

Research Article

Gender Dynamics and the Role of
Participatory/Development Theatre in a post-
apartheid South Africa: The example of
DramAidE

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Declaration

I, Miranda Young, do hereby declare that this is my own work, and that all other people's works have been fully acknowledged. I further declare that I have never before submitted this work for an award of a degree to any other university. This work is being submitted in partial fulfilment of Master of Arts degree in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Natal, Durban, South Africa

Signature.....

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Abstract

Participatory education (Friere 1972) and by extension participatory drama/theatre (Boal 1979, Mda 1993) has been regarded as particularly appropriate for oppressed communities, since participatory theatre for development – which involves the active participation of both spectator and actor – encourages disempowered communities and individuals to view change as possible (Mda 1993).

However, taking DramAidE (Drama in AIDS Education) as a case study this dissertation argues that in a post- apartheid South Africa the tendency with development/ participatory theatre has been to marginalise questions of gender in the focus on race without an awareness that it is the interconnections between race/ class and gender oppressions which characterise a society (Davis 1984). This coupled with the fact that theatre for development has a tendency, if not effectively facilitated, to allow for the reinforcement of dominant [patriarchal] values (Kerr 1995) makes an awareness of gender dynamics in participatory theatre projects particularly relevant.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Participatory Education (Freire, 1972), which has evolved into Development Theatre (Mda, 1993) has been regarded as particularly appropriate for oppressed societies (Boal, 1979). Popular theatre for development - which involves the active participation of both actor and spectator - encourages disempowered communities to view change as possible (Mda, 1993). In a post-apartheid South Africa however, the tendency with development/participatory theatre has been to marginalize questions of gender in the focus on race. Yet "patriarchal domination shares an ideological foundation with racism and other forms of group oppression" (hooks b, 1989:22). The way women are perceived (and treated) - and perceive themselves in society is directly related to existing power structures within the given society. Issues of gender therefore cannot stand in isolation. It is the interconnections between race, class and gender¹ oppression that characterise a society. Angela Davis (1984:47) writes, "the very same conditions that spawn (racism and) racist violence encourage (sexism and) sexual violence". The culture of political violence that has been established in South Africa - fuelled by the poor socio-economic and political situation - has implications for the treatment of women- particularly black women - who are predominantly economically disadvantaged. The interconnectedness of race, class and gender also highlights "the diversity and complexity of the female experience, of our relationship to power and domination" (hooks b, 1989:21), thereby defying a monolithic construction of women and the 'myth of sisterhood'. Thus emphasising the need to articulate gender not as a separate entity but in terms of race and class. Davis (1984:49) states that "sexual violence (or associated sexist behaviour) can never be completely eradicated until we have successfully effected a whole range of radical social transformations" in society in general. By the same token radical social transformations (which typifies the post-apartheid situation) can never be completely successful without the eradication of sexist behaviour and attitude.

This research article will involve a theoretical discussion of development/participatory theatre based in Paulo Freire's (1972) concept of participatory education in developing countries. Following on, Augusto Boal's theories of theatre of the oppressed which grew

¹While I am aware that a myriad of power categories exist such as sexual orientation and age and that these

from Freire, and which have been very influential in the evolution of theatre for development, will be applied. Secondly, Freire and Boal's theories and practices will be located in a Southern African Theatre for Development context. Thirdly, both Freire and Boal's theories will then be critiqued and analysed from a gendered perspective which will be drawn from the arguments of bell hooks (sic) (1989) and Angela Davis (1984). Attention will also be given to the issue of silence and voice as agency. Finally, the resulting critique will then be applied to the participatory approach developed by DramAidE (a KwaZuluNatal based Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) whose objective is AIDS education in rural areas) analysing the extent to which they are gender sensitive and how gender issues are dealt with. In a post-apartheid South Africa the extent to which educational theatre - as an overarching category - is sensitive to gender dynamics is an issue which needs to be seriously addressed in the light of our new (May 1994) government's commitment to gender equality.

are by no means definitive, for the purposes of this article I will be dealing with these three only.

2.0 THEORETICAL DISCUSSION OF DEVELOPMENT/ PARTICIPATORY THEATRE

2.1 PAULO FREIRE: PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED

With the ideological move towards democratisation of communication, the radical methodologies and educational philosophies of Brazilian born educator Paulo Freire have had increasing impact since their inception in the 1970's. Developed in response to the growing crisis of illiteracy in developing countries, it led to the discovery of what Freire described as a **"culture of silence"** (1972) of the dispossessed. He came to realise that their "ignorance and lethargy were the direct product of the whole situation of economic, social and political domination - and of the paternalism of which they were victims" (Freire, 1972:10). An awareness that educational processes are not neutral caused him to articulate the aspects of formal education which he termed the "banking concept of education" (Freire, 1972:46), and thus to develop his method of participatory education. The former functioning to "facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system" the latter becoming "a practice of freedom" where people are given the means to "deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world" (Freire, 1972:14).

2.1.1 Paulo Freire's Philosophy

The dehumanisation of man² by other men is what Freire terms "historical reality" (Freire, 1972:20). It is a state of dehumanisation that characterises 'the oppressed' and condemns them to remain thus. Driven by a desire for liberation, it therefore becomes the primary goal of "the oppressed" to become more humanised and thus "more fully human" (Freire,1972:43). Due to binary constructions in language and thus our conception of

²In describing the nature of oppressors and oppression, Freire inadvertently uses terms such as "paternalistic" and "domesticating" yet he fails to extend his logic to include the central aspect of gender to oppression, preferring to use the generic 'man' without acknowledging its implied omission. This indicates a bias in the work of Paulo Freire, which will be avoided in my analysis, but will be highlighted in relation to my concern with interconnections of power struggles: the fact that Freire was gender blind, unknowingly privileging race and class oppressions in his analysis, reinforces the extent to which these systems of domination have historically been established as the meta-critique.

reality, the alternative to not being 'the oppressed' necessarily implies (for some) being 'the oppressor'. This danger of crossing over from 'oppressed' to 'oppressor' is one that 'the oppressed' must overcome. Freire attributes this unfortunate tendency primarily to a fear of freedom, as 'oppressor's' tend to prescribe an oppressed consciousness to match his/her own, causing a lack of consciousness of themselves. If the oppressed individual becomes an oppressor in the process of his/her liberation, Freire stresses that the struggle for emancipation has been meaningless. Humanisation, which is constantly being shackled by the results of oppression such as exploitation and injustice, involves a struggle for emancipation and "for the affirmation of men as persons" (Freire, 1972:21). This humanising process not only involves the liberation of 'the oppressed' but 'the oppressors' as well.

Freedom for Freire is an "indispensable condition for the quest of human completion" (Freire, 1972:24). It involves aspects of autonomy and responsibility, and can only be achieved through conquest and most importantly must be initiated by 'the oppressed'. It is central to Freirean philosophy that 'the oppressed' initiate their own awakening as "no pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and for presenting for their emulation models from among their oppressors" (Freire, 1972:13). Yet Freire (1972:25) asks, how can the oppressed participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation that will enable them to transcend their oppressed situation? For "as long as the oppressed remain unaware of the causes of their condition, they fatalistically accept their exploitation" (Freire, 1972:40). The answer lies in the ability to perceive the reality of the oppression. This critical awareness of the causes and consequences of being deprived of a voice (such as domestication) involves a process that is at the heart of Freirean philosophy. Freire terms this process *praxis*.

