

**University of KwaZulu-Natal**

**USING POPULAR PARTICIPATORY THEATRE AS A  
RESEARCH METHOD TO EXPOSE THE RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN HIV/AIDS AND SILENCE IN MALEALEA  
VALLEY, LESOTHO.**

**By**

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## **Disclaimer**

I, Rethabile Malibo, 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 the award of a degree from any university. This work is being submitted in partial fulfillment of Master of Arts degree in the Faculty of Human, Social and Development Sciences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.



**AUGUST 2008**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Miranda Young-Jahangeer, for her guidance, dedication and support, but mostly her patience. Her enthusiasm to sharpen my writing skills is highly appreciated. Thank you for everything!

I am highly indebted to Professor Lynn Dalrymple for agreeing to supervise me while Ms Young-Jahangeer was on sabbatical leave. Her knowledge and intelligence amaze me and her constructive criticisms and comments are highly appreciated.

To my parents `Mataoana and Khotso Malibo, my pillars of strength, I cannot seem to find the right words to show how grateful I am to both of you for being the kind of parents you have been and continue to be ...I thank God for truly blessing me with your presence. Thank you for *always* being there with me through the most difficult times. Your constant love, support and motivation have pulled me through. I love you *‘Me le ‘Ntate* and thank you for everything.

My dearest brother Liteboho for helping me find all the relevant literature by setting up appointments for me while I was still in Durban and for driving me around, I couldn't have asked for a more loving and thoughtful brother. I love you and keep strong!

Morakane, my angel ... I love you so much...

To all my friends, you have all been so supportive, particularly Nkoe, Rethabile, Norma, and Phili, who kept asking about the progress of my dissertation. You kept me going....

To the government of Lesotho, thank you for sponsoring my studies.

I give thanks and praise to the Almighty for giving me the strength and wisdom to successfully complete this study. May he continue to bless of all of you.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study discusses the benefits of Popular Participatory Theatre (PPT) as a research method with which to investigate the culture of silence around HIV/AIDS issues in Malealea Valley, Lesotho. Popular Participatory Theatre provided the means by which the community named, reflected on and initiated action with regard to their problems. This research will contribute to the growing body of research which aims to uncover effective modes of communication which could lead to behaviour change.

This study employed the qualitative research methodology. This was in recognition that qualitative research involves in-depth understanding of human behaviours and the reasons that govern that behaviour, and looks at the reasons behind various aspects of behaviour, perceptions, beliefs and attitudes. Qualitative research seeks meaning rather than generality and contributes to theory development (Miller et al, 2003:192-3). In-depth interviews and focus groups were also used as instruments for data collection.

The findings of the study indicate that socio-economic issues such as language, cultural practices, the way that Basotho are brought up and power dynamics around patriarchy contribute to the culture of silence. The Malealea Theatre Project helped the Malealea community to re-examine some of their beliefs and cultural practices. The findings also indicate that popular participatory theatre is an effective research method that can be used to collect data while also leading to community action.

## **The researcher**

While I was growing up I was exposed to different cultures. We lived in the University staff village on campus from when I was little up to the age of 16. This was a completely different world, as it was cosmopolitan due to the different lecturers at the university. At home there were certain movies and television programmes that we were not allowed to watch, thus I had little idea of what was happening in the outside world.

It was only after my family moved to our new home in Mazenod, about twenty kilometres from the capital town of Lesotho, that I was exposed to rural life and to some extent some of our indigenous cultural practices. There were things that I saw happening in the village and sometimes I was really taken aback by what I saw and what I heard. For example, husbands would abuse their wives physically or verbally outside where everybody could see, but the women wouldn't walk out of their marriages. I could not believe that some people were that naïve.

While I was studying at the National University of Lesotho for my undergraduate degree in Drama and Theatre I was even more shocked by some of the things that I saw. Some of the girls were abused by their boyfriends and they never reported them or did anything; instead they stayed in those relationships. As far as I was concerned such things were only supposed to happen in the rural areas where most of the people are not educated. I felt that a university student should be able to walk out of an abusive relationship because there is a certain degree of understanding and strength that they should have.

In one of our drama courses we created a theatrical piece titled *Flesh to Flesh, Dust to Dust* which was later sponsored by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and The Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHDA) to tour the country. When the project came to an end, we were commissioned by other organisations to create more HIV/AIDS productions for performance across the country. A whole new world opened up for me. I saw people who lived in absolute poverty, some of whom had given up on life. So many of them came to our plays but the first question they asked was, "What are you going to give us?" If we said

nothing, most of them left and stated that if there are no T-shirts then they would rather leave.

As the audience related their stories to us and asked us questions with regards to HIV/AIDS, HIV/AIDS ceased to be just something that was 'just there' for me, and became something that I wanted to explore further. In trying to find a topic for my thesis I knew I wanted to write about HIV/AIDS, though I was reluctant as I thought that I would be embarking on something that has already been overdone. However, I realized that many of the campaigns that have been carried out were not participatory and did not assist in breaking the silence.

In their article "Determining validity in qualitative inquiry," John Creswell and Dana Miller (2000:127) note that it is important for a researcher to acknowledge her/his entry point in terms of her/his personal beliefs, values, biases and assumptions to permit the reader to comprehend her/his position, and then to suspend those biases as the study proceeds. Therefore during the course of the research, especially during interviews and focus groups, I had to 'hold back' so as to avoid the risk of authenticating my own beliefs. It took a lot whilst in the field for me to distance myself from my own personal experiences and my research. This was due to the fact that I am simultaneously an outsider as a researcher, and an insider, being a Mosotho and being aware of some of the cultural practices that were brought up. Because of my own understanding, I realised then that what needs to be done is not to come up with solutions for people (since by now the majority of people know that HIV/AIDS exists) but to ask the right questions. For example, if people know about this pandemic, what is it that stops them from protecting themselves?

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# CHAPTER 1

## 1. Introduction

HIV/AIDS was first detected in Lesotho in 1986 (Kimaryo et al., 2004:146) and since then the epidemic has escalated dramatically in the country. At present Lesotho has a 31% HIV/AIDS prevalence, putting it in fourth position in sub-Saharan Africa (HIV/AIDS policy fact sheet, 2005:1).

The impact of the epidemic has greatly affected the development and progress of the country. The government of Lesotho has been slow in responding to the epidemic. In fact, it was only in 2002/2003, seventeen years after the epidemic broke out, that the government began a determined programme to fight against the disease (Lahann and Pefole, 2005:n/p). Lesotho, like many other countries, suffered from a denial syndrome.

The government's response, when it came, was to produce educational campaigns by utilising the existing modes of mass media such as print, television and radio. Prevention was the government's top priority; care, impact mitigation and reduction of risk and vulnerability were secondary priorities (Lahann and Pefole, 2005:n/p). Despite the fact that the existing forms of mass media managed to pass on the required message to the masses, they have several important limitations. One of the problems of most relevance to this research, is that print, radio and television media are uni-directional and uni-dimensional forms of communication (Constantine-Simms, 2000:415), preventing people from asking and being asked questions – a key factor in consciousness-raising and transformation.

On the basis of these observations, alternative approaches seem necessary with regard to HIV/AIDS campaigns. There is a dire need for alternatives to these uni-directional campaigns, which direct and dictate to the populace what to do without acknowledging their socio-economic and political situations. This dissertation argues that what is needed

is a participatory approach – one that people can be a part of and fully participate in by genuinely expressing and exploring their attitudes, values and beliefs without any repercussions (DramAidE, 1995: foreword).

This dissertation presents Popular Participatory Theatre (PPT) (Kidd, 1982; Mda, 1993; Prentki, 2000) as complementary to, rather than as a substitute for other methods and strategies deployed in the fight against HIV/AIDS. PPT is presented as an approach that can assist in breaking barriers since it allows entry into complex and risky situations, be they emotional, political or social, by virtue of its narrative, interactive, embodying and metaphorical capacity (Prentki et al., 2000:101). PPT invites interaction between actors and spectators; hence, it provides an avenue for self-expression and self-empowerment (DramAidE, 1995: foreword).

By extension, PPT will be used as a performative research method since performance is viewed as an adequate account of the way in which people realise their culture and a method by which knowledge of a culture is produced (Fabian, 1990:18). PPT as a research method entails shared ownership, with the community analysing itself with the purpose of moving towards community action. It is on this basis that Jenny Hughes (2006:2) notes that people reveal more in performative research than they would in an interview session.

This dissertation has six chapters. The introductory chapter outlines the social background of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Lesotho. This background comprises statistics of infection rates, a discussion on the reasons for such infection rates, and an overview of awareness campaigns that have been carried out. This chapter also outlines the objectives of the study and the research questions that informed it. These discussions will seek to justify why it is necessary to have campaigns that are participatory.

Chapter Two will discuss the theoretical framework of the study. The starting point of this framework is the concept of ‘a culture of silence’ (Freire, 1972:10), which will then be integrated with a gendered analysis since the issue of ‘silence’ and the right to speak have been articulated and appropriated by feminist discourse, as illustrated in works by

bell hooks (1980), Angela Davis (1984) and Safia Mirza (1997). Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), which informs much of the theory of participation as an act of critical reflection – a crucial aspect of alternative participatory development – will also be discussed.

Chapter Two will also include discussions on Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) (1979) and Theatre for Development (TfD). TfD progressed from both Freire's pedagogy and Boal's theatre; it introduced and developed the modern philosophical and theoretical foundations of PPT (Chifunyise, 1990; Kidd, 1982; Kamlongera, 1989; Mda, 1993; Kerr, 1995). PPT involves active participation of both actors and spectators and "encourages disempowered communities to view change as possible" (Mda, 1993 in Young-Jahangeer, 2004:137).

Chapter Three introduces the Malealea Theatre Project as the case study for this dissertation. The chapter provides a description of the project under subheadings such as the objectives of the project, the project site, the implementation of the project as well as the challenges of the project.

Chapter Four presents the research methodology, and includes a section on the research techniques such as observation, interviews and focus groups. This chapter also includes a discussion on the research design and PPT as a research method.

Chapter Five presents the research findings and analysis while Chapter Six summarises the research findings and draws conclusions.

## **1.1 Motivation for undertaking the study**

Since they actively started campaigning in 2002, the Government and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Lesotho have used different media forms for information, education and communication strategies in the fight against HIV/AIDS. However, this has as yet not had any significant impact (HIV/AIDS policy fact sheet, 2005:1), as statistics are still rising. Thirty per cent of adults are HIV positive and each year, despite educational campaigns, the number of infections increases (WHO, 2005:15). This dissertation will attempt to contribute to the growing body of research which aims to

uncover effective modes of communication that could lead to behaviour change. It will also seek to examine the relationship between HIV/AIDS and the culture of silence (Freire, 1972:10; Doyal et al.,1994:16; hooks,1989:6). It is hypothesised that by uncovering these issues, community members can begin to work together to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS.

As an aspiring theatre practitioner, I am aware and appreciative of the potential of theatre as a means of agitation in post-colonial spaces (Boal, 1979). TFD (Kidd, 1982; Kamlogera, 1989; Mda, 1993; Kerr, 1995), the umbrella under which PPT sits, is used in most developing countries to stimulate discussion around issues of development, health and agriculture (Kidd, 1982:5; Mda, 1993:65; Kerr, 1995:149). Today it is being used increasingly in the fight against HIV/AIDS (Campbell, 2003:14). It is a recognition of the reality and effects of HIV/AIDS in Lesotho, and of theatre's efficacy as a communication strategy, that has motivated the undertaking of this study.

I was a participant in a sensitisation campaign against HIV/AIDS that toured Lesotho with 'Agitprop' Productions (Mda, 1993:49) for a period of four years. Agitprop productions are message-oriented plays that are used for development communication. These plays are produced by professional actors and are directed towards the community. In these plays the actors themselves respond to the local situations (Mda, 1993:50). The drawback of the work done by Agitprop is that the audience becomes merely a consumer of a finished product, which does not invite critical thinking since information is merely 'deposited' into the spectator (Mda, 1993:63). This study aims to move beyond this towards the dialogic approach proposed by Freire (1972:58) and implemented by theatre practitioners such as Augusto Boal (1979) and Ross Kidd (1982).

In addition to the sensitisation campaigns I undertook in Lesotho, I also did a university Prison Theatre course (Drama and Performance Studies, UKZN), in which performance was used as a medium for discussion and exploration of issues affecting inmates and ex-offenders. I wish to combine the skills and experience I have already gained with the insights gained from this study.

## **1.2 Objectives of the study**

The main objective of the study is to expose the relationship between culturally-based silence (Freire, 1972:10; Doyal et al., 1994:16 hooks, 1989:6) and HIV/AIDS in Malealea valley, Southern Lesotho. It will employ PPT as a methodology since it is anticipated to provide an excellent medium for participants to express and empower themselves. This proposed project will feed into an existing project, Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT), initiated by Gillian Attwood (a PhD scholar at the University of the Witwatersrand). This dissertation also engages the use of PPT as a research tool to investigate what the culture of silence signifies amongst the people of Malealea.

## **1.3 Overview of the HIV/AIDS situation in Lesotho**

Lesotho is a small country with a total area of 30,335 square kilometres (MISA, 2004 in Tau, 2001:2). The country is landlocked by South Africa, which governs its economy in terms of trade and employment (Mda, 1993:53). Lesotho gained independence from Britain in 1966 and has since met with obstacles such as political instability in the 1970s and 1980s, land degradation, capacity depletion and economic decline. At present, however, the greatest challenge facing Lesotho is the HIV/AIDS pandemic which is further threatening the development of the country.

### **1.3.1 HIV/AIDS infection rates in Lesotho**

Since the first reported case of HIV/AIDS in 1986, rates of infection have escalated dramatically. Of the almost two million people residing in Lesotho, an estimated 29% of adults living in the urban areas are living with HIV/AIDS, while 24% are adults living in the rural areas (HIV/AIDS policy fact sheet, 2005:2). The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare indicates that the prevalence rates are higher among women than men. The infection rate for women is 57% while for men the rate is around 41% (PSI Lesotho Fact Sheet, 2006:2). According to the HIV/AIDS policy fact sheet, the 20-49 age group has a prevalence rate of 39.1% and the 15-19 age group an infection rate of 14.4%. It has since been reported that despite campaigns that have been carried out, statistics have continued to rise, and it is estimated that the rate will increase to 36% within the next 15 years

(HIV/AIDS policy fact sheet, 2005:2).

### **1.3.2 Reasons for Lesotho's high HIV/AIDS prevalence rate**

Though HIV/AIDS was identified in Lesotho in 1986, it is argued that the government of Lesotho has been rather slow to respond to the pandemic (Lahann and Pefole, 2005:n/p). This can be attributed to the fact that for a long time Africans were trapped in high levels of passivity, denial and fatalism about HIV/AIDS (Campbell, 2003:131). This still holds true to some degree as many have continued to believe that HIV/AIDS is an issue for 'others'. Lesotho was one of those countries, as is attested to by the local name given to the pandemic, *Koatsi ea bosolla thlapi* (something foreign from overseas). When there was finally evidence that it did exist, most people who had been infected and directly affected remained silent due to the discrimination and stigmatisation associated with the epidemic. As a result of a lack of 'talk' about the disease, fallacies arose. HIV/AIDS consequently thrived, and still thrives on the secrecy and silence that prevails. Concurrent with the issue of denial is the pervasive belief, particularly in the rural areas, that HIV/AIDS is a myth (Campbell, 2003:131).

Three quarters of Lesotho is covered in mountains and river valleys, thus there is little arable land. Due to the lack of arable land and the prevailing harsh economic environment, Lesotho's economy has depended largely on remittances from Lesotho's migrant labourers in South Africa's mining industry (Mphale et al., 2003:13). Over 25% of Basotho males are migrant workers residing in single-sex hostels in South Africa (Mphale et al., 2003:13). Miners usually go home two to four times a year, which implies long periods of absence of men from their households. This situation has promoted temporary marriages and sexual relationships particularly for miners in South Africa (Mphale et al., 2002:13). Miners' wives are at risk of contracting the disease since, as Catherine Campbell (2003:31) contends, most miners prefer to have sex without the use of a condom because they feel that the risk of HIV is minimal compared with the risk of death underground. The movement of these migrant workers to and from South Africa, together with the attendant growth of the commercial sex industry and the breakdown of cultural and religious values such as fidelity and abstinence from sex

before marriage, have contributed to the spread of the virus in Lesotho (Government of Lesotho, 2000:33). The infidelity of migrant workers does not however mean that women are always innocent victims. Kimaryo et al. (2004:55) have noted that there is a high probability of extramarital affairs when spouses are geographically separated over long periods of time.

Migration within the country is another factor contributing to the high rate of infection. Lesotho has textile industries situated in the capital Maseru and Maputsoe, and many people, especially young women, move from the rural areas in the hope of being employed in the textile industry (Government of Lesotho, 2004:56). In 2004, over 56,000 people were employed in this industry, and the majority were women (Lesotho National Development Corporation, 2004:73-75). These women usually live in the urban areas next to the factories and go home once a month. The pattern of textile employees travelling from urban areas to rural areas has, according to Lesotho's National Development Corporation (2004:75), proven to be a major contributing factor in the spread of both sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS.

Unemployment is another factor contributing to the high HIV/AIDS rate. In Lesotho, the government is the major employer and every year, with more than a thousand graduates (from the university and from eight technical and vocational training institutions) to employ ([www.education.gov.ls](http://www.education.gov.ls)), there has been a serious shortage of employment opportunities. Due to the high rate of unemployment and poverty that clouds the country, commercial sex is on the rise (Government of Lesotho, 2002:14), with many unemployed women opting for commercial sex for survival. Apart from this, as is the case in many countries, there is no law governing prostitution in Lesotho; this makes it difficult to reach and include sex workers in HIV/AIDS campaigns (Government of Lesotho, 2000:50). However, in the Corridors of Hope campaign that was organised by Population Services International (PSI), Lesotho, sex workers were included.

The high rate of HIV infection can also be culturally attributed. The Sesotho custom has always enjoined and justified possession by men of extensive rights over women. Male

control over women in Lesotho was principally mediated through the custom of *bohali* (bride price), meaning that males are valued over females (Epprecht, 2000:17). Bluntly put, this means that only the boys 'grow up' while their female counterparts remain legal minors subject to the will of their senior male relatives until marriage to their husbands. This lack of cultural agency affects women's ability, for example, to initiate condom use. Prescribed gender roles are the core of a number of social, economic and political factors that drive the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

In addition to the Basotho culture that makes women more susceptible to HIV/AIDS, Tina Johnson (2002:8) argues that women are biologically more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS than men. She further states that more women than men are living secretly with the virus. Tasmin Wilton (1997:13) contends that this is because, despite campaigns attempting to reduce the stigma, an HIV-positive person is seen as diseased, contagious, isolated, threatening and guilty. In some instances, women are more likely than men to lose their jobs, be refused entry into another country, face expulsion from their homes, or face divorce (Doyal et al., 1994:16; Johnston, 2002:xvii). However, when it comes to men, society is more forgiving and instead of 'punishing' the men, tends to make excuses for them. These attitudes are projected in phrases such as *monna ke mokopu oa nama mosali ke cabbage oa ipopa* (men are pumpkins and they should spread like pumpkin leaves and women are cabbages and they should hold themselves together like the cabbage leaves), meaning that it is forgivable for men to sleep around because they cannot control themselves but it is unforgivable for women to sleep around; they need to know how to control themselves.

Another reason for the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Lesotho is that the government and NGOs have been faced with economic challenges and to some extent lack technical resources with which to address the HIV/AIDS issue. A lack of funding has resulted in a delay in reaching out to the entire population. For example, more than half of Lesotho's citizens are based in the rural areas, and are heavily influenced by traditional customs and the Catholic Church, the country's dominant faith, which opposes the use of condoms and advocates abstinence until marriage. It is for these reasons that the older generation

finds it hard to talk about sex to the younger generation. This poses a challenge to public health systems and media to reach out to the youth because when information is received but not reinforced in families or in schools, it is seen as a foreign value (Maw, 2000 in Mpele, 2005:8). In Lesotho, furthermore, it is a cultural taboo to talk about sex, and sex education is prohibited in schools.

### **1.3.3 Government response to HIV/AIDS**

The history of the HIV/AIDS campaigns run by the government and NGOs helps to explain why new approaches are necessary. As has been stated already, the government of Lesotho has been rather slow to address HIV/AIDS as a national disaster. It was only in late 2002 that the government responded by formulating a National Strategic Plan, and through it Lesotho's AIDS Programme Coordinating Authority (LAPCA) was established. As a result of the late response, LAPCA was ineffective. People were dying and infection rates kept on soaring. Instead of involving the general public, LAPCA isolated itself from them and only worked with the Maseru community. Posters, flyers, and (empty) high-tech condom dispensers were only found in Maseru. Conferences, meetings and workshops were also held in Maseru and excluded all the other districts like Mafeteng where rates were high, and which were in dire need of HIV/AIDS services. Consequently, LAPCA's standing deteriorated immediately and some donors withdrew their money and directed it elsewhere (Lahann and Pefole, 2005:n/p).

In 2005 LAPCA was dissolved and the government established the National AIDS Commission (NAC) and the AIDS Secretariat to coordinate and support HIV/AIDS strategies and activities. At present Lesotho is still working on the next HIV/AIDS strategy for the period of 2005 to 2008 (UNAIDS, 2005:n/p). So far, one of the major campaigns planned by the Lesotho government has been the 'know your status' campaign advocated by His Majesty King Letsie III, in which there was to be a countrywide door-to-door testing campaign. The campaign, however, did not materialise because of financial constraints.

While the government has been slow in responding, NGOs have played a part in attempting to conscientise people about the epidemic. The World Health Organisation (WHO), together with the American Embassy and the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), have sponsored theatre productions that have toured the country. Once the plays have been performed to the audience they are followed by a question-and-answer session.

Other NGOs that are also actively involved with the HIV/AIDS campaigns include PHELA Health and Development Communications (Lesotho's version of Soul City<sup>1</sup>) and PSI, both of which have worked with the existing modes of media in public awareness and communication. One of the methods they use is to go out into the communities to undertake research and then present their findings back to the communities in the form of radio dramas or live performances. Other methods that the PSI uses to conscientise people include beauty contests and sport, where intervals are used for question-and-answer sessions.

#### **1.4 Research questions**

Silence in most African countries, with particular reference to taboo subjects such as sex, remains a major challenge for individuals and societies as a whole. It is no surprise, therefore, that HIV/AIDS, which is mainly transmitted through sexual intercourse, has been shrouded in silence since its exposure. However it should be pointed out that this silence does not exist at all levels. For example, there is education and media attention around HIV/AIDS, but within families there is silence. This dissertation has two key areas of inquiry, the first being the issue of HIV/AIDS and silence and the second being Popular Participatory Theatre as a research methodology and its application in addressing important issues. This dissertation will employ PPT as a research tool to find out what

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<sup>1</sup> Soul City is a multi-media health and development project that aims for social change by creating an environment that empowers the audiences to make healthy choices as individuals and as communities. Soul City employs edutainment programs to reach more than 16 million South Africans ([www.soulcity.org.za](http://www.soulcity.org.za)). Debates around the effectiveness of this campaign go beyond the scope of this dissertation.

the people of Malealea understand the culture of silence to be in relation to HIV/AIDS; what the consequences of this culture of silence are; if the PPT approach can be used effectively in this; and what challenges PPT faces. In order to obtain answers for these research questions, the Malealea villagers were asked questions that elicited discussions around these issues. By researching the relationship between HIV/AIDS and silence using PPT, I will thus be able to ascertain both the reasons for the proliferation of HIV/AIDS and to critique the methodology.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2. Theoretical framework

This chapter discusses the main arguments of relevance to this research. The starting point of the theoretical framework is Paulo Freire's (1972:10) concept of the 'culture of silence' as embodied by the oppressed. Following a discussion of Freire, I will then introduce Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre as it influenced the development of Western popular theatre. Discussions on Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (1979) will then follow, as it was inspired both by Brecht's theatrical techniques and Freire's education movement. My focus will then shift to the form and content of Popular Participatory Theatre (PPT) (Mda, 1993; Kerr, 1995; Kidd, 1984) and the Marotholi Travelling Theatre of Lesotho. The chapter will conclude with a discussion on women and silence.

#### 2.1 Paulo Freire (Pedagogy of the Oppressed)

The fundamental methodology and educational ideology of Paulo Freire developed in the 1970s is still very popular and widely used all over the world. Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed is used in a range of different disciplines such as Education, Literacy, Politics, Science and the Arts. Freire developed his pedagogy in response to the then-prevailing situation in Brazil, absolute poverty and the high and increasing rate of illiteracy. In his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1972:46) called for an educational system that emphasises "learning as an act of culture and freedom". Freire came to the realisation that the ignorance and the indolence of the impoverished and illiterate intensified the whole situation of socio-economic and political inequality, and he described this as the "culture of silence" (Freire, 1972:10).

