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Domestication or transformation?: the ideology of Theatre for Development in Africa

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The significance of ideology

This paper is an attempt to tease out the significance of the relationship between the kinds of applied theatre that have been and are being made in various parts of Africa since the 1970s, and the impetus behind the creators of that work. The importance of the study is indicated in the evidence coming from many of my informants, (and I would reference at this point such young activists as Laurenz Leky and Amy Booth, who have both written to me in recent months in anger and despair at the practice they have been witnessing in the field, as well as a group of recent African postgraduate students I have worked with, Simon Peter Otieno and Rose Komu from Kenya, Lilian Mbabazi and Evelyn Lutwama from Uganda, and Asferti Kilo and Mahlet Solomon from Ethiopia and recent research from such as Ola Johannsen from Sweden and Chris Hurst in South Africa¹) who have all raised concerns about the dogmatism, quantitative as opposed to qualitative focus from funders, and lack of true participatory engagement in work purporting to come under the rubric of Theatre for Development in Africa. The article is by no means intended to undermine the activities of and group or individual seeking to work to make a real impacts in partnership with communities of the marginalised, and of course not all examples of good practice can be recognised in a single article. However, it seems to me that a key influence that needs to be considered and transparently debated in relation to much TfD, but one which is usually unspoken for reasons I will attempt to unpack, is the ideology underpinning theatre practice. Many articles have been written on *how* TfD projects are run, but we surely also need to consider *why* we engage in these projects.

In this article I see myself as much indebted to the research and perspectives of David Kerr. Kerr's hugely important article 'Participatory Popular Theatre: The Highest Stage of Cultural Underdevelopment?' (1991, 55-76) alongside his *African Popular Theatre* (1995) raises many of the issues I will debate here. My own political perspective is similar to Kerr's, but twenty years have passed since these major publications appeared, and it is important that we review and debate where socially committed theatre is heading in Africa. Indeed, the fact that there has been so little work in recent years attempting to understand the socio-political context for contemporary TfD must be a matter for concern. To pretend that political contexts are not important in socially committed theatre is surely to play into the neo-liberal hands of those who wish community-based theatre to remain inward-looking, focussed on individual behaviour change, and divorced from an understanding of the national and geo-political reasons for the perpetuation of social inequalities.

A Brief History

It is generally accepted that Theatre for Development – and this is a convenient catchall term, though others have referred to Popular Theatre, Community-Based Theatre and more recently Edutainment or E-E, in Africa dates back to the 1970s². The starting point is commonly seen as the work of Laedza Batanai and their extension programmes for farmers in Botswana, as developed by Ross Kidd and Martin Byram to enable farmers to discuss practice as opposed to having new ideas imposed upon them³. The baton was then taken up by Steve Oga Abah who pioneered hugely influential Theatre for Development programmes at Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria⁴, and

academic practitioners such as David Kerr, Michael Etherton, Zakes Mda and Penina Muhando in universities in Malawi, Zambia, Lesotho and Tanzania respectively⁵. What is notable about all these names – with the arguable exception of Steve Oga Abah – is that they were all – and continue to be – strongly socialist and inspired by concepts of inclusivity, community, empowerment and enablement of the poor and marginalised to take control over their own lives.

There were in the '70s and '80s no readymade models for TfD. Dating back to the 1960s and the first flush of independence, just using local languages was often seen as radical, followed by encouraging plays written by young local playwrights, often using elements of indigenous performance culture mixed with western dramatic form, and increasingly with material which criticised government – frequently necessarily covertly⁶. The move to what we now call TfD and where Laedza Batanai becomes so significant is that this is the first time we see theatre beginning to be made with – though not initially by – instead of for, ordinary people.