Praxis implies a unique combination of intellectual reflection and action and is defined as "action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1972:28). No reality can transform itself, authentic³ *praxis* implies that there must be an awakening of critical

³Freire's ideological and philosophical associations with historical materialism are clear through his use of Marxian rhetoric. Freire uses the word 'authentic' to describe genuine *praxis* as stated above. 'Genuine thinking' implies that which is concerned about reality and 'genuine liberation', that which involves the

consciousness before transformation is possible. The oppressed person must confront his/her reality critically, which involves an understanding of the interdependence of subjective and objective. This understanding enables the individual to transcend subjective reality to an awareness of objective reality - that which is independent to oneself, enabling him/her to act. Thus the central human process of conscientisation is initiated, which empowers the individual to effect this development and transformation of reality. Conscientisation is only viable because one's consciousness although conditioned, can recognise that it is conditioned.

This liberatory pedagogy characterised by a conscientisation process implying an awareness of the nature of oppression and a commitment to transformation of oppressive reality marks only the first stage in Freire's pedagogy. The second "liberation pedagogy" occurs when the reality of oppression is transformed, such that it becomes no longer "the pedagogy of the oppressed" but the pedagogy of all men (sic) in the process of permanent liberation.

2.1.2 Pedagogy

Freire's pedagogical method of "critical intervention of the people in reality through praxis" (Freire, 1972:30) constantly highlights the importance of 'the oppressed' being the facilitators of their own liberation since "pedagogy which begins with the egoistic interests of the oppressors (an egoism cloaked in the false generosity of paternalism) ...is an instrument of dehumanisation" (Freire, 1972:30). Freire however is equally aware that the implementation of liberating education requires political power and 'the oppressed' have none. Freire then asks the question: How then is it possible to carry out the pedagogy of the oppressed prior to the revolution? (1972:30). The reply is to be found in the distinction between *systematic education* and *educational projects* (his italics). The former can only be changed by political power and is exemplified by formal education; the latter should be carried out *with* the oppressed in the process of organising them. It is thus essential according to Freire (1973) that "education for critical consciousness", involves the

process of humanisation. 'Genuine reflection' will be briefly defined later. Freire's use of the word 'authentic' is also potentially problematic as it raises question of 'authentic' in relation to 'inauthentic'. By inference Freire does not define what is meant by 'inauthentic *praxis*'.

reflective participation of 'the oppressed' since attempting a liberation process without this is to "treat them as objects which must be saved from the burning building; it is to lead them into a populist pitfall and to transform them into masses which can be manipulated" (Freire, 1972:41).

2.1.3 Banking Education

For Freire, education is to be considered a "Practice of Freedom", liberating both educator and learner. It involves participation and a codification of words into visual images which "stimulate people 'submerged' in the *culture of silence* [my italics] to 'emerge' as conscious makers of their own culture" (Freire, 1973:viii). Thus participants are empowered to reject their traditional role as 'objects' in nature and social history and undertake to become 'subjects' of their own destiny. Education, is thus a combination of communication and dialogue. Freire's concept of education however, is revolutionary and is not the system currently used in schools and other educational institutions throughout the Third World⁴. Rather, there is an inappropriate and unqualified assimilation of First World educational techniques into a Third World context exemplified by what Freire terms the "banking concept of education"(1972:46).

This form of education writes Freire is suffering from "narration sickness" (1972:45). The teacher (the narrating subject) deposits information into the students (the listening objects) such that the content is entirely detached from reality. This form of education is thus alienating, transforming the students into mere containers who must repeat back mechanically what the narrating subject has said. It implies a one-way vertical method of education, which is both paternalistic and oppressive. The binary of teacher and student has connotations of active and passive - the teacher is active, the student is passive - implying that the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing. There is no participation involved. This lack of both critical conscience and action (embodied in participation) implies a lack of *praxis*; thus this educational process is dehumanising,

⁴Although the term 'Third World' was ascribed by Western 'so-called' First World countries within a Modernisation framework to describe conditions of 'underdevelopment' and consequently contains connotations of 'backwardness', the use of the term here is purely descriptive, synonymous with the grouping of 'developing countries'. The term is also used and will continue to be used throughout this

working against the primary goal of becoming more fully human.

'The oppressors' use this method in conjunction with "a paternalistic social action apparatus" (Freire, 1972:47) in an attempt to minimise the creative power of individuals making them more easily dominated. They are treated writes Freire as "marginal men who deviate from the general configuration of a 'good organised and just' society" (Freire, 1972:48). According to Freire the truth is, however that 'the oppressed' are not marginals living outside society. They have always been inside - "inside the structure which made them 'beings for others'" (1972:48). The solution for Freire is not to integrate them into the structure of oppression - for this is impossible but rather "to transform that structure so that they can become beings for themselves" (1972:48). This would then undermine both the oppressors purposes and hence the use of the banking concept of education.

Where banking education highlights the false understanding of men/women as objects who are mere possessors of consciousness, Freirean "problem posing" (1972) education stresses the centrality of man/woman as a conscious being responding to the concept of intentionality which is considered by Freire as the essence of consciousness.

The humanist, revolutionary educator encourages critical thinking at every level. The student is imbued with a trust in humanity and a belief in creative power. The teacher is thus transformed into a facilitator initiating a new teacher/student relationship that is less 'vertical' and more 'horizontal'. Through this reassessment, the teacher can now re-examine his/her earlier considerations, simultaneously playing the role of student and educator. Thus liberating, problem-posing education implies a dialogical relation between the two cognitive actors - teacher (facilitator) and student. Authentic education stresses the centrality of dialogue in the process of education. This dialogic interaction enables the emergence of consciousness - as opposed to the banking submergence of consciousness.

Education as a practice of freedom denies the Eurocentric belief that man (sic) is abstract, isolated and independent of the world - this being what Freire terms "authentic reflection" (1972:54). Rather, he sees men/women simultaneously in the exterior world and in the interior consciousness enabling a perception of reality as a process, which must constantly

article in compliance with Freire's extensive use of this term in his works (1972) (1973).

be reassessed and transformed in a legitimate pursuit of humanity, which otherwise would not be possible. In sum Freire writes: "banking theory and practice, as immobilising and fixating forces, fail to acknowledge men as historical beings; problem-posing theory and practice take man's historicity as their starting point" (1972:56).