A culture of silence is the result of a socio-economic and cultural context which fails to acknowledge the voice of anyone not recognised in the existing hierarchical structures (Freire, 1972:10). These include the poor, the underprivileged and marginalised people in societies, and in patriarchal societies like Lesotho this would include women and girls. Freire (2002:55) contends that in any given society two groups exist: the oppressors who possess all the power, and the oppressed who have no voice or control as a result of their suffering the imposition of silence. This imposition of silence affects their outlook on themselves, their social reality and the roles they play in society (Freire and Macedo, 2001:47). This silence is not necessarily literal – people are able to speak and respond, but, firstly their voices often carry little agency and second their responses are usually deficient in critical enquiry as they have been conditioned by the existing structures of the oppressor (Freire, 1970:32-34).

In a culture of silence, therefore, “to exist is only to live, the body carries out orders from the above, thinking is difficult and speaking is forbidden” (Freire, 1985:60). The culture of silence is a culture of doing what one is told to do, with no explanations and no questions. The domination experienced by the oppressed is expressed in ways in which “power and philosophy merge and manufacture forms of knowledge, communal associations and other cultural forms that actively silence people” (Elias, 1994:xvi).

This culture of silence as postulated by Freire is perpetuated and maintained in the educational system, which is where society is constructed and then carried through to reality. Freire (2002:67) terms it the “banking concept of education” which functions primarily to reify and alienate oppressed groups (Freire, 1985:xvi). In this system, the teacher’s role is to ‘fill’ students with information, reducing the students to objects and elevating the teacher as the source of all knowledge. Freire (2002:71) argues that this method is alienating as the contents are detached from reality. This educational system views man as “an adaptable manageable being” (Freire and Macedo, 2001:69); thus in essence it indoctrinates students to adapt to a world of domination and not to challenge the forces that manipulate them. In this educational system, the world is viewed as a static reality and transformation as impossible because of the lack of creativity and

knowledge that is present (Stokes, 1997:203; Freire, 2002:81). This is credited to the fact that knowledge and creativity transpire from invention and reinvention through an intolerant inquiry of human beings into the world around them (Freire, 1974:58).

This silence, as explained earlier, is not necessarily or simply literal, and it extends beyond the boundaries of institutions. The same silence is observed in and often pervades in relationships, for example between the communities and their community leaders, between wives and husbands, between children and their parents and, if we take it a step further, between donor agencies and their sponsees (Okigbo, 1996:36).

Because the oppressor controls the oppressed through biased dialogue which is representative of only the oppressor's viewpoint, this affects the way the oppressed view themselves. It is argued (Elias, 1994) that the oppressed typically view themselves in a negative way as their way of thinking has been conditioned and shaped by the environment that they have lived in, since "the body learns tacitly ... habits transform into sedimented history and knowledge itself may block the development of certain subjectivities and ways of experiencing the world" (Elias, 1994:xx).

Thus the image of the oppressor is adopted by and instilled in the mind of the oppressed, resulting in self-deprecation by the oppressed. The more they feel that they are not worthy human beings, the more easily they adapt to the guiding principles of the oppressor. Consequently the relationship between the two parties becomes "prescriptive" (Freire, 2002:55). The oppressed are seen as incapable of acquiring true knowledge of their situation as they are encouraged not to question the nature of their situation or the reality of their circumstances; they therefore strive to identify with the oppressors by interjecting their values and lifestyles (Freire, 1970:33). This relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor results in false consciousness – the oppressed fail to comprehend their reality and their exploitative social relations with the oppressor and hold onto the belief that things are the way that they are supposed to be (Freire, 1972:52).

In his pedagogy Freire contends that when one is unable to name their reality they are unable to comprehend why they are in the situation that they are in and what keeps them in that situation. Because of one's inability to name one's reality, one cannot change the situation because in order to change a situation one needs to first name it. In false consciousness the oppressed fail to recognise the instruments of their oppression because "their perception of themselves as oppressed is impaired by their submersion in the reality of their oppression" (Freire, 2002:47). This false consciousness is imposed by means of religion, education and socialisation (Fritze, 1993:3).

This point is evident in patriarchal societies like Lesotho where through the years the Basotho generally and women particularly have slowly internalised this culture of silence. Basotho women have managed to be in the forefront of this system through institutions such as cultural practices, traditions, and to some degree religion. For example, during the *litlhobahanyo* (an advice session for a newly married couple), the aunts and close female relatives tell the bride that no matter how bad it is in her marriage, *Ngoetsi e ngalla motseo* (a woman's refuge is in the kitchen) or *mosali o shoela lichabeng* (a woman's grave is among the aliens), which means that once a woman is married she belongs to her in-laws until the day she dies and no longer to her maternal family (hence she will be buried by her in-laws).

This internalised oppression is passed on from generation to generation and what this illustrates is that women ultimately support their own oppression. This culture of silence continuously develops into a cycle of hypothetically earned power and superiority and this culture can only be broken down by a revolution of ideas. Prior to that, the internalised image has to be rejected and be replaced with autonomy and responsibility (Freire, 1972:29).

In patriarchal societies, silence is viewed as an attribute of a reputable and distinguished woman. It is my contention that silence in patriarchal societies should be perceived for what it is: a condition imposed on a woman by denying her the right to communicate by rejecting her voice and limiting it to a specific time and space – or even discrediting it

before she can utter a word (Epprecht, 2000:18). In Lesotho during a *Pitso*, (public gathering where village issues are discussed) women are not allowed to speak: their role is to be there and listen to what is being said, and whether they like it or not they have to agree with what has been said (Epprecht, 2000:18).

The cure for false consciousness is consciousness-raising, achieved through the problem-posing methodology (Freire, 1972:52). The point of departure for Freire's pedagogy is breaking the culture of silence that exists amongst marginalised peoples because, according to him, "human existence cannot be silent [because] human beings are not built in silence but in word, in work and in action-reflection" (Freire, 2002:88). Consequently, they need to communicate through engaging in dialogue as dialogue is the very essence of humanity – "it is to our humanness what blood is to the body" (Bala, 1998:140).

Freire's (1972) proposal of the problem-posing pedagogy which leads to critical consciousness was in recognition that "educational work towards democracy would only be achieved if the literary process was not about man or for man but with man, with the learners and with their reality" (Freire and Macedo, 2001:18). The first step is to collapse the dichotomy between the student and the teacher so that the two can jointly become responsible for the educational process (Freire, 1972:52). In the problem-posing methodology, the realities of the students are presented as problems with possible solutions. The students then identify the problem, find the root cause of the problem and consider practical ways to change the situation (Freire,1972:52). Because the students are able to relate to the information, it becomes beneficial and meaningful to them (DramAidE, 1996:3-4). This pedagogy therefore becomes liberatory and revolutionary as it stimulates inquiry and permits questions by "conquering authoritarianism and isolating intellectualism" (Freire and Macedo, 2001:79). This methodology permits students to learn and learning is not just about the consumption of ideas but it is about questioning, discovering and creating new ideas (Freire, 1985:44).

A distinctive feature of the problem-posing methodology is dialogue, which "is the recognition of and respect for the other speaker, the other voice as an autonomous

subject, not merely as an object of communication” (Rahim, 1996:131). Rahim further states that in a dialogical encounter, no voice is to be ignored or amalgamated with other voices as all involved have an equal right to speak and be heard. This is because dialogue with the people, as argued by Freire (2002:137), “is neither a concession nor a gift; much less a tactic to be used for domination” it should instead be used as a tool by people to get their freedom by fighting for their liberation.

In problem-posing education, individuals are able to grow together in their comprehension of their societal reality and with mutual responsibility for the maturity of their consciousness. In asking and responding to each other’s questions, strategies for survival are formulated, and as individuals make decisions with respect to their social reality, challenges are perceived as problems that need to be resolved. The problem-posing methodology involves praxis (1972:28), which is a “spiralling cyclic process that begins with reflection, proceeds to action and returns to reflection” (White, 1996 in Servaes, 1996:24). Praxis permits individuals to iterate the process of consciousness (Freire, 1972:96). To achieve praxis, Freire (1992:53) argues that trust must be placed in the oppressed’s ability to reason, as, if there is no trust, there is a possibility that dialogue will not be initiated and that instead dictatorship and instruction will develop.

In South Africa the DramAidE (Drama in AIDS Education) project has adapted the methodology effectively. DramAidE is a life skills and sexuality programme that employs Freirean participatory methodologies to engage young people in dialogue about issues relating to sex, sexuality and HIV/AIDS (DramAidE, 1996: foreword). DramAidE employs cultural forms such as songs, drama, poems and dance to empower the participants and break the cycle of silence (Dalrymple, 1997:75).

Evaluations carried out by DramAidE and outside researchers using both qualitative and quantitative research have indicated that the programme has had a positive impact in changing knowledge and attitudes about sexuality and responsible behaviour in schools (DramAidE, 1996:3). Although behavioural change could not be measured, it was significant that the programme managed to break the silence by providing ways of talking about sex and sexuality (Dalrymple and Preston-Whyte, 1995:3). In other words, Freire’s

participatory methodology needs to be contextualised in the convergence of “indigenous cultures, local languages and visions of liberation” (Thomas, 1996:28).

In conclusion, there are two phases in the development of the liberatory pedagogy (Freire, 1972). In the first phase the oppressed, in this context often women, are aware of their plight. They expose the world of their oppression through action and reflection and commit to its transformation. The second phase occurs when the oppression is actually transformed and the pedagogy ceases to be that of the oppressed but includes all interested in the process of permanent liberation.

Currently Lesotho is engaged in the first phase as these cases of oppression are slowly being revealed. Some Basotho women, especially those in the urban areas, are aware of their oppression. The increase in the number of conferences and workshops on Women and HIV/AIDS, Women and Culture, Empowerment of Women, Women’s Rights and the Right of the Girl Child, is indicative of this.

In this research, given the existing realities in Lesotho, such as poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and the ‘culture of silence’ that exists particularly in the rural areas where the study was undertaken, Freire’s concept of the articulation of silence as embodied in the oppressed is particularly relevant, and can be considered useful in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

### **2.1.1 Critique of Freire’s pedagogy**

Inevitably, much criticism has arisen against the Freirean pedagogy. Charles Okigbo (1993) argues that the problem-posing methodology may be challenging as Freire takes for granted that all persons are intelligent and will ask the right questions. He notes that “Freire talks so glowingly of the problem-posing methodology as if it is an innate quality of every individual ... it must be a difficult exercise to expect that everybody will know how to pose the right questions about their social reality” (Okigbo,1993:48). Unfortunately there are no guarantees that people will ask the right questions about their socio-economic and political reality, and accordingly the process may not lead to the development of critical consciousness. After all, getting the right answers is dependent on

asking the right questions.

In the above criticism articulated by Okigbo (1993), what he does not account for is that people will not ask the right question because their minds have been conditioned to think in a certain way. For people immersed in a culture of silence or in the reality of the oppressed, questioning is forbidden. They have grown into that system and they hold the view that life is supposed to be the way that it is, that they have to surrender to a greater power who controls life. Therefore, by questioning it shows that they are not acknowledging their social reality. Therefore, Freire's educational methodology aims to 'uncondition' the mind through guidance and by so doing, open the possibility for questioning.

The other criticism lies in the fact that Freire's participatory methodology endeavours to be democratic. The reality is that nothing can ever be truly democratic; for example, even though the students are at liberty to talk about aspects of their life, it is the teacher who will guide students and choose the topics that are to be covered. As a result, the participatory method can be manipulated in some ways and can be made to seem participatory when in fact it is not.

By extension is the view that Freire's participatory methodology has been seen an approach that undermines the role and authority of the teacher. According to Heather McDonald (Sparks 2007:7), some educators have taken this participatory method to such an extreme that a teacher once stated in a class, "I don't have the power to tell a young person what to do and not to do ... they find the path" (McDonald, in Sparks 2007:7). What such critiques fail to realise is that Freire has always maintained that even though his methodology is democratic, that does not take away the fact that it is directive. Pierre Bourdieu (1998:8) supports this view when he contends that there is no genuine democracy without direction or genuine opposing critical powers.

Freire (1985 in McLaren, 2000:150) notes that "the teacher who eliminates her role as the teacher and claims that they are equal with their learners is either a demagogue, lies or is incompetent" Freire has always affirmed that education is directive (Freire, 1998:109)

because there is no real education without direction and there is no educational practice that does not point to an objective (Freire and Macedo, in Sparks, 2007:7). Therefore the teacher is permitted to have authority and intervene but should not be authoritarian (Freire, 1998:65). For example, the questions posed by the teacher are centred on the students' social reality, so that the students can reflect on and evaluate the world in which they live. The reflection and the evaluation are not a bid to "[find] ways to adapt to the world, but rather [to find] ways in which to transform it" (Freire, 1998:69-70).

## **2.2 Epic Theatre (Bertolt Brecht)**

In the 1930s, German playwright and theorist Bertolt Brecht created Epic Theatre which has had an influence in TfD. Brecht broke the traditional approach to drama based on the rules of Aristotelian poetics. Peter Brooker (1994) contends that Brecht's view of drama as first outlined by Aristotle was to "invite spectators to empathise with the emotional destiny of its central individual character" (Brooker, 1994:188), thereby evoking feelings of terror and pity in the spectator and ultimately causing a catharsis (Willet, 1957:279). Consequently Aristotelian poetics views spectators as a collective, mentally immature individual which can only be reached through its emotions (Willet, 1964:79). It is argued by Brecht (Willet, 1964) and subsequently Augusto Boal (1979) that Aristotelian poetics, which essentially describes dramatic theatre, presents the world as static (Willet, 1964:79; Boal, 1979: xxiii). This, it is proposed, encourages the view that things are 'the way that they should be' and so will never change.

For Brecht, theatre was not just a place for 'mental refreshment' but a tool for social engineering, a laboratory for social change (Gray, 1976:134). Therefore, he points out that the audience should not be made to see but to think about the actions on the stage, question them and propose solutions rather than emotionally immersing themselves in the plot (Esslin, 1960:134). He thus invites the audience not to identify with the characters but to identify with the problems or issues that the characters face. This is credited to the fact that Brecht's opinion is that the audience is a community capable of intellectual and emotional maturity, which is able to question and relate the play to its personal and social reality (Willet, 1964:79).

Epic theatre “is dynamic and its task is to show the world as it changes and also how it can be changed” (Willet, 1964:79); therefore, it presents individuals as “socially constructed and malleable” (Brooker, 1994:188). Epic theatre shows human behaviour as alterable and suggests that while man is dependant on certain socio-political and economic factors, he is at the same time capable of changing them (Willet, 1964:86). Epic theatre’s interest lies in its practicality (Subiotto, 1982:35). In this type of theatre the puzzles of the world are not solved but shown; this arouses the spectator’s capacity for action and forces him/her to make decisions (Brooker, 1994:189). Therefore once the audience has seen how the play correlates to their social reality by raising critical awareness, the audience then initiates change in their own socio-economic and political environment.

A significant feature of Epic theatre is the alienation effect (A-effect). The aim of the A-effect is to alienate and detach the audience from the characters and the storyline in order to make them focus on the arguments raised in the play (Willet, 1964:136). Alienating an event or character means “stripping it of its familiar, obvious or natural quality and creating a sense of astonishment and curiosity around it” (Brooker, 1994:191). This is because if a thing has not been changed for a long time it appears to be unchangeable, and the only way to change it is to ‘frighten’ it out of its naturalness by alienation (Demetrez, 1962: 109). In this way the habitual notion that a situation in question requires no elucidation is broken, and the view that a situation is difficult is given up and people begin to work on it by removing layers (Willet,1964:136). The A-effects therefore help transform the audience from being passive to developing a critical and suspicious role. To do this, the stage should be ‘purged of anything magical’ (Willet, 1964:136) and no hypnotic tensions should be set up. This is done to prevent the setting or the stage presenting or suggesting a particular place, time or season.

In order to achieve this, the “fourth wall” must be broken down (Wright, 1989:26). The fourth wall is a reference to the proscenium arch separating the audience and the actors. By breaking the fourth wall, the audience is aware of the performed illusions and thus ceases to be a mere spectator conditioned to believe that he/she is watching “a spontaneous authentic unrehearsed event” (Willet, 1964:141). When the fourth wall is

broken down it is “possible for the actor in principle to address the audience directly” (Willet, 1964:136) either as a character or as an actor, thus acknowledging the audience’s presence in the theatre. Therefore, by breaking the fourth wall the audience is aroused to action and can critically assess or think about the issues raised.

Once the fourth wall has been broken down Brecht notes that the actor should not become wholly transformed into the character he is portraying (Willet, 1964:137) rather he just shows his/her character in the process of change and growth (Brooker, 1994:196). To do this, the actor has to act in ways that do not invite compassion and understanding so as to avoid putting the spectators in a trance. “The verdict he didn’t act Lear he was Lear” would be an annihilating blow to him. The actor just has to show the character or rather has to do more than just get into it (Brooker, 1994:197). Brecht was of the opinion that if the actor became completely transformed into the character, the audience became emotionally attached to the character, consequently shifting the focus from the arguments or issues raised in the play and instead investing interest in the characters. In order to avoid total transformation so as to help alienate the actions and remarks of the characters being portrayed, the actors were encouraged to rehearse parts in their own accents rather than being ‘in character’, to read lines in the third person, to change the present tense into the past tense and to include the stage directions in the dialogue (Willet, 1964:138; Brooker, 1994:196). All these were however, to be avoided during the performance. Speaking the stage directions out aloud in the third person and also transposing in the past gives the actor a stance from which he can also look back at his sentence. Consequently there will be an audible and visual distance between the actor and the character that he/she is playing, during the performance, ultimately putting the focus on the arguments. In this way the audience will be able to witness a process of change and growth

In Epic theatre the lighting consisted of an unnatural, exaggerated white stage lighting whose source was placed in full view of the audience. The stage was brightly lit at all times without taking the mood of the scene into consideration, and the exclusion of stage lights served as a constant reminder to the audience that what they were watching was a

play (Willet,1964:138).

Other A-effects included the use of music, whose purpose was not to complement what was happening on stage or intensify the emotion, but to narrate what was happening and to distance the audience from the play. The music was used to *counteract* the action of the play, in that the lyrics and the melody were contradictory so as to bring attention to the words, “the words, the music, the setting must become independent of one another (Willet, 1964:37-38). For example, the theme of the song would be sombre, full of life’s challenges, but the melody would be cheerful and light. Ultimately the contradictions and the ambiguity would alienate the audience, resulting in their questioning what they saw on stage. Other A-effects included the use of minimal props and the use of explanatory placards at the beginning of each new scene.

By applying the ‘A-effects’ the plays aimed to avoid creating an illusion of reality on stage and made the audience more critical and questioning of what they were taking for granted (Etherton, 1988:88). As observed above, these techniques were not only oriented towards the audience but the actors as well, so that instead of just being actors they could also critically comprehend their role (Brecht, 1957). Brecht’s Epic Theatre can thus be seen as revolutionary in that, by encouraging audiences to watch a play critically, it gives people the capacity to act on their own environment.

### **2.3 Theatre of the Oppressed (Augusto Boal)**

Drawing from his own experiences as a political activist in Brazil and inspired by Freire’s (1972) educational philosophies of dialogue, problem-posing, praxis, conscientisation and culture circle, together with Brecht’s (1930) theatrical techniques, Augusto Boal (1979) developed what has come to be known today as Theatre of the Oppressed (TO). TO was created in the 1970s as a response to the prevailing dictatorial regimes in Brazil (Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz, 1994:2) which caused severe socio-economic oppression. Boal created theatrical techniques to be utilised as consciousness-raising tools by the suffering Brazilians to conquer their oppression and empower themselves (Babbage, 2004:3).

In defining oppression, Robert Mullaly (2002:27) states that it is when a particular group in society is demoralised and dominated by an excessive use of force, power or societal norms. It can also be defined as power dynamics that centre on a monologue as opposed to a dialogue (Boal, 1979; 2001). In his *Poetics of the Oppressed*, Boal (1992) contends that oppression should not be identified as a cause of a particular thing, nor should it be tied to an ideology since “such limiting categorisations are inimical to the whole spirit of theatre of the oppressed ... and [they eliminate] the possibility of change” (Boal, 1992:xxiii). The reason for this is that oppression has different connotations in different parts of the world as the oppression that people suffer differs from place to place.

In South and Central America, for example, it meant people who literally killed others with guns, whereas in developed countries such as Europe, USA, and Canada, Boal found that the oppression had different resonances (Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz, 1994:4). There, the oppression that people suffered from was internal; it impinged on people’s desires and decisions. Their oppression was more psychological and ranged from thoughts of suicide to loneliness and alienation (Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz, 1994:4).

In Lesotho the oppression that women endure is, among others, caused by ‘institutional sexism’. This exists externally and is experienced both internally and externally. In Lesotho, different roles have been assigned to both men and women. While this is not necessarily oppression, these roles can and do lead to oppression as they are incorporated into the legal system. For example, in Lesotho it is legally accepted that the man is the one who makes decisions. If, for example, he does not want his wife to further her studies and she proceeds, he has the right to take her to court. Apart from these roles, expectations are placed on women and girls, which are perpetuated through such things as culture and taboos which force women to follow men without question. Therefore, in employing the techniques of TO, participants are at liberty to create themes based on their own comprehension of what constitutes oppression in their world.

Like Brecht, Boal’s theatre also challenged conventional theatre principles. Boal built on Brecht’s idea of inviting the audience to play an active role by questioning and critically assessing how the play correlates to its personal and social reality. He takes this concept

a step further by “[finding] ways of allowing the audience not only to think but to act for itself, thereby turning theatre from an ideological state into a rehearsal for revolution” (Fortier, 1997:140-141). He therefore proposes a notion in which the spectators become actors simultaneously, hence the coinage ‘spect-actors’ (Boal, 2002:xxvi), which gives them authority, power and responsibility. The spectators become agents who transform the dramatic action on stage, because for Boal “all must act, all must be protagonists in the necessary transformations of society” (Boal, 1979:vi).

Augusto Boal (1979:122) terms TO a “rehearsal for revolution” as it is located on the boundaries of fiction and reality. For him, theatre is a weapon for oppressed people to employ so as to change their social reality. This is because, although the drama is centred on true events, it is experienced in a fictitious environment (Boal, 1979:141). TO’s fundamental objective is to cross the boundary of fiction and become incorporated in real life. When the oppressive situations have been explored through theatre and ways to overcome them found, people are encouraged to move beyond the play and take the action in the real world (Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz, 1994:36).

TO is designed to identify the oppression and stop its cycle by proposing solutions. Boal proposes that the oppression should be defined by the oppressed (Boal, 1979:122), as the key objective is to change people from being passive spectators to being subjects, actors or transformers of the dramatic action (Boal, 1979:122). The first step that Boal (1979:126) proposes is knowing the body through a series of exercises. The sole objective of the exercises is to make people realise “their bodies’ potential, restrictions, social distortions and possibilities of rehabilitation”. These exercises as designed by Boal (1979:128) are intended to undo the muscular structure of the participants; to take it apart, and discover and explore each part. This raises their level of consciousness so that each participant comprehends what point his/her body is governed to work. “Each exercise is a physical reflection on oneself, a monologue introversion” (Boal, 2002:48). During the exercise, Boal (1979:130) states that it is important to maintain a creative atmosphere.

Once people understand their bodies, the second stage is to make the body expressive (Boal, 1979:126) through a series of games. These games deal with the expressivity of the body as a producer and receiver of messages (Boal, 2002:48). In playing these games participants should be encouraged to play characters and not interpret them (Boal, 1979:130). Unlike the exercises, “the games are a dialogue and they require an interlocutor. They are extroversion” (Boal, 2002:48). The exercises and games utilised in the first and second stages are used to develop group consciousness and to establish a degree of theatrical communion (Boal, 1998:8). In both stages participants should always be encouraged to invent games and exercise and not be submissive consumers of entertainment that is external (Boal, 1979:131).

Once the two preceding stages, which centre on the work of the participants with their own bodies, have occurred, then participants are ready to proceed to the third stage. This stage requires direct participation in the theatrical forms/performance by utilising theatre as language, “that is living and present and not as a finished product displaying images from the past” (Boal, 1979:126). This stage delves into issues raised and furthers the transition from passivity to action (Boal, 1979:132). TO is therefore about acting rather than talking, questioning rather than giving answers, analysing rather than giving and accepting (Boal, 2002:xxviii).

There are three main categories of TO: Image Theatre, Forum Theatre and Invisible Theatre (Boal, 2002:xxii).