Making socially relevant theatre for people certainly predates independence in many African nations. There are numerous references to the British colonial government commissioning educational performances, often filmed and taken around their districts by District Officers with portable cinema equipment, to educate about issues such as the use of the postal, banking and telephone systems. These dramas commonly pitted the 'stupid' village African against his more sophisticated, educated and urban counterpart, and sought to influence through mockery and slapstick humour⁷. The agenda was paternalistic, patronising, Westernising, and demeaning to the mass of ordinary people. One of my questions in this paper is about how strongly this mode of theatre making persists to the present day; in comedy sketches both live and on national TV stations and in slightly reinvented and more sophisticated formats in the edutainment initiatives currently sweeping across Africa in live performance, on television and most influentially through radio drama⁸. I am testing out an argument that this form of Westernising, coercive and neoliberal performance has retained a far stronger hold over modern African applied theatre than is commonly acknowledged, and that in the battle with socialist-inspired performance initiatives the power of capital and the subtle turning of initially socialist-inspired theatre forms against their intended use means that what purports to be TfD is often in fact a reactionary practice intended to domesticate rather than transform the lives of African subjects.

I would argue that in the 1960s, '70s and early '80s this was not the common direction of travel. From the university travelling theatres developed a range of initiatives seeking to break down the colonially-created divide between the educated university elite and the mass of less privileged people. So we see Penina Muhando Mlama's sustained work in the early-1980s, with the villagers of Malya in Tanzania, where people used performance to discuss local issues some of which, as in relation to access to land by village youth, were resolved internally while for others, such as official village registration, Muhando helped resolve after making common cause with lawyer friends of similar political persuasion⁹. Or most famously of all I would refer to Ngugi wa Thiong'o's two plays made with the people of Kamiriithu village in Kenya, *Ngaheeka Ndeenda (I Will Marry When I Want)* in 1977 and *Maitu Ngujira (Mother, Sing For Me)* in 1982¹⁰. Again we see a sustained subversion of the Western educated versus peasant divide, as these plays were created with and by a whole village community, with transformatory effect on many concerned¹¹. Importantly this work privileged indigenous performance modes, and it was not called Theatre for Development. Rather in the '70s and early '80s the more explicitly socialist term Popular Theatre was generally invoked, and

the work, as in both the cases exemplified above, did not shy away from confrontation with the political. Instead of being linked to development agencies this theatre was being led by people who were also left-wing, politically engaged playwrights and authors, and was an extension of the activity of making politically challenging theatre in more conventional formats. This explicit socialist link can also be seen in the theatre made by activists in support of liberation struggles across the continent, in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Ethiopia and Eritrea, to name only places for which I have good information¹².

I think it is significant that while some liberation theatre was certainly pure propaganda, and might be seen as coercive, this was by no means universally the case. Preben Kaarsholm discusses how the Zimbabwean liberation struggle produced a wide range of theatre in the 1970s in the guerrilla camps discussing a range of possible governmental options for the future¹³. Similarly after the overthrow of Haile Selassie in Ethiopia in 1974 for a couple of years the theatre was a leading voice debating the kind of post-imperial nation which might emerge, and in Eritrea in the 1980s the theatre of the liberation struggle encompassed debate about gender, national identity, and the impact of war on family relationships as well as promoting simple nationalist ideals¹⁴. Once more all this theatre came from writers either explicitly or more broadly allied to socialist or Marxist causes.

Who controls Theatre for Development?

The change comes in most places from the mid-1980s. By this time much of Africa had had independent governments for around 20 years. Throughout the continent the first flush of post-independence hopefulness had evaporated, and governments were everywhere censoring politically challenging theatre¹⁵. Simultaneously Africa was getting poorer. Collapses in prices for the agricultural and mineral products Africa produced in the late 1970s led to the International Monetary Fund imposing a raft of Structural Adjustment Programmes in the 1980s which led, in most sub-Saharan African nations, to a socially disastrous withdrawal of educational, health, agricultural and cultural programmes. Universities could no longer fund cultural experimentation and outreach. Theatre groups and buildings had state subsidy withdrawn. People could not afford to pay for commercial theatre. Into the gap came largely NGO-funded Theatre for Development alongside limited state support for theatre pedalling state endorsed messages.

