

An Appreciative Inquiry Approach to Community Theatre on HIV and AIDS Education for Young People

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation positions Community Theatre as an agency for development and education based on the educational principles of Freire and Boal's Theatre for Development. The dissertation argues that Appreciative Inquiry can enrich the practice of Community Theatre by approaching HIV and AIDS education through an *asset-based*, participatory, inclusive, learner-centred approach. The dissertation further hypothesises that the infusion of the 4-D process of Appreciative Inquiry into Community Theatre processes aimed at HIV and AIDS education will enhance young people's agency as active participants and agents of change in their communities beyond the didactic notions inherent in ABC education approaches to HIV prevention. This approach can encourage meaningful participation and critical consciousness amongst young people in the HIV prevention response.

KEY CONCEPTS

Appreciative Inquiry, development, peer education, Community Theatre, theatre for development, drama in education, theatre in education, conscientisation, Theatre of the Oppressed, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, social change, meaningful participation.



ABBREVIATIONS

ABC:	Abstain, Be Faithful, use Condoms (<i>condomise</i>)
AIDS:	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
CADRE:	Centre for AIDS Development, Research and Evaluation
CBO:	Community Based Organisation
DramAidE:	Drama for AIDS Education
FBO:	Faith Based Organisation
HIV:	Human immunodeficiency virus
HSRC:	Human Sciences Research Council
IATT:	Inter-Agency Task Team
IDUs:	Intravenous drug users
NGO:	Non Governmental Organisation
PEPFAR:	United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
UNAIDS:	UNAIDS: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNESCO:	United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO:	World Health Organisation



CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	I
ABSTRACT	II
KEY CONCEPTS	II
ABBREVIATIONS	III
CONTENTS.....	IV
LIST OF FIGURES.....	VI
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Theatre and Change in South Africa	1
1.2 Community Theatre and Critical Consciousness.....	6
1.3 Focusing on What Works: An Asset-based Approach to Learning and HIV Prevention	20
1.4 Statement of the Problem.....	22
1.5 Research Question.....	23
1.6 Aims of the Dissertation	23
1.7 Research Statement.....	24
1.8 Research Approach.....	24
1.9 Clarification of Concepts	26
1.9.1 <i>Appreciative Inquiry</i>	26
1.9.2 <i>Community</i>	27
1.9.3 <i>Development</i>	28
1.10 Limitations of the Study	29
1.11 Chapter Conclusion.....	29
CHAPTER 2	32
CRITICAL LEARNING, HIV AND AIDS AND YOUNG PEOPLE: OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH COMMUNITY THEATRE	32
2.1 HIV and AIDS in South Africa: The Unfolding of the Epidemic.....	32
2.2 Challenging Behaviour Change in HIV Prevention Programmes for Young People.....	35
2.3 Placing HIV and AIDS Responses within Communities	42
2.4 Involving Young People in HIV Prevention: Lessons Learnt	49
2.5 Theatre Used for Young People in the Response to HIV and AIDS in South Africa: A New Call for Participation	57
2.5.1 <i>The AREPP Theatre for Life Model: Aesthetics vs. Participation?</i>	60
2.5.2 <i>The DramAidE (Drama for AIDS Education) Model</i>	63
2.6 Challenges and Opportunities in the Use of Theatre as Educational Conduit.....	68
2.6.1 <i>The Importance of Participation in HIV and AIDS Theatre Programmes</i>	70
2.6.2 <i>The Importance of Context in HIV and AIDS Theatre Programmes</i>	72
2.6.3 <i>The Importance of Content in HIV and AIDS Theatre Programmes</i>	73



2.6.4	<i>Guiding the HIV and AIDS Theatre Process: The Importance of Facilitation</i>	76
2.6.5	<i>The Need for Synergy in Community Development and Community Theatre Practices</i>	78
2.7	Chapter Conclusion.....	81
CHAPTER 3		85
DEVELOPING CRITICAL YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH THEATRE: EXPLORING THEORY AND OPPORTUNITIES.....		85
3.1	Introduction	85
3.2.	The Contribution of Paulo Freire to Critical Learning.....	86
3.2.1	<i>Dialogue</i>	89
3.2.2	<i>Praxis</i>	92
3.2.3	<i>Conscientisation</i>	94
3.2.4	<i>Experience</i>	97
3.3	The Contribution of Augusto Boal to Critical Learning.....	99
3.3.1	<i>Knowing the Body</i>	104
3.3.2	<i>Making the Body Expressive</i>	105
3.3.3	<i>The Theatre as Language</i>	106
3.3.4	<i>The Theatre as Discourse</i>	109
3.4	Challenging Freire and Boal: Reviewing Selected Critique	110
3.5	Freire and Boal: Synergies in Critical Learning	115
3.6	Chapter Conclusion: Creating Synergy	119
CHAPTER 4		122
APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY		122
4.1	Appreciative Inquiry in the context of Freire, Boal and Community Theatre.....	122
4.2	What is Appreciative Inquiry?.....	123
4.3	The Theoretical Basis of Appreciative Inquiry	130
4.4	The Principles of Appreciative Inquiry	134
4.5	The Appreciative Inquiry Process.....	139
4.6	Appreciative Inquiry, Community Development and Young People ..	142
4.7	Chapter Conclusion: Appreciative Inquiry and Community Theatre – Exploring Opportunities.	147
CHAPTER 5		150
AN APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY APPROACH TO HIV PREVENTION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE USING COMMUNITY THEATRE.....		150
5. 1	Positioning Strengths, Positioning Weaknesses	150
5.2	Steps Towards Critical Consciousness: Framing the Approach.....	151
5.3	Merging Methodologies	153
5.3.1	<i>Learning through Discovery</i>	153
5.3.2	<i>Asset-based Imagination from Reality to Dream</i>	157
5.3.3	<i>Design through Empowerment</i>	162
5.3.4	<i>Destiny and Sustainability</i>	166
5.4	Chapter Conclusion.....	169
CHAPTER 6		173



CONCLUSION	173
6.1 Introduction	173
6.2 Summary of Chapters	174
6.3 Contribution of the Dissertation	176
6.4 Suggestions for Further Research.....	178
6.5 Conclusion	178
LIST OF SOURCES CONSULTED	183

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The Appreciative Inquiry 4-D cycle. (Whitney & Tristen-Boom 2003:6)	141
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Theatre and Change in South Africa

Globally, theatre has been significant in various contexts in providing opportunities for self and social reflection that may contribute to individual or social transformation (Boal 2000:ix; Sthapitanonda, Buapraphon & Singhal 2004:10; Bourgault 2003:50; Sykes 2008:4; Maritz, De Beer & Du Plessis [sa]:[sp], Chinyowa 2009:330; Schutz & Bilbrough 2006:s32). There is significant literature that claims theatre's ability to advocate for action around political and social issues and that maintains that it has the ability to raise awareness, create dialogue and change attitudes and understandings around sensitive issues. A prominent example is protest theatre.

The use of theatre as a vehicle for protest and change during South Africa's apartheid regime (1948–1994) offers insights into the use of theatre in the local quest for social and political transformation. During this time, theatre was used as a vehicle for mobilising communities towards a critical consciousness of their oppression and for building solidarity in the quest for a democratic and free South Africa (Van Heerden 2008:20). The use of theatre during the apartheid era provides examples of how theatre was used as a grassroots manifestation of opposition to political oppression and how it managed to create dialogue based on the lived experiences and realities of its creators and audiences towards conscientisation, political mobilisation and civil action.

The struggle against apartheid united especially the youth of South Africa in ousting an oppressive regime, with theatre being a visible contribution to resistance (Spitzcok von Brisinski 2003:114). Legendary liberation struggle hero Steve Biko highlighted the value of theatre and drama as a powerful tool for liberation and as an important innovation that needed to be encouraged and developed (Steadman 1998:62). For the apartheid government theatre was so

powerful a weapon that it became a criminal offence to participate, or even witness, a production.

Theatre was viewed as a substantial threat to the oppressive state and was managed by means of oppressive and restrictive legislation implemented by the apartheid government. The most significant of such legislation was the Public Safety Act of 1953, which prevented any public gathering or activity that could be considered to undermine the South African state (Bourgault 2003:221). Theatre became a force to be reckoned with in the liberation struggle to the extent that it was specifically mentioned in the 1975 Treason Trial of the South African Student's Organisation and Black People's Convention with reference being made to those of the accused who conspired "to make, produce, publish or distribute subversive and anti-white utterances, writings, poems, plays and/or dramas" (Steadman 1998:63). Theatre was indeed a threat for the oppressive regime of the time and this underlines the power of theatre in creating social cohesion and in acting as a tool for mobilising communities to social action.

Theatre has thus presented South Africans with opportunities to engage with the possibilities of social, economic and political change in the struggle for democracy and against an anti-racist society, as well as in coming to terms with the legacy of the apartheid regime and the many social and economic challenges still prevalent in the newly democratic state¹ (Bourgault 2003:221–223; Marlin-Curiel 2002:275–276). It seems appropriate that post-liberation theatre is also used as a response to current social challenges such as HIV and AIDS.

Theatre in its many and varied manifestations has been used globally in the fight against HIV and AIDS with debatable success. HIV and AIDS is considered one of the most serious public health and development challenges facing the world today and theatre has been used as an educational conduit for addressing this social challenge and fostering a response that reduces risk

¹ Theatre was also used during the Truth and Reconciliation process in South Africa as a form of therapy, not focusing on the sociopolitical issues but in bringing about healing (Marlin-Curiel 2002:276).

behaviour among communities. South Africa is no exception. In South Africa, as in other parts of the world, HIV and AIDS is a major threat to community development and specifically to young people's development² (Barnett & Whiteside 2006:208).

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) Inter-Agency Task Team (IATT) on Education has identified the need to strengthen and develop participatory programmes to protect the health of young people amid the HIV and AIDS epidemic (UNESCO 2009:15). In South Africa, theatre has been used extensively in attempts to curb the spread of the disease among young people. The meaningful participation³ of young people in educational and development projects is central to their own and their community's development (Cook-Sather 2002:3; UNICEF, UNAIDS & WHO 2002:32).

Current practices in HIV and AIDS education do not, however, seem to encourage such meaningful participation or the development of a critical consciousness among young people in addressing HIV and AIDS, clearly pointing to the need to develop new methodologies for engaging young people through theatre in the HIV and AIDS response. Beyond the meaningful participation of young people lies the need to critically engage them in the HIV and AIDS response; to engage them intellectually and critically in HIV prevention beyond didactic notions of awareness-raising. This dissertation proposes that young people require critical consciousness to engage actively in the HIV and AIDS response and need to be seen as contributors of knowledge and information to this response and not mere contributors to statistics on HIV

²The World Health Organisation (WHO) definition for young people will apply to this study. The term 'young people' refers to a combination of Youth and Adolescents, namely the age group 10–24. The WHO considers adolescence to be between the ages of 10 and 19 and youth between the ages of 15 and 24. (World Health Organisation 2006:1).

³ Fletcher (2005:7) offers the following interpretation of meaningful participation, in the context of students actively participating in the improvement of their schools, as the process of engaging students (young people) as partners for the purposes of strengthening their commitment to education, community and democracy and that it continuously acknowledges the diversity of young people (students) by validating and authorising them to represent their own ideas, opinions, knowledge and experiences throughout education in order to improve their community.

and AIDS. Further, many current projects/interventions favour an individualist approach to HIV prevention among young people that proposes health-seeking behaviour, such as abstinence, sexual monogamy (or reducing the number of sexual partners) and condom use, to mitigate the risk of HIV infection (UNAIDS 2006:64–66) without considering the social realities that young people face that may not support such behaviour.

The lack of participation or critical engagement of young people in HIV and AIDS education indicates the need to develop educational platforms and methodologies that allow for young people to engage with HIV and AIDS in a context beyond individual behaviour change that promotes safe sexual practices and health-seeking behaviour (Crewe 2004:4).⁴ In order to meaningfully address the above concerns, Crewe (2004:6, 7) highlights the need to engage with and transform the realities of young people through education that engages with the social context that young people interact with. This would indicate a need to rethink the way in which young people are reached through education:

Through a critical imagination of the impact of AIDS on education systems, we should be seeking imagined futures. Our roles should not be to prescribe, to dictate, to judge, capacity build and to blame those who are in the midst of this war. Our roles should be to free people from the ways in which education systems are thought about, taught about, spoken about and described to develop new ways of seeing (Berger), new ways of understanding, and new ways of understanding the society in which we are trying to make an education system that thinks faster than the epidemic (CSA 2002). An education system that is obsessed by quality, by critical consciousness, by intellectual creativity and by radical innovation (Crewe 2004:6).

⁴ UNICEF, UNAIDS WHO and the Youth AIDS Coalition has increasingly requested attention to the participation of young people in HIV and AIDS programmes (http://data.unaids.org/topics/young-people/youngpeoplehivaids_en.pdf & <http://www.youthaidscoalition.org/docs/youth%20message.pdf>)

By merely providing young people with information on HIV risk and prevention, they are seemingly being problematised as the drivers of the epidemic and not encouraged to engage with the epidemic beyond risk behaviours. As mentioned by Crewe, behaviours are dictated to young people, they are 'capacitated' with information with little or no consideration being given to the society that young people interact with, which may be increasing their vulnerability. They are, for instance, not encouraged to imagine a world without HIV and AIDS and what this would require from them beyond safer sexual behaviour. Where HIV education addresses young people as a problem that needs to be solved, and not as dynamic individuals or agents who can contribute critically to the HIV and AIDS response, transformation may not be possible and HIV and AIDS education is limited to an exercise in sexuality and sexual behaviour as opposed to a development problem. The agency of young people to become agents of change is thus not fully developed or tapped into.

HIV and AIDS interventions for young people (theatre or otherwise) seem to favour a problem-based approach that highlights negative behaviour that contributes to risk and has been seen as largely failing young people (AIDS ABC is ... 2004:1; Murphy, Greene, Mihailovic & Olupot-Olupot 2006:1446). These interventions position sexual behaviour and health as the central issues that need to be addressed in HIV and AIDS education based on studies that reflect sexual behaviour as the main concerns in HIV prevalence and incidence (Cohen 2003:132–135, Pettifor, Rees, Kleinschmidt, Steffensond, MacPhaila, Hlongwa-Madikizelaa, Vermaak & Padian 2005:1532), with limited success and participatory engagement from those at whom the programmes or interventions are targeted. Citing Becker, Guenther-Gray and Raj, Cambell and MacPhail (2002:5) assert that, in the past decade, there has been a shift away from information-based HIV prevention programmes to those that are more participatory and peer-driven that conceptualise sexuality as a "socially negotiated phenomenon". This shift has unfortunately not seen any significant change in HIV behaviour in South Africa although prevalence rates seem to be stabilising (UNAIDS 2008:40). There are very few examples of how young people are involved in the HIV and AIDS response beyond sex education. The

increase in participatory, non-individual-focused HIV prevention programmes may still be missing the mark with young people since they could perpetuate the mostly problem-based approaches focusing on negative behaviours.

The problem-based approach positions the educational project/intervention within the authority of the 'outsider' as the expert in others' lives and allows for very little critical engagement and understanding of the subject matter. This may contribute to minimal retention of information and empowerment or notions of self-efficacy, since the 'outsider' then leaves the classroom or the young person and the learning experience becomes isolated and not transferable to the real-life situations or social constructs that may increase risk.

Whether in corporate or community settings, there is very little evidence to show that HIV and AIDS education is framed within an asset-based⁵ framework where development or learning is the imperative. In a different sphere, organisational development and community development challenges are being addressed through an organisational development tool, Appreciative Inquiry. Appreciative Inquiry frames the problem-solving or change agenda using an asset-based approach, which will be further discussed in chapter 4. Paulo Freire challenges the notion of education as an external knowledge-based system that is 'deposited' on learners and this will be discussed in chapter 3 together with Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed approach, which regards theatre as a participatory educational vehicle that promotes change.

1.2 Community Theatre and Critical Consciousness

Community Theatre has the potential to build consciousness among community members around social issues and is well documented. The notions of a critical consciousness, an agent of change or transformation and transformational praxis (among others) are rooted in the education movement of the 1960s and 1970s, specifically in the work of pedagogue Paulo Freire (1985; 1996a; 1996b;

⁵ In the context of community development, 'asset-based' refers to an approach to community building that sees community members as active change agents rather than passive beneficiaries or clients.

2001; 2006) and theatre practitioner Augusto Boal (1992; 2000; 2006a; 2006b). These notions underline this dissertation's inquiry into theatre's potential to educate and develop agency among young people as community members in the prevention of HIV and AIDS, and frame the use of Appreciative Inquiry in this specific context. Appreciative Inquiry becomes the methodology that guides development processes through theatre. More specifically, these notions, as well as the "counter-cultural, radical, anti- and post-colonial, educational and liberation theatre of the 1960's and 1970's" (Van Erven 2001:1), including the theatre of Augusto Boal and progressive European education models (Nicholson 2005:9), became the generative forces behind current modes of theatrical engagement that speak to personal/social transformation and consciousness-raising.

Theatre used as a participatory development tool or as a vehicle for change, whether it be community development, education, or general awareness-raising around a specific issue, is defined by a number of terminologies. It is worthwhile exploring these terminologies in order to understand the complexity of Community Theatre (as it is understood in this dissertation) and the various drama/theatre-based methodologies used for education and development that contribute to Community Theatre's ability to act as a development and educational agency in HIV prevention and education for young people. These theatre practices and methodologies constitute the building blocks of Community Theatre and its application in this dissertation. They are not seen as being mutually exclusive but, as will be discussed, they are seen as contributory and intrinsically linked in their aim of educating audiences and raising critical consciousness through participation.

There are many similarities in the methodologies used in these forms of theatre, but there also exist contradictions in the terminologies applied. This section will show that it is not the use of a common terminology that defines the practice of theatre used for development or social change, but rather the synergy of methodologies that may add value to using theatre in a community setting to

address issues or challenges faced by a community or, in this instance, a specific group in a community.

The most predominant of the terminologies used to differentiate between the use of theatre in the development and educational paradigm are Applied Theatre, Theatre-for-Development, Drama- and Theatre-in-Education, and Community Theatre (Bourgault 2003; Nicholson 2005). In the context of HIV and AIDS, Bourgault considers these forms of theatre as 'Theatre for Social Change' inspired by the work of Freire and Boal that relies on participatory methodologies (inherent in Theatre-for-Development, Theatre-in-Education, Drama-in-Education and Community Theatre) aimed at changing risk behaviour related to HIV infection (Bourgault 2003:68). For the purposes of this dissertation, I consider the term 'Applied Theatre' to be an umbrella term encompassing (among others) the modes of theatrical engagement mentioned above but not the most suitable term to use when applying theatre as an asset-based approach in HIV and AIDS education for young people.

Applied Theatre refers to categories of participatory theatre⁶ used in community and educational settings that encourage community development and social change (Prentki & Preston 2009:2). Applied Theatre interweaves drama/theatre-based practices and approaches with participatory theatre (Nicholson 2005:2) to form a hybrid mode of theatrical engagement that is socially critical and socially reflective and that aims at involving individuals and communities in identifying collective concerns, analysing problematic conditions and exploring possibilities for communal action and change. Applied Theatre is described by Prentki and Preston (2009:9) as:

“... a set of theatrical practises and creative processes that take participants and audiences beyond the scope of conventional, mainstream theatre into the realm of a theatre that is

⁶ Participation refers to the processes through which participants are able to influence situations that are represented to them, gain further conceptions of selfhood and implement these understandings into everyday life (Nicholson 2005:37). Participation opens up a dialogical space (again a Freirian notion) in which participants can interrogate, reflect on, and re-imagine experiences, concerns and perspectives collectively.

responsive to ordinary people and their stories, local settings and priorities.”

Applied Theatre further emphasises the application of selected theatrical practices in appropriate settings, allowing practitioners to select from a range of drama/theatre-based practices to compile the most appropriate collection of practices and modes of theatrical engagement to attain the goals set for a project, programme or performance in a specific context. Applied Theatre is perhaps best defined by its aims of “personal and social transformation [rather] than by the various forms it can take” (Conrad 2004:4). Applied drama is bound by context and is fluid enough to address the concerns of local communities, audiences and participants (Nicholson 2005:12). It is this reliance on community realities and the collective stories of the community that holds strong linkages to the work of Freire and Boal in relation to dialogue, conscientisation and praxis, as well as the asset based approach of Appreciative Inquiry that relies on the life-affirming stories of participants captured through dialogue.

Whilst Prentki and Preston (2009:10) consider the term ‘Applied Theatre’ as including the application of theatre in education and development paradigms, they consider that the term may assume a false collective that conceals conflicting ideologies and intentions in these various forms of theatre. Prentki’s and Preston’s concerns are echoed by Nicholson (2005:5–8) who states that the similarities and use of the term ‘Applied Theatre’ may imply that there is a theoretical basis (pure and applied), where the scientific body of knowledge comprises the study and the practice – the theoretical base and the application of the theory. Nicholson (2005:6) however stresses the fact that Applied Drama/Theatre should not be seen as either “pure” or “applied” where applied theatre is seen as being the opposite of “pure” theatre as an art form. Rassmussen (in Nicholson 2005:6) stresses that all forms of drama and theatre rely on the aesthetic qualities of drama and theatre, which should not be compromised, thus the term ‘applied’ should not imply a deviation from the artistic or aesthetic qualities of theatre. Theatre as ‘art’ or ‘spectacle’, in my view, can still be ‘applied’ to address social challenges and raise awareness

around these challenges and as such a balance between the aesthetic and the applied needs to be considered in a development context.

I consider the term 'Community Theatre', rather than 'Applied Theatre' as being the most appropriate term to define my understanding of the use of theatre in a community setting for the purpose of education and development. I agree with Prentki and Preston that the term 'Applied' may be alien to communities since the term 'Community' when linked to theatre immediately implies the use of theatre as being based on something familiar to participants and roots the theatre approach as being relevant to them. In my view, in order for Community Theatre to remain relevant, it is vital that it does not merely rely on its value as entertainment or as information dissemination, but that it takes a multidisciplinary approach that explores theories and methods of good practice in HIV and AIDS education and development studies to inform its practice.

To frame my interpretation of Community Theatre, I will consider Theatre-for-Development as primary contributor to Community Theatre as used in this dissertation. Drama/Theatre-in-Education will be framed as a secondary influence and contributor(s) to support key principles of the use of Community Theatre.

Theatre-for-Development resonates strongly with Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed. Theatre-for-Development also employs Freirian notions of critical consciousness and praxis, to name but a few (Epskamp, K 2006: 9). In this dissertation, Theatre-for-Development is contextualised as explicitly linked to Theatre of the Oppressed. Both Theatre of the Oppressed and Theatre-for-Development gained popularity in the late 1960's and 1970's in parallel with liberation movements in Africa and South America (Epskamp, K: 2006 1&3). The links between Theatre of the Oppressed and Theatre-for-Development offer valuable insights into the purpose of Community Theatre in the context of this dissertation.

My understanding and interpretation of Theatre of the Oppressed as positioned by Boal is based on Freire's notion of *conscientização* or critical consciousness,

described as the very act of recognising how human development⁷ is affected by social and economic conditions (Babbage 2004:20). It is precisely this quest for critical consciousness that Theatre-for-Development aims to achieve and certainly, in my framing of Community Theatre, that Community Theatre should achieve. It is my understanding however that Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed was not necessarily asset-based or appreciative of the existing strengths of the oppressed. Whilst Boal approached theatre as life-affirming (Babbage 2004:2) and valued the knowledge of the oppressed, his work used this knowledge to focus on the oppression rather than on that which sustains positive behaviours or feelings of well-being among the oppressed.

There are clear connections between the work of Freire and Boal (as will be explored in chapter 3) in terms of the community-centeredness of their work. In the available print sources in English and Afrikaans there is seemingly no exploration of linkages to critical consciousness, social action and change and asset-based approaches such as Appreciative Inquiry, as proposed in this dissertation. Chapters 4 and 5 will explore these linkages explicitly in a manner not documented or proposed in previous writings on Boal, Freire and Community Theatre.

Theatre-for-Development, resonating strongly with Theatre of the Oppressed, has evoked considerable debate around the exact practice of this form of theatre in order to identify a commonly accepted definition or terminology and establish a common identity. According to Mda (1993:48), Theatre-for-Development refers to the use of theatre to “disseminate developmental messages, or to conscientise communities about their social, political and economic situation”. This links up strongly to the notions of Boal concerning the use of theatre. One of the main purposes of Theatre-for-Development is for audience members to be spurred into action and to effect the desired change in a community by being conscious of the challenges in their communities (Boal 2000; Ewu 1997; Abah 1996; Blumberg 1997; among others).

⁷ See page 28 for a definition of human development.

According to Bourgault (2003:218), Theatre-for-Development refers to performances and strategies conducted in aid of specific development projects such as vaccination campaigns, entrepreneurship or HIV education where theatre may be 'applied' to certain development challenges in a community, resonating with what Nicholson refers to as a bandage to a problem. If this application of theatre is considered appropriate it may place theatre as a one-dimensional 'fix' to a problem that may require a more participatory and sustainable solution. Such an understanding of Theatre-for-Development further resonates with what Marlin-Curiel (2002:277) considers the roots of Theatre-for-Development, that is, as lying in the colonial missionary theatre of the 1930s that aimed to evangelise and civilise 'natives' in an effort to educate communities in the area of development through theatre.

Marlin-Curiel (2002:279) sees Theatre-for-Development as an external agency applied to people or communities who may need to adapt to preconceived notions of development and as a form of theatre that underscores a colonial agenda. In this reading, Theatre-for-Development is positioned as a hegemonic force that perpetuates the dominant attitudes, values, relations and practices of a dominant order and encourages individuals to identify with these values. Although current Theatre-for-Development agendas claim quite the opposite, the question remains as to whether Theatre-for-Development can fully transcend its colonial roots, especially within a deficit-based frame. Theatre can easily be used as a participatory vehicle for promoting propaganda that may not serve the purpose or the immediate needs of a community. This points to a weakness in the application of the Theatre-for Development process when critical consciousness is not promoted through participation and framing the process based on the knowledge of participants.

In contrast to these views of Theatre-for-Development as a long-term, sustainable intervention, Durden and Ndihura (2003:9 & 10) consider it to be a short-term participatory intervention based on the premise that participation and action-reflection (praxis) are core processes for empowerment and liberation. Cohen-Cruz asserts that Theatre-for-Development deals with the

community and the civil society with which it engages and as such offers a holistic approach to theatre used in the development context (in Banham, Gibbs & Osofisan 1999:115). Ewu (in Banham *et al* 1999:87) describes the objective of Theatre-for-Development “to encourage community participation and dialogue in development whereby community participation in theatre becomes symbolic of and catalytic to its participation in development”. This would indicate that participation in theatre at the community level may be considered equal to participation in community development. As such both Ewu and Cohen-Cruz assert that theatre is based on participation from community members and the act of reaching out to communities through theatre.

Following Ewu’s and Cohen-Cruz’s views that the participation of community members as vital, Duggan (in Banham *et al* 1999:3) asserts that in order for the performance to be considered developmental it should articulate the beliefs of audience members and these members should be able to critique the performance and be motivated to act on their experience. This developmental purpose and intention to effect action will not happen if the theatrical experience is not culturally appropriate and does not address issues that are familiar to audience members (Doesebs 1998:3). If the development ideal and choices are not placed within the scope of the community, understood by them and executed within their ability to initiate action, the development ideal may be misplaced and ineffective. As such, development or learning cannot be seen as separate from the community and driven by an external agenda. This dissertation will propose that infusing the Appreciative Inquiry approach may ensure that the development ideals are firmly placed within the community realities. This calls for a synergy of Theatre-for-Development principles framed as Community Theatre through an Appreciative Inquiry approach.

Such a synergy resonates with the position of Prentki calling for new forms of theatre. According to Prentki (2001:119), contemporary South African theatre places Theatre-for-Development as a primary cultural intervention that can transform post-apartheid society and transcend the boundaries of what can be considered mainstream, alternative, formal or Community Theatre towards an

understanding of how theatre applied in various contexts can move participants and audiences towards change. Prentki (2001:119) is here proposing a synergy (or “hybridity” as he refers to it) that reinvigorates theatre traditions to create new and exciting theatre forms from this synergy through the fusion of existing genres. Prentki considers this the antidote to the fragmentation and sectarianism of theatre when forced to adhere to traditional forms that disregard the creative ambitions of theatre to be a product of the lived realities of its audiences and participants. Here Prentki underscores the purpose of this dissertation, that is, as an inquiry into possible synergies of applied theatre approaches to education and development, where theatre becomes an ambitious agency that can infuse various techniques, methodologies and approaches to the benefit of the community, by the community and for the purpose of this dissertation especially young people as community members.

Abah (1996:245, 251, 254) highlights that the various manifestations of theatre used for development and education are interconnected. This is similar to the notions of Prentki (as mentioned above) in asserting the commonalities of theatre used by and for people in their development agenda. Abah reaffirms the position of Theatre-for-Development as a ‘people’s theatre’ that allows for the active interrogation of cultural practices and an immediate response to people’s problems. Abah moves away from a need to categorise Theatre-for-Development as different from or opposing other forms of theatre and highlights the similarities between Theatre-for-Development and other fields, such as Drama-in-Education, Theatre-in-Education and Community Theatre. Abah highlights the strengths of Theatre-for-Development in promoting the participation of communities and maintains that it is the use of the ‘structures’ of Theatre-for-Development by communities themselves and for their own purposes that re-energises Theatre-for-Development (Abah 1996:260).

Whilst Theatre-for-Development is used primarily at the community level in what is referred to as developing countries, Drama- and Theatre-in-Education are generally used in educational environments as part of formal or non-formal curricula in a school environment. Drama- and Theatre-in-Education drew

considerable interest in Britain in the 1970s and 80s where Drama-in-Education was primarily considered a curriculum-based teaching methodology and Theatre-in-Education was considered the work of a team of actor-teachers that worked with students in participatory performance programmes (Nicholson 2005:4). This methodology, also considered to be process drama pioneered by O'Neill, is another example of how drama or theatre may be used in an educational context to aid learning and development (Wagner 1999:1).

Dorothy Heathcote is well known for her application of Drama-In-Education techniques. Amongst her numerous strategies and techniques, it is especially in the Mantle of the Expert approach to drama in the classroom that Heathcote promotes the development of students' own expertise through drama as a learning medium (Wagner 1999:x), an approach that holds value for the educational and development imperatives of Community Theatre and Theatre-for-Development. Heathcote (in Heathcote and Bolton 1995:ix) positions the Mantle of the Expert as an educational approach based on the principle that young people learn best when they are placed in a position of experts in the learning and teaching relationship, rather than as empty vessels to be filled with another's superior knowledge. This is similar to the approach proposed by Freire in his denouncement of the banking method of education and also supports the view of this dissertation that, in HIV and AIDS education, young people must be approached as experts on their environments and their own behaviour. Such an approach opposes the didactic approach of ABC-based life skills education for young people (that will be discussed further in chapter 2) and the notions that experts on HIV and AIDS decide what the best form of HIV and AIDS education should be for communities or young people in or out of school. This can again be linked to Marlin-Curiel's notions of Theatre-for Development, which may be used to propagate the beliefs of external agencies and not to engage with the realities of communities.

O'Neil and Lambert (1990:11) explain that Drama-in-Education draws on the knowledge and experience of children to create an imaginary world. According to Wagner, there is "less emphasis on story and character development and

more on problem solving or living through a particular moment in time” (Wagner 1999:1). Wagner states that, for Heathcote, the goal of learning through drama is to experience “their reality through fantasy” and to learn beyond the manifestation of action to the investigation of the meaning behind the action (Wagner 1999:1) in order to foster a change of attitude or understanding. This is a common aim among Freire, Boal, and the many manifestations of participatory theatre and programmes. The work of Heathcote and particularly the Mantle of the Expert, could be easily integrated into a non-formal education setting, where development is placed within the power of the participant and, in this case, the development agency of young people and their ability to address HIV and AIDS given that they know their circumstances best and are experts on their behaviour.

The development agency of young people can be linked to the learning opportunities in Drama- and Theatre-in-Education. Drama- and Theatre-in-Education emphasise active learning, democracy and participatory involvement in the collective story (Wagner 1999; O’Neill 1995; Bolton 1979). This resonates well with the position of Freire since it also draws attention to the relationship between the personal and the communal and to the negotiation of meaning. This commonality with the work of Freire and Boal is echoed by Doesebs (1998) where she uses drama to penetrate the cause of community violence and argues that in order for education to take place people need a substantial amount of time to share and reflect on their own experiences. In common with Freire and Boal, who consider the lived experience of learners as contributing to the learning process, Doesebs considers that these past experiences and events prove to be better teaching aids than manuals.

It is this ability of Theatre-for-Development and Drama- and Theatre-in Education techniques to invite the participation of learners through the sharing of knowledge, experiences and communal stories that links up with my understanding of Community Theatre, Theatre-for-Development and the work of Boal and Freire, and creates synergies within the Community Theatre process. As such, I will frame the term ‘Community Theatre’ so as to encapsulate the

educational and developmental imperatives of theatre that reflect on and use community members, community realities and community issues. In support of this position, Mda (1993:2) and Van Erven (2001:2) describe Community Theatre as drawing on culturally appropriate forms of participatory artistic expression familiar to the community to educate and empower (Nicolson 2005:10) and emphasising the dramatic potential of local or personal stories (Van Erven 2001:257).

For the purpose of this study, the term 'Community Theatre' refers to the practice of using theatre as an agency for development and education, using appreciative, highly participatory methodologies, such as those inherent in Theatre of the Oppressed, Theatre-for-Development and Drama- and Theatre-in-Education. This dissertation considers the term 'Community Theatre' as most appropriate to this dissertation given the possible synergies with Appreciative Inquiry as will be discussed in chapter 4. It is a hybrid model of theatrical engagement and a grassroots manifestation of the collective community reality that uses theatre as an agent of reflection, communication, conscientisation, education, increased awareness and development.

Kuftenic (in van Erven 2001:2) places the roots of Community Theatre in the liberation theatre of the 1960s and 70s, and refers to Community Theatre as "community based" or "grassroots" theatre. Van Erven (2001:2) argues that Community Theatre shares generic similarities with Drama- and Theatre-in-Education and concludes that this type of theatre is usually not seen as popular or mainstream theatre and can take on various forms. In Africa, there is a seemingly intrinsic relationship between Theatre-for-Development and Community Theatre.

With the roots of Community Theatre in Africa firmly placed in the anti-colonial and anti-oppression struggle as forms of political theatre, it has "intricately intertwined with drama in schools and theatre in public awareness campaigns, in which *guise* it is commonly called 'Theatre-for-Development'" (Van Erven 2001:10), hinting at the ability of Theatre-for-Development to break with its colonial ties. Where Community Theatre was used as a force of community

unity towards liberation in South Africa, in itself a tool for development, it is not its classification as a form of theatre that is community based or development-orientated that defined its success, but rather the manner in which it functioned and the power it had to mobilise communities and reflect injustices towards creating a change that illuminated its ability to be both educational and developmental.

Although Community Theatre manifests in a variety of forms, mediums and performance styles, its crux lies in its emphasis on the collective story of the community. Community theatre investigates notions of community and identity and how imagined narratives influence the way one identifies oneself (Nicholson 2005:13). Community theatre can enable individuals to gain insight on how they construct their own identities and communities; furthermore, it encourages individuals to identify themselves in different positions and examine experiences to come to new understandings through theatrical means (Nicholson 2005:24).

Community theatre is also concerned with drawing attention to or revealing the hidden stories of a community (Prentki & Preston 2009:9). The community members are thus the 'drivers' of the creative input and create a grassroots reflection and performance in a shared collective form of sociocultural empowerment (Van Erven, 2001:2–3). As described by Van Erven, the collective story of the community becomes the impetus for change and as such any move towards development lies within the community. This can instil a sense of agency as communities can gain a greater understanding of their situation and can make informed decisions regarding their communities and themselves (Govan, Nicholson & Normington 2007:82). Prentki (2001:120) asserts that community theatre (like Theatre-for-Development) holds the opportunity for development where communities speak for themselves through theatre and do not rely on external, centralised 'theatres' that speaks *for* townships, rural settlements and suburbs.