### **2.3.1 Image Theatre**

In Image Theatre, the actors use their bodies to create tableaux of different situations, such as incidents in their daily lives, feelings and experiences, which are representative of broader societal oppressions (Boal, 2002:xxii). Once the oppression has been identified, it is then transformed into an image, since one’s internal state can be comprehended by one’s physical position. The image created should not remain static as it is only the starting point. The image should then be changed to into an ‘ideal’ image and finally into a ‘transitional’ image so as to show the possibility of moving from one reality to another (Boal, 1979:135). Thus Image Theatre must reflect a transitional society since the

oppressed vision is as yet incomplete (Boal, 1979:136). Once the image has been transformed, the spect-actors take their discoveries back into reality and apply them so as to liberate themselves. Accordingly, through Image Theatre spect-actors learn how to transform their lives as the most important thing is to analyse the feasibility of change (Boal, 1979:139).

Image Theatre is very instrumental in generating trust, since actors touch each other. The images created by the participants provide a solid foundation for action that will develop, as derived from the themes that are set up. Image Theatre is both stimulating and easy to perform as it has the capacity to transform thought into a visible image (Boal, 1979:137) and can turn “everyday space into a theatrical arena or aesthetic space” (Boal, 1994:3). Image Theatre is seen as effective as images can be close to our feelings and even subconscious feelings (Hushlak, 1995:78). As a result, it possesses the ability to break language and cultural barriers, making it an enjoyable experience for the participants. Image Theatre can be used as a foundation for Forum Theatre.

### **2.3.2 Forum Theatre**

In Forum Theatre, participants are asked to tell a story containing a social problem which is an indicator of an oppression (Boal, 2002:xxiv). The story is then turned into a skit and shown to the spect-actors in an unresolved manner. After one showing of the scene, it is shown again exactly as it was, but this time slightly sped up until a spect-actor shouts ‘Stop!’ The spect-actors then assume the role of the oppressed and try to overpower the oppressor. The aim is to try to break the cycle of the oppression by testing solutions, as it is not the place of theatre to show only one path but to offer the means by which all possible paths may be examined (Boal, 1979:141). Therefore, various solutions should be enacted as through the enactment knowledge, tactics and experience are gained. Forum Theatre should evoke a desire to practise in reality the act that has been rehearsed in the theatre setting (Boal, 1979:142).

What is of paramount importance in Forum Theatre is the debate that it fuels, both in word and action, thus enabling people to become protagonists of their own lives (Boal

2002:xxiv). The process of thinking, acting, discussing issues and learning collectively is therefore the core of Forum Theatre and the resolutions established are less important; in other words, it is more important to achieve a good debate than a good solution (Boal, 1992:230). The discussions, conflict of ideas and arguments all enrich the process and prepare the spect-actor for action in real life (Bower, 1997:5).

In Forum Theatre, ideas should not be imposed because this type of theatre is about inquiring, acting out situations and analysing, rather than simply talking or dictating to the participants what should or should not happen (Babbage, 2004:65).

The proceedings in Forum Theatre are controlled by a Joker. The Joker is a direct link between the characters in the play and audiences in the real world. The Joker is attached to no real party; he sets the rules for the spectators, facilitates the replacements of the protagonists with audience members, and sums up solutions put forth during the intervention (Babbage, 2004:69). The Joker in the forum theatre faces the greatest challenge as he/she is responsible for the success or the failure of the forum (Vine,1993:117). Because the success of the forum is dependant on the Joker he /she must transmit liveliness, excitement and enthusiasm for tackling problems put forth by the spect-actors with a genuine interest in all contributions. Nevertheless, the general responsibility that lies on the shoulder of the Joker is “structuring and deepening the learning experience as it unfolds”(Vine,1993:119).

### **2.3.3 Invisible Theatre**

In the Malealea theatre project, Invisible Theatre was not used, however I will give a brief description of what it is. This form of theatre involves the public as participants without their knowing it (Boal, 2002:xxiii). In Invisible Theatre a scene is rehearsed and then played out to the audience in a public space. The scene usually involves an unpredicted subversion of that behaviour within that particular society (Boal, 1992:xx). In response to what they have seen the public then gets involved in the argument.

### **2.3.4 Critique of Theatre of the Oppressed**

While Theatre of the Oppressed can be highly effective as it promotes personal

development through self-expression and collective empowerment, it does however have its own limitations. The first shortcoming is that it can at times prove to be a very long and time-consuming process (Mda, 1993:184) which sometimes moves beyond the scope of any defined project.

Apart from the above reason, it may at times yield negative results as there is an *intervention participation relationship* that needs to be taken into consideration (Mda, 1993:170-171). For example, for conscientisation to occur, participation and intervention need to reach an optimal level; yet sometimes the issues discussed are too close to people and the intervention tends to take longer, ending with the pointing of fingers – ‘the blaming syndrome’ (Erven, 2001:244; Mda,1993:15) – about who is right and who is wrong. Such discussions end up being personal as opposed to moving from the individual to the community at large.

Another criticism directed at Boal’s TO is that there is no guarantee that the spectators will transform what they see on stage into their lives (Young et al., 1996 in Nduhura 2004:18). Sometimes transforming what one sees on stage may be viewed as nothing but a romantic notion since the execution is dependant on other factors, such as support structures or financial factors, rather than being limited to an individual who wants to liberate him- or herself.

Lastly, Dominique Nduhura (2004:18) contends that participatory approaches sometimes fail to involve communities, especially in communities with an introverted culture which are used to being told what to do most of the time. He draws this conclusion after a study carried out by Durden and Nduhura, (2003) in which some spectators were reluctant to participate for fear of accusations from their peers should they possess different views.

## **2.4 Theatre for Development**

Theatre for Development (TfD) is the utilisation of theatre as a tool in the processes of both community and social development (Prentki, 2000:13). According to David Kerr (1995:149), there have been two principal sources of TfD: propaganda theatre, which was practiced during the colonial era, and community theatre.

In the 1950s, TfD experiments were carried out by colonial governments in developing countries as they prepared for their independence (Kidd, 1984:5). The performances were staged by a community development workforce who combined the performances with practical demonstrations and a question-and-answer session (Kidd, 1984:5). These tours, according to Ross Kidd (1982), were a “form of mass education to complement and reinforce a process of community development and extension work at the village level”.

A decade later, another form of TfD emerged, the travelling theatre projects of the universities (Kerr, 1995:135). University students of Ibadan (Nigeria), Makerekere (Uganda) and Chikwakwa (Zambia) created and geared plays to local audiences, mostly concerning conflicts between tradition and modernisation. This initiative was a form of ‘cultural democratisation’ where theatre was taken out of the urban community and made accessible to the populace (Kidd, 1984:5). After the plays, drama workshops were held for the local audiences to transfer drama skills and ideas. The plays had a strong performative content as they contained indigenous theatrical traditions of dance, song, music and traditional storytelling narratives (Kidd, 1984:5).

On the basis of the above, it can therefore be suggested that TfD emerged in response to the need for information dissemination, particularly amongst the rural communities. TfD therefore became a form of mass education to complement and strengthen the community development processes that were already in practice in the rural areas (Mda, 1994:204).

Frances Harding (1998:15) argues that the point of departure of TfD lies in the understanding of the terms ‘theatre’ and ‘development’. Keir Elam (1980:2) notes that theatre is a “complex of phenomena associated with the performer-audience transaction: that is production and communication of meaning in the performance itself and with the systems underlying it”. This definition is also echoed by John O’Toole (1992) and Paul Taylor (1997) in their contention that the core of theatre is the process that permits people to derive meaning from the communication that ensues between the spectators and the audience. Juma Bakari (1998:116-117) substantiates these points by indicating that

theatre is a process in which issues are communicated to spectators using language, movement and space. This process, according to him, begins as soon as the first spectator comes in and ends when the last spectator leaves.

Development, as noted by Mda (1993:39) is perceived by African leaders as “wanting to be like the west”. Because of this definitions by African leaders, African citizens aspire to lead western lifestyles, where infrastructure, technological advancement and economic growth take top priority. In measuring development, much emphasis is placed on the Gross National Product (GNP). This indicator has proved to be insufficient, however, as it excludes the distribution of wealth, problems of poverty and unemployment, and instead focuses on purely economic growth (Mda, 1993:39).

This approach is due to the fact that in the early 1950s development was defined as a concept of successive phases of economic growth (Todaro 1982:86). According to this concept of development, all that was needed to enable Third World countries to proceed to the next phase was the right quantity and mixture of foreign aid and investment, a process which had already been followed by more developed countries (Todaro, 1982:87). This concept of development promotes dependency, consumerism, poverty and oppression because all the advanced technology, investment and aid come from the west (Mda 1993:40). Therefore, as Third World countries endeavour to adopt ambitious development targets set by developed countries and the UN, this only worsens their status (Thomas, 1992:1).

Mda (1993) therefore proposes that development should be looked at differently. Todaro (1977:95) proposes that development should be seen as a “multi-dimensional process including the reorganisation and reorientation of not only the economic system but the social system which is inclusive of popular attitudes, customs and beliefs”. Harding (1998:5) notes that development refers to “consciousness-raising as much as it means material development and it essentially encompasses inner experiences or transformations”. For example, it is in the process of transformation in one’s self-awareness that people come to make decisions, either individually or collectively, that

will lead to development.

In order to achieve self-awareness, which is key to development, individuals need to undergo a process of reflection. Reflection is defined as bending or folding back like a ray of light. When one reflects, one essentially looks deep within oneself to discover wider views of oneself, and uncover knowledge that has the potential to transform one (Kantrowitz, 1997:138). Self-reflection can be achieved through social interaction with other people, enabling one to externalise the internal dialogue so that past experiences can be integrated to the present situation and seen in a new light.

Therefore, development is a process through which the society achieves greater control of its social, economic and political providence (Mda, 1994:205). It is here that Mda (1993) points out that for Tfd to be optimally effective, the initial phase for any developmental project must be communication, and, according to Freire (1972:52), effective communication should be a two-way dialogic encounter.

In utilising Theatre for Development in the community, there has to be social interaction throughout between the 'development agents', in this case theatre practitioners, and the beneficiaries of the developmental action, the community (Mda, 1993:56). It has been observed that if developmental projects exclude the community, such projects are seldom a success (Bala,1998:131). This is because the community feels that the developmental agents are imposing their ideas on them and they feel no obligation or any inclination to participate in the project; as a result, they lack the motivation to see the project through (Harding, 1998:5). Employing theatre as an instrument for development is a response to a need for an autonomous mode to facilitate dialogue at the community level for both mass and interpersonal communication (Mda, 1995:204).

The application of Tfd is most significant in developing countries since its main objective is empowerment through encouraging individual and community development, particularly in the rural areas. Tfd has been identified as one of the best modes of media that can be utilised in the realisation of developmental goals (Mda, 1993). This is

credited to the fact that it serves as the people's democratic media since it has the capacity to integrate indigenous and popular systems of communication that already exist in the rural areas; and it is participatory and interactive, permitting the audience to play a more central role by producing, acting and distributing the messages (Mda, 1993:2; Parmer, 1994:27-33). According to Ross Kidd, Tfd has the potential to meet its aim of promoting socio-economic and political consciousness, because

It has the means of bringing people together, building confidence and solidarity, stimulating discussion, exploring alternative options for action, and building a collective commitment to change; starting with people's urgent concerns and issues, it encourages reflections and possible strategies for change (1984:264).

Mda (1993:48), however, claims that not all Tfd is effective. He notes that it is most successful when it is 'popular' – that is, when the “plays are oriented towards the whole community and not only those who are educated” (Mda 1993:46); when it deals with local problems that local people can relate to; and when it employs already-existing expressive cultural forms, such as local languages, songs, dance and poetry (Kerr.1995:151). Popular theatre conforms to the transformation-oriented perspective of the people who are also its intended audience (Boal, 1998:213).

Mda (1993:49) describes three types of popular theatre, namely Agitprop, Participatory and Theatre-for-conscientisation. The term 'Agitprop' originated in the 1920s and is a neologism of two words – 'agitation' and 'propaganda'. In Agitprop a play is created by professionals and is performed for the community (Mda,1993:50). The play centres on whatever problem is seen by the theatre practitioners to be of the greatest urgency and importance to the community (Mda, 1993:50). In this type of popular theatre, actors themselves respond to the local situation, thus there is no participation from the community and, therefore, no conscientisation. At the end of the play there may be informal discussions. Agitprop places art or the play before the developmental issue (Mda, 1993:50).

The second type of popular theatre is Participatory. In this form the play is produced by and for the people with the help of catalysts which in this case are the theatre practitioners (Mda, 1993:50). The plays are improvised within particular boundaries and consciousness is raised from inside as the community suggests issues to be dealt with. After the production there are organised discussions (Mda, 1993:50).

The last form of popular theatre that Mda talks about is Theatre-for-conscientisation, which is a theatrical piece that is produced by and for the people, without spectators. Theatre-for-conscientisation is a higher stage of participatory theatre as it involves a high level of public involvement in the production and decision-making process (Servaes, 1996:79). This is attributed to the fact that those who may initially be spectators later become actors. Boal's Simultaneous Dramaturgy and Forum Theatre can be classified as a type of Theatre-for-conscientisation. In this form of theatre each participant is encouraged to voice his/her ideas, thus giving individuals power and allowing them to influence the final results (Mda, 1993:88; Harding, 1998:14). In his article, "Didactic Showmen: Theatre for Development in Contemporary South Africa", Page Laws (1998:52) notes that Theatre-for-conscientisation is obviously the most radical and most empowering to the people.

In utilising popular theatre in order to create and exchange messages, Mda (1993) notes that there has to be full participation of the audience from the beginning to the end. It is at this juncture that Mda (1993:171) points out that although community participation is vital in raising the consciousness of the people, another equally important variable is intervention. In order to achieve conscientisation there should be a balance between participation and intervention. The purpose of the intervention should draw out the "villagers' own analyses rather than imposing the catalyst's own thinking on the villagers" (Mda, 1993:174).

In Agitprop there is maximum intervention and minimum participation; therefore, the level of conscientisation is minimal (Mda,1993:170). Mda (1993) does not gauge PPT in terms of the participation / intervention relationship; however, it is evident from his

explanation that he would consider it as less than optimally participative, with an over-emphasis on intervention. These conclusions are drawn from Ross Kidd and Martin Byram's critique of Laedaza Batanani, who found that during the discussions it was mostly the articulate members of the society who monopolised the discussions and often had dominant-class values (Kerr 1995:153). Later literature argues, however, that PPT needs to emphasise intervention to prevent a self-blaming syndrome (Erven, 2001:244)

The notion of popular theatre is rooted in putting theatre back in the hands of the people so that through it, they are able not only to reflect on and interpret society but also transform it (Mda, 1993:6). Popular theatre offers a fictionalised context for social and community development to occur, since participants can express their opinions without personally compromising themselves (Harding, 1998:16). In joining a theatrical production, participants are able to triumph over their own fears, liberate themselves from their repressive realities, and achieve a sense of freedom and relief that is realised within the margins of theatre (Boal, 1979:140). Therefore, popular theatre provides a forum in which people have the capacity to calculate and prioritise their needs.

Popular theatre employs cultural practices for the empowerment of people. Research has revealed that an understanding of culture is a fundamental aspect in any developmental process. Dennis McQuail (2000:92) defines 'culture' as a constant process of producing meanings of and from our societal experience. Culture can also refer to "shared attributes of a human group such as their physical environment, tools, religion, customs, and practices, arts such as music, dance, and poetry." Understood from this perspective, culture should therefore be viewed as a foundation of development and not just as one of its factors.

#### **2.4.1 Theatre for Development in Lesotho**

In Lesotho, Theatre for Development was utilised in previous years as a method of non-formal adult education in rural and marginalised areas. Educational topics included reforestation, migrant labour and cooperatives, amongst others (Mda, 1993:65). Presently in Lesotho, however, Tfd is seldom used, though this is not documented. One

of the reasons is that while there are theatre practitioners, there is not enough financial backing as theatre in Lesotho is sponsored by NGOs, and the government does not subsidise it. Funding from NGOs is often sporadic and projects are not sustained. In Lesotho, Tfd was introduced by Professor Andrew Horn, a British practitioner who taught Literature in the English Department at the National University of Lesotho in the 1980s, but it was Zakes Mda who popularised this practice by forming the Marotholi Travelling Theatre (Ebewo, 2004:95).

#### **2.4.2 The Marotholi Travelling Theatre**

The Marotholi Travelling Theatre of Lesotho, founded in the 1980s, was a collaborative project of the English Department and the Institute of Extra Mural Studies of the National University of Lesotho. The aim of the project was, firstly, to utilise theatre as a means of development communication and secondly, to empower and motivate communities to initiate and participate in development activities (Mda, 1995:204; Horn and Davenport, 1985:28).

Initially the Marotholi theatre practitioners utilised the agitprop approach (Mda 1993:66). Marotholi toured villages with ready-made plays, created following a five step process where theatre practitioners would collect data for the target audience, analyse it, improvise a story, rehearse it and present it to the community. During the analysis of the data, actors prioritised issues they felt were important, which they wanted to deal with (Mda, 1993:66). In this method the only way that the community participated was through group discussions at the end of the play (Mda, 1993:66). An example is the play *Kopano ke Matla* (Unity is Strength) which was performed in villages such as Ha Rata, Ha Mohalenyana, Ha Lethena, Ha Ramabanta, Ha Moituspeli, and a special performance for the King and Queen at the Royal Village, Matsieng Pitso ground. The play was mounted between May and June 1984 during the university's winter holidays (Mda, 1993:99-101).

One of the arguments put forth with regard to the Agitprop approach utilised by Marotholi was that sometimes their productions were sponsored by organisations such as

UNICEF and the Ministry of Health, and that theatre practitioners consequently had to promote the interests of those agencies (Mda, 1993:67). This, according to Harding (1998:25), has been one of the shortcomings of TfD in Africa where almost all the time it becomes an instrument for oppression in itself, expected to be an agent for the government or the funding agencies, who ultimately decide what is best for the community. It thus becomes a situation of “he who pays the piper calls the tune” (Harding, 1998:25).

In 1986, Marotholi changed its approach after the theatre practitioners realised that they were not properly identifying with the community’s problems (Mda, 1993:87). A different approach, which would dismiss the domesticating qualities of Agitprop and yet build on its merits of possessing a strong rallying force, was thus needed. A combination of Boal’s Forum Theatre and Simultaneous Dramaturgy<sup>2</sup> was appropriate in overturning the chain of command. The community members became creators and actors of the drama and they were at liberty to prioritise their needs as a community. In permitting the spectators to become actors, community participation increases, and it is at this point that consciousness is raised within the community as it analyses its socio-cultural reality. In this way, as stipulated by Lambert (1982, in Mda, 1993:67), “theatre then offers the means whereby all possible paths may be examined as the community educates itself”.

An example of one such production is the Agro-Action play (Mda, 1993:126). The community members themselves selected the issues that were dealt with in this production. The villagers were involved in the planning phase and they created the script. Since the villagers suggested the campaign, they also initiated the process of communication. Although the actors of the Agro-Action play were the external agents, the community participated by dramatising the end since the play only posed questions. This was done deliberately so that through finding solutions by asking, questioning and acting out different solutions, the community could be empowered (Mda, 1993:136).

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<sup>2</sup> In Simultaneous Dramaturgy catalysts perform a short scene that is suggested by a local resident. The actors then stop the play at a crisis point and invite the spectators to offer solutions. Thus in simultaneous dramaturgy the audience writes the play while the actors performing it (Boal, 1979:132; Mda, 1993:66).

Harding (1998:25) notes that with the right to speak, to ask questions and to use one's language, comes the power to hold and articulate an opinion. Therefore, through questioning, people acquire a voice, and according to Freire (1972:52), that is when the process of development ensues and oppression ceases.

### **2.4.3 The Facilitator**

According to Stephanie Marlin-Curiel (2002:278) the most successful Tfd projects are the ones that have a facilitator who possesses a "higher critical awareness but invites participation from the audience rather than imposing his or her own views". The responsibility of the facilitator is "create an environment for dialogue, learning and transformation"(White and Nair 1999:39), thus he/she should protect all opinions put forth by the audience so that they feel free to dialogue about issues affecting them. In order to assure a safe space he/she needs to have good listening skills, needs to be able to ask the right questions and should also be patient with the audience, so as to "catalyse thinking, motivation, interaction, action, reaction and reflection" (White and Nair,1999:38). In this way as the facilitator leads the audience into dialogue they will learn through and from each other. Ted Welch (Winner,1998:77) notes that not everyone can be a facilitator as it needs training and practise; he notes that some facilitators facilitate without reflecting and that is inappropriate as what they are doing is simply stating their own opinions.

In PPT, a crucial task of the facilitator is to remove the focus or decentralise the power away from her/himself and instead invite the audience to reflect on the issues raised in the play and also those not raised but related to their social reality. The facilitator leads the community into a dialogue with the opinion that each member of the audience is different-has their own views, knowledge and understanding and therefore should be respected. Therefore communication, which is essential for participation, is dependant on the skill of the facilitator to invite the audience to dialogue (Nair and White, 1999:19-20).

## 2.5 Women and Silence

In this era of HIV/AIDS, silence is a tragedy as the pandemic has been “strongly constructed as a male disease and women as representing a risk to men” (Kitzinger, in Wilton, 1994:5). Silence is a characteristic of gender inequality and accordingly prohibits the negotiation of safe sex, self-discovery, and the expression of susceptibility – eventually “blocking the building of trust and respect and developing a culture of fear” (Morrell, 2003:1).

In his book *The History of Sexuality* Foucault (1980:27) contends that there are many silences and that they are a primary part of the strategies that motivate and infuse discourse. Foucault (1980:27) further points out that silence does not exist in isolation but it operates beside speech.

The first definition of silence relevant to this study, is that by which an individual feels incapable of talking about certain subjects or emotions. The second definition of silence, as explained by Foucault (1980:27), is that it is a social phenomenon experienced collectively in that silence is concealed dialogue, dialogue prohibited due to the policing and prohibition that ensues. Those with power control what can and cannot be said. These two aspects should not be separated but should be understood in relation to one another as they fuel each other. For example, individuals do not talk about certain things as the community forbids them. According to Sesotho culture, young unmarried women are not allowed to talk about sex as it is a taboo subject; as a result it becomes really difficult in workshops or campaigns for Basotho to really open up and talk about sex. This is a serious issue, as it is virtually impossible to talk about HIV/AIDS prevention without talking about sex.

Gender inequality, which breeds silence, is perpetuated by cultural practices. Dalrymple (2004:1) notes that ‘culture’ as a static notion dates back to the colonial era and has leaked into the post-colonial age to justify cultural practices that strengthen social structures such as patriarchy, which are at the core of oppression, particularly for women.

Patriarchy is a socially constructed system that permits male domination and female subordination – “[there exists within it] political and social control of women” (Coward, 1983:7). The survival of patriarchy through the years is attributed to the fact that it originates in and is nurtured by the family itself, even as it penetrates other sectors (Kambarami, 2006:3).

In the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1972) stipulates that the oppressor (in this context read ‘man’) has disempowered the oppressed (women)<sup>3</sup> by denying them freedom. Women (as patriarchally oppressed citizens) are therefore dehumanised by being stripped of their dignity, integrity and respect and deprived of justice and equality of values and choices (Epprecht, 2000:19).

The materialisation of this disempowerment inevitably leads to, amongst other things, silence which, when associated with power, becomes the sphere of influence of the oppressed (Freire, 1972:28). In Lesotho, the patriarchal system that exists limits women’s choices regarding their sexuality, and strips them of their bodily autonomy. Basotho women are defined in relation to their men, which is why an unmarried woman is referred to as a *letekatse* (a loose woman) or *letlola terata* (one who jumps fences) (Epprecht, 2000:85). In Lesotho the patriarchal system is also reinforced by Christianity, which traditionally states that man is head of the house, that a woman should respect her husband, and he will in turn love her (Kambarami, 2006:3).

This silence that exists in societies, and in this case Lesotho, is based on the fact that cultural practices are founded on the belief that women have less value than men; they are just objects whose sole objective is to serve men, entertain and produce babies for them (Epprecht, 2000:19). Such beliefs are driven by cultural practices such as *Bohali* (bride price). In Lesotho, a woman is a legal minor throughout her life, and is subject to

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<sup>3</sup> It is not the intention of this thesis to monolithise women as ‘the oppressed’. Further it is not the intention to monolithise Third World women as ‘the oppressed’. Nevertheless, the realities of rural women in particular in Lesotho do constitute a significant degree of oppression. It is my contention that not to acknowledge this would be to further silence these women.

the will of both the senior and junior male relatives until marriage, when she comes under the control of the husband. A Mosotho woman, as she is a 'child', is denied ownership of cattle, land and transferable wealth and is not permitted to make any independent decisions about anything – even the welfare of her children – since by virtue of payment of *bohali*, the children belong to the husband and not her (Epprecht, 2000:18).