I am not arguing that most funding agencies meant other than well. Ever since I became involved in theatre in Africa in the early 1980s there has been a tension between theatre makers and aid agency donors – though generally cash-strapped theatre makers have been happy to take the donors' cash. The trouble, I think, is that the agenda for making theatre moved away from African playwrights and theatre makers, in many cases away even from Africans at all, as agencies based in the West devised projects and programmes and began to use theatre simply as a communication tool to pass on information about the priorities they had identified for Africa – sometimes with national governments, but sometimes in Washington, Berlin or London, and certainly not starting from the life experience of ordinary people.

It is understandable how this happened. Suddenly the only money for the arts was coming not from the people, from artists or from universities, it was coming from national governments concerned primarily to maintain power and from donor agencies who were social scientists with no understanding of art or culture. The former started to subvert the old colonial schools and colleges arts festivals which flourished in many ex-British colonies. These had been originally instituted to

promote English language and culture, but now they were turned, and governments chose topics – unity, *harambee*, girl's education, etc – which all plays had to be about, usually in a rather crude melodramatic format¹⁶. The latter did know something about ideas of participation which were becoming part of the rhetoric of development, and so making plays, often accompanied by some sort of post-performance discussion, became quite a niche market.

But who would make these plays? Sometimes University specialists were commissioned, but increasingly often the contract went to the lowest bidders, who were all too often groups of under-employed school leavers who saw the making of development plays as a purely commercial activity, while the funders simply handed out the message to be purveyed and judged the result on how many people saw the play. I don't think the funders had any idea of how powerful they were in the under-funded African theatre market, but they completely distorted it. Where there had previously been an often fairly hand-to-mouth but surviving commercial market, and other groups seeking to make theatre that challenged or engaged people with ideas, even if sometimes from a rather elite perspective, suddenly there was relatively large funding for crude propagandist theatre which endorsed the current campaign from Oxfam, USAID, GTZ, Christian Aid and so on and so forth¹⁷. Many theatre makers were no longer invested in the material – they were running a business. Somewhat ironically I would argue the development sector had turned African development theatre into a service industry, where the message was often irrelevant to the service providers, and the quality of work was often abysmal because the commissioners had no knowledge of, or interest in, the arts.

Recently large corporations have moved into sponsoring Tfd. So, in Uganda, Nile Breweries have funded competitions to make plays about responsible drinking, while in Nigeria Shell fund community theatre¹⁸. The sheer hypocrisy of such actions is fairly breath-taking. No-one could possibly think such industries have any interest in listening to the voices of the people. Shell have not listened to armed uprisings protesting their degradation of whole swathes of the Niger delta. Their funding, I would argue, is entirely cynical and either about presenting an acceptable face to the international community or about domesticating local populations who are encouraged to take responsibility for finding 'community solutions' to problems caused by international capital.

Tfd Methodologies

With time the funding of Tfd has become somewhat more sophisticated. Rather than just handing out the relevant information and commissioning a play to be performed in x number of market places, where the only evaluation tool is the occasional counting of how many people have seen a given production, many aid agencies have funded one or two week programmes in drama training in particular methodologies for the groups they work with. They also increasingly commission research which engages target groups to find out local feeling on a given topic prior to plays being made.

The richest vein of this industry in recent years has been in the area of HIV/AIDS. I defy anyone who has worked in applied arts in Africa in the past 20 years not to have made an AIDS play. I made a terrible one in Eritrea in the mid-1990s, which was under-researched and had a vastly over-simplistic

focus on the evils of working with 'ignorant' traditional healers, for which with hindsight I can only apologise; and a somewhat better piece about people's misconceptions about how the virus was transmitted in the late 1990s in Sudan; both at the time the first AIDS plays in those countries²⁰. Like much of the INGO funded work this was information theatre – and information about AIDS was of course crucial in the early days – but as the research tells us information alone does not lead to behaviour change, and theatre which is only about information giving is limited and often alienating to audiences of the poor who have spent all too much of their lives being told what to do²¹. Moreover, the information which is disseminated is almost always determined by either the state or the INGO which ultimately has to please western paymasters. So, all too often in the 1980s and 1990s even basic HIV/AIDS information was censored. For example, where the common secular wisdom was to promote the ABC of 'Abstinence, Be faithful and use Condoms', charities and states influenced by the Catholic Church refused to endorse condom use. Information was not either true or objective – and as a result millions died unnecessarily²².