Whilst so much of Community Theatre is shaped around the collective and the sharing of collective experiences or stories, Cohen-Cruz argues that Community

Theatre stands the risk of marginalising communities by not including those who can actually support and effect the sought-after ‘change’ and that community-based theatre only deals with a particular group, often underrepresented, in order to gain collective expression and is more concerned with what is referred to as “identity politics” (in Banham *et al* 1999:115). In my view there is also a risk that Community Theatre may be over-politicised or used to prepare communities for a change agenda that they may not be familiar with or necessarily agree with. When notions of critical consciousness are not included in the theatre development process applied in a community setting, the use of theatre as a development and educational agency will be compromised. This use of theatre is positioned by the reason why theatre is used. Prentki and Preston identify three reasons as to why theatre may be used.

Prentki and Preston identify the use of theatre ‘for’ a community, theatre ‘with’ a community and theatre ‘by’ a community. Theatre ‘for’ a community usually relies on external agents performing a piece of theatre or presenting a workshop to community groups. Theatre ‘with’ a community is usually workshop or process based and involves a creative exploration that could lead to a performance for a wider audience. Theatre ‘by’ a community is where community members develop the entire ‘production’, although they may rely on an applied theatre specialist to facilitate decision making. This dissertation considers the first form of Community Theatre as inappropriate as it does not speak to the goals of Community Theatre. The second and third forms of Community Theatre will be considered as appropriate and as outcomes of the Community Theatre processes that infuse an Appreciative Inquiry approach.

Utilising the strengths of these modes of theatrical engagement, Community Theatre programmes that maximise critical consciousness and participation by communities can be devised. The outcome then would be the discovery of new methods of making Community Theatre that are non-partisan and non-exclusive, rather than developing new categories and terminologies and opposing one methodology with the other. Development and education practitioners can use Community Theatre as a locally relevant educational tool

in the response to HIV and AIDS, bridging the gap between individual and socially targeted behaviour change interventions.

By exploring the various terminologies or fields of study inherent in the use of theatre as development and educational conduit, the similarities and interdependence of these approaches and techniques have been discussed and the need to create synergy and remove boundaries between the theorising and application of these programmes points to the need to further develop and implement Community Theatre programmes in HIV and AIDS education as a set of synergies and cohesive techniques and theories. The work of Freire and Boal in this regard indicates how pedagogies can be developed to support new development processes.

Whilst exactly how theatre's potential and ability to improve development opportunities are not discussed in the literature reviewed, this dissertation proposes that the use of a non-theatrical organisational development tool, Appreciative Inquiry, to explore the way Community Theatre, used as educational conduit for HIV and AIDS prevention, may be enriched and strengthened by the optimal use and engagement of young people as agents of development and social change. Similarly, it will position Community Theatre as the creative process that strengthens the creativity implicit in the Appreciative Inquiry, thus combining the strengths of Community Theatre as a creative process and Appreciative Inquiry as a development and learning tool in pursuit of a holistic learning experience about HIV and AIDS.

1.3 Focusing on What Works: An Asset-based Approach to Learning and HIV Prevention

Appreciative Inquiry is an increasingly popular organisational development tool used to manage change imperatives or transformation processes in the corporate sector and was developed by Dr Suresh Srivastva and David Cooperrider at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom 2003:1). Appreciative Inquiry started as an action research technique in the field of organisational development. However, rather than

conducting a problem-based inquiry, the focus was on analysing the factors that contributed to the organisation's success. It is these positive moments or experiences that Cooperrider and Whitney (2005:1) consider to be the life-giving forces of an organisation and that reflect what they refer to as the positive core of organisations.

While working from a "positive core" (Cooperrider & Whitney 2005:8), the Appreciative Inquiry approach makes use of four steps or stages towards transformation, as described in the GEM Initiative Four-D Model. These are the Discovery, the Dream, the Design and the Destiny stages. Appreciative Inquiry is a process; it is not didactic nor is it prescriptive (Watkins & Mohr 2001:42–45, 47). It is a discovery of beliefs and systems that contribute to change. Chapter 4 will explore these stages and processes in more detail. It will also explore the theoretical base for Appreciative Inquiry, which includes social constructionism and the power of the image. Although available literature in English and Afrikaans at the time of printing this dissertation does not contain any reference to the use of Appreciative Inquiry in theatre-based interventions, oral evidence suggests that it is starting to be used in community development projects using participatory learning methods such as drama and theatre (Kidd 2008).

Furthermore, such an asset-based or appreciative approach towards HIV and AIDS education has the potential to position the individual as expert in his/her own life and context, and to critically engage and consider the circumstances that can heighten or lessen at-risk behaviour. It can assist in developing community-driven education programmes that can frame HIV and AIDS as being related to more than sexual behaviour and health, as it also impacts on social, economic and political levels.

In this dissertation I will argue that a synthesis of theatre in/as community development practice and the asset-based organisational development tool, Appreciative Inquiry, can assist in developing the critical consciousness

necessary for young people to act as agents of change⁸ within their community in the context of HIV and AIDS education and awareness. This dissertation will further argue that this synergistic approach can promote young people's sense of agency, critical consciousness, creativity and discovery by exploring appropriate HIV prevention programmes in broader developmental contexts rather than once-off educational interventions.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

A significant body of prior research focuses on validating the impact and effectiveness of Community Theatre and communal approaches (Winston 2001; Monks, Barker & Mhanacháin 2001; Beare & Belliveau 2007; Sinclair & Grindrod [sa]; Chinyowa 2008; Singhal 2004; Elliot & Gruer 1996; Prentki 2001; Marlin-Curiel 2002; Scott-Danter 1999). As an educational and developmental conduit, a continued search for effective models that sustain individual agency and social change through Community Theatre can be prioritised and as such the research agenda in community and development theatre may shift from a focus on validation and effectiveness to creating these new and improved models.

HIV and AIDS education programmes tend to target individual behaviour removed from cultural and societal influences (Parker *et al* 1998) and in my view tend to favour a problem-based approach that isolates the learning experience and does not contribute to a holistic understanding of risk and the impact of HIV and AIDS. This dissertation positions a shift in paradigm from an over-reliance on individual behaviour change methodologies to a comprehensive methodology that allows for the exploration of relationships between the social, economic and political aspects that contribute to risk. This position further implies a shift from a problem-based approach to an asset-based approach that may assist young people to participate meaningfully in

⁸ In the context of HIV and AIDS education and young people's development, a change agent, or agent of change, will refer to an individual who intentionally or unintentionally causes or accelerates social, cultural, or behavioural change.

their own and in their communities' development in the context of HIV and AIDS education.

Although oral evidence suggests otherwise (Kidd 2008; Samba 2009), available printed sources in English and in Afrikaans seem to suggest that the emerging and popular asset-based organisational development model, Appreciative Inquiry, has not yet been applied to Community Theatre practice. Given the positive references (Cooperrider & Whitney 2005; Whitney & Trosten-Bloom 2003) to the impact of Appreciative Inquiry used as an organisational development tool, the opportunity exists to investigate possibilities of applying Appreciative Inquiry to enrich and add value to educationally imperative Community Theatre practices in HIV and AIDS education and young people's development.

1.5 Research Question

How can Appreciative Inquiry enrich the practice of Community Theatre when used in HIV and AIDS education as a tool for developing critical consciousness, promoting meaningful participation, and establishing agency and enhanced understandings of HIV and AIDS among young people in a development context?

1.6 Aims of the Dissertation

The aim of this dissertation is to theoretically explore the way in which Appreciative Inquiry can enrich the practice of Community Theatre in HIV and AIDS education for young people.

The sub-aims of this research are to:

- review HIV and AIDS education for young people in South Africa with specific emphasis on good practice and Community Theatre programmes,
- explore the connections between Freire's and Boal's transformational pedagogies that pertain to Community Theatre,



- investigate Appreciative Inquiry and identify connections to Freire's and Boal's pedagogies,
- theorise about the way Appreciative Inquiry, with specific reference to the connections identified above, can enhance Community Theatre practice to address current challenges prevalent in HIV and AIDS education for young people.

1.7 Research Statement

Appreciative Inquiry, by focusing on asset-based engagement, can enrich the development and learning opportunities in Community Theatre that focus on HIV and AIDS education for young people. Appreciative Inquiry offers possibilities for developing a communally aware, integrated, critical, multidisciplinary, synergistic approach to Community Theatre in the context of HIV and AIDS education.

These possibilities stem from the fact that the inquiry is asset based, participatory and inclusive. It can frame the development of the Community Theatre programme and the issue to be addressed (in this case HIV and AIDS) as a journey of discovery rather than a problem that needs to be solved. It places the participants as knowledgeable, skilled informers to the process, rather than objects that need to change their behaviour or implement certain practices to conform to the ideal result that an external agent/agenda may deem appropriate. The asset-based approach of Appreciative Inquiry allows for a creative and empowering approach to HIV and AIDS education and community development using Community Theatre.

1.8 Research Approach

This dissertation uses a qualitative research approach. Strauss and Corbin (1998:10,11) view qualitative research as research that is not produced by means of statistical or other quantifying procedures; qualitative research seeks to gain an understanding of an object or phenomenon studied through an

exploration and acknowledgement that the object/phenomenon of study changes depending on the way in which the object is perceived and interrogated. Qualitative research can be used to research lived experiences, emotions, performances and sociocultural phenomena. Rather than producing concrete answers to the questions posed in this study, the conclusions drawn from this research will enable this researcher to argue for a point of view within the framework of the research. The frame of reference of the research and the way in which the researcher approaches and engages with the study influences the interpretation of the phenomenon studied. In accordance with McMillan and Schumacher's (1993:373) thinking, this research views reality as multidimensional, as interactive and as a shared social experience that is interpreted by individuals.

This position is echoed in postmodernist and qualitative frameworks that move away from knowledge as an 'objective reality' as posited by modernism. Constructionism is a learning theory that positions learners as making meaning through language and external sources of information and is an important theoretical basis of Appreciative Inquiry that promotes the creation of knowledge through association with social experiences (Watkins & Mohr 2001:33). This supports the notion that knowledge and meaning are not created in isolation from social contexts (Freire 2006:11, 12; Freire 2001:30–33). This dissertation will approach the research into Community Theatre, HIV and AIDS education and Appreciative Inquiry as explained above.

In line with Strauss and Corbin's (1998:11, 12) views on qualitative research procedures, this dissertation will follow procedures of information collection such as collecting data from printed and internet sources. The dissertation will review documented case studies related to education and social change, young people's development, Appreciative Inquiry, Community Theatre and HIV and AIDS education to reflect on and promote a new approach to young people's development in the context of HIV and AIDS prevention through Community Theatre.

This dissertation will report on the areas of investigation and engage with the organisation and interpretation of said data, including conceptualising the research, elaborating on aspects of the research that stand central to this dissertation and finding relationships between theoretical constructs that will enhance understanding of the phenomenon studied. In doing so, the dissertation is exploratory and interpretive, and builds on existing theory and practice related to Community Theatre in order to develop alternative possibilities and approaches to Community Theatre practice in HIV education for young people.

1.9 Clarification of Concepts

1.9.1 Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is the “study and exploration of what gives life to human systems when they function at their best” (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom 2003:1). It is primarily an asset-based approach to organisational transformation, where positive trends, practices and feelings of well-being are illuminated. The asset-based approach shifts the research or inquiry focus from a problem-based approach to a positive, appreciative investigation and process. The process encourages people to reaffirm success stories about the organisation when it was performing at its best (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom 2003:82).

Appreciative Inquiry is based on the belief that questions and dialogue about strengths, successes, hopes and dreams are in themselves transformational. It follows a four-stage cycle towards transformation, which entails the Discovery, the Dream, the Design and the Destiny stages. Each stage begins by asking an unconditional positive question to allow participants to discover the best in their organisation – that which drives the organisation to excel or reflect on moments when members of the organisation felt the best about themselves within the organisation. This discovery is followed by dreaming about how the organisation can change in order to maximise these positive feelings, which are assets to the ‘wellbeing’ of the organisation, then allowing for the design of this improved

organisation and finally reflecting on the new 'ideal' and possible further changes.

1.9.2 *Community*

Community in this dissertation refers to Anthony Cohen's theorising of Community, as described in *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (1989) as "the entity to which one belongs, greater than kinship but more immediate than the abstraction we call 'society'. It is the arena in which people acquire their most fundamental and most substantial experience of social life, outside the confines of home" (Cohen 1989:15) and it may or may not be defined by geographical borders.

According to Govan *et al* (2007:73), community is usually described in a positive manner; quoting Williams (1992) it is described as "a warmly persuasive word" but this may create a false sense of homogenised local communities within a stable environment. Quoting Young (1990:300–303), Govan *et al* maintain that community may also be exclusive by 'entrapping' individuals and enforcing dominant social beliefs on marginalised groups (such as women), thereby limiting participation or sustaining limited opportunities for development or change.

Building on Cohen's concept of community as a frame of kinship where groups of people are held together by a common interest or supposedly shared identity, this dissertation will affirm communities as a group of people with relationships and affiliations that offer a platform for learning and sharing ideas that can make an impact on the society and culture/s in which they interact. However, noting the constrictions of Govan *et al* (2007), community will also be approached as an entity that may inhibit change as a result of cultural beliefs and traditions.

For the purpose of this dissertation, community is framed as young people and refers to young people in the context of their vulnerability to HIV and AIDS.

1.9.3 *Development*

For the purpose of this dissertation, development refers to human development in a specified context. Human development, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is: "... first and foremost about allowing people to lead a life that they value and enabling them to realize their full potential as human beings" (UNDP 2006:5). In the broader sense, development takes into consideration all aspects of an individual's well-being which includes their health status, educational achievement and access, and economic and political freedom (Soubbotina & Sheram 2000).

In a global development context, the term 'development' is often used in relation to countries. Developed countries are used to describe those countries that form the 'centre' according to the modernisation and world system theories, implying that they are the countries that possess the models of development other countries may learn from. These 'other' countries are the so-called underdeveloped countries, the peripheral or, as they are commonly known today, 'developing' countries. The Millennium Development goals (as agreed on by the United Nations and its member countries) are a set of criteria developed to urge all countries and especially the 'developing countries' to 'catch up' and to become mirror images of the countries that have graduated into the class of developed countries (Knutsson 1997:109). The use of these terminologies places development in a paradigm of deficit and despair. It breaks away from the earlier theorists of development who focused on philosophical optimism and social evolutionism (Knutsson 1997:110).

Development in the context of Appreciative Inquiry refers to the building of a common vision that elevates the organisation or community in which it is being implemented beyond the challenges they are facing by reaffirming what is considered the positive core of the organisation. Similarly, in a community development context the focus tends to be problem driven and reliant on external agencies to guide the development process rather than relying on the solutions developed by communities themselves. Using an Appreciative Inquiry approach rather than an externally driven problem-based approach,

communities can be encouraged to develop methods that address their challenges on their own terms.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

This dissertation will not prove the ability of theatre to change the behaviour of young people in relation to HIV and AIDS-related risks; rather the focus is on exploring how the agency of young people in contributing to the HIV and AIDS response can be strengthened through Community Theatre programmes. The reason for this is that it is very difficult to isolate the 'theatre experience' as the sole contributing factor to a reduced HIV prevalence in a specific community or society. Considering previous studies in the effectiveness of these theatre forms in HIV education, this study also moves beyond the validation query.

This dissertation does not aim to provide an educational or community development model that will eradicate HIV and AIDS and its subsequent negative impact among communities through Community Theatre. Nor does it aim to fundamentally prove that any one methodological approach to Community Theatre practice is more effective than another. It does, however, aim to highlight the potential and possibilities in developing models of Community Theatre that support young people's development and participation and contribute to HIV and AIDS education initiatives enveloped in the development imperative. The review of prior scholarship will investigate defining trends in Community Theatre, young people's development and HIV and AIDS education together with an Appreciative Inquiry approach to learning as a potential model for not only sustainable health promotion for young people in communities, but also a holistic approach to young people's development.

1.11 Chapter Conclusion

This dissertation aims to explore the way in which the use of Community Theatre as a development and educational agent can be extended to enhance its ability to impact positively on young people and their understanding of HIV and AIDS, and facilitate opportunities for young people to become actively

involved in community development. As such this chapter has framed HIV and AIDS as a contemporary challenge to young people's development and places current HIV prevention programmes and educational approaches (including theatre-based programmes) as problematic and inadequate. This is because contemporary programmes are over-reliant on individual agency positioned in opposition to behaviour change theories that do not consider young people as contributors to the learning experience. The chapter introduces the organisational development tool, Appreciative Inquiry, as an asset based approach that can enrich the educational experience and encourage meaningful participation among young people. Community Theatre is specifically placed as a creative learning agency used in the HIV and AIDS learning response that, combined with Appreciative Inquiry, can promote young people's critical consciousness concerning HIV and AIDS beyond proposed safe and low risk behaviours.

Community Theatre is positioned as an appropriate learning medium given that the process has direct relevance for community experiences and that it promotes culturally appropriate artistic expression. Moreover, the term 'Community Theatre' immediately positions the theatre process as part of the community and moves away from what could be considered a 'scientific', removed experience, as one could argue the term 'Applied Theatre' implies (as a tool for solving a problem) and may be considered too external or driven by an outside agency.

This chapter has begun to outline the issue of problem-based HIV prevention approaches using Community Theatre, resulting in passive educational pedagogy and failure to optimally engage young people in the learning process. It has also outlined the need to review current Community Theatre practice, HIV and AIDS education programmes and Appreciative Inquiry to enrich the practice of Community Theatre used in HIV and AIDS prevention. The purpose of such an investigation is to develop the critical understanding of young people about HIV and AIDS and the required response.

This chapter has set out the parameters of Community Theatre as an educational conduit and a tool for young people's development. It is essential that the research agenda of Community Theatre be expanded to include an investigation into new and creative forms of Community Theatre that may contribute to the broader development and social change agenda. Such new forms could contribute to sustainable efforts that assist the most vulnerable and valuable in communities, young people, to actively participate in the learning imperative in HIV prevention, while personally benefiting from the experience by gaining critical consciousness and skills that will ultimately contribute to their own development, agency and potential.

In the following chapter I will explore prior scholarship related to theatre used for HIV and AIDS education and community development in order to position the role, functioning and relevance of Community Theatre within the development context. I will start by reviewing the scholarship related to HIV and AIDS and young people within the social and educational arena in South Africa specifically and include global examples where relevant. This will be done to explore the manner in which young people have been engaged in HIV prevention work at educational and community level and the relevance and impact of educational and developmental theatre-based approaches to not only community development, but also young people's development.

CHAPTER 2

CRITICAL LEARNING, HIV AND AIDS AND YOUNG PEOPLE: OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH COMMUNITY THEATRE

2.1 HIV and AIDS in South Africa: The Unfolding of the Epidemic

For the purpose of this dissertation the focus is on theatre used as an educational and development agency in HIV and AIDS education for young people in South Africa. The literature reviewed also frames the use of theatre as an agency for increased participation of communities or individuals in development.

To understand the paradigm in which the value of Community Theatre and Appreciative Inquiry could be considered in HIV and AIDS education and prevention programmes, it is important to first review the impact of HIV and AIDS on young people. Secondly, it is important to establish the link between HIV and AIDS and development within communities before venturing into a discussion on the uses of theatre in HIV and AIDS education and prevention programmes. This is done in order to understand how HIV and AIDS have impacted on young people and how they have been approached in the response to HIV and AIDS. This allows for the opportunity to frame the HIV and AIDS response for young people and interrogates the challenges experienced within this response, as well as offering insights into how the Appreciative Inquiry and Community Theatre approach may enrich current responses.

The impact of HIV and AIDS on South African social security, especially education and health is undeniable. At the time of writing, South Africa has the highest number of people living with HIV in the world totalling 5.7 million (UNAIDS 2009:27). Over the past twenty years HIV and AIDS has challenged the foundations of every social, economic, religious, cultural and political structure. Since the onset of the epidemic, governments have struggled to come to terms with its impact and to develop adequate responses to it that mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS. Plummer (2005:255) relates early HIV and AIDS

responses at country level as one of the most talked-about diseases of its time, assuming the features of a traditional morality play with images of blood and semen, sex and drugs, and morality and retribution being the order of the day.

The early South African response was no different. The disease was immediately moralised and the initial health promotion response was framed as a life-versus-death scenario. This response was evidently ineffective, not only in South Africa but across the world and in Africa, still proves to be ineffective as will be demonstrated in this chapter.

South Africa reported its first cases of HIV and AIDS in the early 1980s. The early unfolding of the epidemic in South Africa was linked biologically to that of earlier epidemics in North America and Western Europe (Marais 2000:5). HIV and AIDS was positioned as a disease affecting mostly homosexual men and poor, marginalised communities but soon transcended into a disease that affected mostly the poor, women and girls. Responses soon translated into programmes that targeted young people who were seen as agents that could change the growth of the epidemic through education around sexual behaviour.

The political response in South Africa came at a time when the former white nationalist government was preparing to hand over rule to a new democratically elected government. The apartheid government had already demonstrated a deficient response in handling the emerging epidemic effectively. Fourie (2006:51) refers to the apartheid government's response at the time as "a rich societal Petri dish in which HIV and AIDS could flourish". At this time South Africa was experiencing racial separation, the lack of democratic governance, high levels of migration and political oppression, all of which are considered to be driving factors of the epidemic. Fourie (2006:58) illustrates how this response was contextualised as a moral and bio-medical issue where lines were clearly drawn between those deemed innocent and those who led lifestyles that were not deemed pure and in-line with apartheid ideology. At the time the emerging epidemic was framed by language that promoted racism and homophobia.

The post-apartheid government implemented an array of government-supported systems and interventions through the development and implementation of policy and the rollout of intervention programmes and financial and budgetary allocations. The government opted for higher-level policy interventions that were soon challenged by actual implementation (Marais 2000:15), whereas countries such as Uganda implemented community-based programmes supported by leaders who themselves took on the response to HIV and AIDS.

It was the use of a theatre-based HIV awareness programme, *Sarafina II*, that outlined the disastrous beginnings of the HIV and AIDS response in South Africa and the *Sarafina II* scandal saw government and civil society embroiled in a stand-off over government expenditure on HIV and AIDS and issues related to AIDS treatment (Marias 2000:33, 34). Regardless of these controversies, South Africa has integrated the HIV and AIDS response through its various government departments, such as Health (as lead department in the HIV and AIDS response), Labour, Education and Social Development to name a few. It has also developed a National Strategic Plan for HIV and AIDS and STIs that was reviewed in 2007. These national strategies and programmes set the framework and form the guidance for HIV and AIDS interventions at a national and local level.

Of specific relevance to young people, the Department of Education introduced HIV and AIDS and sexuality as key components of the Life Orientation Curriculum (Francis 2009:1). While this response framed the importance of institutionalising the HIV and AIDS response within the South African education sector and providing young people with information on HIV and AIDS and sexuality, several challenges still remain in responding to the HIV and AIDS education imperative among young people in South Africa. This will be discussed in the following section.

2.2 Challenging Behaviour Change in HIV Prevention Programmes for Young People

HIV Prevention among young people has been a cornerstone of many countries' HIV and AIDS responses. There is a current renewed emphasis on HIV prevention as articulated by the president of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, who states that: "We must reduce the rate of new infections. Prevention is our most powerful weapon against the epidemic" (Zuma 2009).

HIV prevention however remain a contentious domain with biomedical, social-behaviour change and structural responses positioned against each other in an effort to address HIV incidence and prevalence. As with many other sub-Saharan countries, HIV prevalence peaked in South Africa around the mid-1990s. Current indications, however, show a stabilisation of the prevalence albeit at a very high rate (UNAIDS 2009:27). It is especially encouraging that prevalence among young people in South Africa aged 15 to 24 seems to be decreasing. It is of concern though that certain high risk sexual behaviours, especially among young women and girls, are on the increase. This may indicate that whilst prevention programmes may be having an impact on increasing certain health-seeking behaviours there may be factors influencing specific health-risk behaviours that are not being effectively addressed by prevention strategies.

In 2008/9 the prevalence of HIV and AIDS in South Africa seemed to have stabilised among the adult population but there is still little evidence of a decline in new infections among pregnant women, with more than 29% of pregnant women attending ante-natal clinics being tested positive for HIV infection (UNAIDS 2009:28). The prevalence of HIV among young people aged 15 to 24, however, seems to be declining considering the 2004 to 2005 prevalence of 25% compared with 21.7% in 2008 (UNAIDS 2009:28). As mentioned, despite this decline, high-risk sexual activities, especially among women and girls, seem to be on the increase. The percentage of young women reporting to have sexual partners more than ten years older than themselves rose from 18.5% in 2005 to 27.6% in 2008 (Shisana in UNAIDS 2008:31). Similarly, the percentage

of males aged 15 to 24 reporting sexual debut under the age of 15 declined from 13.1% in 2005 to 11.3% in 2008, the percentage of young women reporting the same rose from 5.3% in 2005 to 5.9% in 2008 (Shisana in UNAIDS 2008:31).

The changing face of HIV and AIDS, resulting from the increased feminisation of the epidemic in South Africa, indicates that the epidemic is not fully developed and remains formative in the way it is unfolding. There are no global examples of countries that have fully lived through the epidemic and have eliminated new infections among young people. Whilst there are examples of countries, such as the Dominican Republic and the United Republic of Tanzania (UNAIDS 2009:9), that are achieving signs of significant decline in HIV incidence, there must be caution in generalising the prevention approaches that these countries may have applied. UNAIDS (2008:100) warns that countries with different epidemic patterns will require different national strategies for implementing effective HIV prevention programmes.

Successful programmes dealing with HIV prevention are designed according to the context the epidemic is playing itself out in. This requires HIV prevention programmes to consider the variables within societies – cultural, political and economic – that drive the HIV and AIDS epidemic. As such what works for one country may not work for another. It might have been easier to implement HIV and AIDS prevention programmes if HIV and AIDS could have been approached as a purely bio-medical issue using medicine or vaccines, but HIV prevention programmes necessitate an understanding of the social, psychological, political and economic factors that underlie the spread of the epidemic.

In the global context, HIV prevention programmes fall within a health promotion response and, as Wallerstein and Bernstein (1988:381) argue, social and environmental risks need to be considered in health promotion as opposed to an over-focus on individual behaviour. In the context of HIV prevention, driving factors at community level, such as culture, need to be considered alongside biomedical prevention imperatives when cultural change is required based on

epidemiological evidence (Kenyon & Zondi 2009:30). Cultural and community factors driving the epidemic impact differently on young people who are at the centre of HIV prevention programmes, and as such it is essential that prevention programmes are developed that consider their specific context and behaviours. In my view, Community Theatre on HIV and AIDS for young people holds the advantage of interrogating cultural and community factors that drive the epidemic in a given community and assists in ensuring the local relevance of the HIV prevention response making use of theatre.

Considering current indications of a possible stabilisation of HIV prevalence among young people at alarmingly high rates after over 20 years of grappling to come to terms with the management of the HIV and AIDS epidemic, it is not surprising that South Africa is only starting to show evidence of an actual decline in prevalence rates among young people so late in the epidemic. The current reduction in prevalence rates is attributed to the exposure of young people to HIV and AIDS communication programmes, where over 90% of youth have been reached by at least one communication programme as well as condom campaigns promoting the use of condoms (Shisana, Rehle, Simbayi, Zuma, Jooste, Pillay-van-Wyk, Mbelle, Van Zyl, Parker, Zungu, Pezi & the SABSSM III Implementation Team 2009:66, 74).

There is, however, no clear evidence linking these programmes with any reduction in HIV prevalence, however minimal, to HIV prevention. Where, for instance, provinces such as the Eastern Cape showed an increase in condom use in 2009, they also showed an increase in prevalence for the age group 15 to 24 (Shisana et al 2009:34, 67). There are many variables at play that may influence these statistics but the fact remains that it is very difficult to pinpoint or attribute reduction in prevalence to specific activities. Shisana et al (2009:67) consider that the reported increase in condom use can be attributed to behaviour change theories where awareness of high-risk behaviours lead to the required precautions for protective sex. The application of behaviour change models in HIV prevention and awareness campaigns has, however, created significant debate and critique in South Africa. Behaviour change methodologies

have long been seen as being of primary importance in HIV-prevention programmes.

In my view, behaviour change seems to be more of an “ideological” term, than a realistic outcome when evaluating the effectiveness of HIV awareness and prevention programmes. Considering that South Africa is still, after over twenty years of prevention and awareness programmes, home to the world’s biggest and fastest growing HIV and AIDS epidemic, programmes based on (perceived) behaviour change methodologies are not curbing the infection rate effectively. In 1988, Wallerstein and Bernstein (1988:381) highlighted the need to include socioeconomic risk over individual behaviour risk and the fact that a new generation of health promotion theorists have recognised the role of social action in health. In reviewing literature on HIV-prevention programmes, it is worrying to note that programmes often do not consider or apply these theories but rather opt for information on the basic facts of HIV prevention.

When examining behaviour change theories and models in the context of HIV-prevention and awareness programmes, globally and in South Africa specifically, most are focused on the individual. These theories and models are created using cognitive-attitudinal and affective-motivational constructs aimed at empowering the individual to make ‘safe’ decisions regarding sexual activity (Parker 2004b:1). The most popular theories or models for behaviour change are the health belief model, the theory of reasoned action, social learning/cognitive theory and theory of self-efficacy, diffusion of innovation and social marketing (Glanz & Rimer in Airhihenbuwa & Obregon 2000:8).

According to Airhihenbuwa *et al* (in Parker 2004a:1), models of behaviour change, such as the health belief model, the theory of self efficacy and the theory of reasoned Action, do not provide an adequate framework for bringing about behaviour change, especially in the African, Asian, and Latin American and Caribbean contexts. The main reason for this includes, again, the failure to link individual knowledge and action to social, political and cultural contexts. A focus on individual behaviour assumes that individuals have control over their behaviour and disregards the influence of cultural and social contexts on

individual behaviour. Parker (2004b:2) further asserts that many HIV and AIDS communication programmes are based on the assumption that behaviours related to sexual activity are rational and volitional and removed from emotional responses with regards to sexual activity.

In *Reconceptualising behaviour change in the HIV/AIDS context* (Kelly, Parker & Lewis 2001:1), it is argued that these models have a problematic foundation for developing programmes aimed at behaviour change. The fundamental flaw in behaviour change programmes, focusing on the individual, lies in their inability to address the social dimension of change and the social and communal issues that might be putting the individual at risk (Parker 2004a:1). As such, I believe that behaviour change campaigns, such as ‘ABC’,⁹ that mainly reflect on individual behaviours, do not consider the social and communal factors that may prevent these behaviours or the exposure to popular media that promotes behaviour that does not relate to abstinence, for example.

This is highlighted when one looks at the LoveLife campaign, a high profile “brand” of health communication in South Africa. Stressing the importance of behaviour change, David Harrison, the then CEO of LoveLife, argues that: “HIV infection can be averted by an effective HIV prevention campaign through incremental improvements in key behavioural indicators over time” (Harrison & Steinberg 2002:2). These key behavioural indicators may include an increase in the consistent and correct use of condoms, the delay of sexual activity or complete abstinence from sexual activity or limiting sexual partners to one partner, as promoted by the “ABC” campaign of abstinence, being faithful and using condoms. Campaigns such as the ABC campaign, as I positioned earlier, in my view limit young people’s understanding of sex and sexuality and offer a simplistic guide to safer sexual practices outside the reality of young people’s conceptualisation of sex and sexual activity, which may be driven by cultural, social and economic factors. As such, it can be considered a prescription for an

⁹ The ‘ABC’ approach refers to the popular ‘Abstain, Be Faithful and Condomise’ strategy inherent in many HIV prevention programmes.

illness that does not consider the cause. In my view the prescriptive mantra of 'ABC' is often positioned as the only option, a 'do-or-die' prescription that instils fear rather than understanding

Social, cultural and economic factors constantly challenge and undermine the choices an individual might make or attempt to implement regarding safe sexual practices, including the ABC choices put forward in HIV and AIDS education. In South Africa, a country experiencing high levels of violence against children, poverty and inter-generational sex, the choice to engage in safer sexual practices is often not within the ability or choice of young people. Young girls in South Africa experience sexual violence and practise sex for survival thus increasing their vulnerability without allowing them the choice to practise safe sexual practices.

External community influences, such as migration and extreme poverty, impact on social cohesion in communities and further challenge volitional control over sexual practices (Parker 2004:3). Furthermore, access to appropriate and quality health services remain a challenge as well as the uptake of these services being impeded by cultural and traditional norms. As such it is argued that culture at the contextual level must be at the centre of all health HIV and AIDS prevention strategies (Airhihenbuwa & Obregon 2000:7). Designing culturally relevant programmes and communication messages for small groups are two key factors that influenced a positive outcome in 37 community-based HIV prevention programmes in the United States of America (Janz et al in Airhihenbuwa & Obregon:2000: 6). I am of the opinion that mass media aimed at behaviour change miss the mark by not contextualising HIV prevention and risk behaviour of young people and by not working with young people in smaller groups that allow opportunities for critical reflection and understanding of risk factors and risk behaviours. These programmes or interventions (and other education/prevention programmes) do not generally consider media or social and economic factors that works against the promotion of healthy sexuality and responsible sexual behaviour among young people. They seldom allow for

critical reflection by young people and a deeper understanding of what ‘risk’ actually means.

The 2002 Nelson Mandela HSRC study on the prevalence of HIV and AIDS among young people cites the problem with behaviour change programmes in terms of risk as follows:

“With regard to behavioural interventions, there is concern about generalising of assumptions of risk, and homogenising of target audiences (Parker 2004). Behaviour change approaches driven by high intensity mass media interventions that involve homogenising target audiences, seldom take into account differences in language, culture and socio-economic contexts. In addition, such approaches tend to be strongly oriented towards persuasive communication messaging, often under the banner of ‘behaviour change’, and make little allowance for the endorsement of already appropriate behaviours and practices¹⁰. Messaging may also only resonate with a small sub-section of the intended target audience (HSRC 2002:7).”

The majority of these programmes, as mentioned by the HSRC, focus on awareness through information campaigns, curriculum and extra-curricular activities and peer education programmes. In critique of individually focused behaviour-change programmes, Campbell and MacPhail highlight through Stockvale, the growing social identity literature that emphasises how “health related behaviour are shaped and constrained by collectively negotiated social identities” (Stockvale in Campbell & MacPhail 2002:5). This move towards understanding social identity in the context of HIV prevention shifts the focus away from understanding individual sexual behaviour towards an understanding of ‘sexuality’ as structured and influenced by “group based societal identities” and more specifically peer identities. Young people, for example, would form peer identities through the influence of group-based social identities which would be the result of a process of collective negotiation by young people in a group setting (Campbell & MacPhail 2002:5). This points to the need to involve young people in HIV and AIDS education based on their knowledge and

¹⁰ The Appreciative Inquiry approach will specifically address this issue.

experience on how these social identities are negotiated in their communities and culture in order to critically engage with the way these identities and structure (whether cultural, economic, social or political) promote their vulnerability.

2.3 Placing HIV and AIDS Responses within Communities

Few HIV prevention programmes address the causes and solutions to HIV and AIDS by communities themselves. Based on extensive research Rugalema (in Collins & Rau 2000:31) states that most communities in Africa are aware of HIV and AIDS and can state reasons, such as high levels of sexual activity and lack of development opportunities for young people, for its existence in their communities. What Rugelama's research indicates is that communities can easily indicate the problems and challenges that promote vulnerability but not necessarily the assets that mitigate risk.

Collins and Rau (2000) place community responses in the context of national and international responses and highlight the need for an integrated approach to HIV prevention, treatment and care in order to maximise the potential of community-driven responses. For Collins and Rau (2000), HIV and AIDS prevention programmes should not be purely educational in nature but should address the wider development goals of communities.