This cultural practice gives men rights and absolute control over women and their bodies and in turn, the women are denied their basic human rights and freedom. In this situation, it becomes extremely difficult for a woman to actually negotiate condom use because her body is not her own, but it belongs to the husband. In addition, in Lesotho when a woman marries, she is not only married to the husband but to the family as well, so in some instances when a woman demands that her husband use a condom the whole family is called on to intervene, and the woman is reprimanded<sup>4</sup>. Sometimes, even though women may know of her husband's behaviour they may not insist on condom use for fear of family conflict, violence and or economic loss (Holland et al., 1990:19). In the case of young girls, if they initiate condoms they fear that they will be accused of mistrust of not loving her partner enough or being too sexually assertive. Unlike the older married women who are sometimes dependant on their husbands, for girls, the reason why they may stay in relationships, the problem may not so much be “economic or social dependence as a fear of challenging dominant ideas about heterosexuality of asserting their own needs and putting male pleasure second” (Holland et al.,1990:19). It can therefore be said that the main thing standing between women young and old alike and safe sex is the men that they are with (Holland et al., 1990:19) and by extension it could be concluded that for most women they contract HIV/AIDS in a 'loving' way from the men they love.

Some cultural practices that encourage silence amongst woman are evident in the upbringing of children. Traditionally the girl-child is brought up differently from the boy-child. The boy is brought up to view himself as a tough head of the household who

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<sup>4</sup> My experience as a Mosotho woman who lives in the village gives me insight and credibility.

makes all the decisions, while the girl is brought up not to question the man but to be an obedient and submissive woman (Epprecht, 2000:18).

Silence is a trait most typically demonstrated by rural Basotho women (and to some extent urban women, though to a lesser degree) who are not culturally empowered to speak and who, by Sesotho custom, remain legal minors (Epprecht, 2000:18). Silence amongst women has typically been the consequence of patriarchal societies across the globe where silence is seen as submission to patriarchal authority (hooks, 1989:6).

Recently, feminist writers such as American academic bell hooks have tried to recover the undervalued and suppressed women's voices. hooks (1981) maintains that this silence "was not a gesture of solidarity with black male patriarchs, it was in fact silence of the oppressed – that profound silence engendered by resignation and acceptance of one's lot" (hooks, 1981:1). Other feminists such as Heidi Mirza (1990:4) and Angela Davis (1993) talk of gender politics and silence and argue for the 'excavation' of silence by women. However, the attempt to recover women's voices reveals numerous types of gendered silence, "silence because women are not speaking, silence because their voices are not heard, silence because their voices are not understood, silence because their voices are preserved" (Balsamo and Treichler, in Treichler and Warren, 1998:140).

An element of silence that is not often acknowledged is the silence of the powerful themselves because "the ability to keep an area silent and virtually unexamined is an important if not the ultimate key to institutional power" (Treichler and Warren, 1998: 141). For example, the decision that a man may take to remain silent reinforces the prevailing situation. Such cases can be observed in domestic abuse where other men (relatives of the perpetrator) simply keep quiet and do not reprimand the perpetrator. This silence turns the abuse into something that is acceptable, thus normalising the abuse and to a high degree condoning the perpetrator's situation. This conspiracy of silence denies the existence of the problem for the victim as the silence conserves the privilege of the man.

Furthermore, if we take the position of women in a patriarchal society, they are not necessarily physically silent but those with the power choose not to hear them. As Miranda Young (1997:19) states, “a woman may or may not be physically silent, but it is the extent to which she is heard that signifies the nature of the silence”. An example is that most men are of the view that women have no right to say ‘no’ and when they do, their voices are not heard. Therefore, the silence of women in patriarchal societies should not be taken as an indication that they are not speaking.

It is in this light that, when dealing with the HIV/AIDS pandemic, sensitivity to gender dynamics must be observed. Doyal (1994:18) asserts that many existing prevention programmes “attempt to persuade people to change their sexual behaviours and in the case of women, that of their partners too ... however, these prevention programs often fail to recognise difficulties facing women who attempt to do this”.

An example is the ABC (Abstain, Be faithful and Condomise) campaign where women are advised to demand condoms every time they have sex. But what such initiatives fail to recognise is that it is not a simple, practical question about dealing rationally with the risk. Instead, it is solely the outcome of negotiation between potentially unequal partners where a woman’s voice is unheard even though she speaks.

In his essay “Neither Fixed Masterpiece nor Popular Distraction: Voice, Transformation and Encounter in Theatre for Development”, Harding (1998:14) states that having a voice gives people the means to act as agents of social transformation. Those who have a voice have the power to act in all the socio-political structures; however, women under patriarchy are denied that right because they do not speak, nor are they given an opportunity to speak by those who have power and who can speak – “the authoritative voice, the voice of authority” (Harding, 1998:14).

This chapter has highlighted the roots of PPT. The purpose of the theories discussed provide a foundation to explore ways of using PPT and to investigate whether Boal’s techniques of TO have the capacity to allow participants to identify the cause of their oppressions and find ways in which to solve them. Brecht (1957) Freire (1972) and Boal

(1979) wanted individuals to be shapers of their world by playing active roles in their own lives.

This section has also examined the possibility of achieving immediate results through PPT, and has discussed the issue of silence amongst women. It has thus laid a foundation for the investigation of the issue of silence amongst women in Lesotho. The following chapter will discuss the Malealea theatre project. It will take the reader on a journey from the theoretical description of the Malealea Theatre Project to implementation and the challenges faced during the project.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **3. The Malealea Theatre Project**

#### **3.1 Theoretical description of the project**

The Winter Summer Institute was borne out of a meeting between Professor Nigel Watson, Professor Katt Lissard and Professor Chris Dunton in March 2005. Professor Watson, a lecturer in Community and Educational Drama and Theatre at the University of Sunderland in Britain, was in Lesotho working on a project founded by the Association of the Commonwealth Universities on the implementation of the HIV/AIDS policy at NUL. At the same time, Professor Lissard, a lecturer from The State University of New York, was on a Fulbright scholarship, working on projects connected to HIV/AIDS whilst also teaching Acting and Theatre for Development at the University. Coincidentally at this time Professor Chris Dunton was formulating a Theatre for Development Diploma programme for NUL. It was at this time that the three professors formalised their thoughts about creating a kind of theatre intervention that would connect the three universities and have a Theatre for Development framework with an HIV/AIDS focus. They decided that it should take place during NUL's winter break and for other universities their summer break. Hence the Winter Summer Institute (WSI).

While still in Lesotho, Professor Lissard was invited to the Malealea valley by Gillian Attwood, a PhD student from the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) who was engaged in a community development project using Paulo Freire's REFLECT circles. Professor Lissard, impressed with the community's efforts, tied the community project to the WSI. The idea of working with the Malealea community was borne and Wits joined the list of participants.

### **3.2 Objective of the Malealea Theatre Project**

The objective of the Malealea theatre project, as set by the WSI lecturers, was:

To use PPT which encompasses storytelling techniques, songs and dance to address issues of HIV/AIDS, gossip and silence in the spread of HIV in Malealea, Lesotho. In using PPT the participants would then create a drama piece which relates to their social reality. Simultaneously drama skills would be imparted to the community so that they will be able to use them in their community to solve their own problems.

### **3.3 Project Site**

For the first two weeks of the project, students and staff from the four universities, namely The National University of Lesotho (NUL), Witwatersrand University (Wits), University of Sunderland and The State University of New York, stayed at Roma at the Trading Post Guest House, about fifteen kilometres from The National University of Lesotho. After two weeks the project then moved to Malealea, Southern Lesotho, to connect with a local community project. Malealea is one of Lesotho's tourist attractions and the WSI students and lecturers stayed at the Malealea lodge. The Malealea lodge works with the community; all the horses (for pony trekking) and huts hired by the tourists belong to the Malealea villagers.

### **3.4 Implementing the project**

The project comprised three phases:

- WSI students create a model play and perform it on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 2006.
- A drama workshop for Malealea REFLECT circle members.
- Performing a new play with Malealea REFLECT circle members on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2006.

### **3.4.1 Phase one – creating a model play**

The project brought together twenty-two students and nine lecturers from the four universities. There were five students and two lecturers from each university except for NUL, which had seven students and three lecturers.

In preparation for the creative process, students were given reading materials such as books, journals and articles prior to the institute take-off. The readings were further enhanced by presentations related to the theme of HIV/AIDS and silence, which examined the issues of HIV/AIDS and silence in different fields. The presentations were chosen by Professor Dunton and given by the Lecturers from NUL in the mornings from 9.30am to 1.00pm at the Trading Post conference hall. The presentations served as resource material; as a means to give the non-Basothos an idea of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Lesotho; and lastly to let them know some of the Basotho cultural practices and traditions that exacerbate the spread of the pandemic.

Once the presentations were over, discussions then followed. In the afternoons, the WSI students were divided into three groups and each group created a three to five minute scene drawing ideas and inspirations from the presentations and discussions that had taken place, and the reading material that they had been given. The presentation of the scenes was followed by further discussions and the groups reworked the scenes again by going deeper into some of the issues and also developing some of the characters they had created. In the evenings, the WSI students, under the guidance of a music lecturer from Wits, practised dance forms as well as songs. The songs and the dances were representative of the cultures that were present, with the majority from Lesotho.

With some input from the WSI students, the lecturers then chose scenes that they felt addressed the dramatic theme of HIV/AIDS and silence, keeping in mind the rural community of Malealea. Through the continued discussions, improvisations, constructing and deconstructing of the scenes, the play 'Dance Me to the End of Love' *Ntjeke ho isa pheletsong ea lerato* was born. The play was then performed in Roma at the National University of Lesotho on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 2006 at 2.30pm and at the Maseru Sun Convention Hall on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July at 7.00pm. These two shows were part of the

playmaking process, functioning more like dress rehearsals before the big performance in Malealea. Post-performance discussions from these two locations are not included as part of my data collection since the audience did not comprise part of my community research.

In Malealea, the play was performed on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 2006 at 10.00am at the community health clinic to an audience of more than 350. The cast marched from the lodge where they were residing to the community health clinic where the performance was to be held. They sang popular songs and performed popular dances along the way. Because the Malealea community was familiar with most of the songs they joined in the march and by the time the cast got to the clinic they had a strong following of villagers who in some cases were already initiating some of the songs. After the play, there were post-performance discussions led by one of the lecturers from NUL.

### **3.4.2 Phase two – the workshop**

Immediately after the post-performance discussions on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July, phase two of the project began. Professor Lissard asked the REFLECT circle members from Malealea who were chosen to work with the WSI students, to stay behind.

The REFLECT circle is a project that has been set up in Malealea by Gillian Attwood. The Malealea Valley is home to fifteen villages. Each village has its own REFLECT circle. Members of the REFLECT circles are a mixture of housewives, farmers, retrenched miners and self-employed people, thus all participants come from the same socio-economic background. Members meet twice a week for two hours and during this time participants discuss a range of development-related issues. Among other things, the project has set up an income-generating co-operative which makes craft for tourists.

For participation in the WSI, each REFLECT circle selected two representatives to participate in the WSI. There were thirty members of the REFLECT circle in all, two men and twenty-eight women, all of whom reside in the Malealea Valley. The participants ranged from 18 to 65 years of age. Although all participants came from the Malealea Valley, some did not know each other as they came from different villages. All

participants in Malealea participated in the project because they wanted to be a part of the project, and there were no incentives given. All the REFLECT circle members who were chosen to work with WSI were to watch the play as it was compulsory for them.

The REFLECT circle members were then given a briefing on how they would be working with the WSI students and lecturers over the next few days and what was expected from them. The objective was for them to create a drama based on their own social context in response to the play that they had watched. This introductory phase was not all about the WSI lecturers telling them what they were going to do, but it also included games such as names games and other games, singing and dancing. This was done to try and create a relaxing and light environment. The REFLECT circle members were informed that they would be given drama workshops so as to enhance their theatre skills, but most importantly to create a new play that reflects the problems of Malealea. In order to create a play that reflects their social reality they were told that they should not let the play they watched influence their thinking in a particular way, but rather that they should use it as a means of reflection and a foundation from which to begin dialogue.

The following day the REFLECT circle members together with the WSI students met at 9.00am at the community health clinic. They were then divided into three groups with two lecturers to guide or facilitate the workshops. The workshops were held every day in the mornings, beginning at 9.00 am with a series of warm-up and voice exercises. The exercises were then followed by games for team building and also building trust amongst the WSI students and REFLECT circle members. It was important that before the discussions, the two groups interact with each other again in a more fun and relaxed way so as to lay a foundation from which they could work together. In the morning, a few of the REFLECT circle members were still a little intimidated by the WSI students and the lecturers, but during the day began to feel more relaxed, and on the second day were even more at ease.

After the exercises and games, issues emanating from the play 'Dance Me to the End of Love' and issues that were not reflected in the play but were pertinent to the Malealea community, were discussed using theatrical forms such as storytelling, role playing,

Image Theatre and an adaptation of the Forum Theatre (Boal 1979:135). In the beginning of the discussions the REFLECT circle members were discussing events and characters from the play 'Dance Me to the End of Love'. It was only when they were told by one of the lecturers that the play was merely a mirror for them to reflect on their own situations and a vehicle to initiate dialogue, that they actually started talking about issues that the Malealea community are faced with. After the discussions the groups then created scenes using the discussions as their source of inspiration.

The three groups worked in different locations. One group worked in the Malealea Lodge conference hall; the second group worked in the Malealea hall, which is also in the Malealea Lodge grounds; and the third group worked at the community health clinic where the play was staged. In the afternoons, the groups came together to present the issues that they had discussed in a form of a theatrical piece. After each group had staged their scene, the scene would then be discussed at length in terms of how it was created. All the scenes were staged outside on the lawns of the lodge, with the participants sitting on the grass.

On the afternoon of Monday the 10<sup>th</sup> of July, the three scenes created in Malealea by the REFLECT circle members and the WSI students were woven into the play 'Dance Me to the End of Love'. For the purposes of this research I will refer to the play with the three new added scenes as 'Dance Me to the End of Love' Revised Version. There was one run-through of 'Dance Me to the End of Love' Revised Version on the 10<sup>th</sup> and the second took place the following morning.

### **3.4.3. Phase three – performing with the REFLECT circle members**

The play 'Dance Me to the End of Love' Revised Version was staged on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July at a valley-wide mini-festival in which the lodge was celebrating 20 years working together with the community. The REFLECT circle members and the WSI students marched from the lodge to the grounds of the festival in a procession led by 49 Basotho ponies. The play was the centrepiece of the festival and it drew a crowd of more than 500. After the play, there were post-performance discussions that were facilitated by a lecturer from NUL.

### **3.5 Synopsis of the play ‘Dance Me to the End of Love’ (*Ntjeke ho isa pheletsong ea Lerato*)**

Below is a synopsis of the play as created by WSI students under the guidance of lecturers and performed by the WSI students for the Malealea community on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July. The play was a montage of scenes, and each scene was complete. At the end of each scene, four actors, two males and two females, served as ‘gossips’. They commented on the action of the past scene as if they were gossiping about it, introduced the next scene and served as translators. Two of the gossips, male and female, were Basotho. The other two were from the UK. Thus whatever the gossip from UK said, the Mosotho gossip translated it into Sesotho. The gossips alternated; for example, at the end of the first scene the two females served as gossips, whilst at the end of the second scene the males served as gossips. The gossips were accompanied by a silent trickster/ joker, who assisted or resisted the gossips by using gestures. For example if the gossips said something that the joker agreed with, the joker would nod her head and if she disagreed with what they were saying she would shake her head.

#### **Scene 1. *Bohali bo tsoile.* (The cattle have been paid.)**

The first scene illustrates that in Sesotho culture, once the cattle have been paid the woman becomes the man’s property. This is shown in the negotiations where the family of the bride and groom come together and put a price on the woman’s head. After the wedding ceremony, the young couple are given instructions but it is the bride who gets the most advice. She is told to respect her husband and that she should not cause her family shame by going back home when problems arise. The scene ends with the groom carrying the bride over his shoulder; this is done to demonstrate that from the moment that she becomes a wife she becomes her husband’s property.

#### **Scene 2. *Hoa tantsoa ntlo ea cha.* (Waltzing while the house is burning.)**

A womanising taxi driver spends all his money on girls and when his wife challenges him about it he beats her. Meanwhile, we have a couple dancing happily in contrast to the brutal abuse of the wife by the husband. The neighbours and the dancing couple peer in through the windows, doors and holes in the wall at the unhappy couple and gossip

behind their hands, but everybody keeps silent about it, because it is his right and people are not supposed to interfere.

**Scene 3.** *Kokoana ha e tšele mohokare, kapa banna ke mekopu, basali ke likh`abeche.*

(The virus does not cross the Caledon, or men are pumpkins, women are cabbages.)

In this scene, three husbands leave for the mines. One is responsible and has been taking care of his family. The other one is irresponsible and has been staying away for longer stretches, while the last one is broke and has no money. As the miners are working one of them (the one who is broke) is injured and dies. The two remaining miners, after witnessing the accident, go to find comfort from their mistresses, sex workers or second wives in South Africa, and neither one practices safe sex. In the end only one miner returns home, the responsible one, but unfortunately he infects his wife. The other one abandons his family and now stays with his mistress. Two women who were dependent on their husbands are left alone and vulnerable to the men in the village, especially those with money.

**Scene 4.** *Ke moetlo; hase moetlo.* (It's in my culture; it's not in my culture.)

This scene consisted of small scenarios in which people used culture as an excuse. One concerned the abuse of alcohol: when a drunken man is asked why he drinks so much, he argues that it is 'in his culture' to be drunk. Another piece portrayed a young man proclaiming that it is not 'in his culture' to use a condom; other scenarios included issues such as incest with phrases such as '*mokoko o itsoalla lithole*' (a cock begets its chicks). This phrase is normally used when a man has raped his daughter, and when people talk about it, this is the phrase they normally use.

**Scene 5.** *Monna eo ke sa motsebeng betheng ea ka.* (Stranger in my bed.)

A woman is driven to prostitution after being abandoned by her husband. She tells the story of how for the first time in her life she took a stranger in her bed and the stranger hurt her in the worst possible way. In the play, she does not say how the stranger hurt her. In the end, all family and friends come to her aid, showing that *letšoele le beta poho*. (Unity is strength).

**Scene 5a.** *Seotsoa sea bua.* (Sex worker speaks.)

In this monologue, a sex worker speaks about the pain of her work. She indicates that she misses her family and her child. She states, however, that she will never go back home because she has embarrassed herself. She also tells us that due to her work nobody who knew her before would recognise her as her job is physically taxing.

**Scene 6.** *Boithuti ba ABC.* (Learning your ABC.)

An irresponsible student who is HIV-positive goes partying every weekend. As exams approach, she consults her professor in his office concerning her grades, as she knows she is in danger of failing. She knows her parents will be angry with her as they have sacrificed a lot to send her to university. He indicates that he is open to her advances. The two engage in sexual activities and the professor is infected. When the girl becomes aware of her status she goes to a counsellor who preaches to her about the ABC of sex. The professor realises he is HIV-positive and the scene ends with him debating whether he should tell his wife.

**Scene 7.** *Bo Ntate ba ratang le banana.* (Sugar daddy.)

A graduate student who cannot find a job finds herself a 'sugar daddy' even though she has a boyfriend. As much as the young woman is manipulative, she is just trying to survive. She is pregnant and both her sugar daddy and boyfriend want her to terminate the pregnancy. The young man is a student and having a baby will ruin his prospects if he has to quit studying, find a job and support a family. The older man does not want his wife to find out. The younger man suggests that they both go for an HIV test, and the girl is offended: how could he doubt that she is faithful to him?

**Scene 7a.** *Pale ea ka.* (My story.)

This scene consisted of six monologues by people who had had close family members die of AIDS. The monologues projected their fears while they were nursing their dying relatives, and showed how some of the victims had brought HIV upon themselves. By the end each victim had shamed his or her family to such an extent that nobody in their family wanted to talk about it, even after the victims had died.

**Scene 8.** *Ha re sana makunutu.* (We have no more secrets.)

In this monologue, a mother tells her daughter how bitter, frustrated and humiliated she was when she discovered that she was HIV-positive. In the end, the mother decides to come out and break the silence because she has learnt that she can live a longer and healthier life since anti-retroviral drugs are given free of charge. She discloses her status to her daughter who in the beginning rejects her but ultimately supports her.

**Scene 9.** *Ha a re che seo a se bolelang ke hore e.* (When she says no she really means yes.)

A woman runs to the police station and reports that she has just been raped. One officer after another is called to hear her story and she is forced to repeat it over and over again. They laugh at her and turn her into a clown by putting a red plastic nose on her nose. The perpetrator is taken to trial, and the trial becomes a circus, a travesty of justice. Everyone is present since a rape trial is considered 'juicy'. The victim is on trial and she claims that she said 'NO'. The defendant says that 'NO' means 'YES', everybody knows that, and the revealing clothes, the mini-skirt and the short shirt that she was wearing 'meant that she wanted it'. The verdict is that the defendant is not guilty and the young woman is sentenced to a life of shame and degradation.

**Scene 10.** *O ne o ka etsang?* (What would you do?)

In the finale, the joker takes three scenarios in the play by snapping her fingers, pointing to the characters and beckoning them to come to the front. When all the characters are in the front they freeze as they did when their scene was being played out. Other actors who have not been selected by the joker ask the audience several times, "*O ne o ka etsang?* What would you do?" The joker then points to the first image and beats a drum three times. With each drum beat the image changes, thus reversing the scenarios. The characters that the joker called are from Scene 2, Scene 6 and Scene 9. In Scene 2, instead of the neighbours watching the man abuse his wife, they intervene and stop the fighting. In Scene 6, instead of the parents scolding their daughter they hug her, and in Scene 9, the police are co-operative and the perpetrator is found guilty.

### **3.5.1 The title of the play**

For the title of the play, the students were asked to suggest names. The suggested names were put in a name suggestion box, after which the students voted, finally selecting the name 'Dance me to the end of love', *Ntjeke ho isa pheletsong ea lerato* in Sesotho.

### **3.5.2 The pink fan and the red nose**

In the play a pink fan was used symbolically to represent HIV/AIDS. It showed the transmissions of the virus from one person to the next; whoever held the pink fan was HIV-positive. The idea of using a pink fan was suggested by Professor Lissard who, when she was in Lesotho in 2005 on the Fullbright Scholarship, workshopped and directed a play with the 4<sup>th</sup> year Theatre for Development students. In the play they used a pink fan to symbolise the HI Virus. Professor Lissard took the idea of the pink fan and proposed that it be used in this play.

In Malealea as the play proceeded, most of the villagers at first did not comprehend the symbolism of the pink fan but only understood it towards the end. A possible alternative that would have been more culturally relevant would have been a blanket because in Sesotho if a person says *ke batla likobo* (I want blankets) it means I want to have sex with you. In Lesotho a blanket, depending on the context, is synonymous with sex. Although this dissertation is not focussing on issues of cultural exchange, this incident is indicative of the kind of problems which can arise when people outside a culture are intent on changing cultural practice – however destructive that practice may be.

The 'red nose' was also a potentially contentious choice. A red nose was used in Scene 9 at the police station when the raped woman goes to the police to report the crime; the policemen in the station put a red plastic nose on top of her nose. Although the red nose is a western clown icon, it was fortunately familiar to the rural villagers. In the scene when the policemen put the red nose on the abused woman the audience did understand the idea behind it.

### **3.6 Scenes created by the REFLECT circle members of Malealea village**

Below are the three scenes created in Malealea from the workshop with the WSI students and the REFLECT circle members. These scenes were woven into the initial play as will be illustrated later in the chapter. The ‘new’ play was performed at a valley-wide mini-festival on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2006. Below are the three scenes as created by the Malealea participants and the students.

#### **Scene 1.** *Mathata a moste.* (Village problems.)

This scene contained two scenarios. In the first scenario, someone’s chicken is stolen. A villager sees this and when the owner of the chicken inquires about it, the person who saw the crime just keeps quiet.

In the second scenario, a tourist tips a young boy who has been showing him around, claiming to be a tour guide. As soon as the young boy gets the money, he goes to a shebeen where he spends all his money on beer with older women. The following day, because he is broke, he waits in a secluded place for people who are from town, as he knows that there are transport problems in the village. He robs them and rapes one of them who, unbeknownst to him, is his mother.

#### **Scene 2.** *Thapelo le Moriana.* (Prayer and Medicine)

This scene showed that prayer needs to work in conjunction with medicine. In this scene, a young child is sick. Her parents do not want to take her to the doctor but instead want to pray for the sickness to be cured. Some villagers convince the parents to take the child to the clinic. In the second scenario, the mother is too drunk to care for her family, leaving the child vulnerable to risky behaviour.