As development theatre has become more of an industry the funders have supported the introduction of a raft of 'systems' which could be easily passed on and used for more effective influence over target groups. Exchange of great ideas is of course the stock in trade of all theatre makers, but these 'systems' often claimed to be fail safe methods which could be taught quickly and would have mass effect. In order to impact on communities the idea seems to have been that practitioners simply had to learn a single methodology and hand it on – this deeply fallacious concept has been most seductive and has proliferated in relation to Tfd practice supported by many INGOs. Trainers/facilitators trained over only a week or two, often in just a classroom setting, before being sent back to implement their learning among communities, simply do not have enough learning and thinking time to do more than repeat, parrot-fashion, the techniques they have been taught. When unexpected situations arise they have no alternative knowledges to fall back upon, nor can they use their learning in a flexible, thoughtful manner, adapting it to the necessarily varied needs of those they may be working with. Reliance on such short term training demonstrates that the organisations funding it do not value skilled trainers, but only those who will regurgitate what they have been taught. It is extraordinary to me that while no-one would allow a doctor or a dentist to undertake life-changing operations on the basis of two weeks training it is assumed that cultural activists might be able to initiate profound individual or social change after a simple, short course on a single cultural strategy. In my own teaching I constantly reiterate that a technique is simply a tool, and one tool cannot possibly suit every need. Community arts facilitators need extended training in many different approaches, combined with detailed local understanding, reading and debate about how and why one might be working with these groups in the first place.

The most famous and widely adopted system is Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, especially in its widely used mode of Forum Theatre²³. Forum Theatre was developed in an explicitly radical left-wing setting in Latin America and was intended, said Boal, to be a 'rehearsal for the revolution'²⁴. Boal himself largely sold out in his later years with \$1000 a day workshops focussing on privileged western groups, though the myth that making Forum is somehow radical in itself - as opposed to being a set of techniques which can be applied in more or less 'revolutionary' ways according to how they are used by each facilitator - has a strong hold over many groups across Europe and the US. In Africa, where Boal never went, Forum Theatre was quickly seized upon by many INGOs, with the form being utilised but the topic of theatre making usually predetermined by those paying for the project. This is utterly contradictory to the original philosophy of Theatre of the

Oppressed's strategy of Forum Theatre, which seeks out issues which are identified as oppressive by participants, enables them to make a play exploring the problem, and then works with audience-participants, or in Boalian language 'spectactors', to encourage them to rework the drama to explore a range of possible ways to engage with and ideally rid themselves of that oppression.

Forum, and models such as the Reflect methodology developed by ActionAid²⁵ or the subsequently developed Stepping Stones programme²⁶ looking at gender and sexual relations, are a significant step forwards from the crude making of information plays for performance in a market, followed up by a little discussion. They require target groups to become the actors of their lives, and at their best they develop a virtuous circle of performance – analysis - performance, which may indeed lead to behavioural impact, but hard evidence for this is pretty non-existent as the crucial work of evaluation is seldom undertaken in any depth. I have seen no change in the last decade from the findings on training and evaluation of Helen Gould and Mary Marsh for the UK Department for International Development in 2003, after research on five major INGOs working in seventy countries worldwide in 2003:

