PART ONE

SETTING THE PROBLEM
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION
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Indigenous arts that are lively are never static and traditions which are living are always being adapted. (Freire 1973)

The primary goal of community development is to help people improve their social and economic situations. The underlying philosophy is to help people become subjects instead of objects, acting on their situation instead of simply reacting to it. (Christenson & Robinson 1989)

Top-down methods of communication have been accepted as the 'magic charms' of extension and rural development in most countries; the concept of development being seen not in a human context but from the mechanistic angle of economic growth and technological advancement. Yet new concerns are now emerging from a number of different sources. Does agricultural extension need a non-prescriptive format to acknowledge a farmer's own personal preferences? Has the conventional education system prevented a majority of powerless adults from active involvement in their learning programs? Have people been neglected as living parts of their human society, participating and interacting with the surrounding systems? The evidence of the post-Second World War decades is overwhelming: there has been consistently an apparent temptation by education systems and organizations to manipulate, persuade and prescribe people to do certain things, that is, distorting the natural processes of communication. This approach might claim that is rooted in biological means of controlling learning and motivation originally tested in experiments with animals. Learning in this case is highly stimulated by motivational inputs and is considered a result of rewarding and punishing systems. However, critical minds will say that learning of such a kind creates a conditional system of behaviour: through experiences of reward and punishment it creates and controls pleasurable, positive feelings, and unpleasurable negative feelings as powerful 'forces' and 'causes', firstly, to enhance and/or to start and secondly, to stop or to lessen certain stimulation. In this manner, learning would be a response to stimuli which mediate the activity. The mechanistic view of learning which derives from this ontology is that "Thought and feelings are not determiners of behaviour ... [since] ... humans are passive and under the control of the environment" (Adelman and Taylor 1983, p.23).

A number of institutions in our society (family, school, work, leisure, etc) create many layers of social conditioning. Mass media, the manipulated folk media, or any kind of so-called traditional education also function through these motivational systems to force and cause the learning of new things. This conditioning process is reinforced since, particularly from early childhood, each rewarding and punishing experience acquires labels in the mind
of a human. For example, words and sentences might have rewarding and punishing effects and stimulate certain responses. However, as Balcomb (1975) pointed out, "... the idea, prevalent in the early 1920's, that mass media could condition people to do precisely what those controlling the flow of messages wished them to do, has long since been exploded. Hard-sell, one-way communications campaigns arouse audience skepticism. They tend to be self-defeating in the long run. Eventually people make jokes about them" (p.5).

There are now many humanists who have claimed that such a conditioning does not liberate, but rather enslaves and dominates (eg: Rogers, 1969; Freire, 1972; Boal, 1989). These thinkers have proposed dialogue as an interactive, dialectical communication to restore human's potentiality. Systemic communication here connotes a dialogic, symmetrical relationship which allows awareness to be shared in group in an equal sense. Systemic communication involves a number of group interactions which allow a joint analysis of interpersonal relationship. Dialogue within the process of systemic communication fosters critical reflection upon those aspects that condition our social behaviour, for example 'power', and includes different verbal and non-verbal (that is, imaginary, physical) techniques of codification.

Accordingly, with the use of input/output system of education there has rarely been any appreciation of experiential and indigenous knowledge systems. One could portray the conventional context of communication in which power status is maintained through top-down communication and conditioned learning is reinforced, as the following set of one-way oriented relationships:

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  Domination

     Manipulation

       Persuasion
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Figure (1) THE PERSUASIVE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION
This relationship functions through the simultaneous and unified process of image making and agenda setting. Mass media reinforcing social conditioning constantly occupy the mind by making predetermined images and setting occasional agendas. Do they cause the domination of their audiences or do they stimulate dialogue, creativity and appropriate change?

The works of Freire (1970, 1972, 1973), and Kidd (1979, 1984, 1985), for example, reinforce the view that vertical communication through conventional education, agricultural extension and folk or the mass media has placed people in the position of passive recipients, has distorted their human potential for communicative action, and has essentially silenced them. These media have been aimed at the transfer of information and creation of images to impose certain changes on the behaviour of their audiences. Hence humans' capacity to act intentionally and participate actively in changing their own thoughts, patterns of behaviour and environments, has been manipulated or ignored.

Since the 1970s, considerable efforts have been made to eliminate the discriminative consequences of this vertical/ asymmetrical relationship, to foster emancipation and creativity and to transform the power structures within conventional communication processes. In terms of systemic and participatory dimensions, the most powerful alternative has been a humanistic and 'inside-out' learning approach to human inquiry, community development, organisational change, and rural extension. This study, in critiquing the concepts of 'learning' as change in behaviour (behaviouristic), change in knowledge (cognitivist), and profound imitation and selective invention (social learning), appreciates
the humanistic approach and demonstrates learning as a process of actualizing human potential. It seeks to address the question: does development imply merely the socio-economic development of the individual and society or should it involve the ethical, cultural, moral and psychological development of the person as well?

The formulation of the research question is concerned with a systemic/participative view of drama and theatre, that is, a systemic communication within a framework of grassroots participation and interaction, in the context of systemic action research, through creative and self-directed learning processes. Therefore, the study is concerned with exploring methodologies for change rather than with changing extension organisation.
RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN IRAN

Within the last five decades in Iran, particularly with the emergence of new scientific knowledge of agriculture, the position of farmers has often been characterised by a passive opposition to technological development grounded in reaction to urban practitioners' persistent tendency to equate farmers/villagers with illiterate ignorants. The post-Green Revolution decades in development programs of the Shah's regime have illustrated that the application of money to a problem does not automatically solve it. And the classic monarchical mentality of 'curing' problems by forcing people to take imposed 'cures' has proved to be an inappropriate approach here, as elsewhere (Korten and Klauss, 1984).

Rural development in Iran has a history of less than half a century, when a one-way oriented, exogenous type of development was adopted by those who governed Iran. In the 1950s, an agricultural information package was offered to the country. In parallel, the United States' Four Point package, along with intensive application of the mass-media for the transfer of new technology, was accepted uncritically. Agricultural extension was based on the dissemination of technology by the Ministry of Agriculture throughout Iran. The dominant aspect of this approach was the imposition of certain directions on farmers to change their traditional ways of farming. It was followed by land reform in the 1960s which resulted in the majority of peasants becoming small land-holders. This suspended them between two 'worlds'. The change freed a large number of farmers from their land to migrate to the industrial sector - a massive migration of the labour force. This socio-cultural shift occurred in a period within which a variety of Western technologies and a rich supply of equipment (supported by a well-intentioned extension philosophy) were taken into the rural settlements.

The Extension Department was organised, offices were established, mobile units were equipped with information and small mechanical tools, campaigns were planned and health and literacy corps headed for rural areas. Thousands of pamphlets and posters were printed to preach 'The more production, the more money'. The rural sector was being modernised, and at the same time was being segmented into two categories: the poor were becoming poorer and the rich, richer. Modernization certainly did achieve some successes: big modernized farms were built, commodity crops were mass produced, high yield hybrid corn, cotton and wheat seeds were widely used in some areas, tractors and fertilizers were introduced in some places, and schools were built in others. But while commercial agro-businesses expanded enormously, subsistence agriculture hardly changed.
The cultural impacts and the consequences of the programmed, modernization plan was politically as well as religiously criticized. In the early sixties, strong religious leaders started to voice opinions against the cultural destruction and non-value-based shifts in the foundations of the Iranian society. The innovative/modernizing trends focused on the physical realities, whilst neglecting the ethical phenomena which included cultural belief systems and value bases within the society. 'Fanaticism' was the accusation made to any opposing voice.

The Green Revolution's inequitable outcomes started to affect the local ways of living by the creation of high-yield varieties of corn, wheat, rice, and the mass consumption of chemicals. Agricultural extension activities in Iran still focus on advice to improve farmers' technical skills. Within this context, the hierarchical structure of the extension organisations, the lack of community-oriented development programs in favour of production, the lack of linkages between research institutes and farmers, the unsatisfied vocational expectations of the practitioners and extension workers (Khatoonabadi, 1989), the lack of trust and understanding among farmers and outside researchers, as well as the principles which underlie the lineal extension philosophy, has decreased the potential energy of the agricultural information system and prevented it from actively encountering and challenging ongoing rural issues.

For decades then, extension organisations have promoted the transfer of new technologies to remote regions in the hope that these would be 'adopted' by the rural poor. On the ground, however, many extension workers have long recognized that prescriptive approaches cannot meet the problems of rural poor which derive from a combination of powerlessness, cultural issues, vulnerability, poor sanitation, poor water supply, malnutrition and lack of education. And so, the poor or small farmers who can ill-afford the time or money and lack the confidence for trips to the towns and consultation welcomed the contact with extension services only when their conditions became intolerable. The extension organisations, in spite of their intentions and services, managed to serve only the relatively affluent.

In general, extension workers interpreted the farmers' behaviour in terms of attitude, and focused their activity to achieve certain attitudinal changes. Agricultural extension, by intending to influence farmers, ignored their identity and apparently neglected the fact that the farmers' customary habits of doing or appreciating certain things was tied strongly with the ways they perceived the world. For example, until they reflected upon and analysed their life situations critically, they continued to believe in fatalism. Therefore, when extension workers talked to farmers about new ways of farming, without taking into account their world views, crystallized in their cultural forms of expression, they were doomed to failure, as almost every occurrence was explained in terms of 'fate'.

These dynamics were dramatically underlined by several events during the second half of the 1970s, such as the establishment of big commercial farms across the lands of small farmers in many States, for example in Garmser of the Tehran province, or in Khoozestan and Isfahan, as well as the widespread urban and rural unrest and violence in 1979. After the new Islamic government took over, new strategies for poverty eradication through community programs began to be developed. Ironically, it created a new sense of dependence by rural people on urban aids and assistance. During the early 1980’s these programs spread over the country and although their coverage was still very limited, several positive results began to appear, examples of which are grassroots participation in literacy training, health and rural industry. The adoption of several new technologies did increase, and the role of the broadcasting media and other less formal communication processes was revealed to be important in this context. Yet the rate of change has been desperately slow, and indeed distorted.

Seemingly, little connection had been made so far between extension and communication, nor had the significance of non-formal, indigenous processes of communication been recognized.

Within conventional processes of development, when low-income farmers (as the passive receivers) did not accept a certain idea or message, whether through face-to-face contacts and or the mass-media, the extensionists tried to interpret this failure by categorising these low-income farmers as ignorant and holding onto primitive and superficial concepts. They did not rethink the underlying extension and education philosophy nor even the underlying principles of the methods. Consequently, their assumption (without being tested or proved) led to another conclusion: that if the farmers did not accept a new technology, there must be motivative and persuasive ways of making them accept it. This point led them to employ other micro-media such as folk-theatre, again with the aim to persuade and used in a top-down manner. There is no doubt that the changes that were made by agricultural extension in Iran were oriented in one direction and based on propaganda. The experience of almost twenty years of modernisation policies in Iran before the Revolution proved the fact that technology-centred development (which ignored personal development) failed to reach the masses. Rather, it widened the gap between the social groups and increased the vulnerability of small farmers in the communities. The advertising method of introducing chemicals and new technology influenced some of rural Iran without communities being aware of it. There was a tacit acceptance of the message.
In this manner also, (rich) farmers' demands were manipulated not only by subtle media technologies but also by the obvious content of extension messages, which showed villagers how to use commodities. The inevitable cultural aspect of this arbitrary manner was that, in the long term, 'chemicals' or 'new technology' were likened to various attributes presented as being 'socially desirable'. Extension functioned unintentionally in a way to create demand in farmers rather than simply to reflect their innate desires. As a consequence of the machine-centred development of the 1960s and the centralization policies, the migration rate from the villages to the big cities increased drastically. Even after the Islamic revolution, despite the government's incentives and subsidies and mainly due to the one-way orientated and non-systemic development policies, this continued.

THE AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION SYSTEM

In the conventional model now operating in Iran, extension activity starts in government research departments and is followed through by the extension staff who are consequently in charge of advising farmers. Although it might be claimed that there is also a feedback system in the above process, it is still linear and non-participative.

The agricultural information system can therefore be criticized in terms of the passivity it has created among its clients. The following critical review has been derived from the studies of the researcher through ten years of experiences in the rural sector, as a practitioner in animal husbandry, consultant and production manager (operating the modernized farms) and broadcaster of rural radio programs:

1. The issue of cultural identity in the processes of technology transfer was neglected, as those who were affected by the changes were suspended between two worlds while becoming part of neither the old world which was crumbling or the new one which rejected them.

2. The feudal system had provided peasants with annual or seasonal credits to face their needs, based on the locally accepted norms, whereas the new 'land reform' was not supported by follow-up and regular financial support. Therefore the agricultural extension services were beneficial mostly to those who could afford the technology.

3. The large and rich farmers adopted a higher proportion of the recommended innovations than did renters and share-croppers. On many occasions the high income farmers had also rewarded the extension workers for their innovative services, with the result that they favoured the high income farmers.
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On the other hand, the economic gap had prevented fruitful social interactions. As a result, the technology not only was appropriated by mainly the modernized or commercial farmers, who were a minority, but was also diffused among them only, whereas the majority who produced the main food crops were deprived and neglected.

4. Farmers were perceived as mere production factors and treated by the media as passive, non-thinking recipients of technological recipes generated by outsiders' decisions. Consequently the ability of farmers to express their basic, real needs or to employ their own potential and participate in invention of the appropriate technology was ignored or neglected. Their voices were heard rarely only in radio programs which were for the propagation of government policies.

5. The farmers were not provided with the opportunities 'to express themselves and to have their own voice' through the mass media as information channels. In contrast, mass media (and radio as the most accessible) functioned in a way to influence and manipulate farmers far more than they realized - in the patterns of their everyday life, and channeled their unthinking habits, their functional decisions and their thought processes by the use of techniques gleaned from behaviourist psychology, conventional communication theory and positivistic social sciences.

6. The extension services discovered the role of opinion leaders and the miraculous effect of the 'two-step flow' of information, and employed local leaders in their own service, giving them the title of 'technical leaders' to impose the government's policies and new technology on rural communities more effectively and to increase the adoption process. The activity was sympathetic to technological change and opposed social change; it basically was aimed at domestication, but not liberation - only one reason for the actual potential of the structural changes of the 1970s within Iranian society.

7. In some cases, even if the extension activities had been offered to small farmers, the top-down method of communication and the aggressive diffusion and publicity of the government's farm policies would still be the subject of criticism. The dominant policies in agriculture were beneficial mainly to commercial farmers as a result of which extension orientation became essentially commodity-based.

8. The use of persuasive techniques had negative impacts not only economically, but also biologically and ecologically. Marketing imbalances, the destructive results of use of pesticides, and subsequent unemployment and subsistence reduction are examples.
It is this catalogue which suggests the need for a different approach to ‘extending’ agricultural information: a different approach to the whole issue of ‘development’ and one which would build upon more traditional ways of information flow.

THE GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY AND CULTURE

Every culture includes an appreciative system which must be at least sufficiently shared to guide collective action, to mediate communication, and to give the society which generates it enough self-confidence to survive. (Vickers 1983, p.56)

Iran is a land of contrasts: a land of deserts and forests, of snowy mountains and green valleys: Apple trees and palm trees grow within a few miles of each other. There are three major mountains (5500 meters and over) which make a triangle around this land.

In the centre of Iran, there are two large deserts. Between the mountains there are valleys with a Mediterranean climate. In the north of Iran, alongside Caspian Sea coast, there is a big, warm, humid jungle. Iran enjoys vast natural resources and is a rich country, even though most of the population remain engaged in farming activities. Inevitably geography has affected the culture, and there are a number of subcultures in the country, each with its own myths and belief systems. Historically, the people in western Iran have interacted with Greece and, further back, the ancient Roman Empire. In contrast, those living in the eastern part have interacted with India and the ancient East. As a result, Iran has been a land of a number of religious traditions.

Myths and other cultural phenomena cannot be separated from the historical context, and an understanding of the roots of cultural elements in a society is a prerequisite to the study and interpretation of social phenomena.

In a short flash-back in Iran’s history we may see groups of people, originally living in central Europe, who migrated to Iran (Persia) and India. Each group gradually evolved into a specific nation, Aryans moving towards the south east around 2000 B.C. and settling in both Iran and India. These people established small clans with tribal structures and chose a nomadic life style.

Those who settled in Iran and India are known as Indo-Iranians, whose ancient religion still remains in a collection of religious Indian songs which is called Rig-Veda and ancient Iranian songs which is Yasht. This historic religion reflects their ontological roots, as well as the way they interacted with the world: a nomadic life based on seasonal migration, living in tents and constant battles with the ‘wild world’.
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In a paradoxical manner, they were both the enemies and the lovers of 'wild nature', and they reflected a sense of horror in their arts, as well as an admiration of the world. They are 'frightened' of drought and at the same time are delighted with the beauty of the sun-rise and the rain, and repeatedly talk to the goddesses of fountains and the sun.

After Islam, Iran experienced, in a very short time, a shift to a completely new theological foundation and was affected, culturally and intellectually, by its new insights and living program. Iranians, as the major Shi'ite Muslim population in the world, are still strongly tied with the myths and the belief systems which connect them to the moral, instructional and ethical issues of Islam.

The history of any kind of 'social change' programs within Iran's context show that any programs neglecting these traditional moral or cultural aspects of Iranians, in the long term, have resulted in conflict situations and have finally failed. Hence, any contemporary educational and developmental activity which does not appreciate such indigenous value systems is unlikely to succeed.

A review of the history in Asia also reveals the close ties between the belief systems and the indigenous dramas and rituals and other cultural and economic practices. India, Indonesia, and Iran are typical examples. Schechner (1985) argues that indigenous drama and rituals in all cultures in most cases are 'a mirror of life', or a symbolic representation of that life.

LOCAL DRAMA AS AN INDIGENOUS INFORMATION SYSTEM

Throughout the thrust towards modernization, agricultural and nomadic communities, inheriting a rich artistic tradition through a number of art forms - the most creative of which is the ritual theatre, folk drama and story-telling in the village forums and tea houses - did continue to preserve their own cultural identity. The religious revolution, which started through mourning processions, affected the whole of rural life and highlighted the fact that farmers' attitudes were rooted above all else in their values and culture. Villagers and nomads alike provide a distinct source of creative knowledge within the context of their art works, that is, a significant source of indigenous knowledge (Roling 1985; Chambers 1983).

In this manner, villagers have formed the basis of 'micro-cultures' and knowledge systems throughout history which gives them a highly important status in the development of an ancient civilization. This is the point which legitimates the focus of this present study of their creative initiatives within the context of a research and development program.
The complexity of the Iran's rural context offers researchers a prime opportunity to consider a systems perspective to appreciating the inter-dependencies between socio-economic and cultural factors as crucial to the process of rural development. In this connection, an epistemological exploration and reconstruction seems to be worth considering.

As Chelkowski (1979) has put it, the Persian literary heritage extends back over 2,500 years and is renowned for its long structured narratives of national history and romantic epics, but its only true, large scale drama is the Muslim-inspired Ta'ziyeh, which took well over a millennium to develop. This is possibly a result of Persia's close cultural and geographical ties with Greece and India, both of which had extraordinarily rich theatrical traditions, but its strong religious content reflects the rooted ontology of the nation. Chelkowski (1979) has described Ta'ziyeh as a compromise between the moving procession and the stationary recitation that was at first staged at street intersections and squares, as it still is now in the villages. However, it eventually moved into the courtyards of caravanserais, bazaars, and private houses. By the nineteenth century, the nascent dramas were performed in arena theatres called 'Takiyeh', built usually by the wealthy and upper classes as a religious and public service. In present times, Ta'ziyeh is mainly seen in the villages of Iran, and in most rural areas begins with the early morning groupings of people from different villages marching the long distances to the central village where Ta'ziyeh is performed. In a general view, it is similar to annual festivals of Latin American or other Asian countries. It occurs in the context of cooperation and social interaction.

Ta'ziyeh literally means expression of sympathy, mourning and consolation. (...) The Ta'ziyeh of Iran is ritual theatre and derives its form and content from deep-rooted religious traditions. But although it is Islamic in appearance, it is strongly Persian, drawing vital inspiration from its special political and cultural heritage. Its genius is that it combines immediacy and flexibility with universality. Using rural folk art with urban, royal entertainment, it admits no barriers between the archetype and the human, the wealthy and the poor, the sophisticated and the simple, the spectator and the actor. Each participates with and enriches the other. (Chelkowski 1979, pp.31-2)

However, Ta'ziyeh may clearly be regarded as both a ritual and a popular theatre of the Iranians. It involves a strong, non-oppressive content and message - Freire's non-oppressive, philosophical statements on the quality of relationships among humans are in fact of a similar connotation. This religious ritual is in fact one kind of Iranian 'folk theatre'. Epskamp (1989), has described it:

Tah'zieh presents a more difficult problem. Tah'zieh is performed by professionals in the rural areas. As well as that, Tah'zieh is performed by amateurs all over Iran. During the administration of the Shah, ... there were both folk and popular versions of this form of theatre, both of which were accepted, but not really appreciated by those pursuing the west-oriented modernization process envisaged by the Shah. This distinction disappeared after the Iranian Revolution, and Tah'zieh became pre-eminently the popular theatre of Iran, valued highly, by the people as well as by the religious elite.... Tah'zieh is not only accepted in Iran, but even promoted as the very tradition that not only underlines the cultural identity of the population, but also the national identity of the state. (Epskamp, 1989, p.42)
**Ta'ziyeh** is a religious expression in the form of drama (which was traditionally oral and passed from brother to brother). It involves social and moral life of the (rural) communities, and despite the fact that the specific theatrical aspects of the drama change a little with each local performance, there is an integration of all sub-cultures under its ethical, moral and spiritual coverage throughout Iran which reveals a strong sense of national identity.

Other dramatic expressions include stories carried by oral traditions, such as those concerning the popular anti-hero, the Hoja, and the rich legacy of the so-called **Thousand and One Nights**, which have been published in many other languages, including English. Poets of historic standing whose works are produced in modern editions in many languages even today include Omar Khayaam, Ferdosi, Sa’adi, Hafiz, and also At’tar, whose work **The Conference of the Birds** inspired Peter Brook’s epic theatrical journey through Africa and an earlier project, **Orgast at Persepolis**. Contingent is the tradition of narrative painting.

Concepts of national identity begin with individuals in society and reflect social-psychological concepts. According to Habermas (1987), the two aspects of identity involve self-determination and self-realization. Under the latter, "self can be identified not only generically, that is, as a person capable of autonomous action in general, but as an individual to whom an unmistakable life history can be attributed" (p.101).

Therefore, a process of self-realization that contrasts to the outside influence can increase the number of independent individuals who foster national identity. In the processes of conventional development of rural Iran, Western cultural influences did not gain a strong hold, because self-confidence existed in the indigenous cultural heritage and there was a lack of interest in outside cultures by the majority. More importantly, a great deal of people's creative knowledge lies in their traditional oral literature, manifested in metaphors, parables, stories, indigenous dramas, epics and rituals and other art forms and, while these are maintained, national identity will also be maintained.

Regardless of the potential energy of local dramas as micro-media and the reluctance of people to adopt new trends, efforts rarely were made to appreciate and appropriate these media within national rural development processes. On the other hand, due to the rapid economic changes and the technological advancement or modernization, which started from the 1950s, the indigenous forms of cultural expression in the cities have been widely replaced with modern mass media, or Western European derived theatre, which mainly satisfied the desires, aspirations and interests of the educational elite, the aristocratic classes and urban dwellers born in the last few decades with no strong connections with the
traditional culture of the country. These groups largely rejected traditional culture as being 'old fashioned'.

In this study, the researcher attempted to appreciate indigenous culture through participating in the religious ritual of Iranian villagers, as a means of establishing trust, cultural exploration and communicative action as well as different forms of dramas, that is, creative drama, 'popular' and 'forum theatre', which were used for exploration of culture issues, appreciation of local knowledge as well as empowerment of the participants to increase their participation in their own development programs.

FINAL REMARKS

It can be concluded that the inadequacies of conventional approaches to development in Iran to date can be associated with three major issues:

(1) The linearity of the current approach (and assumptions about the diffusion of innovation and the adoption process).

(2) The non-participation of farmers and rural people in the policy and strategic processes concerned with development.

(3) The fact that indigenous knowledge has been ignored almost to the point of its omission by the technology transfer model.

A number of workers in other countries have turned to theatre and popular drama in response to similar critiques. This thesis will explore drama in Iran from the same critical perspective.

Before further exploring the application of drama as a more systemic, participative approach to development in Iran, it is appropriate to explore critical aspects of 'extension', and the dimensions of both drama and theatre as process.
CHAPTER TWO

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the aim, objectives and the methodological framework of the inquiry. It posits that the goal is not merely to increase economic output, but to increase human development. It focuses on qualitative principles and highlights systemic action research as the most relevant approach to this inquiry. The chapter emphasises the research which deals with qualitative interpretations based on theory-informed action, rather than numbers to be presented in sophisticated tables. Finally, the validity is achieved through a number of action/research cycles rather than through measurable quantities.
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AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The Third World's strong oral traditions, as well as mass illiteracy (as identified and emphasised by others who have researched the role of popular theatre as a tool for non-formal education) are not simply the justification of this inquiry. Rather, the study is an investigation of the learning/researching aspects of drama (creative drama, popular and forum theatre) along with indigenous media (metaphors, story-telling, and parables) as a critical medium for collective expression, extension and development.

It is now clear through the literature that drama is an important method of communication within societies all over the world and, as a consequence, culture patterns and dramatic enactments interrelate. Through such a medium, for example, extension officers or health agents can look at the tacit or implicit knowledge of the oppressed and get an insight of the whole aspect of their clients' culture in order to integrate the traditional methods of life (including herbal remedies, farming, animal breeding and so forth) and to mobilize all available resources for community development. The goal, however, is not merely to increase economic output, but to increase humans' potential to participate to achieve change.

When the development of an individual is being facilitated (within both a small group or a larger organisation) the development of the whole community is likewise being facilitated. The principle which underpins a seemingly radical attitude towards theatre from the Western European perspective lies in the differences between 'art for art's sake' and 'art for life'. This study attempts to clarify the distinction between art and life, and sees a vital role for theatre as a culturally and socially-engaged involvement in the process of creating a participatory context for development. It investigates whether creative arts provide individual participants with a mechanism through which they become able to view themselves and their relationships critically. The research then seeks to test the appropriateness of drama as a codification tool and a language for personal expression and development particularly in rural Iran. To achieve this, a participative style of theatre has been established (involving the audience in performance) with the aim of helping people to view their relationships within their particular social structure in order to facilitate their process of decodification/codification within a number of contexts.
AIMS

The study aims to develop farmers' communicative actions, to facilitate the creation of farmers' own voices through locally accepted performance media, and to challenge the distinction between 'learning' and 'being entertained' by theatre.

MAIN OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the inquiry is to design a creative and interactive model of drama through systemic action research within which farmers, as well as other community members, can develop their communication skills, share and validate their personal experiences and help each other develop insights into their daily life events to make appropriate decisions. The focus of the study, then, is on the praxis of drama as cultural medium with a highly participative nature to learn through and improve problematical situations within community development contexts.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives are based on a central point: to facilitate interactions among participants to critically reflect upon their asymmetrical relationships and the one-way communication which manipulates, persuades and conditions individuals as follows:

- To promote personal communication skills, experiential and self-directed learning among the rural communities;
- To test more appropriate tools of codification (in a target area, rural Iran) by undertaking a systemic action research in order to respond to socio-cultural and technical issues identified by farmers;
- To explore a methodology for group learning to transform social reality and improve people's lives which is also capable of being used for participatory research;
- To investigate the particular appropriateness of drama as a codification tool in rural Iran and 'participatory theatre' with the aim of helping people view themselves and their relationships within the social structure) to facilitate their processes of decodification as well as codification;
- To foster activities that fulfil community needs which are presently beyond the scope of individual local neighbourhood groups;
- To assist villagers to critically analyse their current situation (relationships with each other), raising community awareness of development potential and problems through promoting peer learning and facilitating the process.
METHODOLOGY

To capture the qualities of a living moment, the researcher does not follow one standardized method, but chooses one or more to suit the unique event. Many styles of inquiry are used inventively. Thus researchers may describe and justify methods as they proceed.

(Courtney 1988c, p. 6)

Systemic Action Research is the methodological framework of the study. In Bawden's terms (1990), "Action research is a participative, experiential process where people work and learn together in ways which allow them to make sense out of their experiences as a basis for action to change them" (Bawden, 1990: 15).

Action research is a method of inquiry based on a model initiated by Lewin and developed by Bawden in tertiary studies in Agriculture. The model involves the dynamic process of someone planning and acting, implementing a first step for action, observing the results of that step, reflecting upon that and then planning subsequent actions (figure 2).

![Action Research Cycles Diagram](image)

Figure (2): ACTION RESEARCH CYCLES (AFTER LEWIN)

Thus, the process consists of a number of action cycles (basically recursive fluxes) through which validity is gained. Each cycle by itself provides an experiential learning context for all involved in the inquiry. Through action research, learning is challenging and absorbing, as it makes the abstract realities concrete, bringing about a certain consciousness of the 'self', making individuals acquainted with the basic issues and the possibilities for taking action to change the situation.

To a large extent, action research deals with qualities rather than measurable quantities. In social studies, quantitative research relies mainly on questioner, often with the multiple choice questions. Researches which are based on measurement are rooted in the
methodology of the nineteenth century. Such studies, as Courtney (1988c) has noted, were mainly based on measurement in answer to the questions How many? and To what extent? and was mostly popular in the physical sciences. When this mode of inquiry was used in dealing with human beings, many issues emerged to prove its deficiencies. It was not a satisfactory way of dealing with human beings, as well as with the social situations, since "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted" (Cameron 1963, p. 13).

... in the qualitative research, the researcher is involved in the event. Qualitative research defies simple definition or description. It grew out of a variety of disciplines: anthropology, sociology, psychology. Researchers label their work in diverse ways: as naturalistic, ethnographic, participant observation, etc. As a result they show differences of beliefs and assumptions, of attitudes to research methods, of the criteria to be used, and of ways to assess research studies. (...) A Qualitative researcher studies (A) qualities in (B) contexts while (C) within the event and (D) uses various methods as the context alters. (Courtney 1988c, p.4)

Some characteristics of qualitative research also involve the relationship between the inquirer and the co-researchers which can be defined as: 'partnership', 'rapport', 'openness', 'non-judgemental', 'reflective', 'appreciation and revelation of commonsense understanding and assumptions that most people use in their daily interactions' (Bogdan and Taylor 1975). Besides, Brookfield has characterized qualitative research by three features as follows:

1. A substantive concern with the exploration of perceptions and attitudes, and with understanding the inner meaning and significance of behaviours.
2. A reliance on certain data collection techniques; open-ended interviews, participant and non-participant observation, and the use of unobtrusive measures.
3. A predilection for the application of grounded theory towards the analysis and coding of data, discernment of central themes, generation of hypotheses, and establishment of typologies and classifications. (Brookfield 1983, p. 139)

Based on qualitative research principles, participatory inquiry unlike survey research is concerned with engaging all people in the research process. Within an open-ended process a certain amount of knowledge is revealed collectively. In qualitative inquiry each individual is appreciated for the uniqueness encompassing his/her entity. Therefore, valid and reliable knowledge is achieved when co-inquirers establish a consensus upon their 'commonalities'. It is now agreed that the phenomenon of generalisation through surveying the random samples in quantitative research would be inappropriate as far as humans are concerned. The major shortcomings of survey research methods were recognized by Budd Hall in using carefully devised and pre-tested questionnaires while working in adult education research in Tanzania. His criticisms on survey research are:
1. The survey research approach oversimplifies social reality and is therefore inaccurate.
2. Survey research is often alienating, dominating or oppressive.
3. Survey research does not provide easy links to possible subsequent action.
4. Survey research methods are inconsistent with the principles of adult education.
   (Hall 1975, p. 25)

Since then, the participatory research principles were developed by Hall and published in a number of works (1975, 1978, 1979, 1981, 1989). In Hall's writings participatory research is seen in the collective act of:

- problem identification and definition, data collection, analysis, and the conclusion;
- the main problem is to improve the participants' life style through the radical transformation of social reality;
- community members are the beneficiaries of the research themselves;
- participatory research is an authentic process of inquiry, and the accuracy and validity of the results are more than those of a survey research, because people are involved within whole activities, and the conclusion is the corollary or the synthesis of all perspectives and represents a collective form of worked-out knowledge. Participatory research is mainly concerned with the norms, values, codes and attitudes of people involved in the researching process.

According to Smith (1989), the concepts of 'reliability' and 'validity', are very important in social research, since "They are a measure of the accuracy of the information collected" (p.29). Validity refers to the truthfulness of information which is acquired within inquiry, whereas reliability implies a consensus and the relevance of information in the long term. As Smith has pointed out, if information is not accurate in human inquiry it may result in false decisions being made which do not reflect what people truly believe. The quantitative/mechanistic methods in social research can create inaccurate outcomes, because in human relationships 'knowledge' is more than factual elements to be mechanically gathered, rather there are underlying values to be taken into account. Quoting the late Roby Kidd, Brookfield (1983: 136) points out that "it is not possible, and may never be possible, to assign consistent numerical weights to all human attributes such as love, fear, rage, wonder, hope, responsibility". The case, however comprises two different tasks or responsibilities in quantitative research, that of interviewer and the interviewee. There are a number of criticisms to the questioning approach:

- it is researcher (ie: interviewer)-based, rather than interviewee-based;
- it is imposing and dominating;
- it is top-down, rarely bottom-up;
- it is a one-way communication;
- there might be a number of factors (ie: psychological, social or personal) that may
affect the responses, at the time of interviewing;
- the mentioned factors may strongly decrease the validity of the research results;
- the samples in quantitative research are selected randomly, whereas humans are not objects with a common nature, but are unique entities with a set of specific characteristics and absolute experiential uniqueness;
- the act of generalisation in quantitative research is not logical in working with humans (i.e., a sample has an identity of its own).

In a qualitative research process, in contrast, the direction shifts from interview towards dialogue in which the two parties, while working out a common problem and sharing awareness, are engaged in a co-researching process. The knowledge gained is basically the result of reciprocal communication. The value of interviewing dialectically is stressed by Zweig (1965: 245):

The act of interviewing does not need to sink to the level of mechanicalness. It can be a graceful and joyful act, enjoyed by the two sides and suffered by neither. What is more, my contention is that unless it becomes such an act it will only fail in its main function. One cannot conduct an interview by bombarding one's victims with a barrage of questions, which is only tiresome and tiring for both sides. The only way is to make an interview an enjoyable social act, both for the interviewer and the respondent, a two-way traffic, so that the respondent feels not a 'victim' but a true partner, a true conversationalist.

FINAL REMARKS

The qualitative nature of this process of systemic action research (through a number of experiential cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting), has gained validity not merely within reflecting through the developmental process of the study, but also through the consensus made in each level of the action research. Each level of the inquiry (i.e.: exploring drama methodology in Theatre Nepean; field work with Iranian farmers; field work with Australian immigrant farmers; and workshops with agricultural students at Hawkesbury) involved an experiential learning flux including abstract conceptualisation, active experimentation, concrete experience and reflective observation.

In such a context, the systemicity comes through the explicit integration of: humanistic education theories, rural extension as a cultural activity, conscientization and empowerment, systemic and participative methodologies, and grassroots involvement through drama methods with the actual application in field situations. A distinction between 'drama' and 'theatre' is made, and a number of forms of theatre are reviewed to determine their contribution to the learning process. It will be shown that the learning/researching potential of theatre does not depend only on the message and the context, but also the nature and the expressive qualities of the type of theatre which is used.
Then different types of learning which occur through drama, such as experiential learning and self-directed learning, will be discussed. Forum theatre will be highlighted as the potential theatrical form able to regard the audience as actors and creators of drama, the argument providing a context to illuminate the fact that the process of making drama is more important than the given performance, the product. Theatre will therefore be introduced as an open-ended process and not only the activity which starts and ends on the stage. From this point, the research explores the principles of open-ended theatre processes in relation to the principles which underlie systemic action research methodology, another major characteristic being the continuous recursive relationship between action and reflection or praxis in the sense explored by Freire (1972).

A set of points will be chosen and considered from the work of learning theoreticians and psychologists as well as contemporary extension and systems scientists and cognition specialists such as: Gregory Bateson, George Kelly, Michael Polanyi, Paulo Friere, Richard Bawden, and Augusto Boal.

The notable principles which are the foundation for this research include:

- emancipatory learning;
- conscientisation and empowerment;
- personal construct psychology;
- phenomenology;
- self-directed learning;
- personal knowledge;
- systems thinking;
- recursive logic;
- participatory inquiry and systemic action research.
- creative dramas, forum theatre and

methods (and the techniques) used in systemic action research which demonstrate a combination of physical and emotional involvement:

- participant observation (Spradley, 1980);
- interviewing of 'Key Informants';
- semi-structured interviews (Goldman and McDonald, 1987);
- group interviews;
- focus group meetings; and
• drama (consisting of story telling, dialogue, improvisation, creative imagination and movement, role play, metaphors and parables, as well as Theatre (including drama and an active observer).
PART TWO
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
CHAPTER THREE
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION : A CRITICAL VIEW

This chapter critiques agricultural extension which focuses on 'transfer of technology' and presents instead a systemic perspective for development at the interface between 'culture' and 'adoption of new technology'. It also criticises 'adoption' and posits a way an individual emancipates from oppression and recaptures his/her whole humanity for better management.

An alternative or complementary method for extension which fosters self-learning, critical reflection, creativity and innovation is then explored.
CHAPTER THREE

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION: A CRITICAL VIEW

Training peasants to be well-rounded managers is one of the most difficult aspects of the development process.... Agricultural training is not a matter of selecting one method of training over another, but rather of developing an approach that integrates a variety of complementary educational techniques. (Lansdale 1986, pp.1-5)

Agriculture is the activity which links human activity systems with environmental systems. Thus, "Extension may refer to more than agricultural extension ...[and] is relevant to development overall" (Rivera, Seepersad and Pletsch 1989, p.140). In the second half of the 1950s, the cultural and societal dimensions of rural extension were explored by several researchers. Dube (1956) for example, pointed to an actual development activity in India which did not succeed due to its direct intervention with the local culture. According to him, "There has been a growing realization among rural extension experts and technical assistance workers that even some of the less involved technological or economic innovations have latent cultural and social dimensions that need careful consideration of the success if these programs is to be assured" (Dube 1956, p.19).

Baxter et al. (1989), have noted that the term 'extension' was first used in connection with agricultural improvement over a century ago, and what are now called 'agricultural extension activities' pre-date that usage by many years. Regarding extension as part of a process of transferring knowledge, they have also identified different approaches to agricultural extension such as: rural extension, commodity-based extension, university-based extension, and Ministry of Agriculture field service extension. Also Contado (1990), in the FAO report on the Global Consultation on Agricultural Extension, has identified eight approaches to extension namely: (a) the general agricultural extension approach; (b) the commodity specialised approach; (c) the training and visit approach (T&V); (d) the agricultural extension participatory approach; (e) the project approach; (f) the farming systems development approach; (g) the cost-sharing approach; and (h) the educational institution approach.

Except for the participatory approach, the common aspects of all other approaches are a focus on information as the purpose of agricultural extension and the issue of imposing certain knowledge on farmers, rather than a focus on them as the centre of inquiry for development.

Agricultural extension (in a traditional sense) is a form of non-formal education, regarding farmers as passive receiving agents. Essentially this is the traditional perspective of adult
education through which the farmer is passive and the extension officer is the only person who is in charge of acquiring technical knowledge and transferring it to rural clientèles.

After the Industrial Revolution in Western Europe, the emergence of new technologies and the establishment of various research institutes resulted in consideration of science as the inherent possession of the new generation of scientists, which greatly affected extension theory. The result was the model of: research > knowledge > transfer > adoption > diffusion (Bawden et al. 1990). Hence, the researcher was given the peculiar right of hypothesis-making and the exclusive privilege of playing the prestigious role of the source of all innovation while the farmer was supposed to be a passive recipient. Such a process gradually led to separation of the research stations from their origins - the farm and the farmer.

Traditional extension focuses on the transfer of technology (TOT model), as well as adoption and diffusion processes through which researcher, extension officer, and farmer are seen as a lineal progression (Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971). In other words, there is a father/son or a knowledgable/ignorant relationship in place. The pattern was initiated in North America through the Land Grant Colleges and was focused and developed during and after the Second World War. The main goal was to increase the productivity of agricultural products to provide the allied fighting countries with sufficient food and nutrients. From this point, significant attention was paid to new technologies which consequently involved the extension programs.

For decades, extension organizations have been satisfied with the transfer of new technologies in remote regions in the hope that these would serve the poor. "The goals of extension organizations include: the transfer of knowledge from agricultural research to farmers...; advising farmers on the decisions they have to make, sometimes by recommending a certain decision to be taken, sometimes by helping them to acquire sufficient insight into the consequences of the alternatives from among which they can choose in order that they can make their own decisions" (Ban 1986, p. 91).

However, extension work that is based on bureaucratic administration and a prescriptive approach cannot meet the problems of rural development which derive from a combination of issues such as moral and ethical concerns, economic problems, health and education. This holds true with the management of a sustainable agriculture as well. Odell (1986) has pointed out that "hundreds of millions of desperately poor people throughout the world have been hurt rather than helped by economic development.... In recent years, re-examination of past failures and the intransigent nature of poverty in the Third World have led to calls for new approaches...away from large, capital-intensive projects...which allow
local producers and institutions to learn from experience". Then he emphasises group approaches (p.169-170).

A KELLIAN APPROACH

There were some other research projects done in Australia based on Kelly's personal construct theory, mainly conducted at Melbourne University. Salmon and Underwood (1980) developed a model of reciprocal communication among farmer-researcher-extension officer and called it the 'pool of extension'. Salmon (1981) also critiqued a variety of works within the context of the constructivist approach. His review demonstrated a great appreciation of the application of personal construct psychology in rural extension. Salmon (1981) in reviewing the works of Salmon (1975), Hicks (1976), Childs (1977), Berwin (1978), and Woog (1978), discussed the "personal psychology of change in management" and considered it as "a hidden aspect of agricultural extension". Salmon and Underwood (1980), Salmon and Bock (1978), Childs and Salmon (1978), Woog (1978), and Berwin (1978) have adopted this approach in extension and from their work is emerging a picture of the farmer as an active inquirer, engaged in the process of making sense out of the world of agriculture. This model of the farmer, which is inspired by the model of 'human the scientist' of George Kelly (1955), suggests that farmers, like other adults described by Tough (1978) and Knowles (1970) are constantly actively engaged in self-directed learning challenges within their life process. It would seem that the farmer is not a static being who needs to be motivated or pushed. Rather, he/she is actively pursuing skills and the new knowledge, and selects the most relevant issues which make sense. Salmon is one the earliest who applied Kelly's personal construct theory to agricultural extension.

Salmon, by carrying out (1980) and reviewing (1981) a number of case studies, has applied and adapted personal construct theory to clarify both the problems of farm management education and the hidden aspects of agricultural extension. His way of looking at Kelly's theory is in the following:

Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Theory places man in a constant state of change, with each new experience modifying in some way a relatively stable self-constructed personalized world. It is useful then to look more closely at Kelly's theory, and its derivatives in cognitive psychology, in order to re-examine the problem of attitude change from another perspective. (...) Kelly's approach to attitude change within construct theory dispensed with the consistency assumption. (...) For Kelly, man is constantly striving to make sense out of the world around him by actively setting up hypotheses and putting them to the experimental test. (Salmon 1980, pp. 1, 6, 7)
Focusing on the self-directed aspect of farmers' learning activities, Salmon and Underwood (1980) point out that: "Agricultural extension has become so pre-occupied with what it has to offer that it virtually ignores the farmer and what he wants to gain."

Challenge for a new method to involve farmers in the process of research and extension is the main concern of those who regard farmers as self-directed learners although, in most cases, 'social learning' has been neglected whereas 'individualism' has been emphasised. The interest in a client- or farmer-oriented approach in extension, parallel to learner-oriented education, was a significant feature of the challenges for an alternative to the production-oriented extension services. Basically, a two-way communication was supported in the late 1970s, a method capable of approaching a wide range of farmers regardless of their social status and consequently breaking down the barriers and constraints towards such an approach. A new alternative to target-group based extension services was emerging. Concentrating on self-directed learning, Underwood and Salmon (1980) have pointed out that:

... the role of agricultural extension is changed dramatically. To effectively assist the farmer with his self-directed learning, the role of extension officer is not that of teacher or instructor, but rather that of helper. The model of the learner-helper interaction... is therefore applicable. (...) There is a need for research which focuses on the learning undertaken by farmers.

(Underwood & Salmon 1980, p.160)

Figure (3) A MODEL OF MAN THE SCIENTIST (FROM UNDERWOOD AND SALMON 1980)

Salmon (1980) in another work discusses "a personal construct theory approach to agricultural extension" which is the result of five years research in the Agricultural Extension Research Unit, University of Melbourne. In this study, the issue of concern is
farm management problem, and the focus of interest (according to Salmon, 1980) is the farmer and not the farm. The major point of the work is the notion of attitude change being compatible only with a subject-oriented psychology, and it emphasizes the potential of humans in the creation of their own perspectives. Missing from Salmon's approach is the principle of social and group learning.

Another critical perspective of extension emerged through the work of Russell (1989). He strongly criticized the transfer of the technology model, discarded the current top-down model of extension in Australia and proposed an holistic approach to extension. According to him, "extension in Australia has been mainly at the service of innovative or progressive farmers" (p.13). The perception of extension and rural development in Russell's review is one of facilitating learning which is similar to "the helping relationship" suggested by Brookfield (1983:152).

The major challenge of the 1970s, cited for example in the works of Anderson (1979, 1982), is an emphasis on improving relationship between adviser and farmer. Since then the challenges to replace the old paradigms of extension have continued. As Jeff Coutts wrote in the foreword to the articles in the proceedings of Australia Pacific Extension Conference 1993:

Extensionists have redefined their role in the rural knowledge system as one of professional partnership - between public and private sectors; with researchers; and with the people they serve. The change has accompanied a quiet revolution. There has been a fundamental shift from the push of technology driven development, to that of facilitating people to drive (their own) development. (...) many theme titles contain the word 'people': People and production; People and environment; Helping people help themselves. It is this focus that underscores where extension has positioned itself: Extension is about working with people. It is people who provide the energy, commitment and capacity for change and people who ultimately benefit from that change.

(Australia Pacific Extension Conference 1993, p. iii - emphasis added)

THE MAJOR EFFORTS OF THE 1970s IN AUSTRALIA

Focuses on effectiveness of relationships have revealed the emphasis of numerous works in extension. These works, though very far from the self-directed perspectives of the farmers themselves, do challenge people to look for alternatives. For example, Malcolm (1975) used a drama method (role-play) to develop the farmers' insights into problems and to move them from being 'one-eyed'. He applied role-play techniques to precipitate the conflict inherent in salinity problems (in Wellington Dam, Victoria, Australia) and to give participants the chance of arguing the case of some other party in the conflict. He proposed that for some farmers and some problems, like the one described, this could be effective in developing a 'second eye', and moving the farmers to act effectively. Also, in 1976, in a joint project with Melbourne University and the Department of Agriculture, Victoria,
Malcolm used a short play through an inservice course to "raise issues and spark discussion". At the end he made some suggestions for using drama with farmers. In this work to stimulate discussion and raise some of the issues, he used a short, pre-scripted play performed by himself and one of the dairy advisers. In the same way, Anderson's and Gidley's works in development and testing the alternatives to extension methods and their focus on creating empathy in working with farmers, might be critiqued. Anderson suggested a set of rules to achieve empathy, such as "listen to the farmers, put yourself in the farmers' shoes, find out the farmer's aims and goals, talk the farmer's language, get your hands dirty (show practical skill or knowledge), and be as unlike a public servant stereotype as possible", to mention a few (Anderson, 1979). Paradoxically, without any proposal for an alternative philosophy, method and extension model, Anderson (1979), enters into humanistic propositions and finally, as the two implications of his findings, suggests that:

Studies should be continued into rural sociology, in particular into how rural communities operate in terms of rules, values and world views, and these results should be discussed within extension services. (...) The problem, of course, is that a "bad" farmer may not be listening. A psycho-social study of the ways in which "bad" farmers view their world may help extension workers to communicate with this type of farmer better. (Anderson, 1979)

Obviously, Anderson focuses on the transmission of empathy and does not explore it as the result of an inside-out process rooted in creativity, which is firstly cathartic and secondly empathic. Moreover, his classification of farmers into two categories of 'good' and 'bad' is neither humanistic, nor rational, since the field experience of this research has proved that farmers in Australia are neither ignorant nor bad, rather the way they see their land determines the way they deal with it. Most of them, despite twenty to thirty years living in Australia, still do not 'belong' to the land, even though they 'own' it. We may then, conclude that there is a crucial difference between a sense of 'ownership' and 'belongingness'.

This research argues that a new methodology may be the solution for what Anderson has found to be deficiencies in traditional extension.

Perhaps an understanding of the ways this type of farmer views the world, including an understanding of the historical forces which led to his present condition, would aid extension workers in their attempts to introduce new ideas to his group. (Anderson, 1979)

Answering the challenge to establish system of rapport, Gidley (1979) has also emphasized research-extension communication as something to lessen the gap between research and extension, and points to the neglected role of the farmer within such a process, as he puts it: "Because farmers are rarely brought into focus in the liaison literature, very little 'hard'
evidence exists that helps to build a picture of research-to-farmer communication" (Gidley 1979, p. 11).

He critiques research to, (but not with farmers, and points to a "direct flow between farmers and researchers" as an "ideal communication system". He pointed out that "among agricultural scientists and Australian farmers, at least, any close and effective two-way communication links are the exception and not the rule" (P.11).

Gidley (1979) argued that research workers' understanding of the inter-relationships between research problems and farm systems should be improved. Explaining the deficiencies of communication in conventional extension services, he asserts that farmers in the ideal liaison and communication system will be involved with research and extension on equal terms and in a meaningful way. He points out that "If we accept that one useful benefit from research - extension liaison is the development of good working relationships, then can we not accept the same outcome in terms of farmers?" (p.11).

According to Gidley (1979), in the ideal situation, all participants will develop these relationships. Participants will begin to use each other to help identify and work through significant problems in some aspects of their work. How can we go about achieving such communication and relationships?

Gidley (1979: 11) himself responds to the question by quoting Harley (1971) and Braga (1972): "The type of liaison benefits that have been discussed to this point are only likely to come when groups of people 'team up' to try to solve both meaningful and important problems to all participants".

However, for Gidley (1979: 12), "It is logical to expect that someone will have to act as catalyst-facilitator."

Gidley, in the context of the preceding argument, poses the important question facing liaison organizers, "How can they design programs to meaningfully involve research, extension and farmers in a relationship of rapport?" He finally suggests a working group consisting of six or eight participants to allow for the development of the relationships envisaged.

Furthermore, he tries to develop within the group decision-making frameworks for specific farm situations in the context of each total relevant system as he points out: "Failure to locate problems in their full, relevant systems framework often results in their importance
being misplaced in a hierarchy of needs or in inappropriate solutions being proposed" (Gidley, 1979:13).

The lack of a participative methodology in the field of agricultural extension and the dominance of mechanistic views in the field is the most critical point of the 1970s.

The focus of 'extension' (as a non-formal educational activity) on 'technical advice' within the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, as well as its neglect of the socio-cultural factors which interface with the adoption of new technology, resulted in the failure of many extension and development works of the last decades. Therefore, a shift from technological advancement to development of human resources with an anthropological approach came onto the agenda of non-formal education, agricultural extension and rural development. A systems approach pays attention to both sides, that of technology and that of culture, based on an interactive/systemic epistemology. In contrast, a reductionist, non-systemic approach divides the learning domains such as technical, practical, and emancipatory learning and concentrates on one domain. A systems perspective necessitates a viable (training) method of marrying these together, providing a person with all three mentioned modes of learning to create 'technical, practical, and emancipatory' action.

People often mistrust and reject a new idea unless it has roots in their cultural and belief systems. The consequences such as rejection of new technology, personal conflict or cultural alienation are alarming and frightening for researchers who seek to establish rapport and mutual understanding. 'Localization' of messages through the application of 'micro-media' such as puppet or folk theatre, was one perceived solution to the problem of mistrust (for example, many cases in India and Africa).

The crucial point of this argument is that the process of technology transfer is appropriate mainly where it is directly requested by the farmers, but not in problematic, complex situations, such as Third World contexts. In the latter, problems comprise a number of factors, one of which is itself the issue of new technology. Therefore, the solution does not merely lie in greater land productivity, better health care, the number of mass media receivers in use, or the application of pesticides, rather it lies in a whole vulnerable situation including economic, political, environmental and social systems. This is why a traditional education or extension activity may not satisfy the basic needs of rural communities. On the other hand, there are alternative philosophies which propose a multidisciplinary approach in dealing with a social system. For example, Habermas (1973) emphasises three major domains: instrumental, communicative, and emancipatory, but participatory development approaches so far, seem have focused on a particular issue. These three learning domains will be discussed later.
In a Western country like Australia (as it will be shown in the chapter about field experiences), even the extension staff and some of farmers found a cultural orientation was necessary to deal more effectively with the issues of ethnicity, ethical norms, marketing problems, consumer rights, sustainability and so forth.

The lack of an actor-oriented extension is also a problem which becomes glaringly obvious in the context of rural extension. The failures became apparent in development efforts within various kinds of groups and organizations involved in any educational activity. These failures have engaged the attention of several philosophers, psychologists and education theoreticians, for example, Habermas, Kelly and Freire.

Based on this study in both the contexts of Iran and Australia, the future of extension will have crucial links with cultural actions. In Australia, for example, this relates to 'ethical issues'. The study with Australian immigrant farmers revealed the fact that the 'ethical issues' are the main concern for some of the farmers and extension staff. This makes culture inevitably an integral part of agricultural extension.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO EXTENSION

The new paradigm extension scientists (Salmon 1980), (Russell 1989), (Bawden and Russell 1990) suggest that conventional extension services have not been successful in dealing with all the complexities in agriculture. They have reviewed the inefficiency of extension critically, particularly its function within the Green Revolutionary period. Extension within the developing contexts was basically acting as the marketing agent of the industrial sectors. Extension activity, in general, functioned paradoxically. It resulted in increased productivity and surplus products and dissemination of modernised technology within poor local contexts, and it widened the economic gaps, in the deepest sense, within the traditional peasantry societies. Extension work within such situations acknowledged one side of the coin and ignored the other side. While the rich progressive farmers benefited from the new technology and their assets increased, the small farmers were suffering from lack of financial credit and a sufficient income to survive. Culturally ignored, socially neglected and economically deprived, they were getting poorer and poorer.

Therefore, the argument is not merely technical, rather it is ethical (value-based) and judgemental. Accordingly, the following questions sparks in the mind:

- Is the technology adaptable?
Which category of farmers are being served by it?

How does it function within the traditional context?

How does it interact with indigenous knowledge, culture and the local economy?

The above questions have had a critical effect upon the conventional extension theory based on the research > extension > adoption-model. The model, according to Bawden & Russell (1990:11) is conceptualised "as a transmission of generated knowledge from scientists to farmer through an active agent, and its subsequent diffusion through farm communities".

The history of extension in the post-Second World War era is evidence of the unequal and asymmetrical relationships most affected by a mechanistic ontology. Its principles stem from a communication theory which assumes that there exists an active transmitter who influences the behaviour of passive receiver through a persuasive monologue.

On the other hand, since the 1980s a remarkable shift has been made away from what was being perceived as 'agricultural extension' in a conventional sense. For example, the Australia Pacific Extension Conference (1993) brought a number of issues and developments to light, such as:

* Extension is being challenged to become a futuring profession. Scientific futuring does not predict. It uses trends, possibilities, alternatives and scenarios to prepare for the future in the present.

* Extension in this Information-Communications Age and time of reduced resources needs, more than ever, to be accountable, relevant and client-centred.

* There is a need for better evaluation of extension methods and projects, including approaches which farmers can use.

* Technical changes need to be made with regard to the whole system, not in isolation - this requires a systems approach in extension.

* People from many backgrounds felt one of extension's major problems was poor communication, including too much use of jargon, both with clients and among extension people themselves. (Australia Pacific Extension Conference 1993, Vol. 3, p. 643, original emphasis)

Nowadays, traditional extension and formal education have been fundamentally criticized by systems thinkers, as well as education theorists. They have been critiqued in terms of their reductionistic orientation and one-way communication. Systems thinking in relation to complexity and change proposes a holistic view to explore the hidden aspects of a problem situation which rely on the continuous interactions between the components of a system. The new paradigm of agricultural extension does not start from the 'transmitted
message' or presupposed information, rather it starts on a human level within a framework of systemic interconnectedness.