#### **Scene 3.** *Litokelo tsa bana.* (The rights of a child.)

In this scene, a father chooses a school for his daughter without asking her opinion. He is against his daughter going to school in Maseru (the capital of Lesotho) because he believes that his daughter will be a drunkard and smoke, or worse, have a boyfriend and get pregnant “*joalo bana ba Maseru*” (just like teenagers who live in Maseru do). There

is tension in the family as the mother supports her daughter's decision to go to school in Maseru. The girl goes to school in town and unfortunately mixes with the wrong crowd. Regrettably she gets pregnant. The mother dies of a heart attack.

### **3.7 Structure of Dance 'Me to the End of Love' Revised Version**

The three scenes created by the REFLECT circle members in Malealea were woven into the original 'Dance Me to the End of Love'. The idea was to let the REFLECT circle members perform only the scenes that they created, but they insisted that they wanted the WSI students to perform with them and they wanted their scenes to be incorporated in the play because some of the issues that the play 'Dance Me to the End of Love' addressed were issues happening in Malealea. The structure of the play as it was performed on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2006 with WSI students and REFLECT circle members, was as follows:

**Scene 1.** *Bohali bo tsoile.* (The cattle have been paid.)

**Scene 2.** *Hoa tantsoa ntlo ea cha.* (Waltzing while the house is burning.)

**Scene 3.** *Kokoana ha e tšele mohokare, kapa banna ke mekopu, basali ke likh`abeche.*

(The virus does not cross the Caledon, or men are pumpkins, women are cabbages.)

**Mathata a motse.** (Village problems.)

**Scene 4.** *Ke moetlo; hase moetlo.* (It's in my culture; it's not in my culture.)

**Scene 5.** *Monna eo ke sa motsebeng betheng ea ka.* (Stranger in my bed.)

**Scene 5a.** *Seotsoa sea bua.* (Sex worker speaks.)

**Litokelo tsa bana (childrens rights)**

**Scene 6.** *Boithuti ba ABC.* (Learning your ABC.)

**Scene 7.** *Bo Ntate ba ratang le banana.* (Sugar daddy.)

**Scene 7a.** *Pale ea ka.* (My story.)

**Thapelo le Moriana (Prayer and medicine)**

**Scene 8.** *Ha re sana makunutu.* (We have no more secrets.)

**Scene 9.** *Ha a re che seo a se bolelang ke hore e.* (When she says no she really means yes.)

### **3.8 Challenges of the project**

The Malealea theatre project presented a number of challenges. The initial plan was that the WSI learners would work together with Malealea residents for a week and a half. However, this was not the case as the show in Malealea was postponed from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 2006. This shortened the number of days scheduled for Malealea. Time therefore proved the greatest challenge, and this culminated in a situation where it came down to a choice between process and product. The lecturers agreed amongst themselves that the product, which was the play, should be the priority.

The effectiveness of popular participatory theatre lies in finding a balance between being an exciting theatrical piece and being educational at the same time. However, due to time constraints we had to prioritise. The theatrical aspect is important as it endorses a sense of achievement amongst the participants and because it was to be performed for the whole of the Malealea community at the festival, it had to be good. Yet personal growth and development is also important and is achieved through exploring different topics (Schonmann, 2005:38). It was decided that the product should be a priority and as a result, we did not have time to get deeper into some of the other issues that were raised by the villagers. It is however important to note that for development the process is always more important than the product, because if people understand the process, they can create a product on their own. Conversely, if attention is paid to the product once the people are left on their own to carry on the work, the project has a danger of failing as the people do not know how to get to the product.

Language posed another limitation. The villagers from Malealea did not speak English and all the students and lecturers, except for those from Lesotho, were non-Sesotho speakers. The first day was very hectic and a lot of my time was spent interpreting for the non-Sesotho participants, which proved to be a very tedious exercise. The issue of interpreting had been overlooked until then. Both the students and the lecturers did not realise how difficult it was until it was actually done. In interpreting from Sesotho to English and vice versa, the original statement was sometimes distorted and it was a struggle to find the right words. At one point one Mosotho student even started

interpreting from English to English mistakenly and this too was time consuming. Because of the issue of language, one day was set aside so that the workshop could proceed in Sesotho.

This chapter has explained the execution of the Malealea theatre project and the challenges that were faced by the project. The following chapter will discuss the methodology of the study. It first discusses the research design and then moves on to discuss how PPT was used as a research method. The chapter will also discuss the tools that were used to collect data.

# CHAPTER 4

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Research design

In order to answer the key questions, the study employed a qualitative research design. Qualitative research is relevant where the purpose of the study is to study “social phenomena as they unfold in real world situations without manipulation” (Bailey, 1987:67). Traditional quantitative methods have been recognised as insufficient in meeting informational requirements about human health and behaviour since they emphasise the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not process (O’Reilly, 1995:27; Silverman, 2005:10). Qualitative research, on the other hand, provides a deeper understanding of social phenomena by providing answers to questions that emphasise how social experience is created and given meaning (Silverman, 2005:10). Qualitative research explores attitudes, behaviours and experiences of the participants by utilising such methods as interviews and focus groups (Dawson, 2002:15). This research design has also demonstrated its usefulness in research on sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, where most of the social phenomena being studied are personal and intensely private (Power, 2000:87).

Qualitative research endeavours to get in-depth opinions from the participants. For this reason, fewer people take part in the research and the contact lasts longer. The advantage of a qualitative approach is that, because it employs fewer people, quality data is collected and in most cases relationships are formed between the researcher and the research participant, enabling the researcher better to understand the environment of the participants (Bailey, 1987:68; Silverman, 2005:12-14).

## **4.2 Participatory Theatre as research method**

Popular Participatory Theatre has been used as a tool in different countries to deliver information about and sensitise people to HIV/AIDS issues. Apart from the fact that it is a tool that can be used for social development to conscientise people, it has been observed that it is also a “powerful way for ethnography to recover and interrogate the meanings of lived experiences” (Denzin, 1997, in Conrad, 2004:9). This is attributed to the fact that performance incorporates cultural practices, traditions and expressive forms; therefore, it can be regarded as a justifiable and ethical way of representing ethnographic understanding (Fabian, 1990:6). In this research, it was used as a research tool to find out what the ‘culture of silence’ means to the people of Malealea, the consequences of this ‘culture of silence’ and how it exacerbates the HIV/AIDS situation. Because this was an action research project in which thirty villagers were directly involved from the beginning of the project to the end, it created an impact on the participants. As Salazar (1991, in Conrad 2004:8) puts it, participatory research is more than just a research method but develops into a democratic viewpoint of life in which “unjust or exploitative power relations are broken down to achieve a more satisfactory kind of society”.

Popular theatre as a qualitative research method is both participatory and performative (Fabian, 1990:11), thereby permitting the participants to be part of the research in two ways, as the performers and as members of the community. In using PPT as a research method, the researcher also becomes a participant and thus learns more about the community that he/she is studying (Hughes, 2006:2). This is because it disposes of the traditional hierarchy between the researcher and the researched, because performance in essence is about giving form to something. This can only happen whenever communicative exchanges are initiated that involve all participants, including the researcher (Fabian, 1990:11-12).

PPT as a research method is inclusive of cultural expressions such as poetry, dance, songs, and dramatic activities such as image work, improvisations and role-playing (Conrad, 2004:8). In engaging in these dramatic activities and expressions, participants

are able to produce, present and interpret their ideas. In participatory theatre, participants exist simultaneously in two worlds (Conrad, 2004:11; Boal 1979), as an actor in the fictitious world and as themselves assessing the situation from the outside world. Therefore, as participants enter the fictitious world they allow themselves to be set outside of themselves and see elements of themselves (Conrad, 2004:10). As Conrad remarks, “What better way to study lived experiences than the community re-enacting them?” (Conrad, 2004:10).

Consequently, people’s performances usually portray and examine their realities by presenting their personal experiences. Popular theatre performances may offer the best means of expression, as there are some types of cultural knowledge that cannot be expressed in discursive statements (Fabian, 1990:15) and can be represented only through performance. Fabian argues this in recognition of the fact that cultural knowledge is itself performative; it exists in what people do rather than what they say.

PPT is effective in stimulating discussions through dramatic activities such as role-playing. In role-playing, participants perform in the role of someone else. Since this may raise awareness of the effect of their behaviour, people are able to see themselves through the eyes of others. Using this approach, people are more likely to disclose information about themselves than in an interview or a focus group. Participatory theatre ‘makes the unsayable sayable’ and it provides a means of communicating complex messages quickly and effectively. It is also multi-layered by nature, since multi-layered multiple messages can be made at once, which is very convenient for a researcher (Hughes, 2006:2).

PPT became a method in which the villagers, together with the WSI students, shared their experiences in a bid to look at the cultural silence prevailing in Malealea. Furthermore, because it is action research-centred, the process also helped members of the Malealea community to realise some of the problems that they were confronted with and try to find solutions to them. In this theatre project I was both an outsider and an insider: an outsider in that I did not belong to the Malealea community, and an insider in that I am a Mosotho woman. I therefore know and understand some of the issues that they raised in

the discussions. I was also a researcher and one of the seven lecturers. Thus during the course of the project I had to try and find a balance in my roles which conflicted to some degree. As one of the lecturers, my role was to facilitate, and the principal focus was the final product – a good theatrical production that would be able to conscientise the Malealea Community. On the other hand, discussions that occurred during the workshop and as the play was created were more important to me as a researcher than the actual production.

### **4.3 The three steps in the Malealea theatre project in Malealea**

Below are the three steps involved in the Malealea theatre project, during which data was captured from the Malealea audience and the REFLECT circle members.

The first point at which data was collected was at the performance put on by the WSI students at the Malealea Health clinic on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 2006. In his *Literacy: Reading the World and the Word*, Freire (1987:20) used pictures as codifications of social reality to facilitate people's deconstruction of their oppressions, in order that they ultimately realise the concealed structures and challenges affecting society. In the case of this research, a play was used to codify social reality. The codifications, according to Freire, are not just used for teaching but represent the core of the educational process as they initiate and stimulate the process of critical thinking. Therefore the play served as a mirror for the Malealea community to reflect on. After the play there were post-performance discussions that were facilitated by one of the lecturers from NUL.

The second point, was a workshop held for the REFLECT circle members so as to enhance their drama skills and also create a play that related to their own social reality. Members of the REFLECT circle, together with the students, were divided into three groups and, through workshops, each group created a piece in response to the initial drama. The three pieces were created under the same working theme of HIV/AIDS and silence that had been modelled by the lecturers. The three groups, comprising both WSI students and members of the REFLECT circles, met every day from 9.00am to 4.00pm except on Saturday the 8<sup>th</sup> and Sunday the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2006. This is because on Saturdays, people normally go to funerals and it is a cultural practice that if there is a funeral,

everyone in the village should attend. Funerals in Lesotho usually last the whole day, starting at 10.00am and ending at around 4.00pm. On Sundays, people go to church and Basotho are highly religious.

The workshops began with a series of warm-up and voice exercises. Physical exercises help the body to relax and release physical and vocal tension. It is important that the body feels relaxed, as it is the only instrument that is utilised throughout the day. The exercises were followed by games for team building and building trust amongst the participants. After games and exercise, issues were discussed using theatrical forms such as role-playing, storytelling, Image Theatre (Boal, 1979:135) and an adaptation of the Forum Theatre (Boal, 1979:139). Each group improvised a play, after which they presented it to the whole group. After the presentations of the plays created, there were discussions around issues emanating from the plays.

The objective of using some of Boal's theories and theatrical techniques in this case study was to use them as a research method while simultaneously empowering the Malealea community participants. In continuing to employ these theories and techniques, they can continue to liberate themselves since "all truly revolutionary theatrical groups should transfer to the people the means of production in the theatre so that people themselves may utilise them [as] the theatre is a weapon ... a weapon for liberation" (Boal, 1979:ix).

The third and last step was another public performance of the play 'Dance Me to the End of Love' Revised Version. The performance was staged on the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2007 for an audience of more than five hundred. The revised version was performed by both the WSI students and the REFLECT circle members. After the performance there were post-performance discussions.

#### **4.4 Data collection**

Four methods were employed to collect data, namely post-performance discussions, participant observation, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

#### **4.4.1 Post-performance discussions**

Post-performance discussions followed the two shows of ‘Dance Me to the End of Love’ performed in Malealea on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 2006, and the Revised Version that was performed on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2006 by WSI students and the REFLECT circle members from Malealea. The discussions were facilitated by one of the lecturers from Lesotho. During the two shows of the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> I sat with the audience members. As the audience was discussing issues emanating from the play, I took notes.

The other data was collected when the WSI students and REFLECT circle members were presenting their plays to each other. All the post-performance discussions that happened after the three groups presented their plays were part of my data collection. I also took notes.

#### **4.4.2 Participant observation**

This methodology is often used when the researcher is a member of the group that he or she is studying. This methodology is popular among researchers whose interest is studying communities, cultures or contexts (Stacey, 1996:52). After the play was staged in Malealea, the thirty REFLECT circle members under the guidance of the WSI students and lecturers created a play in response to ‘Dance Me to the End of Love’. Drama workshops were held every day from 9.00am – 4.00pm. The REFLECT circle members discussed issues, some relating to the play and theme of the project through theatrical forms such as role playing, Image Theatre, storytelling and an adaptation of Forum Theatre (Boal,1979). I was a participant throughout these workshops, in that I took part in image theatre, creating images, and also telling personal stories. As these issues were being dealt with in various theatrical forms, I took notes.

The method of observation that was used was unobtrusive observation (Bernard, 1994:142). This method involves studying behaviour where individuals do not know that they are being observed. This method reduces an occurrence of reactivity or people acting in a certain way when they realise that they are being observed (Bernard, 1994:142-3). The first time when the play ‘Dance Me to the End of Love’ was staged at

the community health clinic on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 2006, I sat with the audience. As the play proceeded I watched the audience's non-verbal expressions and also listened to the comments that they made to each other during the course of play. Other observations were also made during the duration of the workshop and at the last performance staged on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2006 by WSI students and members of the REFLECT circle.

During tea and lunch breaks I also took notes and listened as the REFLECT circle members talked amongst themselves about the project. I found that the informal discussions with the REFLECT members during these times were quite informative. I also took this opportunity to ask them about their backgrounds and aspirations, and we also talked about religion and politics. Their responses formed part of my research data.

Kathleen DeWalt and Billie DeWalt (2002:9) notes that the utilisation of participant observation as a method to collect data is a way of strengthening the validity of the study since the observations may help the researcher better comprehend the context. Prior to the project I had never been to Malealea and did not know anything about the place except that it was a favourite place for tourists. I decided to use this approach as one of my methods for data collection so that it would give me a better understanding of where the residents were in their thinking. Also it would help me to revise my thinking in terms of my pre-conceived ideas about the community.

The other reason why I decided to use this method was that it would help me refocus my questions and ask questions that they could actually relate to their environment. Prior to the observations I did have questions that I had written down but because I was not really sure how they would respond to the play, I found that these questions were very general. A further reason why I decided to use observations as a research method was simply to seek information without asking questions. Sometimes when people are asked questions by an outsider they tend to be self-conscious. During observations notes were taken and analysed at a later stage.

#### **4.4.3 Focus groups and group interviews**

There was one informal group interview and three focus groups. This group interview was on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July after the post-performance discussions in Malealea. Once the post-performance discussions were over the audience formed groups and started talking about issues emanating from the play. I then went to one of the groups and asked to interview them. This group consisted of both adult males and females. There were about five women and two men ranging in age from the early thirties to the late forties. The group interview lasted about thirty minutes. Questions that were asked included: How did you feel about the play? Do you think the play ‘talked’ to you? Which scene did you like the most and why? Do you think the play was effective? What other issues are you confronted with on a daily basis here in Malealea that you wish the play could have addressed?

During the group interview they started sharing ideas and stories, and that is where I got the most information. Because of the insightful information that I got from this first group interview I was able to restructure some of the questions that would be used in the focus groups and in the in-depth interviews. In particular I was able to be more specific in my questions; for example, I asked: What do think about young couples that show their affection where older people can see them?

There were three focus groups. The first focus group was held on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July during lunchtime. This focus group consisted of five female REFLECT members ranging in age from 29 to 45 years. The focus group was conducted as we ate our lunch, after an in-depth interview I had with one of the males.

The second focus group was conducted on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July in the afternoon. The respondents were organised by my tour guide and the group consisted of only males, all but one of whom had seen the production when it was staged on the 6<sup>th</sup>. They ranged from 16 years to 27 years of age. This focus group discussion took place at the lodge’s gate in the afternoon, and it lasted the longest as the respondents had a lot of fun.

The last focus group took place on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July after the performance at the festival. It consisted of a group of five girls, three of whom had watched the play on the 6<sup>th</sup> and two who had not, but had heard people talking about it and had just watched the revised version. This focus group was the shortest, and the participants were distant and seemed distracted. It seemed to me that they wanted to get it over with, perhaps because they wanted to join the queue for food. Their ages were between 17 and 23 yrs. Their answers were very short and they did not seem to be interested. Focus groups have proven to be effective for the dynamic exploration of differing experiences and perceptions and therefore they were a valuable addition to this dissertation.

#### **4.4.4 In-depth interviews**

Five in-depth interviews were conducted, two with women and three with men. Of the three men, only two were involved in the project; one was in his late thirties and the other was in his early forties. The other male was a young man in his mid-twenties who had watched the play but was not part of the project. Two women were interviewed, one in her mid-thirties and the other in her late twenties. I had initially prepared to have the in-depth interviews with only the women but when I realised that there were only two men involved in the project, I decided to interview both of them. I was interested in finding out what their perception of women is because I was looking at cultural silence and, as has been noted already, this is not because women are literally silent but because those who have the power choose not to listen. Interviewing men would add value to the dissertation as it would add another dynamic.

The reason why I decided to interview the tour guides and have a focus group with them, although they were not part of the project, is that during the post-performance discussions the villagers kept referring to tour guides and their relations with their mothers and girls and older women in the village. I thought it would be an avenue for me to explore, especially because the REFLECT circle members consisted only of older women and only two men.

Two interviews were conducted on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July. The first interview was with one of the males during lunchtime and the second one was conducted during teatime at around 3.00pm. The interviews were between twenty and thirty minutes long. The third interview was on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July with the young man who was a tour guide and held the horse for me as we went pony trekking for two hours between 10.00am to 12.00pm. During my interview with him, he agreed to help me set up a focus group with his friends.

The last two interviews were held on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July. Both the interviews were held during lunch. They lasted for about twenty minutes. The reason why they were cut short is because this was the last day of rehearsal before the villagers and students performed the production and everything was cut short for the rehearsals.

The reason for conducting in-depth interviews was to gain a deeper understanding of what the people understand by the culture of silence. Questions included: What are the things that you liked about the play? Why do you think that people do not talk about issues that affect them? What are the consequences of not talking? Do you think that after this project is over people will continue to work together and solve their own problems? Do you think the play helped you see things from a different perspective?

These questions were used to initiate the flow of the interview and I made sure that they remained open ended to allow for unexpected exploration. During the interviews I took notes.

The reason why I decided to interview people who were not part of the REFLECT circle was to establish if the play did speak to them, the audience that had come to watch the play, and whether they did indeed talk about some of the issues raised (the idea being that the play was a first step towards community dialogue).

## **4.5 Taking notes**

Because I did not have a voice recorder all the post performance discussions were written down on a note book. The responses were written one after the other as they were given by the audience members. Responses were written down in Sesotho in shorthand. In the evenings I worked on the notes that I had taken so as not to forget what I meant, because sometimes I would just write in two or three words. However I made sure that in some instances I wrote down exactly what the villagers said word for word. For the workshop, because I took part in the exercise such as story telling I just summarised the stories, but I also made sure that I took down some of what they were saying word for word.

All responses for the group interviews, focus group and in-depth interviews were written down in both Sesotho with some bits in English. During these interviews I also tried to write down their direct quotes as much as possible. I also wrote down notes for observations- what the REFLECT members said to each other and I also observed their body language, for example, if they looked frustrated or confused.

## **4.6 Analysis of Data**

Data collected from the group interview, focus groups and in-depth interviews was analysed after the project was finished. What I did was to go over all the notes that I had transcribed so as to get a sense of all the data together. This process provided me with a background for the themes that emerged, I then grouped the notes in terms of the themes as will be seen in Chapter 5. I then compared the themes to my research questions to delineate units of meaning that would be relevant to my research. Consequently, I was able to identify patterns and themes that addressed my research questions.

In analysing my observation notes I looked for recurring problems and key concepts which gave me a deeper understanding of the Malealea community. These observations also served as indicators of issues that people did not say but I observed. I then grouped the observations according to the themes that had emerged from the data collected from the workshop discussions and interviews. These observations were used to refine some of the data in the light of the findings.

## **4.7 Sampling**

Convenience sampling was used, which is a sampling method that utilises subjects who are simply available in a convenient way to the researcher (Lunsford, 1995:107). The two women and three men I chose were the most confident, open and willing to talk. The same method was used in setting up the focus groups.

## **4.8 Limitations of the study**

One of the limitations in a qualitative study is that the findings cannot be generalised to the larger population (Silverman, 2005:27). In Malealea only 30 villagers participated in the project and unfortunately this number is too small to be entirely representative. Even with interviews carried out with focus groups, their views still represent only a portion of the population, thus this cannot meet the statistical assumptions needed to project the results accurately or reliably regarding the total population.

During the workshop (Forum Theatre) and the focus group interviews, I could sense that some of the respondents told me what they thought was the correct answer. One of the reasons for this could be the fact that they did not want to present themselves in a negative light. Ultimately, this social tendency towards self-censorship inhibits consciousness-raising. This proved to be a serious limitation because we had brought in people who we thought shared oppression, had the same problems and came from the same socio-economic class to try and solve issues, yet they chose carefully what they said. For example, during the discussions most people refrained from saying anything, or they generalised too much. The reason that they gave was that the personal information they gave might be used against them in the future. This was yet another form of (self) silencing.

The other limitation that I was faced with was that responses from the group interview, focus groups and in-depth interviews were written down, and this proved to be a time-consuming exercise. The other drawback was that the young women had to go back to their homes and cook, while others rushed home as they came from outlying villages and

they travel as a group. This lack of time posed a serious problem.

The concept of participation on which this research is highly dependant also proved to be a limitation, as will be evident in the following chapter. While the concept of participation is integral to PPT, sometimes the catalysts need to do more than just intervene and dictate, especially when dealing with life-threatening situations like the response to HIV/AIDS. Although Freire (1972), Mda (1993) and Boal (1979) are against such methods of dictating to the populace in a top-down manner, and instead advocate for facilitation/intervention and direction for consciousness-raising, it is sometimes difficult to step aside and direct the populace simply by asking the right questions. Sometimes it takes time and sometimes the villagers want something not because it is beneficial to them, but because they have been immersed in a culture to such an extent that they believe that things are the way that they should be and are beyond their control.

Translating also proved to be a limitation to this study as a lot of time was spent translating from English to Sesotho and vice versa. Because of the problems encountered, it threatened the working environment. For instance, the villagers were not comfortable seeing the WSI students arguing amongst each other, and there was a point when they were reluctant to discuss some of the issues. This proved a limitation to the research aspect of the project as some of the issues could not be fully explored.

This chapter has explained the methods used for the data collection and has attempted to show how the research was conducted. It has shown how PPT was used as a research method, and also discussed the interviews and the focus groups. The following chapters will present the research findings and the analysis.

# CHAPTER 5

## 5. Research Findings

This chapter sets out to present the data collected in Malealea over a period of one week. The data is derived from the performances, interviews and the workshop that was held in Malealea with the REFLECT circle members and the WSI students. The findings have been grouped in terms of two key areas, form and content. The findings on the form, relate to the effectiveness of PPT and the findings on the content focus on silence and HIV/AIDS in Malealea. First the findings will be presented supported by evidence, then they will be followed by an analysis and conclusions about each finding.

### 5.1 Findings on form

#### 5.1.1 The play - Dance Me to the End of Love

All the interviews stated that they liked the play, Dance 'Me to the End of Love'. This was echoed in responses such as:

I liked the play very much because it does not have a message, it does not tell people what is wrong and what is right and it does not tell people what they should do. (Group Interview, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

Even me I liked it very much because when I was watching it I did understand what they were talking about. I could relate to some of the stories especially the one where people were telling their stories about their friends and family members who passed away from HIV/AIDS. I know someone who passed away because he was HIV-positive and I know that he was very sick like the way they described it in the play. (Workshop Discussion, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

I liked it very much because it shows what is really happening in our society. I especially liked the gossips because here in Malealea people talk too much and they mind other people's business. The play was like a mirror for them to actually look at themselves and

see how maybe they would want to change their lives. (Informal conversations, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

The respondents also stated that they were able for the first time to look at things differently and be less judgemental. They also stated that they would encourage a friend to come and watch the show:

I liked the play very much because it does not point fingers and say that someone is to blame, like most HIV/AIDS plays that like pointing fingers at people especially those who are HIV positive like it is their fault. I think that people should be encouraged to see this play or maybe you can make it into a radio drama. (In-depth interview, male, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

The play was very real and that is what I liked about it. For example, what happened to that other woman whose husband did not come back from the mines and the wife had to ask for a debt from the shopkeeper so that she survives. These are real things that happen and we see them everyday in our societies. (Post-performance discussion, female, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2006).