2.2 AUGUSTO BOAL AND THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED

As discussed, Paulo Freire's revolutionary theory for liberation of 'the oppressed' has at its core a unique combination of reflection and action, which he termed *praxis*. It was acknowledged that in order for individuals to become truly liberated from their oppressors or oppressions, active participation was essential. If we work from the premise that this method is most appropriate in the liberation and subsequent empowerment of individuals, drama becomes an extremely appropriate method in furthering the goal of education and liberation amongst oppressed peoples. It is by nature an active learning experience where the audience is able to identify with the characters and where a certain image of the world is projected. In appropriating the Freirian method of action and reflection and of the necessary participation of all involved, South American dramatist Augusto Boal saw this potential for Drama to further Freire's aims of the liberation of 'the oppressed' and subsequently developed what is widely known today as *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1979). In order to do this however Boal's first aim was to place the theatre back into the hands of the people. He states "all theatre is necessarily political, because all the activities of man are political and theatre is one of them" (Boal, 1979: vii).

In his book *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1979) Boal articulates that theatre, both past and present, which traditionally reflects the established "coercive system of tragedy" (Boal, 1979:ix), is in itself an instrument of oppression. What began as an art form possessed by all the people was taken possession of by the ruling classes and thus came to embody their spirit of separation and the exertion of power over others. This involved the separation of actors and spectators as well as the separation of the protagonist and other actors. However the emergence of Marxist German playwright Bertold Brecht in the 1940s marked a distinct move away from Aristotle's mimesis. No longer a reflection of the ruling class control, Brechtian drama revealed the revolutionary potential of the theatre through communicating that social being determines thought and not visa-versa. He also revealed the potential of the spectator to transform into the actor. Greatly influenced by Brecht, but seeing that the process could be taken further, Boal proposed a revolutionising of the theatre in which theatre was placed back in the hands of the populace where it was able to be used as a tool for their liberation.

Boal developed his own brand of theatre in which he explored the frontiers between theatre, drama and psychotherapy. The Boal system specifically works at identifying oppressions and leading the learner to propose creative solutions to solving them. The central aspect of this process is the involvement and active participation of the oppressed person in the healing process. Thus Boal turns the spectators into "spect-actors" (Boal, 1979:339) thereby empowering the audience to alter the course of action on stage, to change a certain image of the world and to do the action they think necessary to liberate themselves. He states "when an actor carries out an act of liberation, he or she does it in place of the spectator, and thus for the latter a catharsis. But when a spect-actor carries out the same act on stage, he or she does it in the name of all other spectators and thus for them it is not a catharsis but a dynamism" (Boal, 1979:339) this being the ultimate goal in the process of liberation.

The theories expounded in *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1979) are designed to transform reality, that reality which contains oppression. The process for this transformation is cyclic. Firstly, the oppression must be defined. In order to do this Boal uses games and exercises that are designed to dynamise the individual and develop group awareness. The aim is then to sensitise the body into a receiver and transmitter of signals: Boal places great emphasis on knowing the body so that it can become an instrument of expression. Secondly, the oppression must be transformed into an image or a fiction (which is real in so far as it is an image) since external physicality can reveal our internal condition - oppression is felt physically rather than described verbally. Once the image has been created the participants must then ask "what do we want to change?" then the image, which is representative of the oppression, is transformed. Working on the image, Boal feels reveals the possibilities for change in all situations. Finally, the oppressed individuals must return to reality in order to transform it and thus liberate themselves. Boal stipulated that the work must begin from the oppression of specific individuals or groups and move towards a generalisation. This process is one of pluralisation. If an expression cannot be pluralised it is probably not material (changeable) oppression but something imagined. Boal articulates that oppressed people must become artists (they must make their own images) starting from their own oppressions even if they seem objectively less important than others' oppressions.

2.2.1 Boalian Theatrical Forms

Boal's theatre of 'the oppressed' is comprised of three distinctive theatrical forms that work together in the process of liberation. These are Image Theatre, Invisible Theatre and Forum Theatre all of which aim "to change people – 'spectators', passive beings in the theatrical phenomenon - into subjects into actors, transformers of the dramatic action" (Boal, 1979:122).

Briefly, Image Theatre is defined as "a series of exercises and games designed to uncover essential truths about societies and cultures without resorting to spoken language" (Boal, 1992:xix). It involves the participants making still images - symbolic representations - of their lives, feelings and oppressions, which are then grouped in terms of themes. The images are not static but are rather the starting point for further action.

Invisible Theatre is defined as "public theatre, which involves the public as participants in the action without their knowing it" (Boal, 1992:xx). It takes place outside of a theatrical context and is used to stimulate debate and discussion thus getting people to question their beliefs in a public environment. It involves actors staging a conflict in public which the public are lead to believe is a genuine disagreement. The conflict between the two actors increases until the public becomes involved. The staged conflict is always relating to an oppression, which affects members of that community directly - sexism for example.

Forum Theatre is "a theatrical game in which a problem is shown in an unsolved form, to which the audience, again spect-actors, is invited to suggest and act solutions" (Boal, 1992:xxi). The actors in Forum Theatre present a play in which a certain image of the world is depicted involving an inhibiting oppression. The spectators are then asked if they agree with the message/actions of the protagonist. The play is then repeated and the 'spect-actors' are encouraged to alter the course of the action showing that alternative solutions are possible. "[The] spect-actor intervenes and changes the vision of the world as it is, into a world that it could be" (Boal, 1993:335). To alter the course of the action all the audience members have to do is approach the playing area and shout "Stop!".

Thus, by acting out their ideas they are able to train for real-life action, learning the possible consequences of their actions and that transformation is possible. Theatre of the

oppressed, which encompasses these categories, "is about acting rather than talking, questioning rather than giving answers, analysing rather than accepting" (Boal, 1992: xxiv).

2.2.2 An introduction to gender

Boal, unlike Freire, who speaks in terms of a monolithic essentialist conception of 'the oppressed', unaware of the specific oppressions faced by some and not others - specifically relating to the double oppression of women in a post-colonial situation, realises the specificity of certain oppressions. In his book *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (1992), Boal gives an account of a Forum Theatre, which took place in a small town in Italy entitled 'Feminism in Godrano'. In this instance the oppression communicated was the oppression of women by men. The programme was said to have had an empowering effect on the women who were able, through the vehicle of theatre, to publicly express their grievances, which would otherwise have remained unheard.

Boal sums up his views on his method: "The poetics of the oppressed is essentially the poetics of liberation: the spectator no longer delegates power to the characters either to think or act in his place. The spectator frees himself; he thinks and acts for himself! Theatre is action! Perhaps the theatre is not revolutionary in itself; but have no doubts it is a rehearsal for a revolution" (Boal, 1979:155).

2.3 THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CONTEXT

Responding to the drastic need for development in Third World countries, a methodology was needed that would not only identify and solve the problems of specific communities but would empower the communities with an understanding of their individual and collective potential to effect change. Thus the participatory strategies of Boal (who grew from Freire) which coincided with a development strategy came to be known as 'popular' Theatre for Development. 'Popular' as the use of popular cultural forms enables the inclusion of the whole community and not just those who are educated.

When discussing Theatre for Development however, it is firstly necessary to make the distinction between *drama* and *theatre*. Southern African developmentalists, such as Zakes Mda and Ross Kidd, are primarily interested in theatre, which Mda defines as "the production and communication of meaning in the performance itself...a transaction or negotiation of meaning in a performer-spectator situation" (Mda in Gunner, 1994:203). Drama alternatively, refers to "the literature on which performances are sometimes based" (ibid).