Collins and Rau (2000:2) argue that:

“... there is substantial analysis from development studies on which to draw in designing socially relevant HIV/AIDS prevention and care programmes. Also, numerous local initiatives provide substantive learning models for blending HIV/AIDS into a wider developmental context that can sustain an enabling environment for improvements in social welfare, including reducing the risks and impact of HIV/AIDS.”

What Collins and Rau clearly highlight is the need to place HIV and AIDS prevention programmes within the development paradigm, especially those linked to community development, and the opportunity that community development programmes hold to influence broader, larger scale development

priorities that influence policy and national agendas. They advocate a two-way stream, where communities are not mere empty vessels, similar to students who, in the 'banking method' of education, are considered empty vessels, but valuable contributors to their own development, who benefit from social policy and sustainable macro influences set by larger forces whilst at the same time influencing and informing the development of those very same policies for their own benefit.

Myhre and Flora (2000:42), together with Leclerc-Madlala (2002:34–35), emphasise community involvement in HIV and AIDS prevention programmes and argue that unless HIV and AIDS prevention programmes address the macro and micro environments that influence safer sexual behaviour, AIDS education programmes will be ineffective. Mutonyi (in Collins & Rau 2000:28) stresses the fact that a community should not be approached as merely a geographical entity, but in relation to patterns of association, common interests and concerns. This assists in the broader dissemination of information and in creating greater community networks and reach. This is essential, especially when considering working with young people in the South African context, where young people may associate themselves with various 'communities' or 'social networks' or move between social networks or communities that have distinct and even conflicting values or traditions.

In the context of HIV and AIDS education, Parker (2004a:4) supports the views of Collins and Rau and argues that there is a need to focus more on participatory approaches to HIV prevention communication and use the opportunity HIV and AIDS provides to focus on the broader developmental challenges that are underpinned by HIV and AIDS. Theatre used in HIV and AIDS education is already tapping into the participatory agency that theatre practice holds. However, as I will argue later, communication interventions (such as theatre) should also move away from focusing solely on the individual and start to address the enabling environments and contextual factors within communities that drive the epidemic within a framework of 'communication for social change' (Parker 2004a:4).

Current research into HIV and AIDS prevention in South Africa shows a fragmented approach to identifying risk behaviour at community level and a significant gap in risk in relation to socioeconomic contexts. Barnett and Whiteside (in Collins & Rau 2000:6) state that a society's vulnerability to the impact of HIV and AIDS is determined by the degree of social cohesion and levels of wealth, and where low social cohesion and low levels of wealth exist, the vulnerability to HIV and AIDS increases.

Strong social cohesion may be related to strong social identities in communities where self-esteem is associated with sharing common beliefs and behaviours. This hypothesis supports that of Wilkinson (in Collins & Rau 2000:5) where social cohesion is equated to community strength and strong communities are not as drastically influenced by individualism and market values. This, however, also indicates that strong social cohesion may influence individuality at community level, which may not allow for the opportunity to influence negative cultural stereotypes that may, for instance, promote risk behaviour in relation to HIV and AIDS. Early sexual debut or intergenerational sex, such as the Msondo, Zoma or Chidototo rights in Southern Malawi or in the female initiation rite Fisi among the Chewa of Malawi (Malawi Human Rights Commission [s.a.]:7–8, 36–37; UNICEF 2006:17) may be condoned in certain communities as acceptable behaviours. Although it may be more difficult to convince communities of the risks of such behaviours, it may be easier, once alternative practices are accepted, to encourage change on a larger scale.

Where communities succeed in HIV prevention, treatment or care, whether through coordinated community responses through NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs) or faith-based organisations (FBOs), their design, implementation and progress are rarely documented and studied to inform national programmes or supported to sustain enabling environments for effective HIV prevention, treatment and care. These community responses often go undetected and unevaluated, nor are they invested in by governments, donors and international development and aid agencies (Collins & Rau 2000:25).

The global good practices identified by Collins and Rau offer an evidence base for increased investment in community programmes. In Malaysia, a community-driven prevention programme for intravenous drug users (IDUs) proved that knowledge of the immediate needs of those vulnerable, as identified by the community, has a more sustainable impact in changing the behaviour of IDUs (Collins & Rau 2000: 25–26). By first providing basic essential needs, an enabling environment is created for discussing prevention methods. The fact that the IDU community actively participated in the project and realised their ability to adopt health-seeking behaviour was deemed crucial in the success of the programme (Collins & Rau 2000:25, 26).

As stated by Collins and Rau, the most important lessons learnt from this community programme is that even the most marginalised community members can be reached through social mobilisation campaigns and that those marginalised communities can be the best resource for future social mobilisation campaigns once they have gone through their own mobilisation process. The participation of young people in HIV and AIDS prevention programmes is often overlooked and as such they become marginalised in the HIV-prevention imperative and mere receivers of information that they may not have the ability to act on due to an unsupportive community environment. Another consideration important to this dissertation is Collins and Rau's notion that young people may be the best resource for social mobilisation campaigns when they have gone through their own mobilisation process.

Existing community systems provide the possibility of community-driven HIV and AIDS interventions. This is evident from the Urassa study in Tanzania that explored the care and support of orphans and vulnerable children in a certain community. It was found that the most effective community responses to the HIV and AIDS epidemic were those that sought to work within traditional social and cultural structures to support households caring for orphans and vulnerable children. Urassa (in Collins & Rau 2000:27) argues that the challenge and only feasible intervention in this case was the strengthening of existing community structures with limited external support.

This is echoed in the case study of the Chikankata Community in Zambia. By legitimising social and cultural processes and norms through recognising traditional practices of care, an HIV and AIDS counselling programme could easily be integrated into the existing practice of care without trying to invent new practices but by integrating contemporary issues into community processes (Mutonyi in Collins & Rau 2000:28, 29). As such, this counselling programme reflected classic community development principles of dialogue, self-awareness, mobilisation of resources and problem solving. In rural Malawi similar community initiatives have managed to build on social norms that keep communities together rather than those that splinter communities, highlighting the value of asset-based approaches to development. Existing agricultural income-generating projects were used to care and support those families affected by HIV and AIDS and this basic community support structure has been expanded to offer prevention advice and other forms of care and support such as primary health care, condom promotion and providing school fees for orphans who would otherwise not be able to attend school (Collins & Rau 2000:27).

The above examples from Zambia and Malawi indicate to me that asset-based approaches hold promise in highlighting the assets that communities have for responding to the HIV and AIDS epidemic. In this dissertation, I will argue that Community Theatre programmes that follow an asset-based approach (such as Appreciative Inquiry) may enrich current practices in the HIV and AIDS response in South Africa.

Fox, Oyosi and Parker (2002:14) assert that initiatives that target children (and young people) should be based in the community and encourage the active involvement and participation of community members who work together in establishing programme goals and developing the strategies to achieve those goals and sustain the intervention. In other words, communities need to participate in order to create an enabling environment (Soola in Fox *et al* 2002:14). HIV and AIDS programmes using Community Theatre offer the

opportunity for communities to participate in the development of an enabling environment.

The above case studies show that when communities participate in the AIDS response, it is easier for them to articulate the challenges they face and offer solutions that may address these challenges, whether they are related to access to services, improved educational and economic development services or improving their own community interaction and dialogue, which may create a supportive environment in which young people are able to adopt health-seeking behaviour.

The above programmes all make use of an asset-based approach to community development where existing structures that have positive influences on community welfare are employed to address the challenges related to HIV and AIDS. Local knowledge was tapped into to provide care and support for people affected by HIV and AIDS. The use of local structures and local knowledge has direct linkages with prominent pedagogies underpinning educational and theatre initiatives (as will be seen in chapter 3). By making use of the existing knowledge of community members and existing community structures opportunities can be created to address challenges. By using that which already exists within the community partnerships, ownership can be created in the response. Examples such as these are few and far between when analysing community-based HIV and AIDS programmes, especially when looking at the involvement of young people. The above examples do not necessarily illustrate behaviour change in communities, but do show how communities are responding to HIV and AIDS by using local resources and knowledge to create HIV-prevention programmes or systems of care and support for those affected by HIV and AIDS. This reliance on community knowledge and participation is positioned against externally driven behaviour campaigns by Parker (2003:5) as follows:

“Behaviour change theories and interventions are clearly constrained by a range of conceptual and contextual factors. These factors do not negate the value of behaviour change concepts and interventions, but recognition needs to be given to

the broader milieu of prevention. In many instances there has been an over-reliance and over-investment in ‘behaviour change communication’ with little parallel investment or strategic support being given to the development of an enabling environment for HIV prevention.”

Parker is here referring to the enabling environment that Collin and Rau earlier refer to as providing for the basic needs of communities. An enabling environment in the context of this dissertation refers to more than just providing for the basic needs of communities. An enabling environment refers to an environment being created in which HIV and AIDS can be discussed as a development issue within the social, cultural, political and economic environment and that reduces risk reduction and promotes an understanding of the way in which change can realistically happen within these environments.

When an asset-based approach is followed similar to those in the case studies mentioned above, rather than an over-reliance on behavioural change programmes from the outset of HIV and AIDS awareness and education programmes, communities may offer their own examples, experiences and solutions that are appropriate and familiar to them. This may ensure an enabling environment for dialogue and solutions driven by the communities themselves may be formed. It is, however, important that these solutions are viewed within a human rights framework to ensure that negative cultural practices that may be considered appropriate are analysed and discussed. Participation through dialogue remains key to such a process (see chapter 4), especially where negative cultural practices are present that need to be addressed. It is important that there should be a critical understanding of how such practices can contribute to risk and vulnerability and ultimately influence the unfolding of the epidemic at community level. When theatre is used in HIV and AIDS education it is important that it also considers a human rights framework and that it promotes critical understanding of practices that may promote vulnerability.

2.4 Involving Young People in HIV Prevention: Lessons Learnt

South Africa still needs to address many challenges in relation to the impact of HIV and AIDS and the implementation of successful prevention programmes especially for young people. This is particularly relevant if the spread of the epidemic is to be curtailed and the Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of HIV infections is to be reached by 2015. In the search to develop programmes that will contribute to health-seeking behaviour in young people and to reduce their risk of contracting HIV, theatre offers a valuable tool in contributing to young people's participation in prevention programmes. Theatre-based programmes may contribute to an increased understanding of risk among young people and create community support for the optimal development of young people in a community. Whilst it has been shown that theatre is a powerful education and development agency in the response to HIV and AIDS (see page 1 & 2), the idea that the use of theatre in HIV and AIDS programmes must encourage *meaningful* participation and be *contextualised* to benefit specific communities or population groups has also been discussed.

The welfare of young people remains central to any country's development. Young people are the largest demographic group worldwide¹¹ and offer great potential for confronting the HIV and AIDS epidemic. Often children and young people are marginalised in development, where the focus is on developing economic and political sustainability.

HIV and AIDS has a significant influence on the economy and are a social burden that manifest when productive members of society in the 25 and older age group fall ill and die, leaving behind young children and family members dependant on the state's economic and social contributions (World Bank 2007). HIV and AIDS pose a major threat to the development of any country, with the loss of productive labour forces, the burden on health care and social development, as well as their crippling effect on education systems. Children and young people bear the brunt of the impact of high infection rates, morbidity

¹¹Young people are currently making up more than half of Africa's population. (World Bank 2007:4)

and mortality. As social support structures at community level (such as family) become overburdened by coping mechanisms to avert the economic impact of AIDS due to the loss of primary caregivers, safety nets for children begin to disintegrate and often social welfare structures begin to buckle under the pressure of increased need.

With the high rate of infection and subsequent high number of people dying, millions of children have lost one or both parents and are either living with an extended family, foster parents or institutional care or are heading households themselves (Marais 2005:72). Young people aged 15 to 24 and especially young women continue to bear the brunt of the epidemic in South Africa (UNAIDS 2006:8). Young people, while seen as the most appropriate population group for offering hope in changing the way in which HIV and AIDS unfolds in a country, remain at the same time the most vulnerable in any community affected by the impact of HIV and AIDS.

The new National Strategic Plan on HIV and AIDS (2007) positions young people as a specific demographic group for HIV and AIDS education and awareness and regards the educational response through behaviour change programmes as being pivotal. According to the 2006 UNAIDS Global Report, a combination of HIV education in schools and the provision of voluntary counselling and testing services has successfully contributed to the declining incidence of new HIV infections in some countries. South Africa has increased access to voluntary counselling and testing services for young people and, as part of the *Khomanani* campaign, has stressed the importance of knowing your HIV status. HIV education through the Life Orientation Curriculum Statement of the National Department of Education is available in all schools up to Grade 10 and a new curriculum is currently being rolled out from Grades 10 to 12.

In terms of the education and prevention programmes discussed earlier, the focus of prevention programmes should not be on behaviour change alone, but should address the overall development of young people and offer critical skills and supportive environments that can guide them through the epidemic in order to mitigate their vulnerabilities and offer the ability to respond to the epidemic.

As such I would argue that there should be a shift away from mere prevention programming for young people in the context of HIV and AIDS, towards a more developmental approach that addresses young people not as a risk *behaviour* waiting to happen, but as an individual that has the ability to emerge from the epidemic with increased abilities to be a constructive and critical citizen contributing to community and social development.

The development of young people primarily centres on the psychosocial and socioeconomic improvement of their lives. HIV and AIDS is a challenge to this social development framework for children and young people, as it not only breaks down traditional family systems (as did the apartheid system through forced labour migration), but also their ability to interact constructively in a social environment as a result of the stigma and discrimination associated with those affected and infected with HIV. Losing a caregiver is a traumatic experience, as is the change that goes along with it, often creating more vulnerability for the child through sexual and economic exploitation. The lack of sexual and reproductive health care services specifically designed for young people further undermine efforts to minimise HIV infections among young people. To what extent young people are aware of these social/cultural (family systems), economic (loss of income) and political (access to services) drivers of the epidemic is not determined in any of the literature reviewed for this dissertation.

Popular media also work against contemporary HIV-prevention campaigns through their portrayal of sexuality connected to brand names that are considered attractive by young people. There is a common saying in the world of advertising that 'sex sells' and through regular television programming, creative advertising campaigns, cinema, music and web-based entertainment, young people are constantly exposed to identities of sexuality that contribute to their social awareness and understanding of sexuality and gender roles. This assertive, creative and clever advertising reaches young people by tapping into their specific cultural interests and is specifically developed to target their interests (Boshoff & Prinsloo 2008). Such advertising may drive peer pressure to conform to the notion of what is acceptable appearance and behaviour

among a certain age group that works directly against what can be considered responsible sexual behaviour among young people and promoted by social marketing programmes such as those used by *LoveLife* and *Soul City* in South Africa.

As such, I again want to stress the fact that current prevention campaigns using popular or mass media may miss the mark completely since they are positioned against an overwhelming array of media that promote opposing notions of sexuality and gender that contribute to risk. Information on risk behaviour alone is not sufficient to promote and sustain health-seeking behaviour (which is the desired outcome of these programmes) when it is in direct opposition to the message promoted by the popular media. This again points to the need to contextualise HIV prevention in terms of social and cultural influences such as those positioned by popular media aimed at young people.

Culture and young people's understanding of culture within the context of HIV prevention are important. Through culture meaning is created in many different ways, there remains an inevitable existential search in all cultures and especially among adolescents and the youth. This age group is struggling to come to terms with themselves, the world that they live in and the relationships they have with others (Laughton & Johnson in O'Toole & Donelan 1996:36). This struggle for meaning is an important development process. Through participation in development programmes that focus on HIV prevention, and as will be shown later through Community Theatre, young people may find the answers or solutions to achieving their goals themselves, without prescriptions from external agencies. Young people are better placed to reveal and discuss the cultural barriers that prevent safe sexual behaviour. They understand their communities and their culture and need to be informants or leaders in the response to HIV and AIDS at community level. As I will demonstrate in chapter 3, this is exactly what Freire and Boal refer to as the knowledge and experience that learners bring to the education process.

Young people do not develop by being passive receptors of information, but rather by building skills and confidence in participatory processes (UNICEF

2002:vii). I do not think that young people should be approached as passive receptors of HIV and AIDS information. Unfortunately, this is not as simple as merely providing young people with the basic facts on HIV and AIDS. The assumption that young people who have the basic facts on HIV infection can choose not to become infected with HIV does not consider the fact that young people function in a social context where sexual activity, the main transmission mode for HIV and AIDS, is interrelated with culture and societal norms. Young people participate on a daily basis in social and communal networks often prescribed by their socioeconomic status and within these networks certain behaviours are considered appropriate. By merely providing young people with the basic facts of HIV prevention, they are not critically engaged to understand the behaviours or further engage with the skills required to negotiate behaviours that may reduce risk.

The *meaningful* participation of young people in prevention programmes is deemed important for addressing these dimensions. The *meaningful* participation of young people is seen as central to their development. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) study documented in *Finding our voices: gendered & sexual identities and HIV/AIDS education programmes in Africa* (2003), such programmes have failed to address young people as active subjects: "it [programmes] has tended to group them [young people] together as impersonal subjects who are incapable of individual thought" (UNICEF 2003:13). This could be connected to the 'banking method' of education, which regards young people as recipients of information and not as individuals with the critical capacity to engage with information and make informed decisions.

Quoting Freire, Fletcher asserts that learning must be rooted in the experiences children come from (Fletcher 2005:4). Through their investigation into peer education programmes in South African schools, Campbell and MacPherson (2002:10) explore the difficulties that South African young people face in asserting their critical confidence in their ability to change their lives or to have control over their sexual health. This is largely undermined by conditions in their

local communities which impede young people's ability to develop social capital in South Africa.

A widely used methodology for involving young people in HIV prevention and promoting participation is peer education. In the context of HIV and AIDS, peer education relies on the ability of young people to act as educators for their peers on matters such as sexuality, safe sex, gender and violence, both in and out of school (de Waal in UNICEF 2003:148). A recent UNICEF study argues that young people are strategically better placed to understand the concerns and social contexts of other boys and girls and, as such, have the ability to communicate more effectively with their peers on sensitive issues in ways that well-intentioned adults cannot (UNICEF 2003:148). When young people are used as peer educators in Community Theatre, they have the ability to inform content based on events and experiences they gain from their community. It is this 'insider's' knowledge that could be tapped into other than merely using them as empty vessels for communication. Young people construct their identity by the events and experiences they gain from their community and as such may have an understanding of their community beyond the constructs of their home lives. They live the reality of interacting with the individuals and groups of people in their schools, streets, shopping centres and other places of social interaction. They understand the pressures their peers face and grapple with issues of their own development such as educational growth and sexuality.

A study by the HSRC (2007), mapping the implementation of peer education programmes, found that most programmes were in line with the emphasis of the HIV and AIDS/STD Strategic Plan for South Africa 2000–2005 (Department of Health 2000) and the HIV and AIDS and STI Strategic Plan for South Africa 2007–2011 (Department of Health 2007), on prevention as a priority area and young people as a specific target group. Citing Campbell (2005:54), the report also supports the view that the participation of young people in prevention programmes is very important: "involving young people in prevention efforts not only educates them about HIV but also gives them a sense of responsibility and pride. Participation of peer educators and other young people in the planning

process and development of action plans is essential for successful programme implementation” (HSRC 2008: 30). From the literature reviewed, very few theatre-based HIV-prevention programmes make use of peer education as a strategy to strengthen the prevention messages or proposed actions.

Campbell and MacPherson argue that when using the framework of Paulo Freire’s “critical consciousness”, peer education will be effective as a health promotion model for young people. As will be shown later in this dissertation there are very few HIV-prevention programmes, especially theatre-based programmes, that consider Freire’s notion of critical consciousness, relying rather on information-sharing in order to promote behaviour change. It has been shown earlier that peer education should be used to develop young people’s critical consciousness of their sexual health¹². As such it should stimulate young people’s belief that their current environment can be changed and alternatives should be discovered. It should also stimulate young people’s insight into the manner in which issues such as gender relations and beliefs, as constructed by society, negate health-seeking behaviour (Campbell & MacPherson 2002:9).

However, young people should, in my opinion, not be burdened by innovations such as peer education that may place them in positions of power or forced maturity that they are not able to handle. Instead, peer education should infuse a learning process among peers that promotes dialogue. In order to ensure meaningful participation, young people should remain the drivers of the programme. The learning process embedded in peer education could also benefit from participatory methodologies that consider the cultural and social context of young people and are familiar and attractive to them. Fletcher concludes that research and experience has illustrated that where people have been meaningfully involved when they were young, they are more likely to be informed citizens who are engaged throughout their communities (Fletcher 2005:24).

¹² Young people’s critical consciousness of their sexual health refers to young people having a holistic (physical, mental and social) understanding of the dimensions of sexual health beyond a didactic understanding how to prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

Participation is not, however, a simple, easily integrated methodology from which immediate results can be achieved. Cook-Sather (2002) uses the term ‘authorizing’ student participation to explore the power dynamics that require a paradigm shift if student’s or young people’s participation is to truly contribute towards social change. The paradigm shift occurs when current ‘authorities’ that structure young people’s development and learning (government, community leaders and teachers to name a few) accept that young people have existing knowledge that could improve policies, frameworks and programmes designed for their education and development. Only when young people’s ability to influence these has been ‘authorized’ and they are addressed as equal and equitable in their own development and education, will meaningful participation take place (Cooke-Sather 2002:9). As I will point out in chapter 3, what Cooke-Sather refers to as ‘authorization’ is what Freire and Boal refer to as ‘democratising’ education and theatre.

In the community setting, peer education becomes a powerful agent for change when it is used to challenge predominant notions of culture and tradition or everyday behaviour that make individuals or groups (such as young women) vulnerable to HIV infection. This powerful tool will unfortunately not be effective if it is not used within an enabling environment. Tawil, Verster and O’Reilly (in Campbell & MacPherson 2002:7) argue that “unless such participatory health programmes are supported by access to power (defined as respect and recognition from others or economic power) they are not likely to succeed”. As such participatory health programmes should expand their focus from young people only to include means and ways in which young people and other community members can participate and share in the learning process (as with the DramAidE programme that will be discussed later). The learning process for young people should, however, still be placed within their specific community realities, making use of forms of expressions and language that are familiar to them.

Patrick explains how theatre as an educational tool is used more successfully with young people to bring about behaviour change when the process is placed

within the social and cultural context of young people.¹³ He explains how African children primarily receive health education through songs, games, dance, poems and drama and how, by targeting young people in adolescence, the opportunity to stem the impact of the epidemic once they move into their youth is greater. For Patrick it is appropriate that children learn through their traditional and cultural rituals or performance since this situates the learning process in a familiar context (Patrick in O'Toole & Donelan 1996:85).

By making use of their own traditional and cultural understanding of performance, theatre offers young people the opportunity to call on the qualities of imagination and transform their social reality to create fictitious worlds where the status quo is changed and new possibilities appear (O'Toole & Donelan 1996:11). Theatre offers a platform for young people to express their lived realities and the factors that increase their vulnerability to HIV infection and the difficulties of living in a world with HIV and AIDS. To this extent it is important that theatre does not just document the struggles of young people but also create imagined realities.

Community Theatre, as understood in this dissertation, may be a useful way to infuse meaningful participatory learning methodologies in combination with contemporary cultural approaches that are relevant to young people in peer education programmes. Appreciative Inquiry may assist in framing this discovery in an asset-based approach that relies on the strengths of young people and communities to offer solutions to the challenges faced by young people that increase their vulnerability.

2.5 Theatre Used for Young People in the Response to HIV and AIDS in South Africa: A New Call for Participation

Similar to the way the oppressive apartheid regime in South Africa was portrayed and presented by theatre practitioners urging for social mobilisation and change through theatre, theatre is currently widely used as a

¹³ It is important to note that there is no study available in English or Afrikaans that conclusively proves that the use of theatre in HIV and AIDS education sustains behaviour change.

communication, education and social mobilisation agent in the response to HIV and AIDS. In the previous chapter it was illustrated how protest theatre that was used in the response to apartheid managed to contribute to social mobilisation against this regime.

Nobel peace laureate Desmond Tutu compares the battle against apartheid to the current battle against HIV and AIDS and highlights the need to address HIV and AIDS in the same spirit (Burger 2008:37). With Community Theatre in its varied manifestations considered to embrace the process of change, and with the examples of protest theatre listed in chapter 1, a renewed use of performance in the response to HIV and AIDS is timely. As mentioned in chapter 1, there is a significant amount of literature promoting the use of theatre in HIV and AIDS education. Theatre's ability to include participatory methodologies makes it an ideal vehicle for promoting interpersonal communication about desired change (Bourgault 2003:104).

Often less political and revolutionary than the theatre used in the response to apartheid, current theatre programmes addressing HIV and AIDS seemingly fail to attract the same response that protest theatre had in social mobilisation against apartheid. There seems to be a limited impact if one considers the current rate of HIV incidence and prevalence. The most spectacular failure in the use of theatre as an HIV prevention agency is arguably the production of *Sarafina II* (1996), the musical theatre production of Mbongeni Ngema. This production built on the success and popularity of the iconic apartheid musical *Sarafina*,¹⁴ which was used by the ANC Government of South Africa to showcase an artistic, creative and government-driven response to HIV and AIDS focusing on young people.

Sarafina II raised public concerns about questionable practices in the allocation of government resources, especially the excessive use of funds of the then newly established National HIV and AIDS strategic plan. Massive funding for

¹⁴ *Sarafina* was first performed in June 1987 at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg, South Africa.

the *Sarafina II* project and the disputable allocation of funds aside, perhaps the biggest failures of *Sarafina II* lie in the lack of educational value of the play, the information it provided about HIV and AIDS and the non-participatory nature of the production. Not only did the producers not encourage joint learning from their audience, they also did not consult wider stakeholders that could have contributed to the learning process. “The lack of advice from social workers and people from communities who are most affected not only demonstrated arrogance but resulted in poor communication about salient issues within the framework of the play” (Blumberg 1997:159). Estimated costs of around ten million rand took a considerable portion of funds from the new *National Plan on HIV and AIDS* (1995) with what seemed to be little or no consultation and analysis of the situation of young people and with no monitoring and evaluation framework in place to ensure that it was a strategic and systemic intervention. It was rather a once-off spectacle dubiously claimed by its author to address behaviour and social change.

In the case of *Sarafina II* it was clear that a ‘spectacular’ or ‘Broadway’ approach to HIV and AIDS education, with an emphasis on theatre’s aesthetic ability, was perhaps a well-intended but weak and badly thought-through response to the epidemic at a time when leadership and decisive action was lacking. Without consulting leading experts in the field of HIV and AIDS communication and education, or the communities themselves, it hinted at a knee-jerk governmental response in order to be seen as ‘doing something’ about the epidemic and constructing popular concepts of the similarities between the struggle against apartheid and the ‘struggle’ against HIV and AIDS. Although a misguided attempt from the South African government, it does provide (albeit costly) an example of how performance should not be used in HIV and AIDS education.¹⁵ South Africa does however have two examples of

¹⁵ Oppenheimer and Bayer (2007:75) refer to Abdool Karim’s inquiry at the time of the development of *Sarafina* for a copy of the script from the playwright. Ngema informed her that there was no script and that it would be developed through the performance. However, the content of the performance indicated very little consultation with experts in the field of HIV prevention at the time.

sustainable theatre based programmes that have address HIV and AIDS among young people, DramAidE and AREPP Theatre for Life.

Theatre programmes such as DramAidE and AREPP Theatre for Life make use of techniques positioned by Freire and Boal, such as Forum Theatre (not AREPP) and dialogue. AREPP Theatre for Life and DramAidE will be discussed in the following two subsections as practical examples of how theatre is used in the HIV and AIDS response in South Africa. There are a number of organisations and companies working toward this purpose, but AREPP and DramAidE are of the few organisations that use drama and/or theatre for HIV and AIDS education in South Africa that both rely on donor and government funding and implement rigorous monitoring and evaluation of their work. As such their work is well documented and presented at both national and international fora. There are other practitioners who use theatre in innovative ways to address social challenges beyond the limitations of traditional theatre and education, such as *Mothertongue*. I could not source any formal evaluations of *Mothertongue* on HIV and AIDS work for young people and as such could not include them in the study.

2.5.1 *The AREPP Theatre for Life Model: Aesthetics vs. Participation?*

A 2002–2004 evaluation on the AREPP Theatre for Life programme showed the validity of the AREPP programme in encouraging perceived self-efficacy among learners in Grades 10 to 12 in South Africa (Nell & Shapiro 2005). AREPP Theatre for Life is a non-governmental organisation that offers travelling repertory theatre programmes to schools where the intention is to encourage young people to make sound and informed choices about what is best for them and their society in specific situations (Nell & Shapiro 2005:7). The main thrust of their work for learners 13 years and older is HIV and AIDS education.

In terms of the AREPP methodology young people watch a play where characters portray the positive, negative or unintended outcomes of certain scenarios. This is not, however, done in the form of forum theatre and learners remain spectators. They are nevertheless encouraged post-performance to

interact with the actors and raise questions about the content of the performance. Nell and Shapiro are of the opinion that the AREPP approach does encourage a degree of openness and debate (Nell & Shapiro 2005:2).

Whilst this echoes the dialogue principle of Freire (see chapter 3), it is not clear from the evaluation if this debate is done in a manner that allows for the experience of the learners to be considered or the community context that influence decision making. It is clear though that the experience of learners in a specific community may not have contributed to the content of the performance and since the performance is script based by a resident scriptwriter, the performance was not workshopped by the actors drawing from their experience. The possibility does, however, exist that the experience of the actors may be reflected on in the post-performance dialogue sessions. However, this is not mentioned in the evaluation. I thus have questions concerning how exactly self-efficacy would be obtained other than learners affirming certain enacted scenarios and denouncing certain scenarios as inappropriate. Learners seem to remain mostly spectators where information is disseminated about lifestyle choices based on a human rights based approach, but there is very little participation required from learners beyond the dialogue-based interrogation of the issues and scenarios presented in the performance.

Nell and Shapiro (2005:2, 3) mention that AREPP is not “winning the battle” against issues such as homophobia, celibacy (or abstinence) and condom use, but highlight that the findings from the AREPP evaluation indicate behavioural traits among people that could be useful for the development of future performances. These behavioural traits include girls being more tolerant and open about issues than boys, that learners from less affluent schools are less tolerant of homosexuality than learners in more affluent schools and learners from schools with poor pass rates feel that it is less acceptable to make mistakes. The evaluation concludes that the AREPP model is a valid model but it is not clear against which other models it was evaluated. The evaluation does, however, claim that learners benefit from the model and has a positive impact on those it works with.

Critique against the AREPP programme is outlined by Nell and Shapiro in the 2005 evaluation as being based on the fact that individual change is dependent on social context, culture and gender relations removed from the performance itself. Nell and Shapiro however counter this critique by stating that the AREPP model is able to create an understanding that sexual activity and lifestyle choices are the outcome of complex interactions between context relationships and individuals and not only individual choices. They also assert that the model assures that young people, whilst they are not able to control their environment, can control their response to what happens to them by not becoming 'victims' but 'directors' and that an individual sense of self-efficacy can be multiplied as well as the impact on communities and societies to name a few.

Considering the above attributes of the AREPP model and the recognition of the limited ability of this model to effect measurable change through the optimal participation of learners as experts of their own worlds and active engagement in the performance development and performance itself, the AREPP model falls outside the scope of what this dissertation would propose as a theatre model engaging with young people towards social change. This is not to say that the AREPP model is not valuable in the response to HIV and AIDS for young people in South Africa; however, it can be considered an awareness-raising model and not a participatory transformative model of education and theatre. Therefore I do not consider this model as relevant to a community-based theatre programme that involves the meaningful participation of young people.

Many current educational theatre projects do not develop beyond promoting awareness and information about HIV and AIDS. In this sense they too fall short of the revolutionary or transformative powers of education and theatre as argued for by Freire and Boal (see chapter 3). Without its transformative power, theatre that addresses HIV prevention may be a spectacular failure in that it fails to bring about any real change in the manner in which young people and communities interpret and understand the facts about HIV and AIDS.

The AREPP model relies on vigorous research and consultation to ensure that the issues addressed in the performance are relevant to young people. The

scriptwriter and producers draw on a strong research base in developing the scripts for the play and monitor the response to their plays in order to rewrite scripts and adapt to perceived learner needs or developments in HIV and AIDS (Nell & Shapiro 1998:8). The AREPP model does, however, run the risk of overvaluing the aesthetics of theatre over the principles of participation and input from learners, relying on professionally trained actors to deliver a well-performed aesthetically pleasing performance followed by a question and answer sessions from learners.

Based on the evaluations of the AREPP model it is clear that the aesthetic qualities of theatre used in education and specifically in the context of HIV and AIDS are appealing and allow for theatre to use the local language and cultural expression of its audience. In order for theatre to optimise its ability to act as change agent, it needs to consider participation both in the development of the performance as well as participation in the performance itself. The AREPP methodology asserts that it builds on the reliance of young people to enable change, as such relying on their ability to adopt behaviours that are life-affirming or positive. This can be deemed an asset-based approach in that it relies on young people's abilities to be resilient. This asset base however assumes that young people inherently have these skills and that they are able to use them by being more aware of their choices. In addition, it does not necessarily allow for skills building or further inquiry into how these skills may be used in a specific community context.

2.5.2 The DramAidE (Drama for AIDS Education) Model

Significantly different from the AREPP model, the DramAidE model is directly based on Paulo Freire's principles of participation, praxis, experience and conscientisation (Dalrymple 2006:205), performance theories and educational drama/theatre methodologies. Dalrymple asserts that DramAidE did not conceptualise communication as a one-way transmission of information from source to receiver but rather as a complex social interaction through which meaning is produced.

The first project developed and implemented by DramAidE used a three-phase intervention aimed at individual behaviour change. This consisted of the presentation of a play to a school, followed by drama workshops where learners and educators developed their own play and then an open day where the schools presented their plays to fellow learners and the community (Dalrymple 2006:207). The performances presented by learners used traditional forms of entertainment including mass choirs, poetry, speeches, sketches and drama (Bourgault 2003:68).

DramAidE evaluations point to significant change in attitudes and improvement in knowledge about prevention of HIV infection among young people (Dalrymple 2006:2007). This improvement in knowledge and change in attitudes did not, however, translate into a change in safer sexual practice when measured against schools who benefitted from the DramAidE programme and those who did not.

With the participatory principle of Freire highlighted in the work of DramAidE (Dalrymple 2006:205) and the suggested transformative powers of Freire's principles it is not clear why the DramAidE approach does not bring about the desired levels of change in learners. One hypothesis could be that issues of sexuality and risk behaviour need more in-depth focus and critical consciousness coupled with an understanding of social and economic dynamics. It is not clear from the DramAidE evaluation in what way these issues were approached. It is likely that whilst using the principles of transformative educational pedagogies in the development and implementation of the performance process that the actual content of the performance, HIV and AIDS, was not sufficiently contextualised to allow for critical consciousness and action-reflection or praxis. Dalrymple (2009:211) mentions that a content analysis of the plays and performances could have indicated learners' understanding of HIV and AIDS and how the content of the plays were received and understood by learners:

“Throughout ‘Act Alive’, young people have devised literally hundreds of skits, songs and poems and these speak to other young people.

What are they actually saying and how are they being received? Discourse and reception analysis would surely reveal a great deal about the understanding of the epidemic and the dilemmas faced by this group (Dalrymple 2009:211).”

In my view, Dalrymple’s acknowledgement points to a lack of meaningful participation of young people. Whilst young people are engaged in factual information on HIV and AIDS and in devising performances or culturally appropriate artistic expressions of how they can or should respond to the epidemic, the fundamental engagement of young people in critically understanding the epidemic as entry point to HIV and AIDS education is missing.

This can be hypothesised based on the fact that evaluations on the DramAidE method confirm its success in information dissemination and increasing knowledge of HIV and AIDS, but that learners did not engage critically with the social and economic factors that would enable actual change. This hypothesis would also dismiss the AREPP believe (as well as DramAidE’s focus on self-efficacy) that self-efficacy can be multiplied and can effect broader change. The fact remains that when the environment that young people engage with socially does not allow for change or even access to services, any change may be limited to merely an intent to change.