In the mid-seventies, basic shifts in psychology, sociology, education and research methodologies provided systemic and humanistic perspectives. As a consequence, the top-down flow of information was no longer justified or accepted by systems thinkers or cognitive psychologists. In contrast, the alternative solution for the existing training pattern of agricultural extension was the dialogue or interaction between all parties involved in research and extension. The new paradigm accorded equal rights for all members to share their knowledge and learn from the interactions within the whole process, that is, a learner-centred approach with the emphasis on interactive communication and critical reflection (Freire, 1970, 1973).

The new paradigm of agricultural extension, by giving equal rights to all humankind to make and test their own hypotheses, suggests that through horizontal communication all members play the roles of participant-extension officers and co-researchers.

The fundamental shift from the traditional model to the new paradigm dispenses with the impenetrable walls between research, extension and farmer and considers both the 'farmer and extension officer' as self-directed learners (Salmon & Underwood 1980), and 'extension officer' as researcher, participant and conceptualiser (Bawden and Russell 1990).

Following the concept of self-directedness as a fundamental point of agricultural extension, it may occur to us that farmers themselves have been developing agriculture over thousands of years. Baxter et al. (1989) pointed out, "Farmers seek and acquire useful agricultural knowledge and develop their farm management skills in a large number of ways. The common way is through farmer-to-farmer contact and this can be facilitated by government initiatives such as encouragement of farmer associations" (p.2). It is from this standpoint that the theories of self-directed learning and experiential learning are reviewed and discussed in a specific chapter later on. These theories reinforce the idea that farmers are constantly confronting the environment and have been always the major sources of knowledge in the relative areas. Through such a dynamic process, however, every single experience is subject to the new challenges or, in Kellian terms, each construction system is the result of a real experience which is permanently reconstructed through direct confrontations with the phenomena. 'Experiential learning' and Kelly's personal construct theory will be discussed in detail later on as principles for lifelong learning and development. Hence, the perception of 'extension as communication' and the seeking for methods of effective communication to increase the efficiency of extension activity (eg:
Anderson, 1979 & 1982) is, according to Chamala (1987), a difficult task because many institutions, groups, organisations and end users are involved in the process of technology development and dissemination.

An alternative to this in the 1970s and 1980s was Farming Systems Research (F. S. R.) which proposed a hard systems approach (including farming but not human systems) for 'on-farm' research and extension relationship to diminish the gap between the two, and put them close to the farmer (Shanner et al., 1982). As the literature reveals, the research-extension-farmer continuums in Farming Systems Research are not necessarily parts of a total technical innovation process, since collaboration among the parties is mainly concerned with experimentation and adaptation, but not equally with the innovation of methods. Furthermore, the systems approach applied in the form of Farming Systems Research, has been severely criticized by Brouwer and Jansen (1989: 379-395) on the basis that most Farming Systems Research belongs to the 'hard' systems approach and ignores the social (see Chapter Seven). According to Brouwer and Jansen, the problem context (the household production unit and its surrounding socio-economic system), consists of sense-giving subjects which have conflicting goals and interests. Their thinking and behaviour are determined largely by power relations. These authors finally suggest that, in Farming Systems Research, the hard systems approach should be discarded and a critical, alternative approach should be developed instead. Since "it is nothing else than on-farm research, without any analysis of a system", it remains a top-down approach. On the other hand, an anthropological approach emerged in Farming Systems Research and emphasised a human-centred perspective and the need for a strong anthropological orientation in the farming systems. The central point was the "perception that all manifestations of human behaviour are interrelated parts of cultural systems" (Rhoades, 1984).

COMMUNICATION AND CHANGE

The normal processes of communication among humans seem to be systemic. However, the top-down method of communication manipulates these natural trends, silences people and turns them onto linear thinking which, by itself, results in conflict situations. One-way oriented communication prevents people from realizing their whole potential and relying on their personal strengths to create understanding and resolving their conflicts themselves. Systemic communication, through participative processes such as drama workshops, leads people to recognize their natural potential, their strengths and weaknesses, to learn the most effective practical ways to communicate systemically.

The issue of communication not only underlies extension theory, but also deals fundamentally with the application of folk or mass media. Though the views on
communication are sometimes antagonistic, they are also often complementary. Traditionally perceived, communication is the process of message transfer. The elements which constitute such a process are: sender, message, channel, receiver, response and feedback. Similarly, traditional extension is based on such a conventional communication model. According to Bawden & Russell:

Extension has been envisaged as a process of communication since it was first institutionalised; the earliest model, research > extension > adoption, being conceptualised as a transmission of generated knowledge from scientist to farmer through an active agent, and its subsequent diffusion through farm communities. For many of the reasons..., this linear model of communication is inadequate in many ways, even when confined to the context of technological innovation.

(Bawden and Russell 1990, pp. 9 - 11)

This perspective on communication is the initiative of the North Atlantic countries, economically and technologically developed and culturally homogenized. Without thinking twice, this view has been adopted by governmental development agencies in most developing countries. The view in such countries has been supported through application of both the folk media (like puppetry or indigenous dramas) and the modern media (such as T.V. and radio). This mode of communication is almost equal to the activity of transmitting modes of thought, feeling, action or intended knowledge of one person or a group to the others. In this way the act of 'transfer' would be the specific function of the transmitting person or group in order to persuade those receiving the message to change their attitudes, beliefs and behaviour. Obviously, this equates the function of the communicator with the conscious attempt of the propagandist who intends to impose certain values and thoughts on the opinions of the receivers, through utilization of the communication techniques. Such a conventional perspective pre-assumes the existence of both an active transmitter and a passive receiver. Through such a process, the former persuades the latter through a persuasive monologue. Clearly, this provides a vertical, unequal relationship within which the communicator is placed in a dominating and the audience in a dominated position. It is, as McQuail points out:

... familiar as the model of intentional transfer of information as defined by the sender, but without the positive commitment of the receiver to this definition of the situation. The case of the adviser and his "target" audience or the propagandist and his public are examples, as are some institutionally defined learning situations where the pupil is uninterested and lacking motivation.

(McQuail 1975, p. 33)

On the other hand, as Carey et al. (1990:87) state "achieving the objective of informing an audience on a particular point is one thing, but convincing them to change their age-old practices or invest in new technology is quite another". The problem involves neither the advertised technological goods, nor the actual content of the mass media programs, but the asymmetrical and non-participative nature of McLuhan's communication theory of 1960s, which underlies the development programs of the decade. This resulted in the Third World
countries considering media's function as a culturally invasive one. In this respect, within the global scene, Freire's voice of the 1970s is the most familiar.

The biological epistemology of Maturana & Varella (1987: 196) suggests that:

...biologically, there is no 'transmitted information' in communication. Communication takes place each time there is behavioural coordination in a realm of structural coupling. This conclusion is surprising only if we insist on not questioning the latest metaphor for communication which has become popular with the so-called communication media.

Maturana & Varella (1988), to invalidate the passive view on the classical model of communication, visualise it as something happening in a 'tube'. They point out that:

According to this metaphor of the tube, communication is something generated at a certain point. It is carried by a conduit (or tube) and is delivered to the receiver at the other end. Hence, there is a something that is communicated, and what is communicated is an integral part of which travels in the tube. Thus we usually speak of 'information' contained in a picture, an object, or, more evidently, the printed word. Accordingly to our analysis, this metaphor is basically false. It presupposes a unity that is not determined structurally, where interactions are instructive, as though what happens to a system in an interaction is determined by the perturbing agent and not by its structural dynamics. It is evident, however, even in daily life, that such is the case with the communication: each person says what he says or hears what he hears according to his own structural determination; saying does not ensure listening. From the perspective of an observer, there is always ambiguity in a communicative interaction. The phenomenon of communication depends on not what is transmitted, but on what happens to the person who receives it. And this is a very different matter from "transmitting information." (Maturana & Varella 1988, p.196 - emphasis added)

Communication for the humanists is basically the event of an open dialogue among a group of individuals, and it occurs only when the receiver decides to make it happen (Maturana & Varella, 1988). The definition of horizontal communication encompasses social interaction processes within systems of symbols revealed in the forms of language and the arts, through which the affective and cognitive experiences of people with one another are exchanged in a dialogic way with a reciprocal effect on the attitudes and patterns of the both parties involved in the activity.

The crucial element of the helping relationship is participation between the consultant and the individual or group, which leads towards autonomy, self-direction, self-initiated learning and creative adaptability. The main characteristic of a helping relationship is the honesty and mutual respect through which the helper considers and recognizes "the uniqueness of the individual as a person who possesses the need and right to participate in making decisions about matters relating to his own welfare" (Brookfield 1983, p. 153).

"Extension planners and government policymakers cannot monitor the successes and the problems of extension unless there is regular feedback stemming from participation at all levels of the agricultural information network. Farmers should be recognised as a basic
source of information..." (FAO, 1989, P.126). Participatory process, whether in the form of popular theatre or action research, considers the farmer and his/her value systems as the focus of inquiry and who generates the appropriate knowledge. However, as Young (1993) has noted, most agricultural extension has focused on the commonality of the physical problem and neglected the 'commonality of value systems' in the programs. In Young's case:

Land degradation problems such as water erosion tend to be dealt with by agencies on the basis of the commonality of the physical problem. However, people experiencing the problem are likely to have different sets of values and attitudes towards it. For effective extension, programs should be targeted using commonality of value systems and attitudes rather than just the commonality of a problem. (Young 1993, p.474)

In Development Communication for Agriculture, Forest (1990) focuses on the farmers' involvement in the research and extension process not only physically and socially, but also psychologically. To him, a "deeper psychological involvement and commitment can be a key goal in itself for any research and extension process" (Forest 1990, p.175-6). But he does not show 'HOW?' and stops after making general comments without discussing the actual ways of achieving the psychological involvement. Although Forest (1990) has discussed the learning potential of the farmers, he has identified neither the dimensions of knowledge (ie: tacit and explicit), nor its psychological nature. However he appreciates the potentiality of farmers as people who personally acquire their relevant knowledge, and who are the subject of their own realities. Farmer involvement in extension and research is including them in the research and extension process by creating experiences in which they become, socially and psychologically, a part of that process, not just physically present. (Forest 1990, p. 176)

In other words, Forest has tried to follow the constructivist perspective by regarding the equal right for farmer, researcher, and extension officer, within the process of inquiry. Also, his focus on psychological aspects of farmer's involvement transcends the cognitive approach to participation. In his concluding comments, Forest claims that:

Participation of farmers in extension and research is inevitable and effective. (...) Farmers, extensionists, and researchers perform different roles and tasks in involvement because of their different knowledge and experience, depending on what function and what phase of the program it in (sic). (Forest 1990, p. 191)

Also, Samanta (1990:206) focuses on "farmer-researcher participation and collective actions", and uses the term "bottom up development". Samanta, like other humanist extension experts, suggests a fundamental, constructivist and grassroots extension and development, but like most of them, he does not speak about the mechanisms of knowing
and the ways of eliciting and achieving grassroots knowledge, which is the main concern of this research.

The notion of relative innovation can be explained as "any thought, behaviour, or thing that is new because it is qualitatively different from existing forms" (Bajracharya 1984, p. 330). Accordingly, if people go one step beyond what they are, they will come in contact with understandable and appropriate innovation which is compatible with their historical background.

On the other hand, Hall et al. (1989), when talking about creation of popular knowledge as a goal of participatory research, are concerned with the dynamic interaction between the kind of indigenous or practical technology and expertise that people who live in the situation have, and the kind possessed by a researcher or extension officer known as official technology and expertise. Swantz et al. (1988) talking about "participatory inquiry as an instrument of grass-roots development" support the idea that participatory research is a tool for people's action and reflection (p. 127). Although Swantz et al. have focused on the element of participation - but not the degree of participation - as the crucial criterion in human inquiry, they do not clarify the ways of emancipation and involvement in the research process. It is from this epistemological framework that Bawden & Russell (1990) consider "extension officer as researcher and participant" (1990:19). They point out that: "Lewin challenged an accepted role of the scientist as a disinterested, 'objective' observer and this challenge is still as relevant today as it was then" (p.20).

It is worthwhile to follow the argument by quoting E. M. Rogers (1967) from Samanta (1990:1) as follows:

Development is a widely participatory process of social change in society, intended to bring about both social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom, and other valued qualities) for the majority of the people through gaining greater control over the environment.

Also, Bawden et al. pointed out:

... understanding the communication process, delineating deficiencies and suggesting methods to increase effective communication (in agriculture) is a difficult task because many institutions, groups, organisations and end users are involved in the process of technology development and dissemination.

The importance of cultural beliefs and what has been termed "indigenous knowledge" has often been undervalued in the quest for more productive agriculture. A typical view is that of indigenous knowledge impeding the development of improved systems of farming - of the knowledge of indigenous people as being superficial and primitive, and grounded in myth and taboo.

(Bawden and Russell, 1990, p. 11-14)
Here, the focus on participation is to engage people in their own process of inquiry to achieve local (useful) knowledge through empowering drama processes. Such an activity involves indigenous people in the emancipatory learning domain, which will be discussed later in the Review of Learning Theories.

In the context of the development activities of the post-Green Revolution era, the interests of the fully industrialised societies differ widely from those of the so-called underdeveloped or developing countries. Similarly, the perspectives on development of the Third World and of the North Atlantic countries differ drastically. Among the Third World's approaches in both the theory and practice of development are the valuing and utilization of local and indigenous knowledge, and grassroots practitioners in the fields concerned with rural development such as food and nutrition, sanitation, health care and birth control, and energy consumption (Chambers 1989 and Islam 1984). Besides, in the seventies, significant attention was paid to indigenous education and communication systems. The research outcomes concerning useful knowledge and local technology were the major inspiration for the development of both 'intermediate' or 'appropriate' technology, and the folk media such as folk drama and people's theatre to meet the basic needs of local communities.

Despite the research on both indigenous knowledge and local media in 'indigenizing' development, there is scarcely any work considering the two aspects of the local knowing system that is 'tacit' and 'explicit'. Neither is there any particular application of theatre which focuses essentially on these aspects, other than a general notion of 'participation in development'. The basic challenge of this research is to employ theatre for the elicitation of 'tacit' and 'explicit' knowledge through target groups' participation in their own development within drama processes.

Many humanist experts in the field of international development have expressed the need for developing and utilizing human resources at the local level, but the reality of most programs still indicates that such ideas are no more than conventionalized rhetoric. Moreover, it is common knowledge to many social scientists that development projects have produced technical, economic and social changes, many of them unintended. The review of literature and case studies shows that once the innovating organization (for example an extension service or an aid organization) was removed, the behaviour of the local population often reverted to its original patterns. The reasons for such reversions have often been unclear. Studies have shown that a lack of understanding of the local population's socio-cultural systems along with a lack of local participation hindered the effectiveness of the innovators and the programs which they had designed, and the
perception of the local population was that they were not as effective or desirable as the old systems.

As Russell (1989) has posited "Everyone thinks that they know what is implied by agricultural extension but no-one agrees with any single definition". Agricultural extension conventionally has been focusing on changing traditional 'attitudes' of farmers to change their behaviour. Farmers' attitudes are rooted in their values and culture and until value systems and cultural elements of a community are appreciated and analysed, attitudes are unlikely to be changed. Based on half a century of experiences in Greece, Lansdale (1986) has pointed out, "Essential to the progress of rural development is an educational systems based on indigenous needs rather than a system transplanted from an alien culture" (p.6). Bawden and Russell (1990) have pictured extension as a process of helping farmers to learn how to become active as 'researchers' themselves how to increase their awareness of science and scientific ways of thinking and doing things (p.14). Lansdale (1986) has also noted that, "A lifetime of close association and shared experiences with Greek villagers has instilled in me a deep-seated faith in their ability to solve their problems, if they are given the opportunity and adequate support" (p. xiii).

Social scientists have for many years suggested Human Ecology (and more recently, Social Ecology at Hawkesbury) as an area for looking at the human's interaction with the surrounding environment as a whole system. The continual interface between the components of the two systems, that is, human activity and environment increases the complexity of extension issues. The interdependence of the cultural, societal, political, administrative, economic and human activity subsystems on one hand, and the environmental subsystems, such as land, soil, pasture, irrigation, in conjunction with massive generation of new technologies on the other, have created a very complicated situation in which the old paradigms of agricultural extension will no longer assist. Hence, criticism of the study of 'technology transfer' as the major focus of agricultural development training, since it is reductionistic, top-down, prescriptive, non-participative, and non-systemic, seems to be relevant. It ignores the interdependence of the subsystems, and therefore widens the gap between the theory and the practice of agriculture as a locally accepted reality. An integrated, ecological model of agricultural development, including 'culture' as a phenomenon which involves the psychological, behavioural, and societal dimensions, would be one way of coping with the centralized activities of extension. As an alternative, 'community development' seems a holistic approach, which contrasts to the one-way oriented activity of agricultural extension training.

In Community Development in Perspective (Christenson et al., 1989), the term 'community development' has been defined as "a group of people in a locality initiating a
social action process (that is, planned intervention) to change their economic, social, cultural, and/or environmental situation" (p.14). The authors have discussed three general approaches to community development - *self-help, technical assistance* and *conflict*. They argue the 'third-party role' in managing community conflict and regard this as the most appropriate role for the community development professional, "since conflict is inevitable, coping with it creatively is essential" (p.110). To them, ethics and strategies in community conflict involve empowerment, justice, freedom to make possible responsible choices, and the individual's value orientation toward conflict as a viable process for change. Also, their list of 'attributes of an effective community developer' highlights the question of the *method of facilitating such a development*:

A good community developer
- has a thorough knowledge of group organizing techniques
- is an astute observer
- plans with people, not for them
- consults the users
- summarizes and integrates group efforts
- builds others' leadership skills and group capacities
- graciously withdraws as the group becomes self-directed

(Christenson et al., 1989, p. 136, emphasis in original)

Basically, the context of development (fundamentally different from technology transfer, modernization and economic growth), is complex, multi-dimensional and problematic, within which vertical (top-down) communication is unlikely to succeed.

Extension and community development may both be used in achieving what is commonly referred to as "rural development". Rural development encompasses at least three key elements: rural well-being or welfare involving both material sufficiency and the non-economic aspects of rural living such as health and education; resource development, involving increased production and efficiency; and organizational development, involving the maintenance and creation of rural structures through which people may channel their energies for rural betterment. (Baker 1989, p.47)

The interventionist approach to rural development through extension and preplanned programs is very similar to the performance of a scenario before an audience who has no idea of the plot. The recreation of this metaphor (as setting the scene for the drama of 'development'), from Porter et al. (1991), is worth considering. In a Kenyan case, they report each act in the 'drama' of development

... had a number of well-crafted scenes: feasibility studies, appraisals, designs, implementation, negotiation, redesign and economic analyses. In the early stages the cast was small and enthusiastic. On both the Kenyan and Australian sides the same actors entered for set pieces to negotiate over the details of a general plot. As the play proceeded, however, the plot became largely beyond the control of any one of the cast or the playwrights. There were, of course, many bit-part actors running on and off the stage and hustling around back-stage. Desk officers... "experts" in this and that, High Commissioners attempting to influence the plot with constant cables from the Mission, or a Minister ignoring the cables and stalwartly refusing to allow the play to go into the third act. The striking thing about this play was that the people for whom it was written, the Giriama, remained towards the back of the stage, a sort of Greek chorus, commenting on the actions of the
main actors, but listened to by nobody. Early in the play they wandered off, tired at being ordered about the stage and increasingly frightened that the obviously irresponsible behaviour of the actors and playwrights would set fire to the theatre and destroy them and their livelihoods. (Porter, Allen, Thompson, 1991)

Creating a conflict through which individuals learn and enrich their choices of action to resolve the problem is one of the basic roles of a facilitator within creative forum theatre processes, and as a creative force has its source in emotion. Creative and participative dramas can release these energies through group dynamics.

TOWARDS A GRASSROOTS METHODOLOGY

The failure of a general agricultural extension approach became apparent in the mid-1970s. After 45 years of the global operation of some kind of extension system, on the whole, "those who are small-scale, landless, poorly educated, resource poor and female continue to be largely bypassed or ill served" (FAO 1990). The emerging paradigm of extension suggests a collaborative context including farmer, extension worker and researcher and 'dialogue' which is not merely a tool for effective communication but a method for appreciating and eliciting the local knowledge (Freire, 1970). The principle within such a process could be participation and involvement - the basic point that makes linkages between the new paradigm of agricultural extension, the theory of participatory research (Hall, 1975) and the systemic action research methodology (Bawden, 1990).

Also, significant efforts have been made to link drama and theatre with the participatory research approach (Kidd, 1980), or emancipatory group development (Boal, 1989, 1992) based on what Freire (1970,1973) calls conscientization. In the discussion about Freire's and Boal's views in this research it will be shown how drama functions to empower and involve grassroots communities in learning through their own life experiences. Boal's 'forum theatre' in this research is basically implemented to facilitate and awaken the human's potential energy for theory building through the theatrical language as a codification tool.

According to the principles of the new paradigm research and extension, researchers should firstly interact with the whole system that they intend to study and, secondly, find ways of involving farmers in the research process. The whole system basically consists of culture, value and belief systems, power structures, physical environment, social rules, economy, etc. The premise behind this, however, is that all humans are inherently hypotheses makers and theory builders (Kelly, 1955) and that their codification systems (ie: meaning making methods) are different (Freire, 1970). This consequently increases the interest in integrating local knowledge with rural development. The 'dialogue' in the
development process serves this premise as the opening of two-way communication channels for the eliciting of local knowledge and the exchange of new perspectives. The recent growth of interest in the utility of indigenous knowledge (Chambers et al. 1989 and Islam et al. 1984) and the involvement of rural poor in development programs, has brought more sharply into the focus the cross-cultural limitations of many conventional methods for collecting perceptual and behavioural data. The real issues of a community cannot be fully explored merely by the use of verbal language through a number of techniques such as 'yes-no' questions or interviews. Rather, there is a tacit knowledge, mostly unconscious and not spoken, and not made clear in printed word either. This is in addition to an explicit form of knowledge which appears through our speech.

As realistic/humanist research, this study aims to touch this 'whole reality' and through drama and forum theatre to reveal both the tacit and the explicit knowledge of the community. Such a process is holistic. It is a systemic learning as well. However, the ethical question still remains: should such learning provide information for the powerful from the powerless or should it serve the powerless themselves? The exploration and the application of forum theatre in the field experiences of this study will provide relevant answers to this question.

To justify the application of forum theatre in the contexts of grassroots development, self-directed learning, and extension, it will be argued later that researching conventions and elicitation techniques perfected in Western societies have not been automatically suitable in most developing countries, such as Iran. Within the last decades, the top-down traditional approaches have resulted in stereotypical research reports of 'the researcher!' and heaps of monographs reflecting the researchers' perspectives being kept in dusty files.

Within the context of Iran, where the major part of the field project has operated, the hierarchial structure of the extension organisation, the lack of linkages with research institutes, the unsatisfied vocational expectations of the practitioners and officers (Khatoonabadi, 1989), the lack of trust among farmers and outside practitioners, as well as the principles which underlie the linear extension philosophy, have decreased the potential energy of the agricultural information system and prevented it from actively encountering the ongoing issues.

TOWARDS SYSTEMS OF RAPPORT

The 1970s and 1980s are illuminated with the efforts of extension scientists to establish a more democratic and interactive extension methodology and method to create an empathy between the 'client' and the 'message'. After grassroots approaches in research were
introduced, for example 'participatory research' by Budd Hall, significant attention was
paid by a number of humanist researchers to the foundation of a methodology for the
legitimation of getting people involved in the process of their own research and extension.
In agriculture and rural health care, supportive ideas were established to reinforce these
grounds challenges. Moreover further attention was paid to 'local knowledge' as useful
knowledge of communities, and efforts were made to elicit and employ such knowledge in
the development process. Significant examples are the application of painting, drawing,
folk-media and dialogue. Although these resulted in a deeper insight and credibility, there
were still unresolved problems which were rooted in the lack of well-defined objectives
and definitions of agricultural extension. Among these efforts, Freire's ontological
propositions are the most important in this study. Although his method obviously needed
adaptation, he opened new windows through which possible answers might be given to
serious questions of that kind. His basic challenge created a new alternative in seeing the
'problem' differently and eradicating the state of dependence endemic in rural attitudes.

NEW PARADIGM EXTENSION

A review of new paradigm extension literature reveals theme areas as follows:

- efficiency of extension in a search for effective communication and empathy;
- competency and effectiveness relationships, and empathic methods;
- farmer participation approaches;
- indigenous knowledge systems and development (Chambers 1983, 1989;
  Brokensha, Warren and Werner 1980)
- systems approaches to extension;
- conscientization, and empowering group processes;
- the focus on world views, local knowledge, cognitive psychology;
- adult education, self-directed, experiential and action learning approaches.

A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Undoubtedly, as Hobson and Forge (1992:81) have pointed out, "one future direction for
agricultural education is the movement of its locus from the classroom to everyday life, for
both adults and young people". Paulo Freire, (whose critical perspective on adult education
has brought a fundamental change in the field, as well as earned him a great reputation for
his ethical propositions) in an essay, 'Extension or Communication' (1973), has
profoundly critiqued the term 'extension'. Freire not only analyses the educational task of
the agronomist (or, according to him, mistitled an 'extension agent'), and the way in which
technicians and peasants can communicate in the process of developing a new agrarian
society, but also synthesizes a humanistic education within which humans, through their conscious action, are able to transform the world.

Freire (1973), analyzes the term 'extension' in terms of: (a) the linguistic meaning of the word (b) a critical view derived from philosophical foundations of the knowledge theory, (c) the relations between the concepts of extension and cultural invasion and oppression.

Furthermore, his discussion on agricultural innovation and change demonstrates a strong criticism of the position of agriculturalist/educators following traditional schooling methods. To him, communication is dialogue, which is the interchangeable role between two social beings as the subjects and objects of learning. In other words, the concrete experience, within a social context, reconciles the abstract realities inter-subjectively. Therefore people genuinely are reached and a true communication takes place. Freire's essay reveals the deficiencies of the prevailing notion of agricultural extension with evidence from Latin-American countries. The failure of traditional extension, according to him, is due to a naive way of viewing reality (ie: objective), and most importantly to the superiority and oppressive attitude of extension workers, which is demonstrated in top-down technical advice, and the lack of empathy between peasant-farmer and extensionist. Freire demonstrates how the conventional concept of extension ignores the potentiality of the peasant-farmers as humans, and considers them as 'things' or 'objects' of development projects. Thus, extension is dominating farmers instead of educating them. And the extension worker - as the 'modern' man - decides what farmers ought to know to become 'modern' too. Hence, extension becomes a tool for propaganda, and a marketing centre for agricultural technology, rather than for educating people. According to him:

... the mere presence of new objects in a community, of a new method, of a different way of acting, produces mistrust and total or partial rejection. (...) Hence, they may undergo a distortion in the new context to which they were "extended". (Freire 1973, p.106)

In Freirean terms, "substituting elaborated techniques for magical ways of acting involves cultural aspects and levels of perception which make up the social structure". He suggests that social structure involves problems of language which are unseparable from thought, as well as that thought and language cannot be isolated from social structure. He claims that:

Knowledge is not extended from those who consider that they know to those who consider that they do not know. Knowledge is built up in the relations between human beings and the world, relations of transformation, and perfects itself in the critical problematization of these relations.

(Freire 1973, p. 109)

Therefore, he criticizes traditional education and extension as running contrary to dialogue and as a cultural invasion that, instead of freeing men, enslaves them, reduces them to
'things', and manipulates them by not allowing them to act as subjects in history, and through this action to become authentic persons. As he has posited, farmers' attitudes towards concrete realities such as planting, harvest, erosion, land degradation, re-afforestation and pastoral affairs are related to their attitudes toward nature, their religious beliefs, their values and so on. Cultural reality, as a structure, cannot be affected in any of its parts without an automatic reflex occurring in other dimensions. As a result, extension officers cannot change farmers' attitudes merely by considering a particular aspect of the whole system of life unless they know the farmers' world views and confront them in their totality. Freire's perception of the concept of agricultural extension is significantly supported by the holistic approach created by Richard Bawden and his colleagues at Hawkesbury, as well as in the systemic proposition of Bawden & Russell (1990). Their work has pictured the extension agent as an action researcher 'on the process of responsible development of rural communities'. Accordingly, from their perspective

... the extension agent is not a mere transmitter of knowledge - a transfer of technology - but an action researcher. (...) The action researcher researches (sic) enrich farmers in a more profound sense than the increasingly common practice of research on farmers' fields (may be with the farmer as technicians!). It is useful then to think of knowledge being generated through research with farmers, for farmers (conventional natural science) and on farmers (conventional social research).

(Bawden & Russell 1990, pp.22-23, emphasis in original)

The point here is the fraud of top-down methods of communication in agricultural information systems which tend to preserve the status quo, and to ignore the importance of the social structure, as well as of local systems, a point made clear by MacAnany (1980):

The structural context is something that enters into the outcome of any communication strategy and considerably modifies the potential benefit of most projects (...) Gruig (1971) found - among Colombian peasants - that although information can help an individual adapt to a changing situation, it can do little to change the situation. The small subsistence farmers may not lack for information but often cannot use it in any productive way because of structural constraints such as land size or lack of credit.

Thus, a two-way communication in such situations can result in creation of appropriate knowledge based on the needs of local farmers which is relevant to their contexts. Later on in this thesis, when analysing Paulo Freire's ideas, it will be seen how a dialogue occurs and how it relates to the codification and decodification systems of humans. This perspective on communication, in contrast to the asymmetrical and dominating mode, provides a symmetrical, and equal relationship between both those who transmit and those who receive. In other words a dialogue presumes an interactive role for the both parties concerned. Therefore, the alternative model of communication based on dialogue which opposes manipulation or persuasion of the audience would be a recursive model considering the dialectical relationship between the transmitter and the receiver.
When discussing Boal's forum theatre approach in particular, and also Kidd's popular theatre and participatory research approach in general, we will see that 'dialogue' is achieved both verbally and physically through drama action and theatre. The method uses theatre neither for the entertainment and persuasion of an audience, nor is it merely to encourage grassroots people to participate in learning and development activities. Rather, it aims to emancipate and conscientize them through their own codification. Here, emancipatory learning, as one of the basic learning domains, crucial to the instrumental and practical learning, will be introduced in the review of learning theories.

In the context of this research, relevant codification means expressing perspectives and ideas in the most familiar codes. Each individual, then each community, has its own codification system.

A TARGET GROUP APPROACH

Another trend of agricultural extension is the focus on a target group such as 'progressive' farmers in the context of technology transfer and knowledge diffusion. Anderson (1982) in another work within a conventional background, shows how the 'progressive' type of farmer is the main client of extension services, who then refuses to share and diffuse the knowledge gained. This results in the neglect of a large proportion of the rural population, for example, the poor farmers. Anderson suggests that the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu (1977) might be applied to justify this phenomenon. Discussing the idea of "cultural reproduction" of Bourdieu (1977) in Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture, Anderson (1982) identifies a central concept in Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction, the process which also reproduces class relations within a society. The notion of 'cultural capital' refers to a form of knowledge which can rapidly be converted into economic capital (money, wealth), as depicted in the following:

![Diagram](image_url)

Figure (4) THE INTERFACE BETWEEN CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC CAPITAL (AFTER BOURDIEU)
For example, in the context of land reform of Iran in the 1960s, the new class formations in the rural society widened cultural gaps among different groups of farmers so that between-class exchange of knowledge was unlikely to occur. According to Anderson (1982), Bourdieu (1977, 1979) examined the specific contribution of the education system toward reproducing the structure of class relations while, at the same time, concealing that function principally by an ideology of autonomy.

The theory of cultural capital undoubtedly questions the theory of diffusion, and whether the progressive farmers, for example, are willing to share their knowledge with the small farmers. From a systems point of view, patterns control the flow of information in a system, be the information cultural or phylogenetic (Bateson, 1979 in Plas 1986, p.79). It also may contribute to the understanding of Kelly's personal construct theory, and how a group of people within a society function, while seeming to ignore others' thought and initiatives.

On the other hand, action research with immigrant farmers in Australia within this study shows that application of the above theory basically depends on the context and the formation of individuals' goals in a society. A community with individualistic or competitive goal structures may not achieve the level of co-operation at which knowledge may be shared or exchanged. In a social context where knowledge creates power relationships within a competitive or individualistic structure, a sustainable relationship may not be established, because there is a constant conflict between individualistic interests on one hand, and sustainable agriculture on the other. This is the point that illuminates the need for a participative and also a value-oriented means or a cultural approach to agricultural extension.

**FINAL REMARKS**

In the area of rural development, there are different kinds of responses for the alleviation of the problems of hunger, poverty, exploitation, and oppression. It is obvious that these responses have had serious limitations, otherwise the problems would have been eradicated or solved. The task therefore is to understand the nature of their limitations and to look for methods that have evolved out of what can be learned from observing these limitations.

The development of the approaches to extension since the Land Grant Colleges in North America to the latest challenges (as for example, in Australia Pacific Extension Conference, 1993), represents a significant shift from a focus on 'technology' to 'human'. This can be depicted through the following diagram:
Figure (5) THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF EXTENSION TOWARDS HUMANISM

Each of these and many other agricultural and extension and education approaches have helped restore the farmers' learning process to its ancient spiritual and self-managing potential. The once degraded identity of the farmer is being re-instated as a self-directed learner, again in the deepest, most human sense of that word. Contemporary extension scientists and systems agriculturalists (eg: Bawden and Russell, 1990) are returning to ancient impulses, not to destroy current reductionist disciplines and conventions, but to forge their own ideas, to drink, as it were, from the original well.
Traditional extension theory (based on the knowledge transfer paradigm) as well as conventional education and research methods, has been fundamentally criticized by systems thinkers and certain education theorists in terms of its reductionistic, one-way orientation and its prescriptive approach. The underlying philosophy of such an asymmetrical relationship is positivism, and its psychological root is behaviourism. The emergence of 'cognitive psychology' and the revival of alternative philosophies of epistemology have created a new context of challenge and creativity. The new approach involves systems thinking and participative types of research such as action research (explained in the Chapters Seven and Eight).

As the literature shows, the new paradigm research movement is still under critique, and has not yet established a consensus on the issue of methods to integrate individual self-learning with social learning and epistemological transformation.

In the area of agricultural extension, four major frameworks can be identified: transfer of technology (adoption and diffusion), social action processes through community development programs, and other social processes such as group dynamics and group decision making, as well as indigenous knowledge systems and development. This research seeks for methodologies to elicit indigenous knowledge, and focuses on group dynamics, that is, interaction of individuals in small groups. In such approaches...

... a small number of people come together in intimate face-to-face association and attempt to improve the working relationships within the group. Through personal contact, individuals develop consensus on values and goals and learn how to behave according to expectations of the group. In these small groups, members react to each other as persons rather than as role occupants. The emphasis is on social-emotional support rather than task accomplishment.

(Warner, P. D. and Maurer, R. C. 1989)

Rural people themselves have been using many ways to survive and to struggle for existence. No organization, no program, can survive without understanding and appreciating the efforts of people who suffer from poverty, hunger, ill-health, lack of education and a relative lack of awareness of the forces that shape their lives. Trying to solve any one problem by excluding the others leads to failure, and far too often many organizations - trade unions, political parties and voluntary agencies - have failed just for this reason. The review of literature in extension reveals a continual challenge designed to establish an interactive model. Some have explored group dynamics (eg: Gidley,1979), whereas others have questioned the legitimacy of "knowledge dissemination or diffusion by the progressive farmers" referring to the Bourdieu's theory of Cultural Capital (Anderson, 1982). However, despite these efforts, the problem remains unresolved, mainly because they have been basically questioning the methods, but not the philosophy of
conventional extension. Challenging the methods without reconsidering the rooted principles of extension philosophy creates ambiguity and confusion. At an international level, these challenges and the traditional, positivistic philosophies of extension have been criticised and a humanistic form of extension has been proposed.

To sum up, like the two kinds of popular theatre, two major trends of 'extension' exist: (1) the one which regards the activity as a part of training process of 'transferring knowledge', and (2) the view which regards extension as a process of 'creating and sharing knowledge'. The main concern of this research is an appropriate methodology based on a humanistic philosophy to elicit and to touch the whole knowledge of the co-action researchers, including their tacit and explicit knowledge. Hence, to achieve such a dimension of collaborative knowledge, the researcher has identified the following principles:

- participation and collaboration of the co-researchers (researcher, farmer or nomad, and extension agent)
- systemic action research as the methological framework
- a participative context which involves all concerned individuals in the research process
- constructivist epistemology which regards equal rights for all humans to create knowledge, or to construct their personal constructs
- systems thinking which focuses on the inter-relationships between the components within a social system, therefore non-linearity or recursive logic
- self-directed learning as a constructivist view of adult learning
- learning as an empowering process, which, in Freirean terms, conscientizes or emancipates the learner from the repressing and oppressing situation.

Furthermore, the accepted premise of this argument is that indigenous people (ie: farmers and nomads) are an original source of knowledge (as Polanyi says: 'tacit' and 'explicit'), and the challenge of the researcher is to elicit both the tacit and the explicit knowledge of indigenous people through group dynamics within drama and forum theatre - ie: discussion theatre, as the participative and appropriate methodology for knowledge and social processes.

This study provides a journey in both the philosophies and the methods. The mechanistic view of extension is discarded and the humanistic perspective is embraced. Drama methods are tested to be used as media compatible with the humanistic philosophy through which a high level of participation and involvement may be achieved. This research finally reports on experiences with Iranian Nomads as well as rural farming communities, and Australian immigrant farmers where both drama and visual arts were used as part of an
empowering action researching process. In this case, drama was not a medium for communication, it was the communication, the message. A methodology for using drama as systemic/participative action researching will be developed and presented.
CHAPTER FOUR

DRAMA AND THEATRE AS PROCESS

In this chapter, the conceptual and functional differences between drama and theatre are discussed, case studies articles and books on popular theatre are reviewed and the common aspects of these works are elicited. The main intention of creating such a literature review is to build a framework and a view of theatre as it relates to community development. Also, the chapter aims to explore the diversity of approaches, as well as the co-learning, co-researching potentials within the process of popular and forum theatre. Finally, the work of Bertolt Brecht and Augusto Boal will be reviewed, together with forum theatre.
CHAPTER FOUR

DRAMA AND THEATRE AS PROCESS

No artist sums up man's potential for personal renewal better than does the actor, who summons from himself a new identity, a new level of reality and experience, with each role he creates. (Benedetti 1976, p.9)

The Oxford Reference Dictionary (1986) defines 'drama' as: "a play for action on stage or for broadcasting; the art of writing and presenting plays; a dramatic series of events"; and 'dramatic' as: "sudden and exciting or unexpected; vividly striking". These are somewhat unsatisfactory and limited definitions, linking 'drama' largely to texted and staged plays. The definitions also betray the somewhat limited view Western society has of drama as a whole, a view which prevails at many levels, that 'drama' is 'art' and, in the Western context, 'entertainment'. However, drama is defined in this thesis as action, and it is this area of action which most concerns us in this context, the content and the process, and not the staged product. We are also concerned with the people who present drama, the actors, whether in a situation which is rehearsed and performed for an audience, or as celebrants of a seasonal ritual, or in a series of improvised dialogues, such as found in forum theatre. In this context an actor is someone who takes an active role as a participant, a doer, and is not confined to the acting profession.

Drama has many sources: oral narrative, ritual, sport, metaphoric and metonymic representation, spectacle, play and behaviour in society (Courtney: 1974 and 1988; MacAlloon: 1984; Schechner: 1988 and 1990; Turner: 1988, Blau: 1990 and Goffman: 1976). Its oral narrative form is the most important source in this context, and it is the main source of information in societies without writing. It can be presented in many ways, by a single performer in a monologue, or in dialogue where two or more interact. Narrative is also implicit in all the other different forms of drama; in most cases many forms are blended.

Participation in drama, whether as an 'actor' or an audience member, can also be an experience. Dorothy Heathcote (Wagner, 1977 and Johnson and O'Neill, 1984) is one researcher and teacher who has explored various dimensions of drama as means of learning and widening experiences, even if we never act in a play or stand upon a stage. To her, it is a human capacity to allow "a willing suspension of disbelief" so that in the moments of opening a book, or our ears and eyes at a performance, we are willing to discard all prejudices, all pre-knowledge and wait for the story or the play to take control of our
imaginations and, for the time, we believe in the action. Johnson and O'Neill (1984) have noted that when we have had empathic acquaintance (via the story-tellers, the poets, the authors, the playwrights and the actors) with the emotions and situations of other people, untapped energies might be released in us, and we might be open to greater sensitivity, greater comprehension, new knowledge of our society and individuals, and even of ourselves. This in turn might create a new awareness of our relationships with those near to us in the community in which we live.

They point out also that these aspects must concern us when we consider drama as a means of education. Johnson and O'Neill have asked: If there is a way of making the world simpler and more understandable, why not use it? They suggest that dramatising makes it possible to isolate an event or to compare one event with another, to look at events that have happened to other people in other places and times perhaps, or to look at one's own experience after the event, within the safety of knowing that just at this moment it is not really happening. There is the possibility, however, to feel that it is happening because drama uses the same rules we find in life. People exist in their environment, living a moment at a time and taking those decisions which seem reasonable in the light of their present knowledge about the current state of affairs. To these authors, the difference is that in life we have many other things to consider at the same time and often cannot revise a decision taken, except in the long term. So drama can be a kind of playing at, or practice of, living (Huizinga: 1955, 1976), tuning up those areas of feeling-capacity and expression-capacity as well as social-capacity. Based on Johnson and O'Neill's conclusion, it is in the nature of drama that we start exactly where we ourselves are, with our own prejudiced views. The diagnostic potential in drama is therefore very valuable for consultants in the field of community development if a means can be found to make the unrealised, realised and the tacit, explicit.

In the Oxford Dictionary (1986) 'theatre' is defined as a building or outdoor area for the performance of plays and similar entertainments; the writing and production of plays. In the conventional sense, theatre has been seen as structure or form, that is, without participation being considered at all. Western theatre, regardless of its human-based source, is often intellectually and financially invested in the urban elite and performed only in modern theatre buildings, with the word 'theatre' standing for both the place and the activity, as though the buildings themselves gave status to the action. Other kinds of performance are often called 'alternative theatre' implying a lower status. In the practical sense, however, it is the amalgamation of form, place and action which makes theatre. A building tends to isolate audiences from the action; the lack of a building is irrelevant. The main purpose of theatre must be to communicate.
The essence of theatre is **communication between people with complementary roles**, the actors and the audience. Without the intention to communicate and the attention of the active audience, there is no theatre. (Longley, 1993). This communication is reflexive, and should be free and open, offering a voice to all people, not constrained by oppressive social barriers.

Boal's approach to theatre is central to this view:

> In the beginning the theatre was the dithyrambic song: free people singing in open air. The carnival. The feast. Later, the ruling classes took possession of the theatre and built their dividing walls. First, they divided the people, separating actors from spectators: people who act and people who watch - the party is over! Secondly, among the actors, they separated the protagonists from the mass. The coercive indoctrination began! Now the oppressed people are liberated themselves and, once more, are making the theatre their own. (Boal 1989, p. 119)

Courtney (1974) has regarded drama as the **selective expression in symbolic action of human interaction in which codes and patterns of behaviour may be examined** because: (1) the area can be selected for review, which in life it cannot, for we are busy living; (2) the theatre has developed over many years the different styles and modes which can be employed to enable such reviews of people’s dilemmas and problems; (3) the actual moment in time can be isolated, tried again, turned around, played with for different solutions, because we can accept the conventions of real/not real.

Theatre does this constantly. It shows life in action, how people fill the spaces between themselves and others. It can do what is the reality of life but seems to be the opportunity of art, and reconstruct that view productively. (Courtney, 1974)

Theatre can be an integrated, educative process in the **empowering activities of development** and, according to Moreno and Borja (quoted in Epskamp, 1989), functions as "an artistic form, unstructured and spontaneous, that offers the *camperino* who wants to participate an opportunity to portray real situations without being threatened by consequences".

It has been suggested that drama in general is a language for **personal expression**, and that is a capacity embedded within all of us (Goffman, 1976).

In our society the character one performs and one's self are somewhat equated. A correctly staged and performed scene leads the audience to impute a self to a performed character, but this imputation - this self - is a **product** of a scene that comes off, and is not a **cause** of it. The self, then, as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be borne, to mature, and to die; it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented. (Goffman 1976, pp. 254-55 - emphasis in original)
This principle can be extended to group-devised drama where, through conscious artistic expression, a holistic and harmonious environment is constructed within which a group can identify itself within the framework of play. It also provides the group with the opportunity to discuss or question the results openly. Also, if the group itself participated in the process of making and giving the performance, it turns into a learning process through which all members share and test alternatives suggested by the other participants without risk-taking.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In ancient times, Western performances were intentionally initiated by and linked with the seasonal ceremonies and religious worship and, through their expression and their symbolic action, represented codified feelings towards nature and the gods. Full community participation meant that there was no dividing wall between the eyes watching and the act of performing. In contrast to this, the modern Western perspective, influenced by interpretations of Aristotle, reveals manipulated human initiative which contributed to the notion that theatre is a demonstration of life for others who merely observe. Some have criticised the passivity of this mode of theatre, and drawn a fundamental distinction between a theatre of "seeming", to the theatre of "being" and "becoming" (Benedetti, 1976). This view was critiqued also by Brecht (Trans. Willett, 1984).

Drama in 'tribal' communities today has sociological, psychological and religious (magical) functions (Courtney, 1974; Napier, 1986; Turner, 1988), just as they have for over three thousand years, for example the existing drama games and plays among the nomadic and rural people of twentieth century Iran.

Tribal groups who were once nomadic herdsman are now settled. A more stable, agrarian existence has led to changes in religious and social expression. This culminated in the growth of communal enactments within the intellectual frameworks of the ritual myths. Settlement also led to the establishment of the sanctuaries or temples - models of the higher life and the 'house' of the divinity. The stylisation of active rituals eventually, in some cases, became fixed liturgy, with a religious function. In other cases it formed the basis of social performances (Courtney 1974, P. 157-8).

The early Christian church used theatre as a powerful moral educational and political propaganda tool within the church liturgy itself (Hardison, 1965; Grose and Kenworthy, 1985). The cycle plays and morality plays later performed a similar function in a secular context. A thousand years later, during the cultural and political revolutions in China, Russia, Africa, South East Asia and South America, theatre was widely used for political persuasion and propaganda by both the ruling powers and the various opposition parties
(Epskamp, 1989; Van Erven, 1992; Tung and Mackerras, 1987; Peacock, 1987; Boal, 1989; Braun, 1986), usually based on existing traditions of religious and social ritual and drama. Despite codification, no forms of drama remain static, just as people do not remain static.

**Popular theatre**, that is theatre originating from various sources of drama in a society, and codified into a form found by the majority to be enjoyable, often represents aspects of the real, contemporary living situations of the community or their remembered or imagined history, and also serves them as entertainment. It may present views which are already held, or may be part of a popular opposition, or may introduce new ideas, lessons and propaganda, but it is rarely reflexive or reflective in its nature and does not lead people to ask questions. Because of its persuasive capacities, popular theatre is also often appropriated by religious organisations, educators, health workers and extension agents, as well as political groups.

In rural India, for example (Mathur, 1964), almost all forms of popular drama show an constant intermingling of two trends: first, nation-wide and universal liking for religious and mythological stories and characters and, secondly, an awareness of social and political change. These two trends have continued interconnectedly and often have been synthesised into one element. In fact, what is generally understood to be the popular drama has not only co-existed with but sometimes been intertwined with the more serious drama of social purpose or religious ritual.

European theatre was strongly affected in the nineteenth century by the Industrial Revolution, where the advent of mass media allowed the development of 'popular' theatre on a never before seen scale. It had an even bigger effect on the indigenous theatre in the African, Asian, and Latin American societies, when it was a tool in the hands of European colonialism, a dehumanizing system imposed on nations and individuals, and strongly affected these human societies. For example, it taught indigenous people that their ways of living were primitive and that their life was barbaric. Colonialism not only created a culture of silence, but also taught people to turn their back on their own cultural norms and values. They consequently lost much of their identity and their past.

After the Second World War, the independence movement taught the people in most newly liberated countries to recapture that lost self, and the theatre proved to be a very important part of that recapturing process, particularly within rural life. According to Adedeji (1981), in revitalising their theatre, most people looked at the stories that were handed down orally by their ancestors and used them to teach their children. As a result, their traditional dances, folklore and ceremonies were re-assessed, including ritual theatre.
Agit-prop (agitation and propaganda) and political theatre, and the taking of theatre to the working classes, the 'masses', was an idea articulated in 1920s by Brecht in Germany, and was considered to be the start of the 20th century people's theatre movement in the West. Contemporary social action theatre illustrates modifications of the same principle: educated and sophisticated people taking theatre to the not-yet-educated or the poorly educated. A study of modern other people's theatre movements, however, reveals that it sometimes functions differently. In some societies, like China, or Russia where Meyerhold headed the agit-prop program for some years, it is the State that does this. In others, it is groups with anti-establishment values and beliefs. The review of the literature from Brecht in 1920s to Kidd in 1980s shows a shift from people's theatre for revolution towards popular theatre for reconstruction and self-consciousness (Epskamp, 1989).

The popular theatre movement focuses on the group dimensions of the work, and remains a mainly group-oriented activity and a grassroots medium for consciousness-raising. On the other hand, the history of the contemporary challenges in the theatre for social and cultural action reveals the significance of the forum theatre approach devised by Augusto Boal as a potential alternative to the generally accepted form of popular theatre. Forum theatre is by nature flexible and embraces the major characteristics of action research methodology and cooperative inquiry together with the form of a theatrical performance. Although originally it was revolutionary, especially when used in Peru in 1974 in the literacy movement, its structure suggests a great potentiality for adaptation and multi-purpose applications. The traditional folk drama and the so-called popular theatre in Africa and Asia, for example, are a constitution of ritual, drama and theatre, through which performances the participation of the audience is unavoidable. Western theatre, however, is often a single performance loop, and unsuitable for forum theatre, whereas the popular drama of indigenous people is a participative drama process with several recursive, intertwined loops. The former is usually a structured play or set staged events, whilst the latter from its origins is interlinked with creativity and improvisation (Kidd & Byram 1978, Kidd, 1984,1985; Balcomb 1975).

While re-enactments of daily life, or the dramatising of living conditions, emotions, sorrows and happiness of tribal or communal life are often found in traditional societies expressed in their folklore, in a rapidly changing world, folklore is often no more than a cultural expression of the past. Thus there is a need for a grassroots medium to involve people in expressing the present situation, as well as opening the windows of the future. It is this concern with the future that gives rise to a need for theatre for social action.
In many cases, the effectiveness of **theatre as social action** is difficult to assess. If the goal is specific, it is easier to ascribe success or failure. But other social forces are almost invariably at work and they, too, must be taken into account.

Reviews of African (Adedeji 1981, Etherton 1982) and Latin American popular theatre for social change (Luzuriaga, 1978) have revealed many different popular theatre genres are used as frameworks for popular and forum theatre such as ritual/festival theatre, dance, mime, story theatre, puppet theatre (in India and Indonesia, perhaps as the oldest existing popular form of drama - Gentili, 1979), forum theatre and musicals.

**GRASSROOTS APPROACHES TO DRAMA**

There are several different forms of drama compatible with processes of inquiry, community development, and grassroots, dialogic extension including:

1. **Psychodrama** involves the individual's own capacity in self-exploration; the focus is based on past experiences and the individual also plays his/her own desired roles. In psychodrama, the analyst is concerned with an individual acting with others. Ments (1989: 155), reflecting on the literature and his own personal experiences, states that the aim of psychodrama is "to help the protagonist identify the emotional blocks in his life". According to him:

   The origins of psychodrama stem from the seminal work of J L. Moreno who is also credited with the development of sociometry, group psychotherapy and sociodrama. Moreno was interested in the problems of interpersonal relationships and the application of play, encounter and theatrical techniques to their solution. In the 1920s he founded a 'theatre of spontaneity' in which issues dealing with current events were dramatized, but later he became interested in the application of the theatrical setting to the treatment of individuals, marriage relationships and small groups.
   
   (Ments 1989, p. 154)

Psychodrama is mostly applicable at the personal level, and is not recommended for larger groups.

2. **Socio-drama** involves the participants in taking and playing social roles to understand and explore those roles within a group process, while the participants' roles reveal and develop in relation to each another's. In sociodrama, the analyst is concerned with the whole group in dramatic enactment. Ments (1989:156), defines it as "a technique used to explore the problems posed by social groupings", that is, a way of learning about social problems. According to his report:

   The procedure would be to draw out the critical aspects of the problem from the students (participants) and to construct, with their help, a scenario which illustrates one concrete example. Players would then be chosen to enact the scene and they would be asked to report their feeling and
attitudes during the debriefing stage. This leads on to further discussion of the problem, further refinement and definition, and to a further example or variation of the first one. The process continues as long as is required. (Ments 1989, p. 156)

(3) **Play-back theatre** is based on story-telling, while a group of semi-professional actors listen to the story or stories of a specific audience, then spontaneously create and re-create that story until the participants are pleased with the enactment of their actual theme. The participation of clients or audience in such a case includes their continuous comments to lead the actors to create the 'correct reality'. In the context of this research, this form was used to explore the educational condition of the village, with a group of village children who had gathered in a truck to go back home from the Ta'ziyeh ritual. This method was used mainly because they were too shy to respond to my questions, but in creating the teacher's role, by making their comments and clarifying the role's characteristics - that is, the teacher - they tried to intervene and break the silence. It is also worth mentioning that there is a play-back theatre group in Sydney which give monthly performances. The Sydney Playback Theatre's brochure says:

Play-back theatre is spontaneous - it is theatre created through a unique collaboration between performers and audience. People tell stories or moments from their lives, choose actors to play the different roles, then watch as their story is immediately re-created with movement, music, dance and dialogue. The drama and enjoyment is in the meeting between audience and actors, between improvising performers, between the range of stories told. PLAYBACK THEATRE is both a forum and a mirror for individual and group concerns. (Anon. - program notes from workshop)

(4) **Warm-up theatre** focuses mainly on releasing the dormant energies and opening minds of participants by involving them in games and relaxation exercises. Warm-up activities have general applications in all sorts of drama, and create a congenial atmosphere for group activities, socialization. They usually begin a drama session, or precede a change of activity and focus.

(5) **Image theatre** is a form which enables the representation of creative images to be transformed into 'sculptured bodies' (that is, a transformed image into the form of a sculpture), or 'things' to stimulates further images for group discussion among the audience. A workshop process involves participants in the creation of frozen images. Creative imagination as the core of self-realisation and self-expression is useful for the construction and representation of 'problem', 'solution', and 'transition images'. Image theatre, as explained by Boal (1992), is based on a series of body movement and release exercises. A frozen image includes and expresses a problem, a desired situation and a transition image, that is, the way problem is solved. It is built within a group of five, for example, through sculptured bodies to present the kind of oppression, and then the images of overcoming that case. Through 'image theatre', abstract images become realistic and concrete. Image theater in community development is useful to identify, to deepen and to
reveal the aspects of the problem. Then forum theatre is implemented to enrich the choices and to test out the alternative solutions through voluntary, improvised dramatic actions. There is evidence which shows the practicality of image theatre and forum theatre in resolving a community's conflicts and problems, for example, Bong (in Khatoonabadi, 1992).

(6) **Popular theatre**, as originally used by Ross Kidd in literacy programs in Botswana, is based on collective actions for participatory research, to involve indigenous people in exploring their own local knowledge and decision-making processes through creating popular themes and acting upon them. This approach uses local capacities, is mainly group oriented, and is similar to a socio-drama approach. Furthermore, it is a planned medium mainly compatible with participatory research in developing countries with a strong background in drama, including dance, songs, and popular forms of performance.

Ross Kidd, in the article "Popular theatre and non-formal education in Botswana" (1974), has identified popular theatre as the form chosen by a large section of the public rather than a small elite within the context. As he pointed out "it is not high art, occasionally toured around the boondocks, bringing culture to the deprived masses, [but] people's theatre speaking to the common man in his language and idiom with direct relevance and usefulness in his reality". Although in Botswana popular theatre had been used as a tool for 'information-giving', Kidd (1979) cites discussion as the crucial aspect of such a work. In the article, the human potential for role playing and lively dialogue improvisations has been noticed among most field workers in Botswana who showed their excitement about its potential. They had already experienced the inefficiencies and ineffectiveness of traditional methods used by themselves and extension workers in attracting an audience or moving people to deal with important local problems;

(7) **Theatre of the Oppressed** is a challenge for change, encompassing a variety of theatre forms such as living newspaper theatre (that is, the selection and enactment of newspaper themes towards analysing, performing and proposing alternatives for change), forum theatre, and invisible theatre (that is, a pre-devised theme enacted in public as if it were happening naturally). All these forms have been devised by Augusto Boal in Latin-America for literacy and political objectives by involving people in a self-reflective process of perspective transformation. The main objective of these theatre forms is to change people from being spectators into active creators or co-actors.