When speaking in terms of development, Mda isolates 'communication' as the basis for initiating and continuing this process. Without social interaction between those agents of development, and those to whom it will benefit, Mda states that "we cannot in any meaningful way talk about development" (ibid). Effective communication, in accordance with Freirean philosophy, must be dialogic - two way - involving the community. Thus in explaining the application of theatre as a tool for development he states: "the need for a democratic vehicle to facilitate dialogue at a community level gave birth to the use of theatre as an appropriate medium that can be used for both mass and interpersonal communication" (Mda, in Gunner, 1994:204).

David Kerr locates two main sources of Theatre for Development: "The colonial tradition of Theatre as propaganda, and another more radical tradition of Community Theatre" (Kerr, 1995:149). Many African countries, post-independence, stuck to the old didactic methods

of theatre as part of developmental programmes. Many adult educators, however, were dissatisfied with this centralised method where "control and goal setting were kept out of the hands of those whom the programme was run" (Kerr, 1995:149). Similarly Mda warns against top-down developments - when those from outside the community decide the route for development without consulting the community. Not only are these projects in danger of not responding to the socio-political needs of the community, but also without involving the community at a grass-roots level the community feels no responsibility towards making a success of the project. Due to the lack of empowering participation, these projects tend to reinforce dependency and passivity encouraging "poverty and disadvantage (to be) viewed as self inflicted" (Dalrymple 1987 in Baxter 1995:23).

In the same way that Paulo Freire challenges us to make a distinction between education as an instrument of domination, and education as an instrument of liberation, there was a growing awareness of this essential distinction within theatre. The inappropriateness of traditional didactic methods, which were marked by a cultural gap between adult educators and the people, was becoming apparent. In assessing developmental interventions Kerr (1995:151) describes "a lack of focus in attempting to concretise the constraints to rural developments, and a tendency to a moralising exhortatory approach on the part of the extension workers". In the search for a method that would not encourage paternalism, Popular Theatre for Development seemed to be a technique, which could resolve the apathy created by poor methods of communication. Using popular forms, speaking in the local language and dealing with local problems made this method useful, understandable, and able to overcome the barriers of illiteracy so rife in much of rural Africa.

The seminal experiment in Theatre for Development, as identified by Kerr (1995) was called *Laedza Batanani (The sun is up, let's go and work together)*, which took place in Botswana for the first time in 1974. Originally concerned with issues of migrant labour it later grew to include such issues as tuberculosis and venereal disease. What characterised this approach was that the plays and post-performance discussions lead to direct comments and solutions through action. The developmentalists function as mere catalysts, who through becoming familiar with the problems of the community can direct the action in the appropriate way. True to Boal's practice it was acknowledged that Theatre for Development should not instruct people what to do but rather empower them

to participate and find ways of solving their own problems. 'Development' thus implies a process of critical awareness or in Freirean terms – conscientisation. Kerr writes that "the idea was that a fairly simple set of skills which were nevertheless close to indigenous performing traditions could be an appropriate communication and conscientization tool for villagers to adopt" (1995:155).

However, despite the good intentions of these projects and *Laedza Batanani* in particular, a very significant finding was that during the research process "it was the most articulate members of the community who monopolised discussions; and they often had dominant class values" (Kerr, 1995:153). Thus, instead of creating a realisation of the radical potential of all the individuals in the community, in ignoring the hierarchical dynamics within each community, it had the dangerous tendency to preach dominant class values and reinforce the status quo. In a critique of *Laedza Batanani*, of which they were in fact a part, Kidd and Byram acknowledge that "the Freirean emphasis on conscientisation and participation...was, in practice, a smokescreen for domestication" (Kidd and Byram 1981 in Kerr 1995:159). Thus despite the Freirean language of popular resistance used to describe Theatre for Development, in practice this method was more like paternalism. Kidd and Byram (1981) write: "The major disadvantage of Theatre for Development Workshops has been that they have not been truly popular...the whole process is controlled by the more powerful members of the community" (in Kerr, 1995:159) who disseminate dominant class ideas. This finding clearly has central gender implications as 'articulation' and 'agency/power' are traditionally associated as being the possessions of men and 'dominant class ideas' are traditionally patriarchal ones.

Another of the primary factors, which caused Theatre for Development to be repressive rather than liberatory, was what Kidd (1981) termed "scapegoating the poor" implying a belief that poverty is self-inflicted. This led to the developmental focus being on transforming the individual and not the structures that determine the individual. A necessary and obvious leap, is an understanding and awareness of the most pervasive and oppressive determining structure - that being patriarchy. Thus truly liberatory Theatre for Development needs to be aware that it must not merely resist "scapegoating the poor" but

must also resist "scapegoating the women"⁵(Kerr, 1995:167). An example of this took place in a Nigerian Workshop in the town of Gboko. In this instance the drama team felt that the play creation process and discussions had been entirely dominated by men and illustrated a mentality of "scapegoating the women" (ibid). They consequently requested to hold separate sessions with the women. In these sessions "the double oppression of women, economic and sexual, was (presented by the women) as a major problem" Kerr (1995:167). Kerr (1995:161) asserts "by concentrating on disparate constraints divorced from the underlying structural causes of underdevelopment, Theatre for Development often obscured issues for the rural poor rather than clarifying them".

A solution was thus needed to retain the positive effects of Theatre for Development, while amending its tendency to domesticate. A seminal example of theory informing practice was seen in the consequent appropriation of August Boal's Forum Theatre, which through its extensive participatory approach, had the ability to overturn the hierarchy in a community which may have prevented certain people from interacting. Where previous methods had included the community primarily in the post-performance discussion, in Boal's method of participation "theoretical analysis of the issues is an integral and inevitable part of scenario making" (Kerr, 1995:161). Through his emphasis of "theatre as discourse" where actors and audiences collaborated in the creation of drama, it afforded agency to those who previously had none. People are far more likely to join in on the discussions if they have joined in the play. For Boal and those whom he has influenced "the various 'rehearsals' are [his italics] the performance and are scarcely distinguishable from the audiences' analysis" (Kerr, 1995:161).

Through this method, theatre is seen as the process, not the product such that "Development theatre can be said to be in the process, with the product lying in the actual development" (Baxter, 1995:25). With this shift from ends to means, nothing is presented as conclusive enabling empowerment to be effected inside the group through the constant questioning and challenging of the ideas and possible solutions presented in each scenario. Kidd (1984 in Kerr, 1995:161) describes the Boalian method as a "drama-which-is-never-

⁵This issue of *scapegoating* women or *women-blaming* as it is otherwise known, is central as will later be discussed in the DramAidE section of the article. This tendency, which educational projects are in danger of complying with (Seidel 1996:157 in Dalrymple and Preston-Whyte 1996), becomes important when

finished" in that it is constantly being restructured and reassessed to extend the insights of the participants.