Some of these happen here in Malealea. (An audience member to another during the show, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

Apart from the fact that the audience liked the play because it was real, other people liked it because it was culturally sensitive:

Before the play I was very uncomfortable, I was debating with myself if I should come to watch the play. I was concerned about the content of the play and the language that may be used. What made me more scared is because I was thinking that after the play you will give out condoms like other people. And you know for us it is really embarrassing as we come to these shows with our mothers-in-law and our children. (Workshop discussion, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

In response to the above remark, an elderly woman replied that the play was not about

whether people should use condoms or not, but that people ought to make their own choices. If condoms were to be given out, the message sent out would be that the only way to prevent HIV/AIDS is through the use of condoms. This point made me realise how much attention the audience had paid to the performance, and that they were also relating it to their life.

What the above responses illustrate is that respondents liked the play because of its realness: they could identify with the stories that were being told, they could relate to them personally and in a social context. The play 'Dance Me to the End of Love' was different for them in a lot of ways; it was not message-oriented but instead it posed questions for them, so that they could reflect on their lives and decide what it is that they want to change. In contrast, most of the plays that they had seen tended to be Agitprop plays (Mda, 1993: 49) which are exhortatory and tend to shift the blame onto someone as opposed to posing the right questions so as to solve problems. These plays tend to preach about the way that people should lead their lives without really looking into their socio-economic situation.

Consequently in such plays the audience tends to feel detached from it in terms of content because they feel as if the play is blaming them for whatever reason, and also dictating to them what they should do. For example, handing out condoms to individuals at the end of a play could give the impression that you don't trust the audience enough to let them make their own decisions so they might as well have the condoms because they are going to have sex anyway. (In the project the condoms were not distributed at the end of the play but they were left at the clinic so that people can make their own choices.) Further, giving out condoms could also suggest that it is okay to have sex just as long as you use protection. This tacit message is controversial, causing a clash of cultural values as can be seen in the following response:

You see my child this is a good show, the other people come here and they teach our children how to have sex because they give them condoms, young and old ones. Why can't they just talk to them? Sometimes I end up concluding that they are the ones who

are actually spread this HIV/AIDS with their condoms. (In-depth interview, female, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

Most Basotho are very religious and very conservative and don't agree with sex before marriage. Handing out condoms, to them, preaches that people should have sex just as long as they use protection and therefore they believe young people will indulge in premarital sex. To the older people, HIV/AIDS should be fought on moral grounds (abstinence before marriage) and not with condoms.

The other reason why they liked the play was the fact that the play was not too explicit either in the language used or in the portrayal of events and yet it managed to be clear, leaving people to make their own choices.

Another finding was that people liked the play because it was stylistically different from other plays that they have seen. It employed various theatre styles or acting techniques such as Image Theatre, song, dance and poetry. They also liked the montage of scenes as they said it showed the different sides of life. The reason why they liked the play was for its uniqueness – they are used to the conventional form of theatre where things happen in a particular setting with a particular plot, unlike in 'Dance Me to the End of Love' where each scene or setting has its own storyline.

One respondent noted:

It was the first time for me to see that in a play you don't have to talk all the time, you can sing and also do statues. You also don't need to be using the real things like furniture all the time, you can actually use each other. Like in the play in the police station when the other was a chair and the other a table. (Post-performance discussion, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

During the play some audience members remarked to each other that, although the actors used each other as furniture and mimed other activities such as eating, they could relate to what was happening because the issues that were being dealt with were real. They noted that although it was funny it helped ease the weight of some of painful issues that they

scenes addressed as attested by the following response

This play was very real even when people made funny things like when the other boy became a chair I laughed so much, it made me laugh but after laughing the issue of rape came back to me. In other play they can do a funny thing and then after that you just laugh throughout the play because they are doing funny things and in the end you forget that you are watching an AIDS but with this one you can laugh but after that the issues just come back to you and it is like they do not want to leave your mind I cant forget about what was shown. It is just too real. (Workshop discussion, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

Therefore, from the above responses it can be concluded that people liked the play for the various acting techniques that it employed (such as Image Theatre, which was referred to as “statues”, singing and dancing) and also for its cultural sensitivity and for its realness.

### **5.1.2 The use of English in the play**

The play was in both Sesotho and English. The REFLECT circle members and the Malealea community at large do not speak and understand English. This however did not affect their understanding of what was happening in the play when the actors were speaking in English.

Even though sometimes I did not understand what was being said I did understand what was happening in the play, for example, the white boy, I did not hear what he saying but I saw that he was drunk. (In-depth interview, Female, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

The language did not matter to me because everything made sense. And I also liked it that these yellow people [white people] from outside learnt our language and spoke it in the play. I also liked them because they were dressed like the Basotho. It shows that they take us seriously. (Focus group discussion, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

The reason why the use of English did not have a negative impact is because when the audience saw WSI students from the USA and the UK on stage, they did not see them for what they are but for who they are on stage and what they represent and the issues that

were raised. Because the play was convincing, they saw real Basotho men and women who told stories that they could relate to and sometimes what they saw was more important than what they heard. Consequently they identified more with the stories because they identified with all the people telling the stories, not only the Basotho, as evident in the following response:

I want to congratulate the actors especially those from outside Lesotho and South Africa because they have worked really hard. Really when I saw them playing *morabaraba*<sup>5</sup> and during the *Litlhobohanyo* I saw nothing but real Basotho men. (Post-performance discussion, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

Apart from the fact that the audience comprehended and identified with some of the stories, the presence of the non-Basotho gave the play more impact and gave a deeper understanding of the issues and a clearer picture of reality. This can be seen from the following responses:

In the other part, I felt really sorry for the wife of that husband. Her husband was giving money to the other women and I felt like hitting that man. You know I thought that these things only happen to us because we are poor. (Workshop discussion, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

Another respondent stated:

When her wife said hello father of my child how was your day? [this is after the husband comes back home after spending time and money with different women] I just told myself that men are never satisfied. How can a man play games on this beautiful yellow woman? (In-depth interview, female, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

The role of the wife whose husband cheated on her was played by a white American; the women in Malealea were able to relate to the story. What they gained from the play was a universalising of injustice, that social injustices happen to people regardless of class and

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<sup>5</sup> A game played by Basotho men that could be said to be a Lesotho version of chess. The men play *morabaraba* in Scene One before the lobola negotiations.

race. The fact that the role of the woman who was cheated on was played by a non-Mosotho gave it more impact and made it more powerful. If, for example, the part had been played by a Mosotho, the audience would have had a different reaction to the one that they had. The disadvantage of this interpretation is that it may cause despondency in that they may come to the realisation that all men are the same and that there is nothing they can do to change (hence the Sesotho expression, *monna ke mokupu oa nama mosali ke cabbage oa ipopa*), that so they might as well stay in their marriage. Nevertheless, such an interpretation is still constructive as it arises – in line with the aim of PPT – from people’s realisation that they are not the only ones enduring these injustices; therefore, it creates a platform from which people will be able to talk about these issues.

From the above responses it can be concluded that the inclusion of people who do not come from the same cultural context as the audience in PPT projects needs to be carefully considered, particularly in terms of the roles they play. In other words, their inclusion may be a benefit or a liability in the long run. However, if catalysts make an effort to understand the culture of the people they are working with, it becomes a benefit as the community feels that their stories are understood; and they see the stories as being told not by outsiders but by insiders, people who are a part of them.

The responses also show that in order for PPT projects to be effective, the catalysts need to show an appreciation of the community’s culture, so that the community not only sees people who are telling them their stories, but people who understand their stories. Therefore, they can come together and work towards a solution without the other party feeling judged or misunderstood.

### **5.1.3 Facilitation and post-performance discussions**

When the facilitator asked the audience to comment on the first performance of the play, I observed that the audience was initially hesitant. The facilitator then asked leading questions such as: Did you as a woman, a man or young adult feel that Scene X was talking to you? As a Mosotho residing in Malealea, do you think that the portrayal of events in Scene X was accurate? How did you feel about Scene X? What do you think

needs to be done? Do you think that silence is a good thing? After the facilitator asked leading questions, people began to dialogue. The reason why they did not talk initially was not because they had nothing to say, it was because they are not used to speaking up.

When asked what they liked most about the play, some interviewees stated that they liked the post-performance discussions. They said they liked the discussions because:

They gave us a chance to talk about the issues that we are faced with here in Malealea. The play was good but I think it could have been better if it included issues such as the rights of the child because nowadays you cannot even talk to your child or show her/him the right path. In our culture it is known that when your child misbehaves you show her/him the right path by spanking her but nowadays these children tell you that they have rights. (Post-performance discussions, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2006).

Other interviewees stated that issues such as alcohol, transport and chicken theft should have been dealt with in the play:

I hear that HIV/AIDS is a very big problem in the country, and a lot of people are doing a lot of things to fight its spread which is a very good thing. My only concern is that our chickens are disappearing, people are stealing them, the culprits are known yet no one is doing anything about it. (In-depth interview, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

During the post-performance discussions one elderly man stated:

I like this play very much, the part that I like is when you my mother asked me whether this play has talked to me and what is it that can be done here in Malealea to solve the problems that are here. (Post-performance discussion, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2007)

From the above responses it can be seen that facilitation gave them a feeling of recognition, that they were not just there to listen to what the ‘experts’ were saying, but that they were an important ingredient in the play. The play is made for them and if there are challenges that they deal with on a daily basis that are not reflected in the play, it is

important that those issues be put out in the open so that they can be addressed. The facilitator's duty was to explain to them that the play is merely something that they could use to reflect on their lives, to see what is important and what it is that they want to change. Through facilitation the audience thus realised that they are what is important in the play.

However other people did not like the post-performance discussions. For example, when the facilitator invited people to discuss issues presented in the play, other people, especially the older boys, left laughing and running. When asked where they were going they shouted that they were going to herd the cattle as they had left them to watch the show; others, meanwhile, shouted that they did not want to be asked questions.

A middle-aged woman whispered to another saying:

She should not come to us and ask us to speak. (Post-performance discussion, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

The above observation indicates that some people were not yet ready to speak out, mainly because they did not want to be put on the spot in case they said something wrong.

The objective of the project was to break the silence and begin dialogue, because as people began to dialogue on issues posed by the play, different solutions would then be explored. Through the discussions, comments and suggestions led by the facilitator, the play became a way in which possible paths may be examined as stated by Lambert<sup>6</sup>. If there had been no facilitation, the audience would have identified with characters and seen the characters' journey as nothing more than natural and unalterable. This was reflected in the group interview (6<sup>th</sup> July 2006) and in one of the interviews with a middle-aged woman who said:

You know my child, we see young girls who are in relationships with older men just so

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<sup>6</sup> See page 39

they could get money and also men who cheat and beat their wives. But because these things happen so often we have come to see them as natural things that happen and that if they don't happen to you or your daughter you are lucky. But when you look them in a play and people talk about them then you actually see how disgusting they are and you also realise that they can be changed.

From the above responses it can be concluded that most people liked the facilitation because it provided them with a platform to actually stand up and talk. Although the issues raised were occasionally outside the scope of the project, it nevertheless gave them a chance to air their views and be heard. The play provided them with a space to talk about issues that were really bothering them, whether it was chicken theft or children's rights, what is important is that people did dialogue.

The facilitation also helped in focusing the audience's response, as well as encouraging them to take part in the discussions by asking leading questions. During the post-performance discussions an elderly woman started talking about how the lodge had betrayed them and because of that she was now wearing torn shoes. Apart from her, though, there were few people who talked about issues outside the scope of the project but the facilitator always managed to tie those to the bigger issue of silence, which was the main theme, through problem-posing.

From the above findings it can be seen that in order for the audience to engage in dialogue, the facilitator as a catalyst communicator (White and Nair, 1999) needs to create an enabling environment. The findings have also substantiated the point made by White and Nair (1999) that in order for the facilitation to be effective, the facilitator needs to have appropriate skills. In the end it is the audience, with the assistance of the facilitator, that transforms the way that people look at themselves, feel about themselves and relate amongst themselves. Therefore as argued by Welch in page 39 the success of PPT depends on an effective facilitator and not everyone can be a facilitator. This was evidenced when a workshop was facilitated by an inexperienced student. The session failed terribly as people did not participate and in the end the facilitator was the one who was telling people what to do, much to the confusion of the villagers who were not sure

what was happening.

#### **5.1.4 The workshop**

Interviewees stated that they enjoyed the workshops very much because they taught them theatre skills that they could use when developing their own plays:

I liked this project a lot because through it I now have an idea on how to start a play that people will like and relate to. At first, when I was in a play I wanted people to laugh and if they didn't I thought it was because it was boring and I would do something so that they could laugh. Now I know that what is important is not that people should be laughing all the time, but what is important is the story that you are telling them". (In-depth interview, female, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

I learnt how to start a play and how to use very little [sic] props. When we do our plays we wanted to use real things like chairs but this play that you did for us showed that you can use each other. The plays that we are going to do after this are going to be very good. (Focus group discussions, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

The above responses show that the audience learnt new skills that they are going to use to create their own plays. Apart from the skill of learning how to improvise and create plays that people can relate to, they also showed a great liking for Image Theatre:

The other skills that I learned is the skill of statue [freezing]; I like it because people can see what is happening even though the people on stage are not talking. I did not like it at first because I did not understand it when you people were teaching it to us. I felt stupid. But I like it because some of the things you cannot actually do on stage and sometimes you don't feel comfortable talking about other things on stage like sex. Now when we do our plays we will use the statues. (In-depth interview, female, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

I liked the statue technique because I am now able to take what I'm feeling and turn it into a statue. (Informal discussion, female, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

The findings all confirm that the REFLECT circle members learnt theatre skills from the

WSI students and lecturers and that they will apply them in their work. The findings show that they liked Image Theatre because it is more powerful than words and has the ability to break cultural barriers and also say the unsayable, especially on taboo issues like sex. These findings on image theatre substantiate Boal's views on image theatre<sup>7</sup> (1979) However during the workshop some REFLECT circle members were not happy with the trust exercises that they did before the storytelling exercises:

I did not like what you were doing when you said that we should fall and the other people should catch us. I thought that I would fall because I'm heavy. (Informal chat after the exercise, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

Another respondent noted

I did not like the statues because I did not understand what I was supposed to do and it was like you people were losing patience with us when we did not understand. (Informal conversation during tea break, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

The reason why initially the REFLECT circle members did not like the exercises is because they did not understand what they were supposed to do. This can be attributed to a lack of planning on the part of WSI students and lecturers. In carrying out the workshops it was decided that the WSI students from America and UK should be the ones to lead Image Theatre techniques as they know them quite well and use them often in their respective countries. This was however a mistake on the part of both the WSI students and lecturers, as the chosen students had trouble communicating the techniques to the REFLECT circle members. So when the other students from Lesotho and South Africa (who spoke Sepedi) translated what they were saying to the REFLECT circle members, the WSI students from the UK and America thought that the other students were telling them what to do (how to do the image) and as a result were not happy. This confusion was passed on to the REFLECT circle members and in turn they also became confused as they did not know what to do. Hearing the two groups arguing, they thought

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<sup>7</sup> See page 27

that they were the ones with the problem, especially since some of the WSI students from Lesotho lost patience with some of the REFLECT members.

The other reason is that before the workshop began, the REFLECT circle members only did one or two exercises. They were thus not comfortable with their bodies and therefore did not have the confidence to do what was required of them as they did not know their bodies' potential and constraints. Boal (1979:126) notes that an actor's body is his/her main instrument, thus it is important that before any work can be done in the theatre, the actor should explore his/her body. Consequently, if the actor does not know his/her own body it becomes difficult to execute trust games or getting into the other forms of theatre such as Image Theatre. The above finding thus substantiates Boal's point about the necessity of knowing one's body before practising any forms of theatre.

Part of the reason why the exercises were not fully done is the fact that the project was running out of time. As the above findings indicate, however, these exercises are an important part of the process and if they are not done a project runs the risk of failure.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from these findings is that if there are different cultures in a PPT project, logistics of planning need to be sorted out before the project takes off. Further catalysts should not take things for granted as this may have a negative impact on the community or the participants, as was the case with some of the REFLECT circle members.

### **5.1.5 Participation**

In Malealea the REFLECT circle members were asked what they thought could be done to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS, and what could be done to help those who have tested positive to encourage them so that they can take care of themselves.

One respondent noted :

There is nothing that we can do, this disease can only be stopped through prayer, because God is the one who has the power to stop it. (Workshop discussion, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

Most of the villagers shared the same sentiments. The WSI facilitators tried to intervene and ask them what that they could do apart from prayer that could help. Another respondent replied:

There is absolutely nothing, only God can help us. (Workshop discussion, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

Even though the facilitators kept asking leading questions, the participants all stated that there is nothing they can do. Even after the facilitators brought up the subject of medicine, they stated that:

You can drink that medicine and take care of yourself but if it is time it is time. God already has a plan for each one of us and there is no one who can change it. (Workshop Discussion, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

The facilitators then intervened and through leading questions asked whether medicine wouldn't help. There were REFLECT circle members who concurred with the facilitator but the majority of them were still in favour of prayer. In the end there were two groups, one for medicine and the other for prayer, with the latter dominating. In the end the facilitator told them that they need medicine and proposed that instead of prayer maybe they need both; it was therefore agreed that one needs prayer so that it can give them strength to take medicine and medicine to give them strength to pray.

From the above it can be seen that the concept of participation, which is PPT's sole purpose, can be very challenging. Contrary to what Mda (1993), Freire (1972) and Boal (1979) advocate, sometimes the catalyst's intervention is not enough and they need to dictate to the populace, especially with life-threatening situations, as there is a danger that by the time they find the solution for themselves it might be too late. Furthermore, because of people's beliefs, intervention can be a problem for example, the belief that anything that happens to them is beyond their control and is the will of God. This is point correlate to Freire's views on false consciousness<sup>8</sup> and Fritze's point that false

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<sup>8</sup> See page 15

consciousness is imposed through religion, therefore in a Christian society when people have no where to go they take rescue in the fact that they cannot do anything because their life has already been mapped out for them by a greater power. And Christianity requests that people do not question but should accept things as they are as it is the will of God. It is therefore difficult for the facilitator to actually intervene as anything that the facilitator brings out may be seen as contradictory to their religious beliefs.

Participation can also be very time-consuming; for example, whenever there were discussions, one of the men always brought up the issue of chicken theft.

I hear you are talking about HIV/AIDS and it is a very dangerous thing but what worries me is this issue of people who steal chickens in the village. What saddens me is that some of these people are known and people who know them don't say a thing. (Post performance discussion, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

While, the WSI had said that the community was to discuss and create a play based on the realities of the Malealea community, the issue of chicken theft was outside the confines of the project and it took the facilitators a long time to get back to the core issue of HIV/AIDS and silence. By doing this the WSI members were not imposing their ideas but were driving the community to talk about issues of HIV/AIDS and silence. Even Freire notes that true education drives to a certain point, there is no education that is neutral, thus education should be directive, and in the case of WSI the objective was to explore issues of silence and HIV/AIDS as faced by the community.

#### **5.1.6 The space, time and seating arrangements**

The use of space in African tradition is dictated by custom, and in this regard Lesotho is no exception. There are different spaces reserved for different activities for both genders. Therefore, if a project's objective is to empower the community, the space in which the project is to be carried out is crucial. It has to be a neutral place that is not affiliated to any organisation; and it has to be accessible and familiar to the community.

The decision to perform the play at the clinic was because most HIV/AIDS campaigns

are held there and there is a positive relationship between the community and the clinic staff. The fact that the community was familiar with the space was a positive aspect with regards to participation, as they did not feel intimidated by the space. The community was more likely to be empowered, as they in a certain sense ‘owned’ the space. It is a community clinic whose purpose is simply health, not religion or politics, which are the issues that seem to be dividing Basotho presently.

The play was performed on Wednesday the 5<sup>th</sup> of July at 2006 at 10:00am. The timing of any performance, especially a participatory one, is crucial as it affects audience response and their degree of involvement. Taking into account that the play was done in the rural areas where most people perform daily manual tasks, we had to find a time when they had completed these. For example, we knew that at 10:00am, people are back from the fields and they would gladly come and watch the play.

The seating arrangement in an interactive theatrical production is also crucial, as it has a bearing on the participation level. The concept of theatre in the round that is normally practised during popular theatre interventions has been adapted from the staging of indigenous and popular performances. For example, in Lesotho the children would normally sit around the fire while they are told folk stories, and are at liberty to join in the performance if they know the stories told. In Malealea the audience sat on the grass in a semi-circle, with the action of the play taking place in the centre. During the performance there was no line of demarcation between the actors and the audience like the one found in a conventional theatre. Because of the seating arrangement the audience was able to connect with the actors in the show.

### **5.1.7 Songs, dances and poetry**

The play ‘Dance Me to the End of Love’ utilised *lithoko*, *liphotha* (poetry and popular dance) from Lesotho. This is because in Lesotho traditional modes have always been used to deliver messages and such modes have always been found to be interesting. Not only did the project utilise song and dance from Lesotho but it also included songs from other cultures: South Africa, the United Kingdom and United States of America. My

observation was that the songs and the dances increased the audience participation. For example, in the first performance, when WSI students marched, singing and dancing from the lodge to the clinic, they were joined along the way by audience members who during the march were already initiating some of the songs. The audience also joined in some of the songs during the play. The songs and the dances made the audience feel like they were a part of the show even before the show started. This is attributed to the fact that song and dance transcend boundaries of language.

As pointed out earlier, Okagbu (1998:35) warns that the application of foreign modes of communication should be carefully considered as sometimes the audience would first need to be educated in the codes and conventions of that form before they can derive meaning from it. This however was not the case with the Malealea theatre project. In fact the opposite was quite true in that the introduction of new cultural practices led to participation as the audience seemed to be intrigued by the foreign forms. Post-performance discussions after the 3 REFLECT circle groups presented their plays to each other yielded the following responses:

I just wanted to know if after the discussions we will have a chance to sing and dance. I want you to teach us that dance that was done during the march where that boy who talks a lot kept jumping up like he is play *sekoche* [tap dancing]. (Post-performance discussions, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

Another respondent noted

I liked the dance that was done by that boy who plays the accordion [same boy as above, tap dancer]. I didn't know that boys could actually do that. *Me ooee* [oh dear mum!]he did it so well it showed that he knew what he was doing and he was really enjoying it. (6<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

The above response shows that the use of foreign media can increase participation and also motivate people to take part because they want to learn foreign dance styles. The Malealea REFLECT circle members also taught the WSI students new songs. Most of

the songs that they taught them were related to the theme of the plays that they created together with the learners. Therefore it can be concluded that the use of traditional modes as well as new cultural forms can increase participation.

## **5.2 Findings on content – Silence and HIV/AIDS**

### **5.2.1 Silence in the family**

Interviews conducted show that women are denied the right to power and decision making in their own families since the man is positioned as the head of the family.

As a woman, I am taken as a child by my husband. He is the one who makes all the decisions in the family. He works in South Africa, even when he sends me money he tells me what I should do with it even though I'm the one who is here. (In-depth interview, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2006).

This sentiment was echoed by most of the women. One noted:

Even though my husband lives in South Africa he is the one who makes the decisions, he also makes decisions for the children like which school they should go to. Sometimes I know that the school he has chosen is not a very good school but I just keep quiet because if something should happen to the children such maybe the boy becomes a drunkard and the girl falls pregnant like in the play their father will blame me. So to avoid such things I just keep quiet. Sometimes I just avoid the arguments because I will be seen as disrespectful. (Workshop discussions, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

The responses show that in families women keep quiet not because they do not know what to say but because they are scared that if they speak out they will be seen as disrespectful. Additionally they are scared of the consequences should anything happen. This silence that is practised by Basotho women is encouraged by the Sesotho culture; for example, it is said during the *lithlobohanyo* that a woman should not question her husband's decision.

In the focus groups that I had with both the boys and the girls they echoed the same

sentiments, stating that in their families they have never been allowed to make any decisions as their parents, especially their fathers, make decisions for them. For example, their parents choose which extra mural activities they should join:

My father is the one who said that I should join the church choir. I wanted to join the village choir but he said no. (Focus group discussion, females, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

These sentiments were also addressed in one of the scenes that were created in Malealea. Silence in the family is not only observed between the wife and husband but it also extends to the children. The lack of communication in the families was evident in one of the interviews when a respondent stated that there is no communication between her and her mother, especially when it is about sex or HIV/AIDS. She stated that when she began her menstrual cycle her mother simply said to her:

You are now a woman so you must not talk or even play with boys because you will have a baby and don't tell anyone that you have started your periods, it should be your own secret. (Informal discussion, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

Since then her mother has never talked about sex, HIV/AIDS or boys except for just the occasional remarks that she makes once in a while when there is something about AIDS on the radio or an HIV/AIDS related activity, when she makes comments like

*Hee AIDS ena e re tenne* (I'm really fed up with this AIDS). (Informal discussion, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

From the above response, what can be observed is that in addition to the silence that prevails in the family due to the lack of communication between the husband, wife and children, there is another type of silence. This silence is born out of the euphemistic vocabulary and indirect choice of words that parents use with their children. For example, what the mother is really saying here is that the girl should not have sex with boys, but rather than saying that she says that she should not talk or even play with boys.

