing liberating popular theatre (Chapter 3.4.3), a participatory development strategy, while the plays they perform comprise the 'community popular theatre' type (chapter 3.4.2). The popular theatre strategies of both Platform 2000 and Action Workshop exemplify how two types of popular theatre, 'community' popular theatre and 'liberating' popular theatre, can effectively be used to complement each other. By allowing the popular theatre activists to do what they help others do in their drama workshops, the activists keep in touch with the drama creation process and practise their acting skills. When plays are performed to potential drama workshop participants, as in the case at Kamiriithu, an example of what popular theatre can do is shown.

The popular theatre of Platform 2000 and Action Workshop also exemplifies how participation strategies need to be assessed not only by their tangible effects or strategic actions which emerge, but by the process which unfolds. The process of popular theatre is inherently valuable in itself. This means that to categorize a popular theatre initiative as a 'coping' strategy or 'strategically significant' (Chapter 2.3.1) must be based mainly on the quality of the popular theatre process. Who is in control, how, and for how long, are significant factors in this endeavour.

As an empowering process which promotes participatory development, popular theatre is significant. During the play creation processes I witnessed, both in Namibia and South Africa, the use of a collective and democratic creation process where constructive criticism was encouraged was very powerful since this is an important step towards local organizing. When participants probed expressed issues and problems, a conscientization process occurred as the causes of problems were revealed. As a forum for expression where participants could be active instead of passive recipients of ideas and art forms, a 'kind of therapy' took place where participants worked towards a greater sense of self and freedom. All these processes contributed towards increased self-confidence and empowerment.

Liberating popular theatre also involves the transfer of the means of production of drama to those who usually do not create this particular form of drama. This process undermines the 'normal' method of those with power and money creating the art forms which are consumed in dominant culture. By reclaiming the right to tell history informed by their own analysis, participants create new, and revalue old, cultural art forms which may otherwise be destroyed by mainstream culture.

As a local organizing tool, the popular theatre studied for this thesis showed that the process takes a large amount of time. For instance, with reference to the power of the facilitator, participants need time in order to develop enough confidence so that they might work together with the facilitator on an egalitarian basis.

The popular theatre process studied here did prove to be very significant for

the popular theatre groups themselves. The activists involved were developing a sharp, critical analysis through their drama creation and drama facilitation process. Although some groups had emerged as a result of the popular theatre process in South Africa, this had yet to be the case in Namibia.

However, the goal or aim of helping to create autonomous popular theatre groups needs to be reassessed. Although Platform 2000 has articulated this goal, it may not be the most fruitful way to use popular theatre. It takes a large amount of time and follow-up work in order for a community drama group to begin to exist on its own. In Namibia, this had not yet occurred.

Consequently, I argue here that popular theatre is most easily used from within a larger organizational structure (like the SACTWU Cultural Group in South Africa). By being part of a larger organization, the popular theatre process remains grounded and a significant part of the social change process. For instance, in South Africa, Action Workshop was very much linked to the MDM and received requests for plays and workshops through this network. In Namibia, Platform 2000 did not have these kinds of links because it was less well known and it tried to cover a larger geographical area. Platform 2000 plays attracted maximum crowds when their performances were integrated into larger organizational structures (like the plays for May Day, YWCA...). In this way, popular theatre groups can work for and with other progressive groups in an integrated and effective way. Drama ceases to be labelled as 'ruling class escapist entertainment' (see chapter 5) and is part of 'the struggle'.

This thesis, then, has furthered a dialogue which is only just beginning about

popular theatre in southern Africa. How popular theatre is used as a tool of the mass democratic movement in Namibia and South Africa and as an end in itself was discussed. The benefits of popular theatre are immense and should be considered as a valuable contribution towards working for liberation and empowerment.

APPENDIX "A" - POPULAR THEATRE QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear _____ ;

I am a researcher from Canada who is working for BRICKS. I am interested in the problems and prospects of using people's arts (songs, play, dance) as a tool for development. It would be greatly appreciated if you could fill in the following information and send it along with the other form to the P.O. Box 60536.

1. Are you presently using songs, plays (role-playing) and/or dance in your adult education and/or cultural work?

2. If yes:

Please explain how you are using songs, plays and/or dance.

If no:

Would you be interested in learning how to incorporate people's art in your work?

----- (Please use the back.)

Who is involved in these activities (ie. school boys, school girls, working women, unemployed male youth, mothers, male workers...)?

What kinds of problems have you faced in your work with people's arts?