Theatre may be a successful tool for development, however it is important not to over-estimate its transformative potential - at least on a physical level. It is clearly unable to relieve the immediate physical conditions of poverty and underdevelopment that the people who live in these conditions have to face on a day-to-day basis. Nevertheless, although theatre can't be expected to change the material conditions that people live in "it can allow the participants to identify (their) goals and 'rehearse' the way in which they intend achieving them" (Baxter, 1995:25). Thus, Theatre for Development is not about raising standards of living but should be "a process of social transformation" (Mda, 1994:204) involving a greater control over social, political and economic destiny. Its ambition lies in empowering people to mobilise in the Third World battle against poverty, economic oppression and the ever increasing threat of AIDS.

Where Boal turned theatre into a radical tool of conscientization, the primary inspiration for Theatre for Development clearly came from Freire. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972:80) he writes: "I cannot think for others...Even if the people's thinking is superstitious or naive, it is only in action that they can change".

3.0 ADDING GENDER TO THE AGENDER

3.1 WOMEN, SILENCE, 'THE OPPRESSED'

Taking Freire (1973) as a starting point, it is his recognition of 'the oppressed' as being characterised by their lack of agency and voicelessness that caused him to describe their condition as a "culture of silence" (1973: viii). As previously mentioned⁶, Freire also articulated that one of the consequences of being deprived of a voice is what he terms 'domestication', he asserts, "functionally oppression (which implies being deprived of a voice) is domesticating" (1972:28). Although Freire was neither assuming gendered associations in his use of 'domestication' nor 'silence', if we take this one step further, the interwoven concepts of 'silence' and 'domestication' have been widely drawn on to describe the condition of women in patriarchal society. This is largely due to the fact that having a voice, as Banning (1996) indicates, implies agency and thus the capacity to act as our own agents of social change, a situation denied many women. She argues: "voice is a metaphor that is widely used to point to the notion of 'power as agency' - the capacity and right of all people in our country to act in and on the social, cultural and political structures that express and shape our particular relations" (1996:66).

American Feminist writer bell hooks articulates the centrality of the notion of silence to feminist thought: "within feminist circles silence is often seen as...the sign of women's submission to the patriarchal authority" (1989:6). Thus, while silence/voicelessness and its association with lack of agency, is a characteristic of 'the oppressed' (of which the women also form a part) in relation to 'the oppressor', within oppressed communities themselves, it is the women who are characterised by silence/voicelessness in relation to the men. This highlights the relative nature of oppression and the consequent necessity of being sensitive to gender dynamics when working within a Third World community within a development context.

According to the Freirean pedagogy of 'the oppressed', the defining characteristic in horizontal communication and education - that which enables the emergence of

⁶ see page 4

consciousness and liberation - is dialogue. Both hooks and Banning draw on the importance of this aspect when dealing with the issue of women's silence - and particularly black women's silence, as these women are predominantly victims of both race oppression and gender oppression coming from traditionally patriarchal societies.

hooks defines dialogue as "the sharing of speech and recognition" (1989:6). A woman may or may not be physically silent, but it is the extent to which she is heard that signifies the nature of that silence. Thus, although it is often silence that describes the state of many women in the presence of men (or other oppressors, which may include other women), speaking does not necessarily imply agency. Agency, as discussed by Banning has two central aspects - acting on, and being acted on. It is thus dialogic and "implies action on the part of all the participants, the speaker in speaking and the listener in listening" (1996:69). Speaking therefore becomes an interchange where both the speakers and the listeners are active, for it is through dialogue that our consciousness is, and continues to be created throughout our lives. Banning therefore distinguishes between silence and **voicelessness** - which implies a loss of agency. She maintains "people are rendered voiceless by the acts of others on them and by the structures and conditions in which they are inserted" (1996:71).

Through conceiving of speaking as social agency, it both changes the meaning for the speaker herself, empowering her with an awareness of the responsibility of her words, and "relocates the power of speaking in the spaces between people, spreading power *among* people" (1996:69). hooks stresses the importance of speaking and speech not only as a form of creative power, but also as an act of sustained resistance which can "protect us from dehumanisation and despair" (1989:7), for the context of silence (voicelessness) is both varied and multi-dimensional: "[m]ost obvious are the ways racism, sexism and class exploitation act to suppress and silence" (1989:8). Thus, resisting the temptation to locate sexism as the dominant and originating form of oppression, she realises the extent to which silence/voicelessness is characteristic of any situation of domination. She writes: "...when I ponder the silences, the voices that are not heard, the voices of those wounded and or oppressed individuals who do not speak or write, I contemplate the acts of persecution, torture - the terrorism that breaks spirits, that makes creativity impossible" (1989:7/8). Thus hooks expands the Freirean concept of *culture of silence* demonstrating

the patriarchal and racist nature of a culture bent on silencing those in historically weaker positions.

The existence of a situation of domination is clear when dealing with predominantly black female students whose behaviour, as Banning has observed in her experience as a voice trainer, demonstrates "a crisis of confidence" (1996:68) when faced with the possibility of crossing the threshold into speech that signifies meaning. Banning stresses the need to explore with these students reasons for this "crisis" - looking into what may be imposing itself on them. While being sensitive to social dynamics, she argues that "this is particularly necessary in the case of students whose personal histories are marked by systematic de-voicing by virtue of their gender, race/class or cultural and linguistic identities" (1996:71). She thus proposes an environment where students' voices can be more fully heard. bell hooks boldly articulates that "moving from silence into speech is for the oppressed, the colonised, the exploited, and those who stand and struggle side by side a gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth possible...(it is the) movement from object to subject - the liberated voice" (1989:9).

3.2 INTERLOCKING SYSTEMS OF DOMINATION

In the words of bell hooks: "We live in a world in crisis - a world governed by the politics of domination, one in which the belief in a notion of superior and inferior, and its concomitant ideology - that the superior should rule over the inferior - effects the lives of all people everywhere..." (1989:19). In assessing the nature of this domination, hooks and Davis stress the importance of seeing domination not in terms of individual manifestations such as race, gender or class oppression which operate independently; but rather as interconnected and interlocking systems of domination. In this way highlighting the diversity of female experience. The monolithic way in which Freire (1972) speaks of 'the oppressed' - primarily in terms of race and class - reinforces the historical way in which race and class oppression have been entrenched as the meta-critique when dealing with systems of domination. Issues of analysis in terms of gender are consequentially often sidelined.

Through articulating the way in which socio-economic conditions effect the experience of women and the nature of their oppression, hooks also rejects the tendency of Western Radical feminism to create a monolithic conception of women. She writes "race, sex (gender) and class, and not sex (gender) alone determine the nature of any female's identity, status and circumstance, and the degree to which she will or will not be dominated, and the extent to which she will have the power to dominate" (1989:22).

Women, she feels are themselves implicated in the politics of domination through other forms of oppression such as racism, which has placed white women (for example), in a position to become exploiters. Echoing the sentiments of Freire, hooks asserts therefore that it is essential for both men and women to be aware of their potential to oppress and dominate: for while the realisation of agency is empowering, if this agency is used against people to counter liberation, the struggle is meaningless. Thus "it is first the potential oppressor within that we must resist - the potential victim within that we must rescue - otherwise we cannot hope for an end to domination, for liberation" (1989:21). Nevertheless, while acknowledging the interconnections of power and domination she legitimates all forms of oppression as feminist concerns stating that "feminism as a liberation struggle must exist apart from and as a part of the larger struggle to eradicate

domination in all its forms" (1989:22).