In order to address some of these constraints, especially around creating supportive environments in which information and knowledge obtained could be enforced, DramAidE developed the Act Alive project in which out-of-school young people supported by DramAidE develop and perform a play for targeted schools that act as a catalyst for social mobilisation (Dalrymple 2006:210). Once the play is performed schools then establish health clubs where the clubs and the teachers are taken through a range of drama-based workshops to develop “action media” that consist of plays, songs, dances and posters (Dalrymple 2006:210).

This work is then presented to fellow learners and communities at the launch of the health clubs following which the clubs also establish food gardens and

engage in general health-promoting activities in the schools such as cleaning the toilets and the school yard. I doubt that the cleaning of schoolyards and toilets as a mode of participation would necessarily encourage and sustain transformation and change. Other than contributing to health promotion and hygienic school environments, the issue of why schoolyards and toilets are in the state they are in may not be addressed. Whilst the above may have been a contextualised activity, the question could be asked whether learners in more affluent schools that have dedicated services for these activities (cleaning of toilets and schoolyards) would benefit from such activities and whether they change risk behaviours or are at a lesser risk of becoming infected with HIV.

As mentioned by Dalrymple (2006:210), the aim of the Act Alive project was to include interpersonal, social and cultural determinants in the promotion of healthy individual behaviour. Two key features of the health-promoting schools in the Act Alive project were school health policies and community support systems for referral. It is not clear from the evaluations to what extent learners were involved in the development of the school health policies and monitoring the implementation of these policies or to what extent they engaged with the proposed referral networks for support services. The establishment of school health policies and community systems for referral are, however, important factors in creating supportive environments for community-wide health promotion activities for young people.

Evaluations of the Act Alive project showed that whilst most of the objectives of the project had been met, again there was very little evidence showing that a decrease of HIV infection took place (Dalrymple 2006:210). This is understandable given that this kind of impact is measured over a long period and such change may not be measurable within a short period. The evaluation did, however, show that opportunities were created for young people to express themselves in a manner that they found authentic and culturally relevant (Dalrymple 2006:210).

Whilst the evaluation may have found the ability for young people to express themselves in an authentic and culturally relevant manner, it is not clear on

what learning process this expression was based. It would be very easy for learners to express themselves on the basis of the information provided to them, but whether an appreciative approach was followed that would allow for young people to first engage with the positive factors in their community that promote their wellbeing and then contextualise HIV and AIDS against the realities in their communities that do not allow for wellbeing is not clear.

Despite minimal evidence of change in HIV prevention in the DramAidE model, this model does outline an approach that focuses on community, participation and partnership. The DramAidE model offers a good starting point for infusing Appreciative Inquiry as part of raising the critical consciousness of learners and infusing an asset-based approach to HIV and AIDS education at a community level.

The AREPP and DramAidE models offers specific examples of the challenges and successes in implementing HIV prevention and education programmes for young people in South Africa. The AREPP and DramAidE review illustrates the value of theatre as an educational conduit in HIV prevention, highlighting the benefits of information sharing and raising awareness in an authentic and culturally relevant manner. The review also illustrates the challenges faced by the two programmes in actually promoting behaviour change. Possible reasons for this include the level of participation of young people, the approach to dialogue and an over-reliance on the aesthetic value of theatre.

It has to be noted though that any HIV-prevention programme will be challenged by evidence that isolates the programme as the main contributor to HIV reduction in any context and that there is still value in both programmes as part of a comprehensive HIV and AIDS response for young people. This dissertation does not aim to show these programmes as failures but rather to highlight the constraints under which they function in an effort to seek possible solutions. It is worthwhile to also reflect on other studies that review the evidence and impact of using theatre in health promotion and education initiatives in order to indentify

similar or different challenges that may be addressed by infusing an Appreciative Inquiry process in the theatre process.¹⁶

2.6 Challenges and Opportunities in the Use of Theatre as Educational Conduit

A study done by Elliot and Gruer (1996:133) challenged the perception that Theatre-in-Education programmes can effectively disseminate information and increase knowledge. This study also reflects on behaviour change but it fundamentally challenges the notion that people can learn effectively through theatre. This is in direct conflict with, among others, the evaluations of the work of DramAidE and AREPP, which indicate that theatre programmes have the ability to increase knowledge of HIV and AIDS.

Whilst the empirical evidence may point to the capacity of theatre to promote participation, the effectiveness of theatre in increasing knowledge and sustaining change has not been widely proven. As mentioned, both AREPP and DramAidE acknowledge the challenges to prove impact in as far as behaviour change is concerned through theatre programmes (Nell & Shapiro 1998; 2005; Dalymple 2006).

Sykes (2008), in a study to evaluate the effectiveness of Theatre-in-Education as a tool in alcohol education, concludes that there is not enough evidence that proves theatre's ability to increase knowledge levels, although there is some evidence that points to its potential to influence young people's attitudes towards health. Sykes (2008:4) does, however, state further that: "evidence does suggest that Theatre-in-Education can influence short term behaviour, intended behaviour, improve problem solving skills, decision making and improve communication, but this evidence is limited". Sykes also highlights the limitations of the effectiveness of Theatre-in-Education programmes if they are not part of a comprehensive approach but a stand-alone intervention and if they do not involve all stakeholders (in this case, school communities). Further

¹⁶ The theatre process will refer to all forms of theatre used in the HIV and AIDS response as identified by the authors. This includes Drama/Theatre-in-Education, Applied Theatre, Theatre-for-Development and Community Theatre.

limitations include insufficient preparatory and follow-up work and credible performers who are fully conversant on the subject matter (Sykes 2008:5). This is in contrast with the AREPP programme that relies on professional performers trained specifically in facilitation and HIV and AIDS where no proof has been given or evaluations have been conducted that would indicate that using professional actors offers an advantage over untrained actors.

Sykes (2008), however, shows a limited exploration of the participatory elements of Theatre-in-Education that may contribute to its effectiveness. Methods such as hot seating and workshop discussions parallel to the performance show a limited understanding of how Theatre-in-Education can be transformed to be more effective using developmental approaches that involve young people at a conceptual and contextual level. Sykes does, however, highlight a consistent finding in her research on Theatre-in-Education when used for alcohol education – the aim of the performance. The aim of the performance can be interpreted as the content focus. In the context of HIV and AIDS it could be prevention, harm reduction or delays in sexual debut.

Vicki Doesebs (1998:3) also warns of the limitations of theatre in HIV and AIDS education and prevention programmes. She stresses that the 'effective' medium of theatre as a conduit for development may become trapped within the realities of a community's everyday life. It may be unable to transcend the realities of the community by offering solutions that may be out of reach of the community owing to economic, social or political structures and traditional beliefs that cannot be changed or challenged by theatre alone. In order to overcome the challenges mentioned by Doesebs, I consider applying an asset-based approach such as Appreciative Inquiry as being key to identifying solutions based on strengths within the community. This will allow for the development of solutions that communities consider realistic and achievable. Elliot and Gruer (1996) further warn that theatre may not have the desired impact if it is only a once-off, short-term intervention and that consistent, long-term approaches may be needed for young people. Both AREPP and DramAidE recognise the

challenges in once-off interventions that may not yield sustained results in change unless isolated over an extended period of time.

From the literature and case studies reviewed on HIV and AIDS education programmes through theatre it is again clear that participation, context and content are interdependent in contributing to the educational and developmental value of theatre. Participation and context go hand in hand. When young people or participants in general do not participate in the contextual development of the performance, the development and educational value of theatre becomes compromised.

2.6.1 *The Importance of Participation in HIV and AIDS Theatre Programmes*

Learning from the current body of research on theatre used in education and development, studies have shown that the more participatory HIV and AIDS programmes are, the greater the willingness of participants to engage with sensitive issues. These include issues such as sexuality and contraception and the ability to talk openly with others about sensitive issues; more importantly, more participants are able to make a difference in their lives by changing or challenging high-risk behaviour (Parker *et al* 1998:15).

Citing the work of Bekker, Guenther-Gray and Raj, Campbell and MacPhail (2002:6) state that the past decade has seen a move away from information-based health promotion to more participatory approaches to HIV and AIDS education. Participation at a community level can be placed in the framework of 'social identities', where through the use of peer education, social identities become a powerful tool for social change. This relates to what was discussed earlier as community cohesion that strengthens participatory approaches to HIV and AIDS responses and resonates with the DramAidE approach through the participation of communities. Appreciative Inquiry, working from an asset-based approach, builds on positive experiences within social identities that enhance the change imperative, as will be discussed in the next chapter. Elliot and Gruer (1996:333) assert that "relevant and innovative approaches are required if

health education is to succeed with young people, especially those at the ‘margins’ of society”.

It is my understanding that participatory methodologies have the ability to ensure that the audience relates to the messages in a very personal way and allow them the opportunity to have a sense of ownership over the project. Through participation, communities become partners in change. When they simply receive information or messages, they are targets of change initiated by external agencies. As such, Community Theatre – placed within a community setting, with community experiences, driven by community members – using peer education may offer a viable participatory educational agency to be further developed to act as a locally relevant educational tool in the response to HIV and AIDS and community development.

Participation in the theatre process is important in order for it to function as a development and educational agency. As such, Community Theatre offers a unique opportunity to address HIV and AIDS within the cultural and economic contexts and structures of a community. With theatre as the entry point and the participatory conduit for dialogue, education and knowledge generation, HIV and AIDS can be addressed as a developmental issue (Mda 1993:38).

When considering theatre as an appropriate response to HIV and AIDS and the call for practitioners to refine the theatre approach to suit development priorities that may address the causal factors of HIV and AIDS, it becomes clear that the participation of target groups is essential in developing the response. In order to achieve this, it is essential that the implementers themselves understand the intended audience-participants and the impact of the issue to be addressed on this group and allow themselves to learn from the process.

Prentki (2002:125) asserts that theatre used for development must be placed within the context of communities in order for communities to sustain actions positioned by theatre used in the development context. He also asserts that the development process needs to benefit the community and not the developer, and that the participation of the community, where the development agenda is

set and not developed and implemented by the community themselves, will result in manipulated community development that will not be sustainable (Prentki 2001:120).¹⁷ Supporting this view, Durden and Nduhura ¹⁸(2003:7) argue that where the content of programmes is subject generated and communication is dialectic (or in Freire's terms dialogical) these programmes will have the greatest effect on their audiences. This is because there is an emphasis on local frames of reference, knowledge and experience and because beneficiaries are equal participants in the development process.

The development of community-based programmes that address the HIV and AIDS pandemic should begin by exploring the inherent social and cultural causes considered to be driving factors within the epidemic. Here the participation in the learning process and learners or participants as experts in their community becomes vital. It is important that participation allows for engagement, critical reflection and understanding of the causes or 'drivers' of the epidemic in a greater sociocultural context in order to enable change.

2.6.2 *The Importance of Context in HIV and AIDS Theatre Programmes*

Within the participation imperative, the current body of knowledge identifies the need to expand and explore the contextual development of theatre programmes on HIV and AIDS. Prentki (1998:428) asserts that context is crucial for all participatory development programmes. Understanding context, or the experience of communities, as proposed by Freire and Boal when using Community Theatre in HIV and AIDS education, is essential. Prentki asserts that, with all forms of participatory development, an understanding of the context is essential. In terms of recognising context, Community Theatre can be used to create dialogue and engage with issues in a familiar language and style that the community can relate to. Beyond local knowledge, by exploring the

¹⁷ Although Prentki mentions Theatre for Development in particular, his ideas are directly applicable to this study's understanding of Community Theatre.

¹⁸ Durden and Ndhura's use of the term dialectic seems to resonate strongly with Freire's notions of dialogical, although 'dialectic' is understood slightly differently in other contexts, for example, literary theory.

context, participants can explore the circumstances that influence the environment within which challenges exist. This process assists the development workers to plan the interventions according to the issues and approaches as laid out by the community themselves and as such it is an action research approach.

Kerr argues that there is still much that needs to be done to assist communities to understand the driving forces behind the inequalities they face (Kerr in Banham *et al* 1999:81). If the need is for communities to understand the behaviours that put them at risk for HIV infection, they need to develop a community response that will address the causal or driving factors of the epidemic in their communities. This notion relates directly to Freire and Boal's position of knowing the oppressive situation (see chapter 3, section 3.5). The implementation of a Community Theatre programme on HIV and AIDS as understood by this dissertation relies on a critical awareness of this oppression through dialogue. It is not clear from the literature reviewed whether the DramAidE method promotes this understanding - the AREPP method does not.

The application of Community Theatre in the educational and development environment to address HIV and AIDS, specifically within the South African context, has as much to learn from its audience as its audience has to learn from it. It offers the potential to be a shared learning experience towards mobilisation and change through responsible and accountable health communication serving the interests of the community, thus creating new stages for communication, education, development and change.

2.6.3 *The Importance of Content in HIV and AIDS Theatre Programmes*

Apart from the participation and contextual imperatives, the content of these theatre forms are also important. Bourgault (2004:224) states that the plays she saw on a visit to South Africa took HIV prevention as their central focus with many of the plays stressing the fact that there is no cure for AIDS. She further describes the plays as showcasing the harsh realities of South African township life, characters frantically searching for a cure from traditional healers, to

Western doctors and medicine, to God. Bourgault (2004:224) raises her concerns about the reinforced stereotypes that emerge in the plays; from young girls being willing sexual partners to older men in return for gifts and money, as well as HIV-positive young boys consciously infecting others (again, a problem-based approach).

In support of the need to carefully consider the content of these programmes, Marcia Blumberg (1997) offers many South African examples of how HIV and AIDS is being addressed through the performing arts as well as describing how performance is used to challenge cultural stereotypes. Blumberg illustrates the way HIV and AIDS education messages are generalised and, through this generalised assumption of risk and prevention, messages are disregarded by certain cultural groups because they are considered inappropriate and irrelevant. Blumberg (1997:11) ends her article with a clear challenge to theatre practitioners by asking: “In what theatres of activism will we rehearse and perform?” This remains a challenge that needs to be acted on: when the effectiveness of theatre that seeks to address HIV and AIDS is restricted by a range of barriers, there is a need to explore and learn from other successful practices that can enrich the impact of these theatre programmes.

This is evident in theatre practitioners that build on typical HIV-prevention messages such as the Abstinence, Be Faithful and Condomise (ABC) approach (such as Abstinence Kenya) promoted by governments and donor programmes like PEPFAR. As mentioned before, these programmes use rhetorical messages about abstinence, monogamy and condom use to teach young people about safe sexual behaviour without taking young people’s contextual vulnerabilities or critical thinking abilities into consideration. They approach young people as empty vessels that can be taught right from wrong through the mere acquisition of knowledge and not critical thinking, thus not promoting the participation imperative. This is the same form of education that Freire and Boal warned against and which places education on the agenda of a certain power group and undermines the intellectual capacity of the learner. Such educational content and approaches are counter-revolutionary and non-transformative.

Furthermore, they prevent the development of young people and take HIV and AIDS education out of a revolutionary paradigm retaining a 'banking' method of education where they lack agency and a voice.

Whilst ABC-based programmes may include participation, they often lack the contextual paradigm that encourages understanding of contextual factors that contribute to risk and vulnerability. This is especially important as many once-off theatre programmes or interventions do not consider the context of gender relations, condom use and so on in a specific community or engage with it at a level that is understandable for young people and applicable to their reality.

In support of the above, Crewe (2004) goes as far as to say that these ABC approaches as 'evangelised' by a government development programme such as PEPFAR, promotes new forms of imperialism and racism through their content. This is due to the fact that the behaviours the ABC approach aims to address are "allegedly found predominantly in resource poor settings, the developing world – adding a racial and imperialist agenda" (Crewe 2004:10). As such, ABC approaches warn young people about their vulnerability, promoting a return to what is seen as the age old dogma of 'no sex before marriage'. In reality, as Crewe (2004:11) points out, marriage may actually increase the vulnerability of girls and women to HIV and AIDS. Crewe (2004:11) considers the ABC approach to HIV and AIDS education as being old school and reflective of 1950s educational pedagogy in sex education that offers nothing new in terms of learning opportunities for young people.

Highlighting challenges faced when the content and context is misdirected, Patrick (in O'Toole & Donelan 1996:85) describes how, when a Ugandan living in the United States of America was asked to write an HIV and AIDS educational play for Ugandan audiences, the success of the play was compromised owing to the fact that it was out of touch with the many realities of Ugandan young people and their current way of life and challenges. Another play written by three Ugandan playwrights failed to bring the cultural aspects driving the epidemic in context. The plays were problematic because of the general prevention messages; the messages did not take into account that in

some communities, rape was culturally acceptable, and in other communities, circumcision with a single knife used for multiple individuals was problematic. The above stresses the need to ensure that the content of Community Theatre programmes are relevant, realistic and resonates with change that is possible and practical.

2.6.4 *Guiding the HIV and AIDS Theatre Process: The Importance of Facilitation*

Within a framework of participation, context and content as explained in this chapter so far, the notion of ‘facilitation’ or ‘initiation’ is also important. The question then becomes who initiates and facilitates the process of learning that involves participation, context and content. Who decides what the issues will be, which processes will be followed and ultimately what the desired effect or impact should be?

Ewu (1997:136) states that theatre is rarely agenda free and that Theatre-for-Development (and other forms of Applied Theatre) specialists often struggle to ensure that the agenda of the community determines the focus of the interventions and not *vice versa*. He argues that it is often this agenda that drives people and motivates action that causes governments to either view theatre as a threat or an ally. This points to a need to develop theatre programmes, or more specifically a methodology within theatre programmes, that encourage the voice and agenda of the community and participants and that rely on facilitators rather than initiators that guide the creative, development and learning processes.

The need for a non-partisan facilitator or facilitation process requires specific skills. The question would be what would these skills be and what area of expertise is crucial? Considering the importance of participation (this can be linked to participatory theatre practices and indicates the need for a person with specific theatrical and facilitation skills), the importance of context (this may require a person with specific community development skills or research skills) and the importance of content (this will rely on a person with educational skills and knowledge of the subject area) – facilitation requires multiple skills. As

such, there has been increasing calls for theatre and development practitioners to work more closely together indicating the need for a synergy of approaches and a beneficial learning experience (Ewu 1997:137).

Whilst a theoretical understanding of participation, context and content is considered important, the agenda of the facilitators and their approach to the community can also be questioned. Often leaders, authorities and local governments, for example, do not support some of the messages that may be inherent in HIV-prevention programmes and do not create or support an environment for further dialogue on the messages delivered in such theatre performances. This may be evident in traditional or political leaders influenced by tradition or religion who may not prescribe to the use of condoms as prevention method or may see nothing wrong with multiple concurrent relationships or intergenerational sex where the role of the women is often prescribed as submissive.

Traditional cultural beliefs and practices (such as initiation rites that instruct males and females about communally acceptable male and female behaviour, values, roles, etc in a community, including sexual behaviour) may perpetuate oppressive social hierarchies and gender roles that stand central to a lack of agency in sexual choices and roles and often encourage risky sexual behaviour. External facilitators may cause conflict in communities when encouraging practices that defy cultural, traditional or religious views. As such, the role of facilitator should also include sensitising structures of authority that influence the context or supportive environment in which the theatre process will unfold. Not doing so may result in unintended negative results, detrimental to the development process.

Considering the importance of participation, context and content in the development of theatre this can be revolutionary: the role or skills of the facilitator can be seen as consolidatory, challenging and constructive. Facilitation will require a process where a person or a group of people guides a community or members of a community through a learning experience where they consolidate the knowledge of participants and assist the community to

recreate and challenge the status quo (related to the issue being addressed), construct new understandings of the issue and empower participants to act on the new knowledge in a manner that is non-threatening. The ability to conduct or lead this learning process requires some level of understanding of theories of development, performance and education. The facilitation process can then use theory to consolidate and guide the participation imperative, the contextual realities and the appropriate content based on theory to best serve the participants' educational and development priorities through theatre.

2.6.5 *The Need for Synergy in Community Development and Community Theatre Practices*

In *Must the show go on? The case for Theatre-for-Development in the New South Africa*, Prentki (1998:15) illustrates how Theatre-for-Development (and by extension other forms of Applied Theatre) has the power to bring about changes but also warns of the challenges it faces. Of special concern to Prentki is Theatre-for-Development's implementation and, as he puts it, its "effective implementation as a coherent set of sustainable development practices is still very rare". Often, practitioners lack the understanding of cultural development needed to optimally use Theatre-for-Development. Prentki emphasises the need to explore more sustainable change opportunities and possibilities for Theatre-for-Development.

Further confirming the lack of synergy between theatre practitioners, educators and development professionals, Myhre and Flora (2000) reviewed empirical evaluations of 41 HIV and AIDS prevention campaigns worldwide. One of the conclusions they reached was that such campaigns needed more integration of theoretical paradigms and needed to take cognisance of community-wide strategies that are already in place, emphasising the need to determine existing structures in communities that may contribute to development. This strengthens the notion that whilst a strong theoretical background is needed for the implementation of revolutionary theatre and education programmes, the context of the community and its role and participation in the development process must be equally considered.

However, it is also the critical reflection on the practice that Freire sees as a requirement in the relationship between theory and practice. Without such reflection theory remains meaningless words and the practice remains pure activism with no results (Freire 1998:30). Boal (2000:142) supports this notion by promoting the ability of the participant to reflect on the possibility of change through changing scenarios and developing new possibilities through theatre-based techniques, such as forum theatre, which become the “rehearsal for change”.

I maintain that theatre used in whichever form and in whichever location cannot engage with a community or even an individual through mere spectacle. It needs other tools to be built into its participatory, creative and immediate qualities to transform it into an agency that can build critical-thinking skills (or ‘conscientisation’), assist in addressing the root causes of the issue being tackled and provide insights into modes or means of transforming problems into opportunities, allowing for participants to hope and dream. It needs to be a systemic approach building on the knowledge of a variety of experts and non-experts around the issue being addressed. Equally important is that it needs to be a response that is placed within communities, owned by communities as experts of their own realities and destinies.

If theatre needs to transcend the realities of communities and create opportunities for learning that promote development, it needs to develop itself into an agency that uses more than its power of performance to allow for participation and creativity, as is the intention with Theatre-for-Development. Ewu (in Banham *et al* 1999:87) argues that this need to further develop what he refers to as Theatre-for-Development exists not only because of the shifting nature of the practice, or its use in health promotion, development, education and other social issues, but also because of wider social and structural changes. Ewu reinforces the discourse that theatre used as educational or development agency needs to transcend its own boundaries of implementation that may restrict revolutionary learning. It needs to consider theory, participation, context and content to become a multidisciplinary vehicle for

learning and development as mentioned before. By making use of the components of theory, participation, context and content through ‘consolidatory’, challenging and constructive facilitation, dynamic models of Community Theatre can be created to address community development and respond to any social, political and economic need that the community may have. In order for this to happen theatre needs to develop itself.

Whilst the ‘building blocks’ of creative participatory and revolutionary theatre that addresses social issues (such as Theatre of the Oppressed, Applied Theatre, Theatre-for-Development and Theatre/Drama-In-Education) can contribute to new dynamic models of Community Theatre, it is also important to consider the process involved in making theatre a truly revolutionary learning experience. Scott-Danter (1999) asserts that Theatre-for-Development is an effective tool for creating a portfolio of issues that present themselves in society and that if used with participatory survey techniques (such as Participatory Rural Appraisal, Contextual Dynamic Analysis and for the purpose of this study Appreciative Inquiry) “create a rich picture interpretation of the existing society”. Scott-Danter (1999) is here positioning Theatre-for-Development within an inquiry process that allows theatre to become the vehicle through which broader research aims can be achieved beyond the exploring of the self. Whilst drama and theatre exercises may contribute to a personal exploration of an issue within a specific context, they also allow an exploration of broader social issues, attitudes and behaviours within a social or cultural paradigm. Such an exploration can be classified as research. Scott-Danter (1999:6) believes that such processes need the capacity of a facilitator to guide participants through the inquiry or learning process.

This process may be led by an external facilitator with an implicit research agenda or may use the process to develop the content of the performance. In my view the role of the facilitator should be non-biased and the facilitator should not hold any agenda other than promoting critical learning among participants. In order to be considered developmental and of immediate benefit to the participants, the second option would be a more appropriate use of theatre as

an educational and development conduit in the community context. Such a process needs to be creative, inspiring and non-threatening and ultimately contribute to the learning process. I propose that the focus here should be on the development of the participants and the community and not on objectifying the participants as specimens to be studied. Facilitators utilising processes that are not aimed at the development of the community directly, or that do not contribute to the learning experience, may create alienation and suspicion between the participants and the facilitators/s.

Apart from exploring theatre in the context of development at community level, it is important not to forget theatre's aesthetic value as the AREPP model demonstrates. Thompson (2000:102) warns against focusing solely on the social policy function during the development process. This dissertation posits that it is essential that the creative function of theatre be maintained and that the joyful, social and cultural manifestations of theatre remain central to the development process to engage its participants in the fun and spectacle of theatre. The aesthetic quality of theatre should not, however, compromise participation and the educational imperative of the theatre programme as seen with *Sarafina II*.

The learning processes in Community Theatre as creative learning methodology are enhanced by bringing together the concepts of participation, content and context. The organisational development practice of Appreciative Inquiry may contribute to the development and change process introduced through theatre by introducing the reality of the present and allowing for the possibility to dream. Doesebs (1998:3) asserts that education is about change, and that change would not necessarily take place if those being educated were not allowed a chance to reflect on their past and their current realities in order to realise a future for themselves.

2.7 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter explored prior scholarship related to theatre used for HIV and AIDS education and community development. The purpose of this chapter is to

position the role, functioning and relevance of Community Theatre within the development context. This chapter has identified problems with the ABC approach of HIV and AIDS education with young people and some of the challenges and successes of using theatre to educate young people on HIV and AIDS.

This chapter positioned *meaningful participation, context, content* and *non-biased facilitation* as key principles of Community Theatre programmes on HIV and AIDS.

The imperative is to move HIV and AIDS programmes using theatre as educational and development methodology beyond an awareness-raising process or event towards a vehicle for critical learning and development. Whilst it is impossible to review every case study and finding on the implementation of HIV prevention programmes and theatre programmes that promote HIV prevention, most of the literature read and the case studies referred to in chapter 2, highlight similar needs.

I have argued that more attention needs to be paid to communities and the manner in which they are affected by and respond to the HIV epidemic at grassroots level. There remains much to be learnt from these responses. The structures and social capital that exist in communities are dynamic and need to be used not only in HIV prevention, but also in care and support programmes. The rituals and structures within communities that are manifestations of their traditions, culture, heritage and contemporary associations with popular culture are valuable for use in prevention responses. Communities are the masters of these practices and as such need to lead responses from within. They are the masters of their domain and as such equal partners in the learning or prevention response.

Every community responds differently to HIV and AIDS. Negative responses outside a human rights framework need to be challenged in order to create dialogue; additionally, the social, political and economic drivers of the epidemic need to be part of the challenge and learning process. HIV and AIDS needs to

be addressed within the context of these realities in order to revolutionise the manner in which communities respond. Furthermore, the imperative of change needs to be a collective movement and the overemphasis on individual behaviour needs to make way for a more socially dynamic opportunity for change.

The overemphasis on individual behaviour change, pure communication and awareness approaches needs to be replaced by more participatory learning opportunities for young people. Young people need to be viewed as valuable community members able to contribute to change through critical awareness and not as mere receivers of services and messages. Young people should be challenged to dream and lead the response against HIV and AIDS in a manner that is familiar in terms of their context, environment and needs. The participation of young people in HIV and AIDS programmes is not event driven, nor is the fact that young people participate in dramas as actors or have the opportunity to input on plays and research. For participation to be meaningful young people need to engage with structures of power and structures that can see their dreams come to fruition. Young people should be encouraged and stimulated to be critical in the learning process. They need to be fully conscious of the possibilities of living through the epidemic and the contributions they can make beyond the immediate safer sexual behaviour response.

In order to maximise its potential as participatory communication and learning agency in the response to HIV and AIDS, the use of theatre should be seen in the broader development context. It should not however be overburdened by the development imperative, but should remain a fun, interactive exploratory agency that strengthens the learning process.

I believe that the use of theatre in HIV and AIDS education for young people needs to change. The manner in which theatre is used for HIV and AIDS education needs to be developed continuously. Only then can it become a more effective developmental tool to be applied in the arena of community development or HIV prevention. It places possibilities in the hands of the people and offers them the potential and ability to change and transform societies

without picking up arms, but rather by reflecting, understanding and sustaining platforms for ongoing dialogue that break down barriers (real and perceived) of culture, gender, race and class. Theatre cannot offer a quick fix or the proverbial magic bullet that will put an end to community challenges. It must be prepared for a long rehearsal, an extended run, in order to receive a standing ovation that will be heard and felt by generations to come.

The Appreciative Inquiry approach offers a valuable medium for bridging the gap between development and theatre. Whilst acknowledging the contribution of models of behaviour change, such an approach moves the focus away from individually targeted approaches to a social context in which supportive environments are created for young people that minimise the behaviours they may engage in that could contribute to HIV infection.

Before the Appreciative Inquiry approach is discussed as a complementary process to Community Theatre used in HIV and AIDS education, the next chapter will review the theoretical contributions and practice of Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal to education and theatre aimed at change and transformation. By exploring the work of these two scholars, I will aim to show how current education and theatre practices in HIV and AIDS education may be limiting the educational outcomes and how a conscious and active engagement with the principles of these two scholars may contribute to an improved learning and understanding of HIV and AIDS among young people. This will strengthen the position of this dissertation that education and theatre used in the HIV and AIDS response can be more developmental than purely educational.

CHAPTER 3

DEVELOPING CRITICAL YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH THEATRE: EXPLORING THEORY AND OPPORTUNITIES.

3.1 Introduction

The theories and practices of Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal provide a platform for interaction between education, theatre, community development and social action. Moreover, the work of Boal and Freire could be considered the antecedents of contemporary Applied Theatre practices, which particularly advocate the use of participatory methodologies used by 'target groups' or by partners in the development of theatre programmes for the benefit of communities and development (Bourgault 2003:68). Although Freire's contribution to Boal's work and to Applied Theatre in general has been researched (Schutzman & Cohen-Cruz 1994; Babbage 2004, Bourgault 2004), available literature in print in English and Afrikaans does not explore a detailed breakdown of Freirian principles in relation to Boal's work or Community Theatre as is done in this study.

The work of Freire underlines the importance of placing participants in a learning initiative as central knowledge bearers and contributors to the learning process and as agents for social change – not merely as the subjects or beneficiaries of projects. Similarly, Boal acknowledges and promotes the use of theatre in the learning process with participants as the active agents of transformation. Thus, their work is central to the way in which this dissertation understands Community Theatre as a participatory learning and transformation agency and the potential of young people to contribute to the learning imperative on HIV and AIDS through Community Theatre.

Brazilian Paulo Freire wrote his seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, in 1970, with the aim of developing an emancipatory, critical pedagogy in adult education that would ultimately work towards social upliftment (Nicholson 2005:52). In 1979, fellow Brazilian Augusto Boal followed with *Theatre of the*

oppressed as a response to Freire's work (Epskamp 2006:12), which aimed at social mobilisation in addressing issues of oppression and cultural agency through theatre. The work of Freire was concerned with education as a tool for liberation whilst Boal saw theatre as a weapon for liberation. Both scholars placed their work within a political context and promoted the participatory¹⁹ rights of those deemed to be 'oppressed' by considering the political structures that promoted their inactivity and silence.

Although the theoretical frameworks of both scholars have invited criticism, such as being overly idealistic and ungrounded in "historical materialism", they challenged traditional social, theatre and educational theories that promoted passive engagement of individuals in education and development initiatives (Mutnick in Cohen-Cruz & Schutzman 2006:41). Their views not only impacted on their native Brazil, but also on other countries where education served the ends of political and ideological indoctrination, including South Africa.

As I will demonstrate in Chapter 4, the principles of both Freire and Boal have significant linkages with the Appreciative Inquiry process especially when infused in the Community Theatre context. As such it is valuable to first outline the basic principles and practice of Freire's and Boal's theories to begin to position and frame the possibilities of infusing Appreciative Inquiry in a Community Theatre process with the explicit aim of involving young people in the HIV and AIDS response. This chapter will outline Freire's and Boal's theories and practice as the main contributors to the use of my interpretation of Community Theatre in community-based learning in the context of HIV and AIDS.

3.2. The Contribution of Paulo Freire to Critical Learning

For education theorist, Paulo Freire, education "... is a social practice that enables people to formulate new insights and ideas, to offer social criticism and

¹⁹ Participation is the process through which participants are able to influence situations that are presented to them, gain further conceptions of selfhood and implement these understandings in their daily lives (Nicholson 2005:37).



to develop relationships” (Nicholson 2005:135). Freire further viewed education as “a struggle for meaning and a struggle over power relations” (Freire 1985:xiii). In his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1996 [1970]), Freire asks important questions about who is in charge of what people learn and what the outcome of that learning is to be.²⁰ Education should not be form of domination, but rather a search for knowledge and skills and an understanding of social relations that allow for social change and self-emancipation (Freire 1985:xiii). These are inherently political issues.

Freire suggests that the relationships that exist between the oppressed and the oppressor are echoed in education and reinforce official knowledge and hierarchy of social structures (Nicholson 2005:118). These perpetuate inactivity in learners and do not contextualise the subject matter as life-changing for the learner.²¹ A social inquiry into the possibilities of education includes questions as to how education is placed within the political and economic realities of countries. He further argues that these political and educational realities can be used to liberate people.²² Freire sees the purpose of education as enlightening societies that are, politically and economically oppressed. He argues that this can be achieved through processes where they recognise their dissatisfaction with their current state of living and develop skills and abilities to change the status quo. These processes are situated within a critical and transformative pedagogy through which learners and teachers are able to deconstruct ideologies, recognise hegemonic significations, and negotiate between the

²⁰ Freire considered learners to be people of all ages, whilst the term “learner” in this dissertation refers to young people.

²¹ Dorothy Heathcote, whose work was likewise positioned within the progressive educational movement in Britain, also speaks directly to this notion of education in her work. Her use of drama as a teaching methodology was highly influential and in some ways paved the way for contemporary approaches to, and interpretations of, Applied Drama and Theatre which, in turn, influences my understanding of Community Theatre. An investigation into Heathcote’s work falls outside the scope of this paper, but I will acknowledge her contribution where appropriate. In *Drama for Learning* (1995), Heathcote and Bolton outline the Mantle of the Expert approach, where learners are empowered through the educator (who acts as the ‘facilitator’ and not the one that holds the knowledge) to learn and experience learning as a process of making meaning and making the learner an active participant (an agent) in this process.

²² Boal goes further in asserting that all theatre is political because all human activities are political, including theatre (Boal 2000:ix).

borders of various ideological positions as well as to recognise the cultural agency of the oppressed.

Freire promoted the legitimisation of the culture of the oppressed and advocated that it be incorporated into teaching and learning practices by including the lived reality of the oppressed in the learning experience. Freire argues for “a notion of cultural power that takes as its starting point the social and historical particularities, the problems, sufferings, visions, and acts of resistance, that constitute the cultural forms of the subordinate groups” (Freire 1985:xxi). However focused on cultural agency, Freire recognises the hegemonic implications of culture that legitimise dominant constructions of culture. He argues for a critical consciousness of these hegemonic implications and the ideological imperatives they support. He also points to the possibilities of dominated culture(s) to rupture the dominant cultural and political narrative, as the creation of culture does not lie solely with the dominant classes (Freire 1985: xxi).

Cultural processes, as a form of human production, “are intimately connected with the structuring of different social formations” and it is this very culture that assists human agents to transform society (Freire 1985:xxi). I would argue that it is particularly Freire’s notion of cultural power that holds many similarities to the Appreciative Inquiry approach, which will be explored in chapter 4. By applying the Appreciative Inquiry approach this dissertation will describe how this very understanding of the realities of communities, using cultural expression such as community theatre, can contribute to development and liberation.