Therefore, what the finding articulates is that even though parents may argue that sometimes they do talk to their children and warn them, the reality is that at times what they are trying to communicate to them is lost because of the choice of words used. The reason why parents decide to use specific terms or hide meaning behind words is because they do not want to talk about sex with their children because it is a taboo subject. However because of the phrases used, the children or young adults may not understand what is actually being said to them and that is as good as being silent, especially in a society where questioning an elderly person is seen as a sign of disrespect.

In the focus groups with the women, they were asked whether they talk to their children about their relationships. Some stated that they do not talk to their children as it would seem as if they are encouraging them to have relationships. Others noted that although they do not talk to their children, they know that their children have relationships through rumours or maybe seeing them with their partners. One woman stated that:

I have not yet heard anything about whether my daughter has a boyfriend or not and I have not seen her walking suspiciously with a boy but I suspect that she has one because nowadays she takes too long a time looking at herself in the mirror. I have not asked her and I will not ask her. (Focus group discussion, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

I should point out that in Lesotho young people who are in a relationship are not supposed to walk or even talk in full view of the older people as this is a sign of disrespect. If they want to meet, they make an appointment maybe in the woods or anywhere where they are sure that older people will not see them. They are only allowed to visit each other once the boy has proposed to the girl and the two families have met and have agreed on the bride price. Although in the urban areas some families do allow their children's boyfriends or girlfriends to visit, this however is not entertained in the rural areas and the elders take great offence when young people walk together in a suggestive manner.

For example, amongst the WSI students, two of them were in a relationship, a girl from South Africa and a boy from the United Kingdom. They walked together most of the time, holding hands. Some REFLECT circle members did not take kindly to this and they said that they felt disrespected, stating that

*Ba ea ba fahla* (they cannot look at them because they are too bright for their eyes and they might be blinded). (Informal conversation, females and males, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

My observation was that the villagers were not happy with the relationship and yet they kept quiet up until the last day of the project when they indicated how disrespected they felt. The reason why they did not want to speak out was because they did not want to be seen as trouble makers; because they said that they were being given food and knowledge they would be seen as ungrateful if they started complaining, and so they decided to keep quiet until the end of the project.

The women also revealed that they do not discuss sexual issues with their children as this would 'encourage them to have sex'. One respondent noted that:

I do not discuss anything with my children about HIV/AIDS. When I have heard something about the disease from the radio, or from people I just tell them that what I have heard and then I tell them that they need to take care of themselves. (Focus group discussion, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

One respondent stated:

My dear child, it is very embarrassing to talk about sex to your own children. Maybe in this day and age it is a dangerous thing not to talk to your child about sex and HIV/AIDS. My mother did not talk to me about sex but I turned out okay. So I don't know what I would say to my daughter. It will also be like I am encouraging her to have sex. (In-depth interview, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

Another respondent stated:

I am a Christian, a Roman Catholic and sex before marriage is not allowed so if I start talking to them about sex they will think that I am giving them permission to have it. However, I always tell them about HIV/AIDS, that it kills and that they should take care of themselves. (In-depth interview, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

What these findings illustrate is that parents find it hard to talk to their children about sex as they do not know how to carry out such conversations. The reason for this is that their parents did not talk to them about it, the principle being that one's mother instils in one the same principles that one wants to pass onto one's daughters. What these parents fail to realise is that during their time their parents did not talk to them about sex because there were structures such as *Thakaneng* (a place where youths were moulded by mentors on issues relating to their behaviour as women and men). At that time, as soon as the girl had her first period she no longer slept at her parents' home but at *Thakaneng*. The same thing applied to the boys, until such time that they got married. Another reason why their parents did not talk to them about sex is because there was no HIV/AIDS during their time so there was probably no need for their parents to sit them down and talk about unsafe sex, which is the leading cause of HIV/AIDS.

While some of the respondents noted that they do not talk to their children about sex as they might be seen as encouraging them to have it, others noted that their children know about sex because they are taught biology at school, therefore there is no need to talk to them about something that they already know about:

These children know about sex because they are taught biology at school. The teachers have been trained to handle these things and they are able to talk about sex with the children without feeling embarrassed. (In-depth interview, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

Another respondent noted that:

Apart from the teachers there is so much information on HIV/AIDS, there are radio programmes that children listen to. (Focus group discussion, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

When asked if they ever ask their children what they know about HIV/AIDS they stated that they do not ask them.

What this finding illustrates is that parents would rather put their trust in establishments like schools or in programmes to talk to their children about sex; yet they do not know what these programmes or institutes communicate to them, because they do not ask their children what they do know. Thus they do not know the kind of information that their children are getting. What parents also overlook here is that biology is not a social or a human science but a pure science, and it does not delve into the questions of behaviour, sexual responsibility, life skills, and ethics.

From the above responses it can be seen that a lot of silence prevails in the family. The man is the one who makes all the decisions in the house without communicating with his wife. The wife in turn accepts all the decisions made by the husband because she does not want to be seen as disrespectful or to be blamed in case something happens. She thus doubts herself and accepts his authority. The silence in the family with the father dictating to his wife is attributed to the fact that during the *lithlobohanyo* the woman's role is summed up by comments such as *u hlomphe monna oa hao joalo ka ntao* (respect your husband as you would your father) from her family, especially the elderly women and aunts. From the moment that a Mosotho woman is married she ceases to be under the guardianship of her father and is now under the custody of the husband, where she is nothing more than a child. She is told that she needs to ask permission in whatever she does and must listen to her husband without question.

It can thus be concluded that there is a great deal of silence in the family and unfortunately this is where values, morals and principles are instilled in children. This lack of communication in families is very risky – particularly for girls. This is credited to the fact that the silence that prevails denies them negotiation skills. As they grow up, because they are always told what to do by their parents, they may find it difficult to negotiate safe sexual practices since decisions have always been made on their behalf –

they neither know how to think for themselves nor do they trust their own opinions.

This system is also very dangerous for boys because as they grow up, they witness the way that their father communicates with their mother and they grow up believing that life is supposed to be that way. Thus when they are in relationships, for example, they are the ones that decide everything, for example, whether they want to use condoms or not. Furthermore this system projects that they (men) know everything, putting pressure on them not to ask for information even when they do not know.

### **5.2.2 Silence in relationships**

In the focus group interviews that were held with young women between the ages of 15 and 20 years, they were asked whom they confide in. The general response was that although they do have friends, they do not tell their friends everything that is happening in their lives. One of the respondents stated that:

I once told my friend that I failed a test but the following day everyone knew that I had failed. So, from that day on I learnt never to tell my friends anything serious. (Focus group discussions, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

Most of the girls in the focus group shared the same sentiments. One said that:

I have a lot of friends but I only confide in one, even that one I do not tell her all my stuff. I choose what I tell her; like that I have a boyfriend. (Focus group discussions 11<sup>th</sup> July 2006).

(After the discussion, she told me that her friend still thinks that she is a virgin and I told her that she should be careful. She said, “I like someone like you, who says take care of yourself and not someone who will say don’t have a boyfriend ...”).

One of the respondents remarked that she has a few friends but she does not talk to them about anything as she has an aunt with whom she talks. The group of girls said that they never really talked about HIV/AIDS but that it does come up occasionally in their

conversations.

When asked if they persuade their boyfriends to use condoms they girls just looked at each other and laughed and one of the girls exclaimed:

*Hee ee a tla re khale o lietsa* (No he will say I have been engaged in sexual activities and he will think that you are loose). (Focus group discussion, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

The above response substantiates the point made earlier on by Holland et al. (1991:19) that girls do not want to initiate condom use because they do not want to be seen by their partners as sexually aggressive even if that puts them at risk of contracting the disease.

The above response also indicates that girls tend not to like talking about sex with their friends, with strangers or with their boyfriends. This is attributed to the fact that sex is a taboo subject and young girls practising it are seen as loose (hence they thought I would judge them). Apart from this is the fact that as young girls grow up they are taught from an early age to keep to themselves. Common phrases used in Lesotho for young women are “*u tlabā mosali ea jaong ea ratang litaba, ea senang sefuba*” (What type of wife will you be who likes talking too much and doesn’t know how to keep secrets). The culture of secretiveness is further instilled in them when they begin their menstrual cycle, as has been mentioned already.

This problem however of women not confiding in each other is not only observed in young females but it also stretches to the older women. In one of the lunch breaks, as I was talking with some of the villagers, they noted:

*Ao ngoaneso* this is such a good project; but it is a pity that it is going to end after you people leave. There is just too much gossip here in Malealea and even if people did come it would not work as people would not be honest with each other. They are scared that whatever that they say will be used against them. (Informal conversation, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

While this response from the women may show the culture of silence as something so pervasive that PPT can make no difference, it instead shows that it cannot immediately get people out of an oppressive situation. Behavioural change is a process and the first step is making people aware that there is a problem that needs attention. Thus in the above response the women have realised that there is a problem that needs to be resolved so that people can begin to use PPT to solve their problems without them feeling like they are being judged.

The finding also illustrates that even if people are aware of their oppressive situations, it is difficult for them to get out of them as they have been submerged in that situation for a long time. Thus even if they want to change their situation it should be understood that change is a process and it takes time and people need to get used to it.

This finding also substantiates the point made by Harding (1988:5) that PPT projects should not be once-off events whereafter the catalysts leave the community. Harding states that the catalysts need to go back to the community for a follow-up and establish the progress of the project. The statement above indicates that more intervention is still needed if the people of Malealea are to carry on with the project on their own – otherwise the project will lead to pointing of fingers and in that way problems will not be addressed.

In the focus group that I had with the boys, when I asked them who they confide in with regard to their relationships, they stated that they confide in their friends and anybody whom they are with, depending on where they are. One respondent noted

If we are all sitting together, maybe at the café (where they sometimes just sit) or we are herding the cattle or drinking beer, if the conversation turns to girls then we will just talk about them. (Focus group discussion, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

However, some of them mentioned that they do not talk about the girls that they really love.

I tell my friends everything that I do with my girlfriends and if I want to ask a girl out I tell my friends and we talk about it. (Focus group discussions, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

Most of the boys shared the same sentiments. When asked if they ever discuss using a condom with their girlfriends, the boys stated that they do not.

You know how girls are, first you have to convince her that you should sleep together and she will tell you that she is scared and she will keep saying no without telling you why and in the end she will agree so, sometimes I take condoms but sometimes I don't because with girls they never make up their mind. (Focus group discussions, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

I don't use condoms because I love my girlfriend and I don't like them. (Focus group discussions, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

When I'm with my girlfriend if I ask her if we should have sex she will say she does not want to have a baby but if I show her a condom she will not answer and sometimes she does not know that I'm not using it. (Focus group discussions, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

From the above responses it can be seen that the boys are the ones who decide whether to use condoms or not and many do not use condoms simply because they do not like using them. Another reason why they do not use condoms is that they do not know how to use them, as evidenced in the response below:

The first time I had sex with a girl I did not use a condom as I did not know how to use it. I did not want to ask my friends how to use it as they would laugh at me. (Focus group discussions, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

From the above response it can be seen that although boys claim that they talk about everything, when it comes to sex there are things that they would rather not talk about,

presumably because it is embarrassing for them to accept that there are things that they do not know. This is linked to a tendency amongst men/boys to look to other men/boys to affirm their manhood; asking questions about certain issues such as sex may make them feel less of a man, so they would rather take chances. As frightening as this may be, it provides a point of departure when carrying out HIV/AIDS campaigns as it presents knowledge as to where people are in terms of both their thinking and their practice.

The findings from the focus group discussions indicate that there is a vast difference in the way that both sexes relate to each other, boys to boys and girls to girls. Although the boys tell each other most things and are far more open, they are also selective in their choice of who they talk to and who and what they speak about. The more meaningful the topic, it seems, the less they communicate. This can be attributed to the fact that as boys grow they are taught that real men don't show their feelings. Sesotho phrases such as "*monna ke nku ha a lle*" (a man is a sheep and is not supposed to cry) reinforce the notion that men are not to show vulnerability – a man is supposed to be strong like a sheep, because even when you slaughter it, it does not make a sound.

The findings also illustrate that there is a lack of trust amongst young women. The females are conscious about who they share their secrets with, as they fear that their friends might let them down and disclose their secrets. They also fear that sometimes if their friends know that they are having sexual relationships, they will be labelled as promiscuous. The fact that they do not talk to each other makes them more susceptible to the epidemic, although at times the fact that they do not know anything seems to be a relief to their parents. This lack of trust can be interpreted as a consequence of oppression since it divides the oppressed and keeps them weak (Freire, 1970).

It can therefore be seen that there is a gap of silence that exists within families, within relationships and friendships. Therefore this silence needs to be broken down as silence is one of the factors that exacerbate the epidemic.

### **5.2.3 Layers of silence: rape and domestic violence**

In discussing rape during the workshop discussions, REFLECT circle members noted that most women who have been raped never open a case against the perpetrator. A middle-aged woman who knew somebody who had been raped said that

When you go to the police and ask for help, the way they ask you questions is as if they are laughing at you, sometimes the treatment that you get is the same as the one in the play. When you go to the well to draw water everybody looks down and its like people do not know how to treat you anymore. When you go to church, people give you this odd look as if you have killed a person when actually it is you who has been abused. What would be the point of reporting the crime after all? You just keep it to yourself. In Lesotho, court cases take long so to keep a normal life it is better if you keep quiet and deal with it in your own way. (Workshop discussions, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2007)

Through such a response, it can be seen that the victim is often blamed, sometimes not in what is said but in how they are treated. This was further born out in a causal talk I had with a middle-aged woman who said:

I know of someone who had gone to the police to report a rape but one of the police asked her to come with other family members, even though she had told the police that someone in her family committed the crime. (Post-performance discussions, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

In the informal conversation we had during lunch break, one respondent shared the same views:

If a close relative or a member of the family carries out the abuse, the abuse is hidden and the girl is silenced, and she is told not to bring the issue up as this will bring shame upon the family (informal conversation, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006).

What the above responses show is that rape committed by a family member is perceived as a lesser crime that should be dealt with within the family. The victim is seen as

responsible for the family's honour instead of the perpetrator being seen as responsible for the family's dishonour – not to mention horrific abuse. This indicates that when it comes to reporting rape, it always boils down to who the perpetrator is and who the victim is.

These findings also attest to another type of silence that is encouraged by the people who are responsible for helping to prevent such things from happening – the police and other family members. If one is raped by a family member and is told by the people who enforce the law that that is a family matter, that is as good as silencing the victim. This is a view families often support, rendering most victims silent. And as remarked by one of the audience members in a post-performance discussion, *our* conspiracy of silence causes us in turn to perpetuate the injustice.

When asked if they would report a rape, respondents stated that if they were raped they would not report it.

The fact that I have to go to the police station without even bathing is just another way to ridicule people who have been raped because for example, if I get raped here, I need to take a taxi to the police station because it is very far. If I get in the taxi all torn and smelly what will people think of me. That is just another way to ridicule me. (Focus group discussions, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006).

Another respondent stated that she would never report a rape case because the language that they are expected to use in court is just too explicit. She stated that in court anybody is allowed to come and witness the trial and people find rape trials very interesting. She further stated that sometimes when one reports rape one needs to think of one's children and other family members as this also affects them.

During the post-performance discussion, in relation to Scene Nine, a middle-aged man stated that sometimes the way some women dress is quite 'suggestive' so, in as much as society tries to fight rape, women also need to take responsibility and stop wearing short and revealing dresses. In response, a point was raised that it is not about people wearing

short skirts because even old women who wear a ‘hundred’ dresses also get raped (in Lesotho, most of the time, old women wear three to four skirts to give their bodies more volume).

Apart from the above, it cannot be said that children, some as young as six months, who are increasingly becoming rape victims – often by their own fathers – were sitting suggestively or wearing suggestive clothing. In the focus groups the women noted that they knew a few unreported rape cases; the victims refrained from talking as they felt dirty and did not want to relive the rape again and embarrass themselves by going to court where people will go just to hear the ‘juicy’ details, this point substantiates Victor Nkiwane’s point (2006:4) that every time there is a rape trial people want to listen to the victim as she narrates her story because “a rape trial is juicy”.

Unfortunately, as noted by one of the women during our casual talks,

The fact that sometimes we women are not talking about this is what actually gives rapists more power. I know most of the time women take the perpetrators to court because someone witnessed it. Otherwise if there were no witnesses the woman would just keep quiet. It also happens in the families where fathers rape their own daughters and the mother just keeps quiet, for fear that if people know her family will be embarrassed. (10<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

The above response therefore indicates that sometimes women would rather keep quiet at the expense of their children. This could be traced back to the *litlhobohanyo* where the bride is told that whatever happens in the family stays in the family, and that a woman should do whatever it takes to protect her family.

The Basotho culture seems to be at the core of this problem, due to its authoritarian nature where children are not allowed to question anything but must submit to what their parents or elders say. If parents and their children dialogued, it would be easier to talk about such issues. As one of the respondents said,

I wouldn't even know where to start if I had to tell my mother about being raped, or ... I don't know what I would do ... (Focus group discussion, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

This further indicates the deep level of silence that exists in Basotho culture. Even when children encounter problems they feel that they cannot go to their parents to talk about them because they are not used to it; they do not know where they would start and if the issue is about sex, it is even worse.

In the post-performance discussions, a middle-aged woman noted that the AIDS epidemic has also affected orphans, which are a neglected group. She noted that most orphans, particularly girls, have endured sexual abuse at the hands of their custodians and because some of them are aware that they depend entirely on their victimisers, they are hesitant to report the rape for fear of being disowned by that family or been seen as the ones who bring shame on the family. The respondent also pointed out that often when the orphans do report the rape, the victim is indicted of seducing the perpetrator by dressing, sitting or walking suggestively.

It can be seen from the above that orphans decide to endure the pain and betrayal in silence because they realise that if they do tell they might be thrown out or the abuse might worsen. In Lesotho where there are not enough safe havens for orphans (the very few orphanages that exist accommodate only young children), this may be seen as yet another contributing factor in rape victims' self-imposed silence.

In discussing domestic violence, respondents stated they knew of such cases as the one in the play, Scene 2. Sometimes when a wife questions her husband she is seen as disrespectful and the husband beats her. A REFLECT circle member said she could relate the scene to real life, and that she knew of situations in which, if the woman questions the man about his whereabouts, the woman gets a beating. If she dares utter the word "condom", the beating will increase.

When asked if they knew anyone who had been physically abused, most of the respondents said they did but all of them stated that they did not intervene,

because when you do, once the husband and the wife make up you are left on your own as if you were the one trying to break them up. So it is better if one just turns a blind eye and ignores the abuse. (Workshop discussions, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

What I found interesting was that, as I listened to some of the stories told by the villagers during the workshop, most of the time it was the women, the mothers or the aunties who instructed their abused children and nieces to go back to their husbands. And in cases where the husband has committed a crime against his child, it is the wife who asks the child not to bring the issue up. What was also intriguing was that during the discussions on this issue during the workshop in Malealea, most of the solutions that were proposed placed an emphasis on women. The participants stated that women need to be empowered to get out of abusive relationships and young girls need to be empowered to say 'NO', and that more workshops are needed that will focus on only women.

#### **5.2.4 A safe space**

In one of the workshops on the 7<sup>th</sup> July, two people, a middle-aged man and a middle-aged woman from the REFLECT circles, told us their own personal stories. They stated that they had never told anyone their stories and it was the first time they had talked about them. The first story was told by the middle-aged man. He revealed that one day he lost his way to a distant relative's home and got stranded in the mountains. He met two women who told him that the place that he was going to was on the other side of the mountain and he would never make it in time as it was already dark. The two women offered to help him by giving him accommodation but on condition that he had sex with them. He said that he thought about it for a while, because he needed a place to rest and also because he did not know the place well. He however decided against it because he knew his HIV status and did not want to infect the women. When he told the women that he could not have sex with them they left him there. He found an old deserted house where he slept and continued with his journey the following day. He said that he had

never told anyone about this incident, especially his friends, as he knew that they would laugh at him and say that he was a coward.

In the second story the middle-aged woman told us about how her family implicated her in her daughter-in-law's death. They accused her of bewitching her and the rest of the family mistreated her. Because her son had already passed away they said she wanted to own everything that belonged to the daughter-in-law.

Both people who told the stories admitted that they had never told anyone their stories and their feelings, but the discussions that ensued after the play and the workshops made them feel secure and they felt that they could talk about anything.

Furthermore, one of the interviewees stated that she was glad that her daughter had attended the show, as she has never had the courage to talk about sex with her daughter. She mentioned that due to the nature of the play she would be able to discuss some of the issues that arose out of the play with her daughter, with particular reference to Scene 6, "Learning your ABC" on page 64.

Thus it can be seen that the play provided a safe space in which people were able to talk about issues that they had never talked about before. When the woman was telling her story there were people in the workshop who were crying and when asked they stated that the story that is being told reminds them of some terrible things that had happened to them. None of those who were crying told their stories; they were not ready to talk about them. The other reason is that there were time constraints.

It can therefore be seen that data that is collected in PPT projects at times has more weight and depth because of the safe environment created by participants. The man who told his story said that even if people decide to tell other people who are not part of the workshop, he does not care because he knows he made the right decision, and is proud of himself. However it is important that before people tell their stories they are ready and should not be pushed to do so otherwise people may tell stories because they are told to

do so.

### **5.2.5 Abstain, Condomise and Be faithful (ABC)**

In the one-on-one interviews, all the married women stated that they did not like the ABC campaign. They felt that they are a most vulnerable group, as they cannot ask their husbands to use condoms even though they know that their husbands cheat on them. One woman said that after talking to her husband several times about his behaviour, she suggested that he should use a condom. The following weekend the family gathered (at the husband's request) and she was reprimanded (In-depth interview, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2006).

When the men were asked about their extra-marital affairs, they stated that their wives like to complain about how tired they are. They also stated that they sometimes find it difficult to do certain 'styles' with their wives so it is better to have a *botha pelo* (someone who comforts you) because you can do whatever you like with them and talk as dirty as you like. They stated that they respect their wives too much for some of the sexual styles that they would like to experiment with. I should point out that this issue was raised by the male WSI students from Lesotho during our informal conversations, however the two men in the project also concurred with them. As soon as the WSI students left, I asked them if they really do experience some of the things raised in the conversations and they quickly changed the subject.

The above observation indicates that although the men were able to talk about personal issues in a group, they were not ready to talk about the very same issues with a young woman outside a group. Therefore, drawing from this observation I can say that if this matter was discussed through theatrical forms and in a big group, the men might really have explored the issues more.

A female respondent stated that she used to go for testing often but since she learnt of her husband's infidelities, she no longer bothers to go as the possibility of HIV infection is so high. She said,

I hate this ABC because here I am, a faithful woman to her husband and I might be HIV-positive yet I observed the B and of course condom use is out since I am married. Again this ABC does not cater for raped women. (Workshop discussion, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

### **5.2.6 Tourism and Alcohol**

In Malealea, alcohol seems to be a big problem. The abuse of alcohol came up in the discussions very often and one of the scenes created in Malealea addressed this issue. In the post-performance discussions, a middle-aged man stated that young boys from Malealea abuse alcohol to the point that they often miss school and opt to work as tour guides to earn money. With the money that they earn from being tour guides they buy alcohol. In the in-depth interviews a respondent noted that

I know my child drinks alcohol a lot and I have talked to him a number of times but because he is the one who brings money it becomes quite difficult to be harsh with him as he might decide not to come back .(In depth interview,10 July 2006).

This response was also echoed in the workshop discussions. Another respondent noted that when these young boys have used their money they go and wait by the road at night, especially at month end when they know that people have money and have gone to town to do their monthly groceries, and take their goods to sell them so that they can get money to support their drinking habit.

The REFLECT circle members were very passionate about alcohol abuse and one of the scenes reflected a drunk youngster raping his mother. Although they noted that alcohol has brought a lot of problems to Malealea, the REFLECT circle members stated that nobody is doing anything and people are not talking about it. In the post-performance discussion most people shared this sentiment. One of the audience members noted that after the WSI project is over the play the REFLECT members should create a play on alcohol abuse because this play has given them a mouth.