Patriarchal domination according to hooks shares an ideological foundation with racism and other forms of group oppression, thus we cannot fully understand the way in which women are treated in society and societies without situating it within its larger socio-political context. It is here that Angela Davis (1984:36) makes a parallel between "sexual violence⁷ against individual women and neo-colonial violence against peoples and nations" since the conditions which spawn racism and racist violence, are the very same conditions which encourage sexism and sexual violence. Violence against women stems from a need to exert power over the less powerful, in a racist/classist society - such as South Africa - it is black women who are the most disempowered and fall prey to the most abuse. We therefore cannot look at gender - or racial issues, in isolation. An understanding of the interconnections between the systems of domination, which ensures the uniqueness of individual experience, is essential particularly in the process of education.

The solution for hooks, lies in Freirean *praxis* - "action upon the world in order to transform it" (1972:28), involving a combination of reflection and action. Thus hooks (1989:26) terms feminism "a transformational politics...a struggle against domination wherein the effort is to change ourselves as well as structures". This self-transformation, involving conscientisation necessitates the giving up - by both men and women - of set ways of thinking. It demands a shift in paradigm; it demands different ways of seeing, forcing us to confront that which is unknown and unfamiliar. For, in bringing in the Freirean concept that true liberation must come from within - within 'the oppressed' and within oneself - she states that "if we do not change our consciousness, we cannot change our actions or demand change from others" (1989:24).

⁷In speaking of violence against women it is important to be aware that Davis is not solely referring to physical abuse such as rape and wife battery but also of manifestations such as the lack of availability birth control and the lack of accessible, safe abortion clinics, which she situates on a much larger continuum of socially inflicted violence. This includes the concerted, systematic violations of women's economic and political rights. Within the South African context, violence against women would also constitute the patriarchal assumption amongst many black men that women do not have the right to say "no" to sex; hereby offering a pertinent example of the lack of agency in the voices of (many) women, who while they speak remain unheard. In the light of the AIDS pandemic that South Africa is facing this literally becomes a matter of life or death.

4.0 DRAMAIDE: A WORKING EXAMPLE OF THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

The DramAidE programme is an educational project, devised in 1992 in response to the growing AIDS pandemic in South Africa, particularly amongst the rural black community of KwaZuluNatal. The aim was to transmit information about HIV and AIDS to children - and the communities - as quickly as possible, while simultaneously dealing with interconnected issues of sexuality and sexuality behaviours and equipping people with life skills⁸. The alienating method of formal education represented in Freire's description of "banking education" (1972) offered no solution to this potentially catastrophic problem. Inspired by Boal, "[t]he intervention (thus) made use of educational theatre and drama in order to disseminate information and change beliefs and attitudes towards AIDS" (Dalrymple, L and Du Toit, 1996:19), primarily in terms of attitudes towards safer sex, partner relations and attitudes towards people with HIV/AIDS⁹.

⁸ "World-wide studies are showing that AIDS awareness programmes that do not include life skills have had very little lasting impact" (WHO and UNESCO, School Education 1994 in *Act Alive Funding Proposal* 1996:8). DramAidE, thus has recently initiated a Life Skills programme entitled "Act Alive" which is designed to build the foundations laid by DramAidE teaching skills such as problem solving, communication and social skills. This marks a shift away from a narrow focus to a broader all encompassing one.

⁹ Within the area of participatory drama, for DramAidE is also heavily involved with quantitative research, which they feel is part of their dialogue, DramAidE has devised a 3 phase structure. Firstly, a theatre programme is presented, which involves the use of drama, dance and questions to present basic information about HIV and AIDS. The aim of this phase is to "establish an exchange of ideas between the theatre group and its audience" (Dalrymple, and Du Toit, 1996:20). Although the children do not "act" in this phase they are encouraged to participate through shouting out, in Boalian fashion "Masibonisane!" (Let's negotiate) which they shout out at particular points in the role-play that they feel need to be re-negotiated. The second phase involves Drama Workshops and lessons are taught while keeping with the theme of AIDS awareness. Through the use of Boalian type games, it constitutes a praxis thus enabling students to realise their capacity for change. The final product is an Open Day in which the students present performances around AIDS for parents and members of the community. Dalrymple notes "[p]erformance is a significant way of bringing about a change of attitude in the participants and in the audience because any new attitudes and behaviour patterns that have been adopted are publicly endorsed" (Dalrymple and Du Toit, 1996:22).

As DramAidE is quick to acknowledge, it cannot be assumed that a change in attitude necessarily implies a change in behaviour; however its use of a participatory approach has enabled a more effective campaign due to the appropriateness of this approach as pedagogy of 'the oppressed'. Its common links with participatory oral modes, are familiar to African society and it has facilitated the realisation of DramAidE's aims to empower the community through developing self-reliance in all aspects of life. Where Boal speaks of 'spect-actors', DramAidE speaks of 'actor-teachers' both of whom underlie a dynamic notion in which all of those involved "are being called upon to act out and change scenes related to their own lives and environment" (Seidel, 1996:146). Boal (1979:155) speaks of drama/theatre as "a rehearsal for a revolution", Dalrymple speaks of drama/theatre as "a rehearsal for life" (Dalrymple and Du Tiot,1996:21). Nevertheless the extent to which this transformation of reality, which occurs on stage, will in fact be implemented in real life is questionable. This is not only due to the inability to correlate attitude change with behavioural change, but because societal constraints - particularly around expected sexual behaviour and gender inequality are profound. Echoing Davis' and hooks' emphasis on oppressive determining structures, Preston-Whyte states: "[p]ut simply, it is seldom possible for knowledge and even attitude change to be directly translated into behaviour change before other changes are effected in society, and particularly in the structure of gender power relations" (1996:1).

While there are an abundance of issues to deal with regarding DramAidE, the effectiveness of participation and the extent to which messages are internalised by children, this investigation will centre primarily on issues of gender and the extent to which DramAidE is gender sensitive. This will be analysed in terms of encoding a structure of oppression through facilitation, as well as the importance of the awareness of gender dynamics in light of the established interconnections between race, class and gender, and the issue of gendered silence/voicelessness will be dealt with.

4.1 DRAMAIDE: ISSUES OF RACE/CLASS AND GENDER

As previously discussed in Section 2.0, Freirean developmental philosophy repeatedly stresses the importance that the move to enlightenment of 'the oppressed' comes from 'the oppressed' - that they initiate their own awakening since "no pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and for presenting for their emulation models from among their oppressors" (Freire,1972:13). Through the use of predominantly black, Zulu speaking actor-teachers, DramAidE exhibits a great sensitivity towards this concept in terms of race; however, as argued earlier, systems of oppression cannot be viewed in isolation. hooks and Davis argue for an awareness that race, class and gender oppressions are interconnected, indicating a departure from a monolithic conception that all female experience is necessarily the same by virtue of all women's endurance of gender oppression. The truth of this statement is glaringly obvious in the light of the South African situation, the experience of black women in South Africa is vastly different from that of white women who generally do not experience class oppression, race oppression and certainly do not experience gender oppression in the same way that many black women do in South Africa¹⁰. DramAidE teams reported, "some girls were really excited to learn that they had the "right to say "no" to sex" (Seidel, 1996:162).