Do you think the use of song, dance, plays has been an effective strategy in your work? If yes, why?

APPENDIX "B" - PLATFORM 2000/BRICKS AND ACTION WORKSHOP INTERVIEWS

Platform 2000/Bricks Interviews

Interview A: Bricks former co-ordinator, 13 02 91

Interview B: Bricks/Platform 2000 member, 11 02 91

Interview C: Bricks/Platform 2000 member, compilation of personal conversations while working for Bricks, 02-04 91

Action Workshop Interviews

Interview A: AW Production Co-ordinator, 29 05 91

Interview B: AW Production and Training Assistant, 30 05 91

Interview C: AW Workshop Co-ordinator, 02 06 91

Interview D: Administrator and Training Co-ordinator, 02 06 91

Interview E: Education Co-ordinator, 28 05 91

APPENDIX "C"

DRAMA WORKSHOPS OF PLATFORM 2000

Arandis 1987	MLH 1990	Outjo 1991
*alcoholism	*alcoholism	*alcoholism
*unplanned pregnancy	*street kids	*teenage pregnancy
*lack of recreation		*tribalism
*unemployment		*poor pensions
*misuse of money		*gossiping
		*school racism
Okombahe 1991	MLH 1991	Arandis 1991
*alcoholism	*alcoholism	*alcoholism
*prodigal son	*teenage pregnancy	*mother's struggles
*witchcraft	*sexual discrimination (school and home)	*crime
		*mine working conditions
Women (Kat.) 1991	Rehoboth 1991	Katutura 1991
*women's work load	*alcoholism	*teenage pregnancy
*rape	*unemployment	*crime
	*domestic working conditions	*overcrowding
	*murder	*housing shortages
		*malnutrition
		*high food prices
		*environmental degradation

*workshop play topics

GUIDE TO: DRAMA WORKSHOPS OF PLATFORM 2000

Arandis 1987

Arandis is a privately created mining town where the black workers from Rossing Uranium are forced to live. Between March 12 to March 15, 1987, Platform 2000 facilitated a workshop with 42 participants, mainly youth (Bricks Vol.3, No.3 April/May 1987:5).

West Coast of Namibia 1988

During September and October 1988, Platform 2000 performed three plays and held several workshops throughout the west coast of Namibia (Bricks Vol.4, No.8, November 1988:3). (Data concerning workshop play topics was unavailable.)

Southern Namibia 1989

For two weeks, Platform 2000 activists and one activist from Action Workshop tried to "activate possible groups, to inform workshop participants of the National Cultural Festival at the end of the Year, to transfer skills to existing drama groups" in Maitahohe, Mariental, Tses, Besebe, Keetmanshoop, and Luderitz (Action Workshop 1990 report:1). High school students, teachers, a social worker, older adults and Rossing workers participated in the workshops (ibid). (Data concerning workshop play topics was unavailable).

Katutura 1990

At People's Place (the Bricks organizing space) during June 22 and 23, Katutura high school students participated in a Platform 2000 drama workshop. The group was divided into two where they created a play and then presented it for the other group who then constructively criticized it. The discussion included "the importance of groupwork, criticism and self-criticism, the role of the facilitators and the problems which could hamper group work" (Bricks July/August 1990:12). (Data concerning workshop play topics was unavailable).

Martin Luther High School (MLH) 1990

From the 21 to 23 of September 1990, Platform 2000 conducted a three day drama workshop with students from MLH near Okombahe. The two plays were performed for the school community (Bricks Vol.6, No.5 December 1990:5).

Outjo 1991

Beginning February 25, 1991, two one-week drama workshop was facilitated at Outjo, a very poor small township with no sewage system, not selfhelp schemes in central Namibia. One workshop was facilitated with teachers who created a play about alcoholism, tribalism, teenage pregnancies, poor pensions, and gossiping. The other workshop with the school students produced a play about "free education" and the experiences of black township children facing racism after political independence when they attempt to 'integrate' into the white schools (Platform 2000 report 1991:1-2).

Okombahe 1991

From March 4-11, 1991, Platform 2000 conducted a drama workshop with unemployed women and men from the village of Okombahe. The play which was created was performed for MLH students at their school nearby (Platform 2000 report 1991:6-8).

Martin Luther High School (MLH) 1991

From March 4-11, 1991, Platform 2000 also conducted a drama workshop with the students of MLH. Two plays were created which were performed for other students and the drama group from Okombahe (Platform 2000 report 1991:6-8).