- While agency staff at country level are aware of the need to evaluate their cultural or cultural activities they are struggling to identify appropriate forms of evaluation or impact assessment .
- Agency staff recognise there is a need to assess long-term attitude and behavioural change. But a common complaint was that very few cultural or cultural activities are adequately funded for impact assessment or follow-up evaluation.
- The lack of evaluation of integral cultural activities could be exposing agencies to risk. For example, instances were observed during country visits where messages were transmitted locally which apparently ran contrary to the intentions of the parent or funding agency. The public nature of many cultural outputs (sometimes reaching several thousand people) means that those activities that do not reflect the intentions or ethos of agencies can have a potentially wide impact.
- Agency staff at country level have expressed concerns about the quality of facilitation and implementation. Without adequate understanding of how cultural processes work, or contribute to development e.g. behavioural change, there is a risk that projects may give inaccurate or distorted information, cause confusion or deter communities from engagement with the development process. Instances of this were observed during research visits.
- There do not appear to be any criteria concerning skills and training for facilitators, or guidance on project management. (*Routemapping Culture and Development*, Helen Gould and Mary Marsh, 2003, pp12-13)

The focus of nearly all this work is the individual or small community. There appears to be a general, uninterrogated idea that participation in, or witnessing of, a theatre project, will lead either to individual or community behaviour change along the lines prescribed by the funding body. However the crucial difference between participation, which can often impact on those working on a project, and witnessing, for which there is very little evidence of impact unless the work is backed up by other social action initiatives, is seldom interrogated. In my own practice over more than twenty-five years I can point to some extraordinary impacts on individuals. So, after working on a five year

dance project in Ethiopia with children who started out as street workers, at the moment the training finished and the group were deciding to form their own NGO in 2003, I interviewed the eighteen company members who had become the Adugna Community Dance Theatre.

Minyahil: I have a photo from before I joined Adugna and a recent photo. There is no Minyahil before. Now I am strong and healthy. Before Minyahil spoke very bad language and was aggressive. It is a big big change. As if I were not there before.

Meskerem: They didn't only teach dance, they gave us life. How to live and change others. This is life And what Ethiopia needs. (Plastow: 2004)

These young people were indeed transformed, and many have gone on to become acclaimed professional dancers both in Ethiopia and internationally. Similarly after a more recent gender-led project in Uganda²⁷ I interviewed a young woman participant, Patience, who has since gone on to make a raft of community arts projects.

Patience: I am glad I was part of it. It made me ready for the price I have to pay to claim equality with men; because I really want it.

However I would not claim for any of my practice that there is hard evidence it has substantially impacted audiences to empower or transform lives for communities as a whole.

The most pernicious 'system', largely because there is indeed evidence that it can manipulate social consciousness, is the Edutainment or E-E phenomenon, especially that developed in tandem with Edutainment theory developed at Stanford University in the US and the Sabido system for making socially coercive soap operas²⁸. A prime example here is William Ryerson's Population Media Centre²⁹. Working with governments in 44 developing nations, including East and West African nations, the PMC has developed a model for making mass radio dramas according to the Sabido model where programmes are developed in a deliberately melodramatic format. 'Good' and 'bad' characters are carefully formulated after much research with local populations, and then a key 'transitional' character is developed, with whom the audience identify, who moves from the Ryerson-determined 'undesirable' behaviour - usually related to having lots of sex and babies - to the Ryerson-preferred behaviour - more sexually abstemious and fewer babies - all with the express intent of promoting population reduction. The work, according to Ryerson - backed up by good evidence - is highly effective. From among many compelling examples on the Population Media Centre's website there is this interview discussing a radio serial about family planning in Tanzania, Ryerson explains:

[There was] a zero percent change in the control area where they didn't hear the program, a 32 percent increase in the broadcast areas. I got the Minister of Health to have health-care workers ask new family-planning adopters why they had come in, and 41 percent of them named the program by name. (Population Media Centre. Blog. *How Soap Operas Might Save Us From Overpopulation*, August 3rd, 2010, www.populationmedia.org/2010/08/03/how-soap-operas-might-save-us-from-overpopulation/)

The need to talk ideology

Most of the work being carried out under the rubric of TfD is of extremely poor quality and is probably having little effect; some, such as the work of the Population Media Centre can demonstrate that it is indeed having significant impact. Poor work is a waste of everyone's time and

energy – unless of course it satisfies a tick box about participation and communication for the funder. Effective work in terms of impact is always interesting – but who stands to benefit?