Boal emphasises catharsis through creative action, and criticises Aristotle (c330 BC) who suggested that the principle aim of tragedy would be to invoke catharsis (among the passive audiences). He argues that the imaginative participation of audience with tragic action which
purifies emotions and temporarily eliminates them from the system in an act of catharsis, prevents audience members from taking action themselves in real life and encourages their passivity through empathy with characters. Boal seeks for empathy within action rather than through mere observation, pointing out that:

Empathy makes us feel as if we ourselves are experiencing what is actually happening to others. Empathy is an emotional relationship between character and spectator. A relationship which, as Aristotle suggests, can be basically one of pity and fear, but which can include other emotions as well: love, tenderness, desire (in the case of many movie stars and their fan clubs), etc. (Boal 1989, p.35)

Courtney (1974) also noted that "... most analysts have discarded the earlier theory of catharsis (non-direct therapy) and now consider repetition to be the key: play enables the child to re-experience events symbolically and through repetition, gain mastery over them." Therefore, Boal through his participative styles of theatre encourages the spectators to intervene in the action, to abandon their condition of object and assume fully the role of subject.

By learning how to transform situations of oppression previously experienced or an intriguing newspaper article into action, participants will gain valuable learning experiences for direct application to their personal and professional lives. Forum theatre, within the context of a workshop, basically involves participants in group activities through the principles of both psychodrama and socio-drama. In this research, its application was found to be in workshop-based training/learning and conscientization activities, and includes almost all sorts of drama techniques and approaches. Furthermore, its capacity as well as its flexibility for participatory research, through exploring abstract concepts and, acting and reflecting upon them in a collective form, was revealed to be highly valuable in the context of this research.

(8) Story theatre and narrative is another form. Three different kinds of story/narrative theatre may be found, particularly in some African countries (Adedeji, 1981). The first is known as the theatre of the storyteller. It is based on the raconteur model: that is, the storyteller is not a professional. It is usually a mother who will tell a story at night time, for children. The stories that are told are usually folk tales, educational and dwelling on the morals or virtues and vices of society. The tales often bring out the importance of animal and plant life, which are personified in the folk tales. This theatre is a way of educating the children, of strengthening their values. It leads them to play roles in society, roles that will help them live 'good, useful, and righteous lives' according to the morals of that society.

The second kind of story theatre is performed by a professional troubadour - a musician who travels from one household to another and one community to another. In some African
villages (e.g. in some parts of Nigeria), people live in compound structures, that is, large spread-out areas with many rooms. So much space is needed because people live in collectives composed of extended families. Their family groups include a few nuclear families with the relatives and grandchildren who work and play together. They normally gather in the courtyard and recreate their own cultural heritage. To begin, the storyteller goes to the courtyard and begins to play his instrument. He might have an accompaniment from a flautist, or he might work alone. Once the music starts, the people begin to assemble. When they are all gathered around, he begins to tell the story. One of the first and most important things he does is involving the people in the story.

In African theatre, audience participation is woven into the plays. In this case, the music helps bring about the rapport between the storyteller and the audience because there are points where he will stop the story and the people will all dance. After a time he will continue with the story. Sometimes he uses props to suggest characters and settings, and often he will use a collection of masks which enable him to portray many characters. At the end of the story, there is often a final dance in which everyone participates. After the storytelling is over in this community, the troubadour moves on to another place.

The story theatre of the ancestors is a third kind of story theatre. It is, basically, a masquerade performed by professional actors. However the stories of the masquerade are not folk tales, but stories of the lives of the people. Their emphasis is on the continuity of life. They say that man is not simply an individual on his own, but a link in a long chain of people. The storyteller brings out this message. For instance, he will find out beforehand the name of a person in the audience. He will find out the person's ancestral name. He will also find out the name of the place where the performance is to be done. Every place has both a ritual name and a spirit name, so the artist must know all these names before the performance. Then he will use these names - the name of the person, the name of the place - to link up the story with the history of the people in that particular community. Such an involvement between actor and audience seems to be vital because the actor sets out to rouse them all up to participate in a ritual dance. He will then lead them around the community with his music. This kind of story theatre is not set in one particular place; the action will happen anywhere, but at the end of the story there is a big procession, and the actors will move elsewhere.

(9) **Theatre for community development** is another type of theatre which ties into the traditional arts and involves community development processes (for example, Kidd 1980, 1985). Theatre and community development from the 'African' point of view is something quite new. Many Africans are largely unfamiliar with the Western concept of theatre whereby a play is written elsewhere and performed by a group of people for another group
of people who just sit there and watch the play and pay to do so, and which, further, excludes those who have not paid. The play might or might not be relevant to the audiences. Experiments with this kind of theatre, paid or unpaid, as a means of helping Nigerian people have been unsuccessful (Adedeji 1981). It may well be that Western-style plays move the audiences, and they may well participate empathically, but many African and also some Asian countries have come to realise that this kind of theatre does not touch the heartbeat of the people. Hence, they have been experimenting with traditional forms, the folk arts and the contemporary stories of the people which can more easily communicate.

There are many possibilities for the notion of theatre as a means of 'improving the quality of life'. It can be used to improve the spiritual life, the economic life or the physical life of a community. In point of fact, however, it is often difficult to establish just what the objective of such theatre should be. People, through taking part in such drama activities, step out 'of their shells'. Therefore, the kind of theatrical activities that have been embarked upon by many communities often have been directed towards self-development, getting the people 'out of their shells'. In using theatre for community development is important not only the use of the language of the people, but the involvement of the people both in the creation of the theatre and the analysis of and the emotional responses to the social and political issues.

While this is the ideal, a criticism of most new African and Asian theatre for development would be that the element of a whole community's involvement in the creation and implementation of new knowledge is neglected.

We may draw a major distinction between engaging people through propaganda-based messages of mass or even folk media, and the involving of individuals through their own ways of expression. The former imposes the message continually and occupies the thoughts of a person, whilst the latter seeks for the new understanding through the indigenous art forms they already possess. The former considers theatre as a tool to 'tell' people, whereas the latter regards theatre as a 'discourse' among them.

DRAMA AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The context of rural development involves two main paradigms: unlike mechanistic systems of development, the humanistic explanations of development have regarded the activity as a process of creativity and self-exploration in socio-cultural context (Freire 1972). Through the process, humans' physical entities are not the only focus, but also their minds, culture, value systems, ethics, social norms, taboos, and epistemologies. The view illuminates a multi-dimensional concept and asserts that technology may move traditional
society and result in technological modernization while not necessarily developing the human society, nor enriching the choices in problematic and complex situations. Participatory inquirers for development appreciate the significance of the distribution of power equally among participants to foster creativity and to lead the group to critique the status quo and create new methods. A set of relationships to contrast those illustrated previously in figure (1), is shown below:

![Innovation Diagram](image)

**Figure (6) THE PARTICIPATIVE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT**

As Mayfield (1985:3) pointed out, in the early post-Second World War period it was assumed "that rural development would happen spontaneously with appropriate transfer of Western technology, expertise, and capital resource". But, to implement an endogenous or a humanistic development, firstly it is necessary to set up two-way system of communication, and secondly a vehicle to release the human creative energies within the process. It is also axiomatic that there be an acceptance of a quite a different 'paradigm of development': a shift away from the process of 'technology transfer' and an acceptance of 'learning' as a more appropriate focus.

Participation may be examined as a vital key to the 'wholeness' of human/culture-centred development (Skolimowski, 1985) and can be placed in a systemic context of 'integrated partaking' in the process of coping with complicated human/environmental problems.

The idea of 'wholeness' might bring more inspiration. If one is a social researcher, adult educator, extension or development practitioner, it can be posited that one cannot establish reciprocal communication and rapport unless one understands the socio-cultural phenomena and builds these learning activities upon them. Therefore, the strategy of rural development or 'vocational education' cannot be merely technological advancement, rather it would
involve the overall development of whole communities. This integrates development and culture to function as a whole process.

To gain a clearer picture, the process might be referred to as 'interaction' between three cognitive (or knowledge building) interests: 'toolmaking' (technical interest), 'communication' (practical interest), and 'emancipation' (emancipatory interest). These three learning domains have been discussed by the German philosopher, Jurgen Habermas (1973) in terms of unfolding in three media: work (instrumental action), interaction (language), and power (asymmetrical relations of constraint and dependency). Technical interest and instrumental action (which is the central focus of conventional agricultural extension and of non-formal education), have been apparently concentrated to the extent that 'practical', and 'emancipatory' learning domains have been virtually neglected. Given the importance of these connections between participation, creativity and innovation, the significance of 'culture' to the development process, and the notion of learning through participation, community theatre and participative drama would seem to offer significant opportunities for change.

The last two decades have been highlighted by a remarkable tendency in developing countries to use popular theatre as a participatory means of cultural action, social change and development, although most examples are lacking a holistic perspective. As a grassroots medium, theatre has been approached within two contradictory ways: in the contexts of both 'endogenous' and 'exogenous' development. Endogenous development lies in the autonomous processes of change based on the inside-out, self-managing community activities, whereas exogenous development is project oriented, being controlled from the outside. However, as Epksamp (1989) has pointed out, in most cases, the participation of the target group or community has been limited to a minimum and has been operated in conjunction with a strong dominating and interventionist models in the process of modernization. On the contrary, a systemic, participative approach is necessary in dealing with the complexity of the interrelated socio-cultural and environmental issues. The application of theatre here is valuable due to its capacity as a systemic tool to explore local problems and create participative learning situations based on communities' own culture and modes of expression.

"Drama is not something special, but rather a method ordinary people regularly employ as a way of coping with a new or unsettling experience" (Heathcote, in Wagner, 1979, p.16). Some humanists have emphasised the dynamic of group learning and participative activities within the processes of drama education, popular theatre, participatory kinds of researches, and experiential learning activities. As will be discussed, a participative form of theatre (ie:
forum theatre) might potentially become a powerful means of creating appropriate knowledge, through fostering interaction and emancipation within group process.

Kidd and Byram (1978) experimented with popular theatre as a most appropriate tool to transform philosophical principles of adult education and participatory research into practical action in Africa. Their argument illuminates the fact that, regardless of the understanding of the ideological flaws in traditional teaching practices, as well as the understanding of 'participation' as both goal and method of co-learning and co-researching by adult educators, there is not any clear and manageable tool to involve powerless groups of people in the activity.

These workers (1978) have argued that what is needed is "a method of social investigation involving the full participation of the community; an educational process; a means of taking action for development, and working with the poorest groups in the analysis of their own needs. Accordingly, techniques need to be developed which can be used on a massive scale" (P.1).

The task then is to work out a methodology which can be managed by village-level animateurs and development workers and to train them to use these methods. These workers need more than an ideological grounding in Freire's educational philosophy. They need techniques which: (1) are clear and manageable, and (2) reflect the philosophy of participatory research.

(Kidd and Byram, 1978, p. 2)

Within the last two decades, a growing literature draws attention to a critique of non-formal and conventional adult and literacy education. As a result, ideas of self-directed and lifelong learning, and a search for appropriate means of encouraging and facilitating such kinds of learning, have come onto the agenda of educational and social researchers. For instance, Cross has pointed out that:

... individuals living in today's world must be prepared to make learning a lifelong activity. Lifelong learning is not privilege or a right; it is simply a necessity for anyone, young or old, who must live with the escalating pace of change- in the family, on the job, in the community, and in the worldwide society. (Cross 1981, p. 1x)

The central criticism of conventional adult education focussed on its non-participative and vertical dimensions which reflect the interests of external organizations and has created passivity among those who were receiving 'training'. In contrast, through drama and popular theatre processes, some humanist adult educators and development workers have aimed to develop the potential creativity of individuals in the communities as the basis for rural development. The achievements and outcomes are similar to what Coggins (1980) has analysed as the four categories of potential individual growth:
2. Stance toward others' understanding and appreciating others' strengths and weaknesses.
3. Stance toward life-development of a sense of commitment, a future orientation, and a willingness to take risks.

Therefore, within the context of education and development processes, humans are slowly being regarded no longer as the passive and receiving agents but as the builders of their socio-cultural realities, since they are autonomous self-learners within their own familiar contexts creating both the tacit and the explicit knowledge themselves. The autonomous decision-making potential of all humans is conditioned, interfered with and controlled by socio-cultural dilemmas (Mezirow, 1985) - in most cases repressing and oppressing - and prevents not only the emergence of relevant and appropriate decisions in a problem situation, but also represses and neglects the tacit (ie: unconscious) knowledge. Thus, the research or learning activity within such a complicated situation, might better function first of all, to 
emancipate 
individuals from the oppressive, conditioning factors and 
empower them to cope actively with these factors. These processes aim to achieve self-consciousness, self-confidence and self-esteem among participant learners, and to reveal commonsense understanding and assumptions that most people use in their daily interaction. This by itself makes the process a researching activity at an epistemic level.

According to the literature of the humanist paradigm, an emancipatory and empowering process is achieved efficiently through people's 
participation 
in their educational programs (Freire 1970, Rogers 1969). In this context, participation does not merely involve the physical and literal engagement, but the creative, spontaneous and emotional. Consequently, questions of methodology, method and technique are crucial.

As the literature has shown, the outcome of such an emancipatory process in most cases has been a 'perspective transformation' (Mezirow 1988), that is, a realization of personal inner-resources and an increase of choices for taking the most effective action. The activity has helped individuals to become more conscious of their surrounding systems and the relationship between them. Kidd (1974), discussing the emancipatory role of popular theatre in Botswana, has regarded its function complementary to the other educational activities:

Discussion is an important ingredient in this work. Popular theatre cannot operate effectively on its own; it is best used in combination with discussion and other forms of extension work. This media is particularly effective in the initial motivation stage, helping to challenge people's apathetic response to their situation. However to capitalise on the heightened motivation, popular theatre needs to be supported by other forms of extension work which can provide the required information and skills needed to help people move to action. (Kidd 1974, p.19)
Such a learning activity, in approaching a community's basic needs becomes, by nature, a development process.

The studies on the philosophy of knowledge present a systemic perspective of knowledge that involves two aspects, that of tacit, and that of explicit (Polanyi 1964, 1966). As Russell (1988) has pointed out, "An ecological epistemology would endeavour to hold the two processes together allowing the unconscious process to inform the conscious and the conscious give shape (understanding) to the unconscious." There are very few known methods of eliciting tacit knowledge (which is hidden) except for what occurs naturally within art forms, particularly performative art forms.

Research which ignores the vital aspect of creative art forms as indigenous systems - perhaps better put as indigenous knowing systems (after Bawden, 1991) - risks the loss of key insights into 'development through participation'. Creativity is the core of development, a process to be regarded not from the reductionistic angle of economic growth but from the holistic association of people's cultural, ethical and social potential. The advancement of technology and, consequently, the economic growth might create a modern-looking society, but would be unlikely to satisfy human interests. However, people's participation through their local means of expression to activate and energise this potential has become a major challenge since the 1970s. The crystallisation of people's creative knowledge within their popular dramas on the one hand, and the potential power of drama to awaken and elicit the dormant knowledge of communities on the other, relates performing arts to human inquiry processes. Human values are naturally integrated with the autonomous processes of change in communities and are constantly in interaction with environmental, societal, economical, and cultural phenomena. Hence, to neglect 'each part' is to perceive society as a set of parts, and not to perceive it a system in which "the parts necessarily become changed by their mutual association" (LaViolette, 1981). The following diagram illustrates the systemic relationship between 'culture' and 'development':
Figure (7) A SYSTEMS MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT

Systems practitioners envision development process as a system made up of interdependent factors, including social institutions, individuals, groups, perspectives, motives, formal structure, interactions, goals, status, and authority. Yet the development system is basically a subsystem within the larger system of society, with its social, cultural, legal, physical, technical, and economic components, in the same way that every single organ or part of human body is a subsystem within the body's physiological system. Understanding of development processes is advanced by viewing them as analogous to biological systems.
The system must receive inputs to survive, these inputs must be processes, and output must be dispensed at a rate that maintains the viability of organism. Similarly the development activities within a society, inevitably interact with the cultural, factual and ethical elements in the whole societal system. Hence, if the development practitioners disregard the cultural norms in the whole system, they unlikely succeed to manage a successful relationship with the other subsystems.

THE INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGES OF POPULAR THEATRE

According to Mwansa (1991), a drive for the integration of folk media in communications programs was launched by UNESCO in 1972 with the aim of reinforcing the mass media within extension work. In London, experts held a meeting to discuss the issues of folk and mass media. They concentrated on the use of popular theatre in family planning programs. It was followed by an international workshop in 1974 on the integrated use of folk media and mass media in relation to family planning communications programs in India. The workshop hosted representatives from twenty-one countries and a rural setting was also provided to demonstrate folk media. Among ten basic principles produced at the end, there was not one point on the participation or involvement of grassroots communities as a basic resource.

As the literature shows (Abrams 1974, Kidd and Byram 1978, Luzuriaga 1978, Dall 1980, Boal 1989), although the many African and Asian indigenous styles of theatre reflect tribal and the community interests, their approach is to show and to present, whereas Latin-American forum theatre focuses on theatre as a language that must be spoken, not a discourse that must be listened to. Mwansa (1991) reports that, from the 1950s, theatre was successfully popularized through 'concert parties' in West Africa, by Bob Johnson in Ghana, and Herbert Ogunde and Sala Ladigo in Nigeria. Also, a travelling theatre was conducted by Peter Brook in December 1972, who left his base in Paris with an international troupe of actors towards the Sahara desert where they started an 8,500-mile expedition through Africa, known as the Conference of the Birds (1989). Brook and his group of actors "turned up in the Sahara Desert and then the Nigerian bush to perform something they haven't thought of yet. They were always welcomed. But actors and audience couldn't even speak the same language.... Brook was deliberately throwing away everything he knew and so were the actors in order to discover another way of sharing theatre" (Heilpern 1989, p.3).

Furthermore, in Africa, the University of Zambia and Chancellor College in Malawi arranged some programs of popular theatre. The use of popular theatre in community development programs was also experimented with in 1974 by adult educators Ross Kidd and Martin Byram, in Botswana. For an analysis of some of the processes that have affected
the direction of contemporary popular theatre, as well as showing the practicality of theatre in grassroots development, some parts of Mwansa's analysis (1991) are reproduced and discussed in the appendix (1).

POPULAR THEATRE: A REVIEW OF CASE STUDIES

The articles in this literature review are basically concerned with how to reach the poorest and most disadvantaged sections of the population and how best to help once contact has been made. Some provide extracts from an evaluation of the grassroots, village-based, non-governmental organizations working mainly with powerless non-literate people. Some others draw a distinction between educational approaches and focus on 'education for liberation'. The latter, however, provide the leader with a perspective on how to help people understand their situation and from that understanding to look for ways to improve that situation. For example, Ross Kidd (1985), in Popular Theatre, Conscientization, and Popular Organization, provides the background to what popular theatre is and how it can help people transform the structures which keep them exploited and dependent, even in places where theatre is not imagined to function as collective, emancipatory tool. For example, in Theatre and Social Action, Chilean actor-director Oscar Castro, after being arrested for his political theatre activities, explains how theatre could help both him and the other inmates to survive. In the concentration camps of Chile, between 1974 and 1976, "Every week, performances were improvised and soon these so-called Cultural Fridays became a way of life. As Castro was moved from camp to camp, the idea of Cultural Fridays spread" (p.48). However, the article, "In the Concentration Camps of Chile", illuminates the fact that theatre potentially is able to be produced by ordinary people and result in group, social learning and collective action.

There are a number of articles discussing the participatory aspect of theatre or reporting field projects, which concentrate on the strengths of theatre or drama in helping people to help themselves, and involving them in their own development, revealing versatility in both the insight and the form. In general, the difference between the function of popular theatres in Latin America, and those of Africa and Asia, and Canada is crucial: the former approaches political objectives for social change and has been done mainly by the theatre groups (such as Arena Theatre in Brazil, etc.), whereas the latter focuses on the participatory researching and educating aspects popularized by the adult educators and social researchers.

Hummelen & Wildcat (1984) in Popular Theatre in the Arctic expose their readers to small, remote settlements of Canada's eastern Arctic, where the law is administered by a mobile court system. For the Inuit people, the legal system is alien, imposed by the dominant society, and they mistrust it and do not understand how it functions. In the late 1970s, a
legal service centre was established to provide free legal advice, education and representation to the indigenous population. It recognized that the Inuit and Canadian approaches to the law were at odds, and saw the need for better communication with the Inuit community. The medium chosen for this was popular theatre, and with the assistance of the Association for Native Development in the Performing and Visual Arts, a 'theatre for development' workshop was organized for a group of Inuit who developed an improvisational play representing the Inuit approach to conflict, social problems and the law. This was performed, moreover, for the mobile court, legal centre extension staff and Inuit communities and was found to improve communication greatly and deepen mutual understanding for all concerned. Such theatre workshops are now expected to continue as an important means of communication and self-expression.

Kidd and Byram (1979) consider popular theatre as a conscientizing process that speaks to the local people in their own language and deals with directly relevant problems. According to them, it can be an effective adult education tool in the process which Paulo Freire calls conscientization - that is, a process aiming to radically transform social reality and improve people's lives. It can also serve as a medium for participatory research. They also suggest that popular theatre offers a methodology for a massive scale of application which is manageable by village-level amateurs because: (1) it can create awareness of people's own resources and mobilize them; (2) it provides continuity in definition, analysis, and solution of community problems; (3) as entertainment, it attracts and holds interest; (4) the researcher is a committed participant and learner - not a detached outsider; (5) as collective expression, it fosters cooperative thinking and action. Furthermore, the crucial elements include the discussion after every performance, when people share ideas and identify problems and participation, since everyone can perform, given a predetermined plot line for dialogue and improvisation. Actors are already familiar with everyday issues and situations. They also believe that this already familiar medium defuses feelings of educational inferiority arising from social prejudice or illiteracy. As adult educators in Botswana, Kidd and Byram have used popular theatre in community education campaigns, resettlement education, Freirean literacy work using theatrical story-telling instead of pictures, and as part of extension work in choosing appropriate technology for rural development. In their working paper, they describe these four examples as each moved through problem identification to action while demonstrating popular theatre's role in social transformation programs. They reject prescriptive and pre-packaged performances and leave the worked out solutions to the discussions, which come only after a critical analysis of the problems themselves. To them, "analysis" of "conscientization programs" takes six steps as follows:

(1) Problem identification;
(2) problem analysis;
(3) codification (putting the problems into a code, e.g., picture or drama);
(4) presentation of code;
(5) discussion of code;
(6) action.  

(Kidd and Byram 1978, p. 25)

Kidd & Byram in another working paper (1982), show that highly participatory, engaging, entertaining and locally understandable communication forms can be used not only to liberate but also to domesticate. They present case studies of several nonformal education projects in Botswana that attempts to follow the approach of Paulo Freire by using popular theatre to encourage participation, raise issues, foster discussion and promote collective action. Furthermore, they focus on the pseudo-participatory nature of the program, the involvement of the villagers as actors/audience, and discussion of members, as well as the direction of change. The important element which is clarified by Kidd & Byram, is the dual potential of popular theatre, that is, its capacity for authentic popular expression and raising critical class consciousness, and/or for disseminating dominant class ideas and including acceptance of the status quo.

Although Kidd is concerned with the element of participation in his approach to theatre (such as involving local extension officers in organising community participation or as members of the mobile team of actor-animateurs, as well as getting the community representatives involved in a pre-campaign, planning workshop to identify the priority issues and participate in back-up support for the actual festival performances), its major focus is on theatre as a vehicle for educating non-literate people, rather than focusing on development of their own potential energies. It seems to be one of the (basic) coordinating activities to mobilize and energize the community towards their non-formal education. Therefore the premise of participation accepted by Kidd is as yet unclear about which human level it approaches, and whether deep, inner resources are employed by the individuals. However, drama has been linked to learning in a number of ways. It is clear that each way has had a different potential and, also, its demands on the planning as well as on the participants have been of different kinds. Consequently, an analytical perspective on each suggests that a different kind of learning has happened either through the following elements separately (such as improvisations or games), or within a combination of techniques (like forum theatre or drama workshops). These are:

• Improvisation through employing the creative energies in a conscious way and intentionally (Hodgson and Richards 1966)
• Metaphor and analogy through which a real problem is revealed by an exact parallel to it
• Roles within which individual is in the challenge
- Movement and dance forms where the centres of focus are non-verbal signals, experiences, and explanations as to the means of discovery
- Games within which impenetrable walls are broken down and rules are learned
- Simulation, that provides the opportunity for making a simulation of life

(Courtney 1974, Johnson and Neill (1984))

![Diagram of Drama Workshop](image)

Figure (8) ANATOMY OF A DRAMA WORKSHOP

It is important to consider the distinctions between folk media, popular theatre and forum theatre (as a means and a process of grassroots and dialogic communication). Popular theatre at first glance seems to be totally different from the folk media: while the latter uses the people's communication tools and channels - that is, the indigenous media of people for persuasion, the former creates a participative context of breaking the 'culture of silence and revealing the people's ideas and knowledge. On the other hand, this study shows that even popular theatre (despite its empowering function) is yet a vehicle to send a message with and by the most knowledgeable individuals in a community to the rest of the community, that is top-down. Epskamp (1989) has pointed out that "In a number of cases the landowner paid the theatre group to continue their work, but demanded other themes" (p.159). In developing countries the indigenous theatre groups in a number of cases are employed by the land-owners and the governments which prevent them from remaining popular and people-centred. These groups may be supported in many ways, but they should not change their independent state.
It is suggested that popular theatre can be not only the voice of a group of the indigenous people, their ideas and values, but also it can be the expression of a larger number of individuals' perspectives, interests and knowledge within a community. More importantly, if it aims to make people critically question the status quo or their situation and the deeper structures which shape their relationships and the possible outcomes of various courses of action, then it must shift from advice giving and become mostly an inside-out process. The structure of a process of conscientization and empowerment is rooted in the internal human resources (to be elicited and conscientized through improvisation and reflection). The process continues towards perspective transformation and the follow-up actions which, for example, may lead to organizational changes. However, this is the function of the process described in this thesis as *forum theatre workshops*, within which the tacit and the explicit issues are elicited by the participants themselves and, through reflection, the individuals' solutions are revealed, and (to improve the problem situation) a consensus is gained.

In this study, contrasting with the political objectives in Brecht's epic theatre and the primary experiences of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, the main concern is not a theatre that attempts to have a practical impact upon a society, to change and improve a particular society in some particular way. Rather, the main objective is exploring the researching/learning capacity, a drama method as a flexible tool for systemic action research, participatory research and human inquiry. As result of such a process, both the individuals' and the community's problems improve. Therefore, in a further step, the researcher has developed insights into how drama attempts to involve grassroots communities in exploration, expression and critical analysis of major issues.

**BRECHT IN THEATRE**

The use of theatre as a tool for social change and cultural action has a history of around half a century. In the second decade of the twentieth century, significant works by Meyerhold, Piscator and particularly Brecht in Europe were the actual applications of theatre in socio-cultural movements, basically among the urban working classes. Brecht created a form of 'epic' theatre by which the traditional conventions between audience and actors were broken down. The style was much closer to a classroom presentation than the existing forms of illusionary, realistic theatre: slide projectors or other audio-visual aids were used and the actors began to ask questions from the audience and offer alternatives through intellectual analysis, creating opportunities for distancing from emotional empathy.

A German theatre theoretician, playwright and director, Bertolt Brecht, established this new form of theatre in the 1920's through to the 1950's, mostly episodic and sometimes
interactive. "The essential point of the epic theatre is perhaps that it appeals less to the feelings than to the spectator's reason. Instead of sharing an experience the spectator must come to grips with things" (Willett 1964, p.23). Brecht discarded the notion of the audience as passive consumers. In contrast, his interest was on an active audience that he could excite not so much by what was happening on stage as by what was happening in the street (Willett 1964, p.121). In his theatre, Brecht encourages participation of audience not in the dramatic action but rather in thinking around the unresolved problems even when they leave the theatre, since there is rarely any ultimate solution to the issues he raises in the episodic scenes of his epic theatre. According to Boal (1989), "What Brecht does not want is that the spectators continue to leave their brains with their hats upon entering the theatre, as do bourgeois spectators" (p. 104).

Brecht's perspective prompted notions about theatre as a teaching medium, as a didactic instrument. Thereafter, educative theatre distinguished itself from other types of theatre, since it aimed primarily to stimulate the process of awareness-raising among the audience. As Epskamp (1989) has discussed, educative theatre, first of all, was meant to change the view which the target groups had of reality: to have them consider things in a different way (i.e. to change their attitudes) than they were used to, by seeing things in a different context. From this arose the notion of 'verfremdungseffekt' also a feature of early Russian revolutionary theatre. This mode of theatre, secondly, was designed to provide as many means as possible for the target group to realize the desired interventions into their reality.

Basically, Brecht's desire was to eliminate the systematic, linear development of a plot on stage, and the distinction that had been made since Aristotle (Greek theatre) between the actor and the spectator: the latter experiences a cathartic effect through observing the act of the former.

In tragedy, what was important for Aristotle was its cathartic function, its function as a 'purifier' of the citizen. All his theories combine to form an harmonic whole which demonstrates the correct manner of purging the audience of all ideas or tendencies capable of modifying society. In this sense, the medieval theatre was Aristotelian, though it did not utilize the same formal resources suggested by the Greek theoretician. (Boal 1989, p. 56)

In Brecht's epic drama, also, the personality character is not as important as the power struggle upon which the relationship between the characters has been established. The characters in epic theatre tend to be representations of 'real' people. The actors learn through their acting and develop insights into characters existing in their society. Brecht discarded the 'objective' acting of a character, while elevating actors to act upon character as 'subjects'. Therefore, although epic theatre contributed to the development of the actor /spectator relationship (in the sense that the audience could be interrupted by a sudden question of an actor, for example), the central focus of Brecht's style of theatre was on
'acting as learning' rather than merely 'acting as entertaining'. The major difference between Boal's theatre and Brecht's is the fact that in Boal's theatre the participation between actor and spectator has been increased to the level of co-acting. There is not a stage or a dividing wall between the two, rather there is a workshop in which participant-actors experience catharsis through their 'acting upon' real issues, but not gaining a cathartic effect through a passive observation.

With a grand pedagogy in mind, Brecht wrote his didactic plays. However, due to the stage-oriented style of Brecht's theatre, the educative message often becomes so prescriptive and imposing that it functions as propaganda. Moreover, the propagandistic elements are deliberately distinguishable. In his theatrical 'didactics', the educative and activating aspects are more focused.

According to Epskamp (1989:48) five pedagogical 'attitudes' can be distinguished in Brecht's theatre which can be understood as conditions for his didactic dramaturgy: the approach of performer should be 'experimental and exploratory' and should strive for a blend of instruction and entertainment; multiple methods should be used; the performer should be open with regard to using other media; and the play in one way or another should bear a relationship to everyday life. The fifth pedagogical attitude is that the combined use of the other four should make the teacher superfluous. It is also noteworthy that Brecht's didactic pieces were written to be performed originally by workers and schoolchildren, not necessarily for professional actors.

To Brecht, as Epskamp points out, the didactic play teaches while being acted rather than viewed, the actors gaining insight into the roles they are playing. The roles reflect actual social behaviour. Through repeated performances of the play the actors learn to analyse how they react to themselves, to others and to the world around them. This seems to be the reason for the emphasis in his didactic plays that Brecht puts on depicting visible reality and human relations as they are shaped by industrial society.

**BRECHT'S EPIC THEATRE: THE SYSTEMICITY IN THE STYLE**

Bertolt Brecht challenged the hierarchical Aristotelian style of theatre, where a plot constituted a sequence of development through the three acts of (a) exposition; (b) complication; and (c) resolution. This sequential style involves a single problem which is highlighted and exposed in the first act. Then it reaches a climax in the second act through complication. Act three finalises the complicated problem towards a 'satisfactory' end (Roberts, 1971; Orr, 1989). In contrast, Brecht proposed a style of theatre that is epic (episodic) theatre, through the fragmentation of a problem into interdependent episodes
occuring at the same scene. The more the number of events/episodes, the more complication and climaxes. Interaction between these various episodes, constituted the body of his epic plays. The audience is to synthesise the interactions and sometimes to be questioned by actors for a solution and finally left for a post-performance - discovery of the solution for action and change. At the same time, as Held (1980) has pointed out, "Art loses its significance if it tries to create specific political or didactic effects; art should compel rather than demand a change in attitude". The difference is illuminated when in Boal’s forum theatre, the human being is regarded as the subject of the inquiry, whereas for Brecht the human being is the object of the inquiry.

In Brecht on Theatre (Willett, 1964), a table shows certain changes of emphasis as between the dramatic, that is, traditional European theatre after Aristotle, and the epic theatre after Brecht:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dramatic theatre</th>
<th>Epic theatre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Plot;</td>
<td>• Narrative;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Implicates the spectator in a stage situation;</td>
<td>• Turns the spectator into an observer, but</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wears down his capacity for action;</td>
<td>• Arouses his capacity for action;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides him with sensations;</td>
<td>• Forces him to take decisions;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experience;</td>
<td>• Picture of the world;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The spectator is involved in something;</td>
<td>• He is made to face something;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Suggestion;</td>
<td>• Argument;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Instinctive feelings are preserved;</td>
<td>• Brought to the point of recognition;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The spectator is in the thick of it, shares the experience;</td>
<td>• The spectator stands outside, studies;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The human being is taken for granted;</td>
<td>• The human being is the object of inquiry;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• He is unalterable;</td>
<td>• He is alterable and able to alter;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eyes on the finish;</td>
<td>• Eyes on the course;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One scene makes another;</td>
<td>• Each scene for itself;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Growth;</td>
<td>• Montage;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Linear development;</td>
<td>• Incurves;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evolutionary determinism;</td>
<td>• Jumps;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Man is a fixed point;</td>
<td>• Man as a process;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Thought determines being;</td>
<td>• Socialbeing determines thought;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feeling.</td>
<td>• Reason.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (1) A COMPARISON BETWEEN CONVENTIONAL THEATRE AND EPIC THEATRE
(SOURCE: WILLETT 1964, P. 37)
This research concentrates on the participative and systems principles in theatre, since the linear logic underlying conventional modes of theatre media, such as plays, puppet theatre or story telling, provides only a vertical and unequal relationship and reflects the past, as well as the storyteller's own perspectives, but not the present and those of the people themselves.

AUGUSTO BOAL'S THEORY

Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed has been developed through a critical review of theatre theory from Aristotle, who focused on catharsis as the ultimate goal of tragedy and Brecht, who aimed at the critical consciousness of audience in his epic theatre, to Boal whose strong emphasis was on action itself.

In order to understand this poetics of the oppressed one must keep in mind its main objectives: to change the people - 'spectators,' passive beings in the theatrical phenomenon - into subjects, into actors, transformers of the dramatic action. I hope that the differences remain clear. Aristotle proposes a poetics in which the spectator delegates power to the dramatic character so that the latter may act and think for him. Brecht proposes a poetics in which the spectator delegates power to the character who thus acts in his place but the spectator reserves the right to think for himself, often in opposition to the character. In the first case, a 'catharsis' occurs; in the second, an awakening of critical consciousness. But the the poetics of the oppressed focuses on the action itself: the spectator delegates no power to the character (or actor) either to act or to think in his place; on the contrary, he himself assumes the protagonist role, changes the dramatic action, tries out solutions, discusses plans for change - in short, trains himself (sic) for real action .... The liberated spectator, as a whole person, launches into action. No matter that the action is fictional; what matters is that it is action. (Boal 1989, p.122 - Boal's emphasis)

By transforming the word 'spectator' into 'spect-actor', Boal (1992) opposes the passivity normally associated with the role of audience member and provides an interactive/dialectic context within which every spectator can take the place of a protagonist in performance. Earlier it was proposed that 'wholeness' is achieved through participation, that is, the basis of Boal's theatrical proposition to empower a passive audience. "Empowerment is getting people to believe they are in charge of their destiny, getting them to believe that what they do is going to impact the system" (Pfeiffer 1989, p.33). The argument is that, what the German philosopher Habermas calls 'emancipatory learning domain' (in Freirean term's 'conscientization'), is achieved within creative drama processes which release the human inner-resources and move individuals from passivity towards a state of exploring oppressive situations (ie: self-consciousness) and alternatives, to take initiative and action in real life. There is one more element which empowers the individuals, that is, knowing that they know more than they thought, through exploring tacit knowledge.
Boal has been clearly influenced by Freire's theories, whereas in terms of dramaturgy his inspiration is from the innovations and experiences of Bertolt Brecht. Richard Schechner in his critique of Boal's theatre wrote:

You have achieved what Brecht only dreamt of and wrote about: making a useful theatre that is entertaining, fun, and instructive. It is a different kind of theatre - a kind of social theory... it focuses the mind, relaxes the spirit, and gives people a new handle on their situations.

(Schechner, in Boal 1992)

Boal's approach has been critiqued merely in the context of theatre, but not yet in relation to other areas, in terms of experiential learning, systems thinking, systems practice, and collaborative researching.

In a parallel to the work of Paulo Freire (Pedagogy of The Oppressed, 1972) Boal has written Theatre of The Oppressed, which introduces a number of participative forms including image theatre and forum theatre (above), the kinds of theatre which can facilitate the overcoming of the oppressor/oppressed relationship among individuals. The major concern in these two kinds of theatre is 'exploring oneself in terms of the other' to analyse the aspects of a distorted communication or an oppressive situation. This participative analysis provides participants with opportunities to investigate the ideological penetration into their real life relationships. They learn and practice social phenomena (through creative mechanisms of drama) in terms of 'interaction' rather than 'objects'. Individuals participate dynamically, and their ideas interact within a context of mutual story-telling and collaborative performances. Here, transition from methodology to method is the point which links Boal's innovative method of participative theatre to Freire's epistemology. In Boal's approach to theatre the participants learn through acting their own social reality and reflecting upon their acting. They themselves create the roles and the problematic theme. Through their interactions the alternatives are suggested and the problem is improved.

Brecht shifted his attention from didactic theatre to epic theatre. The difference between epic theatre and didactic theatre is crucial: epic theatre explains social behaviour to the audience, whereas didactic theatre uses drama to activate a target group or group of 'actors'. As Epskamp (1989) has also pointed out, in his epic theatre Brecht was in search of a balance between the educative and entertaining values of the plays, since he believes that the contrast between learning and being entertained does not necessarily exist in nature. Moreover his attempt is against Aristotelian theatre, as in epic theatre he tries to achieve an optimal relationship between entertainment and learning. On the other hand, in forum theatre, Boal's initiative is that he puts the two aspects together (collective learning, and entertainment) at the same time, but he never attempts to remind the audience or impose any presupposed reality on them. Rather, the participants themselves create and pose their own
realities within a conscious effort to change it by interacting with each another's alternative roles to eradicate the oppressive reality. And this, it can be pointed, is a phenomenon equivalent to that which systems theorists and practitioners refer to as 'emergence' or the 'emergent properties of wholeness'.

Augusto Boal explains the dynamic of the Theatre of the Oppressed himself as follows:

We tried to show in practice how the theatre can be placed at the service of the oppressed, so that they can express themselves and so that, by using this new language they can also discover new concepts. In order to understand this poetics of the oppressed one must keep in mind its main objectives: to change the people "spectators", passive being in the theatrical phenomenon into subjects, into actors, transformers of the dramatic action. (Boal 1989, p. 121)

The argument equates traditional theatre with the position of conventional education which had been already criticised by Freire. Likewise, Boal suggests that the dividing walls must be torn down in theatre. He develops a method through which people reassume their protagonist role in the theatre, as well as in the society. Within his alternative approach, firstly "the spectator starts acting again: invisible theatre, forum theatre, image theatre, etc". Secondly, it eliminates "the private property of the characters by the individual actors..." (Boal 1989, p. 119).

To Boal, theatre is a language - an artistic one - through which, as by other languages, the individual can learn and engage in the act of exploration. Every new language, he argues, as an absolutely irreplaceable phenomenon, opens a new window for knowing reality and of passing that knowledge on to others, because all languages play complementary roles for each other "in achieving the widest, most complete knowledge of what is real" (1989: 121). For example, inspired by Paulo Freire, Boal in a nationwide literacy experiment with the People's Theatre in Peru (in August of 1973), formulates one of two principles as: "...to teach literacy in all possible languages, especially the artistic ones, such as theatre, photography, puppetry, films, journalism, etc" (Boal 1989, p. 121).

Then, in making sense of his experience (encompassing the slum, rural, and mining areas of Peru, beside the areas where the indigenous languages co-existed with Spanish) Boal, as a participant, concludes that theatre is a language capable of being utilized by any person, with or without 'artistic talent'.

However, as it will be shown, development of the theory and the practice of the Theatre of the Oppressed led Augusto Boal to the recognition that oppression need not merely be on the 'outside', but exist also as a construct within the mind. Boal's theatre is primarily creative and participatory. His theory of theatre also discards the old Aristotelian theatre theory, which regards acting as the absolute, right only of those who act in the scene.
Aristotelian theatre, according to Boal (1989), proposes a model in which the spectators delegate their power to the characters so that it is they who think and act for themselves.

"Brecht suggests a theatre in which the spectator delegates his powers to the characters so that they may act for himself" (Luzuriaga, 1978). In contrast, Boal proposes a theatre where the spectators not only do not delegate any power, but also recapture their protagonist role, as the subject humans, and by transforming the dramatic action (ie: praxis) hypothesise and test solutions (ie: trying out personal constructs) to be prepared for the action on the real world. Hence, the "theatre of the oppressed" provides a context of transition from the 'world of drama' into the 'world of real life'. To him, this is one of the powerful separating and discriminatory activities of ruling classes in the history of humans. 'The scene' for him belongs to everybody to explore, express, and act real life.

In this regard, Goffman's theory of The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (1969), seems to be worthy of recall in which one monitors 'backstage' his/her 'frontstage' presentation of self in terms of personal constructs (ie: Kelly: hypothesis making and hypothesis testing) and limits the constructs to a set of themes which s/he decides to explore and display. In an interactive process, as the person explores the workable constructs to reach a certain situation, it is when, as Goffman (1967: 50) pointed out, that the "individual becomes involved in the maintenance of a rule, he (sic) tends also to become committed to a particular image of self". Such a mechanism, through participation and group interactions (eg: a drama workshop), facilitates the self to make or determine relevant constructs for the certain sources of action to improve or change the situation.

Goffman reports that the individual is divided by implication into two basic parts: s/he is viewed as a performer, a harried fabricator of impressions involved in the all-too-human task of staging a performance; s/he is viewed as a character, a figure, typically a fine one, whose spirit, strength, and other sterling qualities the performance is designed to evoke. Goffman points out:

Those who conduct face-to-face interaction on a theatre's stage must meet the key requirement of real situations: they must expressively sustain a definition of the situation; but this they do in circumstances that have facilitated their developing an apt terminology for the international tasks that all of us share. (Goffman 1969, p.225)

In the introductory notes to Boal's article in Spanish (on the application of popular theatre in 1973 in Peru, Luzuriaga (1978: 292-3) has commented:

Boal states that the objective of the theatre program in the campaign was to show that theatre can be used by the oppressed as a means of self-expression and can help them change their outlook from a state of passivity - which is the norm for the spectator in the theatre - to one of active, protagonist
participation in the dramatic action. This is truly educational theatre in line with the "theatre of conscientization," an offspring of Freire's theories widely discussed in Latin America in recent years.

According to Boal, Aristotelean theatre separates actors from audiences, as well as the actors from the characters. He believes that the story does not end at this point, but it even separates the actors from each other by defining them as protagonist and ordinary actors. He notes that this kind of theatre divides the people who have gathered in the same place into those with the power of talking and acting, and those with merely the right to observe. Furthermore, the cathartic process in a such theatre, he claims, is achieved through seeing (ie, spectating), and playing passively. In other words it is a static and passive process within which the least attention is paid to humans as the centre of creativity and knowledge. This is, then, an isolated activity but not a process, within which all are the observers of an outside reality rather than being the creators of their own, because the actors imitate characters, and the audience look at the actors. Clearly, the activity is top-down and hierarchical.

To overcome this barrier, Augusto Boal suggests a specific form of theatre through which the level of participation goes beyond the conventions (ie, only imitating the characters and watching the actors): he involves all of the attendants in the process of acting, seeing and discussing, and calls it a forum theatre. Boal emphasizes that theatre is a process that must be developed, rather than a finished product that must be consumed. Through regarding 'the oppressed' as the subjects rather than the objects of dramatic activity, Boal discards the customary boundaries of theatre. Furthermore, he advances theatre towards the domains of psychology, philosophy and politics.

The Theatre of the Oppressed deals with two different forms of oppression: the external and the internal, to cope with both the social disorders and psychological blocks. "The Cop in the Head" is Boal's metaphor referring to those oppressions that have been internalized.

Working on the boundaries of politics, Boal uses Theatre of the Oppressed techniques to investigate specific events, such as the possible ways of organizing a strike. During the process, he discovers many people who would not dare to participate in a strike, for example. Then he seeks for the reasons and finally finds the answer: "They have "cops in their heads".

These people must have been severely threatened by external forces (social norms, cultural taboos, etc.) so that they have internalized their oppressions. Boal makes the conclusion that "the cops are in their heads, but the headquarters of these cops are in the external reality". To him it is absolutely "necessary to locate both the cops and their headquarters". This instance,
however, puts his theatre at the borders of psychology as internal roots are explored and interacted but, according to him, it moves "always on the side of theatre". The premise in Boal’s approach to theatre is either dramatic verbal or non-verbal dialogue between the people. The boundary between actor and spectator has been firmly discarded and even among the spectators there are "only active observers". He discards stage and rather concentrates on the auditorium or the workshop. Therefore Boal’s theatre opens the windows for exploring both external and internal oppressions through drama.

FORUM THEATRE

Forum theatre is an interactive method of theatre developed by Boal. It is a way of transforming theatre from a hierarchical structure where the actors are active and the audience passive, to a democratic process/arena where the spectator becomes the 'actor', contributing ideas, taking over the role and using the tools of theatre to expose everyday problems and find solutions.

Throughout his book, Theatre of the Oppressed (1989), Boal "attempts to show that all theatre is necessarily political, because all the activities of humans are political and theatre is one of them..." The book observes the changes in theatre pre-Aristotle to present, paying particular attention to the actor/spectator relationship. Boal argues that through this period the theatre has allowed the spectator to undergo a certain catharsis. A character is observed to have certain anti-social desires (desires which if acted on would have a destabilising effect on the society's status quo). Characters act on those and are consequently rewarded or punished in some way that liberates them. The spectator identifies with the characters, and by watching, is purged of the desire to act on his/her own anti-social inclinations. Boal argues that this cathartic effect of purging the desire to act for change serves those who benefit from the maintaining of the status quo. Boal’s theatre aims to have the opposite effect: to dynamise an audience or workshop group into action, by leading them through a process of empowerment. Boal argues that in the changing of the form, theatre can be a weapon for liberation, both in a personal, and social setting.

THE METHOD OF FORUM THEATRE WORKSHOPS

Boal suggests a plan for transforming the spectator into actor through an outline of four stages as follows:

1. knowing the body through exercises which allow participant to explore his/her body and its limitations, social conditionings and possibilities of rehabilitation;
2. making the body expressive within a series of games;
(3) image theatre through which participants communicate meanings through images made by some of them through their bodies;

(4) forum theatre which allows spectators intervene directly in the dramatic action and act (Boal 1989, p. 126).

Ben Ross, (the facilitator of a two-day forum theatre workshop in February 1992, in Newtown, Sydney, Australia), who has studied personally under Augusto Boal, explained the workshop process in a post-workshop interview. He explained that a forum theatre workshop aims to create a non-threatening environment for story-telling, image-making through the use of sculptured bodies, that is, a transformed image into the form of a sculpture, and group discussion. The notion of change is a recurring theme. How can an image that represents an actual situation be changed to that of a changed situation, a just, an ideal situation? In forum theatre presentation, a short scene is performed to an audience. One character in the scene is oppressed, that is, due to an unequal distribution of power amongst the characters he/she is prevented from doing/thinking/ feeling something, or is forced to do/ think/ feel something against his/her will. The scene must be relevant and familiar to the audience members so they can identify with the oppressed character. At the end of the scene, the character's problem remains unresolved. The facilitator of the presentation invites discussion: could the character have behaved differently? A member of the audience is invited to the performance area to take the place of the actor playing the oppressed character. As the scene runs again, the 'spectator' offers through action his/her solution the other actors improvising as the action changes. The audience views several possible solutions, engages in discussion and are left to decide for themselves which is the most effective solution.

Forum theatre in its presentation and in the workshop process takes an individual's problem to the group to be critically examined. Common elements of people's stories of oppression are discovered, shared and explored. Those 'spectators' or participants who come forward rehearse actions in the theatre that they might use to change real life situations, or conversely find that certain courses of action, at least within the staged scene, are ineffective. Boal's argument is that in changing the form, theatre can be a weapon for liberation, both in a personal and social setting.

Originally, forum theatre was considered by Boal as a vehicle for a literacy movement as well as revolution. In contrast to so-called popular theatre which concentrates on the participation of community for development in general, forum theatre takes account of inner creative energies and aims to release them, through participation. As a result, its main focus is on the deepening of the participants' insights towards the issues and finding out alternative solutions, through encouraging creative body movements and images. In forum
theatre workshops there is no dividing line between the group members, mainly because it involves a process of creativity and not a passivity. Within a forum theatre workshop all participants get involved in releasing their dormant energies and revealing their existing knowledge. However, as Robinson points out:

In both drama and theatre there are two levels of interaction: (i) a real social interaction and (ii) a symbolic interaction - that is, a interaction between the roles which are represented.

In theatre,...the real interaction between the audience and the actors is limited as a rule to the performers adapting their performance to the audience's responses. (...) the interaction in drama does not happen at these two levels but between them as the symbolic roles may often be used to get some business done at the real social level or to change the actual situation.

(Robinson 1980, p.164)

What Robinson calls 'theatre', is a break-down in the traditional concept of stage performance. In forum theatre, for example, there is both a symbolic and a real interaction between all of the participants. We should not think that in the process of forum theatre there is no audience rather, as Boal (1990) has pointed out, there are 'active observers' who change their roles continually.

Theatrical language is different from everyday language, through the use of which many symbols and images might not be easily understood by every audience. But, if the audience members take part in creating meanings and images, they will learn from those and through the discussion about each image, the ambiguities will be clarified by the participants. The process not only reveals various themes or issues, but also helps the understanding of others' perspectives and is potentially able to make a consensus among a group of people with a common interest.

Furthermore, when Robinson tries to break down the dividing wall between the audience and the actor, as well as between drama and theatre, without mentioning it he gives a picture that has been depicted in this research as forum theatre:

If we set aside our distinction between drama and theatre for the moment and think of the process of dramatizing as a whole we can see, I think, that we get involved in it in three capacities. We may be, so to speak, the prime-mover, generating ideas and building the drama. We may be re-enacting a drama which has already been devised. We may be involved in any of this as a spectator. We may participate in this process as initiator, animator, or audience. Each of these roles - in the sense of capacity now - involve certain sorts of activity which have typical functions. The ways in which these functions knit together illustrate the inherently social nature of this process and indicate how artificial and limiting, so far as education is concerned, this rigid dichotomizing between drama and theatre has been. (Robinson 1990, p.168 - emphasis in original)

Robinson has extracted a range of roles and functions within drama which is illustrated in the following. Similarly in Forum Theatre the roles can be changed, and the functions have deepening effects on the roles.
As Robinson (1980:167) has explained, "the point of describing drama as a process is to indicate that each of these functions, and the capacities to which they attach, is in a sense in every other one". He also emphasizes the differences in practice. There is an explanation of the relationships between the various roles and their functions in the above model, which are practically identified in the forum theatre and creative drama (within the context of this research). Robinson states further:

There are infinite subtleties in the way they blend and emerge in practice. The [participant] who turns and shows his improvisation to the rest of the [group] moves from being primarily initiator of his own drama. But the two roles will merge if he begins to create fresh turns in the drama as he goes along. Still he is doing something more complicated now than when working without the external audience because there is now the extra effort of trying to communicate. Those who watch are in the role of audience if only for a brief time before moving back into the role of initiators themselves. (Robinson 1980, p. 172)

FORUM THEATRE: A SYSTEMIC CONTEXT

"Inputs to a system are transformed through major functions that can be described or developed: as a result of such a transformation, an output from the system is produced" (Wilson 1990, p.70). Forum theatre can be regarded as systemic not only in terms of participation and alteration of actor/spectators, but also in terms of systemic thinking and transformations as it allows ideas to interact through 'stories'. The inputs are personal themes, and the output (a synthesised story), which is a consensus (within the selected performance) is always unpredictable and sudden. Forum theatre gains and develops validity through several verbal and nonverbal interactions, since "Something is valid to the extent that people agree that it is so. Consensual validation becomes the only possible form of validation" (Plas 1966, p.56). The systemic process of establishing a consensus (an output of group interactions through stories) can be depicted in the following diagram:
"According to systems theory, the difference between a 'collection' and a 'system' is that in a collection the parts remain individually unchanged whether they be isolated or together, i.e., they are simply a sum, whereas in a system the parts necessarily become changed by their mutual association; hence, their whole becomes more than just sum of the parts" (LaViolette, 1981). In the same way, theatre can be either a collection of playwright, script, plot, characters, actors and director without being changed within a performance, or a systemic context within which all parts interact and the meaning is constructed and reconstructed through mutual and reciprocal communication. In traditional theatre there is a hierarchical (but not systemic) relationship between the involved parties within which the quality of actor/spectator relationship is worth considering. These concepts can be represented diagramatically in the following:

Figure (11) THE HIERARCHICAL CONTEXT OF TRADITIONAL THEATRE
This model can also be interpreted in terms of a classroom where the 'plot' is a subject matter, the 'actor' is a teacher, and the 'spectator' is a passive trainee. Participative theatre in contrast, aims to have the opposite effects - to dynamise an audience and to shift from observation to participation by a facilitator leading them through a process of empowerment. Augusto Boal's work has focused on exploring ways of transforming theatre from a hierarchical structure where the actors are active and the audience passive, to a democratic process/arena where the spectator becomes the 'actor', contributing ideas, taking over the role and using the tools of theatre to treat everyday problems and find solutions.

Figure (12) THE SYSTEMIC/PARTICIPATIVE CONTEXT OF FORUM THEATRE

Forum theatre represents the idea of an integrated community. The games during a workshop process and warm-ups, foster more participation (as a systems premise) by overcoming rules and patterns of behaviour "that are formally or informally prescribed" (Plas 1986, p. 73). The individual part, the image or story, exists as a separate entity, but each part is only fully meaningful in the context of the whole, namely in the structure of a workshop.

**BOAL'S THREE HYPOTHESES**

What we do takes from art not science! Therefore, we cannot present concrete proofs of anything. We do not demonstrate theorems. We only propose hypotheses. 'Hypo' ... means 'on this side of, underneath'. Hypotheses need practical verification in order to be valuable. And our practice has verified our hypotheses. (Augusto Boal, 1990)

In *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1989), Boal expresses and emphasises two fundamental principles:
• to help the spectator become a protagonist of the dramatic action so that she/he can
• apply those actions she/he has practiced in the theatre to real life.

These principles provide the individual with an actual opportunity for empowering and emancipatory learning (in a Freirean perspective), as well as being an active, lifelong learner in dealing with problematic issues within real life process. For realizing the two basic tasks, through the Theatre of the Oppressed and specifically within the process of 'The Cop in the Head', Boal (1990) himself proposes three basic hypotheses which are based on the fundamentals of the Theatre of the Oppressed: "If the oppressed himself [herself] (and not a surrogate artist) performs an action, this action, performed in a theatrical fiction, will allow him [her] to change things in his [her] real life."

Boal's three hypotheses contrast to the Aristotelean theory of catharsis, which proposes that the spectator's role leads her/him to void the emotions s/he has experienced during the performance.

First Hypothesis: Osmosis:

The Macrocosm and the Microcosm suggests that all an individual's patterns are rooted in the nuclear family which in conjunction with the 'neighborhood' norms creates and reflects a 'group perspective'.

Hypothesis: "All the moral and political values of a given society along with its structures of power and domination, as well as its corresponding mechanisms of oppression are contained in the smallest cells of the social organization (the couple, the family, the neighborhood, the school, the office, the factory, etc.) and in the smallest events of social life (an accident at the end of a street, the ID control in the subway, a doctor's visit, etc.)" (Boal 1990, p.36)

According to Boal, the bigger scale reality, even national themes, can be inscribed in the small personal ones. Or, one's personal 'sayings' reflect a broader society within which similar cases occurs. To identify the basic norms, the investigator also must create universal, but not specific themes. Thus "it is necessary that all the singular elements of individual discourses become 'symbolic' and lose their exclusivity". In this shift from the particular event to its social context, Boal abandons psychotherapy for theatre.