Learners need to become consciously aware of being in an oppressive situation and they need to actively fight against this oppressive state, take action and make a change to their world (Freire 1996b:32). According to Giroux (in Freire 1985:xii) Freire moves away from a Marxist view of oppression as a universalised and centralised phenomenon within a class system, but maintains that there are complex forms of oppression resulting from a multiplicity of social relations. These varied forms of multiple oppressions are due to a variety of social relations that may also serve as a platform from where social groups may

unify and organise themselves in a social and political struggle. Drawing on Freire, I assert that where the aim for community-based work is development or transformation, there needs to be an awareness of the various forms of oppression that inhibit and prevent development whether it is social, economic or political. Similarly, in the context of HIV and AIDS education, there needs to be an understanding of what the social, political or economic factors are that may inhibit health-seeking behaviour. The multiplicity of social relations within a given community also requires consideration in HIV and AIDS education so that new insights and relationships and a pluralistic understanding of the problem can be developed. This will be further discussed in the section dealing with HIV and AIDS. Similarly, Freire's warning to leaders (or teachers) not to act like an outside expert bringing ready-made solutions to a problem that others simply have to assimilate, is applicable to Community Theatre practice:

“... revolutionary leaders do not go to the people in order to bring them a message of “salvation,” but in order to come to know through dialogue with them both their *objective situation* and their *awareness* of that situation (Freire 1996b:53).”

Freire's critical pedagogy of freedom and liberation (Freire 1998:25–51) are based on four educational principles that are essential if education is to be experienced as liberatory and transformative. For the purposes of this study, the principles that resonate most strongly with community theatre and young people's development will be addressed. Some of these principles have been instrumental in developing some applied drama and theatre projects, for example DramAidE discussed in the previous chapter. These principles are dialogue, praxis, conscientisation and experience.

3.2.1 *Dialogue*

Freire insists that education *is* dialogue especially in an informal environment.²³ According to Freire, traditional education practices overly rely on what he refers to as the ‘banking method’ of education, where learners are seen as empty

²³ In this instance ‘informal education’ refers to education that takes place outside popular education institutions (schools and university), also known as non-formal education.

vessels wherein educational matter is deposited through the ritualistic educational pedagogy of information dissemination and memorising (in Heathcote's terms "the one-who-knows") without critically reflecting on the educational matter (Wagner 1999:30). Banking education lessens the learner's capacity to think critically and hinders conscientisation (the process through which individuals become aware of the contradictions within the sociopolitical system). Freire argues for a dialogical interaction between teacher and learner that is removed from traditional didactic notions of education, with specified roles and power relationships in the learning situation (Freire 1993:53).

According to Freire (1993:53) it is essential that dialogue, in the education context, is not one-sided communication, but rather a mutual discussion between learner and educator based on respect and cooperation. He demands respect for the knowledge of students and what he considers the "fruit of the lived experience" or the knowledge that students bring to the classroom based on their realities and their existence (Freire 2001:36). It is this knowledge of their everyday living that will allow the facilitator of the development or learning process to engage the participants with the social, political and economic issues within their community and how they relate to the subject matter. For instance, in HIV and AIDS education it will allow the participants to understand why and how the economic, political or social realities of the community may inhibit or promote health-seeking behaviour.

Active and critical participation and problem solving in the learning process encourages conscientisation and opens the dialogical space that Freire argues for and allows participants to interrogate and reflect on, and re-imagine experiences, concerns and perspectives collectively. Education can then act as a conduit for dialogue between those who can speak and those who are voiceless. This dialogue can break down the alienation and authoritarian position created by the oppressor and stimulates communication of the oppressed amongst each other (Freire 1996b:47, 50). The ideas, perspectives and knowledge generated and interrogated through participatory education are communally heard and validated, foregrounding the importance of community in

processes of transformation and problem-solving. It is this foundation of community and dialogue that embeds the critical learning imperative of Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed as development tool that finds the strong connection with Appreciative Inquiry, as will be seen in chapter 4.

The dialogical learning process as proposed by Freire also shares commonalities with the pedagogical and methodological premises of Community Theatre. The purpose of the Community Theatre process is to engage participants, and in this context young people, meaningfully in HIV and AIDS education. The dialogue principle elevates young people from passive receivers of HIV prevention messages to active participants in the learning process thus promoting critical engagement in the subject matter. Cohen-Cruz (2006:428) describes the communal principle of Community Theatre²⁴ as being committed to the collective and not individual representation. Cohen-Cruz considers the process of Community Theatre as collective meaning-making where aesthetic tools are used in combination with a group of people's lived experience around a certain subject (Cohen-Cruz 2006:432).

Dialogue ensures participatory engagement and critical inquiry into the subject matter. As mentioned, in the context of Freire such dialogue must be equal and democratic. This is echoed by Cohen-Cruz (2006:432) who asserts that despite theatre and dance being collaborative forms, the difference with Community Theatre and contemporary forms of theatre and dance is that Community Theatre is not driven by hierarchal structures of the theatrical profession where authority is given to producers, playwrights, choreographers or directors. Instead, Community Theatre is based on a model of power-sharing among artists and community partners. The community in Community Theatre becomes a democratic learning space where the participants or "partners", as referred to by Cohen-Cruz, have the ability to share their knowledge and experiences around a theme and decide on the outcome of the performance and own the process of the development of the piece. This critical engagement

²⁴ Cohen-Cruz prefers the term "community-based theatre" as an accurate reflection of community-driven theatre

through dialogue and active participation makes what Freire refers to as praxis possible, where participation and dialogue lead to action.

3.2.2 *Praxis*

For Freire, dialogue is not just about an improved understanding of the subject matter, but the start of a transformative process. A heightened understanding of the subject matter in relation to the lived realities of participants is not the end point, but it could be the start of a transformation process for the participants. This transformative process is captured in what Freire refers to as praxis. Aristotle first described the term “praxis” as the process of creating knowledge through experience. Praxis refers to an action that is informed and linked to certain social values and supports and enhances community development (Freire 1996b:111). With a heightened understanding of how the subject matter relates to the reality of their own lives, participants are then better informed on how social structures and values, for instance (in the context of HIV and AIDS), support and promote their vulnerability. This informed knowledge and ability to relate the subject matter to structural and societal ‘oppression’ is the starting point from where participants can effect change. As such the process is one of understanding through reflection that leads to action. Freire insists that humankind are beings of *praxis*, in that human life consists of action and reflection (Freire 1996b:81).

In describing an adult literacy process as a form of cultural action towards freedom, Freire (1977:5) asserts that every educational practice implies a concept of humans and the world. He states that:

“The process of men’s orientation in the world involves not just the association of sense images, as for animals. It involves, above all, thought-language; that is, the possibility of the act of knowing through his praxis, by which man transforms reality. For man, this process of orientation in the world can be understood neither as a purely subjective event, nor as an objective or mechanistic one, but only as an event in which subjectivity and objectivity are united. Orientation in the world, so understood, places the

question of the purposes of action at the level of critical perception of reality.”²⁵

Freire points to the importance of including the knowledge of participants in the learning process. According to Singhal (2001:14), considering Freire’s position as outlined above, humans can be seen as subjects who know and act upon their knowledge whereas objects are known and acted upon. Freire asserts that humans are subjects who act and transform their world and, by doing so, create new possibilities for life. In the simplest terms, and as paraphrased by Singhal (2001:14), the world is not a preconceived reality that human beings have to accept and adjust to, but rather a problem that needs to be engaged with and solved. In my reading, this illustrates the fact that when learning is one-dimensional and the authority of learning lies with the educator or instructor, there is no subject–subject relationship, but only a subject–object relationship. In a subject–object relationship transformative learning is not possible and consequently the opportunity for the learner to act upon his/her new ‘knowledge’ may not be possible – praxis may not be possible.

Praxis is essential in allowing the learners the opportunity, once reflecting on their current situation through dialogue, to be motivated to action – to improving their current lived reality and breaking the status quo of their challenges. Freire’s call for “informed action”, where education is built on learners’ deepened understanding of their current situation and the understanding of the possibilities of change is the praxis that spurs them into action (Freire 1996b:126, 127). Once new knowledge is created, contextualised and understood, new opportunities are created and change is possible.

Considering that mere acquisition of knowledge is not deemed sufficient in understanding and internalising vulnerability towards HIV and AIDS in young people, I view the concept of praxis as crucial to HIV and AIDS education and where Community Theatre is used as educational methodology in HIV and AIDS prevention. A subject–object positioning of HIV and AIDS education (as

²⁵ Freire’s use of “man” represents the *zeitgeist* of the time. This dissertation acknowledges the problematics around hegemonic references to gender.

positioned by Freire as the banking method of education) does not foster a deepened understanding of HIV and AIDS nor does it offer the possibility of change to learners. As such, Community Theatre presents a valuable opportunity to embed the learning experience as a reflection of the experience of the learners. As will be discussed later, Boal's Forum Theatre for example, offers the opportunity for participatory learning where participants or learners can interact with scenarios to embody and engage with their own ideas for solving a particular problem. This opportunity to offer solutions based on the learners' own experience can be strengthened through Appreciative Inquiry that aims to extract positive experiences from participants in order to learn how possible challenges can be overcome. Through dialogue, space is created for innovating change and stimulating praxis where the possibility of change is visualised and strengthened with the purpose of acting on this possibility. It is through critical awareness based on dialogue that praxis is possible. This critical awareness is what Freire refers to as "conscientisation".

3.2.3 *Conscientisation*

Conscientisation refers to a state where learners are not only aware of their social, political and economic realities, but interact with them with the intention to change them. It is a state that Freire refers to as critical consciousness (Freire 2005:39). For Freire, conscientisation is the stage where people leave behind the status of objects in the learning process and assume the status of subjects, accomplished through what Freire refers to as "true praxis" (Freire 1996b:141). As such, learners are not receptors of information, but are subjects able to interact and make meaning of information through their own experiences. Awareness is then created whereby change becomes possible. When learners are objectified as receptors of information it is difficult for them to interact with the information as subjects that are able to enact change. Paulo Freire (2001:55) describes this best in *Pedagogy of hope* when he says:

"The fact that I perceive myself to be in a world, with the world, with others, brings with it a sense of "being with" constitutive of who I am that makes my relationship with the world essential to who I am. In other words, my presence in the world is not so much

of someone merely adapting to something “external”, but of someone who is inserted as if belonging essentially to it. It’s the position of someone who struggles to become the subject and maker of history and not simply a passive, disconnected object.”

Freire highlights the fact that when learners are placed as objects in the educational paradigm, they may choose to adopt this new knowledge as external information that they are not able to act upon or change. Freire (2001:55) further states that when a learner participates as a subject in the learning experience they become aware of the material, social, cultural and ideological conditions that may challenge their notions of change and transformation, but as subjects they also realise that these obstacles are not eternal and can change. Freire called for conscientisation based on these obstacles in the 1960s and, as he puts it: “not as a panacea but as an attempt at critical awareness of those obstacles” and their reason for being (Freire 2001:55).

Freire insists on the necessity of conscientisation as a requirement of the human condition to create new knowledge. In *Education for critical consciousness* (2005), Freire outlines three notions of consciousness. The first is naive consciousness, which considers itself superior to facts, in control of facts, and as such free to understand them as it pleases. Such a consciousness is considered static and deceived in the perception of the facts. When learners receive information as objects it would be easy for them to fall into this category of consciousness where they are not allowed the opportunity to place information in the context of their own realities and experiences. In this way, information becomes static and there is very little opportunity to effect change.

Freire also classifies magical consciousness in contrast to naive consciousness as an apprehension of facts attributed to a superior power by which it is controlled and therefore has to be submitted to. Freire considers this consciousness as being characterised by fatalism where learners are resigned to the impossibility of resisting the power of facts. Again, this level of consciousness does not allow for any action from the learner since the information or knowledge is non-negotiable and they are objects in terms of the

knowledge, incapable of affecting change. Boal also insists that there is no magical solution or what Monks *et al* (2001:416) refer to as institutional-led solutions for the oppressed without creating individual agency towards self-empowerment. In the context of magical consciousness it would be very difficult to develop self-empowerment when knowledge is incapable of affecting change.

For Freire, critical consciousness embraces causal links to a problem. I argue that in the context of HIV and AIDS education for young people it is this consciousness of the causal factors of HIV and AIDS and not mere 'basic facts' on HIV prevention such as ABC that is important. The more accurately learners understand the causal links to a problem, the more their critical understanding increases. Freire further states that critical consciousness links causality to analysis that projects the fact that what is true today may not be so tomorrow. Naive consciousness does not consider causality and sees it as static and, as such, incapable of change. In magical consciousness the response will be magical and, whilst there may be understanding of the problem, learners will adapt to the knowledge failing to relate the problem to reality and the cause of a specific challenge that may be changed beyond the information given.²⁶ Freire considers dialogue as an essential tool for taking learners from naive and magical consciousness to critical consciousness. This process of moving from a naive or magical consciousness becomes conscientisation and requires an active, critical, educational programme (Freire 2005:15).

In the context of HIV and AIDS education, especially with young people, critical consciousness is considered very important. Within a Freirian framework, Campbell and MacPhail (2002:3) assert that the goal of using young people as peer educators in HIV and AIDS education should be the development of young people's critical consciousness about their sexual health. Using gender relations as an example, Campbell and MacPhail assert that by stimulating and developing insight into how the construction of gender relations and the causal links with conditions of poverty, it will be possible to make young people aware

²⁶ See Boal's reflection on 'magical solutions' on p 103.

of the way in which these undermine the likelihood of good sexual health. Once an understanding of causality has been established learners should be exposed to notions that existing norms can be changed and scenarios for alternative behaviours can be stimulated. As such, predominant gender norms may be resisted and young people may be in a position to assert behaviour that may promote their sexual health. By using Community Theatre a participatory space can be created for these understandings, and dialogues and possible scenarios can be created.

Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003:237) refer to Freire's notion that the oppressed are submerged in reality and the belief that the world is predetermined and cannot be changed, and more importantly that the oppressed has no role in the possibility of change. I would argue that the four-D cycle of Appreciative Inquiry (see chapter 4) is designed to break through this fatalist thinking using a dialogue-centred approach to reach conscientisation. It is particularly the causal factors and relationships between individuals that are important in the Appreciative Inquiry process in order to develop an in-depth understanding of the relationship to the self in challenges that may be changed.

It is the experiences, the existing knowledge and access to social peer networks that contribute to the learning initiative and that place them as subjects in the educational imperative. Without the sharing of their experiences and knowledge (both in and outside of peer networks and community structures) in relation to the subject matter, causality and action may not be explored, rendering the educational experience static and non-transformative.

3.2.4 *Experience*

Dialogue, praxis and conscientisation do not offer viable educational praxes if they are not situated in, or do not make use of, the lived realities and cultural positions of learners as central contributions to knowledge in the educational paradigm. Education should be a process of learning through an experience.²⁷

²⁷ Heathcote (1985), O'Neill (1995), and Neelands (1984) focus on learning through experience and view experiential learning as a key principle of Drama-in-Education, the methodological and philosophical position of which resonates with Applied Drama/Theatre.

Freire was convinced that Brazilian people could learn social and political responsibility only by experiencing that responsibility and that experience was only possible through participation and civic engagement (Freire 2005:32).

For Freire, the experience of the learner is paramount in education. Critical education allows learners the opportunity to review their past critically and to present their experiences in the world as knowledge. Freire positions this sharing of knowledge through dialogue as an illuminating experience that allows them the opportunity, by reliving the experience, to realise that the world is indeed changeable (Freire 2005:137). Freire places the knowledge of the lived experience within the cultural context of learners and further asserts in *Pedagogy of hope* (2004:75) that respect for this popular knowledge implies respect for the cultural context in which this knowledge is framed. In *Pedagogy of hope*, Freire refers to his first book, *Educação como prática da liberdade* (1967), where he states that: "it is *local situations* [emphasis in the original], however, that opens perspectives for an analysis of *national* (and regional) *problems*" (Freire 2004:74).

In the context of HIV and AIDS education, Community Theatre offers a valuable space for direct community interaction and exploration of the local situations that may contribute to regional or national problems. Through Freire's dialogical pedagogy, active grassroots participation provides a sense of ownership for participants through sharing and reconstructing experiences (Weisbord [s.a]:18). Here Weisbord touches on the importance of ownership for the participants or learners of the situation, which they may want to change owing to a critical consciousness of the problem. By sharing experiences, participants create a shared ownership of the problem to be addressed, and the space created by Community Theatre allows for the possibility of creating visual scenarios of change. As such they are no longer objects immersed in the problem but subjects that understand the problem and recognise their role as change agents.

It is clear that didactic educational activity must be placed within the lived experience of the learners to fully develop the opportunities for learning,

development and transformation of learners and their environment. I consider Freire's work on adult literacy to be a good example of how the contextualisation of the lived reality of learners promotes the learning process by placing it in a familiar context for learners and using it as the basis for reflection and learning.

Augusto Boal based his work on that of Freire particularly, in the context of this study, on Freire's call for the replacement of the banking method of education with a dialogical approach to learning where the roles of student and teacher are positioned as interactive partners. According to Cohen-Cruz and Schutzman (2006:3), Boal translated this notion into the theatrical context with his concept of the spect-actor who replaces the passive member of the audience watching a production. Where Freire diminished the divide between educator and learner, Boal broke the hierarchy between performer and audience member. Freire combined "the language of critique" on traditional education practices with the "language of possibility" (Freire 1985:xii–xiii). This language of possibility resonates strongly with what Boal (2000:131) refers to as "Theatre as Language", where telling or re-enacting a real-life situation creates the excitement or opportunity for change as explained above.

3.3 The Contribution of Augusto Boal to Critical Learning

The four principles of education as outlined above are essential for using education optimally as a vehicle for the liberation of the oppressed. As I will explain later, these four principles have explicit linkages with the work of Boal as the underlying methodological approach to the Theatre of the Oppressed and its related techniques and exercises in using theatre as a vehicle for the liberation of the oppressed. Singhal (2004:145) considers Theatre of the Oppressed to be the work of Freire in practice. Theatre of the Oppressed have been used across the world as participatory tools in building democracy and analysing social challenges to transforming reality through direct action (Singhal 2004:152). Singhal (2004:152) describes the various disciples and variants of Theatre of the Oppressed as agit prop (agitation propaganda), radical, alternative and people's theatre. Singhal (2004:152) offers several examples of

how this form of theatre was used in the service of the oppressed, citing the Community Theatre Movement in Nicaragua, which used elements of music, theatre and dance to overthrow the ruling dictator, President Anastasio Somoza. Singhal (2004:152) also reflects on experiences in the Philippines and subsequently South Africa, where the Protest Theatre of the politically disenfranchised or oppressed showcased the grim struggle for equality and democracy. The Protest Theatre of South Africa during the apartheid years has strong links to Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, as far as their aim to address the oppression of the people through theatre as a cultural expression of opposition is concerned.

Boal provides a construct for building cultural expression for liberation that resonates with Freire's notion of education as freedom and especially the language of possibility inherent in education. According to Kistenberg (1995:31) the aim of Boal's theatre is for people to become aware of their oppression so that they are in a position to change it and, according to Nicholson (2007:26), use theatre to create solidarity among the oppressed. This holds relevance to Freire's conscientisation, where critical awareness of challenges allows for praxis, or the opportunity to change the situation that prescribes the challenge.

In *Theatre of the oppressed* (2000), Boal illustrates how what he called "spect-actors" may be empowered to enact, analyse and change their situations, through theatre-based techniques, calling attention to the participatory nature of such theatre-based programmes. In common with Freire's challenge of learners as objects and not subjects participating in the learning process, Boal had a problem with the positioning of audience members as spectators passively watching a performance and assuming the performance and dialogue to be set and unchangeable; he asserts that: "[t]he spectator, who sits stock-still, is encouraged to think in a way which is presented as being the right way of thinking, the Truth."²⁸ It is the dramatist who tells this Truth, who points the way: he is affirming, not asking" (Boal 2000:xx). This resonates with what Freire refers to as naive consciousness where learners accept information given to

²⁸ Here truth is not universal. Truth is considered in context and relevant to participants.



them as the absolute truth and not changeable, or magic consciousness where information is prescribed by a higher power and as such not negotiable. These notions of naive or magical consciousness are what Boal aims to deconstruct through what he refers to as Poetics of the Oppressed (Boal 2000:120–156).²⁹ Boal insists that there are no magical solutions to people’s oppression; only through participation and self-empowerment can solutions to oppression be developed through individual agency.

Boal (2000: xx) calls for the spectator to invade the space usually occupied and controlled by actors. He calls for not only the liberation of critical consciousness but for the liberation of the body too, where the audience invades the stage and transforms the images that are shown. When this happens theatre breaks the performance space and flows into real life, where change is possible. The performance piece or theatre is actually then the rehearsal for change and life becomes the actual ritual of change (Boal 2000:155). This process relies on the dialogical principle as described by Freire and requires participation. Rather than remaining an object (spectator) that views the subject (theatre), this relationship is overturned into the subject–subject relationship that Freire proposes in order to overthrow the banking concept of education.

Whereas Freire stressed the importance of ‘conscientisation’ or ‘raising the consciousness’ of populations in need of change through education, Boal stresses the possibilities of theatre in this kind of endeavour. Freire’s participatory approach to learning forms an important basis of Theatre of the Oppressed and subsequently Theatre-for-Development and this study’s interpretation of Community Theatre. The learning process relies on people coming together to share experiences and as such acquiring more knowledge and deepening their understanding of how different aspects of community can come together to form a joint response to development. Boal believes “the power of theatre lies in its ability to create an aesthetic space where everything

²⁹ ‘Poetics of the Oppressed’ refers to theatre used as a language, understood by everyone, and placed at the service of the oppressed in order to express themselves and discover new concepts (Boal 2000:121, 122).

is magnified and dichotomous” (Boal in O’Toole & Donelan 1996:49). Boal asserts that the power of theatre lies in its ability to portray real live challenges that are experienced in a clear, understandable manner. The aesthetic space in which theatre functions allows the participant and audience member (in the position as spect-actor) the opportunity to democratically interact with this reinforced image of their lives and make decisions on how things could be (Boal 2006:18–20). Boal refers to this as the language that theatre brings to people or, in his terms, the oppressed. (Boal 2006:188).

Theatre of the Oppressed endeavours to develop the capacity of the participants to use this language through a discovery of the oppressed experiences, then to create a space to rehearse ways of challenging this oppression and lastly to bring across and extrapolate this into their everyday lives in an attempt to become ‘free’ (Boal in O’Toole & Donelan 1996:47), a view that closely resembles Freire’s idea of the purpose of education. Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed empowers what he calls the ‘spect-actors’ to enact, analyse and change their situations (Schechner 2002:39).

For Boal theatre is essentially the capacity that human beings have to observe themselves in action and being able to change those actions. For me this double-consciousness points to Freire’s notion of critical reflection. Boal (in O’Toole and Donelan 1996:47) explains the process as being able to “talk and listen to my voice, understand my thoughts, observing my gestures and controlling my actions. That is what an actor does. In that sense, even if we don’t make theatre, we are theatre”. My understanding is that here Boal, like Freire, refers to one of the key principles of Drama-in-Education and what Heathcote refers to as a “rehearsal for life” or “looking at reality through fantasy” (Wagner 1999:1) to bring about a change in attitude or understanding.

The Theatre of the Oppressed process sets out to conscientise participants and promote their participation in the learning process through a theatrical process closely related to Socratic questioning or Socratic dialogue. In essence, the Socratic dialogue is a commitment to inquiry, to further learning and discovering rather than accepting the truth as it is perceived (Romney 2005:4). Socrates

believed that good education is based on the practice of rigorous and thoughtful dialogue. According to Socrates, a disciplined implementation of critical questioning enables learners to examine ideas and create dialogue about them in a logical manner that leads to reliable knowledge construction. Boal uses Socratic Questioning through the Joker-figure that would ask audiences or participants if they considered the action or scenarios on stage to be correct (Hogan 2002:46). Through these processes participants would identify the source of their problems and seek solutions. Similarly, Freire promotes problem-based education where learners are critical of what they are learning and seek answers by asking questions. This is considered to be the first step towards empowerment. Plays would then, for example, be devised using stronger characters opposing the audience's new found perceptions and creating a 'new world' where the status quo is challenged and oppression addressed. For Boal, this process of devising plays is very powerful for individuals, as it creates an imagined world where the participants and audience are freed from their challenges and in control of their lives, further strengthening the notion of "looking at reality through fantasy" embedded in Heathcote's approach to Drama-in-Education.

Boal (2000) proposes four phases inherent in the *Poetics of the oppressed*, the philosophy underlying *Theatre of the oppressed* that guides the spectator from passive observer to spectator or, in Freire's terms, from object to subject in the learning process. These four phases are 1) knowing the body, 2) making the body expressive, 3) the theatre as language and 4) the theatre as discourse. Boal argues that in order to understand the Poetics of the Oppressed there must be an understanding of the objective of turning the passive spectators into 'the transformers of the dramatic action' thus becoming "spect-actors". The *Poetics of the oppressed* builds on the participation imperative of Freire and, in the context of this dissertation; Community Theatre offers the opportunity for the 'spect-actor' to rehearse the change and to prepare himself/herself for the revolution or real action. As such, Boal does not position theatre as the agent of change but rather as the agency through which all possible change may be

experienced (Boal 2000:122, 138). These four phases will be discussed briefly in relation to the principles of Freire and the four phases of Appreciative Inquiry.

3.3.1 *Knowing the Body*

The first phase is designed to familiarise the participants with their bodies and the manner in which their bodies have been conditioned by their profession (in the context of Freire's work with peasants, workers or villagers), or in the context of Community Theatre with young people, their everyday life and the role they assume in society. In this phase, Boal (2000:126) makes use of a range of exercises to make each participant aware of their own bodies, their bodily possibilities and the deformations their bodies have adapted to because of their work, or in the case of young people their identity and relationships to others.

I consider the process of learners using their bodies in the learning process to be beneficial and as making a contribution to breaking the passivity of learners and the subject-object relationship. Boal (2000:127) proposes that this first phase of getting to know the body is important in that it presents the start of the learning process and the theatre development process using an object that every participant will be familiar with – their bodies. Boal proposes the use of the body to overcome the alienation that may be experienced between an external facilitator of the process and the local community or the alienation that may be present when a local facilitator introduces theatre as a process that may not be familiar to the participants. It is with their bodies that participants agree to participate in the process and as such discovering the body and its relation to freedom from oppression or prescribed states of being is essential in the liberation process. Boal (2000:128) further asserts that the purpose of this stage is to “undo” the muscular structure (or the conditioning of the body) of the participants and to take it apart with the purpose of analysing them. Boal insists that this process is not intended to weaken or destroy the participants' sense of their own bodies but to raise them to a level of consciousness where they understand how their bodies are influenced by their work or other influences in everyday life. By doing this, participants will be able to transform their bodies

and assume roles of other characters or people in society, be it a different social class or a different profession, to enhance embodied understanding. The above is not an exhaustive theoretical inquiry into the use of the body, but aims to illustrate the link between Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed and the theatre development process towards optimal participation of young people.

For me, Knowing the Body can be seen as a process similar to conscientisation where the physical conditioning of the body is understood in relation to what can be considered the oppression of the individual or the group. Here I can draw parallels with the inquiry process of the four-D cycle of Appreciative Inquiry and Freire's dialogue principle, where the use and exploration of the body is the entry point for dialogue and discovery regarding a chosen challenge. For instance, in the context of HIV and AIDS education for young people, it is important that young people not only understand their own physical vulnerabilities to HIV but also how social factors such as relationships and community dynamics and culture may increase their bodily vulnerability. However, it is not only important for participants to know their bodies and analyse their bodies in relation to individual and social dynamics; they should also be exposed to the possibilities of using their bodies as agents that can make change possible.

3.3.2 *Making the Body Expressive*

The second phase uses the knowledge that is created of the body and the consciousness of the possibilities of changing the body to develop the expressive ability of the body (Boal 2000:130). Boal states that reliance on predominantly verbal communication in contemporary culture leaves the expressive capabilities of the body in an underdeveloped state. Boal propose exercises in this phase that allows participants to play with and not to interpret issues, but asserts that owing to the fact that they are more aware of their bodies, they are able to play better and thus interpret better (Boal 2000:130). What Boal is arguing for is not only the liberation of the mind that allows for revolution, but also the consciousness of the body that allows for the rehearsal of the revolution (Boal 2000:128).

Making the Body Expressive takes Freire's dialogue principle one step further in that it allows for words, thoughts and emotions to be expressed through the body and requires physical participation and action from participants beyond the verbal. I see this as 'praxis-in-practice', where the process of conscientisation takes an active form towards praxis. By physically engaging the body, the participants are exposed to the possibilities that the body can be used for in response to an identified challenge and as such their consciousness of the possibility of change is encouraged.

In the context of young people participating in HIV and AIDS education through Community Theatre, physical participation in the theatre development process is important in guiding young people from objects to subjects in the learning imperative. Through young people exploring themes at a physical level and using the body to express for instance dynamics in relationships, this phase becomes crucial in crossing the boundaries set by didactic and passive educational notions of HIV prevention by encouraging and reinforcing participation in the learning process by using the critical consciousness of the young people. This phase is essential in the Community Theatre process since it marks the beginning of young people's experience in learning to use theatre as a tool in the response to HIV and AIDS. They are learning a new language, a language of expression that uses their bodies as educational instruments whilst using their knowledge and perhaps previously untapped expertise in HIV and AIDS education.

3.3.3 *The Theatre as Language*

Boal explains how people's experiences contribute to the revolutionary learning process. Here Boal uses the participants' realities or lived experiences to create images of reality that can be transformed through enactment and engagement. (Boal 2000:131–134). Boal believes that this creates the excitement needed to act on the experience and promote change (Boal 2000:134). Boal describes Theatre of the Oppressed as "a system of exercises, games and techniques, whether professionally involved in theatre or not, to try to develop a language he or she already possesses" (Boal 2006b:14–15). Boal further describes this

process as a search for the language, which in essence is a metaphor for everyday life, the voice, the movements, the passions and emotions that constitute day-to-day living in a specified communal context.

Building of the first two phases focusing on knowledge of the body and experimenting with its expressive abilities, the third phase of Theatre as Language, offers the crucial moment when the participants or spectators get involved in the performance. Boal (2000:131–132) identifies three different parts of this phase each aimed at offering a different degree of participation for the spectator in the performance. Here Boal (2000:132) asserts that the spectator is encouraged to shed their conditioned position as objects and assume the role of the subject resonating with Freire's notion of critical consciousness.

The first degree, as Boal (2000:132) refers to it, is Simultaneous Dramaturgy, the first invitation made to the spectator to intervene in the performance without physically invading the performance space. In this process the spect-actor assumes control of both worlds – the real and the theatrical – and deliberately and self-consciously observes and acts in both worlds (Babbage 2004:42). Practically, the exercise is described as a process where actors, familiar with the local context, perform a scene and allow the spectators the opportunity to question the action on stage and offer solutions or correct the actions on the stage. Simultaneous dramaturgy takes place whereby the audience 'writes' the performance whilst the actors perform their suggestions. Simultaneous dramaturgy emphasises that that which is prescribed may always be challenged and interrogated (Babbage 2004:5). This is then the crux of dialogue and participation, where the participants or spect-actor is moved to participate in the inquiry to promote possible change and new knowledge by contributing their own perceptions and knowledge.

Boal (2000:134) considers this phase as creating excitement among the participants and as the significant experience that breaks down the walls that differentiate between actors and spectators. In doing this, I would maintain, the performance becomes subject to criticism and the ability to change and

reactivate scenarios removes notions of naive or magical consciousness as positioned by Freire.

According to Boal, the second degree of Theatre as Language is Image Theatre. This process calls for more direct participation from the spectator. Boal (2000:135) asserts that here the spect-actor is asked to express his or her own view on a theme that is up for discussion. He or she then uses the bodies of other participants and sculpts these bodies into forms or shapes that represent the challenge inherent in a certain theme and then changing this sculpture into a form or shape that represents the ideal image. These 'statues' are then open for discussion by the group and the process relies on optimal participation from the group and dialogue concerning the constructed and 'deconstructed' images. Boal considers this the strength of this theatre "because of its extraordinary ability to make thought *visible*" (Boal 2000:137). Indeed the thought that is made visible is that of change and Boal (2000:139) insists that the feasibility of change should always be discussed during this stage. It is this feasibility of change that relates to Freire's notions of praxis and conscientisation, where reflecting on the possibilities of change leads to a deeper understanding of the possibilities of change and how this can be affected.

Boal calls the third degree Forum Theatre. Here the Joker performs a play about an identified challenge with no solution. The play is then performed a second time and here the spect-actors have the opportunity to decisively intervene in the performance and change it. Here Boal (2000:141) asserts that whilst it is not theatre's place to illustrate what could be considered the correct course of action, it can offer a means by which all possible actions may be explored and considered. Through this process real action becomes possible because the spect-actor is left with a sense of incompleteness that can only be addressed once real action is taken or, in other words, they act on these challenges in real life (Boal 2000:142). Durden and Nduhura (2002:10) stress that Boal's Forum Theatre is a problem-solving technique, indicating Boal's resonance with Freire that the goal of education is not an exercise in

acceptance of information or a situation, but rather a continuous curiosity and the creation of new knowledge.

In the context of HIV and AIDS education, Theatre as Language can be equated to the surfacing of new ideas and understandings of how traditions or belief systems in society or communities are supporting participants' individual or common vulnerability to HIV and AIDS.³⁰ Community Theatre can be used as the space in which these traditions or belief systems are interrogated and as such theatre and the techniques used in theatre become the dialogue that participants use to engage with the topics or themes. When theatre is used as language in HIV and AIDS education in a community setting, building on Freire's principles of engaging the participants experience through dialogue towards conscientisation, young people are empowered towards praxis where they may feel in a position to address societal and individual barriers that may increase their vulnerability to HIV and AIDS.

3.3.4 *The Theatre as Discourse*

Theatre as Discourse is where the spect-actor is able to use his or her newly gained skills and develop own performances. The Theatre as Discourse is a skill that allows for the continuous critique and reflection on what people believe to be determined in their communities or lives and, according to Babbage (2004:61), it is this continual emphasis on multiple interpretations and on the remaking and un-making of the subject and object in the learning process that underscores the radical potential of the Theatre of the Oppressed process to activate change. It is this radical process of the Theatre of the Oppressed, of continuous exploration and learning that underscore the value of theatre as discourse and as language.

In the Theatre as Discourse phase, Boal posits the use of tools such as Newspaper theatre, Photo Romance and Invisible Theatre as implementing the

³⁰ Heathcote's work in Drama-in-Education supports this creation of existing knowledge through what she refers to as "Leading Through Questions", where children are encouraged to bring themselves into situations that are being studied and reflect on their real lives as contributing to the exploration (Wagner 1999:62).

techniques spect-actors have learnt and involving other members of their community in addressing challenges through theatre. Boal explains the use of these forms as theatre in direct opposition to what he refers to as spectacle theatre and asserts that popular audiences are interested in experimenting and rehearsing theatre as opposed to “closed” spectacles (Boal 2000:142). Boal considers all the theatres that he has mentioned in his *Poetics of the oppressed* as “rehearsal theatre” and not “spectacle-theatre” (Boal 2000:142). Boal, however, asserts that there is nothing that prevents what he considers to be the popular audiences from participating in more “finished” forms of theatre, such as Newspaper theatre and Invisible Theatre as discussed above (Boal 2000:142). All these forms of theatre move the spectator from a position of passivity to becoming active in the theatre process where its aim is to liberate audiences to action where they think and then act for themselves (Boal 2000:155). As a result, this relates closely to what Freire refers to as conscientisation. This conscientisation, as discussed, is the result of a dialogical exchange where educators learn from the lives of the learners so that the object of study or inquiry can be mutually established and understood. This stage holds strong linkages with the final phase of the Appreciative Inquiry approach, as I will demonstrate in chapter 4.

Boal’s *Rainbow of Desire*(2006)outlined in his book of the same name is work that stem from Image theatre. It is often considered a form of drama therapy as outlined by Dwyer [sa.]. This dissertation does not explore the field of drama-therapy and as such focus on Theatre of the Oppressed as a basis for the *Rainbow of Desire* (Sajnani, N 2009:10) and as basis for the synergies between Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Community Theatre and Appreciative Inquiry. *Rainbow of Desire* does however resonate with an asset-based approach and would benefit from further exploration.