This is where the question of ideology comes to the fore. Much of the HIV/AIDS work carried out in the 1990s was supported by right wing evangelical and catholic churches and funded from the West. The PMC is an American initiative. It is irrelevant to this debate whether an individual reader happens to agree that the world is over-populated, the point is that the debate is not being chosen by African subjects but by a United States-based agency funded by a range of Western donors which are using Africa to promote their views and priorities. This is surely neo-colonialism. Instead of proxy wars we now have proxy social engineering. There is good evidence, for example, that the wave of homophobia convulsing nations like Uganda has been stirred up by Western right-wing churches which have no interest in Ugandan development or happiness but only in promoting their own agenda³⁰.

The vast majority of agencies involved in TfD today in Africa seek to evade the issue of ideology. They pretend that their programmes are politically neutral, but what many do is promote either blatant social control or western views of what is good for the world. This is the way neoliberal politics work worldwide. They try to persuade us that their policies are ‘common sense’ or non-political, in a world where all development aid spending is highly politicised. By evading discussion of ideology they seek to disguise their agenda of social control. The fundamental question I think we need to start asking before all others in relation to TfD or any other applied arts work in Africa, of the funders and of the facilitator/makers is, why are you doing this?

If the answer appears to be to promulgate an institutional or individual view of a ‘good thing’ then we should reject the project. If the makers tell us they are seeking to ‘do good’ or to ‘help the poor’ or any similar answer, we should reject the project, because this thinking is patronising, denigrating and domesticating. We should also be very careful of programmes which put the onus for change on poor individuals, while resisting analysis of wider societal and political forces. And we should beware of programmes which are instrumentalist; seeking to tell people what to do rather than engaging in dialogue from the starting point of the community rather than the funder. These projects fail to see the subject group as equal human beings who must be acknowledged to have minds and knowledges which they can bring to bear, and who will only be able to fulfil their potential as creative, thinking beings if art starts to engage with debate, thought and creativity. The African citizen must not be seen as an object of pity or manipulation, but as a fully human being with the right to exercise mind and body. To quote Paulo Friere, the inspiration behind many of the most progressive and radical attempts to promote the empowerment of the oppressed:

Critical and liberating dialogue, which presupposes action, must be carried on with the oppressed at whatever stage of their struggle for liberation.[...] Attempting to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects [...] and transform them into masses which can be manipulated.

(Paulo Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p47)

Empowerment through participatory, dialogic art, in which we explore the problems identified by the least powerful in a sustained engagement, with a view to enabling individual, community and political change is a worthy aim for applied art anywhere, but it goes against all doctrines of elite groups and elite cultures, it undercuts the power of big men, big corporations, religious

establishments and self-seeking states. Such theatre is left-wing, socialist and at least potentially revolutionary, not in doctrinal Marxist manner, but the vision of such as Paulo Freire and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, who have seen art and education as essential to the liberation of human potential in all individuals and societies.