Boal calls the appropriation of ideas, values and tastes, osmosis, which is the result of repression and seduction, as well as happening through repulsion, hate, fear, violence, constraints or, on the contrary, by attraction, love, desire, promises, dependency, etc. He suggests that osmosis happens everywhere, in
...every cell of social life: in the family through legal parental power, money, dependency, affections; at work through salary, bonuses, vacations, unemployment, retirement; in the army through punishment, promotion, hierarchy, the seduction of exercising power; in school through grades, end of the year marks, files; in advertising through the false association of ideas; in the religious ceremonies through hell, paradise, the unknown, communion, forgiveness, guilt, hope. And also, in theatre. (Boal 1990, p. 37)

Boal himself responds that the theatre puts two different worlds in contact: the auditorium and the stage. As he points out, conventional theatrical rituals determine the roles that both worlds must play. Onstage, images of social life are presented in an organic, autonomous fashion which cannot be modified by the auditorium. During the performance, the auditorium is de-activated, reduced to contemplation (sometimes critical) of the events that develop onstage. 'Osmosis' moves from the stage to the auditorium in an intransitive manner. If there is strong resistance to deactivation in the auditorium, the performance can be stopped, but it cannot be transformed since it is predetermined. The conventional theatrical ritual does not change. It may broadcast, mobilizing ideas, but the ritual itself remains unchanged. Through the Theatre of the Oppressed, there is neither any predetermined theme, nor there is a final resolution, According to Boal, participants try to make the auditorium-stage dialogue entirely transitive: the stage may attempt to transform the auditorium, but the auditorium can attempt to change everything. He believes that there is not always a peaceful transmission by osmosis. It relies on subject-object relationships. However, there is not really the possibility for anybody to be reduced to the condition of absolute object. As a result, to Boal, the function of the oppressor produces two different reactions in the oppressed: subversion and submission, as 'Every oppressed is a submissive subversive' (1990). He introduces the "submission" as the 'Cop in the Head'. At the same time, there would be a subversive state for the oppressed individual. Boal's aim, however, is to render the subversion more dynamic while making the submission disappear.

Second Hypothesis: Metaxis:

If the oppressed-artist is able to create an autonomous world of images based on his own reality, and play out his freedom in these images, he can then apply every thing he has accomplished in the fiction to his own life. (Boal 1990, p.40)

Aristotelean theatre separates spectator from actor, actor from protagonist, all from character and puts them in a passive relationship within which the character is acted out objectively and the play is watched passively. The spectator relates to the plot through empathy, and purgates due to the impacts of the catastrophic downfall of the protagonist. Boal believes that the audience are stricken by the emotions of the characters, and that the moral world of the performance in such a theatre invades the spectators through 'osmosis'. They are led by the characters and their actions which they cannot control. Therefore various emotions are experienced. In a Theatre of the Oppressed session, in contrast, the oppressed express
their own oppression by creating a world of images, through which "the relationship active observer/character changes drastically and becomes sympathy". In the Theatre of the Oppressed there is no delegated right on behalf of the spectators to the actors. Therefore, the participants are no longer led, this time they lead. Similarly they are not touched by somebody else's emotions, rather they produce their own. Everybody now is a subject, thus s/he leads and controls her/his own actions. In such a way, the oppressed person steps into the artistic world by recreation of the oppressive situation. Therefore an oppressive experience of the individual in the real world is aesthetically transformed.

When the oppressed-artist creates the images of her oppressive reality, she belongs to both the real and aesthetic world in an active rather than vicarious way. In this instance, we have the *metaxis* phenomenon: the total and simultaneous adherence to two different and autonomous worlds.

(Boal 1990, p.38)

Boal explains that this aesthetic transubstantiation belongs to two autonomous worlds: reality and the image of reality that is created through such a process. However, importantly the two worlds are truly autonomous. The oppressed-protagonist may not merely reproduce the reality, or illustrate the real oppression symbolically, rather, according to Boal, "artistic creativity must have its own aesthetic dimension". Through image theatre, however, the facilitor's role might bring the participants to translate an image into another language, the verbal. Accordingly, they may insist upon establishing the meaning of each image. But as Robinson was quoted earlier, there is a crucial difference between the function of art as a schematic understanding, and language as a systematic one. Consequently, one may look up the meaning of a word from the dictionary, whilst never the message of a painting or a piece of music. The essence of an artistic creation is in the head of the artist her/himself and if it is re-interpreted by critics, then again the individual opinion mediates and there is no single explanation. The "metaxis" takes place inside him. We must identify with the artist (ie: creator of the artistic form) through sympathy, to be able also to experience metaxis and to produce likewise. As a young Iranian villager shepherd called Mohammad Karimi told the author in 1991:

> When I play the flute, I am not myself. It is like somebody else is talking about my sorrows and talks from my behalf. Afterwards, I am relaxed.

Is it not the tacit knowledge which is revealed through playing an instrument? Is not it a way of making sense out of past experiences? If so, it is tacit knowing - knowing through and within the unconscious.

**Third Hypothesis :** The Analogical Induction:

If an individual's farewell image or scene prompts other analogous images or scenes from colleagues in the session, and if one builds a model detached from the particular circumstances of each
individual case using these images, such a model will contain the general mechanisms through which oppression is produced. This revelation of the general mechanisms of oppression will enable us to study the different possibilities for breaking the oppression synpathetically.  
(Boal 1990, p.41)

Augusto Boal’s explanation of the third hypothesis is basically an application of the "commonality corollary" of George Kelly. To Kelly "to the extent that one person employs a construction of experience which is similar to that employed by another, his psychological processes are psychologically similar to those of the other person (Kelly 1963, p.90).

In forum theatre sessions within the context of this research, whenever there was a homogenous group of participants (eg: students, farmers, etc) who suffered the same oppressions, the personal story of a participant helped others develop insights into their own experience. The commonality among individuals neglected the characteristics of each personal case. Such a process resulted in an immediate 'sympathy' all speaking about our common issue.

Conversely, when 'A Cop in the Head' of an individual was directed, a personal oppression was being characterised specific to that person's circumstance. As Boal has clarified, in such instances the other participants "would be caught by empathy, becoming spectators to the person who is telling the story. We can also be in solidarity with that person, but this would not be the theatre of but the theatre for the oppressed." This crucial point makes a clear distinction between Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, and Kidd's popular theatre which is performed for the oppressed spectators. In Boal’s approach to theatre the facilitator facilitates action and reflection to achieve emancipation, self-consciousness and communicative action among participants.

We do not interpret or explain anything. We simply offer multiple points of view. The oppressed must be helped so that she can reflect upon her own actions, that is, regarding possible alternatives shown to her by other participants based on their particular circumstances. We must provide a distance between action and reflecting on it. (Boal 1990, p.42)

It is the interaction between the individuality and the commonality corollaries (Kellian terms) that creates a dialectical relationship between em-pathy and sym-pathy in the forum theatre session. In Boal's terms (1990), analogical induction functions to allow a gestaltic analysis which provides several different perspectives on each situation. However, whether or not the point of 'building a model' occurs in all participants through a particular instance, or not, the interactive or recursive impacts of similar cases would lead to a resulting forum (ie: the final selected theme or scenario) which ultimately produces sym-pathy. It happens because during such a forum the particularities will acquire a symbolic character (given the
fact that we have previously produced, seen, and studied other cases which have deeply engaged us).

According to Boal, such a process provides each participant with her/his own protagonist role in a way that s/he be able to see herself/himself both as a protagonist and as an object. "S/he is the observer of the observed person." The significance of the process is the way a consensus, that is, the final voted theme, is made and the way the solution is enriched through the continual participants' intervention and their replacement as the actors in their own dramas.

The dynamics of group learning for human development can be achieved through the interactive, emotional and aesthetic process of participative theatre. According to Bennett (1990), "The theatre can never cause a social change. It can articulate the pressures towards one, help people to celebrate their strengths and maybe build their self-confidence." Participation is the crux of creativity, since it leads people to rely on their own judgement and to learn through. This is not, however, the case of giving audiences the choice of two or three acts. Rather, non-traditional theatre activities "are constructed precisely on the principle of audience co-creation both in the interests of democratization and problem-solving" (Bennett 1990, p. 122). Such learning deals with concept and action. "No matter that action is fictional, what matters is that it is action" (Boal 1989, p. 121). Because, "learning is the change of the organism within experience" (Courtney, 1988, p. 15). In Mezirow's point of view (1988:153), this integrates conceptual learning with emotional and aesthetic experience. Therefore it becomes an inquiry process in a deeper sense, since concepts are learned and knowledge is revealed through the wholeness of thinking/action/learning (doing). Within the process the partial (single) phenomena are viewed systemically, so that the inquirer be particular into that whole. Such a participative activity provides a systemic context through which the ideas with consequent actions interact, as Augusto Boal's experiments trained and transformed the spectator into an actor.

"Indeed, the creation of open production scripts - scenes where audiences make choices or are free to try out possible solutions - has become a common feature in non-traditional theatre" (Bennett 1990, p.122).

DISCUSSION

As Robinson (1980) has pointed out, scientists and artists alike (and they may be the same people), are equally concerned to get a grip on concrete reality. Both are creative and neither are wholly objective. It is said that "Art is rich in offering a variety of ways to do something" (Courtney, 1988).
Because of the similarity between science and art we need to be careful in saying that the point of the arts is to make people to be more creative. Based on Kelly's personal construct theory and Freire's epistemology, the activity of mind, if it is active, is essentially creative. This potential creativity, Freire suggests, arises, because: "The learners must discover the reasons behind many of their attitudes toward cultural reality and thus confront cultural reality in a new way" (Freire 1970, p. 35).

On the other hand, Maturana and Varela (1988) expose to us their biological epistemology which all humankind as unique entities hold within them, a basic knowing structure to learn through and to communicate intentionally with the surrounding world. The authors' biological arguments reject any social 'communicative action' (ie, Habermas'), to empower or conscientize other people. However, this study, so far, has shown that there are a number of socio-cultural dilemmas shaped and created by the intentional social action of unique individuals, since individuals in society are unique interacting entities. They interact, therefore they become social actors of their own realities and are parts of a whole, that is, of their society. Since our interactions with others and the environment determines the knowledge we hold at the time, it is fundamental to develop our systemic learning within a process of practicing the recursiveness in our relationships with others through our 'participation'.

In other words, it is the duality between 'uniqueness' and 'otherness' which makes human knowledge a complex system and makes it a difficult task for everybody to analyse and differentiate or to distinguish between the tacit/explicit of oneself and others - the point which necessitates a facilitating role for dialogic educators to empower and conscientize people. In this respect, Cooper's comment (1983) is relevant. He has pointed out that "The logic of Otherness is immanent in social structure. Structure is always relationship between 'others' " (p. 202). Also Waters (1989), argues that "In an important sense the self is not separate from the society but a reflection of it. It arises out of interaction and communication with other people" (p.75). He points to mental dialogue as the attempt "to reconcile self-conception with the reflection of oneself in the actions of others. A stable social identity, a self, emerges as this reconciliation occurs." (p.76)

On the other hand, "Freire operates on the basic assumption that humans' ontological vocation is to be a Subject, who acts upon and transforms their world, and in so doing move towards ever new possibilities for a fuller and richer life ... This world to which they relate is not a static and closed order, a given reality which they must accept and to which they must adjust, rather, it is a problem to be worked on and solved." (Mayfield 1985, pp.97-9)

According to Mayfield, the argument provides the interpretation that although human beings
may be bonded in a 'culture of silence', they are capable of looking critically at their world in a 'dialogical' encounter with others.

When an illiterate peasant participates in this sort of educational experience, he comes to a new awareness of self, a new sense of dignity, he is stirred by "I now realize I am a man, an educated man. We are blind, now our eyes have been opened. Before this, words meant nothing to me; now they speak to me and I can make them speak." (…) In contrast to the rote method of traditional education, conscientization, as defined by Freire, encourages the participant peasant farmer to reflect upon and understand the meaning of such key words as 'poverty', 'disease', 'land', 'patron'. The aim is to make people aware of themselves and their environment, to learn to think. And once people begin to think, they ask questions. (Mayfield 1985, pp.97-9)

The basic point of post-modernist theories of arts, including Boal's approach to theatre as well as humanistic learning theories, such as Roger's and Freire's, is the fact that facilitation is the crux and the core of both the arts and learning. The emphasis is on change through participation and involvement.

Change is a pervasive condition of our times. People have the opportunity to effect change or be affected by it. The growing complexity of societies and the interdependence of the smallest community with the world economy makes it almost impossible for an individual working alone to initiate, conduct, and sustain change. But with a little bit of help from others, a group of people working together can initiate, conduct, and sustain efforts to improve their situation, to improve their social and economic well-being. (Christenson et al., 1989, p.3)

Robinson (1980), argues that we do not live in a world of static social realities. If we did, all creative and expressive actions would simply be spasmodic variations around an unchanging theme. The social world is not an 'abandoned monument' but, as George Kelly puts it, 'an event of tremendous proportions', the conclusions of which are not apparent. It exists by happening. It is hard to imagine what the world would be like if it just sat there and did nothing. Our personal construction of reality, in both a literal and a metaphorical sense, is an active rather than a passive process, but there are a number of restrictions, such as social taboos or dominant ideologies which can be identified and challenged through creative drama processes such as forum theatre.

Boal's theory concentrates on the potentiality of humans involved within 'theatre of the oppressed', their rights, their involvement and the interaction between them and their roles - that is, actor and audience. Therefore, his human-centred theatre relies on the potentiality of the humans as actors/audiences, to interact with their roles as well as with their inner-resources. The phenomenological and constructivist schools of thought regard it an equal right for both the actors and the audience to make sense and construct a socio-cultural reality out of the dramatic experience. In this context, playing roles in theatre provides all of them with an opportunity to touch their humanity, to learn and practice freedom of expression in the world of drama. This is one educational aspect of theatre, and according to Robinson:
... our actions in these various roles do have outcomes in the real world. The actor's role does not. It is a representation of someone's action in the depicted world of the play. (...) The actor represent this act of expression. In doing so he may well be expressing something of himself too. (Robinson 1980, p.163)

The differences between drama and theatre cited above may be the reason for adverse critiques of Boal's approach to theatre. Regardless of the significant differences in terms of auditorium, audience and actor, dramatic action is something which is borne by all humans. As Courtney (1987:3) has pointed out, "dramatic action is used in both life and art", and "is a holistic activity". Elsewhere, Richard Courtney (1983) comments:

There are various degrees of human performance: those of everyday life; those of play and creative drama; and those of theatre. All are aspects of human role performance. Each of these kinds of performance have elements that inform the others. An examination of children at play can help us understand theatre, and an analysis of creative dramatic performance can assist us in understanding behaviour in everyday life. (Courtney 1983, p.5)

Courtney has largely examined theatre performance but with analogues indicated to both life and creative drama, and finally makes the following conclusions:

... there are two modes of dramatic knowledge: (1) the generative mode of exploration and discovery; and (2) the pedagogical mode of transmission and formation. (Courtney 1983, p.11)

He poses that existing knowledge (transmitted action) becomes a field within which a new quest for knowledge may be pursued (exploratory action). In drama, when we seek new knowledge we do so within a repertoire of existing action. This repertoire, in order to remain truly dramatic, must remain open to the newly discovered action - "that is, for the action which is 'fit' to be a paradigm for the world of action generally".

The crucial point is the need for adjusting educational drama to contemporary society as a "generic skill: and to make it a human ability that is fundamental to both education and adult life". As (Courtney 1986, p. 5) has noted, far more than simply a vocational skill, drama underlies all aspects of existence; it is at the basis of learning and transfers to the world of the marketplace and workplace as well as human leisure and personal relationships.

For Augusto Boal, from the first moment, the first transgression, when a spectator says "Stop!" she/he steps out of the role of passive onlooker. And when coming onstage to offer an alternative, whatever, she/he is really showing individual creative uniqueness, but not a model. That is why there are always alternatives.

The application of Kelly's personal construct theory in Boal's approach to theatre is that the participation in drama functions in real action time. The roles exist to be rebuilt in one way
or another and the group may be invited to reconstruct or reinterpret, which this would have a crucial effect of getting them involved and hooked into the power to think about influence and hold a viewpoint, because the action is a process of rebuilding not someone else's material, but one's own 'personal constructs'. This is the significance of improvisation, whether an improvised action, movement or a verbal creation. For example, an improvisational story telling functions inside-out and with plenty of rebuilding potential, whereas a static story-telling may involve memory to put together the surfaces of the events, in words devised perhaps by someone else.

FINAL REMARKS

In seeing the world one way or another we are exercising some degree of personal choice (Robinson 1980, p. 160). These choices may be affected by cultural, social, economical and/or political barriers. The first task of facilitating learning is to overcome these barriers and prepare the ground for critical thinking, as well as opening windows for perceiving and making new choices and alternatives.

People see the world in a way they have experienced it, and do things as they see them, mostly without reflection. Maturana & Varela (1988) have put it so succinctly:

"We are keyed to action and not to reflection, so that our personal life is generally blind to itself. It is as though a taboo tells us 'It is forbidden to know about knowing'.

(Maturana & Varela 1988, p. 24)

The way people see things is underlined by the conventions and pressures on them. These constraints, particularly in a closed society, appear as a set of rules and consequently as social norms. These norms not only operate in the creation of patterns, but also specify the direction of looking at events as realities. As a result, they influence our interpretations and determine our perceptions and attitudes. By and through reflecting upon our past, we may get the power to recognize the constraints, and also to awaken our repressed talents and potentiality for changing the future.

Reflection is a process of knowing how we know. It is an act of turning back upon ourselves. It is the only chance we have to discover our blindness and to recognize that the certainties and knowledge of others are, respectively, as overwhelming and tenuous as our own.

(Maturana & Varela 1987, p. 24)

Therefore, a real learning situation is the one that creates the ground for the reflection. It is hypothesized that the both reflection and action are achieved at the highest integrated quality within a drama process, mentally, emotionally, and physically, mainly when it is participatory in its deepest sense. As quoted earlier, Freire (1970) considers
"knowing" as a "dialectical movement which goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to a new action" (p.31). Even, literacy learning is regarded by Freire as a cognitive dialectical process. He has noted that:

The cognitive dimensions of the literacy process must include the relationships of men with their world. These relationships are the source of the dialectic between the products men achieve in transforming the world and the conditioning which these products in turn exercise on men.

(Freire 1970, p. 30)

Similarly, "Kelly's personal construct theory assumes an individual to explore his own expectations and assumptions about the world around him, and the significance and implications of change on his own emotional reactions or behaviour" (Salmon 1981, p. 44). The direct experience itself is the centre of learning and, through the confrontation with the surrounding environment, both the learner and the environment change. Each experience, then, is reflected on the personal constructs. Thereafter, through a cognitive process, reconstruction of the constructs occurs. According to Salmon, "For Kelly, man (sic) is in the business of making sense out of his (sic) environment" (Salmon 1981, p.32).

What is missing in most of the studies on 'systems', 'research' and 'development' is Freire's proposition of a true dialogue to achieve an individual's perspective transformation as the core of change and development processes. Hence, a participative approach to development may be developed in which society would be regarded "as groupings of individuals seeking to make choices and decisions within the economic, political, and cultural constraints of society" (Mayfield 1985, p. 177). Then the focus is on the creation of situations through participative forum theatre that encourage and enrich new choices and factual/ethical decisions. Mayfield notes that the "...features of any given situation are both 'objective' structures of economic opportunity and a structure of differential advantage in the capacity of the system's participants to perceive and act upon such opportunities" (ibid). Forum theatre workshops aim to create such "opportunity structures" within a community or organization setting. The participants have the chance to act upon perceived opportunities and test their choices (through the dramatic courses of action) to provide an understanding of the real situation and provide appropriate energy and a consensus, that is, the group support, to implement the ideas in a social setting independently.

The common point is the holism encompassing dramatic actions as the normal process of sense-making prior to the learning of symbols, that is, alphabet, etc. Also, emancipatory learning (Habermas) or conscientization (Freire) - upon which a number of well-known theoreticians in the different fields have concentrated - is gained through spontaneous (creative) drama actions. These creative/improvised drama actions represent the uniqueness of individuals in group which through a number of interactions moves them towards a
consensus - a basic prerequisite in problem solving processes. Forum theatre moves beyond the organization of action at the level of the individual to examine the social processes which occur when individuals come into contact with one another. In Waters' terms (1989), these are attempts to reconcile self-conception with the reflection of oneself in the actions of others. A stable social identity, a self, emerges as this reconciliation occurs.

Participation between the parts of a system is the key element upon which systems operate. In socio-cultural systems, power structures function as a barrier to participation. As a consequence, the culture of silence is encouraged and the personal knowledge of people is kept dormant. In a drama situation, creativity and spontaneity reveals the different aspects of knowledge, that of the tacit and that of the explicit. Then the people who are involved realise their own power to talk and to analyse, that is, to be critical. Such a context involves what Robinson (1980, pp.159-160) has clarified as the process of meaning and knowing, or personal knowledge in Polanyi's terms. It also provides a collaborative context of learning and researching through reflection, and an opportunity for the exploration of systemic relationships (between individuals and their world on one hand and between themselves on the other). As a result, through the process of replacing the oppressed role by the participants in forum theatre, the hypotheses are made, tactics are employed and tested and finally the enrichment of the choices for a specific common problem is achieved.

To sum up:

- Empowerment is a vital element in development process.
- Forum theatre empowers through:
  (1) participation (involvement), (2) reflection and, (3) liberation (within roles).
- Making the tacit explicit develops self-realisation.
- Tacit knowledge includes beliefs about the 'way of the world' and about 'how one gets to know about the way of the world'.

The following figure illustrates an interactive process of breaking the culture of silence and fostering creativity.
Figure (13) AN ACTOR-ORIENTED KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM
CHAPTER FIVE

LEARNING THEORIES AND CONSCIENTIZATION

In this chapter it is argued that the principles of humanistic learning theories, essentially experiential and self-directed learning, can be achieved through participative drama. The proposition is that participation within drama methods can link socio-cultural phenomena with educational activities through empowering group processes and creating critical consciousness. Also, it may offer a way of dealing with some of the ongoing extension problems in the context of 'endogenous' development.
CHAPTER FIVE

LEARNING THEORIES AND CONSCIENTIZATION

So far in the history of industrialized nations, there has been a pronounced tendency to increase the separation between education, work, and leisure. The result has been termed the 'linear life plan,' a life pattern in which education is for the young, work for the middle aged, and leisure for the elderly. (Cross 1981, p. 9)

Allen Tough (1978) was among the first to promote the idea of 'extension' as the facilitation of 'self-directed learning'. This theme was further pursued by Salmon (1980, 1981) and others, from the position of construct psychology, and more recently by Bawden and his colleagues (1993) from a systemic perspective. Tough's early work reflected the insights of Knowles (1975) on adult learning, 'andragogy', as he called it. It can also be firmly placed within the humanistic perspective (or paradigm) of learning, so vigorously expounded by Carl Rogers (1969).

Self-teaching is another term suggested by Tough (1967) which transmits a similar concept of self-directed learning. Tough (1989) believes that a large proportion of individuals are capable of dramatic improvement in their competence at self-planned learning.

Brookfield (1985, p. 5) considers the self-directed learner "as one who pursues learning with a minimum of assistance from external sources". Elsewhere, he pointed out that: "Certainly self-directed learning cannot be regarded as equivalent to isolated learning since Tough (1979a) and Brookfield (1981a) have both attested to the importance of assistants and learning groups to self-teaching and independent learning projects" (Brookfield 1983, p. 10). Malcolm Knowles, whose efforts have popularized the concept of andragogy for adult learning considers adults as self-learners, explains self-directed learning as

... a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. (Knowles 1975, p. 18)

According to Tough (1989) "highly intentional learning is clearly a common natural human activity". Although the main focus of adult educators for many years has been on professionally guided learning experiences and modalities, such as classes, workshops, tutorials, educational radio and television, video and programmed instruction (and all of these have value), according to Tough (1989), "it turns out to be only 20 percent of the total picture." Whereas, "The massive bulk of the iceberg that is less visible, hidden below the surface, turns out to be 80 percent of the adult's learning efforts." At the same time, the
adult "seeks suggestions, information, encouragement, resources, or other assistance from an average of 10 people" (p. 257). The identification of farmers' information sources and their learning strategies (Underwood, 1985), and the proposition of learning communities for agricultural extension/education as learning systems (Bawden, 1990c) support this notion. The new paradigm emphasises that, "The learner must, however, be left in a position to make a free choice" (Timus 1989, p.125).

The theoretical basis of Tough's 'extension as self-directed education', and Knowles' 'adult education as a self-directed exercise as andragogy' can be argued in terms of Rogers' humanistic psychology.

**NEW APPROACHES TO EDUCATION**

Adult educators need practical tools to do their work. Often they are good at philosophical statements, but not very good at designing the tools needed to transform philosophical principles into practical action. (Kidd, and Byram 1978, p.2)

There are two distinct approaches to education rooted respectively in behaviouristic and humanistic psychology. According to Cross (1981:228), "the humanist assumes that there is a natural tendency for people to learn and that learning will flourish if nourishing, encouraging environments are provided". The concept of adult education in this chapter is within the humanistic perspective.

The humanistic approach focuses mainly on human **capacity and potentiality** in learning. It also considers learning as a self-directed process followed by the people within their whole life, and regards knowledge as the result of this challenging endeavour. In the humanist school, "the learner is presumably in a better position than anyone else to plan an appropriate learning program" (Cross 1981, p. 229). The view of self-directed learning suggested by Allen Tough (1978) stems strongly from the humanistic theory. He has reported that adults - 90 percent - have indeed a natural tendency to learn. According to Cross (1981:229) "although Tough and others interested in self-directed learning have made little effort to relate their research finding to any theory, their approach to the accumulation of knowledge is ...basically a humanistic orientation".

Carl Rogers is one of the initiators of this trend who created the ground for dealing with the new societal changes. In **Freedom To Learn**, he asks:

Can education prepare individuals and groups to live comfortably in a world in which ever-accelerating change is the dominant theme? Or is this an impossible accommodation for human beings to make? Or is it impossible for education to achieve a goal so foreign to its past? (...) Can education prepare us to live responsibly, communicatively, in a world of increasing international
tensions...? Or will it make us more smug and defensive, less open to true communication and interaction between people, ending in the inevitable holocaust? (Rogers 1969, p. vi).

In his work, Rogers concentrates on the potentiality and wisdom of human beings and seeks for ways of releasing this potential. The goal of education in his view, is the ‘facilitation of change and learning’. The facilitator’s role involves the empowerment of learners, that is, the identification of obstacles, such as power structures within a community, which prevent an ‘equal’ learning situation. The recognition of the oppressor/oppressed relationship in dialogic pedagogy is the prerequisite step to humanistic education: helping people to ‘learn how to learn’, but not pushing them to learn a certain idea. On this point, Rogers’ assertion is worth considering:

The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn; the man who has learned how to adapt and change; the man who has realized that no knowledge is secure, that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security. Changingness, a reliance on process rather than upon static knowledge, is the only thing that makes any sense as a goal for education in the modern world. (Rogers 1969, p. 104)

The new movement which started with the efforts of humanist psychologists affected education in general, and adult education in particular. Specifically, it caused a redefining of adult education in terms of group and community transactions. Education no longer was supposed to be considered a rigid static phenomenon, rather it was a 'process' which enjoyed significant attention from theorists in the field of adult education. To Rogers, ‘facilitation’ as the main aim of education, is defined as:

...the way in which we might develop the learning man, the way in which we can learn to live as individuals in process ... the facilitation of learning as the function which may hold constructive, tentative, changing, process answers to some of the deepest perplexities which beset man today. (...) [T]he facilitation of significant learning rests upon certain attitudinal qualities which exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and the learner. (Rogers 1969, pp. 105-106)

Another proposition of Rogers is that self-initiated, experiential learning is an innate part of the learning process, a proposition which has been virtually ignored in ‘conventional’ education programs. His main focus, therefore, is on individual learners and their freedom in taking initiatives to learn. Another element which is considered by Rogers is empathic understanding, which according to him “establishes a climate for self-initiated, experiential learning”, since sensitive empathy helps true communication between the facilitator and the learner. Rogers' sympathy to "the attitude of standing in the other's shoes", and of "viewing the world through the student's eyes" (1969: pp. 111-112), however, was followed by those working in agriculture-related areas, such as Anderson, who suggested (1979) "putting one's feet in the farmers' shoes".
Clearly, all these efforts reflect challenges towards finding alternatives, to create interactive and empathic models of experiential and self-directed learning. Rogers is interested in human potentialities, and focuses on humans as the centre of education, rather than concentrating on 'information' as the purpose of agricultural extension.

Rogers' human-centred approach guides him towards consideration of human values as the basis for any kind of learning. He argues that having a clear approach to values is linked with human nature. According to him, the human being "prefers some things and experiences and rejects others". He suggests that by studying human behaviour we can infer that the experiences which maintain, enhance, or actualize human organisms are positively valued and those which do not serve this end are rejected (e.g. new experiences such as curiosity, food and security are identified as positive values; and repression, hunger and pain as negative ones).

It is first of all a flexible, changing, valuing process, not a fixed system. He [the child] likes food and dislikes the hunger. He values security and rest, and rejects it for new experiences. What is going on seems best described as an organismic valuing process, in which each element, each moment of what he is experiencing is somehow weighed, and selected or rejected, depending on whether, at that moment, it tends to actualize the organism or not. (...) Another aspect of the infant's approach to value is that the source or locus of the evaluating process is clearly within himself. (Rogers 1969, p.242)

On the other hand, the main characteristics of adult values to Rogers are:

- to be taken from other individuals or groups significant to him/her but regarded by him/her as his/her own
- love or acceptance as the major criterion by which adults' values are set
- those rooted in personal experience, and those conceived preferences imposed from outside which are not open to testing in experience and are held in a rigid and unchanging fashion and thus difficulties in solving contradictions
- those whose source of evaluation mostly lies outside of themselves.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

All learning is change and all education aims at producing it, within the learner as a person and in his or her behaviour. (Titmus 1989, p.125)

According to Houle (1980, p. 221) experiential learning is " the education that occurs as a result of direct participation in the events of life". He regards the whole life's opportunities as the ground on which learning occurs. Experience is considered as the centre of any learning activity. Melamed (1989) suggests, "the term 'experiential learning' connotes learning from experience or learning by doing". It occurs on several levels: "learning
through direct experience, validating personal experience, situating ourselves within the experience of others, joining colleagues in a shared community of experience, and helping others develop insights into their own experience" (Melamed 1987, p.19).

The concept is a reaction to conventional education within which the learner is regarded as a passive recipient who does not participate in the act of learning by doing. According to Melamed (1989), "in non-complex societies living and learning are naturally combined, typically in a family setting and with different adults assuming the role of teachers for succeeding generations". Melamed (1989) quoting from Chickering (1977) puts the definition of experiential learning in this way: "Experiential learning means the learning that occurs when changes in judgements, feelings, knowledge or skills result for a particular person from living through an event or events."

Explaining a number of approaches to experiential learning Melamed (1989) has identified two main themes in this field on the basis of "the definition of experience and the context in which it is examined":

- pragmatic-institutional and,
- individual-existential.

While the former "focuses on the participation of the learner in acquiring or mastering concrete skills on a sequence of learning events specified in advance", the latter as a field of inquiry "values personal experience as an important source of knowledge and places the learner at the centre of the learning process". In the latter, according to Melamed:

'Truth' is relative to each learner in his or her particular social context and 'teachers' perform supportive roles. The whole person (mind, body, and emotions) is involved in the process of discovery on a variety of dimensions. (Melamed 1989, p. 194)

Kolb (1984), in *Experiential Learning*, regarding 'experience' as the source of learning, suggested an experiential cycle and focused on four fundamental elements: 'abstract conceptualisation', 'active experimentation', 'concrete experience', and 'reflective observation'. Kolb's lineal - cyclic - logic, unable to respond to the complexities and the ever-accelerating change in the world of human activity systems, was reconstructed by Bawden (1990:29) on the basis of recursive logic. Experiential learning implies 'learning by doing things', through an interactive, continuous process of conceptualization, experience, and reflection.
Experiential Learning (after Kolb)

Figure (14) THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FLUX (FROM BAWDEN 1990)

According to Melamed (1989) several different approaches which have developed from an individual- existential value base, are:

- learning how to learn
- personal learning from everyday experience
- experiential social group processes
- experiential learning in the classroom
- experiential learning for social and political action, and
- re-visioning the world from women's experience.

As Melamed has pointed out:

Role plays, games and simulations, value exercises, and socio- and psycho-drama engage learners in concrete experiences which, when processed, lead to cognitive as well as attitudinal and behavioural change. Other activities include the use of audio-visual methods, art, drama, music, dance, and play. Critical in using these methods is the provision of adequate time for reflection and conceptualization. (Melamed 1989, p.195)

Experiential learning theories draw attention to the aspect of each individual making sense (= construing) in his or her own way, of his or her own experiences. Kelly (1955) had earlier provided a psychological platform from which such an individualistic position can be elaborated.
Kelly's epistemological/ontological assumptions have been explored by Salmon (1980, 1981) and Salmon & Underwood (1980) in the area of rural extension; and by Zuber-Skerritt (1991b, pp. 56-65) in higher education. Robinson (1980) has also adapted Kelly's theory to issues in arts and educational drama.

Kelly's theory (1955), as a potential alternative to behaviourist psychology which considers human motivation and learning activities as reactions to outside stimulus, has considered humankind as the centre of change and personal development. Although his theory was attractive and had potential, it received notice and was practically evaluated only in the 1970s and 1980s (eg: Salmon 1980, Robinson 1980).

The difference between behaviourist psychology and cognitive psychology on the one hand, and the psychology of personal construct on the other is crucial. While the two former separate the personal aspects of individual and concentrate on parts (ie: behaviour, motivation, information, and memory processing), the latter focuses on the individual person as a whole. Personal construct psychology regards humankind as a purposeful, creative, and active entity who construct meaning out of experience, rather than being a mere respondant to a stimulus.

In the Kellian (1955, 1969) school, humans are 'personal scientists' who hypothesise, predict, test, and control the events of their life and learn from them. Thus Kelly discards the assumption that science would be the peculiar right or prerogative of the scientists. Kelly's basic principles are strongly supported from a biological point of view by Maturana and Varela (1988) who have emphasised the 'knowing' potentiality of humankind and the uniqueness of their entities. They emphasise the individuality of the learning process through the interfaces with environment based on a biological epistemology - as distinct from psychological or philosophical. The individuals as unique learning entities experience the things essentially in different ways and make sense from a unique biological basis. To Maturana and Varela (1988), the key to "learning about how we learn" is reflection.

From a biological point of view, each experience will have a specific effect on the human organism (Maturana & Varela, 1988). Thus the uniqueness of human experiences results in the uniqueness of their world views. The biological epistemology of Maturana & Varela makes a significant linkage between experiencing and knowing.

So far the emphasis has been on the self-directed, self-motivated individual learner. Yet learning, it is increasingly agreed, is a social activity: People learn together! Rogers (1969),
in seeing this, presented the case for collaborative learning and for the importance of the process of facilitation.

The point that emerges through the review of all arguments is the difference in opinion about independence and freedom in adults' learning. Although learner-centred education encourages self-learning, the literature has emphasised a facilitating element to be absolutely necessary in the process. The relationship between learner and facilitators has always been a main issue of interest among the educationalists; Tough (1989) believes self-directed learning "usually takes place in association with various kinds of helpers, such as teachers, tutors, mentors, resource people and peers."

According to Knowles, "there is a lot of mutuality among a group of self-directed learners" (1975:18) that really exists in the social processes of a community's life, for example in the context of rural Iran, since people there normally learn through their daily interactions with the surrounding environment and share their knowledge with others.

On the other hand, Mezirow argues that: "... self-directedness is essential in adults' attempts to become critically aware of the assumptions underlying their values and behaviour and that it is realized in their attempts to change their lives" (Mezirow 1985, p.2). Strict traditions and socio-cultural taboos are the major obstacles, so that an irrelevant message, idea or pattern, whatever, which contradicts adults' values, may increase the conflict within community. It is in such a context that Rogers regards the alternative as the collapse of one's values in the following:

Because he relinquished the locus of evaluation to others, and has lost touch with his own valuing process, he feels profoundly insecure and easily threatened in his values. If some of these conceptions were destroyed, what would take their place? This threatening possibility makes him hold his value conceptions more rigidly or more confusedly, or both.

(Rogers 1969, p. 246-247)

Thus learning, according to Rogers, is achieved through a collaborative process. It needs facilitation which rests upon the empathic relationship between the facilitator and the learner. Moreover, human beings have, at the outset, a clear approach to values whether positive or negative, as well as curiosity to experience new things.

The process results in an understanding by participants of their own capacities, through identifying any repressed feelings and oppressive values operating within their social and economic contexts, and providing them with a space for enjoyment and freedom to learn in a participative manner.
THE MOTIVATIONS OF LEARNING

According to the humanistic perspective, learning is a process through which people can interpret the nature of 'reality'. Obviously they will not achieve insight until they communicate effectively and experiment with that reality. Therefore, learning is a dynamic and intentional process which initiates from the internal forces to solve a 'problem' (here used to denote something to which a solution is sought) or to improve the situation. Is the problem itself the driving motivation of learning or is it curiosity that leads humans to experience and re-experience phenomena to get a deeper insight? Humanist psychologists such as Rogers have considered curiosity to be common to all humans. Further, one may ask whether all humans recognize their problems or not and whether it is the recognition of the problems that instigates curiosity about their solution and action in pursuing that solution - that is, learning? Hypothesising further may move us to ask whether the more problems people have the more active they are in learning.

The wide range of psychological and socio-cultural anxieties imply that many people are not aware of their existing problems and that the ways people in the same situation perceive their problems differ from person to person. This then begs the questions:

Would people who are aware of their problems have a high motivation to learn and would they be more interactive in a group process? and
Can a group process change the people's perception of their problems to change the ways they deal with their problematic world and to improve their life?

The way people look at 'the problem' is bounded and affected by socio-cultural constraints and pressures. These socio-cultural phenomena in conjunction with the economic constraints creates a vicious cycle, called by Chambers (1983, p. 112), "the deprivation trap" including poverty, physical weakness, vulnerability, powerlessness and isolation. These are the phenomena that cause Mezirow (1981) to consider them as "certain anomalies or disorienting dilemmas" and that provoke Freire (1970) to describe them as "oppressive situations". For Freire the initial task of education is conscientisation. Mezirow puts it in this way:

There are certain anomalies or disorienting dilemmas common to normal development in adulthood which may be best resolved only by becoming critically conscious of how and why our habits of perception, thought and action have distorted the way we have defined the problem and ourselves in relationship to it. (Mezirow, 1981)

Mezirow also focuses on "dependency-producing psychological assumptions" and believes that:
The process of socialization makes us all heir to such distorting assumptions. Traumatic childhood events can cause us to learn specific prohibitions, never express feelings, never be the centre of attention never do less than better than others, and so forth. The inhibitory rule fades from consciousness, but it continues into adulthood to influence behaviour. (Mezirow 1985, p. 21)

Within a humanistic context, radical perspectives (for example Freire 1972, Mezirow 1988), claim that there are a number of socio-cultural factors, certain anomalies or disorienting dilemmas, for example taboos, repressed feelings or oppressive situations, which prevent individuals thinking in a creative manner to deal actively with problem situations. A farmer within an oppressed community, for example, needs beforehand to become conscious of these dilemmas, to eliminate them and get prepared mentally for 'technical' and 'practical' learning. Therefore learning in this stage involves an emancipatory domain (Mezirow, 1988). The process through which people move towards a state of consciousness involves 'praxis', that is, a dialectical relationship between 'action' and 'reflection'. This critical reflection results in perspective transformation, called by Freire (1972) conscientization.

Freire (1970, 1973) discusses the political/ideological aspects of a dominant culture and the way it affects adults' construction of a reality, their habits of perception, thought and action, which distort the way they have defined the problem and themselves in relationship to it. This can be resolved through what Freire (1972) calls 'problem posing', or reflecting critically upon taken-for-granted social roles and expectations and the habitual ways people act and feel in carrying them out. To Freire, adult educators must concentrate on facilitating adults to explore the different aspects of their relationships with their surrounding systems. As a consequence, perspective transformation occurs within a liberating learning process, what Habermas calls 'emancipatory learning and action'. Liberating adults from oppression has been claimed as a major domain of adult learning and perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1988). Focusing on learning as a process of exploring and fostering new relationships can be found, for example, in the experience of Hawkesbury group in Australia (Bawden et al., 1984) which has provided a systemic model of perceiving the nature of agriculture, as well as educating agriculturalists and natural resource managers. They view farming as a human activity in which farm family-members attempt to manipulate the physical and biological elements of their environments (that is, instrumental action) for their own defined (although frequently unclear) purposes. These farmers' purposes are markedly influenced by the constraints imposed by the nature of the physical environment and by interactions with a wide range of other human beings. There are also profound interactions among family members and, of course, changes within each individual (Wilson, 1990). This reinforces the concept of 'learning' as process.
The essence of process does not consist in any fixed succession of events...but in the growth that occurs within individuals, within groups, and within the communities they serve. 

(Biddle in Brookfield 1983, p.78)

On the other hand, the process model of community development and its relation to research and adult education can be followed in the works of contemporary action researchers such as Bawden (1990), Grundy & Kemmis (1981) and others. Also, the concept that "a cooperative community involvement process" is "the heart of community education", was acknowledged in a 1977 report issued by Nevada State Department of Education (1983:79). Moreover, it is worth considering the monograph on Process Perspectives: Community Education as Process, by John Warden (1979), which is, as Brookfield (1983:80) has pointed out, "an impressive attempt to review the literature relating to the concept of process as reflected in the fields of community development, social work, sociology, anthropology and education".

Brookfield identifies three modes of community adult education which are applicable in agricultural extension and community development programs as: adult education for the community, adult education in the community, and adult education of the community (pp.84-89). Community development in principles and practice has close linkages with adult education. The connection between the two has been defined by Compton and McClusky:

Community education for development represents the how (practice and program) and the why (theory and principles) of teaching this social and behavioural technology to local groups for the sake of facilitating individual learning, group problem solving and community building.

(Compton & McClusky 1980, p. 229)

The world of humans is the world of their experiences. Adults' self-directed learning is better achieved through facilitation than through teaching. Rogers, Knowles and others have long acknowledged this. Rogers (1961), considers the facilitating role as the "helping relationship" that in his definition is:

A relationship in which at least one of the parties has the intent of promoting the growth, development, maturity, improved functioning, improving coping with life of the other. The other, in this sense, may be one individual or a group. (Rogers 1961, pp. 39-40)

For Mezirow and Freire, this facilitating role should also be emancipatory (ie: emancipation from the oppressive situation as well as the repressed feelings and the social taboos). Another inspiring notion is expressed in the work of Mclure et al (1977) How to Make the Community Your Classroom, which can be related to all participatory and emancipatory activities conducted within a community. Then it can serve the different stances identified by Coggins (1980) as: the potential for individual growth within community problem solving, conscientizing (in Freirean terms), and developing
communication skills within the community. Such a process is normally attached to the adults' inherent desires. Wlodkowski has pointed out, "Most adults who really want self-fulfillment desire challenges in their lives. They want to extend the boundaries of their capabilities and to develop their potentialities" (Wlodkowski 1985, p.132).

**PAULO FREIRE'S THEORY OF CONSCIENTIZATION**

For Freire (1970:53), consciousness is constituted in the dialectic of a human's objectification of and action upon the world. The idea of openness through consciousness of and action upon reality, is what occurs in forum theatre workshops. Participants "become beings of relation" (1970:52). Freire's challenge in establishing a dialogic pedagogy is a fundamental quest for a methodology, but not a method. A methodology is the way we approach a problem and seek answers.

We should understand liberating dialogue not as a technique, a mere technique, which we can use to help us get some results. We also cannot, must not, understand dialogue as a kind of tactic we use to make students our friends. This would make dialogue a technique for manipulation instead of illumination. On the contrary, dialogue must be understood as something taking part in the very historical nature of human beings. (Freire 1987, p. 13)

Freire regards dialogue as a kind of necessary posture to the extent that individuals have become more and more critically communicative beings. For him, dialogue is part of humans' historical progress in becoming human beings. It is a moment where humans meet to reflect on their reality as they make and remake it. He points out that:

To the extent that we are communicative beings who communicate to each other as we become more able to transform our reality, we are able to know that we know, which is something more than just knowing... we know that we know, and we human beings know also that we don't know. Through dialogue, reflecting together on what we know and don't know, we can then act critically to transform reality. (Freire 1987, p.13)

Through his radical education, Freire encourages the target group to participate in their own development. To him, communication normally occurs within processes of socialization or through social interactions, since "we communicate and know socially even though the process of communicating, knowing, changing, has an individual dimension" (1987: 13). But he emphasises the inadequacy of 'the individual aspect' and focuses on knowing as a social event with nevertheless an individual dimension, which connects his logic with that of Kelly's (1955), 'individuality' and 'sociality' corollaries. Therefore, the role of dialogue in the moment of communication, knowing and social transformation is to "seal the relationship between the cognitive subjects, the subjects who know, and who try to know" (Freire, 1973). To Freire, development starts from a change in a manipulated perspective, to
transform oppressed, dependent individuals into dynamic, independent humans as groups of learners through dialogue.

Epskamp (1989: 173) has pointed out that it is a political irony, that 'the oppressed' are made 'conscious' by those who are 'more conscious' which, in essence, implies a vertical relationship between the conscientizer and the audience. Obviously, Freire himself did not introduce conscientization in this manner, but in the hands of official planners, ideologists or project managers, it became another misleading euphemism for processes of change dictated these groups who regarded themselves more aware and articulate than their audience. Hence, as Epskamp (1989: 173) puts it "no one is more conscious than anyone else, different individuals are conscious of different things". This epistemology, as that of other humanists stems from the phenomenological propositions of the philosopher Kant (Freire and Shor 1987, p. 13). However, in the analysis of Boal's theory it has been shown how forum theatre, as a purely participative and inside-out approach, overcomes 'ideological penetration' and social barriers to 'conscientization'.

Freire believes that the Western prescription for modernization within the developing countries creates a dependent society and a culture of silence. Therefore, the role of education would be fundamentally to break it down and overcome the consequences of such an obstacle. To him, dependence and silence are two aspects of the same thing. This is a key point which leads us to regard creative drama or theatre as an holistic means of personal expression and analysis. In his terms a dependent individual is by definition silent. His/her voice is not an authentic voice but merely an echo of the voice of the dominant groups in the society and "in every way the metropolis speaks, the dependent society listens" (1970: 59).

In contrast to development through economic growth, Freire's priority implies the development of the individual and the extension of his/her choices to act and reflect upon the prescribed reality. As it was shown earlier, Boal's method of problematization is through physical and verbal dialogues, that is, drama among the participants who seek to identify their internal and external oppressions. Therefore, exploring oppressive situations through the 'theatre of the oppressed' is Boal's proposed method of 'problematization'.

Moreover, to communicate with others, humans create a number of codes through their different codification systems - linguistic, visual, tactile, symbolic, etc. Codification, to Freire, is a means of relating to the world of events and involves humans' judgements and interpretations mainly through language, but he somewhat neglects the human potential for codifying through a number of codification systems involving humans' whole creativity. This is an area in which the visual and performing arts and literature come into their own, as their capacity for complex symbolic representation is further understood and analysed.
FREIRE AND EDUCATING ADULTS

Freire’s metaphor of ‘banking’ for the function of ‘education’ proposes that teachers’ activities imply a deposit of certain information into the memory system of selected trainees. He argued that such an education does not take into account the creative learning potential of all humans because they are restricted within predetermined ‘information boundaries’. To combat this ‘fencing off’ of knowledge from certain people, (or Bourdieu’s notion of ‘cultural capital’) Freire proposes a dialogic pedagogy to centralize humans’ power to prepare them to confront and change the surrounding world interactively rather than to have their sphere of participation pre-determined.

In contrast to education as ‘an agent of the elite’, he suggests that education can be ‘an agency for freedom’. Literacy in his hands also becomes a weapon for social change. It is means of perceiving, interpreting, criticizing and finally transforming the world. Conventional education, he believes, results in conformity to the ‘status quo’, that is, the existing social order.

...in which the scope for action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing deposits. They do, it is true, have the opportunity to become collectors or cataloguers of the things they store, but in the last analysis, it is men themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity. (Freire 1972, p.46)

The central point, here, as Pierre Bourdieu (1977) has also argued, is that knowledge and attitudes cannot be free-floating in any society because both knowledge-production and knowledge-dissemination are a business that is tightly controlled by the upper strata of society. Such education functions, in particular, as a means of domination for the dominant parties. There is a particular perception of reality by the 'oppressors' that is transferred to the 'oppressed'. Then, there are means of imposing, obsessing and seducing to allow the knowledge to be gained and stored by the 'lower classes'. Accordingly, audio-visual aids are employed to achieve the upper classes' goal through the educational process, that is providing 'the oppressed' with the opportunity to 'bank' a certain controlled knowledge. Freire is not interested in the ‘basic need’ approach to development either, rather his focus is on freeing people to meet their own needs, and he discards very strongly the outside, bureaucratic interference which domesticates people in the name of 'help'. Hence, he clearly regards conventional education as a system of codifying the oppressors' codes for the oppressed.

Freire’s epistemology reflects his revolutionary perspective and his view of prescribed reality as problematic, as well as his belief in the potentialty of human beings and their
capacity for creating new knowledge, whereas the passiveness of simply being the receivers of that knowledge is criticized. The process he advocates, then, may be called problem-solving education which involves people in discovering their own place in the world, exploring their potentialities and employing their inner sources to transform the world as authentic human beings. Such an approach to education is considered by Freire to be the real process of development, since it cares primarily about the development of humans who are potentially able to play a significant role "in the precarious adventure of transforming and recreating the world". Freire argues that the oppressed themselves can create their own codes to learn through. His aim is not just creating revolutionaries (as it may be claimed), rather liberated, not domesticated, people.

Freire, also in terms of empowerment and pedagogy, considers the teacher as an 'artist'. However, as Shor (1987) in a discussion with Freire has noted, "the politics of dialogic pedagogy are clearer than its aesthetics". It has been shown earlier how Boal's approach to theatre makes a dialogic teacher into an artist, and how a participative theatre marries the two aspects together. Boal's 'forum theatre' is an art form in transformative education, and a means of participatory research as well. In the workshop process of forum theatre, 'the dialectical connections' are explored through the analysis of the oppressor/oppressed images, to 'explain the form of reality', in Freirean terms. Within dialogue the culture of silence is broken, communication skills are developed, and individuals are empowered.

Freire's ideas have had strong impact on the formulation of participatory research and popular knowledge. An example is:

In our thinking, in our teaching, we must present challenges: what in your system is seen as an appropriate response to the mass of human misery and oppression? ... Specific problems in their historical and local setting must engage our thinking. Each of us holding to a political-philosophic
position (and others who hold to none) must take up the challenge of the presenting problem: How may it be analysed and understood? How is it to be resolved? (Hall, 1981).

SOCIAL LEARNING

According to Bawden (1988), a definition of learning is the transformation of experience into knowledge. That we can learn better from each other by sharing experiences, by sharing constructs (attributed meanings) of shared experiences and by sharing details of how those constructs were created and tested - the process of learning itself - is germane to this notion. Thus, we can learn not just as individuals but collectively as groups.

As experiential learning involves "joining colleagues in a shared community of experience, and helping others develop insights into their own experience" (Melamed 1987, p.19), the concept of social learning in terms of a shared awareness system of communicating, is worth considering. It is unlikely that the group of empowered self-realised learners explore new horizons and develop awareness into their actions individually. Dunn (1984: 171) has noted that:

In the human species the learning organism reached the point where learning becomes largely socialized because the dominant aspect of the individual organism's learning environment is the presence of and the sharing with other learning organisms.

Peoples' communicative action involves the interfaces among them on the one hand, and with their environment on the other. Thus, as the major elements in an individual's learning and personality formation, according to Dunn (1984:171), are associated with his/her social environment, s/he learns by sharing in a range of acquired information through communication and social system participation. Therefore, social learning is constituted through the interaction between learning at the level of the individual and the level of the group. Korten (1984) used the term 'learning organization' for the natural processes of social learning and highlighted the need to facilitate a group of learners not to be self-deceiving - that is, treating 'error' as synonymous with 'failure' and hiding such 'errors'. The German philosopher Jurgen Habermas proposes that communicative action is the basis of practical learning.

Mezirow (1988), based on the ideas of Habermas, has categorised learning activities into three generic learning domains, three distinct but interrelated modes of learning - the technical, the practical and the emancipatory. These are considered by Habermas as the three primary cognitive interests.
Mezirow suggests that emancipatory learning results in perspective transformation and that the latter is one of the most important learning domains for adults in a socio-cultural context (Mezirow 1988, p. 143). Considering the differences in the very nature of each learning domain Mezirow points out that:

By extension, each learning domain suggests to me a different mode of personal learning and different learning needs. These imply three different functions for adult education concerned with facilitating such learning. Consequently, I believe Habermas' work is seminal for understanding both learning and education. (Mezirow 1988, p.143)

Mezirow's suggestion is that perspective transformation, as a result of emancipatory learning is prerequisite to both the other modes of cognitive interests. According to him: "The resulting transformation in perspective or personal paradigm is what Freire refers to as 'conscientization' and Habermas as 'emancipatory action' (Mezirow 1988, p.144). Mezirow suggests that political, economical, technological, religious, aesthetic, sexual and other cultural ideologies have been manifested in a set of rules, roles and social expectations which affect our ways of seeing, thinking, feeling and acting. The process by which the individual-learner becomes aware of habits of perception, inquiry, learning and etc, is considered by Mezirow, following Donald Maudsley, as meta-learning, and notes that these habits are important elements which have a strong impact on understanding meaning perspectives. As Cross (1981) has noted:

Mezirow cites the consciousness-raising experiences of the women's movement as an example of perspective transformation. In such learning, women - and men - come to perceive the role of women in society in a different light. Freire (1970) uses the term conscientization to describe the new level of awareness that occurred as villagers in rural Brazil and Chile became aware of that they...
had options and could make choices about things that they had formerly seen as beyond their control. (Cross 1981, pp. 231-232)

This is similar to George Kelly's personal construct theory (1955), which suggests that humans' constructs are the result of their past experiences. Mezirow (1981) has noted that "perspectives are constitutive of experience" (p.149).

According to Mezirow (1981:144) the emancipatory learning domain, "involves an interest in self-knowledge, that is, the knowledge of self-reflection, including interest in the way one's history and biography has expressed itself in the way one sees oneself, one's roles and social expectations." Cross (1981: 232) in her critique of Mezirow's notion of 'perspective transformation' has pointed out, most creative thought seems to be of this nature. It is not that the individual with the new idea knows more content than anyone else but, rather, that he or she has put it together in new ways that transformed an idea.

SYSTEMIC LEARNING

Soft systems methodology was developed by Checkland upon the theory of appreciative systems which had been already proposed by Vickers (1970, 1983). Vickers viewed systems in a humanistic context rather than technological, since "systems had become embedded in faculties of technology and the very word had become dehumanized" (Vickers, 1979). "Vickers re-humanized the word 'systems' in the concept of appreciation, a concept which begins with his rejection of both the goal-seeking model and that version of the cybernetic in which standards are set from outside the system" (Checkland 1985, p.760). To Vickers (1970), in contrast to the goal-oriented mechanical or technological systems, life consists in experiencing relations, rather than in seeking goals or 'ends'. The achievement of a social goal is the beginning of a new relationship, to be built upon previous experiences. Humans, through each experience, create certain norms and standards of success relevant to that situation and values, usually tacit and known by the mis-match signals which they generate in specific situations (eg: in a conflict). The norms, standards and values lead towards understanding of similar situations and determination of relevant 'facts'. The evaluation of the facts against the norms leads to taking of new action and modification of the norms or standards. Vickers (in Checkland, 1985) explains the concept of 'appreciation' as "a mental, evaluative act in which conflicting norms and values determine what 'facts' are relevant". Thus, to take action in a problem situation, socially and culturally ill-structured, the methodology of systems engineering (hard systems tradition) based on defining goals or objectives, may simply not work to deal with the complex human activity systems. Also, the sort of education which limits individuals within strict boundaries of school or subject determines their goals and prescribes their future action would be far from an appreciative
system that is: "a cultural mechanism which maintains desired relationships and excludes undesired ones" (Checkland 1985, p.762). Soft systems methodology can be seen as the orchestration of the operation of an appreciative system in a human situation perceived as problematical (Checkland 1981, 1985).