3.4 Challenging Freire and Boal: Reviewing Selected Critique

Freire and Boal’s revolutionary approach to education and theatre has resulted in a range of critique on their work. In my understanding, most of the critique is centred on the theory of change and the practice of change evident in their

work. Davis and O'Sullivan (2001:239, 234) criticise Boal's approach, which aims to liberate participants to action by rehearsing possible change. They consider such techniques to be superficial in that they place the participants outside the context of their realities and consider the problems the protagonist aims to address to be "unreal". Boal (in O'Toole & Donelan 1996:51), however, maintains that through the mere acquisition of knowledge, a person changes and that when a person changes, people around the person change. Although some discoveries may be unpleasant, Boal considers this acquisition of knowledge to be therapeutic in that it is the start of allowing a person to initiate change. I believe that, unless Boal's approach to theatre is placed within a framework that would allow for participants to interact with the 'causes' of their oppression as counteractive and indeed placing the participants as part of a process, 'unreal' expectations of change could be created. For instance, in the context of HIV and AIDS education, should the participants not be able to identify and explore the causes of their oppression, or in this case vulnerability to HIV and AIDS, whether this is structurally related to poverty or their inability to interact with services that might reduce their vulnerability, unreal expectations of vulnerability reductions may be created.

Kistenberg (1995: 32) asserts that Boal's approach to theatre in development puts participants through a process of discovery that will supposedly transform their consciousness and lead them to rethink their social structures, but does not consider the Theatre of the Oppressed approach nor its participants as being immediate agents of change since social change is postponed to some indefinite time in the future. Another question begs the following: to what extent would participants be able to effect change if the material constraints and resources of communities' social contexts remain the same?

I maintain that the question on whether change is postponed to some indefinite time in the future or whether it is immediate to be non-constructive. Given that, for instance, in the context of HIV and AIDS education and programmes that promote behaviour change, the studies end evaluations of programmes such as AREPP and DramAidE have indicated that unless structural and cultural change

occur within communities or systems that promote vulnerability, change is never immediate. However, should the fundamental principles of Freire and Boal be applied, and young people are approached as equal to the learning process in HIV and AIDS where their knowledge is an equal contribution to the learning process and where reflection and action form part of a deeper inquiry into HIV and AIDS and the learner's relationship with HIV and AIDS at all levels, the educational experience itself becomes transformative. From my review of the pedagogies of Freire and Boal, I would rather propose that the challenges in implementing both Boal's and Freire's approach would be the manner in which the object (subject matter or issue) is approached. It would seem that whilst learners would be approached in an appreciative manner as assets in the learning process, the issue to be addressed is often overly simplified. In the context of HIV and AIDS education, when HIV and AIDS is presented as a disease that can simply be overcome by abstinence, condoms or sexual monogamy with one partner, the 'problem' of HIV and AIDS is not discussed as a social, political or economic issue. Such an approach does not consider the intellectual capacity of young people to explore these driving factors of the epidemic and as such learners are numbed educationally to only consider three preventative behaviours rather than the full extent of the epidemic. As such, within the current knowledge of the learners of their own vulnerabilities and, more importantly, strengths, the topic of intervention should be addressed in a manner that allows for the appreciation of the intellectual knowledge and capacity of young people.

Boal's Invisible Theatre also stands on dubious ethical grounds and raises questions as to informed consent, vulnerability and power relations when people are exposed to theatre in non-theatrical settings without their consent or without any pre- or post-discussion and contextualisation. These remain valid concerns over Boal's work, but I have to restate that the intent of his work remains social and communal, and factors that may challenge the optimal implementation of his theory or techniques need to be considered in the social

and communal context prior to execution. The same applies to Freire's theory and practice.

In *Pedagogy of hope* (2006), Freire responds to criticism raised against *Pedagogy of the oppressed* and his insistence on the importance of popular knowledge or the experience of learners as being paramount to the learning imperative. Criticism of the value Freire attaches to popular knowledge centres on the fact that critics interpret Freire's notion as educators focusing education on the knowledge of the learner and not going beyond that knowledge. Freire (2006:72) explains that such naive notions of education were not his intention. He asserts that he has always insisted on the use of learners' knowledge as important in the learning initiative and that it should not be cast aside and disregarded because learners bring with them their own experience of the social practice they are part of and that this knowledge needs to be respected: "Their speech, their way of counting and calculating, their ideas about so-called other world, their religiousness, their knowledge about health, the body, sexuality, life, death ... must all be respected" (Freire 2006:73). Going beyond the knowledge of the learner towards factual information is essential in any educational imperative that aims to broaden the learner's knowledge base and Freire considers this to be knowledge of the learner experience being introduced to a larger horizon of exploration for the learner (Freire 2006:72).

I would argue that using *Pedagogy of the oppressed* or *Theatre of the oppressed* as pedagogical approaches can be considered inappropriate in certain environments. In certain instances the environment and oppression may be too overwhelming and dangerous to engage with transformation or immediately effect the desired change. It is the process of developing critical consciousness around oppression, as proposed by Freire and Boal that liberates people from oppression. It is then the act of liberation in any form, but especially freedom from intellectual oppression, that poses a threat to authoritarian states that thrive on the oppressed state of their populations. This is exactly why people like Freire and Boal had to go into exile because their methodologies and theories were revolutionary and encouraged critical

intellectual capacity that could challenge the oppressor. Critical understanding of the oppression is perhaps the most important stage of liberation, but it is most often the result of this form of liberation, the action taken to change the oppressed state, that can be harmful or fatal.

Theatre used in the South African liberation struggle in the 1960s and 1970s has proven to be a good example of the inherent risks when theatre is used as a tool for liberation. The South African example that will be discussed in this regard may be considered an extreme example and although Freire and Boal insist that both education and theatre are inherently political, there are applications of their methodologies that do not have a direct political influence or necessitate the action, as will be seen in the South African context.

The use of Freire and Boal's methodologies in the field of development created opportunities for the development of their pedagogies and methodologies and for new ways of implementing Community Theatre or other development programmes. Cohen-Cruz and Schutzman (2006:1–2) assert that Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed remains under-theorised and not sufficiently contextualised within existing companion theories and practices. They propose that once there is an improved contextualisation and integration of Boal's theories and practices, the possibility of designing techniques and approaches that consider the continuously evolving global context and dynamic local or community context will keep practices adaptable and sufficiently localised. The same can be said for Freire's methodologies. The local context is continuously changing for communities owing to global or national influences beyond their control such as economic recessions. In such a context, however, my view is that the local knowledge of communities remains paramount because they are the communities immediately affected. In addition, these changes and new ways of learning can be coped with by building on local knowledge and development in theory and new innovations in practice.

In addressing the concerns that the practices of Freire and Boal may not be 'real' or may be too far removed from the reality of participants and that, in reality, it would be difficult for participants to effect any real change owing to the

oppressed environments they find themselves in, I posit that it becomes even more important to understand the local context of communities. This is in fact exactly what Freire and Boal require in order for education or theatre to be revolutionary – a critical consciousness of ‘oppression’ and its results. In *Theatre of the oppressed* (2000:139) Boal warns that the feasibility of change should always be analysed. If Community Theatre is used as a tool for education and liberation, this is exactly what it should aim to achieve: it should create communal dialogue around a specific topic and offer opportunities to engage with possibilities of change through participation.

Despite the critique on Freire and Boal’s work, principles and methodologies, they form a platform for theorising the use of critical education and theatre in the HIV and AIDS response with young people at a community level. The similarities between the work of Boal and Freire provide pointers as to the principles that will underpin the argument of this study that Community Theatre used in the HIV and AIDS response can critically engage young people as agents of change in the HIV and AIDS response by using an asset-based development approach, Appreciative Inquiry to raise the critical consciousness of young people.

3.5 Freire and Boal: Synergies in Critical Learning

Given that the work of Freire and Boal forms an important theoretical platform for this dissertation, it is valuable to reflect on the similarities and synergies between their work in order to link these with the proposed methodology of infusing Appreciative Inquiry in the Community Theatre process as agency to increase critical consciousness of participants and improve the learning process. Both Freire and Boal argue for active participation based on dialogue. For Freire, participation for transformation is only achievable when the teacher–learner role is overturned and for Boal it is possible when the spectator becomes the actor or the ‘spect-actor’ (Schutzman & Cohen-Cruz 2006:3). Boal’s (2000:131) use of the participants’ realities or lived experiences to create images of reality that can be transformed through enactment and engagement

echoes Freire's position that the learners' knowledge and experience are paramount to the learning process.

It is this acknowledgement of the experience of the learners that contributes to knowledge that is considered essential by both Freire and Boal in raising critical consciousness or the process of conscientisation. Boal and Freire both stressed the importance of the conscientisation or 'raising the consciousness' of populations in need of change. By exploring issues beyond pure educational dialogue as proposed by Freire, Boal encourages the use of the body in interpreting and analysing issues, which allows for conscientisation and, subsequently, praxis.

Boal and Freire stress transformative praxis. Mutnick (in Cohen-Cruz & Schutzman 2006:42) argues that "... Theatre of the Oppressed builds on aesthetic as well as political and educational goals [of Freire], in view of questions of content *and* form in relation to the experience and communication of social realities", it is "the performative aspect of theatre" that "underscores issues of form and presentation". As such, Mutnick considers the work of Boal to be one step further in the educational experience positioned by Freire. The work of Boal requires an awareness of the aesthetic, and the theory of performance and the ability of theatre or theatre-games specifically, to further enhance the process of praxis by actually allowing participants to 'rehearse' the change they are proposing. Mutnick highlights the similarities between the practice of Freire and Boal in that they share the imperative for dialogue and praxis and that the relationship between educator and learner (as proposed by Freire) should form the basis of the theatrical learning experience (Mutnick in Cohen-Cruz & Schutzman 2006:42, 43).

The focus for Freire is on the possible denunciation of despair and discovery and the emergence of other possibilities, similar to Appreciative Inquiry. Both Freire and Boal position the understanding of the oppressive situation as being key to unlocking the potential for change. This understanding should not be influenced by the agenda of an external agency other than trying to assist the participants in discovering how the reality of their social structures for example

relate to the subject matter. Being conscious of this oppression and engaging in dialogue or reflection allow for the 'language of possibility' to express the desire for a change in the status quo and through theatre possible change scenarios can be expressed and enacted for further critique and dialogue.

Both Boal and Freire stress cultural agency in the context of mobilisation towards change and cultural context in development and educational settings. For Freire, cultural agency refers to the role between "... man as Subjects in the world and with the world" and that culture is above all, a human creation (Freire 2005:41). It is the exploration of this culture and cultural agency that allows for conscientisation to become possible according to Freire and Boal. The understanding of the relationship between human beings and culture and the construction of this culture is explored by Freire and Boal with participants using dialogue and problem-posing techniques. Both argue for the benefits of a problem-based approach to education that engages with culture as the lived reality of participants. Freire (2005:136) states that "... there can be no problematisation without reality".

Freire considers problem-posing dialogue techniques as being crucial in the development of critical attitude and asserts that a denouncement of problem-posing dialogue in education results in an inability to achieve cultural invasion where the relationship between humans and their society are "domesticated" and anaesthetized" (Freire 2005:113). Freire challenges educators to use problem-based techniques in order to stimulate the curiosity of participants, because it is through curiosity that learning takes place. Boal similarly makes use of the participants' consciousness to problematised images or performances and change them. The four phases proposed by Boal, Knowing the Body, Making the Body Expressive, Theatre as Language and Theatre of Discourse, all propose problem-posing techniques that allow for participants to explore and inquire into the issue being addressed. Whether it is problematising images of reality or images as portrayed by actors, each phase involves the need to solve a problem through dialogue and action.

Practitioners of community development and Community Theatre programmes will benefit from an understanding of the work and theories of Boal and Freire in order to adapt them to the local context. The opportunities for social change captured in *Pedagogy of the oppressed* and *Theatre of the oppressed* provide the platform for the interaction between theatre, community development and social action. Whilst the theories of Freire and Boal remain relevant to education and Community Theatre, it is the action of these theories (putting these theories into action and use) that needs to be adapted to serve communities in need of change.³¹ Appreciative Inquiry aims to highlight the potential for change through an asset-based approach. This does not mean that it moves away from the problem-posing theories of Freire and Boal; it rather focuses the inquiry, the building of new knowledge around positive images and positive realities. The theories underlining the work of Freire, Boal, Community Theatre and Appreciative Inquiry are not exclusive; they speak to each other and hold further opportunities for synergy with current and emerging theories and practices in development, theatre and education.

The most important similarities between the work of Freire and Boal and the Community Theatre and Appreciative Inquiry approaches are:

- They place participants/learners as central to the learning process, by emphasising that they are the ones who hold, or can generate, the actual knowledge
- Boal and Freire establish a platform for learning that encourages critical consciousness;
- Meaningful participation, especially physical participation through action-reflection in the learning process is crucial;
- The notion that the realities of communities represent cultural power and that through cultural expression development is possible;

³¹ This change first needs to be initiated or agreed on by the community and should not be imposed by an external agency.

- Over reliance on external expertise as superior to the knowledge of learners may negate the learning process especially if its importance is positioned as superior the knowledge of learners or participants;
- Dialogue is an essential component of the learning process and this dialogue further strengthens the notion of participants or learners knowledge as central to the learning process.

3.6 Chapter Conclusion: Creating Synergy

This chapter outlined the principles and techniques of Freire's and Boal's work in order to frame the possible infusion of the Appreciative Inquiry process into the Community Theatre process. The central arguments of Freire's and Boal's work are discussed as key determinants of successful theatre programmes used to educate communities and contribute to social change in the context of HIV and AIDS education. Freire's notion that, as valuable community members, young people should be placed central to the learning process by using their knowledge of how communities work and young people function within communities is given primary importance in this dissertation's position that young people are assets in communities in the HIV and AIDS response. Similarly, I argue that using Boal's work would regard the participation of young people in the HIV and AIDS learning process as a key factor that will revolutionise HIV and AIDS education through theatre. I also discuss the work of Freire and Boal as central to the Community Theatre process and as important guiding principles on how theatre should be used as a learning conduit in the response to HIV and AIDS.

In the context of young people and HIV and AIDS education, this chapter further placed the importance of Freire's contribution is his educational pedagogy that moved away from didactic notions of education. Freire's move towards placing young people as participants in the learning process has significance for the manner in which young people should be approached in the HIV and AIDS learning process – beyond simplified notions of behaviour change and risk

reduction through ABC methodologies towards understanding the economic, political and social factors that increase their vulnerabilities (or oppression as Freire would put it).

The four principles of *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, as outlined in this study, dialogue, praxis, conscientisation and experience, will form the cornerstones for the infusion of the Appreciative Inquiry approach in the educational and learning process of Community Theatre. As such, Appreciative Inquiry will be evaluated according to its ability to promote dialogue, reflection and action, critical consciousness and the manner in which it can solicit the experience of young people in the HIV and AIDS learning process, including awareness of the political, social and economic factors contributing to the spread of HIV and AIDS. Similarly, in chapter 5, I will explore how these principles of Freire can enrich the Appreciative Inquiry process in order to present a synergy of practices that can contribute to the HIV and AIDS learning process among young people.

With Boal's *Theatre of the oppressed* forming an integral platform for the implementation of Community Theatre programmes as proposed in this chapter, the four phases outlined in *Theatre of the oppressed*, Knowing the Body, Making the Body Expressive, the Theatre as Language and the Theatre as Discourse, provide guiding principles for framing Community Theatre in the HIV and AIDS response for young people. As with the four principles of *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, these phases of Boal will be evaluated and presented against the principles of Appreciative Inquiry in order to gauge to what extent the Appreciative Inquiry approach can be strengthened by Theatre of the Oppressed. The position of Boal that traditional boundaries of theatre should be broken down to allow for active participation from viewers (from spectator to spect-actor) is central to the manner in which this dissertation proposes that young people should engage in the HIV and AIDS learning process and how Community Theatre can contribute to eliciting this kind of participation.

In this chapter several critiques on the work of Freire and Boal were discussed, and chapter 5 of this study will analyse to what extent Appreciative Inquiry may

contribute to reducing some of this critique and strengthening some of the principles that have been proposed by Freire and Boal. The next chapter will outline, with practical examples, the way the Appreciative Inquiry approach relates to the theories of *Pedagogy of the oppressed* and *Theatre of the oppressed* and the implementation of Community Theatre programmes. This chapter will take the review of prior scholarship one step further in order to look beyond the theorising of education and development theory at practical examples of how the learning process on HIV and AIDS may be enhanced through Community Theatre.

CHAPTER 4

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

4.1 Appreciative Inquiry in the context of Freire, Boal and Community Theatre

Freire and Boal call for a revolution in education and the manner in which we approach development and learning. Similarly, Cooperrider, who is considered the father of Appreciative Inquiry, asks for a revolution in the manner in which organisational development is approached.

I argue that if the principles of Freire and Boal, especially critical consciousness through dialogue and action; and the asset-based appreciative approach of Appreciative Inquiry can be combined. HIV and AIDS educators, theatre practitioners and development practitioners may benefit from a new asset-based methodology to engage and promote young people's meaningful participation in the HIV and AIDS learning imperative. In the interests of strengthening and developing the educational and developmental benefits of Community Theatre as an HIV and AIDS educational conduit for young people, an Appreciative Inquiry framework for Community Theatre, Young People's Development and HIV and AIDS education offers the potential to use the strengths of each of the approaches to the benefit of young people's engagement with HIV and AIDS.

In this chapter I will outline the theory behind Appreciative Inquiry as well as the Appreciative Inquiry process and link these to the principles and practice of Freire and Boal in an effort to explore and identify the way in which the Appreciative Inquiry approach can be infused into Community Theatre. At the time of writing there was no research that explicitly links the approaches of Freire, Boal, Community Theatre and Appreciative Inquiry. Whilst I have heard of the benefits of infusing the Appreciative Inquiry approach into Theatre-for-Development programmes, I have not come across any published research that links these processes in the context of HIV and AIDS education for young

people. There is also, to the best of my knowledge, no published research explicitly linking the work of Freire and Appreciative Inquiry beyond comparing the broad notion of freedom from oppression (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom 2003)

4.2 What is Appreciative Inquiry?

Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987:25) identify Appreciative Inquiry as a form of action research that attempts to create new ideas, theories and images that may contribute to developmental change within organisational systems. The work of David Cooperrider, who developed Appreciative Inquiry together with his colleagues at Case Western Reserve University, provides insights into how, over time, Appreciative Inquiry has become a theory and a methodology in organisational development (Watkins & Mohr 2001:14).

Used primarily as a methodology for organisational development, Ludema, Whitney, Mohr and Griffin (2003) offer examples of how Appreciative Inquiry is used for organisational growth and change. At its core, Appreciative Inquiry is a search for potential. At the level of development and change, Appreciative Inquiry seeks to find and explore the best in people, organisations and their world. According to Watkins and Mohr, Appreciative Inquiry has the ability to “locate, highlight and illuminate what are referred to as the life-giving forces of an organisation’s existence” (Watkins & Mohr 2001:14). It does not simply focus on what is considered to be problem areas to be changed, but looks at what the best in a current situation is, and what it might be, to “help ignite the collective imagination” (Watkins & Mohr 2001:14).

In the simplest terms, Appreciative Inquiry is a methodology that addresses the change management or development needs of organisations. The methodology employed by Appreciative Inquiry moves away from problem or deficit-based approaches where the challenges or problems are central to the process of change or development. Instead, Appreciative Inquiry looks into discovering the elements, structures or processes that *do* work and that *do* contribute to positive feelings or energy within the organisation, whether at present or in the past. It is in this regard that Appreciative Inquiry can contribute towards

replacing didactic, problem-based HIV and AIDS education in an effort to raise the critical consciousness of participants and encourage the action-reflection process or praxis as positioned by Freire and Boal.

Appreciative Inquiry asks the 'positive question'. But what exactly is this 'positive question'? In an attempt to answer this question, Fry, Barret, Seiling and Whitney (2002:6) explain that there are two fundamental questions behind every Appreciative Inquiry process:

- What, in this particular setting and context, makes (some aspects of) organising possible?
- What are the possibilities, expressed and latent, that provide opportunities for more effective, or value-congruent, forms of (this aspect of) organising in future?

According to Fry *et al* (2002:6) these two questions illuminate the “art of appreciation”. This art lies in discovering and valuing the factors that give life to an organisation or group. The process involves interviews and storytelling to reveal the best of the past, which then contributes towards setting the stage for what might be the future. Through this process, new knowledge is created that expands the ‘realm of the possible’ and helps the organisation or group to jointly envision the desired future. These futures are immediately a positive anticipatory image that creates hope and excitement and is compelling and attractive.

Appreciative Inquiry “... as a social constructionist approach to organisational change and development” (Van der Haar & Hosking 2004:1017) is increasing in popularity owing to what is considered its revolutionary approach to learning and development. The process is used increasingly by development agencies for community development initiatives beyond the scope of organisational development (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom 2003:27). Cooperrider and Whitney, in the context of Appreciative Inquiry, consider communities to be “vital connections of life-giving potentials: relationships, partnerships, alliances and

ever expanding webs of knowledge and action that are capable of harnessing the power of combinations of strengths” (Cooperrider & Whitney 2005:1). This study will relate the aforementioned explanation of organisations directly to the notions of Freire and Boal, namely that people or communities hold existing experience and knowledge and are able to enact change based on this knowledge and experience. The link between Appreciative Inquiry and Community Theatre will be further explored in chapter 5, but it is important to note that while in this chapter Appreciative Inquiry is discussed in the sphere of organisational development according to the existing literature, an organisation can equally represent a community, as will be discussed later.

According to Watkins and Mohr (2001:15), Appreciative Inquiry is built on theory-building processes for a whole-system change, while holding organisational learning at its core. These authors position Appreciative Inquiry as a learning process that starts by exploring the positive core and exceptional moments that enable transformational shifts by enabling organisations to develop their own *generative theory*. As such, this allows people within organisations (or communities) to develop their own theories of what contributes to positive developments and happiness within them and their communities. This relates well to Freire and Boal's notions of using the existing knowledge of participants to create new understandings of oppression or specific issues to generate an improved understanding of the issue especially the driving factors of a specific challenge.

Apart from allowing the opportunity for recognising and developing theory, it is also a theory of participation and engagement used by facilitators to encourage participation in a manner that moves beyond traditional problem-solving methodologies (Cooperrider & Whitney 2005:5). Again this relates closely to Freire's and Boal's insistence that active participation in the learning process is crucial in allowing participants to reflect on their own knowledge and create new knowledge. According to Morsillo and Fisher (2007:47) “it [Appreciative Inquiry] is used to develop new ways of engaging the participants, as well as assessing the impacts and outcomes of the projects”. For the purpose of learning and

development, Appreciative Inquiry offers the opportunity for people to participate by contributing their own knowledge to the process of development or change, as such placing them at the centre of the change and development process similar to the theories and practice of Freire and Boal. It also places the focus of the change or development process beyond a ‘problem-solving’ process. Whilst Freire and Boal propose Socratic questioning as one of the techniques to elicit deeper understandings of their oppression and problem solving, Appreciative Inquiry places the problem solving in an asset-based approach where the first inquiry is into the positive or that which adds to participants’ sense of well-being.

The methodology and purpose of Appreciative Inquiry can be further explored by looking at a practice-orientated definition of Appreciative Inquiry as described by Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) and highlighted earlier:

“Appreciative Inquiry is the cooperative, co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organisations, and the world around them. It involves systemic discovery of what gives life to an organisation or a community when it is most effective and most capable in economic, ecological and human terms” (Cooperrider & Whitney 2005: 8).”

Here Cooperrider and Whitney place Appreciative Inquiry as a participatory, organisational or community-driven process that aims to identify positive experiences as driving factors for change. Should this approach be applied in the context of HIV and AIDS education, for example, it would allow for the opportunity to move away from an individualistic approach to HIV and AIDS education where the individual is isolated and identified as the sole responsible agency for reduced-risk activities. It could also frame HIV and AIDS education beyond ‘scare’ or ‘doom-and-gloom’ scenarios, as a health and social issue that can be addressed through actions that are supported by communities or through the actions of the individual. Cooperrider and Whitney further explain the Appreciative Inquiry process as

“... An intervention [that] gives way to inquiry, imagination, and innovation. Instead of negation, criticism, and spiralling diagnosis, there is discovery, dream, and design. AI involves



the art and practise of asking unconditionally positive questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential. Through mass mobilised inquiry, hundreds and even thousands of people can be involved in co-creating their collective future" (Cooperrider & Whitney 2005:8).

Similar to both Boal's and Freire's approaches to achieving change and transformation, this process places participants as active contributors to the learning process. Appreciative Inquiry makes use of the collective experience, knowledge and understanding of the organisation or community to develop the desired potential for change. This is again linked to Freire's notion of dialogue and praxis where people's participation in the development process and the understanding of their own 'oppression' contributes to the action required to change the status quo through a process of reflection. While Freire requires participants to identify the factors that are causing their oppression, Appreciative Inquiry firstly requires participants to identify what it is that makes them 'happy' and what they value in their current situation. This process of learning through reflection and action relies on the asking of positive questions. The process of asking questions, however, relies on an external facilitator to guide the process. As discussed in the previous chapter, this 'facilitation' may however serve an external agenda and it is important that the agenda and issues remain relevant and true to the reality of the organisation or community. Cooperrider and Whitney (2005:8) however assert that Appreciative Inquiry links the change agenda to the "untapped" and "rich" accounts of what people deem and experience as positive.

This clearly points to links with Freire and Boal's notion that the experiences of learners are central to the learning process and that it is communities' accounts of the positive or their lived experiences that Appreciative Inquiry also places as central to the change agenda. Through Appreciative Inquiry communities are allowed to decide on their own change agenda. Where the global challenge of HIV and AIDS is introduced for example, young people are able to start thinking about and determining their own agenda for change that may reduce their

vulnerabilities. While in the process the ABC approach introduced in chapter 3 may be introduced as factual information on how to reduce HIV and AIDS related risk, it does not become prescriptive owing to the fact that Appreciative Inquiry allows for the opportunity to reflect on how their context (as does Freire and Boal) is promoting vulnerability and not merely individual sexual behaviour in isolation.

Here Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) assert that the Appreciative Inquiry process offers the opportunity for ‘democratic’ participation where the contribution of participants is paramount. This can be linked to Freire’s notion of the democratisation of education. Whilst participants’ contributions are based on positive experiences, their contributions are managed by the facilitator/s as valuable and directly linked to the change agenda.

The Appreciative Inquiry process for organisational or community development and change relies on the positive core of organisational life and it is this inquiry into the positive that promotes “collective wisdom, builds energy and resilience to change” and enables the capacity of participants to contribute and enact the change (Cooperrider & Whitney 2005: 10). Cooperrider and Whitney position this inquiry as the ‘positive’ opposite to problem-solving approaches, where the problem or issue that inhibits change or development is isolated and addressed, as opposed to a whole-system approach where the feedback of the inquiry is disseminated to decision makers only and the change process is not a widespread, creative process where best practices are shared among all stakeholders. Cooperrider and Whitney consider problem-based approaches to be slow and unnecessary reflections on past causes of problems that rarely result in new visions and which notoriously result in defensiveness from participants (Cooperrider & Whitney 2005:11, 12). This can be linked to deficit-based HIV and AIDS education programmes where certain behaviours are assumed to be prevalent among young people and as such in need of change; in addition not recognising the positive behaviours of young people that may mitigate negative behaviours.

In this dissertation my position is that the specific difference with integrating the Appreciative Inquiry process in the Community Theatre process is that participants become the change agents through their participation and use of theatre as language (as proposed by Boal), which allow participants to further initiate change agendas with the rest of the community and as such do not rely on facilitators to establish the change agenda through what they learn from, for example, a Participatory Rapid Appraisal process. The purpose of infusing Appreciative Inquiry processes in the Community Theatre framework is to position the learning experience about HIV and AIDS as an inquiry, and to allow for the exploration, discovery and understanding of social realities and they may influence their vulnerability to HIV and AIDS in a economic, political and social sense.

This move away from a problem-solving approach that focuses on the organisation as a 'mystery to be embraced' ensures that participants enter the dialogue on an equal footing where every participant's contribution is valid. This allows for the exploration, inquiry, analysis and search for the organisation's 'positive core' that involves all participants or stakeholders, links this knowledge to the change agenda and sets the priorities for change (Cooperrider & Whitney 2005: 12).³²

Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003:17) further highlight the way the problem-solving approach minimises participation where deficit-based change programmes isolate participation by promoting the selective inclusion of people. As with the principles and techniques proposed by Freire and Boal, the Appreciative Inquiry process is social in nature and relies on the equal participation of all stakeholders and is a critical interrogation of the positive. Whilst in the work of Freire and Boal, the interrogation may have been narrative and dialogical; there is very little evidence that would suggest that the approach was framed as a focus on the positive. It is seen rather as an investigation of

³² This may resonate with the 'six thinking hats' proposed by de Bono (1999), although the six thinking hats are concerned with organising and managing information. The process of the six thinking hats is in itself problem based since it is mainly used in identifying problems and then using the system to develop thoughts and ways of addressing and overcoming the problem.

the problem and the way it could be changed to the positive. I would suggest that considering the critical inquiry based on dialogue (and Socratic Questioning), as proposed by Freire and Boal, Appreciative Inquiry offers a new appreciative and positive frame in which to approach the processes and techniques proposed by Boal and Freire.

Appreciative Inquiry is not a process that was developed in opposition to the standard problem-solving techniques that are used to promote change and development. The inquiry into the positive core is based on the theory of social constructionism. For the facilitator of the Appreciative Inquiry approach it is important to understand the contribution of social constructionism to the Appreciative Inquiry process in order to guide the process according to the need of the stakeholders. The following section will explore the theoretical basis of Appreciative Inquiry.

4.3 The Theoretical Basis of Appreciative Inquiry

Watkins and Mohr (2001:26, 27) frame social constructionism as a formative theory of the postmodern era and, as such, rooted in postmodernism. Where in modernism the search for truth relied on rules and structures that defined the correct way of doing things, postmodernism rejects these assumptions in favour of the idea that truth(s) is/are created by multiple and contextually determined realities.

As mentioned earlier, Appreciative Inquiry has become increasingly popular as a social constructionist approach to organisational change and development. Van der Sluis, De Caluwé and van Nistelrooij (2005:4) confirm the link between Appreciative Inquiry and social constructionism and state that “this dynamic perspective on the process of individual learning and change, in the context of organizational environments, is supported by social construction theory”. Van der Sluis *et al* further assert that, according to the Social Constructionism theory, individuals learn and develop through their social environments and there is a relationship between their own development and practices within their changing or developing social construct (Van der Sluis *et al* 2005:4).

Understanding social constructionism as a theoretical support base for Appreciative Inquiry is important in guiding the developer or implementer of Appreciative Inquiry to understand the manifestations of culture, traditions, beliefs and other practices prevalent in communities and organisations and how to integrate this understanding in the change or development process. Constructionist theory values 'reflective' methodology. This is the ability to critically engage with current practices and behaviours. In common with Freire and Boal's notions of reflection and action, critical reflection allows for a platform to debate and discuss practices or beliefs that may illuminate the need for change and allow for the opportunity to enact the desired change.

Burr (2003:2–9) offers four key assumptions that form the basis of the social constructionist discourse. The first is a critical view of assumed knowledge. Social constructionists challenge the modernist notion that communities can be understood through objective and unbiased observation and that the perception of reality cannot be formed through such an observation. Burr further asserts that perceptions of the reality of communities or, in the case of this dissertation, young people are based on cultural and historical specificity and that the ideas and categories that external agents or observers may assume as the reality are based on individual history and culture and, as such, the assumed understandings of the realities of communities may not be correct.

The third assumption of social constructionists is that knowledge is created through, and sustained by, social processes. This implies that people's interaction and relationships form the basis of what is true to them. As such language becomes the essential tool that brings meaning to all. This is closely related to Freire's notion of the Language of Possibility, where the manner in which people communicate and verbalise thought processes becomes a construct of their reality (Freire 1985:22). The final assumption that brings social constructionists together, according to Burr, is that knowledge and social action are connected processes and that the one cannot function without the other. This is similar to Freire's notion of praxis and Boal's concept of the spect-actor

where reflection on experiences and the generation of critical understanding may lead to action that constitutes change.

It is this possibility of language that is at the centre of the social constructionist argument that insists that the dialogues and discourses among people within organisations and communities shape the realities of people. It is this dialogue or language that makes sense of past and present experiences and history that collectively shape the image of the future (Watkins & Mohr 2001:28). By asking the positive question, or simply put, the question that conjures images of structures, systems or even moments that were deemed positive, anticipatory images are created through dialogue and thus begins the positive inquiry that may lead to further positive images (Watkins & Mohr 2001:29).

Based on several studies in social science, Cooperrider explored the impact of positive images on the creation of the future.³³ It is this belief in the power of the positive image that drives Appreciative Inquiry. This is based on the heliotropic principle (or the *heliotropic hypothesis* according to Cooperrider) that people *move* towards positive images and, as such, Appreciative Inquiry is based on the generative and creative images that can be appreciated as a basis for creating change (Watkins & Mohr 2005:29). In *Theatre of the oppressed*, Boal also explores the use of images in what he calls “image theatre” to enact change and to allow for thought or language to become visible (Boal 2000:135, 138). By doing this participants are capturing the “Image of the Possible Transition” (see chapter 2) which speaks to the process of moving towards the positive that Cooperrider emphasises.

Bushe (1998:1) argues that the collection of positive stories is key to generating ideas and images that aid development. He asserts that whilst the process of creative ideation is important, it is the use of this creation that is critical for change and that the hard work begins once the stories are told and documented. Here Community Theatre may offer the possibility to disseminate

³³ This is according to Watkins and Mohr (2001:29); however, Bushe (1998:3) mentions that there is no published sources that validate this hypothesis.

the positive stories towards a broader audience or an even more in-depth understanding of the possibility of change. In Boal's terms it may become the "rehearsal for change". Bushe (1998:3) however warns that the facilitator should be prepared to assess the validity of images and whether the images are strong enough to propel participants towards change. When the Appreciative Inquiry process is not strong enough or there is insufficient buy-in from participants that will 'unfreeze' the optimal positive images, change may not happen and the process may be in vain (Bushe 1998:3).

Van der Haar and Hosking (2004:1021) warn of the relationship between subject and object, or in the case of community development, the facilitator and the community members. This relates to Freire's notion of educator as subject and learner as object as redundant and where the relationship between educator and learner needs to be renegotiated to focus on the knowledge and experience of learners as central to the education process. Van der Haar and Hosking's critique should be considered guiding factors for the facilitator in that Appreciative Inquiry is a process that will yield different relational results in different contexts and the facilitator should be prepared to deal with these differences. The role of the facilitator is to manage the relationships for achieving the goal of change or development, as set out by the participants through an appreciative process and *not* to impose knowledge or experience on the learners. This relates well to the change required in HIV and AIDS educational programmes, where young people's knowledge and experience needs to be the basis for interrogating risk behaviour.

Bushe (1998:1), in common with Van der Haar and Hosking, warns against the implementation of Appreciative Inquiry in environments where focusing on the positive may not yield the required results unless there is an expression of the resentment or anger around the challenges or 'oppression' in Freire's and Boal's terms. Van der Haar and Hoskings and Bushe highlight the need to look at Appreciative Inquiry and the manner in which it may effect change in different contexts. As such it becomes important to look into the explicit relationship

between Appreciative Inquiry and change and the basis for accepting that Appreciative Inquiry will promote change in organisations and communities.