Thus, it is imperative to be aware that while the majority of black men are racially and hierarchically oppressed, they are not oppressed in terms of gender. It is therefore unlikely that many Black men are automatically sensitive to gender dynamics, particularly in the light of the patriarchal Zulu culture. Jonathan Mann (1993) states that "HIV prevention has been altogether unsuccessful so far in that it has failed to address gender issues" (in Seidel, 1996:156), which is essential when dealing with issues of sexuality. Gender identities are socially constructed, and subsequently internalised. In traditional, patriarchal societies, where these roles are structurally unequal, there are severe implications involving the spread of HIV/AIDS. If a woman is not in a position to say "no"

¹⁰ It must be mentioned that these are general statements as due to the transitional phase South Africa is undergoing as well as the increasing rise of the black middle-class the dynamic of these factors are constantly shifting and cannot be applied with as much confidence as they could six years ago; however despite this transition for the majority of South Africans life has largely

how can she effect the knowledge that she has gained about AIDS prevention enabling a translation of knowledge into attitude change and thus (possibly) into behavioural change? She must feel she has a choice. However, in order to effect the structural change that this necessarily implies, it is first essential to make women aware of their potential to rise above their oppressed situation through offering a view of a working society where this change has been successfully effected. In terms of DramAidE this liberatory potential must be reflected in the structure of the teams, enabling suitable role models to whom the children can aspire. Referring back to Banning's (1996) points regarding voice as agency and the implied dialogue of *speaking* and *listening*, female students need to be taught how *to speak* and male students need to learn how *to listen to women speak*.

The DramAidE teams do deal with gender issues (particularly in phase 2), which stress the importance of equal partner relations and effective communication¹¹. In the new Life Skills programme one of the aspects on the agenda is to teach as "understanding of gender construction as a cultural practice" (Addendum 5 of *DramAidE Life Skills Education* 1996:2); however, while not being entirely unaware of these dynamics in some teams (the Vryheid team for example), the majority of the teams tend to encode a structure of oppression through their facilitation. Of the teams active in the field (excluding the pilot projects), which interact directly with the children, there are twelve actor-teachers and twelve nurses, with two actor-teachers and two nurses in each team (see Appendix A). Seven of the actor-teachers are men, five are women and of the six group leaders, four are male while only two are female. Eleven of the twelve nurses are female. Thus in the majority of instances oppressive gender dynamics and gender roles are being reinforced, through the structure of facilitation, which identifies authority figures being men (team-leaders) and the nurturing/caring figures being women (nurses). Only two teams challenge this construction. Due to the extensive number of children that these teams come in contact with (now over one million) (DramAidE literature 1996) and the fact that the same team deals with the same school exposing the children to only one structural dynamic, it is

remained unchanged.

¹¹ In one viewed instance using a method similar to Boalian Image Theatre, which revolves around the manipulation of fixed forms of oppression, the facilitator created an "image" with two participants: a girl, laden with parcels was placed behind a boy. The children were asked if they would like to change the image. A boy stepped forward and gave the parcels to the boy in the image. Subsequently, a girl came forward, gave half the parcels back to the girl and put them side-by-side.

imperative that DramAidE addresses these issues.

The management and administrative structures do not reflect this inequality; however, they are not placed in a position where children are encouraged to emulate them. Further, placing women in positions of leadership does not imply that they are dealing with day-to-day issues of gender construction. This fact also applies in terms of the team structures. Thus although it is necessary to place women in leadership positions in order to create appropriate gender identification for women and highlight structures of equality, it is also necessary that the institution deals with issues of gender sensitivity within its policy. Although DramAidE is a self-reflexive organisation that is committed to an ongoing process of redefining their role in society, issues of gender and gender construction are not adequately dealt with in terms of the team structure and certain policy around gender issues. Personal interrogation of gender identities, particularly among the actor-teachers should be a matter of policy.

4.1.1 Woman-Blaming

Related to problematic issues around the relationship between structure and *praxis*, is that of the issue of *woman-blaming* or "scapegoating the women" (Kidd 1981 in Kerr 1995:161). This tendency, which was previously discussed (in Section 2.3) in terms of a Workshop that took place in Nigeria, has growing implications with regards to the HIV/AIDS crisis. There is a growing consensus that AIDS is a woman's disease. According to the Report from the United Nations HIV and Developmental programme (1993) "[a]mong sexually active people, those being infected with the HIV/AIDS virus at the fastest rate are women in their teens and early twenties, including many women who have had relatively few sexual partners" (in Addendum 3 of *DramAidE Funding Proposal* 1996:3).

Due to the comparative promiscuity of men in relation to women, these findings, however shocking are not surprising; however, it is also essential to be aware that due to fact that more women visit hospitals than men - primarily as a result of pregnancy - more women are in a position to be tested. The blame that has been placed on women in instances of pregnancy and rape is now in danger of being extended to the contraction of AIDS. This is

primarily due to the lack of responsibility many men feel for the result of sexual actions and the associated perception of women as sexual property. DramAidE thus needs to unpack issues surrounding woman-blaming in relation to pregnancy, sexual harassment (which often occurs in schools by the teachers themselves) and AIDS.

Davis writes on the politics of black women's health stating: "We have become cognisant of the urgency of contextualising black women's health in relation to the prevailing political conditions...all too often the enemies of our physical and emotional well being are social and political" (1984:55). The lack of economic and political franchise coupled with cultural patriarchy has determined that black women are the most disempowered sector of South African society. With the intrinsic link between politics, sex and health we face today, the necessity to be constantly be aware of gender dynamics is of the utmost importance.

4.1.2 Acknowledging silence

As has been discussed in the previous chapter, speaking and voice implies agency, thus 'the oppressed' are typically characterised by silence and voicelessness. Since within racially or class oppressed communities, it is the women who lack agency due to gender oppression, it is the women who are silent in relation to the men. The comparative silence of the women in relation to the men has been noted in other developmental participatory projects as Kidd observed (in Kerr, 1995:153), "it was the most articulate members of the community who monopolised discussions; and they often had dominant class values" reinforcing the status quo.

Due to the patriarchal structures present in the rural communities and in society as a whole, when women do speak, their voices often do not carry the same authority as male voices. Seidel (1996:134) notes through observation that there is a need for more active participation amongst the girls in phases one and two, thus an active attempt needs to be made by the DramAidE teams to bring out the female voices and instil them with the authority they deserve as an example to others.

Preston-Whyte (1996:1) reports, "there is now general consensus that what combating the threat of HIV/AIDS demands, is a radically new view of human sexual relationships".

Through ignoring the comparative silence of women and issues around vocal authority, women's concerns surrounding AIDS and sexuality are being marginalized, reinforcing existing unequal sexual relations and the already prevalent belief that women's opinions around issues of sexuality are unimportant. Viewed in terms of the fact that when dealing with the issue of AIDS vocal authority and thus the ability to say "no" meaning "no", and not "no" meaning "yes", can be the difference between life and death, the urgency to which DramAidE needs to address these issues seems clear.