The general features of Checkland’s soft systems methodology, being directed to knowledge managers (planners, consultants/researchers, educators, etc.) would unlikely succeed to create an actor-oriented systems situation through facilitation of a conflict to explore and challenge the tacit norms, standards, and values - the elements of an appreciative system. This has illuminated the need for a systems education, the necessity to develop a methodology and method of facilitating conflict and systems thinking available to all people at all levels of human activity.

Plas (1986) has posited a number of issues which prevent systemic learning from occurring. She argues that until these issues or rules are carefully viewed, one cannot shift from traditional ways of teaching and learning to systems thinking and systems practice of education. These are:

- linear thinking (whether inductive or deductive)
- emphasis on language as the dominant and distinct form of communication
- causality, that is interpreting learning in terms of cause and effect
- lineal ways of reasoning, and
- non-participative, static models of learning.

The soft systems methodology in connection with both experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) and emancipatory/communicative action (Habermas, 1972) has inspired the creation and application of 'systemic action research' in the context of agricultural education (Bawden and Packham, 1993). Bawden (1990) focused on "learning how to learn how to improve complex situations in agriculture, through systemic praxis - different from most other systems initiatives in agricultural education which appear to focus on variations on the theme of 'learning about agricultural systems'". Their fifteen-year experience in the education of the agricultural systems practitioners at Hawkesbury, Australia, presented the case for a change in focus from inquiry into agricultural systems, to inquiry through systems agriculture (Bawden et al., 1984) or from learning systems to learning systems. The conventional method of agricultural education was strongly critiqued by Bawden:

Agriculture educators, concerned with providing strategies which enable students to master methods appropriate to their preferred career options, are thus presented with a spectrum of foci from the operation and management of farms, through the supply and marketing of commodities, through extension and education, to technological developments and scientific research. This situation is further confounded by the increasing recognition of the need for change in the conventional problem
domains and in the methods for addressing them within each of these vocations. Therefore, in addition to being competent at using appropriate existing methods, agriculturalists must also develop the capability of designing new methods, and this is as true for education as it is for agriculture. (Bawden 1990, p. 4)

Bawden and his colleagues turned the focus of agricultural education from a top-down, discipline-oriented approach into a combined process of action and inquiry being operated in a systemic/horizontal manner and involving what Habermas (1973) called "self-reflection". Their approach has engaged students, farming families, practitioners and academics to improve the quality of relationships, the methods of learning and inquiry, the farming systems and the context of agricultural higher education. The ongoing process of construction and re-construction and the alteration between discourse and practice which results from the dialectic of action and reflection (or theory and practice), is formulated as a methodology called "systemic action research".

Action research makes the 'probing' character of strategic action problematic; it reconstructs past action on the basis of observation and future action in the light of reflection. It does not treat the space between these polarities as empty, but as in a state of dynamic tension which is resolved by a living dialectic of action and reflection. (Grundy & Kemmis, 1988)

Participation and improvement, as the two basic elements of action research (Grundy et. al., 1988) reflect the epistemology of dialectical and systemic learning, since "Wholeness means that all parts belong together, and that means they partake in each other (Skolimowski, 1985).

**IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL CONTEXT**

To promote the value of creative learning and to increase the 'validity' in a human inquiry process, it is necessary to take account of community structures and belief systems, as well as peoples' modes of social interaction. It is also important to consider the activity as a series of processes rather than a single loop. Grundy et al. (1988) have considered 'educational action' as 'social action' and focus on the 'collaborative involvement' in a participatory process. However, to achieve the desirable involvement

... requires a special kind of communication which recognises the authentic knowledge of group members, recognises distinctive points of view, and engages them in practical and political deliberation about practice (with a corresponding political consciousness). The appropriate kind of communication has been described as 'symmetrical communication', that is, a level of communication which allows all participants to be partners of communication on equal terms. (Grundy, et al. 1988, p. 325)

Such a kind of communication occurs in drama workshops. Creative drama workshops do not imply a series of strict activities or leisure projects when people are not 'working', rather they are a challenge towards authentic knowledge.
Adult education programs are the fabric of challenges for rural development and should be assessed for their relationship to human development and social change. Theorists such as Freire, Rogers, Courtney, and Long, are recognizing that education and social life urgently need to get together more. For example, Douglas Long (1990) has considered Learner Managed Learning as "the key to lifelong learning and development". As a result of reviewing 15 case studies in his book, he introduces a model for a learner-managed learning paradigm and regards the role of the teacher more as a facilitator and resource. To him, experiential learning is only one aspect of the process of lifelong learning and he argues that experience and activity without feedback and evaluation may not result in any learning at all. Long draws a distinction between a person having ten years experience and the person who has one year's experience ten times. The difference refers to the occurrence of experiential learning in a process of feedback, evaluation and change.

The point of the argument is that it is not just books or writing or teachers one can learn from. Rather, it is the different ways in which the collected and useful knowledge expands for the learners the context and the world as they understand it. In adult education or in rural extension, the former traditional perspective makes the program seem unauthentic as long as adults are stopped from creating and expressing their own knowledge. In such rigid education the learning-getting seems to have no relationship to the learning-getting activities and systems operating outside.

Adults are not toys or objects of any organizational or training system, since they carry years of experiences through their own self-managed programs - the point that has made Knowles (1970) differentiate or exclude the adults' learning process from that of children whose learning is, in most societies, managed by adults who seek to imprint them with the specific cultural knowledge necessary for survival within the community. This is seen as appropriate for children, becoming less so as they reach puberty. Most adult training systems, however, instead of stimulating a growing, self-managing element for more creativity and personal development, have prevented many adults from producing and or assisting in the fabric of culture-making.

A 'helping relationship' may be the alternative to a 'teaching relationship'. To Rogers, a helping relationship "offers exciting possibilities for the development of creative, adaptive, autonomous persons" (p.38). The characteristics of such a kind of interaction are identified in the process of participatory research developed and formulated by Budd Hall (1978, 1979, 1981, 1989). Also, within the process of helping relationships "the uniqueness of the individual as a person who possesses the need and right to participate in making decisions
about matters relating to his own welfare" as well as a mutual trust between the two parties are the central focus of Brill (1973:48).

Various ways of establishing a 'helping relationship' have been introduced in development, literacy, adult education and extension programs. An example is the use of simulation games for learning, designed and utilized by Dall (1984) to encourage development of appropriate conflict resolution and communication skills and to create awareness of agricultural extension needs in Zambia. Another example is the use of indigenous knowledge elicitation through stories in rural development (Chambers, 1983).

The work of Paolo Freire in proposing 'cultural circles' generally provides a philosophy on how to help people understand their situation and, from that understanding, to look for ways to improve the situation. Similarly, Ross Kidd (1985) provides a background to popular theatre and how it can help people transform structures which are keeping them exploited and dependent (individuals). Michael Etherton (1985) describes a play developed by and for landless laborers and, following Freire, Augusto Boal (1979) designed forum theatre to make the 'helping relationship' more real and interactive for disenfranchised campesinos. It is really desirable to find an efficient medium, which in Lotz's terms (1977: 105) is potentially able "to bridge the gap between book learning and real life, and to put knowledge into a form that the ordinary people can understand and use".

There is an obvious movement in agricultural education to shift the locus from the classroom to everyday life involving both adults and young people in the community. Research with both Iranian farmers and nomads, as well as with immigrant farmers in Australia, has demonstrated that farmers' reluctance in group situations and in attending educational institutions are due to time constraints, mistrust and the lack of empathy between farmers and educators, the timing of the educational or even literacy program within the farm and grazing time-frames, as well as the exploitation of the nomads and farmers (in some cases) by educators. In contrast, they participated in the facilitating programs that involved them in a self-directed, 'lifelong' process in which education was part of their life, their occupation, and their means of survival. Participative theatre activity within the workshop process achieved this in a number of ways (see Chapter 8 for details).
LEARNING THROUGH DRAMA

From Plato to Tagore, from Rousseau to Dewey, and from Montaigne to Nandalal Bose, it has been
a commonplace that children's play is the basis of their learning and that this leads to the creation of
art.... Yet an education based upon play is essential for growth of specifically human qualities, both
personal and cultural, that are so necessary in the world of the atomic bomb, global poverty and
starvation, and the horror of increasing violence of man against man. (Courtney, 1987)

Humanistic challenges in education and community development have resulted in the
invention of a new term - 'development education'. Based on experiences in using process-
oriented drama as a tool in the community context for problem solving, social awareness
and literacy training, the Freedom From Hunger organisation in Australia considers
'development education' as: "...a series of activities and programs designed to bring
people to an understanding of the causes of poverty, and injustice and
which leads them towards taking action for positive change" (Freedom From Hunger, 1992).

Paulo Freire, by using a dialogic approach, focuses on emancipatory learning as the basic
educational task within an oppressed situation. To Freire, as Brookfield (1983:102) has
noted, "the problem is how to encourage the disenfranchized, powerless members of a
society first to realize their situation and then to acquire sufficient self-confidence, political
skills and organization to work for change". It is then that liberated people with a
considerable knowledge of themselves may be able to choose the options and subjectively
encounter the environment, to learn from each experience and adapt themselves to the new
conditions and to change those circumstances. At this stage, oppressed people, well aware
of their potential and talent, may move towards self-directedness to manage personal tasks
and to learn or acquire knowledge from daily experiences. This is relevant to the concept of
theatre, when it functions as follows:

The theatre can never cause a social change. It can articulate the pressures towards one, help people
to celebrate their strengths and maybe build their self-confidence. It can be a public emblem of inner,
and outer, events, and occasionally a reminder, an elbow-jogger, a perspective-bringer. Above all, it
can be the way people can find their voice, their solidarity and their collective determination.
(McGrath 1974, quoted in Bennett 1990, p.93)

As a learner in the course of life, one may have never been able to express one's knowledge
as fully as at times of concentration, and one may never learn consciously when
unconcentrated. It is a goal for all learners to keep their focus and find a way to be creative
and dynamic in their learning tasks. It has been always a goal to find a way to release full
human energy and resources, and to learn much more effectively. It is the facilitators' role to
decide how to blend the focus and the task in terms of social learning, factual learning,
reflective learning and so forth.
The activity of drama seems to offer one kind of solution - it is about the construction of life. Some of its social facets are "The therapeutic use of drama in psychotherapy or psychodrama, the educational use of drama for personal and social development and as a method for intellectual awareness" (Courtney 1974, P.158).

We are usually 'outside' dramas which are presented through theatre, T.V. and films - an audience, viewing, looking in. However, the significance of being part of drama through improvisations has been experienced among many people, especially children at play. For example, Richard Courtney explains the outcome of his experiences with socially dislocated young people in therapy groups:

My purpose in using improvisation was two-fold - for learning and for therapy. It allowed them to learn through drama, create their own meanings and thus, motivate their learning and give it permanence. But drama was also a 'helping' instrument so that each of them could develop their personal and social potential. (Courtney 1987, p.145)

THE CRUCIAL ELEMENTS OF DRAMA

Drama as a holistic approach to human development integrates and develops different aspects of the individual through its various elements. Although the functional differentiation between each element is crucial, it is important to explore the flexibility of each element in any context which demands the adaptive, single application of each of them.

Roles are the crux of any drama. As a fundamental element, roles in drama allow participants to shape and reveal their concentrated imagination and energy. Through changing the roles then, new ways of viewing and construing a single phenomenon are permitted and a new epistemology can be practiced. Roles bring life-situations into the workshop atmosphere and demand response. Within roles essential symbolic objects are used to communicate with life-situations. Through roles, 'facts' are learned, perspectives are challenged, questions are posed, understanding is demanded, and the epistemology of group and their behaviour is reconstructed. Within roles thoughts are processed and re-experienced by participants.

Participants of drama begin to explore problems of meaning more intensively within the roles they have created. "In the midst of this kind of involvement the group are pooling past experiences and current perceptions to develop their understanding of the issues." (McGregor, et al. 1977, p.92) Finally, roles provide a context of exploring, expressing and negotiating meanings through social interaction, and connect symbolic codes to real situations. In drama participants use the reservoir of their own knowledge to build the life
they are representing. This happens particularly in subjective acting (Stanislavsky, 1987) and within all improvisational drama. In such a drama, life experiences are put together in symbolic form.

**Improvisation** in drama is the act of discovery and creativity through artistic recreation of meanings and realities in performance (Johnstone, 1979). Improvisation implies spontaneity, imagination and action at various levels, but is an informed action, not a random one.

We create an improvisation whenever we communicate with another person and without having previously rehearsed or memorised what we say or do, or without having the words or actions written down in front of us. Every form of communication is initially an improvisation. An improvisation becomes an improvised drama as soon as it is deliberately enacted for the benefit of others - the audience. All you need, basically, is one actor and one person to sit in audience. Thus as Freud pointed out, a joke is to create a kind of theatre - improvised drama. (Chilver 1967, p.10)

It is this creative application of inner resources, energies, imagination and thoughts 'on the spur of the moment', but out of one's existing, tacit knowledge, that makes improvisation such a revealing process. It also reveals hidden aspects of the individual's construction system. Way (1976) defines improvisation as a play without a written script, and states that it does not need any form of skill or ability at reading, nor learning and remembering lines, and is thus an activity that all people of every age group and every scale of ability are able both to enjoy and to master (p.183). Improvising in any art form, like jazz for instance, requires a high level of consciousness and freedom to use the 'instrument' fully, aware of its possibilities. It is irrational to think of someone who has never experienced music at all suddenly improvising on the piano. But, for drama, the instrument includes all the dimensions of ourselves we have already practiced in life, and involves the experience of acting-out, that is, the exploration and representation of meaning through the medium of the whole person (Schechner, 1988).

**Simulation** in drama means 'to hold the mirror up to nature' (Heathcote in Wagner, 1976).

Whole 'realities' can be re-created - such as The Extension Office or, The Growers Market or, The Village School. Within the bigger frameworks of 'simulation' scenarios, whole contexts can be explored. Through simulation, the participants explore complex interactions with the chance to see the results of their actions on other people - cause and effect. It provides them with an opportunity to work with feeling and thought simultaneously, and also to form their ideas into some kind of order. Most valuable of all is the chance to 'play it again' and change unsatisfactory elements and try other roles.
Games. Boal (1992; and Spolin, 1978; Barker, 1986) have considered games and exercises as an essential part of the total work of the drama facilitator. Through the games the facilitator offers an immediate way of working together within which participants quickly release tensions in the group. The games sometimes provide a parallel and a natural introduction to the main acting-out task, and they can often explore concepts abstractly. They are fun and can enliven the learning of certain skills and reinforce the need for concentration and co-operation. Through games, life interaction processes are formalized and a problem is allowed to be seen clearly so that another look is possible because games allow participants to step back and examine process. Melamed (1987:13) has explored 'the role of play in adult learning' and suggests that 'Through play (the 'work' of children) the individual learns to concentrate, to exercise imagination, to solve problems, to try out new ideas and to develop a sense of control over his or her life.'

Temporary relief from emotion and muddle is also the gift of games. The simple rules of most games provide an alternative operating structure within which a disparate group can cooperate satisfactorily. 'Breaking the rules' of a game is tantamount to a crime, and those who do are often excluded from 'the game'. They are the sources of arousal for structured learning. All games have objectives, order, interaction, and rules, within certain limits of time and place (Schechner, 1990). Huizinga (1949 and 1976) has characterised all play as a voluntary activity, a stepping out of 'real life' into a temporary sphere of activity and secludedness/limitedness. To him the function of play is derived from the two basic elements: as a contest for something or as a representation of something (p.13). Also, through play, "the element of tension imparts to it a certain ethical value in so far as it means a testing of the player's prowess: his (sic) courage, tenacity, resources and, last but not least, the spiritual powers - his fairness; because, despite his ardent desire to win, he must still stick to the rules of the game" (p.11).

Imagination. All elements of drama are grounded in imagination. And imagination is:

...the spark that sets off the creative impulse. Concentration (the capacity to hold an idea long enough to do something about it) and organization (the design or arrangement of the parts) are necessary to satisfying self-expression. Communication - the bridge to others - comes last, and is less the concern of creative drama than of the formal play. In all creative work there are obstacles. These must be recognized and overcome. They may be problems of time and space, or the more difficult ones of human relations. The wise creative dramatist leader learns first to identify the problems and then to look for solutions. (McCasin 1968, p. 34)

Within improvisations, the use of the imagination, freed from everyday necessity to conform, can free-wheel and come up with endless and boundless 'what ifs?'. This is much the same process a scientist or mathematician uses when working on a new hypothesis or a series of open experiments. Improvisation then is also experimentation - and if the subjects are conscious of that, then reflection may reveal new ideas.
THE MECHANISMS OF LEARNING THROUGH DRAMA

McGregor, Tate, and Robinson (1977), have identified four main components for the drama process as: (1) social interaction, (2) content, (3) forms of expression, and (4) use of the media.

Social interaction in drama occurs between people who would not normally interact due to personal and social restrictions or taboos. That interaction occurs at both the real and symbolic levels, both of which are intrinsic to drama. Also, a high level of interaction is achieved through drama, as the participants individually 'create' and 'express' in relation to the others. The range of social interaction is therefore notionally limitless, but unless the people concerned are prepared to tackle all aspects, in practice social interaction is explored only within the limits set by that culture, which in some cases do prevail. For instance, in Iran it was not possible at this time to involve women in any drama workshop, whereas in Jerzy Grotowski's workshops in Europe, there was probably not a single human interaction which wasn't able to be explored fully, whatever the social norms. Nonetheless, in an improvisation workshop the possibilities for exploration are far greater than in 'real life'.

The content of drama is wide-ranging and revolves around problems, questions and issues of understanding, which can be seen in terms of of human behaviour and interpersonal response. There is no issue, circumstance or relationship which cannot be explored by drama. The distancing from 'real life' makes everything possible. Participants will, however, choose content which is of interest to them and has meaning within their lives. Some content might be censored by prevailing social, religious or political norms - but it could be explored if the participants so desired, and often is, in cases of repressed and oppressed people.

Diverse forms of expression allow participants many ways of trying out and representing themselves through the roles and situations they devise. A familiarity with a number of dramatic forms and styles will give people the ability to choose what suits the situation best. Non-verbal languages involving body language, sound and touch are particularly powerful forms of expression and often make communication possible where words or written text does not. The visual arts - painting, sculpture, video, film etc - offer many other ways to explore meaning, even in improvisation. The usage of objects in a symbolic way within drama (eg: chairs may represent a power relationship in image theatre), make the participants use their powers of analogy and encourages reflective learning.
Use of the **media** as a 'language', a method and a way of representing content is mainly dependent on the participants' initiatives and skills. Therefore drama must be practiced - done - experienced. "Through drama the individual can be brought closer to an understanding of a broad variety of topics, issues, themes and concepts, exploring them from the perspective of interpersonal behaviour" (pp. 23-4), but then the participants develop tools where these ideas and understandings can be communicated to others. Communication through drama also sustains mutual support among participants, and at the same time provides them with the opportunity to work differently to the way they do in their everyday lives.

When we are playing a role in drama we are experiencing a new world, which is the world of the character. When the actor is acting a character through his/her subjective role, a new reality is being created. As Courtney (1988) has pointed out, dramatic learning is a natural process of hypothesis testing:

> If I act my role like THIS then THAT happens. But if I change my role then something else happens. (Courtney 1988, p. 52 - emphasis in original)

In daily life, we predict events, make scenarios, play many roles, learn through our roles, we make personal comments on the results and we reflect upon them. We never forget our many acted roles and continually try to develop or reconstruct them. Dramatizing events begins from early childhood, when a king, a mother, a teacher or a bird are enacted in a small group. Later our roles are more connected to our life roles - the team member, the lover, the father, the manager.

When we try to understand the world, we dramatize it: in action when we are young; "in our heads" when we are older. If we rehearse an interview "in our heads," or catch ourselves talking to our image in a mirror, we glimpse, fleetingly, an underlying and fundamental human process that begins when we are very young. (Courtney 1988, p. 49)

We are creators, actors, interpreters, and reconstructors of our realities. All of these worlds are true - and just as 'true' are those we 'act' in 'drama' - or could be.

According to Courtney:

Human life and learning is a continuous process of differentiation. We are born, says William James, into "a buzzing, blooming confusion." It takes some days for the new-born baby to distinguish between light and dark (eg: by turning the head when a light is turned on), or between silence and noise (eg: by turning towards a sound). Maturation and learning throughout life continues this process. Learning names for objects, distinguishing between "through" and "threw," using one language for one context and a different language for another, explaining life through physics rather than chemistry - all such processes are increasing complexities of differentiation. Those who can do this best are said to be the most 'intelligent.'
What humans do in these circumstances is to work with the actual world by dramatizing it. Then 'the actual world' and 'the dramatized world' exist side by side and we alternate (or 'flip') between them. We compare them - one is a model for the other - to arrive at 'truth.' That is the purpose of all kinds of fictional 'worlds'; eg: the play of children and the art of adults, the novel, the 'world' of science, etc. (Courtney 1988, p. 50)

Courtney (1988) retains a holistic view and sees humans as 'total organisms'. To him, a behaviouristic interpretation distorts the nature and purpose of dramatization. He insists on the inter-connectedness of thinking, learning and action, and criticizes the behaviourists who disintegrate this whole by separating its parts, using abstractions through creating isolated maps. He explains the playing and improvisation of children as a process through which, at the same time, they are thinking, learning, and dramatizing. He calls this process, the "whole living experience". The following figure illustrates a dynamic process of constructing realities through creative, participative drama, and shows how consciousness comes out.

![Diagram]

Figure (17) NEW PERSONAL CONSTRUCTS THROUGH DRAMA

The learning nature of dramatic action, to Courtney, is based on tacit knowing (that is, knowing in the experience which is the experiential knowledge). He regards this tacit dimension as the "unconscious, innate, intuitive and embodied kind of thinking that occurs when students act" and considers it as "the basis for common-sense beliefs" (1988:51). He also clarifies the concept:

Tacit thinking cannot always be expressed in words. When we dramatize, 'we know more than we can tell.' The knowledge we gain in play and dramatic action becomes something different when we try to put it into words. (Courtney 1988, p. 51)
When we process our dramatized ‘act’ in our head, we are knowing about the experience. We may also discuss what we have acted in a group. Thus we are creating the conscious knowledge that occurs in drama. This process of knowledge creation is considered by Courtney (1988) to be explicit knowing. As a result, when talking about forum theatre, (which includes a consistent process of dramatic action with subsequent discussion), we are talking about the act of combining tacit and explicit knowing. In other words, we are making sense out of our inner being.

The main principles in creative drama and forum theatre are collaboration, involvement, creativity, interaction, dialogue, and pure action. It is hoped, as Peter Reason in a personal meeting at the University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury, Australia (December, 1990) explained, that its success as a way of human inquiry will be assessed and introduced to researchers to use as a powerful medium as naturally as they use present methods. Thinking, interactive communication, creative action, and self-evaluation in a drama group process will prepare a ground for the three sorts of learning called by Mezirow (1985) technical, dialogic, and self-reflective learning. Furthermore, it creates several models of communication at different levels: communication with self; communication with another (dialogue); communication within the group of co-learners (group discussions); communication between one and many (ie: story telling and mime); communication between two and many (role-play); communication among small groups (brain storming sessions, poly-group-based activities such as game-plays); communication between a group of actors and an audience (interactive theatrical forms, forum theatre, agit-prop theatre). The interaction between all these modes of communication can help people to increase their capacity in group to understand their situations to improve it. The following figure illustrates a number of interactions which occurs within a drama workshop.

Figure (18) THE DIFFERENT MODES OF COMMUNICATION THROUGH DRAMA
As will be shown in the following chapters, the approach within a community or a group of people can include dramatizing anything within potential human experience and understanding, from learning a discipline (ie: technical learning) to matters like rules, social conflicts, the politics of ongoing problems, alternatives to violence or anxiety, career choices and values. In other words, within a self-reflective learning process it provides the participants with a profound self-awareness to serve perspective transformation and emancipatory action (Mezirow, 1985 and 1988). This humanistic approach helps a participant or a co-learner to internalize learning through the unified physical, mental and emotional experiences and to integrate this experienced learning into human understanding. Sometimes the experiences may culminate with a program for an audience but that is not the primary goal. The process of discovery is its own reason for being.

FINAL REMARKS

As Mezirow (1988: 153) has pointed out, "conceptual learning needs to be integrated with emotional and aesthetic experience". Through participating in a dramatic activity, participants not only may explore their individuality, that is, an awareness of the self, but they are placed also in face-to-face contact with others, and share their perspectives. They are involved in a joint, conscious construction of characters and realities. Therefore drama functions as 'a shared-awareness system of communication'. This occurs through drama, not by the self conforming to the social 'status quo', but through the use of individuals to change it.

One of the several functions of education is to lead individuals towards self-awareness and the awareness of the functions of other social groups and sectors in a society. Education also may function to train or promote the practical skills of individuals to prepare them for earning a living as well as developing into mature and responsible persons. These are the potentials which exist in a dramatic learning activity which fosters the development of maturity in unique individuals and harmonizes the individuality with the organic unity of whole society. Within dramatic learning activities, participants may develop a range of experiences through: (a) highlighting particular events or aspects of daily life and becoming more aware of their nature so as to function differently, (b) practicing new experiences that are out of the generally experienced daily life and becoming sensitised to them. This enriches people's choices in coping with life-long problems and prepares them to experience a range of life-long learning activities and self-directed tasks through dramatic actions.
Although the theories and practices of humanistic education, experiential learning and self-directed learning depict a potentially knowledgable future of all humans, they are mainly based on studies undertaken in North Atlantic countries and illustrate adults' learning patterns in such contexts. However, due to illiteracy, poverty, backwardness and fear, and despite the pressing need for technical information, health and sanitation, people in most developing countries are not coming forward to avail themselves of the services provided by rural extension and development agencies. Furthermore, the problem in the context of developing nations is constituted of a number of issues interlinked with the cultural and social life of people in communities, which necessitates a multidisciplinary and a holistic approach to research and educational programs in dealing with problematic situations. It is in this situation that the importance of a human-based education is paramount. Hence these seems to be a need to link adult education programs to rural extension activities.

Within the context of this research it is hypothesised that drama within group and interpersonal processes, through its many approaches, can provide a systemic understanding of the problems and a view of the inter-relationships between the parts which constitute the problems. Hackman and Morris (1977) have shown how group interaction process affects group performance. As they pointed out, "One key to understanding the effectiveness of small groups is to be found in the ongoing interaction process that takes place among members as they work on a task" (1977:344). Drama is also assumed to have the potentiality for adaptation to any three cognitive interests identified by Habermas and argued by Mezirow (discussed in the above) and as a conscientizing tool in Freirean terms. This is reflected in the objectives which are rooted in the pedagogical propositions of Freire, as follows:

a) to achieve local knowledge
b) to achieve functional literacy
c) literacy with learning-and-action groups, and
d) literacy for conscientization and development of organizations among the poor.

The participants of a drama process, by creating another world through a metaphor, an analogy or an improvisation, very quickly find their way back as well, and the process of imagination and reflection provides a guide for personal assessment to make appropriate choices of action in the real world. Furthermore, drama provides the participants - as will be explained later within Iran's context - with an opportunity to catch more of what is implicit in any situation. Although people may never catch all that is implicit in any art form, they can progress towards finding a greater reservoir of meaning and significance. For example, in the following chapters it will be seen how Persian literary and popular metaphors function as the reservoir of Iranian people's tacit knowledge. However, there is always the need for a
facilitator, to not let the group stay at the 'pretend' acting stage in any activity, and persist in a belief and reflection that is more than merely a 'fun' task.

The diagram depicts the relations between humanistic schools of education and popular forms of theatre fostering empowerment and participative, systemic learning.

Figure (19) THE INTERACTION OF APPROACHES TO THEATRE AND LEARNING

In this research, micro-media like creative drama (as an appropriate means of expression) is used to introduce and develop performances within the rural communities to provide appropriate information as well as for raising critical reflection, not merely as entertainment or 'top down' education. As education is the process by which (a) learning is improved by the individual and (b) individuals learn to learn together, then theatre needs to explore from the perspective of different approaches to education.
CHAPTER SIX

SYSTEMS OF THINKING AND ACTING

In this chapter the search is for the 'what', that is, the rooted principles of a systemic communication. This will clarify the context of strategic planning for the field experiences involving both the strategic decisions and the tactical decisions. Therefore, the chapter focuses on ontology, epistemology and methodology in terms of: Kant's phenomenology; Kelly's personal construct theory; systems thinking and practice; and action theory. The chapter aims to critique the positivistic view and discuss the constructivist, critical and systemic perspectives. It is argued that a conditioned behaviour can be changed through 'critical reflection' - which is a key to systems thinking.
CHAPTER SIX

SYSTEMS OF THINKING AND ACTING

For dialogue to be a method of true knowledge, the knowing subjects must approach reality scientifically in order to seek the dialectical connections which explain the form of reality.
(Freire 1970, p.37)

Epistemology and ontology are important issues here, in two regards:

(1) They are (usually tacit) dimensions of any conversation about change and development and therefore need to be made explicit as sources of potential differences; and
(2) They dictate, or at least influence to a great extent, the nature of the process of research itself.

ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONCERNS

As the business of science at the outset has been to study the unknown phenomena in the universe and the nature, its concerns have involved three basic principles: the phenomenon to be studied; the relationship between the subject and the object (that is, subjectivity and/or objectivity) to be known; and the ways of doing the inquiry (Guba and Lincoln, 1990).

These refer to the questions of 'what thing' (including the issue), 'what position', that is, passive, active, or interactive (including the relationship between the issue and the surrounding environment), and 'how' (including the method). In scientific inquiry, the questions might have been decreased to two, that of what thing? and that of how?, whilst the (the kind of) relationship between knower and known has been relatively neglected. The questions which imply the three above concerns, are attributed, respectively, to ontology, epistemology, and methodology.

Ontology, as a branch of philosophy, "explores the assumptions about existence underlying any conceptual scheme or any theory or system of ideas" (Russell 1988). Whereas, "Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that concerns itself with the fundamental and disputed questions about how we know about the world" (Bawden, 1988). "The term methodology in a broad sense refers to the process, principles, and procedures by which we approach problems and seek answers" (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975).
The combination of answers to ontological, epistemological and methodological questions in Guba's and Lincoln's terms (1990), constitute "basic belief systems". Different approaches to science have been challenged to answer the three above mentioned questions, each of them known as a belief system or a paradigm. In the following, Guba's and Lincoln's (1990) classification of the three above dimensions are utilised to clarify the aspects of three belief systems of 'positivism', 'critical theory', and 'constructivism'.

POSITIVISM

The positivistic paradigm's ontology regards the essence of reality to be in natural laws, isolated from human entities and interpretation, as facts which exist externally. The role of traditional science, then, is to explore these laws and the functions of each component and to gather generalisable laws, information and facts that are free from the inclinations of context and of time. Conventional, positivist researchers believe in objective knowledge. According to them, there is some absolute or ultimate truth to which all humans aspire.

The epistemology of the positivistic approach determines the objectivity of the scientific inquiry, since it ignores any interaction, within the inquiry process, between the knower and the known. Hence, the scientist-researcher seeks an absolute answer to his/her questions. Positivist epistemology ignores the ethical elements embedded in and attached to the judgement and the application of any acquirable knowledge. As Graziano et. al. (1989) have pointed out, "The essence of science is the process of carefully composing questions and then systematically seeking their answers to gain a better understanding of nature".

The methodology of positivism is experimental or manipulative, since a positivist inquirer makes a hypothesis, manipulates several questions and undertakes an experimental and highly controlled inquiry to find answers to predetermined questions. This logic of natural sciences, "offers a way of thinking that integrates systematic rationalism with direct empirical observation... [and]... Empiricism is a way of gaining knowledge through observation of a real event; that is, knowing by experiencing through our senses" (Graziano 1989, pp.8-9). The positivistic perspective leads the researcher into posing a carefully designed hypothesis and question, and a systematic proceeding of gathering, analyzing, interpreting, and communicating the necessary information for answering the question. So there is always a switching on and an ending point for the inquirer and the inquiry.
CRITICAL THEORY

Critical theory comes in many forms - including 'feminism', 'Freireism', 'Habermasism' and 'participatory inquiry'. This present study looks mostly at Freireism and participatory inquiry. The rationale of these approaches is the empowerment of oppressed people through the elimination of false consciousness and energies (such as fatalism), and the facilitation of perspective transformation. Freire (1988), in his critique of positivism, has pointed out that "The concrete reality for many social scientists is a list of particular facts that they would like to acquire, for example, the presence or absence of water, problems concerning erosion in the area". For Freire, concrete reality "includes the ways in which the people involved with these facts perceive them". A critical theorist suggests a reciprocal process to develop both the person and the understanding of the concrete facts (the perceived issues) for transformation. Critical sociology is rooted in the critical theory paradigm and, according to Habermas (1973), competes with approaches such as the following:

(1) Confronted with the objectivism of strictly behavioural sciences, critical sociology guards itself against a reduction of intentional action to behaviour.... In place of controlled observation, which guarantees the anonymity (exchangeability) of the observing subject and thus of the reproducibility of the observation, there arises a participatory relation of the understanding subject to the subject confronting him (alter ego). The paradigm is no longer the observation but the dialogue.
(2) Confronted with the idealism of the hermeneutics developed for the sciences of the mind, critical sociology guards itself against reducing the meaning complexes objectified within social systems to the contents of cultural tradition. Critical of ideology, it asks what lies behind the consensus, presented as a fact, that supports the dominant tradition of the time, and does so with a view to the relations of power surreptitiously incorporated in the symbolic structures of the systems of speech and action.
(3) Confronted with the universalism of a comprehensively designed systems theory, critical sociology guards itself against the reduction of all social conflicts to unsolved problems in the regulation of self-governing systems. (...) Among other things, social systems are distinguished from machines (with learning capacity) and from organisms by the fact that subjective learning processes take place and are organized within the framework of ordinary language communication.
(Habermas 1973, pp.10-12)

The ontology of this category is 'critical realist' through which, "features of the real world are apprehended and judgements are made about which of them can be altered" (Guba and Lincoln 1990, p.142). It seems to imply the concept that "reality does exist but that human inquirers will never be able to comprehend it 'fully'" (ibid). This differs from the positivistic ontology that suggests reality exists "out there" and is potentially able to be collected by scientists.

The epistemology of this paradigm is subjectivist in the sense that values mediate inquiry. However, sceptics have posited that the values of critical inquirers determine and affect the direction and the end results of inquiry process, since "...so long as that epistemology is enlisted in the service of a realist ontology, it seems to lose much of its force" (Guba et al.,
1990, p.142). This critical point will be discussed later to be compensated through **internalisation of reality** within participatory inquiry. Habermas might claim that his "critical theory aims to further the self-understanding of social groups capable of transforming society" (Held 1980, p.250).

The methodology of the critical theory paradigm is dialogic and transformative, focusing on people's false consciousness as a result of the repression of feelings by the oppressive factors in society. Their attempt is to interfere with the misleading cultural, societal and political processes which influence humans' construction of a reality. For this attempt, both the dialogue and the psychoanalytic approach have been used to facilitate peoples' ways of knowing and construing realities. Rarely attention is paid to creating and constructing new realities and arousing the whole human potentialities.

In the positivistic school the inquirer (ie: a scientist) collects the pre-existing knowledge (as the absolute reality), whereas through the critical theory paradigm the inquirers (by energising common people as participants) interpret the existing realities through a critical dialogue to **transform** it.

**CONSTRUCTIVISM**

Although critical theory appreciates peoples' sense-making potential to interpret social realities and attempts to correct their false consciousness, it does not elevate people to a level of realised/holistic involvement where they construct their own realities, simply because it is not based on an essentially constructivist view of reality. Therefore, this 'relativist' ontology suggests that realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them.

The epistemology of the constructivist paradigm is 'subjectivist' in a way that both the inquirer and the inquired are fused into a single (monistic) entity. Through this interactive process, findings (as collective, co-created knowledge) are literally the creation of the process of interaction between the two parties.

The methodology of inquiry in the constructivist paradigm is hermeneutic and dialectic through which participants' constructions are elicited and refined hermeneutically and compared and contrasted dialectically, with the aim of generating one (or a few) constructions on which there is substantial consensus. Clearly, the process of interaction and the refinement of participants' constructions in relation to each another validate the knowledge created in the group. The interactive nature and aspects of the constructivist
inquiry which 'take the form of determining the variety of constructions, that is, formulations and interpretations) that exist and bringing them into as much consensus as possible', is the very nature of a 'forum theatre workshop process' that will be discussed later. According to Guba and Lincoln:

The dialectic aspects consist in processes of comparing and contrasting existing constructions (their number inevitably decreases over time, but probably never reaches unity) so that each respondent must confront the constructions of others and come to terms with them. If there are elements in other constructions that do not fit his or her own, it is their responsibility to face those conflicts head-on and decide what to do about them. Whatever they do must be supported by a reason. Of course, it is the case that persons committed to the process can continue to disagree (if for no other reason than constructions suffer from the same disease as theories: underdetermination). But all have the responsibility to engage in dialectic interchange in the hope that consensus may emerge.

(Guba and Lincoln 1990, p.147 - emphasis added)

However, Guba and Lincoln (1990) claim that the ideal objective relationship between the inquirer and the inquired (ie: participant scientists as humans) is not attainable until participation as the vital act, is achieved.

'Participant' is the incontrovertible new concept given by quantum mechanics. It strikes down the term 'observer' of classical theory, the man who stands behind the thick glass wall and watches what goes on without taking part. It can't be done, quantum mechanics notes.

(Guba and Lincoln 1990, pp.145-6)

To eliminate the gap between co-learners in the social construction of reality, to increase the validation or the accuracy of interpretations within a constructivist inquiry (through hermeneutics and dialectics) understanding of the term internalization might be helpful:

Internalization in this general sense is the basis, first, for an understanding of one's fellowmen (sic) and, second, for the apprehension of the world as a meaningful and social reality. This apprehension does not result from autonomous creations of meaning by isolated individuals, but begins with the individual 'taking over' the world in which others already live. To be sure, the 'taking over' is in itself, in a sense, an original process for every human organism, and the world, once 'taken over', may be creatively modified or (less likely) even recreated. In any case, in the complex form of internalization, I not only 'understand' the other's momentary subjective processes, I 'understand' the world in which he lives, and that world becomes my own. This presupposes that he and I share time in a more than ephemeral way and a comprehensive perspective, which links sequences of situations together intersubjectively. We now not only understand each other's definitions of shared situations, we define them reciprocally. A nexus of motivations is established between us and extends into the future. Most importantly, there is now an ongoing mutual identification between us. We not only live in the same world, we participate in each other's being.

(Berger and Luckmann 1966, p.150 - emphasis added)

CRITIQUE

This study appreciates the constructivist ontological fundamental, but suggests that a critical reflection on the existing repressing and oppressing realities, for example, might foster a more dynamic and meaningful construction of new realities. In a dialogic process this might involve a shift from 'social level' to 'realized level' that almost without a
facilitating element is unlikely to be achieved. Rowan and Reason (1981) suggest that we get into a 'realized level' by negating the social level. But, as they have pointed out

...this particular negation is a particularly difficult one, because so many of the institutions of our society (family, school, work, leisure, etc.) function so as to reinforce the norms of the social level. Thus we have to deny many layers of social 'conditioning' (experiences of reward and punishment) in order to move wholly into the realized level. (Rowan and Reason 1981, p. 117)

Habermas might call this process 'emancipation'. To him, "emancipation entails not only overcoming constraints of nature, like scarcity, but also dissolving systems of distorted communication" (Held 1980, p. 277).

Habermas, like a constructivist, has discussed the natural human potentiality to construct realities, to make tools and to critique. He "understands knowledge in light of the problems man encounters in his efforts to produce his existence and reproduce his species being" (Held 1980, p. 255). Habermas has identified three cognitive interests/or knowledge building interests known as 'technical', 'practical' and 'emancipatory'. These are three learning domains, he suggests, which provide humans respectively with: 'instrumental', 'communicative', and 'emancipatory' action.

There is a basis of interests which follows... from an understanding of humans as both toolmaking and language-using animals: they must produce from nature what is needed for material existence through the manipulation and control of objects and communicate with others through the use of intersubjectively understood symbols within the context of rule-governed institutions. Thus humankind has an interest in the creation of knowledge which would enable it to control objectified processes and to maintain communication. There is, however, on his account, a third interest in the reflective appropriation of human life, without which the interest-bound character of knowledge could not itself be grasped. This is an interest in reason, in the human capacity to be self-reflective and self-determining, to act rationally. As a result of it, knowledge is generated which enhances autonomy and responsibility; hence, it is an emancipatory interest.

(Habermas, in Held 1980, p. 255)

On the other hand, the separation of these cognitive interests or learning domains is not convincing, since they are interdependent parts of a complex (that is, a whole human interaction system) and are embedded in the systemicity of human thought and behaviour characterised by Bateson (1979) as the 'ecology of mind'. Although the specification of the relation between knowledge and human activity is worth considering, the systematic classification of human interests, action and knowledge by Habermas, contradicts the reality of human nature. He has later pointed to this in the postscript to Knowledge and Human Interests as follows:

I do not mind at all calling both phenomena [work and interaction] praxis. Nor do I deny that normally instrumental action is embedded in communicative action. ... But I see no reason why we should not adequately analyze a complex, i.e. dissect it into parts.

(Habermas, in Held 1980, p.391)
In an oppressed and a socially and culturally problematic situation, creative construction of realities can hardly be separated from transforming the status quo, as well as the participants' perspectives. These seem to be two aspects of the same thing. Similarly is the distinction between 'creativity' and 'innovation' in dealing with a complex problem that results in a neutral situation for both sides, ie: the inquirer and the inquired. Pfeiffer (1989) has pointed out that creativity implies the generation of ideas, that is, the creating of options and the identification of possibilities, whereas innovation refers to actual situational change.

The nexus between thought and action has been explored in particularly insightful ways by the construct psychologist George Kelly, as well as by the cognitive biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela.

Kelly believes in humans as 'personal scientists' who are always making sense out of events, learning from, predicting and controlling happenings. He has pointed out that "every man is a scientist by disposition as well as by right, every subject is an incipient experimenter, and every person by daily necessity a fellow psychologist" (1969:144).

Argyris & Schon (1974, 1978), and Schon (1987) have also proposed that "human beings, in their interactions with one another, design their behavior and hold theories for doing so". These "theories of action", according to them, "include the values, strategies, and underlying assumptions that inform individuals' patterns of interpersonal behaviour" (Schon 1987, p. 255). The significant point of their vision, which resembles to the tacit and explicit knowing suggested by Polanyi (1966), however, is the recognition of two levels at which theories of action operate.

**KELLY'S THEORY OF PERSONAL CONSTRUCT**

Constructivism, like systems thinking, is a theoretical foundation of this thesis. In conjunction with action theory, both will be extended and will prepare the ground for more discussions on creativity and conscientization through drama.

Kelly, from the epistemological point of view, is similar to Kant who posited his phenomenological epistemology and made a distinction between our perception of reality and the reality itself. Similarly, Kelly suggests that humankind is the centre of constructing reality; people are engaged in a constant process of construction and reconstruction, as each construction is subject to another one. He says: "the correspondence between what people really think exists and what really does exist is a constantly changing one" (Kelly 1963, p.6). This may be regarded as a vital point to be made with "extension" as a process
for making sense of a complex and dynamic world. The process of continual confrontation with the environment guides humankind to a better understanding of the environment surrounding them and, to the extent that new experiences are attained, elevates them through the stages of life. For Kelly, each reality is the result of concrete human experiences, that is, confrontation with the real world or acting on the socio-cultural phenomena. People construe their confrontation with the environment, revise previous constructs and make new ones. Accordingly, they are 'hypotheses makers' and 'hypotheses testers', and are permanently involved in making up-to-date assumptions about realities and re-testing them.

**KELLY'S THEORY: ANALYSIS**

The fundamental assumption of Kelly is 'constructive alternativism'. According to his epistemology, our current constructs are made clear through the way and the quality by which we interpret realities. On the other hand, our confrontation with the environment prepares the ground for the revision of those constructs to be replaced with the new ones. It implies that humans are capable of recognizing their needs and priorities, and are able to understand the environment surrounding them and to predict events.

Humans experiment with their conceptual models in practice, test their validity and make new theories. Kelly suggests that all of these theories or assumptions are valid until they are disproved in practice. In other words, unsatisfactory experiences lead to the rejection of former theories and result in the creation of the new assumptions. Kelly has pointed out that:

> Man looks at his world through transparent patterns or templates which he creates and then attempts to fit over the realities of which the world is composed. The fit is not always very good. Yet without such patterns the world appears to be such an undifferentiated homogeneity that man is unable to make any sense out of it. Even a poor fit is more helpful to him than nothing at all.  
> (Kelly 1963, p.8)

Kelly gives the name of 'constructs' to these patterns, and considers them as the ways of construing the world. He also regards these constructs as one source of behaviour, and behaviour as the pattern of acting on constructs. Kelly also believes that there is not one universe, rather all humans have their own universes, which differ extremely from one another. According to him, the ways people perceive the world and the way they interpret events and realities are absolutely different. Although he does not reject the impact of childhood experiences on the adults' world views, he believes that nothing is as important as understanding of peoples' knowing about their present situation (i.e. their manner of perceiving the world). He is mainly concerned with what people think and care about at the present time, because Kelly strongly believes that our current theories are the synthesis
of our past experiences. Therefore he focuses on the structure of current theories and suggests that for entering the future, we have to begin from where people are.

On the other hand, although Kelly's epistemology might have had applications in therapy, learning, acting, education and rural extension, it lacks obviously a reflective element - significant importance in critical thinking and critical theory, such as do the works of Habermas and Freire. Then it may equate inquiry as a tool to help groups of people to become self-conscious about their current theories. In practice this is unachievable, unless people as groups of participants can critically reflect on their past actions to be able to reconstruct their present. This is a process through which people move from a state of 'trial and error' and, as Freire points out, a state of being "adjusted to the reality", towards being absolutely self-conscious and the creators of their own realities.

Kelly believes that people should not be trapped by their early experiences or confined in socio-cultural constraints which cause their powerlessness. In his claims, change is possible only if people become self-conscious about their personal theories. But he has not been clear enough in depicting how important and fundamental is recursiveness as a way of knowing leading to self-consciousness and the construction of new knowledge.

There are also cognitive psychologists who have suggested the term implicit learning. As Courtney (1988:10) points out: "implicit learning is natural and it is an effective way to understand complex structures without using conscious cognitive methods of learning". He suggests that "knowledge gained from conscious, analytic procedures is less deeply learned than knowledge in the tacit dimension".

The major inadequacy in extension is that it requires people to change their attitudes and behaviours to adopt new technology, without regard to their existing constructs and their talent for building new constructs, that is, appropriate solutions to their own problems. However, Kelly's assertion that humans psychologically act in a way to predict events, or his claim that theory building is not the peculiar right of scientists, but is the potential talent of all human beings, does not provide enough ground for the kind of cooperative relationship necessary for construing and changing the existing phenomena. To him, humans are personal scientists, capable of making theories in different levels, but there is not enough clarity in his works to show 'how' this potential could be dynamised in a creative way. Although Kelly believes that all humans are engaged in the active process of construction and reconstruction through observation, interpretation, prediction and control, he pays little attention to the socio-cultural barriers, to the construction of personal constructs, and to the unequal process of theory building among humans due to social obstacles and the power structures. It becomes, then, a process through which people erect
their world view and determine the modes of their behaviour. A critical theorist may add to this another dimension, that through a critical dialogue, people can reflect upon their world views occurring within their life process, and subsequently change them and to build new ones.

Critical theorists, though they believe in the reality of processes in which, during daily life, people constantly make hypotheses and test them, also look at those factors that distort these processes, obsess people, repress their feelings and oppress them. To Habermas, for instance, there is a need to use a psycho-analytical approach to recognise the psychological dilemmas and to emancipate people from these oppressive factors, and then to have human beings as personal scientists who predict events and plan to control them. Therefore, empowerment, conscientization and perspective transformation are the elements which can refine people's lifelong habits of doing things.

Referring back to Kelly, hypothesis-making processes can evolve people's construction systems through invalidation of the predictions, as follows:

... the successive revelation of events invites the person to place new constructions upon them whenever something unexpected happens.... The constructions one places on events are working hypotheses, which are about to be put to the test of experience. As one's anticipations or hypotheses are successively revised in the light of the unfolding sequence of events, the construction system undergoes a progressive evolution. (Kelly 1955, p.72)

In general, Kelly believes that through personal constructs, people's current behaviour is determined by the way they predict future events based on past experience. This process, according to him, is called 'theory building' which involves all humans regardless of their so-called scientific status. The only difference is in the level of their assumptions or conceptualizations. On the other hand, critical theorists (eg: Habermas, Freire) suggest that the way people predict the future may be distorted by ideological fixations and social obligations and that, through reflection, their perceptions may be transformed.

Kelly believes that personal constructs have an organization, so that each construct is in relation to other constructs - or the current construction system forms the future one (1963: 56). This system is related to the whole as well as to the individual. The word 'evolve' in Kelly's terms implies the dynamic nature of humankind and the fact that the windows for change are always open. Quoting Kelly, Robinson (1980:162) has pointed out that:

To make sense out of concrete events we thread them through with constructs and to make sense of the constructs we must point them at events. Here we have a full cycle of sense-making.
To sum up, our universe is not the one which we observe, rather the one in which we are players. To the extent that we play, it is our universe. Thus, the universe of each person is the universe of his/her experiences. The stage we are playing on is our universe. Therefore, through experiencing things, our relationships with the surrounding systems are built and the social structure is shaped, then we may recognize the width or narrowness of our boundaries and the extent to which we have freedom to act.

SOME OF KELLY'S COROLLARIES

Individuality. Kelly also postulates that: "persons differ from each other in their construction of events" (Kelly, 1963, p. 55). According to him, each individual's personal constructs are absolutely unique. This means that personal constructs differ in different aspects (ie: direction, range, hierarchy and the systemic linkages ). Maturana & Varela, using a biological foundation, also discuss the uniqueness of humans due to differences in their experiences. Every human being is a very different "unity" and that "it is the structure of the unity that determines its interaction in the environment and the world it lives in." Thus, individuals have "different ways of being in the world" (p.86). This may suggest that people respond to, and learn from, the same circumstances differently. To them, humans' knowing occurs only through their observation of their behaviour, and consider the use of reflection, as "a process of knowing how to know" by humans, to make sense of the way they "bring forth their world"(p.24). The term "bringing forth" implies what humans do constantly, as "all doing is knowing and all knowing is doing" (p.26). Therefore, "We human beings in particular are modified by every experience, even though at times the changes are not wholly visible"(p.168).

The idea of uniqueness of personal constructs, and the process of knowing through self-observation and reflection, have considerable application in the participatory process of forum theatre and creative drama, through which participants explore their own knowing structure, images, reciprocity and dialectic thinking and the shared images of others and reflect upon them. This is image theatre within a forum theatre workshop. Participants are given the chance for receiving and reflecting on their current constructs.

A forum theatre workshop can be viewed as a tool for what Kelly calls 'articulation' of at least one or some parts of personal constructs. For instance, 'image theatre' provides the facilitators, as well as the participants, with the opportunity to become familiar with one another's construction systems or world views, and the opportunities to observe and evaluate them through interaction. The articulation process develops learners' self-consciousness and ability to change. This 'uniqueness', however, is revealed through the activities (games, image theatre) which are devised for the identification of specific issues.
Sociality. Kelly points out that: "to the extent that one person construes the construction process of another, he may play a role in a social process involving the other person" (Kelly, 1963, p. 95). This is also the basis of training of professional actors (Stanislavsky, 1988 and Cohen, 1986)

In rural extension, this means that the communication process is unproductive and inadequate when it is one-way, top-down and imposing. Also, Maturana and Varela point out that there is no transferable message until a reciprocal understanding is established, between the two parties. They put it in this way:

   The phenomenon of communication depends on not what is transmitted, but on what happens to the person who receives it. And this is a very different matter from transmitting information.  
   (Maturana and Varela 1987, p.196)

Thus in the context of rural extension, effective communication is achieved only when there is a mutual understanding between extension officer (action researcher) and farmer (co-researcher or co-learner). This understanding and interaction in many developing countries with a heritage of theatre is achieved through drama, and in other contexts through constructive dialogue.

In that case it is not necessary for an extension officer or facilitator to have the same construction system of the farmers or learners to work with them. The important thing is to understand co-learners' personal construct systems as a prerequisite for meaningful interaction. Thus, the mutual understanding is for interaction and not for imposing ideas.

Commonality. Based on the psychological similarities, there is an ideal atmosphere in which to understand and to share personal constructs within a group.

   ... to the extent that one person employs a construction of experience which is similar to that employed by another, his psychological processes are psychologically similar to those of the other person. (Kelly 1963, p. 90)

This principle prepares the ground for sharing others' ideas or a shared awareness system of communication. According to Kelly, people, despite their individuality, in some aspects are similar, because they may have had identical worlds of experiences within similar contexts. Thus, the criteria by which they interpret events may be similar too, the similarities representing a culture or a sub-culture (in its unique form). So people with common ways of thinking, acting and interpreting others' experiences, behaviour and expectations may be categorized as a 'cultural group'.
For Kelly (1963: 93), the conventional definition which considers 'culture' as the similarities derived from upbringing and the same environment, is not valid. He suggests that culture is the similarity in expectations about life among a group. On the other hand, he focuses on individual and his/her personal constructs to understand the problems and to improve them in a group with commonality in behaviour. In fact, he studies personal constructs to understand cultures. Kelly's theory provides the ground for understanding of the epistemological assumptions of self-directed learning. As Kelly regards all humans as 'personal scientists', there is also universal humanist trend in the arts, where all humans are considered artists in numerous ways and at various levels. These trends support the epistemological assumptions of Kelly and his constructivist philosophy. The following quotation is one example:

Raymond Williams, in *The Long Revolution*, points out that artists and scientists are special cases of people exempt from the normal run of every day events. We all take up the roles of artist or scientist in our dealings with the world. But the emergence of a special class of artists, has weakened the status of the efforts of those who are not in the profession. The work of artists is held up like marvellous cultural curios to be admired. This idea of artists churning out objects for the rest of us to appreciate is a characteristic of aesthetic theory and as Williams says, its tendency is to ignore communication as a social fact, and in doing so to ignore the creative action of the audience. Communication is the crux of art ... art cannot exist unless a working communication is reached, and this communication is an activity in which both artists and spectators participate. When art communicates, a human experience is actively offered and actively received. Below this activity there can be no art. (Robinson 1980, p. 172 - emphasis added)

Kelly's model of 'the human, the scientist' and his assertion that all humans make hypotheses and test these hypotheses within their daily life interactions has some basic flaws. The ability of humans in the social construction of a reality does not occur in a vacuum or in isolation, nor is it protected from societal and cultural pressures. Hence, in terms of critical theories, people need facilitation to reflect upon their current hypotheses. According to Habermas, "If emancipation from domination is to remain a project of humanity, it is essential to counter this tendency and reaffirm the necessity of self-reflection for self-understanding" (Held 1980, p.254). This seems to what Rowan and Reason (1981) consider a transition from the 'social or primary level' of consciousness to 'realized level'.

At the Primary level, feelings swept over us and overwhelmed us; at the Realized level, we are now able deliberately to use images and symbols in creative ways for our research purposes. At the Primary level, intuition was an occasional flash of insight, often accurate but quite unbridled; at the Realized level it is our main way of thinking, enabling us continually to see the wood as well the tree. And because we now see the world as our world, rather than the world, we can see clearly through our own eyes. Being rational, we see at this stage, is doing justice to the whole - to all that is out there in the world and to all that is an here, inside ourselves.

(Rowan and Reason 1981, p.116)
SYSTEMS APPROACHES

The whole is different from the sum of its parts. (Bateson, 1979)

Over the past few decades, a number of research approaches have been developed from premises about the behaviour of whole entities or systems. These so called 'systemic approaches' can be distinguished between (a) those which focus on systems as ontological realities and (b) those which shift the essence of systemicity to an epistemological focus.

The principle of an organization in whatever case - a living cell, the galaxy, or a social system, in Batesonian terms, is "the pattern which connects". For Bateson (1971), the shift from 'objects' to 'relationships' is the central point to discard mechanistic ontology and to stimulate systems thinking. The focus on 'relationships' rather than 'objects' and certain ultimate 'goals' (Bateson, 1971; Vickers, 1983) produces the idea of 'holism' as a set of beliefs representing the world as a series of structured wholes, each representing its own identity and property to maintain the connected 'integrity'.