Van der Sluis *et al* highlights the important question of how to approach change in the Appreciative Inquiry process. They state that any form of change is dependent on the learning and change orientation of individuals (van der Sluis *et al* 2005:1, 2). Although van der Sluis *et al* refer to research on employees in organisations, the same can also be said for community development where change is required. In order to bring about individual and social change in a community it is essential that there is a thorough understanding of the manner in which the community learns (or has been conditioned to learn) and how individuals and communities feel about change. Here again the role of the facilitator as guide of the change process is important given that participants may be apprehensive of a sudden overwhelming focus on the positive or their strengths, which may seem unreal or unfamiliar to them and create further alienation.

The challenges identified by Bushe (1998), Elliot (1999), Van der Haar and Hosking (2004) are important when Appreciative Inquiry is used in a community development context for HIV and AIDS education. These concerns will be addressed later in the section dealing with Appreciative Inquiry and community development.

Building on the theoretical base of social constructionism, there are five principles identified as central to the Appreciative Inquiry process. Understanding these principles and their relation to theories of Freire and Boal bring the possible functioning of Appreciative Inquiry as a learning and development tool in communities through theatre closer together.

4.4 The Principles of Appreciative Inquiry

Watkins and Mohr (2001:37–39) outline five principles as being central to the functioning and adaptability of Appreciative Inquiry. These are the (1) constructionist principle; (2) the simultaneity principle; (3) the poetic principle;

(4) the anticipatory principle; and (5) the positive principle. These principles are considered essential should practitioners choose to adapt Appreciative Inquiry to different contexts.

The constructionist principle (linked to social constructionism) is concerned with the knowledge of participants. It forms strong linkages with the pedagogy of Freire which places learners or communities as bearers of knowledge that are able to influence their destiny. The constructionist principle sets the stage for learning and making sense of what is believed and discovering opportunities for change (Watkins & Mohr 2001:37, 38). According to Cooperrider and Whitney, and referring to the work of Gergen, constructionism is an approach to human science that moves the focus away from the individual towards the relationship as the key generator of knowledge (Cooperrider & Whitney 2005: 50). This notion also shows intricate links to Freire's notion of language, which supports the discovery of reality and an exploration of what liberation can be. Also in line with the notions of Freire and Boal on praxis, constructionism sees action and dialogue as being inseparable. Cooperrider and Whitney take this further, stating that it is this combination of dialogue and action that creates generative theory which is "articulations of tomorrow's possibilities" (Cooperrider & Whitney 2005:50).

The anticipatory principle considers imagination to be the most important resource for creating constructive change (Watkins & Mohr 2001:38). This principle considers people's vision of the future and 'what will be' as a key factor in guiding behaviour (Watkins & Mohr 2001:38). Fry *et al* (2005:52) state that: "One of the most basic theorems of the anticipatory view of organisational life is that it is the image of the future that in fact guides what might be called the current behaviour of an organism or system." As with Freire's consideration of praxis and the desire to change oppressive situations, and as proposed by Boal's Simultaneous Dramaturgy, it is people's perceptions of how their reality is influencing their future that creates a powerful image of destiny (Cooperrider & Whitney 2005:52). This can be considered in terms of the way social structures and systems influence and interact with people's perceptions of the

future. For example, how does an individual's economic status, access to quality education and healthcare influence their perceptions of what they can achieve and how their community's ability to negotiate and provide these services and improve economic situations impact on their perceptions of 'what can be'?

In the case of addressing HIV and AIDS at community level and through education, often the only option provided to young people is to follow the ABC approach. This creates a limited view of opportunities outside the contextual realities of the communal factors that drive the very behaviours that promote not adhering to the ABC of safer sexual behaviour. By confirming Aristotle's view that a vivid imagination compels the whole body to obey it, Cooperrider and Whitney (2005:53) reaffirm the power of the imagination as central to any change process. Boal (2006:21) also emphasises the importance of the imagination in the change process. It is this imagination that the Appreciative Inquiry wants to nurture in the learning process of becoming a powerful language of change and stimulating action to change.

The positive principle assumes that change can be more long lasting and effective as a result of its fundamental questioning of the positive (Watkins & Mohr 2001:39; Cooperrider & Whitney 2005:53). Cooperrider and Whitney further position human beings and organisations as moving into the directions they are enquiring about (Watkins & Mohr 2001:39). As such, Watkins and Cooperrider insist that, should the inquiry process follow a positive positioning that does not reflect on issues such as low morale (or risky sexual behaviour in the context of HIV and AIDS), but rather a questioning of empowerment (or being a successful student), it may have a more sustainable longer-term impact than focusing on the individual behaviours that should be addressed.

Similar to Freire's notion that education and change are not mutually exclusive, and Boal's notion of Simultaneous Dramaturgy where the spectator can also be a change agent, the principle of simultaneity states that inquiry and change are not separate processes (Cooperrider & Whitney 2005:50). As Whitney and Trosten-Bloom put it, change happens the moment a question is asked

(Whitney & Trosten-Bloom 2003:58). As such, Appreciative Inquiry focuses on the power of the question, but it is the way in which the question is posed that unlocks the key to transformation. Asking the 'positive' questions allows for discovery and creating images of opportunity and possibility.

The poetic principle assumes that organisations or communities are open books (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom 2003:61). By being 'open books', communities provide what can be considered endless sources of learning and interpretation. This is supported by Boal's *Poetics of the oppressed*, which asserts people's ability to engage with various solutions to a problem. By having endless opportunities for interpretation, communities may reveal stories that can be infinitely interpreted on the basis of the constructionist approach, which asserts that there can be multiple truths and multiple realities.

Fry *et al* imply that by selecting the topic for interpretation, the participants help to write the new story of an organisation and this forms the poetic principle of Appreciative Inquiry (Fry *et al* 2002:5, 6). The poetic principle allows for every conceivable topic to be discussed, interpreted and analysed in order to create more knowledge or generative theory. This is promoted by Freire as the basis of *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, where the knowledge of participants creates new knowledge as opposed to information that is deposited into participants that remain static and non-generative (Freire 2005:92). The poetic principle, however, takes the education process proposed by Freire one step further by focusing the knowledge of the learner or participants on the positive. Appreciative Inquiry relies on the poetic principle to frame these topics as positive and to relate these stories to experiences of joy and/or enthusiasm and *not* to create images or stories of stress or low morale, for example.

Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003:69) include three more principles in their work. These are the principle of wholeness, the enactment principle and the free-choice principle. The principle of wholeness has relevance for the experience and dialogue within communities where experience and the ability to witness opposing views, interpretation and perspectives contribute to understanding 'the whole story'. These authors refer to this as a feeling of

“wholeness” that brings out the best in people through a collective sharing of experiences and situations. The importance of the wholeness principle in Community Theatre development is the capacity to minimise the ability of an external agenda to influence decision making or impose learning that is outside the scope and relevance of the participants. Citing his experience in researching various Community Theatre groups across the world, van Erven (2001:244) argues that the most important benefits for participants in Community Theatre is improved self-esteem and cross-cultural understanding through a collective art process that, I believe, closely resonates with the wholeness principle of Appreciative Inquiry. By sharing experiences and developing performance a journey is created that reflects on the wholeness of the participants as members from the same community. Van Erven highlights the argument that not every Community Theatre project travels the same journey. The outcomes can never be predicted and neither can the process be simply duplicated in a different setting (Van Erven 2001:244).

The enactment principle is closely related to Dorothy Heathcote’s (Heathcote & Bolton 1995:25) “If” technique and is in fact referred to by Whitney and Trosten-Bloom as “acting ‘As If’ is self-fulfilling” (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom 2003:72). The enactment principle encourages participants to enact the change they want to happen. This is also strongly linked the Boal’s *Poetics of the oppressed* where participants are moved into action by assuming the role of the protagonist, changing the dramatic action by trying out different ‘solutions’ and training himself for change (Boal 2000:122).

The principle of free choice is concerned with people’s ability to choose the nature of their contribution (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom 2003:75). In its most basic form this principle suggests that when people are free to choose they are less restricted and able to contribute what and how they choose and that this creates a safe space for participation. This freedom of choice becomes a positive experience when people are able to choose when and how they participate based on their strengths and interests, which will allow them to share their values, hopes and dreams (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom 2003:75). Etherton

highlights that the risk development models, such as Rapid or Participatory Rural Appraisal, hold by often imposing the agenda of its initiators (in Ewu 1997:136).

Appreciative Inquiry holds the potential to empower communities as change agents because they themselves set the agenda, the process and ultimately the outcome of the initiative and not the initiators. The process relies on their participation and cannot be guided or steered in the direction of the initiator. This notion also supports Freire's view of the teacher–learner relationship, where students, through their knowledge, frame the boundaries of participation and not the teacher as the authoritative enforcer of knowledge transmission. Freire takes this notion of free choice further in stating that there is also a freedom in learning to make mistakes, and that this freedom of discovering that mistakes allow for further learning and development (Freire 1998:97).

What is inherent in all eight principles is the need for conversation and transforming conversation into an activity that can effect change. This is done through a continuous application of positive questions that create images of possibility and change. This application of 'the positive question' is guided by a process popularly divided into the Four-D Model or the Four-I Model, where the Four-D model seems more appropriate for use in community development and the Four-I process more suited in an organisational development context. The four-D model encapsulates all eight principles of Appreciative Inquiry as discussed above. The way in which these models are used makes little difference, since they both aim to address the change needs of organisations or communities building on their existing positive attributes.

4.5 The Appreciative Inquiry Process

For the purpose of this study, the Four-D model as outlined by Watkins and Mohr (2001) and Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003) will be applied as being the most suitable for applying Appreciative Inquiry in the community development context using theatre as a vehicle for participation and education. The reason for this is that the Four-D process offers a less technical application

of the Appreciative Inquiry process which captures the power of Appreciative Inquiry in four simple steps: discovery, dream, design and destiny. Each of the steps of this process offer direct links to community theatre principles and maximise participation as opposed to, for example, the Four-I model which requires interview data and interview protocols. Such an overly technical approach may inhibit the learning process at community level where the focus should be on mutual learning and not on creating a perception of participants being studied.

The two models were born out of different needs and showcase the adaptability of the AI process. The Four-I model was born out of a need for a corporate organisation to initiate something new in its field whilst educating all participants in the change process through Appreciative Inquiry. The Four-D model was developed by the GEM initiative, a programme of the SIGMA Centre at Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management, which aims to provide organisational capacity-building programmes for NGOs.

As mentioned before, both models capture the essence of Appreciative Inquiry and link up with the five core processes of Appreciative Inquiry. These five core processes include: choosing the positive as the focus of the inquiry; inquiring into stories of life-giving forces; locating themes that appear in these stories and selecting topics for further inquiry; creating shared images of the preferred future; and finding innovative ways to create the future. It is important to know that the eight principles and the five core processes are located in the Four-D process.

The process used to generate the power of Appreciative Inquiry is called the Four-D model/cycle. According to Ludema et al (2003), the four-D model/cycle can be explained as follows:

- *Discovery*: In this phase participants discover what gives life to the community when it is functioning at its best. Here it is essential to place

value on the 'positive' which participants might consider to be a given and to affirm that as instrumental to change.

- *Dream*: Here participants envision what possibilities might present themselves. Once the 'best' has been identified through discovery, it will be easy to consider and search beyond this. Dreaming becomes the stage where the positive image is realised as a true possibility and passion to achieve the 'preferred' state is created.
- *Design*: In this stage participants are encouraged to share exciting discoveries and possibilities. Through Appreciative Inquiry a consensus is reached so that members may build a common vision of what is desired and undertake to give way to a collective will. This phase relies on the wholeness principle as outlined by Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003), where excitement and shared vision are created by the sharing of ideas.
- *Destiny*: Here the future is constructed through innovation and action. Appreciative Inquiry here establishes its own momentum. Because past realities have been explored, there is a collective confidence in making 'things' happen.



Figure 1: The Appreciative Inquiry 4-D cycle. (Whitney & Tristen-Boom 2003:6)

Each phase offers the opportunity for critical reflection and is the motivation or catalyst for the next phase. It is important to note that the Appreciative Inquiry process is not a packaged formula for change. That is to say that if community development practitioners follow this process that change is inevitable and this will certainly not be the case in the application of Appreciate Inquiry if infused with Community Theatre. Once the destiny phase is completed, the Appreciative Inquiry process need not stop and should not stop. Once new understanding and visions of the future have been created, the process should be continued to discover new opportunities for change, building on the new understanding and vision created.

It is important to note that whilst Appreciative Inquiry may offer a new approach to action research in the context of this study, the use of Appreciative Inquiry is not for research purposes, but to stimulate the participation and learning of people within a community development imperative, using theatre as a vehicle to disseminate information and facilitate participation in the learning process.

4.6 Appreciative Inquiry, Community Development and Young People

A community is a diverse network of social structures and within this diverse network, van der Sluis *et al* (2005:4), affirming social constructionism, confirm that there are many existing models that “describe humans as self-regulating living systems, which both affect and are affected by their environments”. As such, in addressing the HIV and AIDS risk with young people in a community, it is essential that the environment in which risk occurs becomes central to the risk reduction process. In considering this, methodologies should be explored that bring individual risk to HIV and AIDS in direct relation to community interaction and community relationships. This speaks to the notion as discussed in the previous chapter that HIV and AIDS education for young people should not focus on individual behaviour change alone, but on the communal and developmental challenges that increase vulnerability.

As mentioned in chapter 2, efforts that include HIV-risk reduction through education programmes focusing on the ABC approach making use of what

Freire refers to as a 'banking-method' of education will fail to contextualise risk and will not create impetus in risk reduction behaviour among young people. It may indeed very well end up placing the methods as promulgated by the ABC approach outside the reach of many participants owing to community-driven constraints. Appreciative Inquiry, because of its focus on strengths and assets in communities and individuals, may contribute to an improved learning experience that contextualises risk and participants may develop ideas on how to mitigate risk and what the benefits for mitigating risks are for themselves and their communities. As proposed in chapter 3, the meaningful participation of young people in HIV and AIDS programmes is considered very important in effective HIV and AIDS programming for young people and, as such, ABC approaches offer very little more than superficial participation opportunities for young people. In my view, Appreciative Inquiry through the Four-D cycle has the opportunity to maximise meaningful participation opportunities for young people.

It is my argument that where young people often feel disempowered and unable to participate or engage in change processes, the Appreciative Inquiry process offers them the occasions to discover opportunities for participation and change. This is achievable by discovering the positive core or behaviours that contribute to development.

According to Elliot (1999:vi), Appreciative Inquiry makes a contribution to community development by using techniques that assist communities to understand their strengths, analyse their options, and plan and participate in a democratic manner. Elliot points out current practices in poverty alleviation at community level that rely on the use of participatory methodologies to highlight the problems, the resource constraints and the unmet needs of the community. External agents then work with the community to address these problems, resulting in communities believing that only external agents can solve their problems and not building any critical capacity to address further issues as and when they arise.

Elliot (1999:281) concludes that there are many benefits of using the Appreciative Inquiry Approach in community development. Although his work does not discuss the use of Appreciative Inquiry in HIV and AIDS education, he believes that Appreciative Inquiry assists in breaking down levels of cynicism in communities by making them dream and rekindle hopes and mobilise energies for realistic change. The power of Appreciative Inquiry is that it allows for all of this to be done collectively, creating trust among community members to support themselves through every step that needs to be taken to achieve the change. This addresses the concern over trust previously raised by Bushe (1998) that the ability of Appreciative Inquiry to bring together communities in a common goal through the creative processes inherent in Appreciative Inquiry addresses issues of trust among participants.

Elliot (1999:283, 284) raises some concerns around the application of Appreciative Inquiry in the community development context. Addressing the sustainability of Appreciative Inquiry in communities, Elliot warns that there should not be an overreliance on the process itself to sustain it, but that there should be commitment from community authorities with budgets and timelines for periodic reviews to support the process. Elliot further emphasises that due attention should be paid to power relations in communities that may inhibit the process of change. Commitment and openness from leaders in communities and other authoritarian structures such as donors and government should support the process and allow growth and change to occur. Equally important in sustaining the process is sustaining the outcome. For this, community structures need to have gained the capacity, skills and knowledge to realise the change and, through partnerships, sustain the change (Elliot 1999:283, 284).

Neil Ford (in Elliot 1999:vi) believes that Appreciative Inquiry can make a contribution to community development and sustainable livelihoods where the imperative is “to develop techniques and methodologies to help local people understand their strengths, analyse their options, plan effectively and participate more equally in decision-making”. Ford describes what he believes to be current practices that “use participatory methodologies to help local people identify

problems, resource constraints and unmet basic needs” and where development professionals then work in partnership with the community to implement projects that fix the problem as a problem-oriented approach that may contribute to a sense of dependency in the communities and may compromise sustainability when the professionals leave.

As will be explained in the following chapter, the aim to synergise the Appreciative Inquiry approach with Community Theatre practices is to enhance the learning process and contribute to deeper understanding of (in the case HIV and AIDS risk) the subject matter which empowers communities and individuals to effect change. It is my position that, should an asset-based approach be used in terms of which the knowledge of learners is paramount and HIV and AIDS is approached as a multi-faceted development issue for young people, educational approaches and especially those making use of Community Theatre, will be more effective in raising young people’s consciousness and self-efficacy. The focus of this synergy is to empower participants to seek services and support that will enable them to effect and sustain change programmes.

Ford (in Elliot 1999:vi–vii) argues that initial indications are that the results of applying Appreciative Inquiry to the field of development are positive in that it develops a “development pathway based on what is right rather than what is wrong”. Ford states that when people realise how resilient, adaptive and innovative they are, through participation the experience itself becomes very empowering and encourages people to think about the way they want to develop and consider what contributes to the well-being of their communities, whether it be cultural identity or material success. It is this realisation of what development means to participants that provides the sustainability of the process within the search for human happiness.

When working with young people in development the issue of sustainability becomes more complex. Young people’s participation in development programmes should not be at the cost of burdening them with responsibilities beyond their capabilities. The imperative of young people’s participation should

be a learning experience that contextualises their learning experience as knowledge gained for building their capacity and ability to effect change that is realistic for them and appropriate to their context.

There is very little published research and few case studies related to the implantation of Appreciative Inquiry in issues related to young people. From the existing literature it seems that there is some evidence to support the use of Appreciative Inquiry using young people as a tool for development.

Bruck and Weber (2000:10) mention that in an urban renewal project in the United States of America called Imagine Chicago, the most impressive responses for a new Chicago were from children and adolescents. Hall and Hammond ([Sa]) list the example of young people interacting with the Appreciative Inquiry process at the Banana Kelly Organisation in the United States of America and identify the way the Appreciate Inquiry approach, when applied to young people, renders what they consider to be constructive results for community building and development. Hall and Hammond ([Sa]:6) recognise that it is very difficult to measure the outcomes of applying an appreciative approach to working with young people. They do, however, offer basic indicators such as an increase in skills and attendance in development programmes at community level as possible indicators that the approach appeals to young people.

Morsillo and Fisher emphasise that a local level (community or grassroots) approach to Appreciative Inquiry should involve all participants in creative expression and practices that promote the meaningful participation of young people and raise within them a commitment to the process and outcomes of improving their community and creating social change (Morsillo & Fisher 2007:58). Morsillo and Fisher (2007) further argue that an Appreciative Inquiry approach allows for reflection on the social structures with which young people interact. As such, young people's participation in development programmes should be seen as part of a symbiotic relationship with the broader aspects of social change (Conger & Galambos 1997; Mackay 1999; Miles 2002 in Morsillo & Fisher 2007:56). Citing Calcutt, Morsillo and Fisher also assert that in contrast

to dominant social views youth cultures do not reflect a general rebelliousness, “but rather reflect the creative ways in which youth interpret the structural and cultural changes that surround them” (in Morsillo & Fisher, 2007). Although Morsillo and Fisher may not be referring to young people in South Africa, the work of Parker, CADRE and the HSRC, as discussed in chapter 3, indicates that this may be true in the South African context, emphasising the fact that young people are aware of the structural and cultural factors that inhibit their development at a community level.

In the context of HIV and AIDS education, assisting young people to explore the factors that put them at risk may empower them to envision opportunities to change these factors and the Appreciative Inquiry process may assist them to realise their existing strengths that would make such a change possible. Combined with the creative platform that theatre holds, Appreciative Inquiry may provide the platform for young people to discover these strengths in a fun participatory manner.

4.7 Chapter Conclusion: Appreciative Inquiry and Community Theatre – Exploring Opportunities.

An Appreciative Inquiry approach could prove to be beneficial when coupled with Community Theatre work, since the intention in the context of organisational analysis, according to Cooperrider *et al* (2003:3), is the intention to deepen understanding and to foster innovation in social organisational arrangements and processes. Appreciative Inquiry revolves around questioning or exploring the perceived positive core that strengthens the capacity for change within an organisation or community. It is fundamentally exploratory and thus lends itself to community-driven activities that aim to address challenges that may impede development and, in the context of this dissertation, the challenges that HIV and AIDS risk hold for the development of young people.

Since Appreciative Inquiry does not merely focus on the problematic, but on potential, if used in Community Theatre that addresses HIV and AIDS, the possible results could produce a shift in the manner in which these kinds of

interventions are traditionally produced, as well as a change in approach, content and outcome. This is done by highlighting the ‘life-giving’ forces (the positive contributions, events or structures that are celebrated and contribute to a sense of well-being in the community) of the organisation (the community) that may produce a heightened sense of purpose and ultimately contribute to improved communication and understanding of how change is possible within current community realities.

My reading of Appreciative Inquiry is that it is about learning and generating new knowledge. This serves the purpose of both the Community Theatre practitioner and the audience or participants. It allows for the Community Theatre practitioner to better understand the community he or she is working with, its realities, its hopes and its dreams. It allows the opportunity for the participants or audience to reflect on the reality of their situation and engage with the possibility of changing the status quo. Through the discovery and dream process it has the ability to unleash creative energy within its participants. This is done within a learning environment and a learner-orientated approach that allows for dialogue and a renewed critical understanding of the possibility of change and the foundation of ‘oppression’ that can be changed.

Appreciative Inquiry combined with Community Theatre could impact on the functionality of Community Theatre in terms of developing a play, interacting with the subject matter and ultimately the performance itself, by affirming their ‘life giving’ abilities. It can build on the lived realities of participants by imagining the possibilities within their communities. In addition, their personal potential forms an assertive asset-based position. This relies on their imagination, which builds on the creative process in developing a play and delves into their positive core that may contribute to a fresh interpretation of HIV and AIDS risks and how these problems impact on themselves and their communities.

The next chapter will explore exactly how Appreciative Inquiry infused with Community Theatre can focus HIV and AIDS education beyond a banking method of education towards a more holistic developmental opportunity for young people. As such, chapter 5 is a culmination of the assets and

weaknesses identified in HIV and AIDS education for young people, Community Theatre used as agent for change and development at community level and Appreciative Inquiry as change agent reviewed in the literature. By doing this, a model of HIV prevention through theatre will be proposed for young people in order to address the challenges faced in contemporary HIV prevention programmes.

CHAPTER 5

AN APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY APPROACH TO HIV PREVENTION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE USING COMMUNITY THEATRE

5.1 Positioning Strengths, Positioning Weaknesses

In this dissertation I showed how current practices in HIV and AIDS education and especially those making use of theatre as either a learning methodology or a technique within the learning process hold certain weaknesses. I positioned the following as challenges that need to be considered and addressed:

- Many current theatre practices do not seem to optimally encourage meaningful participation that would further promote critical consciousness among participants.
- Young people are not always seen as contributors of knowledge and information in the learning process on HIV and AIDS.
- There is an overreliance on individual behaviour change rather than strategies that incorporate social structures and notions of social change that would support individual agency in context.
- The agency of young people in contributing to the learning process on HIV and AIDS at community level does not seem to be sufficiently encouraged.
- Current practices in HIV and AIDS education favour a problem-based approach that focuses on negative content and simplified messages warning against behaviour.
- HIV and AIDS education programmes are often framed from an outsider perspective where external experts develop programmes or lead processes that do not consider the participants' contexts.

In order to address these challenges, I have worked from the premise that theatre remains relevant in promoting change and that if it is infused with an

asset-based approach to learning such as Appreciative Inquiry new and exciting learning and development opportunities may be created for young people through the HIV and AIDS epidemic. I have described how the work of Freire and Boal provides important building blocks to enrich the learning process. I have brought together notions of critical consciousness, social action and change and asset-based approaches to examine how these can be synergised to possibly implement a multidisciplinary approach to learning about HIV and AIDS. This will bring together the work of Freire, Boal, Community Theatre and Appreciative Inquiry to broaden the scope of HIV and AIDS education and improve the agency of young people in contributing to development within their communities.

5.2 Steps Towards Critical Consciousness: Framing the Approach

In this dissertation I position Community Theatre used as an educational conduit for HIV and AIDS for young people as a development agency when combined with the Appreciative Inquiry approach towards the transformation of young people as receivers of HIV and AIDS information into agents of development and social change. In order to maximise the learning opportunity within Community Theatre for HIV and AIDS, I position Appreciative Inquiry as a process that leads young people to critical learning and development based on the practice and theories of Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal. The similarities in the work of Freire and Boal for attaining the proposed outcomes of education and theatre grounds the use of Community Theatre infused with an Appreciative Inquiry approach as a critical educational experience based on critical consciousness, participation and reflection framed within an asset-based approach. Both Freire and Boal position their work as an inquiry into social systems and the challenges within these systems that promote oppression or, in the case of this dissertation, vulnerability towards HIV and AIDS. Both scholars evoke the power of the imagination in their work, of dreaming about the possibilities of a life without oppression or vulnerability.

In order for this approach to be applied, it is important to outline the parameters within which this proposed model should function. For the purpose of this

dissertation, the infused approach of Community Theatre, HIV and AIDS education and Appreciative Inquiry is focused on young people at community level guided through an educational experience on HIV prevention. Freire proposes dialogue, praxis, conscientisation and experience as key principles in education as a change agency. Boal proposes the stages of knowing the body, making the body expressive, theatre as language and theatre as discourse as critical in using theatre as a change agency. Community theatre on HIV and AIDS requires cognisance to be taken of the important principles of participation, content and context to address HIV prevention. Appreciative Inquiry promotes an asset-based approach to transformation by using four phases – discovery, dream, design and destiny – to facilitate a change process. I will now aim to demonstrate how, by using these principles and approaches in HIV prevention in the educational context, Community Theatre can be a useful agent in the development for young people.

In order to frame the implementation of such an approach, this chapter will assume that a group of young people are to be engaged in a Community Theatre project that aims to educate them on HIV and AIDS. Similar to peer education programmes, a group of young people will participate in the learning process and then include their peers in this process. In the context of this dissertation, the process of learning will take the form of a Community Theatre production framed according to the educational pedagogy of Freire and the *Theatre for the oppressed* principles of Boal. The social mobilisation process will be framed by the Appreciative Inquiry approach which will further embed the pedagogy of Freire and the theatre principles and techniques of Boal.

From the outset, Appreciative Inquiry frames the affirmative. It identifies the positive as the focus of the inquiry. Whilst Appreciative Inquiry is framed by Cooperrider and Whitney (2005:15) in the traditional sense as “a narrative-based process of positive change” that proposes a cycle of activities that engages organisations or communities in a range of interviews based on dialogue around strengths, resources and capabilities, by placing Appreciative Inquiry within a Community Theatre framework, the proposed interview process

led by external facilitators becomes more of an exploration through dialogue and participatory dramatic activity that allows for the community or participants to lead the inquiry. The knowledge and understanding of community or specific groups engaged in the process is paramount and facilitation is framed as guidance rather than assessment.

5.3 Merging Methodologies

5.3.1 Learning through Discovery

A challenge identified with HIV and AIDS education is an oversimplification of risk behaviour which fails to contextualise risk for young people. As shown by the literature reviewed on HIV and AIDS education, risk needs to be contextualised in order for young people to be actively involved in understanding risk based on their own experience and knowledge. By allowing young people the opportunity to contextualise risk, they will see the bigger picture of how social and cultural norms, politics and economic factors contribute to risk or risk behaviours. I maintain that the Discovery phase of Appreciative Inquiry allows for risk to be contextualised and for the learning experience on HIV prevention to move beyond the didactic ABC education currently being promoted.

In order for the Discovery phase to achieve progress towards conscientisation as proposed by Freire, it needs to promote participation (Community Theatre), dialogue (Freire) and Boal's stage of Knowing the Body interwoven with the stages of Making the Body expressive and Theatre as Language. The Discovery phase is a mobilisation of systemic or system-wide inquiry into what is referred to as the positive core (Cooperrider & Whitney 2005:39). This is done by engaging young people in dialogue about what it is in their lives that they feel good about, or that they have the ability to control. Dialogue, based on Socratic Questioning positioned against an asset-based approach, allows for the discovery into the positive to be challenged in terms of the realities of the young people. For example, questions about young people's abilities directly related to risk could open up discussions around HIV and AIDS. These questions could

include what young people consider safe behaviours, what in their community ensures safe behaviours or encourages risk behaviour, what do we know about risk behaviour in the context of HIV and AIDS? Young people may consider their social networks, friends or families as strengths that promote their ability to receive an education, learn from each other or that keep them safe. Young people should be encouraged to reflect on stories that highlight these strengths or abilities in the framework of Appreciative Inquiry. They can then be requested to enact these strengths and, by using Image Theatre, other participants can interrogate these images and make them stronger or position images that may negatively impact on these images.

By placing this dialogue in a Community Theatre setting, it can be translated into storytelling. This storytelling can be further translated into what Boal refers to as Knowing the Body. Young people can get to know their bodies through Image Theatre where they create the sculptures (or images) of their assets or strengths. Facilitators can further promote participants' knowledge of their own bodies by asking them to identify strong and weak characters in their lives. These may include teachers, religious leaders, friends, family members, doctors, nurses or members in the community who they can either relate to or who they do not want to relate to. The facilitator can request that participants 'assume' the body structures or physical attributes of these persons: walk like them, talk like them. The 'bodies' of these persons can then be interrogated by the participants and positioned against their own physical attributes and bodily behaviour.

By allowing young people to tell their story and reflect on their assets, their knowledge and abilities immediately become the focus of the inquiry rather than, as in a problem-based approach, the issue being discussed or the challenge becoming the focus that requires solutions. For instance, rather than telling young people that multiple concurrent partnerships are putting them at risk of HIV and that this requires the remedy of faithfulness to one partner, first conduct an inquiry into the nature of relationships and why young people feel good about relationships or being in relationships, the challenges of multiple

concurrent relationships and why they are taking place and putting young people at risk, which opens up the learning experience beyond a simple problem–remedy paradigm.

Through image theatre, young people can show their relationships as strengths. If this is done, the facilitator may choose to divide the group into smaller groups that represent the social networks in which relationships function. The facilitator may then choose one person in each group who may be in a relationship with someone in their group and place this person in other groups for a short period of time, with the purpose of forming relationships with the other group members and getting to know as much information about the group and individuals in that group as possible. When they return to their original groups, they could share this new knowledge with the other group members in an effort to change their ideas or perceptions about certain issues. By doing this the facilitators should lead the participants through a discussion that uses action-reflection techniques including image theatre and forum theatre on the way social networks interact and how ideas, knowledge and behaviour are fluid and mobile. This can also be linked to sexual activity and how sexual activity can function within a network and could put groups of people at risk. Facilitation here becomes exactly what Freire and Boal refer to as problem posing rather than setting up an artillery of facts on risk behaviour that requires specific pre-identified actions positioned by the facilitator.

Young people may start to understand the impact that high risk behaviour such as multiple concurrent relationships can have beyond the individual. The asset-based discovery into HIV risk will start to frame the response to HIV and AIDS for young people outside a fatalistic do-or-die approach to an understanding of that way culture and systems can be changed to reduce risk. For instance, through image theatre and forum theatre participants can interrogate behaviours in other groups that could be changed to reduce risk based on the assets that these groups have identified. As such, HIV and AIDS does not become a threat to be contained by risk-reduction behaviour alone, but rather an opportunity to use community and individual strengths that builds the agency

of young people to reduce risk and address other impacts, such as care and support for families affected by the disease.

As mentioned, Boal's stage of Knowing the Body is ideally placed within the Discovery phase and positions the theatrical exercises proposed by Boal as a means of engaging the individual in the participatory process. This stage becomes the introduction or discovery of participants of theatre and theatre techniques. They learn about their bodies, what they are capable of and what their limitations are. The Knowing the Body phase becomes young people's first interaction with how their bodies are used to tell a story and as such their first introduction to becoming spect-actors. This stage provides the platform for dialogue to transform creatively with the use of participants' bodies using theatre-based techniques that stimulate self-reflexivity, critical consciousness and praxis.

An example in the context of HIV and AIDS education would be where young people are made increasingly aware through dialogue about the social, cultural and traditional views on masculinity and femininity that promote vulnerability. Popular media may project images of masculinity that young men want to prescribe to and may already have adopted through their body language. Boal's exercises in Knowing the Body allows for a deconstruction of the muscular structure of participants in that it allows participants to explore their bodies as transformative agents. Young men's muscular structure and body framing of masculinity may then be analysed by the group to raise the level of consciousness around bodily abilities and the way in which sexual behaviour are constructed – questioning biological determinism that encourages hegemonic masculinity. Masculinity may then be reconstructed by participants by first appreciating the positive in masculine behaviour and then proposing what masculinity means in reducing risk to HIV and AIDS. This can again be done through Image Theatre where images of masculinity can be displayed in a family setting. Some groups may choose to depict masculinity in a positive way such as a husband caring for his wife and children, or husbands as abusive authoritative figures. The same can be done within the exercise of one person

moving between groups. The person can be asked to adapt certain behaviour that the groups feel is 'masculine' in their community. This exercise should allow for discussion on how notions of masculinity are socially constructed and how these constructs may differ from group to group and how these notions may either promote or negate risk for communities.

Whilst the Discovery phase highlights and appreciates existing knowledge within the groups of young people, by allowing them to reflect on the realities of behaviour or identities in their social networks or communities, it also generates new knowledge. By using their bodies through Knowing the Body and participating in dialogue around HIV and AIDS, they are moving beyond the simplified notions of ABC education on HIV and AIDS. They are beginning to understand the reasons for their vulnerability and are starting to create new ideas and understandings around how risk is influenced by factors beyond individual sexual behaviour. By engaging in exercises that highlight their strengths and allowing for the possibility of changing existing structures or notions (such as masculinity or the interconnectedness of social networks), participants can discover the relationship between social, cultural, political and economic factors and risk behaviour and the focus on the assets they have – both individual and communal – that will reduce risk. For instance, they may discover that masculinity is a notion that is prescribed by culture and that it can be changed from a negative to a positive expression or notion. This provides a platform for a more in-depth appreciation of the possibilities of change that will be harnessed by the Dream phase of Appreciative Inquiry.

5.3.2 *Asset-based Imagination from Reality to Dream*

Through Appreciative Inquiry young people have the opportunity to reflect on their strengths and abilities to not only address risky sexual behaviour but also to understand it as a social construct that can be changed. By appreciating their assets and abilities they will also identify the strengths within their community and themselves in addressing risk behaviour. Young people need to be fascinated by the HIV and AIDS epidemic; they need to engage with it critically and enthusiastically as a challenge that can be overcome and that they have

the ability to change. The Dream phase of Appreciative Inquiry allows for this awareness of the possibility of change beyond individual behaviour change to be shaped into possible outcomes. Having established their strengths and having been exposed to using their bodies to tell their own stories, these collective strengths can now be used to develop collective images and narratives of what their world could be like.

According to Cooperrider and Whitney (2005:39), the Dream phase is an illustration of the communities' potential for positive influence and impact. In this phase, the stories and experiences shared in the Discovery phase can be translated into dramatic enactments of how challenges can be addressed. This immediately broadens the scope of current HIV and AIDS education and prevention programmes that merely propose three simple individual behaviours as reducing risk.