### 5.2.7 Sex work

The audience reacted strongly to Scene 6 and one member was disgusted by the shop owner who, instead of helping the widow, took advantage of her. An audience member whispered to another woman sitting next to her “*Hee!! Jehovah hee bophelo bo thata ntate!*” (hee, Jesus!! life is tough.) *Hee* is a Sesotho expression of pity and sympathy.

During the informal conversations that I had with some members of the audience when the play was over, they raised a point that the pandemic has left many children orphaned. Sometimes these children do not have money to survive and the girl has no option but to work on the streets. They gave an example of the young girls who sell themselves at Kingsway Road in Maseru, stating that some of those girls are orphans while others are falling into prostitution to obtain money so that they can have the right accessories. One respondent noted that

What makes this whole thing painful is that sometimes the extended family knows but because even they sometimes have financial constraints they turn a blind eye and like always our government is not doing anything. (Informal conversation, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

The reason why the extended family turns a blind eye to this is because the orphans are supporting themselves and as a result they do not become a burden to the extended family that is taking care of them.

One of the interviewees stated that she knew someone who was a sex worker and when the sex worker died she realised that the family knew, but because she was helping the family by giving them money, they said nothing and pretended that they did not know that she was a sex worker. While she was still alive, no one bothered to talk to her about what she was doing to herself, tried to help her find a decent job, or even refused the money that she was giving to them because they do not approve of her profession. The interviewee stated that

You know my child we Basotho are a very selfish nation. Whenever something is going

to be beneficial to us, even if it is wrong, we just keep quiet otherwise we would rather talk about it by saying what was she supposed to do? Or what would you have done if you were in her shoes? (6<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

During the workshop discussions, most people echoed the above point and shared a number of stories of people they knew. This statement shows that sometimes when people are aware of unacceptable behaviour, they would rather give excuses as to why people are doing what they are doing than reprimand them. Excuse-making is yet another form of silence.

In the Workshop discussions, most people were of the view that sex work is becoming a big problem. One of the respondents remarked,

We have teenage girls who will do anything just to have the latest accessories so that they can 'fit' and nobody is saying anything. Everyone sees what is happening but they do not see. Someone has to do something. (Workshop Discussion , 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

In Malealea the villagers noted that there is a great deal of sex work going on. This is especially common in the case of older women who will go to the shebeens to wait for tour guides who buy them beer in exchange for sex.

During the post-performance discussions a young adult asked if sex work will ever decrease. She noted that when she is talking about sex work she is not talking about young girls who solicit clientèle on the streets but people who actually give sexual favours in exchange for money and material goods. She gave the example of the young girl in the scene who slept with the professor so that she could get marks she did not deserve, and the unemployed graduate student who had a sugar daddy. She stated that

Maybe people should stop blaming the government for things that they themselves can fix. What do you say as a parent when your child who is unemployed comes home with groceries and how do you feel as a student when you sleep with a teacher just so you can get marks? (Post-performance discussion, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2006)

What was interesting about this remark was that it was made by a young person during the post-performance discussions, and she was the only young person who spoke. She notes that people need to acknowledge the part they play in society and elder people should stop blaming young people, because they are also to blame as they let these things happen right under their nose by not saying anything simply because they are getting something out of it.

While the government is not doing much about sex work, people need to acknowledge that there are different reasons why people end up prostituting themselves. Some teenagers (or women) are engaged in sex work due to the culture of consumerism which pressurises them to have the latest accessories to fit or belong. The majority of the girls (or women) who are sex workers are in the industry due to poverty and desperation, however, and the money they earn they take back to their families.

Occasionally the family is aware of what is happening but because they are also benefiting, they keep quiet, as has been stated by one of the respondents. Thus it can be observed that this is yet another form of silence that prevails – one born out of exploitation. As much as stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS is dependent on breaking the silence which clouds the pandemic, what is also evident from this research is that stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS is not just about individual accountability but it is also about social accountability: society acknowledging the part it plays and taking responsibility for it.

This chapter has presented the research findings and the analysis. The following chapter draws the conclusions to the study.

# CHAPTER 6

## 6. Conclusion

This chapter draws conclusions about the research project. This dissertation set out to explore the culture of silence in relation to HIV/AIDS in Malealea using PPT. Consequently the conclusions will be based on two key areas: the content, which includes what the culture of silence means and what its consequences are; and the form, which is the effectiveness of PPT as a research method and as a tool to address important issues.

### 6.1 What does the culture of silence mean?

From the findings in the previous chapter the culture of silence is indicative of a socio-cultural context which does not listen to or hear the voice of anyone who in the eyes of society does not have an authoritative voice. This is supported by the theory outlined in Chapter Two (Freire, 1972:10). The culture of silence is a culture that dictates that people should do as they are told without explanations and without asking questions. Because people have been born into this system where silence is imposed on them, they hold the belief that things are the way that they should be and therefore accept things as they are. The discussion below will summarise how this silence manifests in Malealea valley in Lesotho.

The culture of silence is silence that is practised in families, friendships, relationships and law enforcement establishments such as police stations. This silence projects itself in different ways; in some instance it does not mean that women are literally quiet but that their voices are not heard by those who have the power to listen seriously. An example of this is in relationships is when the boy insists on having sex with his girlfriend even when she has said she does not want to. Other examples can be seen in marriages where decisions made by the wife are not recognised by the husband, regardless of whether the husband stays with the family or not. This silence that prevails between husband and wife is witnessed by children and it stretches to them.

Sesotho custom dictates that the wife is a legal minor (Epprecht, 2000:17) and the man is positioned as the head of the family, making all decisions for his wife and children. Children see the way their parents communicate and they model their behaviour accordingly. This is due to the fact that an individual's morals, values, principles and identity are first shaped in the family. The family is the chief foundation of societal learning; this is where children learn what valuable character traits are of importance and what comprises normal or acceptable behaviour (John Hopkins centre for communication programme 1995: n/p) Children then see the way their parents communicate, learn from it and come to believe that life is supposed to be that way.

Boys grow up modelling the father's behaviour so that by the time they are in relationships, they are the ones who 'call the shots'; they are the ones who make all the decisions in relationships, including whether they should use a condom or not. This silence that they have taken up from their father also puts pressure on them. They find it difficult to ask for information or advice because they are socialised into the role of 'the one who knows'. This puts both them and their girlfriends at risk.

In the case of girls, having seen how their mother relates to their father, they also follow suit. Seeing the silence that is imposed on the mother by the father, the girl grows up believing that this is the way that things ought to be. This silence in a girl is also reinforced when she attains puberty and her mother dictates to her that she should not tell anyone that she has begun her menstrual cycle. This encourages a culture of silence as the girl is prevented from knowing about issues regarding her own sexuality. Therefore, when the girl engages in sex she does not know how to negotiate safe sexual practices.

The culture of silence is also reinforced in women when they get married. During the *litlhobohanyo* the woman is told that she has a duty to please her husband and that whatever happens in the family should stay in the family. Thus when the husband abuses her she suffers in silence as per the advice of the elders. This creates a vicious circle that is passed on from generation to generation, causing women to internalise their oppression

to the extent that they believe there is nothing they can do to change it.

The culture of silence also means that parents do not talk to their children about relationships and sex because it is embarrassing for them, because it would look as if they are encouraging their children to have sexual relations, and because the church does not permit it. Thus parents do not talk to their children and would rather put their trust in establishments such as schools or radio programmes to do it for them, and because they do not ask their children, they do not know what information they are getting.

The culture of silence means that parents or families are aware that sometimes their children are engaged in sexual activities in exchange for money or, in the case of students in exchange for marks they do not deserve from their teachers. At the end of the day in the case where the child is getting money, the family benefits so they maintain silence and pretend that they do not see what is happening. Sometimes silence in the family is observed where the child is a breadwinner and does as she/he pleases, knowing that he/she will not be reprimanded as he/ she is bringing in the money.

The culture of silence can also be observed in the way that language is used or in the choice of words used. Older people refrain from talking about sex because it is a taboo subject, resorting to indirect and euphemistic language instead (as in a mother telling her daughter 'not to play with boys' because she will get pregnant). Since in Sesotho culture questioning an elderly person is seen as a sign of disrespect, what the mother has communicated to the child amounts to nothing because the child does not see how playing with boys will get her pregnant.

Other examples of how language encourages silence can be seen in cases of rape where the victim is expected to use taboo words when she relates the forced sexual act to a courtroom full of people. One reason rape victims often do not report the crime is because of the language they are expected to use in court which is too explicit and culturally unacceptable.

When it comes to rape, language is not the only thing that encourages a culture of silence. Victims are encouraged to not talk about the incident, especially if it was perpetrated by a family member as it will embarrass the family. Sometimes when the victim goes to the police station to report the matter she is silenced by the police, in the sense that they ask the victim to go back and try to resolve the matter within the family.

In the case of domestic violence the woman keeps quiet because it is a woman's duty to please her husband and respect him. If the woman knows her husband's infidelities and she refuses to have sex with him she runs the risk of being beaten.

Therefore the culture of silence means that people do not talk about issues which affect them and those who talk are not heard, which translates again into silence.

## **6.2 The culture of silence and its consequences**

The consequences of this culture of silence are that people are misinformed and ultimately become disempowered. In the case of girls, for example, they are very selective of the things they say, and they hold many secrets for fear of judgement from the other girls – which at times put them at risk as they may not have access to the right information. What puts them more at risk is the fact that the lines of communication between mother and daughter with regard to relationships, sex and sexuality are closed.

Young girls who are engaging in sex find it difficult to negotiate safe sex, which puts them at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. This is because even when girls know that sex without a condom puts them at risk, they do not want to be seen as having too much knowledge because they have been taught to let the man lead. Further they do not want to be seen as knowing too much about sex lest the boy think that she is loose. This point substantiates the one made by Geete Pao Gupta (2000:2) that there is a culture of silence around sex which dictates that a good woman should be sexually submissive.

Another consequence of the culture of silence is that women internalise a negative self-image as created by men, and feel incapable of self-governance. Thus there is no dialogue, only monologue or dictatorship from the men, making women dependant. This

can be seen in relationships when girls give power to boys to be the ones who decide what happens in the relationship. This can also be witnessed in marriages where the wife has given up and is dependant on the husband to make all the decisions.

Another finding is that when there is too much silence around an issue, people tend to ignore or overlook it. In the focus group that I had with the boys I sensed that for them there are better things to worry about than HIV/AIDS. What I discovered in Malealea was that most of the youth miss school and some of them have dropped out of school so that they can make money by guiding the tourists. In this focus group the issue of making money and training their horses seemed to be what is most important for them. To them HIV/AIDS does exist but it is not something that is urgent; what is important is to make money. The boys' ignorance puts them and girls at risk of contracting the virus as boys take the lead role in relationships; they are the ones who decide whether they are going to have sex and whether they are going to use a condom.

Rape is also another problem that is clouded by silence. People are silent and do not talk about it as they feel that it is their fault, that they will be judged, and because sex is a taboo subject. All of these factors make it difficult for people who have been raped to talk about it. The stigma and consequent silence around rape exacerbates the spread of the pandemic, because if the woman contracted it through rape, it means that she is going to pass it on to her partner; and most raped women would not report the crime in the first place. Not reporting rape further indicates the deep level of silence that exists in Basotho culture.

In concluding the findings it is evident that the Basotho are not a nation that is used to talking openly and saying explicitly what they want to say – especially amongst women. They are nation that has always relied on speaking indirectly or using parables to reflect their feelings and this has been passed on from generation to generation.

What the findings project is that there is a dire need for dialogue in the Basotho tradition to break the culture of silence. Currently in Lesotho elements of dialogue are not present in children's upbringing and this can be attributed to a culture where, from an early age,

children are not allowed to question their elders but are expected to carry out what they are told to do. If an elder tells a child not to do something and the child asks why, the child is reprimanded and is seen as disrespectful.

Therefore it is important that dialogue is brought into the Basotho culture, not just at home but at school so that parents and teachers can engage in conversation with the learners and can stop trying to provide answers to questions that are not asked because they are afraid that their questions won't correspond to the answers that they have. It is therefore important that what children are taught at school is reinforced in families and vice versa so that those values are not seen as foreign by the children. This will also prevent parents from relying on establishments such as schools to communicate with their children.

I will now address the second key focus of the research: the extent to which PPT was able to effectively communicate and encourage communication around central societal concerns. This clearly has implications for whether PPT can be used as an effective research tool.

### **6.3 Can PPT be used as a tool to address important issues?**

The first advantage of PPT is that it offered the villagers of Malealea a safe space in which to genuinely discuss their problems without feeling judged. As the villagers got together and shared their personal stories with the other participants, there was a sense of relief even if only for a moment. Sharing of ideas and experiences and responding to others gives a certain degree of power. Discussions become a vehicle for members of the audience to relieve themselves emotionally, especially when taking an active part in them. Though sometimes this may only be limited to emotional relief, it may at times trigger something in people that facilitates long-term change. Erven (2001:244) states that in community theatre projects all those who are involved, even if only for a day, emerge with an improved self-esteem and this (though at a slower pace) may lead to the desired behavioural change.

The second advantage is that PPT promotes community action. Sometimes people take things for granted and they ultimately begin normalising certain habits and justifying them by reasoning that they have always been there. For example, it is accepted that parents cannot talk about sex with their children because their parents did not talk to them about it. A similar logic is evident in the reasoning that if your husband beats you there is nothing that you can do because it is meant to be like that. In PPT, in order for the REFLECT circle members not to take things for granted, the 'normal' was stripped of its 'familiarity' and its hegemony challenged through Boal's Forum Theatre (1979:139); and as people began to discuss and debate issues, possible solutions to some of their problems were found. Thus PPT succeeded in creating some form of awareness.

PPT can also be used to break the culture of silence around taboo words or problems that exist but which people pretend that they do not see. In the case of Malealea, people discussed issues of alcohol and prostitution that have been festering in the community for a long time but which people did not have the courage to talk about.

The findings of this study illustrate that PPT can be used to address important issues, but these issues should be those that the community sees as important. For example, in Malealea one of the problems mentioned was the fact the public transport is very poor. For PPT to address important and relevant issues, the target community needs to point to the issues that *they* want dealt with. In this way PPT will be a process of social transformation where the community, in wanting to change the status quo, will take ownership of the transformation process.

Reflecting on the project with hindsight, something we could have done was to ask the community their problems and then take those as our point of departure. For example, for the young boys HIV/AIDS does exist but that is not as important as making money. That could have been our starting point. The same is true of the issue of chicken theft, which the old man kept talking about. Therefore, in order not to waste time and move back and forth, it is important that people should state their problems and that should become the starting point. Despite this setback, however, the most important thing is that

the project provided a platform for engaging people in dialogue.

PPT can also address important issues if the target community understands the language that is utilised. For example, the play 'Dance Me to the End of Love' was used only as a starting point so that people could reflect on it and see what it is that they can change. Therefore, if people need to watch a play and relate it to their social reality, it needs to be done in a language that they understand. The fact that the play was performed in two languages, Sesotho and English, posed a problem because the people in Malealea do not understand English.

Language was a huge impediment in the sense that when the play was performed, some of the important issues were not communicated to the villagers as they were in English. For example, Scene 4, 'It's in my Culture, it's not in my culture' was performed in English. It involved a young man protesting that it is not in his culture to use a condom and another claiming that it is in his culture to always drink too much. This key scene was lost on the majority of the audience.

It is therefore imperative that in PPT projects that utilise more than one language, the logistics of language be sorted out at the very beginning, as this could have a bearing on the project. Sometimes important issues will not be communicated, and thus PPT will cause despondency, rather than being a tool to address important issues.

Before social transformation can take place the community first needs to acknowledge that there is a problem and they need to work on the cause of the problem. In this endeavour, there has to be participation from the community and direction from the catalysts since intervention serves a directorial function (Mda, 1993:168). This is because without facilitation or direction from the catalysts, there tends to be finger-pointing (as in the example of the old woman who complained that certain people benefit from the lodge). If there were no intervention, the villagers would easily be divided into two groups (those who support the old woman's views and those who do not support her views) and the focus would have been lost. On the other hand, there has to be

participation from the community as they need to name, reflect and act on their problems (Mda,1993:160). Therefore, for social transformation to occur there have to be two variables, participation and intervention, which must balance in the goal of conscientisation (Mda, 1993:164).

In the case of Lesotho, PPT should form a foundation on which sensitive issues such as sex, rape and domestic violence can be discussed, not just at a community level but by starting with an individual and then proceeding to the family. Opening doors for communication is the first step needed for Lesotho to start to heal as a nation, especially in this difficult era of HIV/AIDS where people hide behind their cultural practices and poverty.

In conclusion, PPT allows its participants to understand and literally act upon their world (Freire,1972:96). It must, however, be understood that it cannot immediately change people's cultural practices which they have practised for a long time and come to believe to be 'natural'. Some cultural practices are factors that lead to the oppression. Change is a process and people fear it as it is packed with uncertainty; people fear what they don't know. In Malealea, however, theatre offered a room within the confines of culture, in which women and girls particularly could practise creating the changes that they would like to see in their world.

The findings of the study also indicate that Freire's pedagogy is relevant in the development of Lesotho and can be used in dealing with the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Applying the problem-posing methodology in dealing with HIV/AIDS can aid in breaking the silence that surrounds the issues pertaining to the pandemic. Due to the participatory nature of the problem-posing methodology, it can help in increasing knowledge about the pandemic and can also assist communities in trying to locate the root cause of their problems through dialoguing with each other. An effective way of dealing with the pandemic is not just to communicate about it as an autonomous entity, but to break it down into pieces. For example, people should not look for ways of stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS but rather look into why the rates keep increasing.

## **6.4 Popular Participatory Theatre as a research method**

Popular participatory theatre was used as a method to collect data. While the issues were discussed through theatrical techniques such as improvisation, Image Theatre, and Forum Theatre (Boal, 1979), data was collected. The data that was collected through participatory theatre had more depth than data collected by way of an interview. This was because sometimes as the scenes were acted out, new discoveries were made, questions were asked and discussions took place. As people saw themselves through the play and saw themselves through other people's eyes, they reacted.

The theatrical techniques employed allowed many issues to be brought up in a short space of time. Some of them were relevant to the theme of the project and others were not, such as chicken theft, transport and problems with the management of the lodge. In the beginning it took time for people to participate as they were not 'warmed up'. In contrast, in the case of interviews or focus groups, sometimes people refrained from talking about certain issues such as sex because they felt that they might be judged. Additionally, as I observed during this study, people tend in interviews to say what they believe is the right answer or the answer that they think the interviewer wants to hear. However, in participatory theatre, because the setting was fictitious, participants said things that they might not have said in the interviews or would not have talked about. In PPT real issues that people are confronted with are discussed through theatre; the fictitious setting gives participants a feeling of security, because they know that it is 'just a play'.

A major shortcoming of PPT as a research method, as observed in this study, is that there are two foci. The first is the issues to be investigated, and the second is creating a production from the findings. The researcher is therefore placed in a dilemma: as a researcher, the workshop is more important than the actual play because of discussions, debates, arguments and counter-arguments; but as a co-facilitator whose objective is to produce and present a good play which people will be able to use to reflect their social reality, the focus is more on the final product. This is due to the fact that in the final analysis, people are going to watch the play; and if it is expected to have a positive

impact on the community, the acting is just as important. Thus the problem with using PPT as a research method lies in the predicament between getting as much information as possible from the participants and producing a great production. However, for a play to be effective it must be good so that people can be both entertained and challenged.

The other shortcoming of PPT in this project is that because the participants did not have any training on how to act, they worried too much about their acting to the extent that they were no longer interested in the discussions and just wanted to focus on the acting. In Malealea, after the discussions, one of the participants asked if they were going to be allocated time to rehearse as she thought that too much time was wasted with the discussions. Apart from this, other people were concerned that the play was too boring, as it did not make people laugh. So to prevent such things it is important that participants learn the value of discussions.

The reason why they may have been bored at times has to do with the fact that the topic was selected for them by people from outside and in the discussions that ensued they felt excluded as these issues were not directly related to their social reality. However, to prevent monotony popular forms need to be utilised as they are the ones that the community can relate to because they understand them.

The success of a participatory intervention depends on the community involving itself and being part of the process. Freire (1972), in his problem-posing education, emphasises participation as does Boal (1979), but neither addresses the question of how to encourage participation in extremely introverted societies. Boal (1992) in his book *Games for Actors and Non Actors* does suggest games as a way to warm the audience. Perhaps additional games were required in this intervention to make the audience more receptive.

Apart from the fact that the audience may find Forum Theatre intimidating, participation can also pose a problem to people who are used to being told what to do, and who might be afraid to put themselves 'out there' in case they provide the 'wrong answer' or are judged and the solutions put forth used against them in the long run. Most people shared

this sentiment. Thus for participation to occur in Forum Theatre, especially where sensitive issues are discussed, there has to be some level of trust among the participants.

## **6.5 Imparting Drama skills**

The Malealea theatre project succeeded in enhancing the skills of the REFLECT circle members whilst also teaching them new ones. The REFLECT circle members learnt the value of creating a play that their audience could relate to. Through the workshop in Malealea the REFLECT circle members learnt how to improvise through storytelling, and an adaptation of Forum Theatre.

Even though the residents noted that initially they found Image Theatre a challenge they subsequently stated that they liked it because they found it stronger and more effective. This can be attributed to the fact it is not high focus, thus there is less pressure. The villagers gave an example of a scene in which people were drunk, feeling that it was more effective with frozen images as opposed to when people were actually speaking and stumbling like drunkards.

Other drama skills that were imparted include articulation, not facing their backs to the audience and taking turns on stage. They were encouraged to use personal experiences to create a meaningful drama so that people are able to relate to it. They were taught to stay focussed and not try and bring laughter to the drama simply because they want people to laugh for fear that the play maybe boring. The REFLECT circle members also learnt how to use as few props as possible and improvising them where necessary. They also learnt how to support the dialogue with music and dance, as these are equally effective for the obvious reasons that have been mentioned earlier.

Through the drama skills that they have used, the REFLECT circle members also learnt the value of listening to one another and respecting each other's beliefs. For example, during the discussion the man who was talking about chicken theft brought it up consistently into every discussion. Initially some REFLECT circle members were very irritated but ultimately they began to weave the issue into all the discussions and tried to

tie it to other issues. Thus they learnt the value of teamwork and taking informed decisions collectively.

Thus the Malealea theatre project met its objective of imparting drama skills to the Malealea REFLECT circle members so that they can use them to address issues that they are confronted with on a daily basis.

Thus it can be seen that PPT can be utilised as a tool through which important issues are addressed and dialogue created around issues that pose a challenge. The participants of Malealea learnt new skills as they were willing to gain more knowledge but most importantly because they felt part of the project and that became their motivation. In conclusion PPT offered a way in which the community learnt about each other and grew together in a way that was empowering.

This dissertation set out to explore issues of silence and HIV/AIDS in Lesotho through PPT. By carrying out this study I was able to ascertain both information about reasons for the proliferation of HIV/AIDS and the effectivity of PPT as a research method and as a tool to address issues of HIV/AIDS. This dissertation has established that there is a lot of silence that prevails in Lesotho with regard to HIV/AIDS and if Lesotho is ever to win the war against HIV/AIDS it must begin first by breaking down the walls of silence. This study has also verified that PPT has the potential to be utilised as a research method whilst also addressing important issues in the community.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Group Interview Questions**

How did you feel about the play?

Do you think that the play talked to you?

Would you encourage people to come and watch the show?

Which scene did you like the most and why?

Which other issues do you think could have been included in the play especially those that happen in Malealea?

Did you take part in the post performance discussions and why?

### **Focus group Discussions with the Boys and the Girls**

Did you watch the play?

If not what did you hear about the play?

If you watched the play which scene did you like and why?

What do you think of young couples that show affection where elder people can see them?

Do you talk with your parent about your relationship if not why?

Who do you confide in?

Do you ever talk about HIV/AIDS with your friends or you boyfriend/girlfriend?

Do you ever talk discuss HIV/AIDS with your boyfriend or girlfriend?

Do you ask your boyfriend to use condoms?

### **Focus group with the REFLECT CIRCLE members**

Are you enjoying the workshop?

Which part of the workshop are you enjoying?

Which part of the workshop are you not enjoying?

Did the play that you watched talk to you?

Which scene did you enjoy the most?

Do you ever talk to you children about their relationships?

Do you think the play was accurate in the way that it portrayed some of the issues?

Discuss some of those issues

How do you think the people in Malealea handle HIV/AIDS?

Why do you think that people do not talk about issues affecting them?

What do you think are the consequences of not talking?

Do you think the play helped you see things form a different perspective?

### **In depth Interviews**

Did you enjoy the play?

Which scene did you like the most?

Are you enjoying the workshop?

Which part of the workshop are you enjoying?

Which part of the workshop are you not enjoying?

Do you discuss HIV/AIDS with your partner?

Do you Discuss HIV/AIDS with your children?

What do you think are the consequences of not talking about HIV/AIDS?