Wholeness is the essence of systems thinking. This ontology led to the investigation of quantum theory in physics: the world will no longer be a collection of components, rather a system of relationships. Such an ontology had its influence on the other areas of science, for instance in agriculture (Farming Systems Research and Development), health, biology, education. The view includes a larger system with a number of interdependent subsystems with certain relationships to maintain operation towards a definable goal (eg: complex hardwares such as spaceships, and computers). At the same time, the interaction between technological systems with a social need was being somewhat neglected. There is a crucial difference between goal-oriented mechanical systems and "social systems where goals are often obscure" (Checkland 1981, p.149). Checkland made efforts to apply systems methods to management problems, to 'soft' problems in social systems, what he calls the human activity system. Bawden (1991: 2371) has pointed out:

Recursiveness and abductive logic must become as familiar to us as lineal thought and induction and deduction have been for a century and a half. And in our rethinking, we must learn how to come to terms with complexity and chaos and develop learning strategies that enable us to help others to deal with such dimensions.

To shift from lineal thought into systems thinking, a number of issues - called by Plas (1986) a list of systemic fundamentals - are explained in the following.
EPISTEMOLOGY. If making a systems shift in our thinking is crucial to managing complex problems, then epistemology is the issue in greatest need of understanding. As was defined earlier, epistemology deals with the ways, the limits and the governing rules of knowing. All people in their actions embrace certain assumptions which constitute an epistemology of living and confronting life’s situations. Discussion on the kinds of epistemology which operate has conventionally been an issue of controversial concern in philosophy. However, an epistemological shift, when it does happen, seems to create fundamental change in our perception of the world and the way we treat our problems.

The most common epistemology in the West up to the eighteenth century was what is called 'naive realism', based on sensory understanding of 'the real thing'. This implies an exclusive communication (correspondence) between our sensory mechanisms and the (real) object to be seen, heard, smelled, touched and tasted. Later, changes began to occur in epistemological understanding which influenced the scientists' minds and their ways of thinking about the 'positively, objectively, really' things. The uncertainty principle of Heisenberg led to serious doubts about the possibility of knowing the essence of truth as a real, positive object. As a result, "We have become very impressed with the limitations on observation forced upon us by our very own sensory equipment and nervous systems, as well as personal and group cultures" (Plas 1986, p.55). Our limitations as observers are reinforced by language, which is an exclusive means of understanding and represents a particular frame of reference. Thus our particular point of view influences our judgement about what we have observed and prevents the essence of the 'thing' being perceived. Systemic epistemology, then, allows recursiveness or mutual communication through which ideas interact and reveal different parts of 'a thing as the truth'. Systemic epistemology, according to Plas, holds that "the only reality we can know is the reality born of the inevitable transaction between the observer and the observed, the knower and that which is known" (p.56). Here she illuminates the need for a systemic method to (1) involve people to practice systems thinking, (2) foster transaction between the observer and the observed and, (3) encourage artistic ways of expression and understanding parallel to the use of 'language'. Thus the meaning through language (that is, a systematic means of codification) is reinforced and developed through artistic expression of images such as drama action (that is, a schematic means of codification). Any new knowledge that emerges as result of the reciprocal (recursive) communication might raise concerns about its 'validity'.

Within systemic thinking, the only standard for the validity of things must be some sort of agreement. If we can never learn the true essence of what we seek to understand, then the best we can achieve in terms of validity is an interjudge reliability. Something is valid to the extent that people agree that it is so. Consensual validation becomes the only possible form of validation.

(Plas 1986, p.56)
**Abductive reasoning.** In contrast to recursiveness (that is, the foundation of abductive reasoning and systems thinking), linearity, regardless of its direction, is the central aspect of both Aristotelian (i.e.: deductive), and Newtonian (i.e.: inductive) ways of reasoning. Aristotelian logic dictated a deductive way of knowing that was reasoning from general to particular. It captures much of our everyday reasoning. For example,

- The houses in the Northern part of the city are luxurious.
- Luxurious houses belong to wealthy families.
- Jim is living in the north.
- Therefore, Jim must be rich.

For hundreds of years, this way of thinking and knowing was assumed to be the exclusive source of universal laws (Courtney, 1988). Almost by the time of Newton, in the seventeenth century, this form of reasoning had begun to break down. Newtonian inductive logic was an alternative which suggested working from the particular to general. Newtonian physics regarded the universe as a collection of components. It affected people’s ways of looking at the world and, consequently, the scientists’ methods of thinking. Since then, science has been in charge of exploring each component from the outside and has tried to keep things separated from one another as much as possible.

Newtonian induction reasoning affected science and philosophy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and was illuminated through the rise of empiricism in Western society. The logic is linear, but while Aristotelian deductive reasoning moves from the general principle to the particular case, Newtonian inductive method moves from the particular to the general case. According to Plas (1986: 70):

> The method was born from the necessity to make sense out of information resulting from observation. Empiricism called for gathering data about specific events and drawing general conclusions from such a collection of observations. Induction provided the needed legitimate process of reasoning to support this kind of human activity.

As Plas points out, "Our cultures have resulted from processes of inductive and deductive reasoning" (p.70).

Aristotle’s deductive school of thought over the ages became the way of people’s thinking and reasoning. Through deductive 'spectacles', a top-down view of reasoning from the general towards a particular entity was provided. In contrast, the Newtonian inductive way provided a bottom-up world view through which nothing might be seen unless the single part was identified. This linear logic, as with the former one, framed thinking for the last four centuries with 'cause and effect spectacles'. As Plas (1986) has pointed out:
A linear way of construing reality is so ingrained within our culture that we can scarcely imagine that another way of dealing with our surroundings might be possible. Even as systemic thinkers attempt to break away from dependency upon the linear construct, many find themselves simply moving toward substitution of ideas of circularity - a concept which is clearly contained within the fundamental idea of line. A circle is a bent line that connects with itself. (Plas, 1986, p.59)

On the other hand, people by their very nature unconsciously have an innate potential for holistic and systemic organization which is dormant and, if awakened, a huge trapped learning energy might be freed. That is recursive logic.

Recursive logic, as Bateson explained, is a dynamic process of involvement and interaction. Through this kind of logic, "past, present, and future inform the present moment in a recursive fashion" (Plas 1986, p. 63). In Freirean terms (1988), it is the actual relationship between the subjectivity and objectivity which results in the creation of concrete reality and helps the individual to explore the different aspects of the reality and to achieve a multi-dimensional perspective. As Bawden (1991:2371) points out, "It must come from a belief that new ways of knowing are crucial to produce new knowledge.... Recursive and abductive logic must become as familiar to us as lineal thought and induction and deduction have been for a century and a half".

Children also discover relations of reciprocity, for instance, they begin to understand that if one stick is bigger than the other, the second is shorter than the first. Reciprocity and annulment are two different aspects of what Piaget calls "reversibility," a fundamental notion that gradually takes root in children’s thinking. At first it is applicable to actions performed on discontinuous elements and later to the transformation of continuous quantities. Reversibility implies the construction of a coherent system of operations that, unlike the actions of the earlier period, can be effected mentally and that, instead of contradicting one another or simply being juxtaposed, now reinforce and sustain each other. (Schwebel et al., 1973, p. 43)

Fundamentally, systems thinking is seen in contrast to other ways of knowing which are linear, that is, Aristotellean deductive and Newtonian inductive reasoning.

To step beyond these limiting methods of reasoning (i.e: deductive and inductive) to become conscious of the different aspects of a certain phenomenon, as well as the nature of our mind, systems thinkers (Bateson, 1979; Plas, 1986) have proposed a third form of reasoning which is called abductive reasoning. Batesonian abductive reasoning has been experienced and accepted as a holistic manner of viewing the world which stimulates and encourages recursiveness and dialectical learning (Plas, 1986)."When we reason abductively (by analogy) we use the form, 'that is to this as that is to that.' Abduction concentrates on pattern similarities and differences" (Plas 1986, p.70). Bateson has introduced 'story' as the essence of abductive reasoning. Story and analogy are essentially the elements of 'drama' and can be better understood and learned through drama action. The function of story and analogy is 'metaphoric'.
A story, for Bateson, is a complete thought. A story contains components that are relevant for one another. They are connected. He suggested that within stories, "the general fact that parts are connected in this way is at the very root of what it is to be alive. (...) Bateson is trying to tell us that the pattern which connects all living things is a pattern of communication which contains parts relevant for one another in a way that allows them to have meaning as a complete thought. Since this description provides an apt definition of a story, Bateson concluded that stories constitute the pattern which connects all living things. (...) As we think about this human task, we are thrust toward an appreciation of systemic epistemology. The absolute, one, true reality of life can never be an important issue from a systemic point of view. Rather, it is recognized that a multiplicity of tales is possible. (Plas 1986, pp. 80-1) 

Story and analogy as metaphoric expressions (in forum theatre and image theatre) are capable of adaptation into systemic methodologies within drama processes. Bateson's suggestion that, "patterns control the flow of information in a system", is crucial in this regard: when games and drama actions, for example, overcome the prescribed rules and patterns of behaviour in a group who are all sharing a similar, active experience, information flows in the form of stories regardless of class and social patterns. Moreover, Bateson's idea of the story as an explanatory concept (Plas, 1986), and the multiplicity of stories (that is, a systems principle) are the central characteristics within a forum theatre process.

Plas argues that development of abductive reasoning skills is to practice answering the question: "How are these two (or more) phenomenon alike and are they different? In order to answer this question, processes of abduction are required." In a forum theatre workshop we might ask what characteristics Story A shares with Story B, with C and with D, even though they seem dissimilar but all contain the issue of oppression or oppressive relationship moving through a consensual mechanism. This holds true within process of image theatre in the workshop where images of individuals' cases of oppression are evaluated against their analogous in real life situations - to find consensual solution to improve these oppressed lifes.

Recursive logic. The understanding of linearity is a prerequisite to the perception of recursiveness. There are three different categories of logic known as as deductive, inductive and abductive (ie: systemic). Cognitive psychologists focus mainly on information processing which has been considered as Level One cognition. Also a meta-cognitive process known as Level Two cognition, used in complex problem solving, has been identified. Piaget calls these 'formal operations' (Slaner, 1986). But there is also an epistemic cognition focusing on moral decision making. Then the argument of systems thinkers is that recursive logic would be the basis for epistemic cognition and learning.

To investigate the most common abductive perspective among a community, and to make people aware of this natural pattern and, following Gregory Bateson's proposition in this
research, it is possible to consider "the story as the whole thought" and investigate the potential of drama-workshops in integrating story-telling with other creative methods of expression, and employing it at the service of holistic thinking. Language by itself reinforces lineal thinking and reflects only a part of the reality. However, story encompasses all interacting elements underlying a problem and, as a result, is a tool to investigate social realities. It reflects the context holistically and provides a relative reality according to the physical and social environment. On the other hand, contextual relativism, as noted by Slaner (1986), represents the learners' increased awareness of the importance of contexts in defining truth and value.

Abductive reasoning is the basis for story-telling and drama. To Bateson, this type of reasoning is of crucial importance for an understanding of human nature, and the rest of the nature as well (Plas 1986, pp. 13-80). According to Plas:

A critical systemic perspective requires an assumption that our words reflect ideas and that our ideas are no more than that. They are ideas: they are not reality. They simply give us a way of thinking about the world around us. At this stage in the development of this new way of thinking about the world probably the best and the least we can do is to continually remind ourselves to develop a healthy mistrust of language - at least as a conveyor of absolute truth and objective reality.

Similarly, Kelly (1955:110), in response to the question "Do people mean what they say?" has pointed out that "it is not possible for one to express the whole of his construction system". Therefore spoken and written language may not reflect the whole reality. Accordingly, to learn more about humans and their inter-relationships we need to think about alternatives for expression - metaphoric and non-verbal media.

Polanyi suggests that the issue of creativity, a part of the distinct nature of humans, has an inherent tendency to embrace 'wholes' as 'systems'. To him "in all instances creativity is the process of discovering the potential for unity within a set of particulars". Thus, as Polanyi points out:

When we comprehend a particular set of items or parts of a whole, the focus of our attention is shifted from the hitherto incomprehended particular to the understanding of their joint meaning. (Polanyi, 1959, p.29)

Then, the unity that we try to comprehend pre-exists as tacit knowledge within the framework of a story. In other words, our ability to formulate a creative problem implies the tacit knowledge of its solution. Such a process combines particulars into larger and larger structures (Courtney, 1988), which incorporate the essence of each story.
THE MAJOR CONCEPTS OF SYSTEMS

Since the emergence of the General Systems Theory in the 1950s, the idea has had implications through 'Systems Engineering', and 'Systems Analysis' (that is, inquiry into systems - Wilson, 1990). All systems have been characterised by premises (encompassing the systems-based methodologies) as indicated in the following (for more details see Churchman, 1979, and Wilson, 1990).

Holism is the first major premise through which the world is viewed as consisting of structured wholes. Every single organism has the identity as a whole system with specific regulations, which functions as the interdependent part of a larger system.

Transformations refer to the continual change within a system. That is the fundamental principle which implies the fact that systems transform themselves continuously. The external forces which disrupt this process of transformation can prevent a system's survival. "Inputs to a system are transformed through major functions that can be described or developed: as a result of such a transformation, an output from the system is produced" (Wilson, 1990, p. 70). For example, in social systems a group of humans with certain ideas (the input) can communicate and interact so that a new, collective knowledge emerges (the output).

Control is a natural mechanism which leads every system act in the face of external disturbance 'to maintain key components within an appropriate range of values' and to continue its dynamic operation.

Communication is the fourth premise of systems approaches which refers to the capacity to operate mutual communication within systems to control the happenings inside and the forces outside. In a social system, the participation of people in the control procedures and the decision-making strategies provides participants with opportunities to communicate information and share awareness to maintain ways to adapt to external disturbances.

Hierarchy is a concept which relates to the principle of wholeness and the interdependence of sub-systems in a sense that every smaller system exists within a larger system, an example which is the organisation of the human body. Through this concept we can reduce complex problems into smaller units so that a problem is analysed both in terms of its whole identity (as an independent system), and its relationship with the other sub-systems.
Emergent Properties is the sixth major concept which imply the principles of hierarchy and wholeness in a sense that the property of each sub-system can be interpreted only in relation to a larger system within which it exists. "If you move from one level to another, new properties emerge while those pertaining to the former level either are absent or are radically changed" (Wilson, 1990, p. 72). Wilson has an example:

Take the example of the development of new technology and the issue of its appropriateness. A technology that is eventually to be used by a particular group of clients in a specific setting can be thought of as a subsystem within a larger system. If a technician develops a technology (e.g., a new soil management practice or a new, post-harvest pest-control process) that does not account for the characteristics and functions that are present within the already established wider system, there is great risk that the new technology will be ignored or rejected. (Wilson 1990, p.72)

HARD SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

The adjectives "hard" and "soft" do not mean difficult and easy respectively, but are ways of describing two approaches to systems analysis. (Naughton 1984, p. 7)

Holism as a fundamental premise in inquiries into systems allows the inquirer to look at relationships rather than objects. The investigators in such an inquiry need techniques to explore, analyse and manage interactions of components within systems. A systems inquirer aims to study

1) interactions among parts and within hierarchies, (2) their emergent properties, (3) the transformations that occur among components of a situation, (4) control processes, (5) communications linking the parts of the system, (6) the objectives and performance measures of the system, (7) the environment, including constraints, (8) resources and inputs, and (9) details of management, ownership, or dominance. (Wilson 1990, pp. 72-3)

The hard systems approach falls into the positivistic school of thought in terms of the underlying assumption about the nature of social reality, as well as the experimental methods, simulations and the quantitative models, which it uses for analysing and designing goal-oriented systems, that is, basically machine-based. Hard systems inquiry is applied in systems engineering, systems analysis, and operation research texts, and with minor variations in the procedure, the process involves the recognition and quantitative definition of 'the problem'.

The analyst goes on to organise the project, defining its purpose. He or she then designs a system relevant to the purpose and problem. A systems model is then formulated and used to assess the relative efficiency of alternative technologies, policies, or strategies. An alternative solution is selected and validated in relation to the original definition of the problem. This constitutes the solution to that problem. (Wilson 1990, p. 73)

The following quotation reflects a hard systems perspective, a view of systems thinking in agricultural extension and development, which has been clarified by Samanta (1990):
The history of research and development for increasing human productivity on the marginal subsistence farm has pointed to systems approach. The small farmer is a part of larger system that surrounds his day-to-day activities. These activities include household concerns that direct priorities and decisions the farmer incorporates in the farming system. Systems logic is needed to solve systems problems. Logically, the solutions will be systems solution. (Samanta 1990, p. 204-5)

SOFT SYSTEMS METHODOLOGY

The soft systems approach evolved to deal with problem-situations in which human perceptions, behaviour or actions seemed to be the dominating factors and where goals, objectives and even the interpretation of events are all problematic. (Naughton 1984, p.7)

Soft systems methodology (SSM) (Checkland, 1981) provides a promising participative and holistic manner of viewing and coping with the complexity of human affairs in a society and is concerned with world-views and ways of establishing systems thinking. "Another difference between hard and soft systems is that the latter are not as clearly definable" (Röling et al 1990, p. 9). It is a difficult task to define a boundary for human thought. We experience the solutions to a problem in a Human Activity System (HAS), and as a consequence we conceptualize a Knowledge and Information System (KIS) based on our anticipation of improving a problematic situation. The central systemic point is, therefore, the interplay between knowledge and environment.

Soft systems involves human activity systems constituted of human thoughts, socio-cultural, psychological and economical components, which by themselves interact with the surrounding environment (Checkland, 1981). Soft systems methodology developed by Checkland suggests a participative process involving human activity systems, and their underlying values within the contexts of organizational and environmental changes.

Soft systems methodology while approaching people at a cognitive level, lacks a strong epistemic method of systemic reasoning and thinking, to satisfy the interests of all parties involved in participative process of change. Also pictorial techniques (such as, mind-mapping) and techniques, which are used in 'soft' inquiry, for generating ideas in groups (such as, brain storming), although valuable in generating knowledge, (1) do not help ideas interact thoroughly, and (2) provide mainly positivistic data. This has occurred regardless of the fact that, as Salmon (1981) has pointed out, systems thinking justified the 1970s efforts of those who used cognitive theory in their programs, "principally as a tool for improving the dialogue which goes on between the participants in learning, tutor and the person being tutored" (p.8).

It has been observed that within systems methodologies and methods, researchers have remained 'knowledge managers' influencing the process of knowledge creation. Also,
even though it has been practiced for more than a decade, there is little evidence of its popularity in the Third World. In spite of the fact that the soft systems approach "was developed expressly to cope with more normal situations in which the people in problem situations perceive and interpret the world in their own ways and make judgements about it using standards and values which may not be shared by others" (Checkland et al., 1990), it has been applied mainly within organizational contexts without equal attention to community development contexts. Furthermore, its concern in most cases has been to satisfy the managerial interests in running organizations than to improve individuals' capabilities to cope with problems differently. And, despite its holistic manner of perceiving humans' interactions and behaviour, SSM fails in practice to create a holistic approach through integrating other methods, for example arts, pedagogy and the media. Also there is unlikely evidence (Checkland, 1990) that soft systems methodology has been practiced to elicit local knowledge and connect the individuals' judgements, values and culture to their daily-life processes in a community level.

It reflects the interests of organizers or planners, but is not a framework for creativity and a ground for transformation of the perspectives of the 'actors' themselves. This occurs mainly because it deals with participants in a 'primary or social', but not in an epistemic or 'realised' level.

As Leewis, Long, and Villareal (1990:25) have pointed out, "...even emphasizing participatory research methodologies that aim to get away from top-down strategies often continue to accord a central role to the experts, such as 'linkage catalysts' or 'knowledge managers,' whose job is to know how to improve the performance of knowledge systems".

This has turned the focus from human beings as the creators of new systems, and reduced their potentiality to a level of social participation. The systems approach has been beneficial mainly to the process of professional planning, but not in satisfying the interests of the 'actors' themselves. In other words, it may have increased the efficiency of organizational operation, but has not equally aroused the creative inner resources of the acting individuals. As a result, it has raised "the need to develop an actor-oriented field methodology when exploring knowledge processes" (Leewis, et al 1990, p. 25). Actors imply those involved in a profession and who are responsible, in the future, to carry out the human activities aimed through a co-creation or participative inquiry:

Checkland is interested principally in exploring problematic situations and the interpretations offered by the various participants in order to identify actors' "taken-for-given' sets of assumptions" that are considered relevant in the eyes of the model builder or would-be problem solver (Checkland & Davies, 1986, p. 112). Yet such a conception fails to study the lived-in worlds of the participants, and in fact, contains no proper understanding of the agency of actors, other than, perhaps, that of the
problem solver. It also fails to contextualize problematic situations and actor interests within the arena of broader historical and socio-political events.

The understanding of people's life-worlds and their strategic actions is crucial for analyzing how actors attempt to create space for their own projects (Long, 1989). (Leevis, et al 1990, p. 25)

Therefore, arguing the methodological implications of an actor-oriented perspective necessitates a sharp focus on the search for relevant methods of putting the systems methodology into practice, a method through which the methodology improves itself. This meta-research in seeking the most effective methodologies, must involve all the creative energies of all participants through the inquiry process.

CRITIQUE

We might now argue that almost all systems approaches are run within a positivistic framework. The 'hard' tradition focuses on the provision of complex hardware, as well as the analysis of social systems, politics, health and civilian problems, and so forth, for the better operation of these systems to attain desirable and definable goals. The 'soft' tradition has followed the same pattern by holding its focus on systems analysis for the betterment of organizational management. The process of systems inquiry through Soft Systems Methodology (Checkland, 1990) also emphasises the role of planners and inquirers at the expense of shifting its focus from the actors themselves. The need for an actor-oriented approach to soft-systems methodology has emerged to further concentrate on the 'wholeness through equal participation' and to develop from cognition into epistemology, in order to stimulate systems thinking and abductive reasoning instead of merely creating systemic data.

TACIT KNOWING THROUGH METAPHOR

Vickers (1970, 1983) has already been mentioned for his invention of appreciative systems and view that, each 'experiencing' creates new norms, standards, and values, usually tacit. Bateson (in Plas, 1986) says that metaphor provides a systems way of thinking through analogy which is far from the linear deductive and inductive forms of reasoning. Through metaphor, a real phenomenon is examined within a symbolic analogy. "The failure to recognize the place of the metaphoric process in the domain of human experience is to fail to grasp the very foundation of our ability to know, to learn, and to create" (Russell, 1988).

As a metaphor links between the known and the unknown phenomenon, and involves experiencing one phenomenon in terms of another, it functions as learning through a tacit or implicit process. According to Courtney (1988:15), tacit learning is aesthetic; it is intrinsic and performative. As it is "learning to learn", it is the necessary ground for all
other learning. It provides learning as the change of the organism within experience. Conventionally, learning is ascribed to conscious knowledge, that is knowing about what we know, but as Russell (1987) pointed out, "There is a lot more to the life of the mind than that portion of which we are (consciously) aware". He suggested that 'the two processes together allow the unconscious process to inform the conscious and the conscious give shape (understanding) to the unconscious'. Tsoukas (1991) has argued for the encouragement of metaphors for different ways of thinking, and their role in enabling social scientists and lay people alike to focus upon, explain, and influence different aspects of complex organizational phenomena. He suggests that, in lay discourse, metaphors constitute an emotional way of relaying primarily experiential information in a vivid manner, and that they can be used as a variety reduction mechanism in situations where experience cannot be segmented and imparted through literal language (p.567). Metaphors transcend a reality to be known in an explicit level, and create an understanding of the implicit or tacit layers of that reality.

When Polanyi talks about tacit knowing he strongly differentiates between the tacit dimension of the cognitive process and the overt or explicit dimension:

> When we recognize a friend's face, we cannot list the various parts on which our recognition is based. We have a total impression, a gestalt, a 'significant whole'. (...) [T]he fact that the mere sound of a word or sentence can communicate to a person a complex meaning is due to the unconscious and tacit knowledge he has accumulated in the past.

(Polanyi quoted in Courtney 1988, p.7)

What is the structure of tacit knowing? The systemicity underlying the knowledge processes involves two aspects: that of the tacit and that of the explicit. In most inquiry approaches, the explicit knowledge is the main focus, while the implicit or tacit dimension is neglected. The process of knowing customarily occurs through a tacit mechanism and is often rooted in metaphors and stories. The lack of an appropriate and epistemic systems method to elicit tacit knowledge has kept soft systems methodology functioning at a cognitive level. Consideration of Polanyi's proposition, that is, metaphor as a structure of tacit knowing, provides a ground to understand the mechanism of learning through drama:

Polanyi indicates that the structure of tacit knowing is metaphor. A metaphor in language is essentially to understand two things at the same time, one in relation to another. Thus we understand 'the roses of her cheeks' as two things in one - while 'cheeks' is the dominant notion, 'roses' are related to 'cheeks'. It involves two things, or two kinds of thought ... That is, the functional structure of personal knowing is a metaphorical relation: 'We attend from something (in order to) attend to something else'. (Courtney 1988, p.7)

On the other hand, the sources of the tacit knowledge of the artist and the scientist, according to Courtney are:
1. Knowledge of the structure of the medium being used
2. The level of values outside the work itself and in the real world ... while a work is being created it interacts with structures in the world and from this interaction takes its "meaning". (Courtney 1988, p.12)

Therefore, we may agree with Courtney (1988:12) that "the values of the artist and society, along with the artist's knowledge of the medium, are the key factors in creativity". Courtney suggests that the tacit dimension of knowing in arts is the foundation of simultaneous creativity, firstly as an individual entity, and secondly as a participant in larger structures. He also relates the roots of personal knowledge to the values within the work and the forms of creativity (e.g.: improvised drama, music or painting) to the social aspects, as well as to "the larger social and mythical structures beyond the work". From this point he links the notion of personal knowledge to the understanding of the nature of "aesthetic emotion". He points out that:

Aesthetic emotion ... is an automatic consequence of the recovery of value through the structuring activity. Emotion is implicit in the discovery of themes, and it is part of the statement of value within themes. (Courtney 1988, p.12)

Understanding of the tacit knowing dimension may lead us to explore the reasons why language has been critiqued in recent years by the cognitive psychologists and systems theorists. It may also be the appropriate time to look at the deficiencies of common language for the attribution and understanding of the meanings in the process of knowing. Some critiques on common language reveal interesting perspectives:

Our senses limit; our central nervous system limits; our personal and cultural categories limit; language limits; and beyond all these selections, the rules of science and more the unsupportable and pervasive ideologies of scienticism which shape our conception of reality.

(Mezirow 1988, p.151)

In the same way, Plas (1986:53-4 ) explains the fact that

A systemic perspective requires an assumption that our words reflect ideas and that our ideas are no more than that ... The words we use do not reflect fundamental or objective reality.

A conclusion deriving out of the above quotations might be that lingual communication, which is applied through conventional research methods and techniques such as questionnaires and interviews, is insufficient to elicit multi-dimensional concepts or to catch the whole meaning. Learning psychologists, by studying personal knowledge and talking about implicit learning, focus sharply on the limits of language and point out that:

... when someone explains in words their own tacit processes, something else happens. Pylyshyn (1973) shows that what we tell is not necessarily a precise picture of what we implicitly know. Our words may reflect our personal knowledge but they are not the same things - they do not have a one-to-one relation with each other. This is largely because when we speak or write we use a different
kind of map - a linguistic system. There is a clear distinction, therefore, between the mapping process of personal knowledge and implicit learning on the one hand, and the way we describe this process in language. (Courtney 1988, p. 10)

However, the focus of Polanyi on the differentiation between the tacit dimension of the cognitive process and the overt or explicit dimension provides us with understanding and recognition of a significant lack in most of the recent critiques on language. Whilst these critiques have paid a lot of attention to the recognizable limits of humans' knowing systems (due to the linear habits of our knowing - i.e. deductive or inductive - or the limits in our human systems as well as our environments), none have paid attention to the tacit dimension of our cognitive process. That is, despite the fact that there are distortions in our ways of reasoning and knowing, as well as the limits of our sensory or nervous system and the context, there is still something else, it is not the whole story. As Polanyi has noted, "we know more than we can tell" (Courtney 1988, p. 6).

According to Robinson (1980:170) "spoken and written language and mathematics are examples of systematic symbolism".

There is a difference between a systematic symbolism and a schematic symbolism, and they make different demands on us in trying to interpret and appreciate them. The symbolism of art is schematic, and the effort of understanding it can be very great.... (Systematic symbolism) consists of signs with conventionalized meanings and rules of structure which govern how they can be put together. (Robinson 1980, p.170)

Courtney (1988:7) points out that personal knowledge has a double structure: it indicates a meaningful relationship between two ideas. Basically, we are first aware of the contents of the ideas: the two particulars within the relationship. We then become aware of the dynamics: the relationship itself.

Polanyian epistemology considers the tacit dimension of knowing as the basic foundation of the cognitive process, and metaphor as the structure of tacit knowing, and then metaphor as fundamental to any type of knowledge. He also has identified the qualities or the potential characteristics of metaphor, as quoted by Courtney (1988), in the forms of existential knowing, which states that 'tacit knowing' is 'knowledge of' (1966). In other words, the metaphorical meaning of personal knowledge is what we live through. This has close relationships to the views of Heathcote (in Wagner, 1976) in drama education. Another form is the bodily metaphor that refers to the structure of perception as the key to knowing, since our bodies are constantly perceiving external objects. On the other hand, semantics suggests that personal knowledge creates a relationship between two ideas and brings about a particular kind of sign, which Polanyi calls "the semantic structure of tacit knowing" (1966). In other words, it is the dynamic process of the relationship that brings
meaning. This is a notion with obvious connections to current studies in semiotics and semantics, specifically those in aesthetics and education.

To sum up, Polanyi's notion of personal knowledge has linkages with constructivism and the other human-centred approaches to learning, as well as aesthetic thinking, action. Courtney (1988), concludes that:

Human assumptions are tacit and unconscious. They are energetic processes based on metaphor; they are simultaneously two things in one, the actual and the fictional. But so are the arts. They are two things simultaneously: the actual, and a representation of the actual. When we create art, most of our thinking, action and knowledge is specifically tacit and personal. (Courtney 1988, p. 15)

When considering the extraordinary function of metaphor in abstract learning, it is worth talking about analogy. There is potential for every theme or concept to have an exact parallel if one understands and recognizes the importance of this inner form. Analogy is the best way to make things fresh and more highly valued for consideration, particularly when things are overfamiliar, overprejudiced and the meanings are distorted. It suggests new faces for the old things. According to Courtney (1988) among the art forms, analogy is the major gift of drama in facilitating change and consciousness, but particularly if:

(a) the real theme is clear
(b) the particular aspect of the theme or abstract which is going to be paralleled is identified
(c) the way of making the ultimate connection between the analogical concept and the real one is determined
(d) the distinction between exact inner form of the analogical and the story line is drawn and the extracted inner form is paralleled.

**ACTION THEORY**

Social action involves the notion of human beings intentionally and consciously engaging in and structuring social reality (Waters, 1989).

Phenomenologically, people are involved in a constant process of interpretation and definition as their situation changes constantly. According to Waters (1989), two main types of action theory exist: positivist and hermeneutic. Action theory within the positivist school of thought takes the view that sociology can only deal with the elements of action that are observable. "The positivist seeks the facts or causes of social phenomena with little regard for the subjective states of individuals", whilst "The phenomenologist is concerned with understanding human behaviour from the actor's own frame of reference" (Bogdan and Taylor 1975, p.2). Hermeneutics, that is, literally, the science of meanings,
argues that sociology must also examine the mental processes behind action by which actors attribute meaning to their actions.

The phenomenological/hermeneutic action theories in sociological studies are similar to constructivism which was developed as a critical reflection on the behaviouristic theories in education and psychology.

Zuber-Skerrit (1991b) has argued that the positivist/behaviourist psychologists consider learning activities as responses to external stimuli. According to them, self-planning and decision making have outside roots, and these external resources have controls on the individual behaviour. To them, self-awareness results from behavioural change, but not as the product of a process which begins inside humans. In contrast to behaviourists, constructivist action theorists perceive conscious acts of humans as the crucial elements in the human behaviour. They suggest that the mental processes, such as reasoning, problem solving, decision making, planning and memory processing are all dependent elements of action. However, in this research action is a general concept and refers to the intentional or purposeful processes an individual undertakes. Also, acting implies a person creating or playing a role as a conscious subject through drama and, within the same perspective, activity refers to processes of learning (eg: doing a learning exercise) and inquiry processes. In the development of contemporary psychology and sociology, action is regarded as a complete concept. In a brief overview, some ideas of action theory in psychology and drama as well as the Leontief's theory of action are discussed.

Courtney (1988), identifies 'action' as a process of signifying the meaning created between mind and the external world and as mediation, which socializes thought and learning. According to him, "It is action that permits the observer to map thought and/or learning through inference". He distinguishes this view from the perspective of behaviourists who see action as behaviour that is conceptually distinct from the activities of knowing and learning.

Thinking/acting/learning are seen as a 'whole' and the observer can use inferences from acting (signifier) to understand thinking and learning (signified). Action is dramatic and performative. Internal empathy and identification, when externalized, become 'putting the self in someone else's shoes' - the basis of dialogue .... Action provides knowledge IN: it is 'thinking on the feet'. It specifically provides tacit, personal and embodied knowing rather than explicit and discursive knowing. The latter occurs when we talk ABOUT action. (Courtney 1988, p.15 - emphasis in original)

Checkland et al. (1990:2) regard all humans as being able to "take purposeful action in response to their experience of the world". By purposeful action they mean "deliberate, decided, willed action, whether by an individual or by a group". And Maturana and Varela
(1988), state that "Effective action leads to effective action: it is the cognitive circle that characterizes our becoming, as an expression of our manner of being autonomous living systems" (p.241).

Tradition is not only a way to see and act, but also a way to conceal. Tradition consists of all those behaviors that in the history of a social system have become obvious, regular, and acceptable. Since they do not require reflection to be generated, they are invisible unless they fail. That is when reflection steps in... all that we have in common as human beings is a biological tradition. (Maturana and Varela, 1988, p.242)

The cognitive theories of action, as Zuber-Skerritt (1991b) sees them, are generally subject-oriented and focused, for example, on cognitive structures and processes, and/or object-oriented which focus on tasks or problems. The relationship is seen as being static, not dynamic.

A systems view of research and extension as an educational action, on the other hand, suggests that the researcher’s understanding of the farmers and the farmers' actual abilities are not in isolation or independent of each other. Therefore, the orientation of cognitive theories that concentrate on cognitive dimensions of information processing, and/or discuss the dimensions of a problem or task, reduce these theories to the level of a subject or an object and are not sufficient to explain co-researching as an ‘action’. Consequently, the researcher’s (extension officer’s) action is the essence of the interaction between the farmer’s and the researcher’s talents, as well as their expectations. As a result, the concept of action is the crux of agricultural co-researching and extension, not merely to mark out an empirical event, but also to construct collaborative hypotheses and theory. Accordingly, as Zuber-Skerritt (1991b) points out, there is enough evidence to claim that "there is a dynamic relationship between subjective and objective conditions and that this dynamic relationship is produced by action". This recursive epistemology is close to what Freire (1988) perceives as concrete reality - more than isolated facts. Rather, thinking dialectically, Freire considers concrete reality as the connection between subjectivity and objectivity and never objectivity isolated from subjectivity.

A more holistic approach suggests 'spontaneous drama actions' as interlinked external behaviours and internal imaginings, that is, integrated 'acts' of subjectivity and objectivity.

... the spontaneous dramatic actions of all human beings are the external behaviours that are inextricably linked to internal imaginings: thinking "as if" and acting "as if" are holistically one; they are the mode of possibility and the statements they make are couched in the future tense. When we are very young, this dramatic mode must be externalized: it is expressed in overt actions. As we grow older, such actions become increasingly covert until we can do them "in our heads." All significant actions are inherently dramatic. These dramatic actions (overt or covert) become the generic medium of expression from which all other media evolve. (Courtney 1987, pp.62-3)
Piaget has also contributed to the development of action theories. For Piaget (1977) the source of knowledge is action, which originates from the indissociable interaction between subjects and objects. In the same way, Freire (1988) has considered concrete reality as the outcome of the dialectical relation between subjectivity and objectivity. On the other hand, in Piagetian terms, intelligence is the process of adapting rather than the level of adaptive behaviour and thus, as a process, it may not be defined or measured easily, but can be described.

What does adaptation mean? To Piaget, adaptation is the result of interaction of assimilation and accommodation. Although, according to him, intelligence can be defined in terms of assimilation and accommodation, there is rarely clear space for reflection in his definition. The terms 'assimilation' and 'accommodation' have been used by him as methods of interacting with the environment. Behavioural change happens, according to him, as an intellectual action occurs because of individual functions in relation to the demands of the environment. However, his logic mainly provides a sequential or an evolutionary perspective, and neglects the processes of systemic relationship within the human activity systems.

On the other hand, Leontiev's theory of action, precisely analysed by Zuber-Skerritt (1991b), concentrates on the interplay between the subject and object through action. It regards action as a "promising non-cognitive conceptualisation of cognitive-psychological problems" (p. 71). Leontiev illustrates his theory in the subject-action-object transitions, through loops like a circle, breaking open in the practical physical action. Considering this as a basic argument, Zuber-Skerritt's translation and analysis of Leontiev's action theory is worth considering:

The action is changed and enhanced by a direct communication with the concrete (materialistic) reality [ie: environment in Piagetian terms - my comment] and submitting to this reality. The realised action is more enhanced and correct than the consciousness by which it was anticipated. However, the subject is not aware of the contribution made by his/her action so that it appears as if the consciousness were the basis of action. (...) The four components are: (1) the conscious and intentional control of the action by the subject (S --- A); (2) the influence through the action on the object (A --- O); (3) the impact of the object on the action (O ---- A); and (4) the active reflection or internal representation of the action in the subject (A --- S). (...) The subject is the holistic person and his/her consciousness, including intentions, motivations, cognitive aspects (eg: thoughts, ideas, concepts) as well as effective aspects (eg: emotions, feelings, anxiety).

(Zuber-Skerritt 1991b, p.72)

The 'subject' implies all humans (which might include researchers, farmers, extension officers and actors) whilst the action, within the whole process, might refer to the different practical learning aspects of the above actors, as well as to all kinds of everyday purposeful activities of humankind, which are constantly reproduced and change (in relation to the
consciousness of the product of action) as the individual moves from one situation to another. The object, that is, the product of an action, may contain an accomplished task or an improvised piece (e.g. the improvised dramas in a process of forum theatre, the research product, or the tested hypothesis of a farmer on the farm).

The following diagram illustrates the relationship between the different aspects of a process of systemic action which provides a holistic approach to change.

Figure (20) A MODEL OF SYSTEMIC ACTION

FREIRE'S DIALOGIC PEDAGOGY: A CRITICAL METHODOLOGY

The interrelation of the awareness of aim and of process is the basis for planning action, which implies methods, objectives and value options. (Freire 1970, p.22)

Freire (1970) distinguishes between the world of animals and the one of humans (as sense makers and conscious beings) and proposes a dialogic pedagogy (1972). To him, education means the practice of freedom through dialogue where sceptics might claim that the whole potentiality, inner-resources and knowledge of each individual is still be unrealised. The main issues in Freire's epistemology involve the human's uniqueness and creativity, conscientization and empowerment, codification/decodification, and praxis (that is, the unity of reflection and action).

Participative theatre empowers individuals by breaking power structures, leads them to experience systemicity by looking at the relationships in a group, and provides them with the opportunity to talk and to shape their messages with relevant and appropriate
codification, that is, stories, creative imagination and expression. Then decodification functions to create a context of critical analysis.

In 1988, Freire pointed out that a dialectical relationship between the 'subjectivity' and the 'objectivity' within the context of human confrontations would result in the 'concrete reality', which is the key to individual's holistic thinking. According to him (1972, 1974), any prescriptive knowledge has ideological implications embedded in both the teaching and the research method which imposes a number of obligations, oppresses the individuals, and represses their creativity.

Although the relevance of Freire's work is his focus on a human energy source to increase human output instead of merely increasing economic output, he does not seek the different aspects of this source which involves the different aspects of human potentiality, such as emotional learning, tacit knowing, etc. Freire, by focusing on the continuity of human experiences, and by valuing their creativity and their products, brings us the joy of a sense of being part of a vast, complex and ultimately meaningful whole. Finally, Freire's main suggestion is that we put aside the teacher/learner dichotomy and regard learning as a joint exercise in which both the trainer and the trainee learn about each other, so that they can work together to improve the situation.

FINAL REMARKS

Knowledge is constructed within the interface between the intentional (social) action of human and the moving situations. Therefore, it is a constantly changing phenomenon. Hard systems logic in general suggests that experimentation and observation of an element or a single phenomenon without considering its function within a broader framework, is not meaningful. Besides, the interface between hard systems, and soft systems (involving the creative thought within phenomenological and hermeneutic process) transcends knowledge from both deduction and induction. The constructivist/hermeneutic process of 'knowing' naturally involves a metaphorical mechanism, which includes (by nature) two different but complementary elements: conscious (explicit), and unconscious (tacit). There is a need for an interactive/systemic context to dynamise learning through the intentional actions of participants so that these two elements (tacit and explicit knowledge) interact.

In the fieldwork, in dealing with the different contexts and phenomena, systems logic is accepted and adapted, as the experiences in the different stages interact and are reflected upon one another, refined, developed and finally considered as parts of the whole research process. Systemic Action Research Methodology has provided the ground for the actual holism through the recursive/ organic process of 'planning, acting, observing, and
reflecting'. Consequently, this research as a system of inquiry and learning, it is based on the following principles:

- general and specific objectives, as well as definable functions
- existence of at least two components, that is, in terms of the context: the different relative contexts within which reflection, adaptation, and development of the method have been directed, and in terms of the content: tacit and explicit
- the impact of one part on another, and the development of consensus through systemic interaction between the ideas
- the interaction between the events or two stories which leads the acting or a knowing system towards its general objective and holism as this fosters unity as moves participation into collaboration
- meaning (knowledge) is created through systemic communication, that is, the interactive/ecological/hermeneutic process, therefore any given situation (to be researched) is created through a number of relationships (ie: relational) and cannot be tackled without the participation of those who have experienced it as subjects.

Interaction (that is, reciprocal communication) can be developed within an integrated 'sense making system' of creative drama through conflict, which interconnects the systematic codification (ie: language), and schematic codification (ie: dramatic creativity) and creates a shared awareness system of communication). Hence learning is achieved through dialogue, both verbally and nonverbally. Language, for example, by itself is insufficient, and without interacting with the schematic ways of knowing (eg: creative imagination and body movement, improvisation) may not reach the 'whole meanings'. At this point, it is worthwhile considering what Hodgson and Richards explored:

The Greeks in the great fifth century B.C. had already realized interrelationship in movement, rhythm and words as the chorus beat out a pattern with feet and body which reinforced the words they chanted. This is a particularly useful way of making our bodies and minds respond to the ideas presented. (Hodgson & Richards 1967, p.181)

From a human activity systems perspective, within the context of this research, agriculture is considered as a sub-system of a larger system, ie: the environment. It is being conducted and affected by human systems. As humans form social groups, they create cultural networks and seek control over their environment, as well as being constantly affected by all the sub-systems which they have created. Culture and social patterns might impose certain ways of reasoning and thinking and lead human (soft) systems to perceive and act on a linear basis. This is essentially what disrupts balance of the nature ecologically and socially. To study agriculture and to improve the related problematic situations one needs a systemic vehicle not only for (1) systems analysis, but also (2) systems thinking and
practice through which inter-relationship between the parts are known and clearly understood. Such a vehicle may lead the co-researchers towards the understanding of unknown and unpredictable phenomena.

Not only the human potential for knowledge creation, as well as critical reflection and their application in participatory research through popular and forum theatre are acknowledged, but also a new dimension is clarified, that is the learning and empowerment possible through exploring one's tacit knowledge. It involves both the researcher and the learner (ie: co-learning and co-researching). Within the context of this research, drama is studied to help the participants understand human experience from the inside out. Through drama experiences, some corollaries of Kelly's theory - such as individuality, commonality and sociality - are examined and developed. For example, because in drama it is necessary that a person do certain things in relation to the other people, drama can improve a group's social health - its sociality. Each participant, within drama, has to 'take in' other human beings and relate his/her response to what they are telling him/her, verbally and nonverbally. Drama is based on group participation, and the participants have to agree to try to sustain the drama, to support one another's efforts to believe, to share their perspectives and interpretations with others. In this context, forum theatre is proposed as such a vehicle. An interactive form of theatre places participants in a recursive framework and provides them with systemic understanding of common themes through their both imaginative and expressive interactions. To sum up:

To elicit or to reveal tacit knowledge:

- power structures need to be broken down, since they preserve prescribed rules and patterns of behaviour, confine tacit knowledge with pressure, and prevent recursive communication and systems thinking
- the 'knowledge' or 'project managers' must involve the people within organization orcommunity in the researching/learning processes (that is, participation is the crux of systemic epistemology and creation of knowledge)
- to get the people involved they need to be aroused and become creative, to overcome the formal and informal patterns prescribed to them
- empowerment of the actors is the core of creativity
- creativity involves spontaneity
- spontaneous drama action, that is, creative drama, releases individual's inner-resources and energy through a conflict situation within the dramatic enactments of daily life events
- creative drama action: (1) empowers the individual in dealing with a conflict, (2) releases the dormant energies and reveals 'tacit knowledge' and, (3) involves
the individual in systemic and tacit (implicit) learning.

Forum theatre as a dialogic, emancipatory methodology for human inquiry here attempts to link hard systems tradition with soft systems methodology in the sense that "It is virtually impossible to perform the comparison phase of soft systems methodology without modifying the readiness of the participants to perceive the world in a particular way" (Checkland 1985, p. 764 - emphasis added).
CHAPTER SEVEN

SYSTEMIC ACTION RESEARCH AND FORUM THEATRE

Based on the phenomenological school of thought and constructivist fundamentals, this chapter discusses some participative research approaches to development, for example: action research, participatory research, and forum theatre. 'Participation', as a humanistic fundamental in creating and maintaining a social system through utilising the relationships between action and reflection, is highlighted. This lets the 'problem owner' think about the problem and become 'problem solver'. The qualitative principles are achieved in a process of action research cycles and involve a series of work-in-progress performances (each as an action research cycle) which will culminate with a group-informed performance (that is, forum theatre).

The chapter searches for an interactive and a dynamic methodology through which people analyse their problems in equal terms. In terms of a participative/systemic logic, forum theatre is discussed as the most aesthetically attractive, economical and holistic method and means of systemic action research for development.
CHAPTER SEVEN

SYSTEMIC ACTION RESEARCH AND FORUM THEATRE

The logic of Otherness is immanent in social structure. Structure is always relationship between 'others'. (Cooper, 1983)

'Meaning' is brought forth through a dynamic process of relationship between two ideas (Polanyi, 1969), and the ideas interact when two individuals participate:

Wholeness means that all parts belong together, and that means they partake in each other. Thus from the central idea that all is connected, that each is a part of the whole, comes the idea that each participate in the whole. Thus participation is an implicit aspect of wholeness.

(Skolimowski, 1985)

According to Leeuwis et al. (1990), "Issues relating to power and social conflict are poorly dealt with in knowledge systems theory and methodology." Consequently, systems methodology lacks a 'method' of conflict resolution. Here, participation emerges as a challenge to 'hierarchy' and thus to power and social conflict, since power relates to the hierarchical (non-participative) structures within a community, a research process or an organizational system.

Traditional extension is based on a philosophy grounded in positivistic principles (Bawden and Russell, 1990). Its structure is hierarchical, and considers knowledge as a set of facts which is potentially transferable existing 'outside in the world'. It relies on empirical knowledge gathered by researchers in laboratories or in research stations. As a consequence, if this empirical and isolated knowledge is not adopted by people, conventional extension suggests that there must be a number of obstacles which prevent people from accepting new ideas which are perceived as 'good' simply because they are the results of a research plan conducted by 'experts'. This positivist view leads conventional extension to rely on behaviouristic theories to challenge these constraints, to persuade people to change. As Hall and Kassam (1989:538) have pointed out, "the conventionalists collect and manipulate the facts as well as the people. They neither create nor participate".

Such top-down processes create asymmetrical relationships. It is basically a reductionistic approach through which the researchers are in the quest for the components or the 'truths' as isolated parts. The passivity which is rooted in non-systemic, non-participative philosophy insists on the transfer of knowledge and technology, but not on the creation of it. Based on positivistic fundamentals, even the researchers do not create, they empirically explore and collect.
Research into the epistemology of adult education, rural development and extension, suggests that viewing development as a systemic and multi-dimensional process of change involves humans and the way they interact with environment. Development implies an improvement of the level and the quality of interactions between individuals and their surrounding systems which is a basis for change (Macadam and Bawden, 1985). The process of facilitating change within a human context is achieved through the establishment of a system of rapport, or what Vickers (1983) calls 'appreciation', between extension workers, researchers and community members.

On the other hand, Goffman's (1969) "backstage/frontstage" analogy of self-presentation, proposes a model in which a person monitors 'backstage' his/her 'frontstage' presentation of self in terms of personal constructs, mainly to increase the extent of his/her influence on others. This has implications for understanding how artists or researchers tend to influence the minds of their audiences in certain ways and for certain purposes. This is also a paradigm contrary to one which proposes the freedom of humans' knowledge building potential and sense-making reality and the value of equal participation. It refers to what Freire (1972) regards as 'ideological penetration' in learning and researching processes.

There is a need for a method of improving group performance effectiveness within collaborative inquiry, and an answer to the question of 'how does group interaction process affect group performance?'. The term 'systemic action research' implies an interactive way of working together that is factual and value based for the determination of appropriate decisions in a complicated situation. It is a participatory process of 'action' and 'inquiry' to manage a successful operation to cope with the ongoing changes in the relationships between the sub-systems inside and outside a communal or an organizational system. Participatory by nature, it seems to encompass both the factual and the ethical elements through action.

CO-CREATION

Working together to achieve certain goals or co-creation may be regarded as a response of humans to the world's ongoing complexity. The differences in peoples's manner of perceiving the world remain the main source of conflict among them, and necessitates collaborative methods of understanding or a shared awareness system of communication to explore alternatives for action.

For humans, orientation in the world does not mean adaptation to the world, rather it means humanizing the world by transforming it (Freire, 1970). Furthermore, humans'
process of orientation, is underlaid by historical and value dimensions and involves 'praxis' (that is, a dialectical relationship between theory and practice) by which the reality is transformed. It is a process in which objectivity, and subjectivity are united through humans' purposeful actions, which are at the level of critical perception of reality. For Freire, "the action of men without objectives... is not praxis though it may be orientation in the world". Rather, "it is action ignorant both of its own process and of its aim" (1970:21-2). Freire's suggestion, and also his achievements in facilitating an awareness of purposeful actions among campesinos in Brazil, is the radical pedagogy through which learners assume from the beginning the role of creative subjects. Checkland (1990:1-2) suggests that "The very existence of the world religions, and the fact that every culture develops its own myths concerning the nature of the world and our place in it, show how important it is to homo sapiens to create answers to the most fundamental - ultimately unanswerable - questions".

The challenge here is to assume the need for more participative contexts to embrace the whole systems' spirit for creation of intentional action (praxis) among participants themselves to interact and share one another's perspectives. A holistic understanding of reality may lead to a consequent purposeful action.

A systemic research methodology should deal with 'knowledge components', each segment existing in an individual's 'construction system' in the form of 'personal constructs'. The method of doing this, however, must be able, firstly, to elicit this segmented knowledge' (including both the tacit and the explicit knowledge of a participant) and, secondly, to create a context to link them together in the most coherent and comprehensive manner. The product may be regarded as the collective knowledge created within and by the group themselves.

Checkland's ontological concerns clearly reveal a strong similarity with those of Freire who insists on 'breaking the culture of silence' (1970, 1972).

Can one really achieve an holistic methodology? Can one promote a more holistic understanding through participation? Is drama, with its emphasis on imagination and creativity, one such vehicle of participation? For example, through a drama experience, if you have three people describe a mime (that is, an action without words) done by one person in detail, you may see that each description reveals a part of 'reality' and furthers the imagined boundary to discover what that 'movement' is all about. It may remind you of José Marti's story of the seven blind men describing the elephant from seven different viewpoints, each one related to a personal and non-purposeful, concrete experience of the
elephant but reflecting merely a part of the whole 'truth'. In a forum theatre workshop, each perspective plays an interactive, complementary role towards the whole reality.

The comments of Checkland et al. (1990:3) reveal a contradiction between what they believe, and what they achieve in practice:

... what one observer sees as wisdom may to another be blinkered prejudice. 'Inside-based knowledge' might be another candidate, but again we have to ask: Insight in relation to whose meaning?

Hence, it may be concluded that a systems perspective which is actor-oriented needs to make connections between the worlds of researchers and participants. This means a mutual or recursive conversation by both the actors and the researchers, that is, their belief systems, judgements and socio-cultural norms. Through overcoming power-based relationships or a systematically distorted communication, the process might result in emancipation of either party from "those belief systems which can maintain their legitimacy despite the fact that they could not be validated if subjected to rational discourse" (Schroyer, 1973). The emancipatory process transcends such systems of communication through critical reflection as the basis to unmask the different forms of domination (Habermas in Held 1980). To understand the stage of an equal communication we may need some inspirations from a story by H. G. Wells, called The Country of the Blind.

...in which a man finds his way to an isolated village of which all the inhabitants are not only blind but ignorant of the possibility of sight. Remembering the adage that in the country of the blind the one-eyed man is king, the hero of the story expects to dominate them, but instead finds himself treated as a simpleton because he does not possess their sensitivity of hearing and touch. When he tries to convince them of the power of his faculty of sight, they think that he is romancing. Could it not be that the mystic, relatively to the rest of us, is in the position of the man alone able to see in the country of the blind? (Ayer, 1973, p. 5)

The crucial differences between individuals' perceptions of the same reality can be sensibly explored from the perspective of phenomenology. The proposition of the philosopher Kant is that the reality (the noumena) is not directly perceptible by humankind, but what is perceived is only the personal view of it (the phenomena). As Foster (1987) pointed out, "The phenomenologist is interested in the way people construct a social reality out of the phenomena of experience." Supportive evidence to this is the differing views of a poet, a pastoralist, a plant specialist and a farmer about a green paddock. Clearly, each one expresses his/her own perspective as personally experienced, which might reveal just a part of that reality. Hence, the essence of Kant's phenomenology is the fact that our manner of perceiving the world is different, and that we view and hold our own interpretations of reality. To those familiar with the phenomenological school of thought, humans are more than the product of their social programming, though it may
affect the creation of mental pictures of the world. Phenomenologists oppose the view that humans are merely responding to, not actively interpreting, the world around them and predicting its events. It suggests that they not only interpret the world based on their past experiences, but they are not bound to them and also create meanings rooted in their interpretations, and test their judgements which stem from these interpretations.

As Salmon (1981:8) has suggested, "much of the extension and adult education philosophy seems to sit more comfortably in the phenomenological school than elsewhere", and also, Polanyi's statement that "tacit knowing is knowledge of" (1966).

Polanyi's consideration of personal knowledge as "living through" (1966) has close relationship to the views of Courtney (1974 & 1988a) and Robinson (1980) in drama education. For Polanyi, 'meaning' is brought through the dynamic process of relationship between two ideas, and personal knowledge is the way we understand ourselves and our environment. The powers of understanding then control equally the sciences and the arts. His claims, however, place the arts in the position of both the knowledge and the method. He points out that "the scientist seeks to arrive at the most universal concepts and the most comprehensive laws; the poet, the painter, the novelist, and the historian concentrate on specific individuals, specific situations, and on a unique sequence of events" (Polanyi, 1958).

He also states that "the declared aim of modern science is to establish a strictly detached, objective knowledge" (1966) and assumes it to be insufficient. To him, all knowledge stems from tacit knowledge. Therefore, his belief that objective scientific knowledge is not only misleading, but false, reveals his phenomenological ontology and places him as one of Kant's followers.

Now, it may be claimed that the scientist deals with quantitative characteristics and studies only one variable at a time, whereas the artist deals with the qualitative characteristics of the concrete, with the comprehension of highly complex wholes. This has been supported through the claim that "Arts specialists are on the whole 'divergers' and scientists 'convergers'" (Courtney, 1988). Systems approaches, however, make possible process encompassing both divergence and convergence.

A CRITIQUE OF CONVENTIONAL RESEARCH

The lack of method in adult education literature is not proof that the answer is no, but rather a demonstration that the question has been avoided. (...) [No] adequate methodology presently exists which fosters rigorous humanistic theory development backed by equally rigorous research.

(Salmon, 1980)
Historically viewed, the last two decades in extension for development could be defined by worldwide conscious efforts of humanist researchers to develop 'appropriate' research methodologies in developing countries, to provide alternatives to conventional social science methods to achieve grassroots participation for community development (Reason 1981, 1988). In terms of research for development, it is incumbent upon people not to ask predetermined questions, and not to use elicitation techniques which are inappropriate and irrelevant to the cultural context and which are tailored to the abilities and requirements of the local community. In such a way interactions between interested parties can be structured so that the initiative in answering questions (or revealing the whole thought) rests with local people. This mode of inquiry derives from the anthropological approach to socio-development activities, as are for example, the analysis of a number of other methods such as games, folk tales and theatre (Schechner, 1985).