Arandis 1991

From March 11-18, 1991, Platform 2000 facilitated two drama workshops in Arandis. One workshop was with youth while the other was with male mine workers from Rossing Uranium. There was not a performance (Platform 2000 report 1991:21-22).

Women's Workshop, Katutura 1991

Saturday April 20, 1991 there was a one-day drama workshop at People's Place for women mainly from Katutura. 21 women created two short plays (Personal journal 1991).

Rehoboth 1991

During April 22-27, 1991 a drama workshop occurred with approximately 15 men and women and youth from the black township community at Rehoboth. Rehoboth is a 'bastor' community just south of Windhoek ('bastor' meaning originally Cape Coloured people) (personal journal, 1991).

Katutura 1991

On-going school workshops (January 1991-) have occurred with high school students from Katutura and Khomasdal. Once or twice a week, Platform 2000 facilitators conduct drama workshops at specific schools (Shifidi, Jan Jonker Afrikaner, Augustineum and Ella du Plessis) (Platform 2000 report, 1991:23).

Okombahe, 1991

Okombahe is a small rural community south of Omaruru in the central-west area of Namibia. The majority of people are unemployed while the older adults receive small government pensions. The problems, identified by the Platform 2000 activists of Okombahe are; "unemployment, alcoholism, youth degeneration and a poor pensioned community" (Bricks/Platform 2000 report, 1991). The general status of women in the community was not easily identifiable.

The drama workshop participants at Okombahe ranged from 18-35 years old and were both women and men (and sometimes babies which would be held by myself or another participant which was one time a man). During one session there were 20 participants, although during other sessions 10-15 people would attend. (half women and men at one point, other times majority men).

The play the Okombahe group (with the help of the Platform facilitators) chose to develop was about witchcraft. The following synthesizes this play:

Scene 1: After a church hymn is sung while walking in a circle, there is a mime of men gambling. When a young girl walks by these men, they jump up as if to attack her and 'freeze' in this position. The narrator (a man) speaks to the audience: "Oh look, how sadly our children are falling into the hands of evil". The humming continues and the group of men are just "loafing around" while another man walks by. The male group again 'freezes' in the attack position. The narrator continues; "Look, oh look, how sadly my child is falling into the hands of evil".

Scene 2: A woman is sitting in her house while her child plays outside. The

mother calls her child into the house and asks the girl to go to the shop to buy some sugar for her while warning her to hurry since it is getting late. Although she protests, the girl goes. The group sings.

Scene 3: An old witch (woman) is "fiddling in her house". After hearing the approaching girl-child, she cries out "Oh, whose child will I get to fetch me some water?", as she pretends to be ill. The child tries to refuse, but then, after the witch's coaxing, decides to fetch the water. Meanwhile, the witch prepares "some strange food" that "she mixes with various odd-looking ingredients taken from her breast and pockets". When the girl returns, the witch gives her this 'food' in return for the water saying "now don't tell anyone that I sent you nor that I gave you anything, you understand? Hurry now. Off you go!"

Scene 4: The child returns home sick. After summoning the neighbour to drive them, the mother and girl go to the witchdoctor. The rest of the group enters as well as the 'witch'. "She acts strangely as she is caught up in the action. She leaves". The witchdoctor mimes 'pulling' out the poison and asks the rest of the group "What must I do with the woman?" The mother and child reply "Kill her, kill her, she wanted to destroy us with her evil thoughts and medicine". "The witchdoctor takes out a strong needle and pushes in through the heart of the doll of the witch. The witch is placed in another corner of the stage where she collapses".

Scene 5: The mother and child are happy and return home while the group sings a song praising the witchdoctor.

Arandis 1991

Arandis is a prefabricated 'black' community made by Rossing Uranium to house 'their' mine workers. It is situated just north of Swakopmund, Namibia, along the west coast of the country. The following is a synopsis of a play which was created by children in Arandis.

Scene 1: Children are playing outside of the home and a mother calls to them saying "All you do is play while I am trapped in this house. Its like a curfew. I need a pass to get out of this house". The son comes inside and argues with the mother about when he can have some money. The mother explains that she will never give money away to a boy who has crashed a car and wastes his money on horse racing.

Scene 2: The boy is involved in stealing for money. He conspires with a friend about the plan. He is worried that the police will give him lots of problems.

Scene 3: The boy is caught by the police. The mother advises the police to take him to prison to teach him a lesson so he will not do it again. She informs her husband about what has happened. The police ask for the father's pass and asks him why he is so drunk. The mother replies that he is drunk all the time and steals her money. She also explains how her husband wants her home all the time and how he is out most of the time or drinks in front of the kids.