Within certain performances by girls in the group, direct challenges to patriarchy have been noted. All female performances of the traditionally male 'gum-boot' dance is but one example where women have taken an active stance against associated passivity, proving that women are literally able to fill men's shoes. However are such reversals "rituals of rebellion", as Preston-Whyte and Dalrymple (1995 in Seidel, 1996:157) discuss, a kind of Boalian "rehearsal for a revolution"? Or is it a momentary escape from the shackles of womanhood. Seidel (1996:158) insightfully asks: "[But] why do these women want to dress like men...Is it because men have greater freedoms and may be positive role-models? And because the construction of what it means to be a 'woman' is altogether too negative and hopelessly restrictive?". Either way, it is clear that young women are looking for an alternative construction either through negotiation or recreation; thus is important for DramAidE to facilitate this discovery through gender sensitive empowerment. Seidel (1996:159) proposes a participatory discussion firstly to ascertain why the girls are choosing to adopt these male forms and secondly to investigate into the existence of alternative forms "that more clearly translate women's experiences".

Due to its ideological and functional appropriateness, participatory drama if properly guided can be a successful tool for identifying and dealing with sexism while simultaneously being sensitive to tradition. Although the translation of attitude into behaviour change poses a far greater problem, whose effects may only be seen over time, the DramAidE project, can be considered a successful project whose efforts have shown a marked increase in knowledge about STD's (sexually transmitted diseases) and AIDS and a change in attitude regarding sex, gender, health and illness (Dalrymple and Du Toit, 1996). However, before attitude changes can be translated into behavioural changes, other changes such as structural changes of gender and power relations must first be dealt

with. Although it is difficult to know how to act on politically, what DramAidE is able to do is to “[sensitise] young people to the structural changes which must occur in order to facilitate changes in sexual behaviour” (Preston-Whyte,1996:4). This can be achieved through the emulation of appropriate structural dynamic within the DramAidE teams and an active gender policy sensitive to the interconnections of race, class and gender.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- In terms of the gendered structuring of teams, there should be a more deliberate effort to ensure that established gender roles, which are oppressive by nature, are not reflected by the teams, thereby inadvertently affirming and reinforcing these constructions.
- More women should be placed in leadership positions so as to serve as positive role models for the children, illustrating the potential for women to be in positions of respect and authority as well as opening up for the possibility for cross-gendered identification on the part of the boys.
- The tendency for woman-blaming, illustrated by the growing conception, particularly amongst rural people, that AIDS is a woman's disease, should be an issue more aggressively dealt with by the DramAidE teams. This form of gendered related prejudice cannot but counter the efforts of DramAidE, who stress issues of initiating healthy relationships.
- Silence implying lack of agency, is a characteristic exhibited by many girls (Seidel 1996:134) - particularly black girls, who are oppressed racially and in terms of gender. The DramAidE teams should thus be more conscious of this when interacting with the children and should concentrate on ways of encouraging the girls to participate more in the action which is necessary to effect empowerment.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Theatre for Development, grounded in Paulo Freire's (1972) concept of participatory education in the Third World and Augusto Boal's theories of theatre of the oppressed (which grew from Freire), offers a revolutionary, empowering solution for the oppressed people of developing countries in the process of their liberation. Through the Freirean concept of *praxis*, which Theatre for Development embodies, individuals who are disempowered are able to rise above their particular oppression through an understanding of the nature of their oppression and the consequent awareness of their potential to rise above it, the potential for transformation. South Africa, as a nation, is undergoing such a transformation, but forty years of apartheid rule has caused many of its people to internalise states of oppression making the application of this dialogic method particularly appropriate. This is coupled with the high illiteracy rates and the alienating effect of banking type education.

The participatory approach of Theatre for Development, dealing with issues of silence and voice as agency, make this approach easily appropriated for gender. However due to the sensitive issue of race, which seems to permeate every aspect of our South African existence, equally important issues of gender are being marginalised. Due to the interconnected nature of the oppressions of race, class and gender emphasised by hooks (1989) and Davis (1984), it is essential not to isolate one from the others if there is any intention of effecting structural changes within our, or any, society, which must occur if a change in attitude is to be translated into a change in behaviour. Aside from a Freirean monolithic conception of 'the oppressed', and a Western Radical feminist monolithic conception of women, an awareness of interlocking systems of domination enable an understanding of unique human experience and thus an acknowledgement that developmental educators in particular need to be sensitive to all these dynamics. In the light of our new governments promises of gender equality, the extent to which Theatre for Development is sensitive to gender dynamics is an issue which seriously needs to be addressed in a post-apartheid South Africa; issues which are to be taken up by organisations such as DramAidE but which need to be pushed further in terms of their analyses of the constructions of gender and its relationship to oppression and power.

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Appendix A

Breakdown of Staff in the Field 1996

DURBAN NORTH (region 1)

TEACHER TRAINING PILOT PROJECT

Lungi Zulu (Actor-Teacher) (Leader)

Balungile Mathe (Actor-Teacher)

Pumi Yeni (Actor-Teacher)

DURBAN SOUTH (region 2)

Jerry Pooe (Actor-Teacher) (Leader)

Mdu Mabaso (Actor-Teacher)

Dudu Mvuyane (Nurse)

Tandaka Ngcobo (Nurse)

PORT SHEPSTON (region 3)

Lancelot Gumede (Actor-Teacher) (Leader)

Nompumelo P. Maluleka (Actor-Teacher)

Zodwa Zungu (Nurse)

Alexina Jobela (Nurse)

PIETERMARITZBURG (region 4)

Zamo Hlela (Actor-Teacher) (Leader)

Dumisani Bukhosini (Actor-Teacher)

Nomagugu Mbkiwana (Nurse)

Ntsiki Khanyile (Nurse)

NEWCASTLE (region 5)

Gabi Mchunu (Actor-Teacher) (Leader)

Ntokozo Khumalo (Actor-Teacher)

Cebile Mbathe (Nurse)

Lindiwe Mnguni (Nurse)

VRYHEID (region 6)

Juliet Mlungwana (Actor-Teacher) (Leader)

Zenobia M. Nqala (Actor-Teacher)

Nokuthula Nkwanya (Nurse)

Charles Hlatswayo (Nurse)

ULUNDI (region 7)

Jerome Dlodla (Actor-Teacher) (Leader)

Dudu Luthuli (Actor-Teacher)

Mpume Buthelezi (Nurse)

Gugu Ndlovo (Nurse)

EMPANGENI (region 8)

Vicki Doesebs (Teacher trainer)

PEER EDUCATION TEAM

(Pilot Projects)

Paul Botha (Actor-Teacher)

Heather Stead (Actor-Teacher)

Coordinator: Peer Education and Teacher Training Pilot Project:

Rehka Nathoo

source: DramAidE literature, Act Alive: Life Skills Education 1996 p 7/8 of Addendum1:
'History and Track Record of DramAidE' .