In contrast to the mechanistic ontology which characterises much of the theatre of the Western tradition, the Third World perspective views drama education and development as a cultural action activity through which both the learner and the learning situation change. Conversely, within top-down education and communication processes, the receiving individuals (the audiences) are supposed to adapt the message to their living situation, the basis of classical development and extension programs.

The failures of conventional approaches to development in the 1970s is one reason for the revival of the use of indigenous media in contemporary contexts of development. The traditional media were appropriated as a logical reaction to the application of mass media in large-scale, 'top-down' projects in the 1960s. The use of mass media for reinforcement of rural development activities was initially questioned sharply by Third World voices. For radical educators like Freire, there was no justification for the prescribed information and entertainment that the 'top-down' methods of communication provided, because they reflected the perspectives and interests of the industrialised societies. Apart from that, these media were accessible mostly to the wealthier groups in the rural society, and did not provide the poor with any opportunity to meet their basic needs and take part in their own development and education projects directly. For example, within the context of this research in rural Iran, sixty-five percent of the population who listened to the radio were among both the literate and the wealthier groups of the contacted communities, whereas there was no way for those who did not own radios to participate in this form of communication.

A basic reason that legitimated the application of micro-media was that these media were initiated by the communities themselves and rooted in their socio-cultural realities. They
were also a means of expression and a codification system as well, which avoided people's alienation from their cultural background. But, according to the evidence, and despite their great potential, these media were originally revived to recover the failures of large-scale media within national development schemes and reinforce the effectiveness of conventional communication methods. Folk media, such as puppet theatre in the 1970s, in most cases were used as a means of conveying prescribed information, and continued to function in the same way, but this time in small-scale projects such as agricultural extension, family planning, literacy and health education in India, Asia and Africa, countries/cultures with a tradition of puppet theatre and a value for traditional rituals.

There are some applications of folk theatre that involve the local population in decision-making and problem solving processes, such as the ones carried out by Kidd and Byram (1978). For Kidd and Byram, participation is both the end and the means of research, through which the transfer of information and attitudes is regarded not as a 'top-down' activity, but as a two-way communication. Kidd and Byram perceive the role of researcher as as a 'participant' and 'animateur', and that participants, central to the research process, are led towards autonomous social change. The experiment was aimed at the question of whether theatre could contribute as an alternative tool to the conscientization formulated by Paulo Freire. Therefore, the authentic means available within the community, like song, dance and story telling, were used to their fullest potential both in the 'top-down' and participatory styles. In the participative approach, however, theatrical experience turns into a learning process. This does not assume a dominant role for the animateur in order to stimulate and involve the local people in creating their own voice and making their own decisions. Being inspired by Freire's approach to literacy and adult education, the participatory researchers reported that such involvement liberated the participant communities from their culture of silence. Furthermore, another fundamental point they noted was the impetus towards self-esteem and consequently self-reliance, since the grassroots activities were continued by the community themselves after the animateurs had left. In the context of the current research I have used theatre to stimulate the self-directed learning potential of the community and to facilitate the process of autonomous learning and development.

The problem is neither the advertised technological goods such a machinery or fertilizers, nor the politically engineered content of the mass media programs, but it is the asymmetrical and non-participative nature of communication in development programs which reinforces social conditioning. Within the global scene, Freire's voice in the 1970s is the most powerful on this subject.
ACTION RESEARCH

Action researchers such as Zuber-Skerritt (1991a:11) have pointed out that it is, "a spiral of cycles of action and research consisting of four major moments: plan, act, observe, and reflect". According to her the plan includes problem analysis and a strategic plan; the action refers to the implementation of strategic plan; the observation includes an evaluation of the action by appropriate methods and techniques; and the reflection means reflecting on the results of the evaluation and on the whole action and research process, which may lead to the identification of a new problem or problems and hence a new cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting.

The basic assumption is that people can learn and create local knowledge:

1. on the basis of their concrete experience;
2. through observing and reflecting on the experience;
3. by forming abstract concepts and generalisations; and
4. by testing the implications of these concepts in new situations, which will lead to new concrete experience and hence to the beginning of a new cycle. (Zuber-Skerritt 1991a, p. 12)

The key point here is that these activities are conducted by individuals working collaboratively to create social knowledge. It is, perforce, a highly participative process and as Grundy and Kemmis (1988) have emphasized, "allows all participants to be partners of communication on equal terms" (p.325).

Here, the crucial issue of creation of new knowledge has been highlighted. The way Usher and Bryant (1989) have seen it is also worth considering:

... action research is a form of situated inquiry, then we can see its purpose as one of widening understanding rather than 'discovering knowledge'. The first task in this inquiry must be to understand situatedness and thus the initial limits of horizons... inquiry must start with an understanding, by the inquirer, of his/her 'historicity'. This involves recognizing that one's knowledge has a specific cultural and historical location, and is the result of social practices both past and present - or what we have earlier called 'tradition'. Through a participative openness, both the action researcher and those with whom he/she is researching attain a position where they are no longer divided into the subject and object of research, researcher and researched.

The systemic nature of inquiry fosters dialogue through interactions among all parties. Bernstein (1985:113 quoted in Usher and Byrant 1989), describes dialogue as "the mutuality, the respect required, the genuine seeking to understand what the other is saying, the openness to test and evaluate our own opinions through (dialogical) encounter". According to them, by opening ourselves up we can bring to the surface our prejudices, interests, and distortions, and interrogate them critically. We can never entirely escape all of these but we can transcend some.
Habermas (1972) introduces the vitally important dimension of the intentions of the humans under such circumstances: a dimension he refers to as 'cognitive interests'. Essentially he recognises the technical, the practical and the emancipatory domains grounded in work, interaction and power. While work involves 'instrumental' action which is governed by technical rules, interaction rooted in the practical domain involves human interest for 'communicative' action. The emancipatory cognitive domain involves an interest in self-knowledge - that is, according to Mezirow (1988) the knowledge of self-reflection. These three distinct but interrelated areas in which human interest generates knowledge are highly affected by 'communicative action' which

... is governed by binding consensual norms, which define reciprocal expectations about behaviour and which must be understood and recognized by at least two acting subjects. Social norms are enforced through sanctions. Their meaning is objectified in ordinary language communication. While the validity of technical rules and strategies depend on that of empirically true or analytically correct propositions, the validity of social norms is grounded only in the intersubjectivity of the mutual understanding of intentions and secured by the general recognition of obligations.

(Habermas 1970, p.92)

This perspective allows fresh insights into the thesis developed by Hall, Usher and Bryant (1989) that 'participatory research' and 'action research' have been defined from two quite different traditions - the tradition which gives appreciation to the gathering of knowledge and the critical perspective that facilitates processes of creating new local knowledge through group process of participation and communicative action.

ACTION RESEARCH: A SYSTEMS APPROACH

It is the interaction in a group process which builds a system of inquiry. Based on the phenomenological school of thought and a constructivist foundation, interaction between humankind and the environment is the main source of reality in terms of beliefs and personal knowledge. This suggests that there is no isolated reality in the world and that each human's confrontation with the environment creates a certain reality related to that situation and context. This view, as a result, considers all humans as learners-researchers and when working together, as co-learners and co-researchers.

The complexity of social research in a cultural context and the need to assess the effects of other factors (economical, administrative, environmental, psychological and ecological) through a research process, necessitates a systems approach. And as within a system the parts (that is, the subsystems) participate, a participative approach provides a systems context of interaction and improvement which enriches the choices for action.
The positivist perspectives and interpretations of action research, according to Usher et al (1989) "are limited by virtue of the fact that they do not consider the possibilities of practitioners doing their own research". Rather, "the net result of their particular orientations is to 'save' action research for positivism and fundamentalism through maintaining a separate domain of academic research expertise and preserving those theory-practice distinctions" (1989:124). Contrasting with this, Usher et al. have agreed on the constructivist and participative notion of action research. This resembles the critique of Leeuwis et al (1990) of 'soft systems methodology' through which an actor-oriented systems practice is necessitated. As Usher and Bryant (1989: 126-6) have noted, this definition is useful in a number of respects. First, it emphasizes that action research is carried out by practitioners or, at least, that researchers are actually participating in the practices being researched, and working collaboratively with practitioners. Furthermore, the use of the terms 'change' and 'improve' in the definition points to the importance of improving practice in action research through 'transformation' of the practice situation. In action research there is a particular kind of relationship between transformation and understanding which by itself emphasises the individuals' learning within the process.

On the other hand, focusing on the inherent potentiality of humans within action research, provides a ground for development of group processes as claimed by Grundy & Kemmis: (1988:328) that "the development of symmetrical communication requires that careful attention be given to monitoring group processes and developing them strategically for the group's own purposes as a self-reflective community".

In contrast to the positivistic view which prescribes experimental data, action research, according to Zuber-Skerritt (1991a: pp. 13-14) is:

- practical
- participative and collaborative
- emancipatory
- interpretive, and
- critical.

Basically, if we accept that action research was originally regarded as a necessary way of analyzing the situation through understanding the interrelationship between the parts and properties of a situation, the possibility of their coexistence, and its possible effects upon its various parts (Lewin, 1948:17), then the critical question that arises is: do the cyclic processes of field experiences provide such a recursive analysis without thorough consideration of the human's complex entity? As Lewin puts it

...
... this analysis must be a 'gestalt-theoretical' one, since the social situation, like the psychological situation, is a dynamic whole. It means that a change of one of its parts implies a change of the other parts. (Lewin, quoted in Zuber-Skerrit 1990b)

Despite the fact that thinking has been considered as the crux of reflection in the conventional processes of action research there is rarely any space and focus on the practice of 'thinking' to explore reciprocity and recursiveness.

Reflection has intentionality, which is grounded in the situation and thus involves 'thinking', not in a purely abstract sense but thinking about something - in other words it has both form and content. (Usher & Bryant 1989, pp. 124-6)

Usher and Bryant claim that action research as inquiry is hermeneutic and as such is well able to take account of the influence of ideology and power. Hermeneutic understanding does not merely operate at the level of the explicit but, through its recognition of situatedness, can penetrate beneath this level to the more underlying factors to be found there. It is not merely a matter of subjectivity but of examining the context in which this subjectivity is located. Thus, hermeneutic understanding can undertake the task of reconstruction which Habermas considers essential.

Within forum theatre it will be shown that participants, through the creation of symbolic images of oppression, not only can view the interdependence between the things and the events, but also step into the recognition of the historicity of these kinds of relationships in their personal situations. Therefore, as Swartz and Vainio-Mattila (1988) have pointed out, "in adopting a participatory action approach there is an underlying assumption that the existing social situation needs to change and that people should be empowered to carry out their own development" (p.141).

THE ISSUE OF VALIDITY

Valid knowledge is a matter of relationship. (Reason and Rowan, 1981)

Within a participative context (whether forum theatre or participatory field work) there is always the question of the validity of the created and collective knowledge. In new paradigm research, validity is a matter of relationship so that valid knowledge is the synthesis of a number of interacted ideas (Reason et al., 1981). It is clear, however that the higher the level of interactions among a group, the more valid is the knowledge. "The knowledge that is generated through action research is the consequence of a process of continuous construction and reconstruction of theory and practice" (Usher and Bryant 1989, p.139).
Since so-called quantitative and qualitative research have been assessed by social scientists, the issue of validity has been the central point of controversy. To validate the results of research, traditional quantitative researchers mostly use statistical assessments of the figures - ie: F test, T test, etc - while organising the data for interpretation at the end of the research. However, this is a physical or a static notion of research mainly popular in physical and chemical sciences and laboratory research. Whereas, within a systemic action research, validity is not achieved simply through a statistical (that is, static) assessment (applying standard deviation and so on) which results in a set of conclusions, considered by researchers as the absolute truth. This way of looking at research (ie: a single loop and not an ongoing process), is the corollary of positivist philosophy and takes a mechanistic-behaviourist perspective.

Constructivism, in contrast, views researching as a learning process through which the researcher is involved in a dynamic process of conceptualizing new theories and testing them in a continual manner. Each theory results in an action and reflection. Thus a so-called researcher seeking for a specific sort of knowledge based on a theory, has to follow the same process, and accept the premise that in dealing with human societies a predetermined plan may not necessarily lead to a pre-supposed consequence. Relativism as a principle makes real sense for such an action researcher - that is, one who consciously reflects on his/her actions to validate them.

Consequently, the constructivist view also suggests that in a research project (ie: process), people involved should be considered co-researchers. In other words there is not a ‘researched’ and a ‘researcher’, a subject and an object and, if so, the former is an oppressor whereas the latter is oppressed. From this perspective, the research objective in such situations first of all should be awakening the people to their internal power and potentiality to be co-researchers, to be participants. Such a process is a process of emancipation through which specific objectives may also be achieved or a subject matter (eg. marketing problem) could be studied. The process is a collective action and reflection. It is neither inactive, nor is it reactive. Rather, it is interactive. The dialectical relationship between co-researchers creates a democratic learning situation through which each party is a source of knowledge and the final product, which is the synthesis of this collective analysis and is accepted by the whole group. Hence, it is popular knowledge. Usher & Bryant (1989: 167) have pointed out that:

If the processes and results of research are self-referential, then conventionalist requirements of validity, which are regarded as objective and trans-personal, will not be satisfied. One implication of locating selves in the research process ... is that these agents of sense-making are 'on trial' with respect to the validity of any knowledge claims that are made, or which may emerge dialectically. But they are on trial in a rather different way and under different rules than those applying to conventional scientific research.
About the conventional concept of validity, Usher et al. (1989: 167) claim that "Traditional validity principles cannot appropriately be applied in new paradigm research or to the kinds of research for reflective practice that we are advocating". Usher et al., also emphasize the logic which recognizes the dialectical quality of sense-making. Its validity principle is properly based on an experiential coherence which is neither insistently 'objective' nor ineffably 'subjective'. Therefore, to them, validity is a matter of the authenticity of shared knowledge among a community of sense-making, reflective practitioners. Although knowledge-claims cannot be substantiated in any formal manner, they must resonate with experience so that it is meaningful and insightful for practitioners to 'know' in a particular way rather than in some other way.

The responsibility that is placed upon the engaged researcher is the requirement for reflective exploration to be made public in what Morgan calls 'reflective conversation'. This is seen as both an opportunity and a duty for researchers to engage in exchanges where they will confront their professional 'selves' (Morgan 1983:374, quoted in Usher et al., 1989). Usher et al. (1989) finally make their comments on the validity issue as follows:

Traditionally, the privileged position of academic researchers as knowledgeable authorities has been achieved by following the prescriptions of 'normal' scientific practices. In so far as these are 'distanced' from research subjects and adopt formal validity criteria, a measure of protection from counter-claims to knowledge is assured ... the self as a reflective practitioner of action research requires protection from 'unreasonable' claims upon his/her practice, since these are likely to follow from the process of engagement itself. In wanting to 'loosen' the constraints of validity as conventionally understood, we are not advocating a lessening of responsibility upon the self to produce 'good' research, but wish to emphasize that both 'good' research and the conditions necessary for its realization depend upon the continuous negotiation and reflection-in-action of all parties in the process - before, during, and after any investigation.

(Usher & Bryant 1989, pp.165-7)

One of the critical claims on the qualitative process of action research is the issue of generalization. The traditional researchers claim that the statistical evaluation in conventional research provides the ground for generalizing the results and conclusions. In contrast, constructivist action researchers make the assertion that humans have unique experiences as the result of their separate confrontations with their specific environment which causes the differentiation of their characteristics and the uniqueness of their identities. The biological epistemology of Maturana & Varella (1988) has strongly supported this idea, when they assert that "every ontogenic variation results in different ways of being in the world, because it is the structure of the unity that determines its interaction in the environment and the world it lives in" (p.86). Thus each of us is a very different "unity" and thus has different world views or "different ways of being in the world" and, presumably, different responses to, and learning from, the same environments.
Also, Usher & Bryant have critiqued the view that points to the lack of generalizability in action research:

Since action research is situated and since every situation is different, then the product of action research must necessarily tell us only about that situation and no other. Related to this is the fact that action research does not use a hypothetico-deductive but a grounded model where 'hypotheses' emerge during the course of the research and are subject to change as the research proceeds. Since action research is not located within a natural science paradigm and is not concerned to provide 'scientific' explanations of the world or make a contribution to formal theory in foundation disciplines, the lack of generalizability is neither a serious problem nor an apposite criticism. One could equally well argue that: 'an enhanced understanding of the particularity of teacher's situation is more important than generalisability, and that replicability and transferability are less important than authenticity and accountability' (Kelly, 1985:131). Although Kelly is here talking specifically of the teacher-as-researcher, the point being made is generally relevant.

(Usher et al. 1989, pp. 127-8)

It is worth arguing that a relative generalization is the result of both verbal and emotional interaction among the participants, which makes a consensus. This can be gained through the participative process of forum theatre where such interaction is focused by means of symbolic representation.

Action research, epistemologically, does not consider knowledge as absolute existing fact (ie: positivistic), but supports the perspective which regards knowledge as relative concepts initiated from inside and created through the theory-practice process or the interrelationship between theory and practice (constructivist). As Maturana & Varela (1988) have emphasized,

...the phenomenon of knowing cannot be taken as though there were 'facts' or objects out there that we grasp and store in our head. The experience of anything out there is validated in a special way by the human structure, which makes possible "the things" that arises in the description.

(Maturana & Varela 1988, pp. 25-26)

Those involved in the action research are parts of the action and not detached from it. The understanding of the researchers is not only the result of reflection, but also an outcome of co-researchers' interaction with each other's knowledge. As a result, the process does not simply lead the researchers to 'impartially' discover the facts, rather to transform and improve the situation, and thus to 'create' the facts. In doing this the researcher is, by definition, changing or at least challenging the status quo. Through collaborative working, practitioners are also engaged in the same process (Usher et al 1989, p. 127).

Validity in systemic action research is achieved through systems (ie: holistic) thinking and the continuity of action cycles and reflection, within the research process. As John Herton (1988:44) has pointed out, there are several overlapping versions of research cycle for co-operative inquirers. Each version involves the inquirers in a reciprocal relationship with reflection and experience, so that these two poles are in repeated interplay with each
other. Also, the claims of Usher et al. are worth considering: "formal theories are the result of certain kinds of academic practice, notably foundational or discipline-based research". Any kind of practice, including academic practice, surrounds its own informal theory. According to them, the promise of action research is that it will effect a unification of theory and practice since it proceeds from the assumption that their separation is educationally unwarranted. If action research is concerned at the same time with the theorizing of practice and the practice of theorizing, then a proposition that we can put forward in its support is that, by examining in action our own informal theories or theories in action, we will come to know better the structures, rules and assumptions which govern our performances, both as researchers and practitioners. The action researcher would then become a reflective practitioner (Usher et al 1989, p.130).

FORUM THEATRE:
A MEANS OF SYSTEMIC ACTION RESEARCH AND HUMAN INQUIRY

If we characterise the goals of action research as: participatory, critical, qualitative, achieving validity by interaction between personal constructs, liberating or emancipatory and systemic, then the following critiques can be made:

Conventional action research as such (like the Checkland's practice of soft-systems methodology), lacks an appropriate actor-oriented method of dealing with complex situations. Conventional action research neglects the epistemic development of participant learners through systemic action, and stresses the cognitive dimensions (acquiring and processing knowledge) in learning and dealing with a problematic issue. Therefore, it does not foster creativity. The same critique remains with the psycho-analytic approach of George Kelly in dealing with complex human systems. Few answers have yet been found to the question of: how the facilitator can get through the individual's world views to make them reveal their personal constructs to critically reflect upon them - how to reveal the crucial issues of self-knowing about epistemologies, ontologies, methodologies, as human nature (as identified by Kant, Rogers, Kelly, Freire, and Maturana and Varela). The particular significance here, is the shift towards a systemic epistemology as a key factor in dealing with complexity. And participation - aesthetically, emotionally and physically - is a crucial aspect here. The following diagram shows changing constructs through mutual interaction.
The figure shows how consciousness comes out of creative or spontaneous drama. Consequently, the action which is taken in the real life can be reflected or discussed through further participative drama actions.

Critical reflection is mostly achievable through appropriate (indigenous) codification systems which are familiar to local people, such as people's theatre and dramas. This is looking at the reality through the eyes and the emotions of people themselves, and beyond the level of language (that is, a lingual, systematic codification). The mechanism of changing constructs through participative drama can be illustrated as follows:
There is a need for the development of an actor-based field methodology and method when exploring knowledge processes, to foster social learning in terms of group interaction because in the context of rural extension the differences in objectives, culture and in some instances language, between extension clients and government agents are such that co-operative action is most unlikely to occur. Most of the obstacles towards collaborative action can be attributed to the differences in ontology and epistemology held by the various parties. Differences are exacerbated when these are not recognised and addressed, and disagreements and prejudices are reinforced. In such circumstances, meaningful communication and accommodation of differences so necessary for sustainable co-operative action, will not occur. Drama shows promise as a methodology to overcome obstacles to collaborative action, because it allows the two parties to put themselves in a new position or role to see and try out things differently. It also highlights systemicity, and systemic epistemology allows for interaction with communities which are hard to reach - the rural community might be hard to reach for the extension workers but the extension workers are also hard to reach for the rural community. It’s a double bind.

Although Boal’s main focus is on the liberatory aspect of his theatre, the process of a forum theatre workshop makes it an experiential learning situation within which five different tasks are accomplished. More clarification of an experiential learning process has been made by Long (1990). It is worth considering that the following strict sequential process does not necessarily occur systematically in a forum theatre workshop, rather there
is an interdependence between these elements in each level of a workshop, the relationships between which are processed later.

Experiential learning is that learning experience which arises from first of all undergoing a particular experience then, as a result of reflecting upon that experience, extrapolating learning from it. Most of the material available on experiential learning suggests that there are five steps involved. They are:
1. Experiencing.
2. Publishing.
3. Processing.
5. Applying.

Experiencing. Central to the concept of experiential learning is the premise that participants on a program come from a variety of backgrounds, even if their backgrounds are similar there are still differences in their overall life experience. Accordingly the intention is to have these people share a common experience so that there is some particular point at which their various backgrounds merge. Ideally this shared activity helps participants to understand more of themselves as well as other people within the group... Ideally, these experiences should be positive and designed in such a way as to provide a low level of personal risk for every participant.

Publishing. Once the experience is completed then the publishing phase is that at which participants share their opinions of what has occurred and their perceptions of the results obtained. The emphasis here is not on understanding the experience but simply obtaining data as to what participants perceived as occurring and their reactions to this.

Processing. At this stage participants are encouraged to look beyond the experience itself to why the experience was used and what are the implications of the experience for them both individually and as a group. Generally, but not always, it is this part of the experiential learning process that will occupy the largest percentage of time available. Obviously, also at this stage, the role of facilitator is crucial as, depending on the skill of facilitation, the processing may be shallow or profound.

Generalizing. At this point the group is encouraged to move from the specific to the general. Having undergone a particular experience and shared their perceptions of it together with the implications of this, they are now encouraged to consider how this has relevance in their wider world and experience. So at this stage, an experiential exercise relating to an accounting function having gone through the publishing phase in which participants share their observations as to the amount of knowledge they have in accounting and, from there, moved to consider the general accounting principles involved, would discuss how these principles have relevance in an everyday work situation. An exercise designed around valuation of inventory may elicit the data that various techniques are used by each participant or group in the exercise and processing may bring about an understanding of the need for the general accounting principle of inventory being valued at the lowest of cost or valuation. In the generalising phase participants will consider the valuation method used at their place of business and the implications of this for either a first in first out, a last in first out, or some other method of inventory control.

Applying. This final stage is the one at which participants move from the exercise itself to determining how the principles drawn out of the exercise are to be applied in their general life situations. This is the point at which learning leads to an action plan for implementation of the learning or, at very least, to the development of recommendations for implementing the principles deduced. (Long 1990, p.53-55 - emphasis added)

In a forum theatre workshop, participants themselves (usually in several groups of 4-6, each with a common issue- say ‘soil degradation’), create a scenario based on their individual, real stories and each group acts it before the others respectively. One is selected by all the participants as being the most appropriate, the one which represents the commonality of the subject among them, and this will be the one worked on for the final
performance. Consequently the scenario is re-performed, whilst the audience members are given the right and the choice to stop the play, and replace each and any the actors at any point. Accordingly, the performance continues until there are no more volunteers to replace the actors and everyone has had their 'say'. In this way, a problem is highlighted through performance and the problematical situation maintained until new solutions and ideas are proposed and actively performed by an observer, who has then become a participant. This dynamic process can go on until the subject is exhausted. At no time are participants required to be 'practical'. Flights of fancy are encouraged and metaphor is developed as a means of testing ideas.

A number of choices for action to improve the situation are proposed and tested by active discussion within a no-risk atmosphere. Such opportunity gives the participant-actors the chance to propose alternative solutions to a problem, revealing their tacit knowledge within the 'What if?' framework. Also, group discussion about the themes created involves the individuals in an active process of reconstructing personal constructs (Kelly's term), perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1988) and collective knowledge creation. Putting the ideas and results into practice can then become a fulfilling personal goal.

Any research, even action research, is by nature a time-consuming process because, in the real world, 'action' involves a number of naturally happening and intervening activities for which, in the long run, considerable funds and energy have to be invested. The process can become unpleasant and create boredom among those frequently engaged in the research activity. Therefore, from the aesthetic point of view, it is also lacking in appeal. Moreover, if conducted within a so-called developing or under-developed rural setting it contradicts the ritualistic interests of the local community, and is less likely to attract them to participate or get involved. If they do get involved, often they don't stay involved.

Hence, a short-term, interactive and enjoyable process, encompassing all the action research characteristics, while entertaining and arousing, might serve participants as a value-based means of group learning and action research, not only to illuminate the basic issues and community problems, but also to facilitate change and consciousness. It also contrasts with the conventional attitude that an intentional difference exists between researching/learning and being entertained. The former may be useful, but only the latter is usually pleasant. So we have to defend the idea against a suspicion that learning must be an extremely unpleasant, a joyless, indeed a wearying business. The contrast between researching/learning and being entertained does not exist in the real world. The kind of learning all of us experienced in school, in training for a profession, etc is often a laborious business, completed by acts of will. But consider under what circumstances and for what purpose it is done. Hall (1988) wrote "Knowledge as a Commodity", because it is a
commodity. This seems to be mostly relevant to 'knowledge' acquired in conventional social research and education for the purpose of being repackaged and resold, very far from the concept of group, shared learning for social and economic change.

Apart from this, the 'time-consuming' aspect of popular theatre as a means of participatory research also takes a lot of funds, skills and energy. Furthermore, because of its similar presentation style to 'stage theatre' in many cases it may turn into a 'top-down' communication style and function as a persuasive theatrical form unless it is approached consciously as part of a continuous and systemic development process. However, forum theatre itself encompasses the idea of an integrated community, an image or story important to the whole group, a way of interacting with others while remaining a separate entity, the individual's construction system (but each construction system being only fully meaningful in the context of the whole, namely in the structure of forum theatre workshop). As metaphors and symbols are embedded within all dramas, more insights and understanding can be developed towards the interpretation of a reality, since through language "It is not possible for one to express the whole of his construction system" (Kelly 1955, p. 110).

The characteristics experienced through forum theatre workshops within the context of the fieldwork make it very similar to the working definition of action research in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If yours is a situation in which:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- people reflect and improve (or develop their own work and their own situations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- by highly interlinking their reflection and action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- and also making their experience public not only to other participants but also to other persons interested in and concerned about the work and the situation (i.e. their (public) theories and practices of the work and the situation)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and if yours is a situation in which there is increasingly

| - data-gathering by participants themselves (or with the help of others) in relation to their own questions |
| - participation (in problem-posing and in answering questions) in decision-making |
| - power-sharing and the relative suspension of hierarchical ways of working towards industrial democracy |
| - collaboration among members of the group as a 'critical community' |
| - self-reflection, self-evaluation and self-management by autonomous and responsible persons and groups |
| - learning progressively (and publicly) by doing and by making mistakes in a 'self-reflective spiral' of planning, acting, observing, reflecting, replanning, etc |
| - reflection which supports the idea of the 'self-reflective practitioner' |

then yours is a situation in which action research is occurring.

Table (2) SITUATIONS IN WHICH ACTION RESEARCH IS OCCURRING
A drama process which develops action learning, facilitates empowerment and encourages holistic thinking for the collaborative analysis of common problems among a group can function as a process of systemic action research:

![Diagram](image)

**Figure (23) FACILITATING ACTION RESEARCH THROUGH DRAMA**

In terms of 'validity', there are two different qualitative mechanisms which guarantee the validation of the knowledge which is gained through the process: (1) the interactions through explanatory stage about the community, group or organization among whom workshop is conducted (such as, participant observation and semi-structured interview) which helps to pick up the different aspects of local knowledge or commonsense understanding, (2) through the synthesis of interactions a consensus is established around a common topic, beyond which no valid decision might make sense to the participant-inquirers. In contrast to 'measurement' and 'experimentation' as two different approaches to validity in the positivistic research paradigm, 'validity' in new paradigm, humanistic inquiry rests on 'experiential knowledge' and is achieved through a process of interaction.

... Valid knowledge is a matter of relationship. And of course this validity may sometimes be enhanced if we can say we know, rather than simply I know: we can move towards an intersubjectively valid knowledge which is beyond the limitations of one knower. (...) The primary strength of new paradigm research, its fundamental claim to being a valid process, lies in its emphasis on personal encounter with experience and encounter with persons.

(Reason and Rowan 1981, pp. 241-2 - emphasis added)
The dynamic of 'action', whether fictional or real, leads a group to the exploration of factual and ethical dimensions of a reality, that is, what makes participative drama distinct from traditional theatre. Peter Hawkins (1988: 60), pointed out that:

Years back when I was doing my first degree I was all set for a career in theatre, and was busy directing plays and television programs. But gradually I got less interested in the finished productions and more in the dramas of the rehearsal room.

I have had the same feeling as Hawkins when I am involved in drama workshops (ie., acting classes, community theatre and creative drama workshops) in the Theatre Department, University of Western Sydney, Nepean, New South Wales, Australia. The process consequently revealed that people had most power to become involved at a caring and urgently involved level if they were placed in a quite specific relationship with the action, because this brought with it inevitably the responsibility, and more particularly, the viewpoint which involved them effectively. As Reason (1988: 99) points out, "We need to find ways to acknowledge both the independent meaning-making of the authentically autonomous human being and the universal patterns to which we all belong". Also, Usher and Bryant are worth considering:

Any model of action research must also contain a theory of communicative action in which different understandings are conveyed by different forms of discourse - including those of the theoretician and the practitioner. (Usher and Bryant 1989 p.130)

Peter Reason and Peter Hawkins (1988) also proposed story telling as a means of human inquiry: for them, story-telling is important as inquiry only when it is used dialogically, as a group process. According to them, when a story is told top-down (and not in a participatory way where each party has a right to tell his/her own and share the others'), it seems to follow the same principles underlying traditional teaching, as well as the conventional theatre, traditional research methods and agricultural extension. In contrast, they use story-telling to create participation and dialogue. For them, top-down story-telling is propaganda which is aiming to impose something on the listeners.

Existentially we create our own meanings from events, in Sartre's terms 'we are our choices'. For surely stories can distort meaning as much as they can uncover and create authentic meaning. We need to do a lot more thinking about authentic and alienating uses of storytelling. Our colleagues have used storytelling within organizations to explore and exemplify the organizational culture. One technique is to invite people to tell stories of those who are seen as the organization's heroes, villains and fools. (Reason 1988, p. 99)

Reason (1988), has brought together a number of experiences and achievements in collaborative inquiry and has provided researchers with different methods and techniques to create an atmosphere for collective decision making and action. Although one article is
about psycho-drama, in his work there is nothing about creative drama or theatre as inquiry.

On the other hand, the method that Reason and Hawkins (1988: 85-100) have applied and adapted, is in its nature significantly dramatic, as they started by writing stories about simple aspects of their lives for each other, sharing these, and then taking time to work with the story, recording both what happened to the story and also the method and approaches we had used in their exploration. To them one way of expressing meaning is to play around with questions of who is the storyteller and who is the audience and also with the variety of voices, roles and dramatic style which the storyteller can adopt. Through the process they explored, they found that each story contained many stories interwoven within it, and that the task was to open up the story more fully, rather than tie it down to one tale. On the other hand, this is very close to concept that 'the story is as the whole thought'. Moreover, within a group process, a story moves quickly from belonging to an individual to becoming part of the collective: that is the dialectic of the process within which the interaction between ideas leads to a common topic where a consensus is reached.

Clearly, the above argument points to the principles that are rooted in the method of a 'forum theatre workshop'. With a similar connotation, Hall and Kassam (1989: 539), have identified a range of participatory research activities one of which is "The Creation of Popular Knowledge".

FINAL REMARKS

The mutual relationship between action and reflection for designing new plans for further action (as the crucial elements of action research) is achieved through drama in a deeper sense, where a number of work-in-progress performances as part of action research cycles culminate with a final (forum) performance: a self-revealing drama action, participative drama workshop activities, a popular or forum performance and possibly an informed collective action by the community of 'actors'. It is a basis from which to shift from a passive to a dynamic epistemology and to explore and eliminate the oppressive and repressive aspects of power structures in the inquiry and social life processes.

As a result of collaborative experiences, participants' range of choices are increased and they are empowered by the expansion of their choices and freedom to take initiative in a real situation. Empowerment of co-researchers is achieved through both an analysis of how the situation might have been handled differently, and the imagination to create a world from which participants can learn. Also, the epistemic interactions between the
participants increases the cohesiveness within their group. It creates a ground for the networking among them and to achieve the following principles as emphasised in group processes by Johnson et al.:

1. People tend to like people whose effort toward a goal helps them to achieve their own goal.
2. People tend to like people who support them in the achievement of their goal.
3. People tend to like people who understand their perspective.
4. Realistic, dynamic, and differentiated interactions break down stereotypes and increase interpersonal identification.
5. Higher self-esteem lessens the tendency toward prejudice.
6. The greater one’s successful learning, the more one likes those who have contributed to that success.
7. The more one expects future interaction to be positive and productive, the more one likes the people involved in that process. (Johnson, Johnson, and Martuyama, 1983)

The role of facilitator within the process is matched to the notion of 'extension' which is pictured by Bawden and Russell as "a process of helping farmers to learn how to become active as 'researchers' themselves - how to increase their awareness of science and scientific ways of thinking and doing things" (1990, p. 14). The facilitator, however, ideally should be perceived as neutral in terms of affiliation of loyalties. The notion that ‘facilitators’ should always come from the ranks of extension workers has great dangers, and perhaps further research into this area would reveal that a facilitator could just as easily be a farmer, or a ‘third party’.

Through the arousal mechanisms, a number of conservative patterns which interfere the process of collaborative research are overcome. The deficiencies of language, that is, merely a part of one's ideas in alphabetical symbols, are compensated for with the other means of expression, like creative imagination, body movement, improvisation and the other elements embedded in drama. A participative drama process bridges the conscious 'action' of individuals with others, through 'interaction'. The interaction leads to establishment of a relatively coherent social structure and consensus among group members, which by itself can result in collective social action.

Forum theatre makes linkages between both the individual and the group learning as emerging in the following theories:

- systemic learning and practice;
- tacit knowing and explicit knowing of Michael Polanyi (1946, 1958, 1959, 1966), as well as the notion of 'propositional and presentational construing' in the process of cooperative inquiry exposed by Heron (1988);
- tacit learning through creative drama action of Richard Courtney (1974, 1988);
- story as the ‘whole thought’ in systems thinking of Gregory Bateson (1971, 1979);
- conscientization and emancipatory learning as the empowering process, and
cultural action of Paulo Freire (1968, 1970);

- popular theatre and participatory research of Ross Kidd (1978, 1980); and
- participatory research explained by Budd Hall (1975, 1989).
PART THREE

THE PARTICIPATIVE INQUIRY IN ACTION:
FIELD EXPERIENCES
CHAPTER EIGHT

DRAMA WITH FARMERS

This chapter reports on experiences with groups of people where drama methods are used as an empowering, action-researching process, within which participants change their perspectives, fixed ideas and preconceptions about themselves, their community and their potential for independant action through involvement in a series of dramatic events. It shows that, within spontaneous improvised action through drama, the individual's unconscious emerges and individuals working in a group can share their awareness to analyse and discuss the basic problems which have affected and conditioned their individual and collective thinking and behaviour. Such awareness consequently can be communicated to a larger group through public performance in a popular theatre style and lead the whole community to take action. The process can be repeated, providing a continuous flow of interactive discussion and performance relevant to the whole community.

A number of field activities have created a context for facilitating change and consciousness through drama. Within these experiences and case studies however, drama was not just the medium for communication, it was the method of a systemic communication in order to answer the following questions: (1) Can a participative drama process explore and develop insights into people's problems in order to change the way they deal with their world? (2) Would people who are conscious about their problems have a higher motivation to move from passivity and to learn from experiences and would they be more responsive and interactive within group processes than as individuals?
CHAPTER EIGHT

DRAMA WITH FARMERS

INTRODUCTION

The participation of a group of people within an inquiry process ideally engages both their physical activity and their knowledge, both tacit and explicit. In an action research process the main focus is usually on the physical involvement of all the participants and their explicit knowledge, to be acquired through participant observations, semi-structured interviews, informal and critical conversations, as well as through taking subsequent action. The major objectives of these field experiences are to approach participatory research in a deeper sense in terms of the emotional and the psychological, to achieve both the physical and emotional involvement of the co-researchers, to let the participants' unconsciousness come out - their tacit knowledge. An approach therefore which acknowledges the emotional and psychological factors is essential.

In doing this, the researcher follows a process through which the study starts from participant observation, group discussions and informal interviews (for the general knowledge known as 'explicit') and continues into further exploration by means of improvised, creative dramas and forum theatre workshops (for revealing the dormant or unconscious 'implicit' or 'tacit' knowledge of the participants). This process of co-learning and co-researching sometimes culminates in public performances and encourages a whole community to take initiative and action to improve a problematic situation. As such a process raises the consciousness of people about 'the self' and helps them to explore and analyse oppressive and preventative factors to make collective and independent decisions, it is an empowering or conscientising process. Germaine to this is the truism that a great deal of people's creative and communal knowledge lies embedded in their traditional oral literature, manifested in metaphors and everyday language, parables, stories and in indigenous dramas and rituals - both secular and sacred.

The major part of the chapter illustrates a rural community in Iran and the role of a facilitator helping people within that community to help themselves to improve their lifestyle, a situation within which drama, games and participative theatre are used. Although the major field work was in Iran, application and development of the theories in practice were achieved through a range of other field experiments. A number of methodologies were applied in a variety of social and cultural settings.
A list of major activities and their methodological focus is as follows:

(A) Exploration of drama methodology and surveys of drama students (in Australia)
Objective: To develop insights into drama as a creative, learning activity through participating in different kinds of theatre classes and workshops, and interacting with drama students and facilitators within a tertiary training institution.
The method: Participant observation, dialogue and group session interviews.

(B) Field activities in participative drama in Iran with villagers
Objective: To assess the ability of participative drama to bring about individual and group emancipatory learning in areas of concern defined by the people involved.
The method: A wide variety of participatory drama and reflective techniques. In seeking to test the appropriateness of drama as a codification tool in rural Iran, a participative style of theatre has been established (ie: involving the audience in performance) with the aim of helping people to view their relationships within their particular social structure in order to facilitate their process of decodification/codification.

(C) Activities with the local administrators from the Departments of Extension, Education, Literacy and Health in Isfahan to discuss research related issues in rural settings.
Objective: To explore the feasibility of using drama techniques for communication and inquiry in the administrative areas of rural development and agricultural extension.
The method: Participative workshops in which creative dialogue, improvisation and other drama techniques were used to gather knowledge and increase understanding of cultural and communication issues.

(D) Participative drama with Iranian nomads
Objective: To explore a research methodology for a new way of looking at sociocultural perspectives of nomadic communities in a collaborative way. The logic behind this type of intervention has been already explained, based on the need for epistemological shifts in the perspectives of various parties involved in the process. The objective was to introduce and to refine research methodology based on creative drama techniques for participative, communicative interaction with nomads.
The method: Spontaneous drama action, dialogue and painting were used to investigate local issues, and the roots of conflict among nomads and some of the local organisations to establish rapport.

(E) Exploration with immigrant ethnic farmers in Australia (farmers who are from other cultures, now farming in Australia.)
Objective: To create a forum for discussion and action relating to the over-use of chemicals among small farmers in the outer Sydney areas and the South Coast of NSW.
The method: Creative, interactive dialogue (derived from drama techniques) used to identify individual farmers' knowledge, values and needs. The second phase was exchange through inter-personal dialogue and follow-up sessions involving group workshops where all farmers involved could share their ideas and formulate solutions which would provide improvement to their individual and collective situations.

(F) Participative drama workshops with several groups at Hawkesbury.
Objective: To develop and refine drama methods and other inquiry techniques with undergraduate and postgraduate agriculture and social ecology students and lecturers.
The method: Forum theatre workshops among different groups of students at the Faculty of Agriculture and Rural Development, operating within a variety of time-frames: two hours, one day, and two days, were conducted, involving them in a number of inside-out / creative dialogue and drama activities.

My intention as a participant observer has been to learn about drama as a learning medium and then to test its usefulness for action researching in rural extension and community development activities. This followed on from my past experiences of script-writing for rural radio programs, the writing of poetry and experiences of radio drama. In the different cycles of the inquiry, I have reflected upon my actions and interpreted them (Piaget would call it 'accommodating'). My mind, as the subject, was permanently involved in the modification of pre-existing knowledge (or reconstruction in Kellian terms) as well as the integration of the newly learnt phenomena. In other words, my actions were being evaluated continually through a self-reflective process leading me to be paradoxically both the creator and the product of this learning activity.

Through extensive reading, many new concepts sparked ideas in my mind and I adapted them into my research activities. Each new activity itself was an opening window through which my existing knowledge was revised and reconstructed. For example, when
experiencing the Newtown Forum Theatre Workshop in February 1992, my consciousness and thoughts (cognitive aspects) were strongly focused to reflect on my past learning in drama and rural extension. Subsequently, I realised that forum theatre was potentially the most relevant and adaptable form of theatre for participatory research and extension work that I had so far experienced. The question which then arose was, how could I be certain that it was the most adaptable form? The cognitive aspects of my mind were making comparison between former experiences in radio drama, acting classes and community theatre workshops at Nepean, as well as participative drama workshops with Iranian nomads and farmers, while my emotional and psychological responses contributed different but just as important views. My final judgement (at this stage) was embodied in the interaction of my whole subjectivity and objectivity. In other words, my holistic individuality was interacting, not merely the cognitive aspects, which is what is claimed by cognitive psychologists. In Freirean terms, within the whole process, my subjectivity and objectivity were dialectically involved.

The following diagram illustrates an experiential process which was followed within each level or cycle of this systemic action research.

![Diagram](image-url)

Figure (24) THE EXPERIENTIAL SYSTEM OF THE FIELD ACTIVITIES
(A) THE EXPLORATION OF DRAMA METHODOLOGY

In the two following sections, the learning activity of the author and the quality of participation with Nepean BA Theatre students in class projects, group exercises and performances, as well as within a two-day forum theatre workshop in Newtown will be discussed. The first objective was to observe and learn the methods and techniques used in facilitating students and groups involved in improvisation, community theatre, forum theatre and ritual, and to take part in the practical projects in a number of community contexts. The second objective was to evaluate personal change among the students as a result of these processes during a learning program of three years of formal drama studies, and again among forum theatre participants in Newtown. The method of inquiry has been participatory observation and semi-structured individual interviews, brain-storming and group-focusing interviews used in conjunction with the stated aims and objectives of the courses.

Before testing drama techniques as empowering and participative processes in rural Iran, a personal intensive learning and exploratory experience was seen as necessary, a prerequisite to any sophisticated field work in the real situation. Therefore, a learning/participating stage was undertaken over six months within the community theatre and drama classes and workshops of the Theatre Department at the University of Western Sydney, Nepean, Australia. Throughout this learning process, theories and techniques were tried for their usefulness and flexibility then targeted to be tested out in real life situations within rural communities.

Furthermore, contact was established with other researchers and theatre workers involved in community development in Asia, South East Asia, South America, Africa, Canada and Australia.

From April 1991, I started my participation with drama students at Nepean. Ninety drama students in the first, second, and third year of their study were involved. In addition to classes and practical projects the students in the drama workshops assisted in the conduct and organization of forum sessions to share and discuss their experiences and outcomes.

The Theatre Department’s focus in the practical classes of the Performance Degree was more on developing students’ practical skills than simply theories, therefore the basis of the teaching was workshops to rehearse and practice the techniques in a creative and participative manner. The context involved students in an experiential, reflective learning process. As a participant observer, I learned group dynamic techniques, improvisational drama, brainstorming processes and collaborative researching through drama. There were
many games that concentrated on the creativity of the group and emphasised the ways the participants coped with a particular problem and performance projects devised by the students themselves with a lecturer as facilitator.

My general aims were to observe and assess the creative drama techniques being applied throughout the courses among a considerable number of individuals (regardless of their educational and professional goals).

The objective was to evaluate individual personal change during a learning program of three years of formal drama studies. In other words, the study was seeking to explore the uses of drama in making the connections between collaborative learning, group process, action research, self-directed learning and participatory inquiry, as well as the development of greater socialisation, cooperation and communication skills among groups of adults in a variety of learning contexts.

The participative and creative drama workshops included acting, movement, voice, performance theory, community theatre, and a final community street theatre performance at the annual Blacktown Festival, in New South Wales, Australia. The objectives and the contents of each subject/workshop process that the researcher attended (during a semester) as a participant-observer are explained in the following:

**ACTING**

The workshops aimed to develop the personal skills of the students in using the elements of drama, particularly in concentration, observation, imagination, self-discipline and problem solving. Students learned a greater appreciation of their own creative impulses and improvisational skills and became aware of both the processes and the structures of drama. Special stress was put upon extending the ability of the students to analyse problems and to provide solutions through using drama both as a means of research and as a medium for expression. In the process, the students got practical and theoretical experience in developing character through improvisational techniques.

The content included: exploring the senses, tension and relaxation; individual and group processes; awareness games; observation and sense-recall development games; play and story-telling; lateral thinking and improvisation; warmups and ensemble theatre games; playbuilding; the development character through improvisation, and the function of action and the revelation of character. In addition, the theoretical issues of each were explored - usually through discussion.
VOICE

The subject concentrated on the skilful use of voice and speech for future professional success, voice production, and related experiences in oral communication. Particular emphasis was placed on the mechanics of voice and speech production. Attention was given also to widening the application of vocal skills to the interpretation of poetry and drama.

The content included: freeing the voice, concentration and relaxation, breathing, voice production and the development of skills, and combined movement and sound. As well, the actor's special voice requirements and the theory underlying the skills were addressed - the cycle of communication, the speaking of verse, group processes in voice work and the understanding of the physiology of breathing and speech.

MOVEMENT

The subject involved practical workshops in the study of body, its capacities and potential for movement and its expressive attributes. It aimed to focus students on their own physicality and to lay the foundations for an ongoing development in their integrated movement and performance skills. Students were expected to develop a vocabulary and a conceptual framework for understanding, creating, analysing and responding to movement in all forms. This subject also aimed to develop at greater depth and complexity the elements studied in original movement workshops, and to use those principles to interpret ideas and feelings in creative movement and to initiate students into another stage. Attention was paid to refining students' awareness of their own movement inclinations, including potential habits and to evaluate current progress plus to reset individual goals for improvement. In the process, the participants established their own working familiarity with a wide range of the qualities of energy and dynamics in movement in order to examine human gesture and its relation to performance. Throughout, there was a concern about the need to enhance fitness in terms of flexibility, co-ordination, strength, control and stamina. The content also included studies of human actions, motion, body awareness, alignment, breath and movement, warm-ups, physical improvisation, relaxation and tension/freedom and control, identifying and using different resources and stimuli for movement: poetry, songs, voice, sound, animal motion, natural elements, paintings, photos, film and humans to create mood/atmosphere/environment in group movement drama. Also, the content involved self-assessment/evaluation, abstraction: finding the essence in movement expression, qualities of energy, as well as, using images/metaphors, element of mime, identifying resources and research, and movement observation and analysis.
Group discussions within a forum theatre workshop

Enacting characters through masks
The emphasis on integrated movement within the BA course was one of its strengths and opened up a wide range of possibilities for expression and exploration in non-verbal languages and frameworks - essential for eliciting tacit knowledge and responses in a performance situation.

COMMUNITY THEATRE

During the workshops students were introduced to a working knowledge of the forms and practices of popular theatre movements in the community, both from the past and in the present. The workshops also intended to develop students' skills in improvisation, story telling and street theatre, to develop students' experience and skills in group-devised performances by giving them the opportunity to participate in the entire process of mounting a group-devised production in public. They experienced the building of a character through a mask-making process. Throughout, consideration was given to encouraging the development of students' skills in creating original material for performance.

The content included group processes, organizational skills, improvisation, creative thinking, story telling, street theatre skills, research and information-gathering techniques, strategies for structuring action and performance, project management and the collaborative approach to creating performance.

MASK PROCESS IN THE COMMUNITY THEATRE WORKSHOPS

Mask process is a theatrical experience that usually is used for training actors or in rehearsing a role or in creating entirely new characters. Masks can be neutral - that is without distinguishable facial features, or they may have sharply defined features and characteristics. Actors, in trying to understand their characters, are often involved in a mask making process, including making their own personal masks from original plaster of paris moulds of their own faces then re-working the positive images by adding clay or plaster to change aspects of the originals to get specific features or characters. These new positives then form the base for creating new masks, made from paper strips soaked in adhesive, plaster-soaked linen strips or latex. Wearing the masks and concentrating on the desired characters helps the actors to understand and to touch deeper levels of the characters, incorporating these discovered aspects into their characterisations. This process was experienced when participating in community theatre workshops at Nepean. Although the theatre students were rehearsing for a specific performance, the application of the
process seemed relevant in a social context with group of participants to help them to rehearse their actual and desired roles in their life and their community.

As a participant, I learned a lot from my own awakened feelings while wearing such a mask I had made myself. In this personal experience, the mask was revealed as a medium within which the individual feels secure and is able to reveal his/her repressed feelings. It is also a rehearsal for uncovering the psychological pressures and acting out desired social roles and finding ways of overcoming oppressions. Thus, psychologically, it is a tool for self-revelation and commitment, revealing the hidden aspects of the personality. The process involves the conscious and unconscious of an individual as well as full concentration and commitment within a group process.

In a two week period of the workshops, the participants completed their desired masks. The participants then wore their masks and, because during creating it they had been focusing on the creation of a certain character, they had an empathic feeling with the mask itself. In my interviews with drama students in Nepean, almost all of those involved in mask making (96 percent), responded that they had created a 'desired' or 'satisfactory' character unable to be accessed in their real life because of socio-cultural obstacles. Consequently, they were prepared to rehearse the character as it really seemed to them, by wearing it. In mask, the participants were not 'being', rather they were 'becoming'. Masks protect them from being negatively judged by others, because, on one hand all participants had masks, and on the other, nobody really related the mask's character to the 'real' behaviour of the individual. They had permission to play.

Furthermore, the process involved the whole individual's concentration on his/her own character, so that during acting all participants focused on their own role. In this way, they felt absolutely bound to create a satisfactory character or personality by playing a role. In fact, during the mask process, the participants stepped into the sensory and cognitive role of the character and experienced it. Each participant was involved in a process of unfolding the pressures and becoming a new person, through which he or she created and learned from the act of creating the new boundaries, 'becoming' towards what in actual world was not achievable. Individuals, through wearing mask and playing the roles of the desirable characters (ie: the ones of masks) created new realities and learned from each of them. Hence, the participant-actors were involved in a process of personal development within the activity.

The process culminated in a street ritual in the town of Blacktown, participating in the community's annual celebration through the performance of a group devised street theatre piece among the Blacktown community.
THE OUTCOME OF A FORUM DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Ninety theatre students in their first, second, and the third year of study, as well as two graduates, were contacted directly and involved in group discussion and 'brain-storming' sessions. Brain-storming also provided the participants with an opportunity to actively participate in a thinking process in small groups of four to seven to explore issues and suggest alternative solutions for identified problems. Brain storming encouraged creativity and collaborative thinking/analysis in small groups within which one person acted as secretary-coordinator and classified all responses during the inter-group discussions. Consequently, after the given time, all participants were involved in a broader discussion, while meanings were expanded and revealed issues worked out. The collective knowledge (ie: the output of personal experiences) was then categorised.

The method of inquiry was participatory observation and semi-structured interviews. The qualitative methodology was used after a sophisticated questionnaire, distributed among ninety students, failed to receive significant feedback from them - five written responses only. It was clearly an inappropriate instrument. This inspired me to apply more qualitative and comprehensive approaches in dealing with complex human entities. However, the questionnaire did affect the situation in a different way than I had intended: it made the theatre students think about the nature and the self-learning mechanisms gained through drama, and to reflect upon the quality of their engagement. It also created a ground for a continuous discourse about the contents of questions among staff and students; some expressed their surprise at how relevant most questions were, considering how divergeant our objectives were. The questionnaire in this way became not a means of inquiry, but a means of reflecting critically on the common and the committed activities among the community of theatre students.

The research was based on direct observation and participation, and informal and semi-structured interviews were implemented to explore the effectiveness of drama in changing habitual patterns of behaviour, as well as creating the power better to cope with complex problems in real life. The underlying learning mechanisms of improvised drama processes within acting classes, community theatre workshops, as well as in the rehearsal sessions, were all important studies.

It was hypothesised that people who had taken part in such a process would be more able to structure their own learning situations, based on past knowledge and prevailing social contexts, and to interrelate within the various groups and classes within their communities, creating understanding and new learning situations.
The following general trends emerged:

1. Playing drama games and improvising within a group helps participants to become more socialised and open, not only with each other, but also to all aspects of their real lives, within three different modes:

   (a) with reflection (private)
   (b) with reflection and open discussion
   (c) without reflection - 'the penny just dropped'.

2. Playing games and improvising within a group releases internal energies as well as dormant knowledge and develops an awareness of subjectivity rather than objectivity. However, in some cases, after discussion and analysis, subjectivity might turn into objectivity, and this time it is a more informed objectivity.

3. A person learns both by being a participant and an observer of improvisations, though within improvisation the observer is not necessarily part of the improvised experience. Furthermore, the experiences help the participant to move from passivity towards being an active entity who causes things to happen. Moreover, the improvisation informs decision making and creative thinking skills.

4. The participants claimed that, when they were acting on things, or improvising, they were 'trying things out', 'taking risks', 'thinking creatively', 'exploring ways of overcoming obstacles', and 'trying to find other ways', i.e. 'testing hypotheses'. As a result, this 'testing out' or 'playing' or 'acting' helped them to test things out differently, think more flexibly, and actively employ tactics in deal with the problematic situations.

5. The participative aspects of playing within a group are considered to have important effects on the behaviour of the participants in these games/improvisations, as most of the students in this study had been affected in terms of changing their goal structures from 'individualistic' towards 'cooperative'.

6. The process of socialization and openness was more tangible among the third year students, as they claimed their behaviour changed in relation to their needs in 'real' life.

7. Through participating in creative group activities such as drama games, role play and improvisation, participants act in a subjective manner and, as a consequence, they not only process their memories, existing knowledge and past experiences, but also challenge
them and create new ideas and patterns. The process develops their potential to employ
tactics within a new situation. The participants recognized that change was happening:
from the state of being into a state of becoming.

8. Second and the third year students claimed that participation in such activities, to a
certain extent, changed their view of the world. It could be stated that, in this context,
change is a relative term. In other words there is an evolutionary process through which
beliefs and world views are reconstructed. On this point, explanation from the participants
in the second and the third year of the study emerged as follows:

"It has happened to us over our time in this course. At some times that change was
greater, faster or more profound than at others. At other times things remained
static."

9. As a result of the group learning and the participative process, and despite the
differences between individuals and their perceptions in the beginning, new concepts and
knowledge emerged which was common to all members of the group at the end of the
improvising session. Some claimed, when they were involved in improvisation during the
rehearsals, that they observed this interactive, dynamic process at work amongst the group.

[This categorisation may by justified by the Bateson's systemic perspective of "the whole
is different from its parts", as well as the experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984).]

10. Drama experiences developed the participants' personality in a certain way, they
revealed. It caused them to know how to know (a state of self-awareness) and to know
what they needed (a state of problem identification) and to know how to solve these
problems (a state of problem improvement or eradication). As a result, drama changed
their habits, philosophy and their ability to operate personal tasks in real life.