Young people are now free to learn more about HIV and AIDS than risk behaviour towards the determinants of risk based on their own knowledge and context and to offer their own solutions. The educative power of theatre, by allowing young people to participate through theatre games and Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, especially Image Theatre and Forum theatre, allows young people to build confidence in their knowledge and their ability to effect change. This relates closely to Boal's notion of a rehearsal for change. By developing images of communities that are in charge of the HIV and AIDS epidemic, young people learn about the critical interventions that are needed to sustain these dream images. For instance, a group can be asked to act out a scene where a family celebrates the arrival of a new baby. The facilitator may then ask a member of the group to enter the scene and bring something positive to the family (such as a new car), and then another member to bring something negative in the life of the family (the husband loses his job). This sequence is then repeated to show the economic vulnerability of families and how certain events may impact on their dreams. The purpose of such an exercise would be to demonstrate that vulnerability goes beyond risk behaviour and that external factors can influence their dreams and build on the notion that social security is

an important factor that needs to be considered in the health and welfare needs of families.

Building on the opportunity of the Dream phase to collect and frame the possible action-based solutions to problems, Morrow and Torres (2002:29) assert that Freire's notion of praxis is a theory of communicative action which is a complementary humanistic strategy that retains value "in the context of concrete, local struggles and social movements" where imagined futures are formed through life-histories unique to participants in the learning processes. This is precisely what the Dream phase in Appreciative Inquiry aims to achieve – to encourage participants to imagine a utopian vision of what their life would be like in a world free from HIV and AIDS and how their abilities and strengths have contributed or contribute to such a world. This is done through action and reflection. Here again forum theatre can be used to weave together a narrative in which young people are placed as the agents of change within a certain scenario. Such a scenario could be a group of young people having successfully finished high school preparing for their admission to university. Young people can interrupt scenes to place obstacles in the way of the characters and then the actors and the spect-actors can decide on how best to overcome these challenges based on the strengths that have already been identified.

The use of forum theatre in this case builds on the knowledge and understanding that the Discovery phase has created. By using forum theatre in the Dream phase, the leadership position of the young people is acknowledged and they are allowed to imagine and enact a time and space where HIV and AIDS may no longer be a challenge, or where they, as young people, have the ability to change the course of the HIV and AIDS epidemic. They have the opportunity to reflect and act on this knowledge through their critical consciousness and enact scenarios of change reflected against the reality.

In the context of using theatre to emphasise and support the action–reflection process, Boal's Making the Body Expressive offers opportunities for young people to enact scenarios and characters that are able to effect change. They

begin to use their bodies for self-expression as positioned by Boal (2000:131) and start to engage with theatre as an educational conduit using their bodies for expression.

This phase holds specific relevance to the heliotropic principle, outlined by Bushe (1998:3) as one of the powerful change agents of Appreciative Inquiry. This is where powerful images are created of the positive core and its relation to HIV and AIDS in the context of this study. Again, Community Theatre holds potential for bringing these images to life creatively through its active involvement of young people in portraying their strengths and realities through theatre-based techniques. Young people now have the opportunity to construct the dream around the positive core discovered in phase one. As an example, when young people have grounded their learning on HIV and AIDS from an asset-based approach and engaged in exercises where their bodies have been used to explore not only theatrical techniques but also constructs of risk, they can now reflect and act on the stories and issues identified and elaborated on in the first phase. They can now move to playing with these stories and images of masculinity for example and portray images of masculinity through Image Theatre and Forum Theatre that in an ideal world would not promote risk. By highlighting and illustrating these ideal images, dialogue on what the steps are to achieving these ideal images will further support dialogue and the inquiry into change and what is needed for change. This identification of what is needed for change, what systemic or cultural change may need to occur for change to happen, is what Watkins and Mohr (2002:14) refer to as the art, in Appreciative Inquiry, of asking questions that strengthen the capacity of a community to comprehend and anticipate potential (see section 3.2.1).

Dialogue, as positioned by Freire, allows for young people's understanding of the possibility of changing their lives. By constructing the dream through dialogue and theatre techniques as mentioned above they are becoming active participants in the change process and not mere receivers of messages and information that would limit their understanding of their ability to respond to the risks of HIV and AIDS beyond individual sexual behaviours. In order to achieve

praxis, they are placed as active learners in the process that contributes their knowledge and experience to the learning process and, by using their bodies (through Image Theatre and Forum Theatre), are able to detail challenges beyond sexual risk. They are also learning from their peers through storytelling and building communal strength towards achieving the new realities they are constructing.

If peer education among young people is considered to be an effective approach in involving young people in the HIV and AIDS response, by using the strengths of Appreciative Inquiry and Community Theatre, the Dream phase allows for communal visioning of desired futures for young people and building agreement on how they as young people can achieve this desired future. Freire aimed at democratising people through literacy programmes, beyond a scope of reading and writing, so the Dream process, by means of further dialogue and creating positive images through theatrical techniques, will democratise young people on HIV and AIDS and use HIV and AIDS education as a vehicle for learning about development and their role in development.

The Dream phase opens up to the Design phase, which will further make use of theatre techniques to challenge their dreams or the way HIV and AIDS may prevent their dreams from becoming a reality. In essence, the Dream phase is the practical implementation of the dialogue and debate that occurred in the Discovery phase. It also becomes a generative phase, where young people will be able to expand on the potential they have discovered.³⁴ They can now create images of their preferred future utilising theatre techniques such as image- and forum theatre. The objective of the Dream phase is to allow young people to imagine a future where they are able to control the impact of HIV and AIDS as individuals and community members. They have a chance to ‘story’ their future and project future selves into the story, embodying behavioural possibilities and rehearsing for change. The Dream phase, while emphasising and harnessing the power of imagination, also focuses on skills building by developing a critical

³⁴ Watkins and Mohr state that the dream phase is framed around the practical, grounded in organisational history, and the generative, in that it seeks to expand the organisation’s potential (Watkins & Mohr 2001:44).

understanding of dialogue and communication and the ability to articulate arguments and concepts directly and clearly. The Dream phase will further assert young people as communicators and thinkers, where they are not only able to effectively discuss HIV and AIDS but also to understand the challenges that HIV and AIDS present to society in the way that they are understood from a traditional and cultural perspective by their community.

5.3.3 *Design through Empowerment*

A significant challenge identified in HIV and AIDS education programmes is the fact that beyond peer education programmes, young people are often not empowered to develop or lead HIV prevention programmes. An overreliance on the banking method of education, as promulgated by the ABC approach to HIV and AIDS education, does not consider young people's knowledge and understanding of risk behaviour nor does it aim to promote new understandings and insights into their vulnerability to HIV and AIDS. As seen in chapter 4, the purpose of the Design phase is to develop a set of propositions in which the positive core of their abilities and strengths are highlighted and illustrated. In the context of this dissertation this will imply that young people are now designing interventions for their peers that bring across the assets they have discovered in themselves and their communities that mitigate risk to HIV and AIDS and propose solutions to the challenges of risk reduction for young people. As such, they are crafting what Cooperrider and Whitney (2005:39) refer to as "... provocative propositions ... incorporating the positive core".

By participating in the Design phase, young people should have the opportunity to reflect on their newly gained experience (as actors and spect-actors) and knowledge of themselves (through dialogue, knowing their bodies and making their bodies expressive), their community and HIV and AIDS. Young people will now be in a position to develop and agree on the theme and content of their Community Theatre intervention and how they would like to approach their peers with such a programme. According to Watkins and Mohr (2001:45), similar to the Dream Phase, the Design Phase will allow for the collective construction of positive images for the future that was done in the Discovery

and Dream phase through Image Theatre and Forum Theatre that encompassed Knowing the Body and Making the Body Expressive. These positive images are decided on by the young people themselves through dialogue and consensus and as such the content of the performance that will be developed is decided on by the young people themselves and the risk of content not being appropriate to the realities of the young people falls away. The participation of young people in dialogue on social systems that create vulnerability based on their own knowledge and understanding and the simultaneous theatrical techniques that promote critical learning around HIV and AIDS assumes that the content of the programme they will develop will be framed in the realities of their peers and as such will be an appropriate reflection of the challenges young people face in relation to vulnerability.

Since young people have the opportunity to discover and dream, the action-reflection, or praxis as it is called by Freire, now needs to take place or what Boal refers to as the *rehearsal for the revolution*. In relation to Boal's *Poetics of the oppressed*, the Design phase captures the assumption of the empowering role young people can play, where they "change the dramatic action, [try] out solutions, [discuss] plans for change ... [train themselves] for the real action" (Boal 2000:122). In this phase the young people prepare to share their vision with peers and community members.

The Design phase also captures what Freire refers to as the "language of possibility" and Boal refers to as "theatre as language" where the ability of theatre to reflect the everyday lives of young people becomes the source of dramatic learning based on the knowledge and experience of young people. As Boal mentions, although the theatrical applications may be fictitious, the experience is concrete and this may be the tool that would assist in contextualising HIV and AIDS for young people beyond sex education towards a development issue (Boal 2000:141). By discovering about themselves, their communities and the issue, young people start to engage in the language of possibility. Theatre is well placed to assist young people to discover this language of possibility by providing them with the opportunity to engage

physically with these possibilities through Forum Theatre and Image Theatre. Rather than learning in a didactic classroom setting or through edutainment programmes, they physically participate in the development of storylines that are then interrogated by their peers. The Appreciative Inquiry process has thus far helped to frame the learning in a positive asset-based framework where opportunity for learning is created by focusing on their positive experiences and skills set along the lines of the subject–subject relationship that Freire requires for transformative education to take place. They are able to transcend the boundaries of their own reality that may contribute to potential risk behaviour in relation to HIV and AIDS and replace language that describes hopelessness and despair with the language of possibility. Community Theatre can now become the language of expression as proposed by Boal (Boal 2000 121).

Remaining focused on the positive core by engaging Community Theatre practices as positioned by Boal, through his notion of Simultaneous Dramaturgy such as Image Theatre and Forum Theatre, young people can now begin to design their Community Theatre intervention for their peers. The exercises proposed in these three theatrical applications further allow for critical learning where young people, as actors familiar with their local context, will perform a scene and allow their fellow participants in the process (peers) to question their actions on stage and propose different actions in terms of Simultaneous Dramaturgy. As such, that which is positioned as fact may be challenged and further interrogated. The use of Image Theatre and Forum Theatre follows the same principles and allows for further dialogue and creativity in not only designing the Community Theatre programme but also allowing for ongoing learning. For example, by using Image Theatre young people can construct their dream of an HIV-free generation and display images of the dream as preferred images of the future. These images can be challenged and interrogated by fellow participants to further stimulate dialogue and create new images of what may be possible and what may be needed to achieve this dream.

During this phase, young people collectively agree on the themes that emerged from the previous two phases in relation to themselves, their community and HIV and AIDS, again moving away from an external notion or agenda on what the major risks are for young people, and creating the space where risk is negotiated by the young people themselves and put into a perspective that applies to their social reality.

There could be the argument that young people may not consider high-risk sexual activities such as multiple concurrent partnerships or refusal to use condoms as significant to them and as such not reflect these in their performance. In the context of this study, the Joker system can be used by the facilitator to 'problematise' the themes and content as developed and proposed by the young people as would be done in Forum Theatre. Where young people develop images or scenarios that do not reflect factual information on HIV and AIDS, the facilitator should be able to guide the young people through a process of reflection based on fact that would allow them to approach the scenarios differently. The Joker system becomes a technique that is used by the facilitator to guide the learning process. The system is, however, not for the exclusive use of the facilitator and the Design phase offers the opportunity for young people to become familiar with this system where Socratic Questioning will challenge not only their own, but also their peers' interpretation of risk and solutions as portrayed in their theatre programme. The skill of learning Socratic Questioning, as positioned by Freire and Boal, will allow for the breakdown of naive or magical consciousness towards a critical consciousness that allows young people to move beyond the acceptance of HIV and AIDS information as one-dimensional prescriptive remedies for risk.

It is my hypothesis that the process thus far has the potential to be revolutionary. Young people have been taken through an HIV and AIDS educational and development process that has potentially revolutionised their understanding and thinking of HIV and AIDS and their position as young people in the response to the epidemic and positioned them as active participants and, as such, revolutionaries in this response. As Boal (2000:141) mentions,

although the theatrical techniques may be fictitious, the experience is concrete and this may be the tool that would assist in contextualising HIV and AIDS for young people beyond sex education towards a development issue.

5.3.4 *Destiny and Sustainability*

Following on from the previous subsection's notion that young people are not encouraged to lead and participate in the development of HIV prevention programmes, the question of the sustainability of HIV prevention programmes led by young people is relevant. In itself a Community theatre programme framed around the Appreciative Inquiry approach is not sustainable if it does not involve external partners or broaden its scope of participation as outlined by CADRE and the HSRC in chapter 2. Cooperrider and Whitney (2005:39) position the Destiny phase of Appreciative Inquiry as an invitation to action based on and inspired by the Discovery, Dream and Design phases and as a public declaration of the required actions for change and a request for action and support from peers and other stakeholders.

The preceding three phases aimed at outlining a process where young people move from being passive spectators or receptors of HIV and AIDS information and education to being agents of change in the response to HIV and AIDS. Once the young people have reached this stage, it is important that they remain change agents once they have gone through their own mobilisation process (see Collins & Rau 2000:49). This is the most difficult part of the process; however the Community Theatre/Appreciate Inquiry process asserts Collins and Rau's (2000: 25, 26) view that young people become the most important resource for social mobilisation when they have gone through their own social mobilisation experience. The Appreciative Inquiry process becomes the social mobilisation process and they are mobilised from passive learners or receptors of HIV and AIDS information, to active participants in the learning process. The learning process that requires their participation through theatre-based techniques and as equal subjects in the learning process has now mobilised them to become agents of change. Young people may now proceed to engage

as agents of the mobilisation process by engaging other young people in similar processes or by presenting their performance to their peers.

Young people's circumstances may change, opening up other challenges that were not addressed by the process in which HIV and AIDS was the focus of the learning experience. Community agendas and challenges may change. The skills that were learnt during the Community Theatre process may enable young people, individually or jointly, to address these issues and challenges by relying on the critical thinking skills they have acquired. By allowing young people to continuously question certain behaviours or certain social structures through Forum Theatre, Image Theatre and dialogue, they will learn not to accept the status quo. With critical thinking and critical consciousness young people may adapt the focus of the intervention to other emerging and contemporary challenges such as climate change and environmental issues.

The Destiny phase, as outlined by Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003: 217), holds three dimensions relevant to the Community Theatre process. The first dimension involves the celebration of what has already been learnt and the transformations that have taken place. This will involve the new communication skills learnt by young people and the critical thinking skills acquired through conscientisation and praxis. The second dimension is the organising and initiation of broader interventions that propel the vision created through the process thus far forward. Boal's Forum Theatre may be a useful tool in deciding on the format of the theatre piece and on a technique that will allow the young people to field input from the audience. Here young people perform their Community Theatre for their peers and other community members in order to not only inform and create further awareness on HIV and AIDS, but also to ensure buy-in from their peers and communities that becomes an invitation to join them in the visioning of a society free of HIV and AIDS. It is my belief that their peers will identify with messages devised through the learning process given that the content is based on the realities of their peers and as such should be relevant to them as well. These imagined narratives developed by their peers will build on their notions of community identity and as such be more

easily understood and accepted than external notions of what their perceived identity should be. The third dimension flows from the second where Appreciative Inquiry is applied beyond the change imperative it was originally used for. As mentioned, the skills learnt in the initial process become the catalyst for using Appreciative Inquiry in other emerging areas such as environmental sustainability.

With their Community Theatre programme in place, developed on the basis of an Appreciative Inquiry approach that showcases the strengths of young people to address HIV and AIDS, the participants now need to move beyond the confines of the group and seek out and connect with structures that will be able to guide and support the implementation of the programme and offer other support services for their peers in order to link the messages and information they provide to actual services and support structures. Some may be present in the community already (such as voluntary counselling and testing services or support groups for young people living with HIV and AIDS) or some may need to be created or strengthened (access to education or anti-retroviral medication). Here young people could also consider electing a group of advisors which could consist of key local stakeholders that could support the implementation of the project and ensure that there is a supportive environment for its implementation. This can be linked to the democratisation of education and participation as positioned by Freire and Boal, where young people are free to negotiate participation and involvement with key authorities. Building on the appreciative and asset base, young people may now dialogue provocative suggestions to community members seen as being able to influence change at a higher level. This will take the dialogue process forward to engaging other structures in creating a vision for young people's development.

The Destiny phase of Appreciative Inquiry is not the end of the learning process. Appreciative Inquiry is a cycle. By putting into action what they have learnt and by visualising this new knowledge and new vision of change through Community Theatre, young people are now placed as development agents in their community. The initial focus of the development imperative was HIV

prevention and, by focusing on HIV and AIDS education, young people have gone beyond learning just about risks behaviours; they have contextualised risk behaviour as socially, economically, politically and culturally determined. They have begun to interrogate structures that promote vulnerability beyond individual risk behaviour and will now be ready to apply these to other issues and challenges. By linking these skills to Community Theatre, theatre becomes a discourse for learning for young people. They can continue to develop new performances based on the skills they acquired and, through the performance, young people will encourage other young people to participate in the change imperative thus further strengthening their agency for social mobilisation.

5.4 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter is an exploration of the possible infusion of the Appreciative Inquiry process in Community Theatre where the aim is HIV prevention for young people. This approach, however, proposes that such an infusion of Appreciate Inquiry into Community Theatre not only strengthen the educational value of Community Theatre by relying on the pedagogy of Freire and the theatrical principles and Boal's *Theatre of the oppressed* but that it also furthers the educational experience to a development paradigm where young people are used as agents of social mobilisation.

The imperative of moving HIV prevention and HIV and AIDS education beyond typical information-sharing exercises to more holistic experiences is the purpose of this proposed synergy. This is where Appreciative Inquire becomes an overarching framework that allows young people to participate and to contextualise HIV and AIDS through their own experiences whilst focusing on their strengths and a vision of their future. It allows them to be the masters of their own destiny by discovering; dreaming and designing interventions that are appropriate to their context, whilst at the same time learning from a positive core that enables them to share this newly gained knowledge with others to sustain further positive actions.

In order to position Appreciative Inquiry as an overarching framework as an educational and development process, this chapter starts by outlining the strengths and weaknesses of HIV and AIDS education for young people, Community Theatre and Appreciative Inquiry, in order to frame possible synergies in the application of Appreciative Inquiry to Community Theatre. By outlining the restrictions and challenges of current HIV prevention and HIV and AIDS education programmes, such as lack of a leadership, ownership, participation, content, context and critical thinking, Appreciate Inquiry is positioned as a process of change that will address the restrictions faced by current Community Theatre and HIV prevention and education programmes.

The chapter further sets out the phases inherent in Appreciate Inquiry that systematically address the restrictions and weaknesses identified. Building on Freire's notion of critical consciousness, the Discovery phase highlights the ability of Appreciative Inquiry to move HIV prevention beyond didactic notions of risk behaviour inherent in HIV and AIDS education and to open up the inquiry into HIV and AIDS to broader the social, cultural, political and economic determinants of risk behaviour. By merging this with *Theatre of the oppressed* techniques inherent in Knowing the Body, the learning process takes on a physical dimension that promotes participation and creativity whilst building on notions of critical consciousness. The Discovery phase further brings together the imperatives of participation and dialogue highlighted as requirements in effective HIV and AIDS education programmes and the impetus to move participants from being spectators in the learning process to actors who are able to make inputs into the process and change the outcome.

The second phase of Appreciative Inquiry, the Dream phase allows the Community Theatre process to frame the power of the positive image based on the discoveries made in phase one. It takes the shared experiences and consciousness that was raised among young people one step further, it creates the link between HIV and AIDS and their future, where it allows them the opportunity to possibly imagine a future free of HIV and AIDS or where they are able to control the impact of HIV and AIDS on their communities. This phase

aims to empower young people as masters of their own destiny. Through the theatre-based techniques inherent in Boal's Making the Body Expressive, it allows them the opportunity to engage with the language of possibility, moving away from traditional HIV and AIDS education programmes that clearly outline the scenarios should a young person not engage in what is considered to be health-seeking behaviour.

Phase three, the Design phase, becomes the actual rehearsal for change, where young people bring together their discoveries and their dreams to develop a play on HIV and AIDS that addresses their specific community context with themes based on what they consider to be real and relevant to them and their communities. They choose when, where, how and to whom they want to perform. The language of possibility becomes the theatre of possibility that they are able to share with their communities and peers and the phase where praxis occurs – the reflection becomes the action.

The final phase, the Design phase, becomes a series of actions through the performance of the play that supports ongoing learning and innovation or 'what will be', as explained by Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003: 9) in the context of organisational development. It takes the internal and group-focused learning that leads to praxis one step further, allowing for the opportunity to further act on the positive images that were created by sharing them with others. It also holds the opportunity for sharing these experiences with stakeholders that can enact further change, such as people in authority who can make reproductive health services more accessible for young people.

In exploring the linkages between Appreciative Inquiry and Community Theatre it seems almost natural that Appreciative Inquiry lends itself to integration into Community Theatre work, but one has to consider again the relationship between Appreciative Inquiry, HIV and AIDS education and Community Theatre and why combining these three areas of work makes sense. Appreciative Inquiry stands out firstly as an organisational development tool geared to change management in organisations. HIV and AIDS education is based on behaviour change theories that aim to reduce sexual risk behaviour. I consider

Community Theatre a device for communities to share stories collectively, to participate in dialogue for addressing a common theme. Apart from one common factor, which is the goal of some form of change, there seems to be very little that would suggest that they could work together as a joint process in HIV and AIDS education. Broken down into simpler forms, however, the possibility and the need for synergy become more apparent.

The Community Theatre programme that uses an Appreciative Inquiry approach in HIV and AIDS education becomes distinctive in that it is fully affirmative and asset-based, relying on the positive core of young people and the positive values they attribute to their communities and their own lives. It is fully improvisational, in that it needs theatre-based techniques to deepen the learning experience through action and reflection. Lastly, it supports the ideal of what Freire proposes that education should be – an inquiry, a critical investigation and dialogue based on young people's experience and knowledge as participants towards critical consciousness and action-reflection to generate new knowledge and understanding on HIV and AIDS and harnessing the ability to mobilise change, not only within themselves but also within their communities.



CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The premise of this dissertation is that the practice of Community Theatre used as an educational conduit for HIV prevention and HIV and AIDS education among young people may be enriched by merging the Community Theatre development process with the organisational development tool, Appreciative Inquiry. In doing so, Community Theatre will become an asset-based educational methodology that relies on the critical capacities and abilities of young people to contribute to the learning process and become active agents of change in social mobilisation on HIV prevention.

By reviewing the existing literature on HIV and AIDS education for young people; Community Theatre used for social change and Appreciative Inquiry used in organisational and community development, this study has established that prominent modes of engaging young people in HIV prevention and HIV and AIDS education are focused on a deficit-based approach and do not maximise the potential of young people's knowledge and contribution to the development of these programmes. Such approaches further fail to frame the educational imperative in the context of young people and propose content that does not challenge young people's critical consciousness and understanding of the epidemic. I argued that the inclusion of Appreciative Inquiry techniques in Community Theatre programmes that address issues related to HIV and AIDS education will enrich the development and learning opportunities for young people by focusing on an asset-based approach through Appreciative Inquiry infusing the pedagogy and techniques as positioned by Freire and Boal.

This chapter will summarise the conclusions of this study in relation to the proposed synergy of Community Theatre and Appreciative Inquiry.

6.2 Summary of Chapters

Chapter 1 introduced this dissertation, stated the aim and hypothesis of the dissertation and provided a background to the need for an inquiry into HIV and AIDS programmes making use of theatre. The need for this dissertation is framed around challenges identified in current HIV and AIDS education and HIV prevention programmes for young people and especially those using theatre as a communication and learning conduit. The use of theatre as an educational conduit positions this dissertation within the domain of Applied Drama/Theatre, specifically Community Theatre. The study reinterprets Community Theatre as a critical learning experience contributing to young people's development. It further outlines the key areas to be investigated, namely Community Theatre, Appreciative Inquiry and HIV and AIDS education for young people.

Chapter 2 positioned the relationship between education and theatre in the response to HIV and AIDS. By describing the effective use of theatre as protest and as community-based social mobilisation during the apartheid regime in South Africa, this chapter outlined the ability of theatre to be used in a community setting for raising critical awareness of oppression. The chapter also positioned theatre in the context of HIV and AIDS education and the assumption that theatre-based interventions will have the same impact in different contexts. It positioned the interaction between education, theatre, community development and social action as holding significant synergies and potential when combined with HIV and AIDS education for young people where the focus is on HIV prevention.

Chapter 3 reflected on the work of two scholars, Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal, and their contribution to understanding the dynamics of education and theatre and to radical education and theatre used to liberate people from their oppression. This chapter positions the pedagogy and practice of these two scholars, Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed, as central to the way HIV and AIDS education and theatre used in HIV and AIDS education should function. This chapter placed young people as primary contributors to the learning process and further suggested that by combining the strengths of

Pedagogy of the oppressed and *Theatre of the oppressed* processes with the asset-based Appreciate Inquiry approach, HIV and AIDS education for young people would move from being once-off didactic educational events to critical learning and development opportunities.

Chapter 4 explored the use of Appreciative Inquiry as a development tool and change agent. It investigated the social constructionist basis of Appreciative Inquiry and how it links with Community Theatre processes, how it contributes to learning and development and how it allows for the generation of new knowledge and new discourses on a specific subject among participants, in this case HIV and AIDS, in the context in which they operate. In so doing, Appreciative Inquiry is positioned as an asset-based inquiry into the skills and knowledge of young people. As such, it brings a new dimension to the work of Freire and Boal in that it immediately goes beyond merely asserting the value of young people to participate and contribute their knowledge to the learning process, to highlighting their skills and abilities and positive contributions and reflections on moments when they felt most 'alive' as catalysts for the learning process.

Chapter 5 explored the way in which the synergy between Community Theatre, HIV and AIDS education and Appreciative Inquiry may increase the optimal and appropriate participation of young people in HIV and AIDS education in order to develop their agency for social mobilisation. This proposed synergy and infusion of processes inherent in *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, *Theatre of the oppressed* and Appreciate Inquiry offer a theoretical perspective of the way Community Theatre can create new possibilities of learning that promote young people's participation in HIV and AIDS education focusing on HIV prevention. By placing the learning process in Community Theatre in a constructionist framework through Appreciative Inquiry, the learning process becomes a reflection of a lived reality and a space in which to rehearse new realities and contribute to social change.

6.3 Contribution of the Dissertation

This dissertation proposes a synergetic approach to HIV and AIDS education for young people that combines and repositions existing theories and practices of Community Theatre, HIV and AIDS education and Appreciative Inquiry. It proposes that HIV and AIDS education should shift from a problem-based approach to an asset-based approach. The dissertation further asserts that Community Theatre practices, when used for HIV and AIDS education, refer back to Freire's notions of critical consciousness, praxis, dialogue and participants' experience and Boal's notions of Knowing the Body, Making the Body Expressive, Theatre as Language and Theatre as discourse and positions the Appreciate Inquiry process as key to linking these in an asset-based approach to learning and development for young people. Whilst Kidd (2008) and Samba (2009) have both presented the potential use of Appreciative Inquiry in theatre programmes aimed at education and development, there is no literature available in Afrikaans or English that outlines and frames the infusion of Appreciative Inquiry in the Community Theatre context, as positioned and hypothesised in this study.

This dissertation aimed to explore theoretically the way in which Appreciative Inquiry can enrich the practice of Community Theatre in HIV and AIDS education for young people. This was done by reviewing current HIV and AIDS educational programmes for young people that use theatre and highlighting their constraints in promoting the critical consciousness of young people by failing to optimally make use of young people as participants in the learning process. This dissertation examined the connection between the transformational potential that is inherent and possible in Community Theatre when building on the pedagogies of Freire and Boal. This potential was juxtaposed against the challenges faced within current HIV-prevention programmes, especially those using Community Theatre, to theorise how these practices can be strengthened by applying an Appreciative Inquiry approach. The dissertation illustrated the work of Freire and Boal as being relevant to an Appreciative Inquiry approach in promoting critical consciousness, participation

and the ability to promote images of possibilities and transformation within an asset-based approach. As such HIV and AIDS education is transformed as a development agency for young people beyond the didactic notions of HIV and AIDS education prevalent in contemporary ABC approaches.

By introducing an Appreciative Inquiry approach to HIV and AIDS education using Community Theatre based on the principles of Freire and Boal, challenges related to HIV-prevention programmes are addressed. These challenges include the transformation of young people as objects in HIV and AIDS education to subjects by using their knowledge and experience in HIV-prevention programmes. Young people are further positioned as agents of change by going through their own social mobilisation campaign to expand their ability as peer educators who are able to address HIV and AIDS beyond prescribing risk reduction behaviour to their peers. The content of negative stereotypical behaviour introduced by external educators or facilitators is negated in preference for life-affirming constructive behaviour and experiences of young people that are framed as relevant and appropriate to their culture and context.

The Appreciate Inquiry approach also allows for the educational experience to be transformed into a social mobilisation experience, leaving young people with critical-thinking skills that may be applied to other subjects or issues. This moves the use of theatre away from a once-off educational experience to a social mobilisation experience. As such the agency of young people to be agents of change is strengthened. The agency of young people to act as agents of change within the HIV and AIDS, and specifically the HIV prevention, paradigm is further strengthened through problem posing techniques as positioned by Freire and Boal through Socratic Questioning. This allows for young people to inquire into the broader social, cultural and economic determinants of vulnerability to HIV infection beyond prescribed risk behaviour.

By not framing the HIV and AIDS education and HIV prevention response as one dimensional, the overreliance on individual behaviour change theories allows for the positioning of HIV and AIDS education and HIV prevention using

Community Theatre as a social mobilisation agency, again expanding the possibility of young people to be agents of change. Similarly, Community Theatre is positioned as a development agency that makes use of the many strengths and applications of theatre and drama in the educational and development contexts, as illustrated by Theatre-for-Development, Theatre/Drama-in-Education and Applied Theatre.

6.4 Suggestions for Further Research

This study proposes a theoretical approach that is not tested but hypothesised on the basis of literature and case studies and that would benefit from research that explores its implementation. Of specific relevance would be the issue of facilitation in this approach and how facilitation can be strengthened as a non-partial process whilst asserting factual information. Further research could also explore the use of the proposed model in both formal and non-formal educational environments and the skills required from facilitators to guide the process in both settings.

6.5 Conclusion

The literature reviewed placed Community Theatre as a grassroots educational experience that allows young people to build ownership of the issues being addressed by giving them the opportunity to share experiences and reconstruct scenarios through theatrical exercises as proposed by Boal. The literature does, however, indicate that the Boalian approach does not necessarily consider asset-based approaches for issues being addressed, but does consider, in common with Freire, assets in terms of the knowledge, experience and participation of community members. Literature also warns against the use of theatre as a tool of propaganda that does not serve the immediate needs of communities but rather promotes external notions of how communities should be or, in the case of this dissertation, how communities should respond to HIV and AIDS.

This dissertation frames Community Theatre as a form of theatre that reflects on and uses participatory methodologies as proposed by Freire and Boal to make use of people's skills and knowledge based on their reality towards change imperatives at community level. Community Theatre thus becomes a culturally appropriate form of artistic expression familiar to communities and used as an agency for education and empowerment that translates into change agendas. As such, the dramatic potential of local individual and collective stories is harnessed and used as key components of the change agenda. This dissertation proposes that the strengths of Community Theatre in allowing for the use of personal and collective stories and participation allows for critical consciousness that introduces Community Theatre as being a locally relevant and appropriate educational agency that focuses the change imperative beyond the overemphasised individual behaviour change imperative towards a socially mobilised change imperative.

Considering the strengths of peer education as a methodology in HIV and AIDS education, Community Theatre offer the opportunity to infuse participatory learning processes for peer educators through contemporary cultural approaches that are relevant to young people and places the learning experience in young people's social realm. In order to do this, the literature warns against using theatre that communicates and informs without critical engagement of the subject matter and the communal context in which the subject matter is placed. Such a use of theatre is considered to be non-revolutionary and an agency that fails to transform individuals and societies in that it fails to promote any change in the way young people and communities interpret and understand the HIV and AIDS epidemic.

The literature reviewed for this dissertation on theatre for education and development indicates the need to strengthen theatre programmes that addresses change agendas. With the use of theatre in educational imperatives already validated through case studies and reviews outlined in the literature, this dissertation highlighted the need for theatre to be used as an ambitious agency that infuses various techniques, methodologies and approaches to

benefit communities. As such, this dissertation proposes an Appreciative Inquiry approach as an agency that, when infused with the Community Theatre process, will develop a multidisciplinary synergetic approach to Community Theatre for HIV prevention and education.

This dissertation argues that infusing the Appreciative Inquiry approach with the educational agency of Community Theatre could ensure that the change and development ideals are firmly placed within the community realities. The combined creative and communication qualities of Community Theatre and the transformative abilities of Appreciative Inquiry will offer an approach to discovering the strengths of young people and building development programmes around their knowledge. As such young people will be transformed as change agencies able to develop systems and responses based on their knowledge and abilities.

The possibilities of Appreciative Inquiry to transform the theatrical and educational practices used in HIV prevention and education stem from the fact that the Appreciative Inquiry approach is asset based and inclusive and that it relies on participation and dialogue through storytelling. Appreciative Inquiry frames the learning process through theatre as a journey of discovery rather than a didactic learning exercise or experience. The asset-based approach of Appreciative Inquiry replaces didactic problem-based educational approaches where problem solving is encouraged on the basis of the assets of young people and communities.

This dissertation positions this asset-based approach in the context of HIV prevention and education as a move away from individualistic approaches of HIV and AIDS education that focus on negative stereotypes and outcomes towards a focus on that which is achievable and that is within the realm of young people. The approach will negate the helplessness that young people may feel in relation to changing risk behaviour or the ability to change the immediate environment in which they may feel oppressed. Owing to the exploratory nature of Appreciative Inquiry it relates well to the need to place HIV

prevention and education beyond didactic educational notions to exploring the reasons for vulnerability.

Whilst Appreciative Inquiry appreciates the knowledge that young people may already have of HIV and AIDS, the process also generates new knowledge and new ways of understanding HIV and AIDS in the political, economic and social contexts. Appreciative Inquiry speaks to the weakness that Crewe highlights in HIV and AIDS education, where learners are not allowed the opportunity to imagine their futures free of HIV and AIDS and a time when they have increased agency to critically deal with the risk factors related to HIV and AIDS. What is important to note here is that Appreciative Inquiry will allow young people the opportunity to build on their realities, especially the strengths and abilities within their realities that allow for change and control of their behaviour.

Appreciative Inquiry will thus become the approach within Community Theatre that promotes the agency of young people as peer educators. The approach will rely on their strengths and assets to frame Community Theatre as a learning process that enables a broader understanding of HIV and AIDS that promotes their development as valuable citizens within communities able to effect change and the outcome of the epidemic.

In this dissertation I argued for a return to the basic principles of education and theatre as positioned by Freire and Boal and an inquiry into what education and theatre should and could be, especially when used for HIV and AIDS education that will promote HIV prevention among young people. Freire (1996b:62) asserts that education should not be dominating, it should be liberating. As such, HIV and AIDS education should not restrict young people as objects in the learning process. HIV and AIDS is a complex issue and young people should be trusted to contextualise such issues beyond oversimplified individual behaviour responses. By allowing young people to launch an inquiry into these issues through Community Theatre, not only are opportunities created to develop critical agency among young people in response to certain challenges, but the development agency of theatre is also expanded.

Boal (2000:ix) wants theatre to be a weapon, to be used by those who are oppressed in their own liberation. Protest theatre used in South Africa during the apartheid era, showed that this was possible. Theatre was a valuable resource in the response to apartheid and it remains a valuable resource in the response to HIV and AIDS. South Africa is not yet in complete control of the HIV and AIDS epidemic and the negative legacy it is leaving young people requires robust and dynamic solutions.

This dissertation has not proposed a solution to the problem. It has, however, positioned young people and theatre as two valuable agencies in the HIV and AIDS response. Through the use of Appreciative Inquiry, the dissertation has proposed a new synergy of approaches in addressing young people and making use of their knowledge and skills through Community Theatre in the HIV and AIDS response. Community Theatre is an asset, as are young people, and continuous efforts to strengthen educational responses using these assets will help to negate the impact of HIV and AIDS on communities and create the desired social mobilisation among young people that could transform societies.



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