References

1. Much information comes to me through private correspondence and student research but see, for example, Ola Johansson, *Community Theatre and AIDS*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan), 2011 and Christopher John, *Workshopped Plays in a South African Correction Centre: Negotiating Social Relations Through Theatre*, unpublished PhD, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, 2008.
2. Terminology is problematic in this area. I have previously argued that there is so much cross-over and lack of clarity in who uses what terms that one should not get caught up the nomenclature debate. However, I am increasingly minded to think that Theatre for Development has become a compromised term as it tends to buy into the argument that development is something that is done to people. Community-Based Theatre is fine when what we are talking about is discreet communities. Edutainment or E-E, obviously linking teaching with enjoyment, may sound neutral but implies what it usually does, which is to coerce people into thinking in particular ways through the sweetening pill of entertainment. The older term, Popular Theatre, is strongly linked to more politicised performance relating to social debate beyond a narrow developmental view of the world, and possibly needs reclaiming by radical artists.
3. See Ross Kidd and Martin Byram, 'Demystifying Pseudo-Freierian Development: The case of Laedza Batanai', *Community Development Journal*, Vol 17, No2, 1982.
4. See Oga Steve Abah, *Performing Life: Case Studies in the Practice of Theatre for Development*, (Zaria: Tamaza), 2005
5. See David Kerr, *African Popular Theatre*, (Oxford: James Currey), 1995. Michael Etherton, *The development of African Drama*, (London: Hutchinson), 1982. Zakes Mda, *When People Play People: Development Communication Through Theatre*. (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press; London, Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed Books), 1993. Penina Muhando Mlamba, *Culture and Development: the Popular Theatre Approach in Africa*. (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies), 1991.
6. For information on a good example of how theatre gradually moved from using local languages to using local plays particularly under the aegis of university sponsored Travelling Theatre Companies, particularly in Anglophone Africa, see the introductory chapter of Mufunanji Magalasi on the Malawian experience in, *Stage Drama in Independent Malawi: 1980-2002*, (Zomba: Chancellor College Publications), 2012 and Chris Kamlongera, 'Theatre for Development in Africa' in *Media & Glocal Change Rethinking Communication for Development*, eds Oscar Hemer & Thomas Tufte, (Buenos Aires: Publicaciones Cooperativas), 2005. For information on covert use of theatre to critique government see later chapters in the same book and Jane Plastow, 'Uses and Abuses of Theatre for Development: political

- struggle and development theatre in the Ethiopia – Eritrea war’, in *African Theatre and Development: Art for Self-Determination*, ed Kamal Salhi, (Exeter: Intellect), 1998, pp 97-113.
7. See Kamlongera 2005 and Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Decolonising the Mind*, (London: James Currey), 1986
 8. On radio drama see Andrew Skuse, Marie Gillespie and Gerry Power, *Drama for Development: Cultural Translation and Social Change*, (London: Sage), 2011. On radio and television see Population Media Centre, *Using the Media to Achieve Reproductive Health and Gender Equity*. Online publication, http://www.populationmedia.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/UNFPA_Best_practices_ENG.pdf 2011. On popular commercial drama in Tanzania see Jane Plastow, *African Theatre and Politics: the evolution of theatre in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi), 1994, pp197-203.
 9. See Penina Mlamba Muhando, *Culture and Development: The Popular Theatre Approach in Africa*, (Uppsala, Nordiska Afrika Institutet), 1991, and Amandina Lihamba, *Politics and Theatre in Tanzania after the Arusha Declaration, 1967-1984*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 1985, Chapter 6.
 10. *Ngaheeka Ndeenda*, Nairobi: Heinemann, 1980. Trans by the authors into English as *I Will Marry When I Want*, (London: Heinemann), 1982. *Maitu Njugira* has never been published though the English version is finally expected in 2014. The former play was put on in 1977, the latter held ‘open rehearsals’ in 1982 but was refused a performance license.
 11. See Ingrid Bjorkman, *Mother Sing For Me: People’s Theatre in Kenya*, (London: Zed Books), 1989. Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Detained: A Prison Writers Diary*, (London: Heinemann), 1981.
 12. On Zimbabwe and Ethiopia see Plastow, 1996. On South Africa see Robert Kavanagh, *Theatre and Cultural Struggle in South Africa*, (London: Zed Books), 1985. On Kenya see Bjorkman, 1989 and Ngugi, 1981. On Eritrea see Jane Plastow, ‘The Role of Theatre in Seeking Liberation for and between Ethiopia and Eritrea’, in *Global Cold War Literature: Western, Eastern and Postcolonial Perspectives*, ed Andrew Hammond, (London: Routledge), 2011, pp113-127
 13. See Kaarsholm, Preben, ‘Mental Colonisation or Catharsis? Theatre, democracy and cultural struggle from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol 16 (2), 1990, pp246-275.
 14. See Plastow 2011 and 1996, pp144-162.
 15. See Plastow ‘Alemseged Tesfai: A Playwright in service to Eritrean Liberation’, in eds, Martin Banham, James Gibbs and Femi Osofisan, *African Theatre in Development*, (Oxford: James Currey), 1999, pp 54-60, and Christine Matzke, ‘Shakespeare and Surgery in the Eritrean Liberation Struggle: Performance Culture in Orotta’, *Journal of Eritrean Studies* (Asmara), 3.1 2004, pp26-40.
 16. In many nations it had not taken as long as the 1980s for censorship to take off. Wole Soyinka was criticising government censorship in Nigeria in the mid-1960s and was