Scene 4: Everyone (mother, father, children) is excited about the weekend. They talk about how they are going to have a good time. However, an argument breaks out about not having enough money to spend. Suddenly, the boy enters screaming in pain. He explains that many people have attacked him when he was

caught in the act of stealing.

Rehoboth, 1991

The so-called 'black' township next to Rehoboth, just south of Windhoek, comprises of less than one thousand people. The following is a synopsis of a play which was created by approximately ten people women and men.

Scene 1: A domestic worker is cleaning for her employer. The employer is ordering her around, even expecting her to pick up a gown that she has just thrown on the floor.

Scene 2: Back at home, the domestic worker finds that her husband has been beaten by his boss for trying to steal his goats (who is her boss' husband) while she is worried where their daughter is.

Scene 3: In the local shebeen (bar), it is found that the shebeen owner is charging too much. The daughter and her friend find that this is unfair and rob the shebeen owner. They need the money for food.

Scene 4: The drunk daughter and her friend arrive home. The pastor is visiting and the daughter's friend uses bad language towards the pastor. After the daughter passes out, the father clubs the drunk friend to death. The mother is so angry she leaves the house (she will not sleep with a dead body in the house) and the daughter is left crying over her friend. The father hides the dead body under the bed.

Scene 5: The next day the domestic worker/mother is back at work where she is listening to her employer tell about all her 'terrible' problems concerning her

marriage, etc. The employer then wonders what is wrong with 'her worker' and the mother tells her the story of how her husband killed her daughter's friend. The employer calls the police even though the mother does not want her to do so.

Scene 6: The police come to the domestic worker's home to arrest her husband. After the father is gone, the daughter informs everyone that she will mend her ways and go to school and church and not drink. She feels responsible for her father's jailing because of her behaviour.

APPENDIX "D" - ACTION WORKSHOP PORTFOLIOS 1991**WORKSHOP CO-ORDINATOR**

Co-ordinate all drama groups

Report backs and assessments of groups.

For workshops sub committes once a month.

Plan a workshop roster

PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATOR

Implement plan of action

Overall responsibility of theatre and props room.

TRAINING CO-ORDINATOR

Implementing trainig of members and drama groups.

Assessments and reports of training.

ADMINISTRATOR

Co-ordinat all adninistrative tasks.

Office maintenance.

Salaries etc

EDUCATION CO-ORDINATOR

Internal and external education.

Resource Room

APPENDIX "E" - SACTWU WORKSHOP 1991

1. INTRODUCTION

2. ENERGISING EXERCISE (STARBOARD)

TO WORK -- TO HOME
CLEAN THE FLOOR
CATCH THE BUS
AMANDLA
FREEZE

10mi.

3. LISTENING/CONCENTRATION (PASS THE MESSAGE)

20 mi

4. CREATIVE (STATUES)

25 min

COMMUNITY CHARACTERS

- a) MACHINIST
- b) CUTTER
- c) STREET VENDOR
- d) BOSS
- e) STREET CLEANER
- f) TAXI DRIVER

SINGULAR

20 mins

GROUPS

20 mins

ASSESMENT AND WAY FORWARD

20mins

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only drawback to the plays of Platform 2000 and Action Workshop is when they are performed in a language which is difficult for the audience to understand. For instance, in the case of Action Workshop, more of their plays need to be in one of the 'indigenous' African languages so that many more people can understand. The group was working on this problem through the implementation of Xhosa lessons.

Platform 2000 and Action Workshop are developing liberating popular theatre (Chapter 3.4.3), a participatory development strategy, while the plays they perform comprise the 'community popular theatre' type (chapter 3.4.2). The popular theatre strategies of both Platform 2000 and Action Workshop exemplify how two types of popular theatre, 'community' popular theatre and 'liberating' popular theatre, can effectively be used to complement each other. By allowing the popular theatre activists to do what they help others do in their drama workshops, the activists keep in touch with the drama creation process and practise their acting skills. When plays are performed to potential drama workshop participants, as in the case at Kamiriithu, an example of what popular theatre can do is shown.

The popular theatre of Platform 2000 and Action Workshop also exemplifies how participation strategies need to be assessed not only by their tangible effects or strategic actions which emerge, but by the process which unfolds. The process of popular theatre is inherently valuable in itself. This means that to categorize a popular theatre initiative as a 'coping' strategy or 'strategically significant' (Chapter 2.3.1) must be based mainly on the quality of the popular theatre process. Who is in control, how, and for how long, are significant factors in this endeavour.