imprisoned in 1967. However, there was a turn for the worse in the 1980s in many parts of the continent. Not only was Ngugi imprisoned, the Malawian poet Jack Mapanje suffered a similar fate in 1987, and in many nations as varied as Ghana and Ethiopia the state had such a strong control of theatre that it had become impossible to mount even covertly critical productions.

17. See Simon Peter Otieno, *Of Codes and Modes: A Critical Evaluation of Kenyan Performances by and for the Youth on HIV/AIDS*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 2008.
18. See Helen Gould and Mary Marsh, *Culture: Hidden Development*, (London: Creative Exchange), 2004.
19. The information about Nile Breweries sponsoring theatre competitions looking at responsible drinking in Uganda came primarily through informal discussion with freelance theatre maker, Baron Oron. (January 2013). Shell in the Niger Delta has sought to offset some of its appalling human rights record by offering sponsorship to community arts groups in the region. (Personal communication from Austin Osagba. September 2008)
20. On the Eritrean play see Jane Plastow, 'The Eritrea Community-Based Theatre Project', *New Theatre Quarterly*, Vol 52, 1997, pp386-395. On the Sudan work see, Ali Campbell and Jane Plastow, 'The Cockerel and the King's Ear', in *African Theatre: Youth* eds. Martin Banham and Michael Etherton (Oxford: James Currey), 2006.
21. See, for example, Susan Krenn and Rupali Limaye, 'The Role of Social and Behavior Change Communication in Combating HIV/AIDS', in, Marlink RG, Teitelman ST, eds. *From the Ground Up: Building Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Care Programs in Resource-Limited Settings*. (Washington, DC: Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation), 2009. <http://ftguonline.org>. And, *Behavior Change and HIV Prevention: (Re)Considerations for the 21st Century*, Global HIV Prevention Working Group, August 2008, http://www.globalhivprevention.org/pdfs/PWG_behavior%20report_FINAL.pdf
22. See, for example, Damian Thompson's article in *The Telegraph* of November 20th, 2010 'Pope Benedict's extraordinary comments about condoms and HIV reflect his charity and common sense'. Or Raziat Butt in *The Guardian* of 17th March, 2009, 'Pope claims condoms could make African AIDS crisis worse'.
23. Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, (London: Pluto Press), 1979.
24. *Theatre of the Oppressed* pp122
25. For more on the Reflect methodology, which like Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed was inspired by the work Paulo Friere and his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, first published in Portuguese in 1968 and in English in 1970, see <http://www.reflect-action.org/>
26. Stepping Stones is a further Friere inspired practice aimed specifically at combating HIV/AIDS. See <http://www.stepsstonesfeedback.org/index.php/page/Home/gb>

27. This interview took place at the end of The Uganda Intergenerational Women's Theatre Project which I led in 2008, looking at sixty women's aspirations in contemporary Uganda, with participants ranging in age from 17 to 70.
28. On the Sabido system for manipulating audiences towards social change as desired by programme makers see Arvind Singhal, Michael J. Cody, Everett M. Rogers and Miguel Sabido, *Entertainment-Education and Social Change: History, Research and Practice*, (London: Routledge), 2003. Stanford University in the US has taken on edutainment as a major area of research in everything from business, to politics to development, and in many fora discusses using edutainment to influence people. See for example, <http://edutainmentandconvergencetoday.typepad.com> or <http://pcl.stanford.edu/press/2010/ie/>
29. See extensive documentation on <http://www.populationmedia.org>
30. See William Ross Rodgers film, *God Loves Uganda*, released September 2013.

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