11. The third year students noted that it also affected their social interactions (ie: the
ability to interact with people and their community generally). For instance, it was pointed
out that in the beginning of the course there were some insecurities in working with older
students, ex-theatre professionals, people of other colour, language, class or religion, and
even with the lecturers.

12. However, the nature of the work smoothed out these differences quickly so that
most participants quickly became 'equal' and did not remain insecure.
13. There is something intrinsic within the dramatic process that makes it possible for people to work and learn together despite their cultural and economic differences, and that the communication they experience participating in drama will pave the way for better communication in ‘real’ life.

14. The main problems in improvisation sessions and group discussions at the beginning of the course were: lack of confidence, shyness, over-assertive people and, in rare cases, the strangeness of the game or improvisation.

15. At the beginning of the drama course (in the first year), participants’ tendency was mostly to choose to be in the same small group for all activities. In doing so, the following priority of reasons were suggested:

a) Common concern and interest
b) Being of the same age
c) Feeling more safe and secure
d) Tendency to not participate with some specific people in the group for a variety of reasons
e) Having a close relationship with some people, such as friends or roomates.

On the basis of this experience in group collaboration, it was clear to me that there are ways of overcoming the barriers which exist between people of different ideas, beliefs and backgrounds. Some key elements for helping people collaborate in a group at the beginning seem to be: working in small groups rather than being the member of a big class; fun and enjoyment; warming up; drama games; leadership roles; and games with interchangable roles, such as mirror excercises and image theatre using physicalisation rather than words.

16. Working on a chosen common topic, within small improvisation groups, in most cases revealed the fact that some participants were more talented and creative in the small groups than they actually seemed to be in the bigger class.

17. Group process in conjunction with fun is one of the most effective ways to overcome personal barriers in learning and also, because of its relation to fun, the participant will tend to continue the process.

18. The nature of improvisational games create a competitive learning situation within a drama experience in which a high level of creative involvement is achieved, without disrupting the coherence of the collaborative process and unity of the whole group.
19. In the workshops, paradoxically, participants learn how to achieve cooperation through a sense of competition between groups.

However, it is the issue of the commonality of the topic and also the group concern that creates a collaborative learning situation, not the point of competition.
(Comment: This point has been observed in forum theatre workshops facilitated by the author in other situations).

20. Those segments of the course that caused us to understand the process better and helped the students to organise their learning tasks were tutorial groups and discussion sessions which were characterized by an open dialogic approach.

21. Drama is a vehicle for self-exploration and self-expression and, as a result, self-extension. Through improvisations, participants got through to their internal feelings and developed a sense of understanding of the self whereas, within the discussion about that improvised abstract, or in the small-group-presentations, they expressed themselves more explicitly than they had prior to the improvisations.

22. Participating in a group process (e.g., drama games, improvisations, etc.) increases the capacity for risk-taking in dealing with unexpected events, and helps participants to overcome the obstacles for establishing a broad sense of inter-relationship and participation with other people in cooperative projects.

While these outcomes were clear among drama students, it remained to be seen whether the process was equally valid for people not motivated to become performers, but for whom the process might be valuable in improving their 'real life' situations. My major concern from the beginning was finding a way of getting people involved in the creation of a common theme, listening to each other, discussing, acting and improving the situation. Consequently, a drama method had to be identified which was capable of involving people within such a process. I was always fighting against the notion of conventional theatre as a passive spectator activity in my mind. Continually being involved in drama workshops, I developed insights into drama teaching methods and began to draw a distinction between Aristotelian passive theatre, and the interactive approaches to theatre from Brecht to Boal. Without the interaction there would be neither drama nor theatre. I was finding out the distortions of the protagonist role for the actor in the conventional approach, which resulted in neglecting the rights of the others.
PARTICIPATING IN A FORUM THEATRE WORKSHOP

Saturday and Sunday the 1st and 2nd of February 1992 from 9.30 am to 5.00 pm, was a most challenging and meaningful experience within the process of my action research. At Newtown High School of Performing Arts in Sydney, a two-day workshop on the theory and practice of cultural action by using forum theatre was held in their drama studio. The workshop was presented by NSW Community Arts Association (NSWCAA). The workshop was facilitated by Ben Ross. He studied personally under the Brazilian popular theatre director/theorist, Augusto Boal, worked for 7 years in community theatre, theatre in education, and has worked with Death Defying Theatre, the Young National Trust Theatre in England and with Aldo Gennaro. He passed on the techniques of forum theatre in the two-day workshop to a mixed group of performers and community theatre workers.

THE METHOD FOLLOWED IN THE WORKSHOP

The workshop aimed to create a non-threatening environment for story-telling, image-making through the use of sculptured bodies (that is, two partners try to create an image of oppression by shaping one another's bodies in a certain way as sculpture), and discussion. The notion of change is a recurring theme. How can an image that represents an oppressive situation be changed to that of a changed, just, ideal situation? At the forum theatre presentation a short scene was performed to an audience. One character in the scene is oppressed, that is, due to an unequal distribution of power amongst the characters he/she was prevented from doing/thinking/feeling something, or was forced to do/think/feel something against his/her will. The scene must be relevant and familiar to the audience so they could identify with the oppressed character. At the end of the scene the character's problem remained unresolved. The facilitator of the presentation invited discussion; could the character have behaved differently? A member of the audience was invited to the performance area to take the place of the actor playing the oppressed character. As the scene ran through again the 'spectator' offered, through action, his/her solution, the other actors improvising as the action changed. The audience viewed several possible solutions, engaged in discussion and were left to decide for themselves which was the most effective.

Forum theatre in its presentation and in the workshop process took an individual's problem to the group to be critically examined. Common elements of people's stories of oppression were discovered, shared, and explored. Those 'spectators' or participants who came forward, rehearsed actions in the theatre that they might use to change real life situations, or conversely found that certain courses of action, at least within the staged scene, were ineffective.
Breaking the chains of oppression through image theatre
(The International Popular Theatre Exchange, 1993)

Street Theatre in the annual festival in Blacktown in Australia
THE PROCESS

There were 38 participants in the workshop from different ethnic backgrounds and careers.

On the first day, we experienced arousing games that helped us to discard class-based patterns of behaviour. Classic warm-up exercises like 'the mirror,' were enjoyable and inspiring. Creation of symbolic images of social realities, such as oppression and isolation, helped us develop insights into these phenomena. Image theatre constituted a number of images of oppression which were presented by volunteers. They used their bodies, or objects in the workshop (like a chair and a table placed in several positions in relation) to investigate power structure in their relationships with the others. This encouraged systems thinking along with developing imagination and mimic skills.

The level of understanding increased through exploring the dialectical relationships of our images and existing objects in the workshop - eg: the participants changed the position of a chair in relation to a table to explore the oppressor/oppressed relationship. Image theatre, however was part of the workshop process through which participants learned the recursive logic by their creative visualization in its simplest entertaining forms.

Then different theme areas were suggested by participants. The similar topics were interconnected to increase the commonality of the thematic concerns in the workshop: racism, mission groups, environment, indigenous people, women's oppression, judicial system, alcholism.

Each person chose a group and discussed the issues that were most important them in a short period of time (ten minutes). Groups were reorganised in terms of their concern about a particular theme. We all told our stories, discussed a number of cases of oppression, and made the most common scenario within each group.

On the second day, each group developed scenarios and rehearsed roles. Then scenarios were performed by each group before the others. After each single performance, a group discussion was held to clarify the ambiguities and to answer the questions that were raised during its presentation. The participant-actors expressed their understanding of their roles and discussed the different choices of action suggested by their observers. Each group's issue, consequently, was widely generalised in terms of analogy. After each performance, the facilitor asked the audience, "Which character was the most oppressed?"
The group concerned with alcoholism was voted as the final choice to be re-enacted. In fact this reflected a commonality of concern among all the participants as they intervened in the final performance by replacing, one by one, each of the actors and presenting in the role differently - possibly relevant to their own personal knowledge and experience.

The workshop ended with a group discussion and networking among all participants.

CONCLUSION

The activities first of all affected my personal perspectives so much that I had changed my views about theatre. In the beginning, involved in the acting classes and community theatre workshops, I was sometimes upset by doing seemingly irrelevant things. However as the inquiry process was going on, the complexity increased and at the same time more alternatives and choices presented themselves. It was a complex process to relate agriculture into drama and theatre. This complexity, on some occasions, led to a deeper insight into the issues of the research, within which I constantly reconstructed my construction systems and reflected upon them. As a result, dramatic involvement developed my systemic thinking and dialectical understanding. For me, learning was now dialectical and the process of learning definitely a recursive flux. The view or the phenomena of attitudinal change and social transformation turns into reality only when people are equipped with dialectical understanding, and it may never be achieved unless they are helped to look at their mutual relationship with each other and the surrounding environment.
(B) FIELD WORK IN IRAN

The field activities in rural Iran included a participative process with Iranian villagers and nomads in the Isfahan province commencing in July 1991, for six months in total. The selected area was the Bara' an rural district of Isfahan Province. Bara'an district is located in the south east of Isfahan with hundreds of villages. The Zayanderoud River crosses the land and distributes water into the northern and southern parts. The rural people in the area have inherited a thousand years of farming tradition and are involved in subsistence farming. The target villages of the study were five villages in Southern and Northern Bara'an: Ziar, Pilevaran, Kondolan, Dastja, and Esfina.

Isfahan is four hundred kilometers from the capital city, Tehran, with a historical background in agriculture and rural industries, and the villages of Bara'an district are scattered about an area from fifty to one hundred kilometers from Isfahan. A visitor coming to this area encounters an environment which has hardly changed in the last thirty years in terms of housing and infrastructure, though the life style has generally improved in respect of land ownership, food, health and shelter.

The area consists of a number of villages with an average rainfall of three hundred millimetres per year. Farmers are small holders with an average of six hectares of land, and seven children per family. The children are considered as a support for the future of the family in terms of labour force and kinship affairs. The area has only one high school and two primary schools. The educational activity for adults involves literacy education by the Literacy Movement Organization and infrequent agricultural extension contacts. The relationship between adult educators and local people is not too good in terms of trust and understanding, and the regression to illiteracy. The literacy training lacks a functional approach. The approach of extension officers is basically prescriptive and top-down, whilst farmers do not accept their advice and sometimes make jokes about them. This is mainly because the cultural and social phenomena are neglected in the education programs, as well as the ethical and psychological elements. People's own cultural and religious affairs were satisfied through locally accepted media such as religious rituals and indigenous folklore. In terms of social interaction, it is worth noting, people generally were cooperative in the religious and cultural activities, whilst competitive in their farming business.

Historically, in rural Iran, there are three major phenomena which represent power and social status: religion, large scale land ownership, and government authority. In fact, before Iran's revolution, the fourth status in rural areas belonged to the 'gendarmes' who had close ties with big owners to preserve the status quo. There has been also a new, fifth
The aridity and poor pasture of the Baraan district

The villagers store winter grain forage for the goats and sheep on the roofs of their houses.
status which belongs to social leaders and those with technical knowledge. Informal religio-social, and technical leaders have been the source of indigenous knowledge systems and served rural communities in terms of giving socio-cultural and technical advice based on community requests. After agricultural extension as a new technical knowledge system was established, due to its vertical style of communication, it failed to compete with the indigenous, horizontal modes of communication. Also, the communities were not offered a new social and cultural knowledge system (in parallel with technical) to adapt technology with culture, and to satisfy new, emerging socio-cultural needs of the community. Therefore, the role of local opinion leaders as the sources of the community's consultation remained unchanged.

The Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Reconstruction, Jehad (M.R.J.), and the Ministry of Agriculture are all involved in some sorts of educational activities, along with two other organisations that are officially in charge of education, the Literacy Movement Organisation, and the Organisation of Education, both ministerial branches. Some of the education-centred bodies act in parallel, so that the total education activity faces a lack of co-operation and coordination. For example, Jehad and the Organisation of Agriculture are both involved in 'extension' activities and, despite differences in their focus, they both follow the 'advice-giving' approach. On the other hand, the private sector does not play any role in this scene, except for the rare occasions when private consultancy companies are temporarily at the service of some government organisation.

The environmental issues are also alarming, and agricultural extension continues to give technical advice on the use of chemicals and fertilizers, whereas environmental problems and sustainability issues are totally ignored. The problem of the food production for a rapidly increasing population and the economical problems of each farming family highlight the issue of productivity, even at the expense of the other sustainability concerns. People share their experiences through their personal contacts and this functions through local and kinship-based contacts. Some farming-based problems such as the robbery of the farming water from the irrigation channels, create social conflicts and affect whole communities' life situations. In general, there is a sense of mistrust of outsiders. This is normally improved or resolved during participation within their religious rituals through the local leaders' support. The mosques are the locations for religious, social and cultural gatherings, even educational films or some literacy classes. The overpopulation creates new problems in the areas of health, education, and legacy laws, resulting in the subdivision of already small holdings. The old habits of doing things creates more problematic issues and oppressive situations, which results in a sense of dependence on government and a reduction of the communities' self-confidence.
Theatre, as usually understood in city schools and in urban areas, has little or no meaning to the villagers here. The Ta'ziyeh ritual - the religious, popular theatre of Iran - is the most widespread and in some cases the only festival throughout the country experienced and performed by rural people. Theatre in the context of this research was something quite different when adapted to their conception of entertainment and its function in the community.

DRAMA WITH FARMERS

This section analyses the different stages of the field study and the workshops, a number of improvised plays built up during the workshops, and then the culmination of the process in a final performance at one of the villages, Pilevaran. The responses of the participants are integral to the research. Since one objective of this field work was also to introduce local administrators and adult educators to participative theatre, their responses will be assessed too.

One of the challenges was that 'problems' were perceived differently by different groups of people. In the Iranian village of Ziar, for instance, the local leader Ramathan perceived the problem to be the government's serious intention to establish cooperative farms in Bara'an, whilst for the Government's head officers it was the illiteracy in the area, and for me it was the problem of how to use drama to create a consensus among the 'actors' to eradicate the real, underlying problems.

The problems in the area have emerged to be within two basic categories: (A) those identified in the context of 'hard systems': a rapidly increasing population; family welfare and economy; the consistent division of lands into small holdings; the use of more chemicals for more produce; the increasing number of animals on limited pastures; land degradation; and (B) those grounded in 'soft systems', the world views or the ways of thinking including fatalism, dependency on Government assistance, and finally, linear reasoning which emerged as a source of conflict, and the top-down, and power-oriented pattern of their relationships. These issues all have created serious ecological, educational, demographic, societal, and cultural problems in the area.

The major aim has been to increase the communities' (self-reflective) knowledge of themselves and their environment and their potential to diagnose and cope with their problems and, very similarly to what they normally did through their cultural celebrations, to promote the community's self-esteem and independence. This study was a challenge to clarify the socio-cultural, economic, environmental and ecological aspects of development, as well as finding a new methodology to increase the rural peoples' participation in
Rice growing in Baraan is a new experience for farmers who were surprised at the crop's success in such an arid area. This was made possible by cooperative water distribution arrangements.

Dialogue about producing healthy melon crops with a successful farmer. Water continues to be a constraint but through increasing cooperation with other farmers, conditions are improving.
learning and researching to help them shift from dependency, linear thinking into systemic viewing, that is a change in epistemology. Thus, the process of research has aimed to foster the independent development of the area.

The objective was to assess the ability of participative drama to bring about group emancipatory learning, elicitation of local knowledge through fostering systemic thinking, and facilitating individual learning about specific subject matters, being acted and represented through drama process within the community. This approach aroused the interests of the community to participate, since 'story-telling' in the village tea-houses of Iran is a traditional way of exchanging information and understanding the local issues and community drama is only a step away from that.

The method of inquiry involved a whole variety of participatory techniques - meeting people, listening to them, participating in their religious ritual Ta'ziyeh, having meals with them - all the stuff extension workers don't usually do. This contributed to establishing trust and relationship within the community to organise and conduct the participative workshops more effectively. The activities culminated with a theatre production by the villagers representing the most common problems of the community that were explored in the earlier stages within the inquiry.

SETTING THE CONTEXT

Field work in Iran was the major part of the investigation in a search for different applications of drama as a systemic communication for extension and development. The most important reason for holding the workshops was the need to explore the possibilities of using drama as an effective medium of creating the different aspects of the local knowledge and participation. By drama in this part of the research I mean a workshop approach developed through improvisation, using local material, the local dialect, and community members with whom the community could easily identify.

A second objective was to introduce the local administrators to this new medium and to look at their response. The workshop group comprised the young generation of the village including farmers, students, and teachers in the area. The program was new in Iran, and its failure or success could mean a great deal to the organizers and to the possibility of an effective participatory research for the rural people. Moreover, the Extension Department had just discovered theatre performed by rural people to be a literacy-teaching tool for transferring educational messages to communities whereas drama in the form of popular theatre had been used already at the beginning of the revolution and during the war with Iraq, mostly with religious and nationalistic themes and with the participation of the young
generation. This time, drama was being used within a creative and participative context for conscientization and empowerment of the villagers themselves.

In detail, the act of organizing drama processes within rural Iran involved a number of inter-connected stages where a power-free discussion was absolutely essential, whilst the power-ruled discussion was discarded. My process is explained in the following:

- exploring the community problems and gathering general information through direct and participant observation, participating in the community's social and cultural life, story telling, as well as a number of spontaneous dramas with children and adults in the village (in other words, gaining trust and joining in - becoming a member of the community)

- identifying a group of volunteer actors within the community which consisted of the village ritual actors, the village teacher, the extension officer and a number of the younger generation of literate farmers/villagers and involving them in a drama/forum theatre workshop;

- recognizing the common problematic issues of the community (those of the workshop participants) through 'analogical induction' that is the 'forum theme' enacted by them at the end of the workshop;

- planning and rehearsing 'forum theme' for a popular performance through extending our boundaries of the 'problem definition' by conducting a human inquiry within the whole community (that is involving the other community members in codifying the problem;

- giving a performance and organizing discussion through (1) shocking the normally passive audience out of its seats with the question: what would you do in a situation like this? And leading them to improvise a response, using tacit knowledge: (2) involving the audience, including both the local key decision makers and administrators, and the interested community members, in a group discussion towards alternative solutions after the performance, that is, explicit knowledge;

- leading both the community and the local administrators to take a follow-up action for improvement of the situation.

Integral to this process was a set of relationships I had already established with local development organizations, first in the city of Isfahan and then in the village. From 1981
on, I had a strong and warm relationship with these organizations as well as with the local people. I went on field trips with them, and worked in their stations and departments as a full-time or part-time employee. This proved to be good training for independent research and had given me a good reputation and respect within the both community and organizations. Another result, a little harder to see perhaps, was that I really cared about the farmers as individuals. I cared about how they would feel if I expressed thoughts offensive to them. However, in a revolutionary, religious society it was absolutely vital to bring religion and science to terms with each other without conflict. It was important for the farmers to give up outmoded ways of thought at a dignified rate, but fast enough to assimilate the undeniable advances in technology and structural changes to their way of life which were imminent.

A sequence of activities - linked together - were conducted in the rural and nomadic contexts of Isfahan. It helped farmers to develop a taste for quality and see the world through a keen critical eye. These interlinked activities were employed to achieve involvement, focus, imagination and improvisation, knowledge revelation, reflection and critical analysis.

On the 7th July 1991, I arrived in the rural area of Bara'an, the villages of Ziar and Pilevaran, to begin the project. Firstly, to get the support of local key decision makers and planners and to build trust among them, I made contact with the staff and chief development workers in related State Departments in Isfahan. Consequently, I was invited by some of them to attend their internal sessions and local seminars at headquarters as well as in surrounding rural districts. My initial ideas about the humanistic theories, through the lectures and meetings, sparked a great deal of interest. They were convinced about the important role of Freirean approach in adult education and the need for human-centred development. They also accepted that people had to become aware of their potential strengths and inherent powers through an emancipation process and accepted that this emancipatory action might awaken the self-directed capacities of farmers and might lead them towards involvement in their own development programs. Although the members of the Ministry of Re-construction, Jehad (M.R.J.), believed in grass-roots development, they did not notice that the emancipatory process or action was the fundamental basis for self-awareness or self-consciousness, self-directedness, and then human involvement in grass-roots development.

It is worth noting that they were already very aware of the role of theatre for education at the grassroots level. For them, although the traditional theatre might inform people or even animate them, its usage was mainly to provide the government with a means of moral and cultural influence in rural communities as drama is a wonderful tool to convince people to
firstly accept certain government ideas and perspectives of the communities' main needs and problems - for informing a community of its (the Government's) own need (!!) and, secondly, to persuade a community to co-operate in the accomplishment of a specific governmental project.

For this reason, and to increase the effectiveness of the government's or the official organisation's messages through theatre, the local office of the Ministry had decided already to introduce the organization's scenario to rural people with drama performances. Even though the scenario was sometimes produced by the local participants in the community, there was always a topic pre-supposed by the government organization to be processed and performed.

The physical participation of villagers in acting was the only reason for outside organizations to regard this as 'people's theatre'. They reasoned that theatre groups already existed in the communities or had been established by the young and or villager-students themselves, and that the government organization (M.R.J.) had explored some of these groups and given their financial and technical support. Finally, for the M.R.J. staff, this activity was 'educational' (informative) and 'people-centred'.

Unpredictably, this emerged as the first issue of my field research in Iran - to change the way the government organizations perceived educational theatre and grass-roots development.

Consequently, a considerable number of non-formal, semi-formal, and also formal sessions and a few direct observations were organized to discuss the topic. Five opinion and technical leaders from communities in the Bara'an district, were contacted, and we negotiated on involving young adults in testing the forum theatre approach as a tool for the identification of the communities' major problems.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

The active process involved only the males in the village, but not the females due to the religious and the culturally accepted norms. However, the contribution of women to the social and cultural activities involves many traditional and emerging tasks and differs from region to region. For example, women in Northern and Western Iran participate in farming and are more involved in public activities. In Bara'an, women as householders participate in preparation of ceremonies, rituals and attend religious gatherings. Their productive work includes weaving Persian carpets as well as making dairy products. Within the domestic sphere, their opinions and contribution is very strong, but cultural traditions
preclude women from taking part in public drama activities. In such a case, and considering that there were no female researchers, the direct input of the women into this research has been low and usually filtered through their menfolk. They did however attend public performances, sitting in segregated areas with the children.

There were no constraints or restrictions in creating a participatory and creative context with the young male villagers and the religious ritual actors. The forum theatre process was greatly appreciated by the group, and enjoyed a high level of participation and involvement. This time, instead of rehearsing designated characters (familiar to them) and being limited by the repetition of script-dictated pieces in a rehearsal for a final, staged play, they were involved in image theatre and improvisations.

The actors themselves, for the first time, tried to explore the inter-relatedness between their artistic creation, the village realities, and the different ways the audience perceived those realities alongside with their expectations. They found this very liberating and exciting. Most of the original improvisations were about oppressor/oppressed relationships which they were asked to improvise through their gestures. In these improvisations, partners created two different images by shaping their bodies in particular positions in relation to one another's. The observers in the workshop were asked to make comments on the kinds of relationships and images which depicted such a conditional life. This process also created situations through which participants explored the dialectical and interactive relationships between objects, for example: an oppressor/oppressed image can be ascribed to the position of a chair and a table in relation to one another, and between humans surrounding them. This process was followed until all the members had symbolically created their own images and improvised a reciprocal relationship; other members interpreted those improvisations.

The result was that each individual within the group was exposed to various comments and alternatives to different kinds of relationships between the partners and their environments, which also created and awakened personal images and potentials in their own lives. Moreover, this process helped the participants to see the inter-dependence of the relationships, rather than seeing the relationships as static and isolated. Their reflection to this activity was highly positive and sympathetic. Some of them later commented that since that time they continued to see the ‘relationships’ rather than the ‘things’.
WORK WITH THE PEOPLE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Afterwards, the local government Extension, Education and Literacy Movement Organizations in the district were contacted. My known background and loyalty to the community allowed me to make direct contacts with some of the local leaders within that context. Explaining my situation as a Ph.D candidate and my research objectives, I tried to involve these opinion-leaders as well as the other villagers. The semi-structured interviews and the informal meetings in the farmers' homes helped me to pick on the basic changes in the area since my last visit in 1984. As a result of the dialogue, we agreed on making an appointment for participant observation in the company of a local informant.

Furthermore, some spontaneous and unstructured interviews occurred in the only public transportation service (mini-buses) available from the city to the rural areas of Iran. 'Hitch-hiking' from the village to city was another method which was used a few times. It was unexpectedly useful for informal conversation with the villager-drivers who carried their produce in 'utes'. Also, village coffee shops and tea houses, the usual places where the farmers and the old people get together to exchange news and talk about their problems, were visited casually. In fact, tea-house investigations led me towards the best understanding of the social structures and the positive or negative attitudes about a specific subject while the hitch-hiking experiences helped me to establish dialogue with villager drivers which helped me understand their attitudes about the policy makers, marketing problems, as well as sharing with their experiences in farming and the local knowledge. I also used public places, such as mosques and the related local organizations to deepen my understanding of the local belief systems and the attitudes of the people towards their basic needs. In this kind of inquiry, at this stage, progress is slow, but builds up a clear picture of the local situation.

The second stage was allocated to recording the information gathered through semi-structured interviews, group-focusing interviews and story-telling sessions. As a result, story as 'the whole thought' in Batesonian terms, reflected a large number of perspectives on the common issues within community, so that everyone could look at the village problems holistically. Needless to say the whole process helped also in collecting the popular proverbs and parables in the community. Furthermore, I consider these examples of 'oral literature' as a major source of the indigenous knowledge and also the communal epistemology.

Interviewing children was another step in investigating the whole reality. In this respect, the children's attitudes towards the different aspects of community's problems was highly valued. It helped the researcher to get the information about the Afghani community
farmers in the village, with whom establishing trust through a dialogue was quite difficult. Furthermore, talking to children entailed recording their songs and games, since the researcher recognized that some specific characteristics which were observed in these games which, to a certain extent, were patterned in the communal behavioural and belief systems. Each play or game included a subject, an objective, a few roles and rules, and an order. The morality of the games in this community appeared more individualistic than collective or cooperative. Further investigation revealed the fact that, on the whole, people were actually more competitive than cooperative. However, the level of cooperation depended on the activity, and it differed from one to another. For example, in socio-cultural and religious activities a high level of cooperative work existed, whereas in the farming or on-the-job activities they were considerably more conservative and competitive.

**PARTICIPATION IN THE RELIGIOUS RITUAL**

In the context of this study the ritual theatre of rural Iran was researched and appreciated for ascertaining familiar patterns and relationships within the community. The ritual elements and the public locations of the village such as the school-yard and the mosque were used, since all these functioned in an interactive manner.

Each year, an extraordinary cooperative work does create a unique social and cultural performance for at least ten days in the community's life. The Ta'ziyeh ritual concerns the martyrdom of the Prophet Mohammad's grandson, Imam Huseyn and seventy-two of his companions and family in 680 A.D, in Karbala (near ancient Babylon). 'Allamah Tabataba'ie (1975) describes Imam Huseyn's life:

Imam Huseyn lived under the most difficult outward conditions of suppression and persecution. This, due to the fact that, first of all, religious laws and regulations had lost most of their weight and credit and the edicts of the Umayyad government had gained complete authority and power. ... And above all, Mu'awiyah wanted to strengthen the basis of the Caliphate of his son, Yazid, who because of his lack of principles and scruples was opposed by a large group of Muslims. By force and necessity Imam Huseyn had to endure these days and to tolerate every kind of mental and spiritual agony and affliction from Mu'awiyah and his aides until in the middle of the year 680 A.D. Mu'awiyah died and his son, Yazid, took his place.

The religious inspiration in Iranian art and folklore is a phenomenon which is clearly crystalized in the form of the Ta'ziyeh ritual. Religious inspiration for the expression of art is a universal phenomenon: it concerns a unity of expression which relates to all traditional art. This holds true for Iranian art, Islamic as well as pre-Islamic. Religious expression can be seen at both a universal and a particular level. As the wide scope is beyond the range of the present study, religious and artistic expression is explored in one particular form: Ta'ziyeh. The martyrdom of Imam Huseyn in Karbala, has inspired many art forms and
The villagers' homes built from traditional sun-dried bricks made locally

A shrine in the village near where the Ta'ziyeh ritual ends.
reflected on the moral and ethical issues within the Iranian society. This happening inspires Ta'ziyeh actors (artists) by bringing about an 'intention' (niyyat) within their heart and soul to express something which is greater than individual man. The inspiration can act directly by bringing about a consciousness within the artist to re-express and re-explore the religious occurrence. In the Ta'ziyeh ritual, the liberating battles of Imam Huseyn which occurred over a ten day period are represented in sixty minutes following a build-up in tension of several days of processions which unite village to village within an area.

This inspiration can act indirectly and unconsciously and it is this aspect of inspiration which cannot be exactly measured. It affects 'living art' as well as the 'art of living': individual and social manifestations of religious inspiration. The individual as living art begins forming at birth and continually changes until the form is completed at the death. Due to the varying factors which cause the changes in the form, the influence of a particular event is difficult to relate to the form, that is, an indirect influence of cultural and social factors which pressure the form much as the fingertips of a sculptor working with clay. In the end, the form is rounded and smoothed and the effect of the fingertips is concealed. Ibn Arabi, the 12th century, A.D. Islamic metaphysician, described the interplay between the conscious and unconscious elements of an artisan to his work in the following way:

Looking at an artisan (knower) who is engaged in moulding things out of clay (that which is to be known), one might make a superficial observation that the clay in the hands of the artisan is sheer passivity, sheer non-action. One overlooks the important fact that, in reality, the clay for its own part positively determines the activity of the artisan. Surely the artisan can make a variety of things out of clay, but whatever one may do, one cannot go beyond the narrow limits set by the very nature of the clay. Otherwise expressed, the nature of the clay itself determines the possible forms in which it may be actualized. (Ibn Arabi, translated in Izutsu, 1966)

Living art, in a sense, is like the clay in the hands of the artisan. It has a certain nature unto itself which determines its tendencies which we can call inner prospensity. At the same time, outside influences and effects of environment and culture contribute to the tendencies of the total form and we reach towards an understanding of 'the art of living', for in 'traditional' societies, the rites and rituals focus upon the sacred as well as the social and bring about another dimension to living. It gives the life of the communities a goal and a purpose as well as instilling a sense of humility towards that which is beyond the cognisant powers of an individual form of living art. The collective activity also plays a role in perpetuating 'the art of living'.

If we were to take the example of prayer, for instance, a basic human right inspired by religious tradition, we cannot measure its effects upon living art within a normal scale, for the forms of living art, both individually and collectively, do not assume shape before our
Penitents drumming and beating their backs with chains as they march from village to village for up to ten days.

Two village mourning processions meeting and uniting, reaffirming their loyalty to each other.
eyes. As with music, where the art form is fleeting and only its effect remains, there is a qualitative time which occurs whereby another form, like an idea, is affected (convinced), shaped (brought forth) and expressed (embellished). Symbolic expressions of religious inspiration, in the case of Karbala, are two-fold: narrative art and performance art. Narrative art re-creates the historical themes and is expressed in both popular religious painting and the Ta'ziyeh or performance traditions of Iran. However, the story of Karbala cannot be limited to narrative art alone. Its effect on the players and the audience is expressed in performance as well and are as elusive as music. These expressions relate to three ever-present concepts in Iranian life: prayer, water (the symbol of life), and death. Ta'ziyeh breaks the personal and social boundaries (even temporarily) and creates universality through symbolic representation of these three concepts in action. There are many forms of Ta'ziyeh in Iran.

The Ta'ziyeh in this district is held on an open plain with travelling troupes which move from village to village with their costumes and ‘props’. In the early morning of the tenth of Moharram (June) the people from around twenty neighbourhood villages of Bara'an march in mourning processions to reach the religious temple, that is, a mosque in the central area, in time for the ritual performance which is a living drama. Each village is represented by a flag with two sticks carried by two mourners. On their way to the temple, the flag holders and the mourners become united and follow the same mourning songs in a very organised order. The old follow the crowd and women walk in the margins carrying or leading their children. Young boys, however, take part in the procession itself from an early age.

In comparison with folk stories, religious myths function differently, since they are a living part of the community through the ages as people believe it is happening ‘now’ as well as ‘then’. Some people participate in its acting, and the rest of the community observe and empathise with the characters, some being moved to tears and greater heights of emotion as they identify with their past. The performance energises the community’s morality and ethics, and has a cathartic effect upon them. The anti-oppression message of Ta'ziyeh inspires the communities so that it affects the socio-cultural life of the participating people. Through reflection (within this study) it can also lead people reconsider power-structures within their relationships and community to better analyse their oppression.

The Ta'ziyeh has been also the source of most of the inspiration for people's morality, social relationships, creativity and artistic work. It has affected paintings, carvings, narratives, popular stories, myths, and the theatrical themes in the area. It is a living part of the community’s belief system.
A group of ritual actors play their instruments

Children representing and playing role in the ritual as a part of the victims' families
PREPARATION FOR THE RITUAL

The preparation of the annual ritual of Imam Huseyn's martyrdom in the community exhibits a profound social structure: it has an informal organization, leadership, order, voluntary activities, donations, symbolic actions, and collaboration.

Charitable people give their donations (Nazar), including dates, bowls of traditional soup and soft drinks, alongside of the road where mourning demonstrators are marching, and the richer individuals give their cash donations for the meals during the ten mourning days and the Ta'ziyeh ritual. Big barrels of drinking water, and children and young adults to distribute water are the most common. The whole social system is affected, as the ordinary daily activities of the people are suspended. Some save the whole year to give their charitable donation to such a holy ceremony.

The mourning processions joined together and gathered around a large square in the village where the Ta'ziyeh was performed. In the ritual some villagers played the role of God's believers, whilst the others played devil characters. The followers of the Prophet's grandson showed their courageous spirit and their loyalty to truthfulness and morality. Although they were denied drinking water in a desert climate they continued revile the devil characters. The ritual is connected to water as the essence of life and alongthe streets people were provided with clean drinking water in memory of Imam Huseyn and his family when they were denied water in Karbala desert. After the performance people continue mourning and listen to the orations of their leaders in the community. Although the Ta'ziyeh ritual is a a mythical re-enactment of the past, demonstrating the values and a crystalization of ethics in the community, the whole process engaged the communities socially as well as spiritually, and this was acknowledged by the communities themselves. The people in mourning processions commemorated the sacrifice, loyalty, contenders, and eloquence of Prophet's grandson and his followers and their covenant with God. They practiced courage, and the words which had been left behind for them to unify their words and their deeds. The living atomosphere of the ritual seemed to provide the hopeless with hope and the lonely with companionship. The communities learned the way of Truth from their words.

A religious leader in his speech about the sacrifice of the Prophet's followers:

Their rich words provide the hopeless with hope and the lonely with companionship. Men learned the way of Truth from their words. They left the message that one should ceaselessly strive for the Truth; in expressing the messages of the Creator, they feared no one. They treated their enemies like good friends and would give them advice not to continue doing what they were doing. Through this means they translated the revelation so that all could learn. They showed the strength of man's ability to speak and express through their words, as well. Through their example, a trust was born, a trust
The devil character riding a horse recreates the symbolic battlefield

A lion accompanies the oppressed, representing power against evil
which revealed the strength of words. Normally just sounds set into motion by waves, their words
gave us strength for they are accompanied by action. When the two become one the result is an
aspect of Truth ... Through our loving them they will remain eternally living and our spirits will be
released from tension and pressure. If we move their spirit and act as they did we will have
strengthened our faith in God. If we really want to know what our responsibility is and we wish to
learn a lesson from them we must begin with their morality and code of ethics and learn to practice
their deeds. If one wants to move towards the Truth through action and practice as these people did,
one reaches the angelic world where they reside.

Within the ritual the concept of sacrifice revolved around the performing of a type of self-
sacrifice for sins committed. The rhythmic beating of the chest with the fist or on the back
with chains is a self imposed penance by which one seeks to bear some of the pain Imam
Huseyn was forced to endure. The concept of sacrifice is a vital aspect of 'living art' in the
sense that one lives by Divinely inspired principles and one is even prepared to perform
the highest form of sacrifice, if necessary, as Imam Huseyn did by giving up his life in the
way of the Truth.

PARTICIPATING IN THE RITUAL

The third step in the preparatory stage of this part of the action research was participant-
observation work in the actual religious ritual. For two weeks prior to the beginning of the
workshop I met the local leaders and a number of the community members for the whole
day to consolidate trust and re-affirm my relationship within the community. Being of the
same religion, I welcomed the opportunity to participate in the preparation and the actual
performance. It helped me to become more familiar with the community belief system and
values through recognizing the messages, the codes and the symbols used in the ritual.

The Taziyeh was performed in an hour with a lot of action and movement. The 'Devil'
character who played the role of a murderer, chased and supressed the Prophet's grand
son's family and followers during the whole performance. One of the villager actors played
a 'lion' who supported the victims. The lion represented innocence and natural power who
supported the 'truth'. I accompanied the performers and played one the victims that insisted
in a free expression against the devil and the oppressors. The victims demonstrated their
resistance and strong morality in saying 'no' to the devil expressing their views
courageously in public. The more powerful the acting demands on the devil character, the
more cathartic it became for him:

I recall my evil forces through acting the negative role, to remind myself of its existence and danger
in my life. I then repress them. My role, actually teaches me through making comparison between
morality and immorality - the contradicitions teach me. I am sometimes so impressed by my
murders, that spontaneously cry with both the sacrificed and the people watching us.

(The devil actor, Mahammad Ebrahimi July, 1991)
The devil character burns the camps of the Prophet's grandson and his family and followers.

The devil character punishes the lion who supports the victims.
According to my observations, the ritual caused some competitive controversies regarding its leadership and who would act the roles - a state of affairs pretty much the same as in Western theatre. Furthermore, the cathartic process of acting - specially the evil character - and the social respect of the actors within the area was substantial. The audience’s reaction was another aspect of this annual festival as they sympathised with the characters - a strong belief in the real existence of the spiritual characters was held and made a great impression. All from neighbourhood communities, including women, men, and children, they were visibly affected by the drama, openly encouraging the oppressed and voicing their hate against the oppressors.

After the Ta’ziyeh performance, the villagers and I arranged a group discussion around freedom of expression, as well as the issue of power which could influence this process. Also, we discussed the interdependence of thought and action as the essence of Truth.

The advantages of the participation in religious ritual might be classified as follows:

- the mobilization potential of the ritual for cultural practice
- the empowering messages of ritual for courage, freedom of expression and speech
- a community context for the re-affirmation of culture and social interaction
- the identification of the function of the ritual in the community's coherence
- the disclosure of the meanings of the colours, metaphors, and symbolic actions
- an insight into the leadership and organizing patterns of the community
- a knowledge of historical and religious background
- the potential for cooperative work for social actions
- personal acquaintance with the social and religious leaders and organizers
- a range of modes of communication used in the ritual on which to draw
- acquaintance with people interested in the community’s development
- the active participation of the young and the children in the ritual
- the artistic talent of the community in representing a cultural phenomenon in dramatic action
- the active potential of the community to organize large scale social events
- the rooted religious epistemology of the community
- the potential of popular drama in the community's awareness and self-identity.
- the non-oppressive message of the ritual as a basis for change - the fight against oppression was endemic in the people’s most sacred and most public event.

My involvement in the Ta’ziyeh ritual and its opportunities provided more understanding of the situation and helped me to comprehend the contradictions between the morality of
people in *Ta'ziyeh* and in their 'real life' situations, as well as the potential resources for change and human development.

During the preparation for the ritual, some of the meetings were also held at the farmers' homes which provided us with an opportunity to talk to their families and to observe their households, their hospitality and some of their socio-cultural values. Moreover, my background and experiences in animal husbandry in the area was appreciated by those families involved in this activity and I responded to their requests in treating their livestock and discussing about their technical problems. This also helped me to establish a closer relationship among the people in the community and provided a chance to assess the general local knowledge, as well as the interests and dynamics within the various groups.

In brief, these experiences led the author to explore and become familiar with the general patterns, behaviour, art forms, belief systems, attitudes and judgements of the people, but it did not help to understand the people's perspectives from the inside and to elicit the tacit dimension of their knowledge.

**DRAMA WORKSHOP AND POPULAR THEATRE WITH IRANIAN FARMERS**

Our personal construction of reality, in both a literal and a metaphorical sense, is an active rather than a passive process. (Robinson, 1980, p.161)

Popular theatre is known as a participatory tool to communicate social and political objectives and messages in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. But as Kidd and Byram discussed, the impact is limited if popular theatre restricts itself to propagating or transferring other people's ideas. Its capacity is more than that. It has great potential to involve its otherwise passive audience in the task of acting, discussing and charting change. Popular theatre can back up the ideas advanced, with some blueprints for action and break the state of passivity that chains the minds of its audience. With this background I intend to analyze the nature of the drama workshops, their success or failure, the possibility of expanding the dimensions, and the dangers and problems they might face now and in the future.

The process of creative-drama and participatory theatre is an art form and a creative and an entertaining process. Our activity involved all groups of the community, including children and adults, the young, and to a certain extent the women, because most of those involved within this process transmitted the stories of their daily engagement to their families. In this way, the women who are not usually involved in social and daily
happenings of their husbands and children shared the outcomes of the experiences. The knowledge shared among families was not merely about the form, but rather the quality and the content of this involvement. Thus, the activity as a process affected the whole village life and created an opportunity for almost all community members to think and to re-think about their issues - that is, achieving a high level of participation.

Furthermore, my observation and involvement in the village religious ritual, group discussions and the folklore of the village, from the beginning, demonstrated that every human being and every group in a society has his/her own 'theatre' and 'drama' through which communication with (1) the self, (2) the environment and (3) the fellow-individual or the community takes place. This symbolic form of action provides a person with a schematic understanding of the environment and the whole system around him/her to communicate, to reflect and to make judgements. Art forms are a vital way of understanding people's epistemologies and world views. The end result is empathy with the environment. Empathy itself is the result of the roots that link the individuals with their history. On the other hand, historicity itself is reflected in art forms, rituals and religious ceremonies. Drama is created from and within childhood and continues in a number of ways into adulthood, and to understand people it is necessary to explore and understand these ways of communicating with the world. These symbolic forms, such as the metaphors that people use in their everyday life in Iranian villages, not only are the rooted channels of communication and a schematic codification system within the indigenous context and are also the reservoir of the communal or 'tribal' knowledge.

For example, when a farmer is singing a song on his land or at night while irrigating his field, he/she is 'communicating with nature' in a personal manner.

When I am singing, I am inspired by the birds, so I am talking to them. I am inspired by the river too, and sometimes I pray when singing. (Said an Iranian farmer in Ziar)

During the process of dialogue, these metaphors, as well as the other forms of community's symbolic forms, are analysed, developed and reconstructed.

A PREPARATION FOR PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN THE WORKSHOP

I emphasized the need to work with a group of interested people, with the company of village student-actors as well as some of the ritual actors, whose collaboration helped to validate the workshop activity and made it more 'popularized'. The major concern was to activate people's dormant potentials to refer to their own resources and to reveal their own knowledge. It is a common fact that in rural Iran villagers tend not to speak in public
before the old and the influential people. Social status and age really affect their involvement in a conversation or dialogue. "Cultural constraints and barriers would be overcome in a game or competition," I hoped, as it had when I was involved in producing on-farm radio shows for broadcasting rural programs in Iran (1985-1988). Such contests had already proved popular and successful.

The activity this time however had to put more focus on the nature of involvement, creativity and knowledge revelation. The objective was neither to change the behaviour, nor was it to tap into cognitive levels, but to create epistemological shifts in the perspectives of the participants. The process aimed to lead them to recapture their past experiences critically, look at their existent knowledge and reveal it in public. However, it depended on how the sessions were facilitated and how the questions were put. My previous study of the fifteen 'On-farm radio programs' in rural Iran (Khatoonabadi, 1985) showed that, among seven hundred and fifty five people (between 12 to 65 years old), all of the participants (one hundred percent) defined the contests as "enjoyable, exciting, fun and entertainment". Also, eighty six percent said that they had learnt a lot, twelve percent said they had learnt just a bit, and four percent were neutral. The participants described the activity as "stimulating" and "inspiring" (34 percent), a way of developing friendship and expanding the network of acquaintances (22 percent), excitement and fun (44 percent).

Therefore, as a prelude to a dramatic activity, fun and competitive games were held. The mosque was chosen as the location and four prizes were donated by the local leaders. More than sixty-five people participated in the competition and answered the socio-economical and technical quiz questions about traditional healing, herbal remedies, appropriate ways of boosting the local economy, the guidance of religion about literacy, and how to take care of the environment. The criteria of the competition were based on the speed of the answer and the level of creative thinking, and it was run by me and two farmer participants. Finally, four winners were selected. The winners were then asked to tell the most interesting story of their life. Subsequently, other volunteers told a story or a joke. As a part of this experience, three mini-dramas on issues that arose were created voluntarily by six male participants between seventeen to thirty-five years old. It was the first improvised-drama by the villagers and led them towards an understanding of a number of local cultural and environmental issues within the group.

One story was about the former land-owner and his funny dictatorial orders, through which a set of dialectical relationships such as oppressor and oppressed relationship were explored and discussed. Another story was about an inexperienced extension officer and his parent-child relationship with farmers, in which some explored an oppressive kind of
relationship. The next subject was about government promises in giving services to farmers without a supportive infrastructure.

A team from the local radio station in Isfahan, including a correspondent, an author, a program producer and a musician were invited to record the activities for broadcast. They lived with us in the village for eight days and welcomed the invitation, for it was good material for their programs. Their existence and cooperation was also a motivation for the people to be involved in the program. The villagers eagerly participated and, through their collaboration, invalidated any scepticism about the possibility of popular involvement. Some of the participants commented that they would listen to their own voices on the radio a few weeks later. This was clearly a plus for them.

Our working time was in the evenings and the farmers, the village teacher, students and a few workers attended the sessions. The day-times were allocated to on-farm, informal and semi-structured interviews, some of which moved towards story-telling, as well as creative and critical dialogues.

INVESTIGATING THE COMMUNITY'S PROBLEMS

The human potential to diagnose and solve problems naturally and creatively, through a trial and error process, was a focus of the field study. In simple terms, a drama workshop can be described as an induction course for the participants to learn through active participation. This is the basis of making plays by improvisation, and the plays made may lead to the exploration of inherent problems facing rural communities. More than that, the workshop is a concerted attempt to give drama its due place in the inquiry process and vocational training program. It also reveals the fact that people's self-awareness and individuals' empowerment is an integrated part of development (particularly in the lives of the millions in a society that is experiencing a transitional period in its history.)

As a facilitator-researcher, I was challenged often to scratch through the outer coating to lead a participant to value his own ideas and abilities. As is normal in this kind of work, some resisted and some rejected involvement in the beginning. It might be thought that they were reluctant, conservative and lazy, or expected advice, but that was not true. There was a human being in there, capable of individuality, imagination, humour, co-operation, thought, learning, and expressiveness. Each participant showed that he knew there was a microcosm of the world inside, waiting to be enticed forth. It took a lot of time, patience, belief and persistence but the goal was eventually reached, and learning became exciting. When the light switched on behind the eyes, or an angry, hostile farmer became involved in a single moment of enthusiastic investigation; when Hasan began to volunteer ideas, or
Ramathan discovered that others valued his comments, when Rajab shared his perspective imagination, or Karim started coming to our field class regularly and staying late to work in our theatre, these were the times I came home from the village after midnight as though I had discovered a new planet. With their agreement, the stories told by the participants were recorded. Then the participants listened to their own stories, elicited and discussed a number of relevant issues:

- fatalism
- indigenous knowledge
- local and rural industry
- unfair relationship between farmers and dealers in the market
- a lack of confidence among the people
- dependence on the government and,
- the superficial perception of the communities' problems (e.g. weneed soap, shampoo, motor-oil and etc.).

THE DRAMA WORKSHOP IN ACTION

"What is happening there?" was a question I was asked several times by those not involved. It was a question implying censure and confusion. What had made drama change from the nice, controlled, auditorium-kind-of-activity it is supposed to be?

The workshop was experienced in a cooperative context with the community members in diagnosing and analysing their problems through different perspectives to assist local villagers to look at their own appropriate knowledge and solutions. The structure of the improvisations, through the process, guided the researcher to look at the ways of deepening insight into self and into others and as a result into life situations and human interaction through the "four C's": Conflict, Choices, Characterization and Critiquing. The activity was contextualized and became an authentic community approach in a creative quest for solutions towards their own problems. The techniques need to be adapted, changed and activities redesigned to meet certain purposes in different circumstances. The need for courage, creativity and a sense of security in the work was found to be important. Building trust, listening carefully to the participant-learners, and talking their language were part of the approach. These principles were always considered during the research process.

The very first expression of an idea from the participants was heard and accepted by me and was consequentially accepted by the group, who then were encouraged to express more ideas. The basic principle was setting an atmosphere for talking, sharing and respect. The
facilitator and the participants as co-learners became process navigators, stimulators, and expeditors with one another. Through the process, I tried not to be merely a catalyst, rather to connect participants with themselves and then with the others. As a catalyst, I facilitated but assumed little power alone. This was a role that we added to the list of roles in drama. It was actually a much more fulfilling role than entertainment for me.

Hence, the workshop program was not an attempt to give local administrators and extension workers a more persuasive tool, but was a unique opportunity for local development workers, extension officers and adult educators, as well as the people themselves to communicate and reflect. Drama, in this case, opened up and explored deeper levels of thought, levels that had remained obscure or hidden from 'seeing with the spectacles' of so many 'practitioners' and 'specialists'. However, a drama activity by itself would have little meaning unless it connected to a goal in a systemic and progressive manner.

CHALLENGES FOR INVOLVEMENT

Games imply fun to both children and adults. Some of them also imply competition. It is better, however to replace 'competition' and 'win' or 'lose' with 'involvement by all' and 'cooperation' and 'achievement'.

Competitive games: A number of improvisational game activities were used, adapted and changed according to research objectives. The goal of arranging competitive games was to promote group involvement and transition into creative drama. In this case what was used was not of less significance than why it was chosen and how it was presented and developed. Different kinds of old and new games which were familiar to the villagers were used and allowed for some ideas, suspense or surprise, movement, increasing group dynamics and improving group solidarity.

The main task of this process is the creativity in changing and adapting the games to the new situation in a way to involve everyone. For instance, a leadership exercise was practiced by each member of the whole group through a very simple involving game: 'the blind and guide' and 'the mirror' exercise, through which two partners experiment with the 'leadership' alternately.

Also, through competitions or contests, I found it necessary to stress that it was not whether anybody lost or won, rather it was 'how one played the game' and how the team could think together. However, as the process was being followed, the games functioned
as a warm-up, and the group members began to learn how to work with each other, and to find cooperation rewarding.

Defining abstractions is much harder than defining concrete objects, but this experience showed that abstractions might be defined through the drama games. Learning theorists mentioned previously believed in the dialectic between the knower and the known. It is true that listening about and watching the fire will not provide the same knowledge and understanding of this phenomenon as it can be acquired by touching it. But feeling and understanding might be achieved through 'empathy' with the reality within drama. Bertalanffy (1981), from a psychological point of view explained the term as follows:

What psychology calls 'empathy', and leaves as a very mysterious function, is basic for understanding of the 'other ego' and hence for social intercourse; it is equally basic in mystical experience, magic, ritual, totemism, and art. (Bertalanffy 1981, p. 76)

It will be discussed later how the dramatic involvement led the participants to learn 'abstractions' through the 'empathic' experience.

Since we had to make sure that each participant understood the rudiments necessary for starting work on improvisation, we used working examples rather than handing out mere definitions of these elements. A participant would provide a simple story and others would then be brought in to render the story into action, with roles, a basic plot, and interaction of characters. Very soon each was able to pick up a role and play it for some time, urged on with the pleasure of discovery and wonder at the shape that was developing. Soon, all the farmers were acting out roles in the story. Some found the ability to act comes easily; others discovered that fluency of thought and action were an asset. However, a main difficulty at that initial stage was the inability of some participants to improvise situations or to play easily. Another difficulty was the inability of the participants to generate or sustain conflict situations while acting. To overcome this difficulty, we made the ingredients of conflict into a discussion topic. In this way, we managed to get some of the participants to see that conflict is basic in drama and needs to develop along with the play so that we can perceive, through conflict, the issue or differences of opinion between two characters. To further drive this point home, we found suitable working definitions of words such as 'character', 'conflict', 'plot'. The process contained both a practical and a theoretical definition of each term. It worked very well for the participants, for example, by exploring actual conflict situations as they identified the dimensions of a certain conflict and learned, explicitly, about interaction and reciprocity.
METAPHORS

When talking about tacit or implicit knowledge, Polanyi was quoted as saying that "the structure of tacit knowing is the metaphor". The result of this research also suggests that it is the foundation of learning, and to some extent reveals tacit knowledge. When people use metaphor in their common language they basically understand two things at the same time, which are in relation to one another.

Metaphors were approached in an interactive way to enhance mutual understanding of a known problem. In the workshop for a certain issue (eg: new technology or chemicals), the participants were asked to offer their own metaphors. Every metaphor was consequently discussed by one participant and analysed in a group. The aspects of metaphor in terms of property, application, and generalizability were discussed. Then the participants agreed on the most relevant metaphor to them and created a unique and united meaning. This method provided them with the chance to understand, critique and reflect upon the different dimensions of a certain issue and build a consensus.

Persian metaphors are rooted in Persian literature, both written and oral, as well as in people’s everyday-life experiences. Depending on how 'educated' they are, they use literary metaphors, or those created by themselves, held and transmitted in generations. However, some of the Iranian poets such as Sa'adi and Hafez have had a strong influence on the Persian language, so that a considerable number of their sayings are now part of the Persian language in the same way that, say, Shakespeare has affected English. The following is a common literary metaphor which was analysed by the farmers themselves to describe the destructive repercussions of huge amounts of technology brought into the rural context by the former regime through extension programs. To transmit its whole sense, as well as its beauty, I made a long search for the poem in the English version, and finally found it in Poems From The Persian translated by J. Bowen (1948) as follows:

Observe this precept whenever you can-
Never make friends with an elephant-man;
For an elephant-man has a pet to keep,
Eating and drinking, awake or asleep,
And if you are friendly one day you'll see,
When the elephant-keeper comes to tea,
That, not in the least by chance or whim,
The elephant will accompany him.
Then as soon as the animal's through the door
You'll notice cracks in the parlour floor,
And however much you may frown or stare
He'll sit across-legged on an easy chair,
And swill your tea with his cumbrous trunk
Till you think 'My Word, what a lot he's drunk'.
And if you should offer a mild reproof
He'll be up from your table and off with your roof ...
In your sorrows you only sink deeper and deeper
If you ever make friends with an elephant keeper.

The above metaphor originally belongs to Sa'adi (1184-1292) who is one of the greatest Iranian poets and still widely popular. As John Charles Edward Bowen (1948:50) has put it:

Whenever a traveller goes in Persia he cannot help being struck by the frequency with which he hears the verses of Sa'adi upon the lips of poor and unlettered people.

The farmers involved in the dialogue believed that having huge amounts of technology was like having an elephant-man in friendship whose elephant (i.e.: destructive repreccussions of the incompatible technology) would have a negative impact on the basis of their relationship.

In another experience, farmers had already made fun of the extension officer on the farm through their spontaneous drama actions. Two farmers played the role of a farmer and an extension officer, representing the inefficiency of extension officer. Whereas, the above metaphor - accepted as a nationwide proverb - revealed another aspect of the fact. It showed how profoundly people think about the socio-economical changes within their community and, indeed, have always done so.

CONCENTRATION EXPERIENCES AND REFLECTIONS

There are a number of relaxation techniques that reduce the tensions and create a ground for openness and creative involvement in drama activities. Concentration and arousal are the two important dimensions in adult learning, and encourage the imagination and their creativity. Concentration through a learning program, could result in dynamic learning. In accordance with the analysis of the observed in this research, focusing minds, imaginations, perceptions and bodies, takes interest and self-discipline. This is a prerequisite to the practicing of a specific task. People normally also pay more attention to what frees them of their routines and boredom. In the beginning of the workshop
programs, the major observable problem was a lack of concentration among the learners. This prevented some participants from following the process effectively.

- "If I could set my thoughts on one thing at a time, I would be able to do some original thinking."
- "When do you have more focus and concentration?" I asked.
- "Only when I am improvising or telling a personal story." He answered.

This led me to ask the question of all the participants: 'Through which activities did you achieve more concentration and learning?' Consequently, sixty-six participants were asked the question and responded as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>clown character and games (including: improvisation, story-telling</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creative movement, warm ups, brain-storming and, 'lose and win' games</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other activities (including: mini-dramas, group discussion role-plays, interviewing activity, and listening)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (3) CONCENTRATION AND LEARNING THROUGH DRAMA ACTIVITIES

The important information in the above table is that there is the highest level of concentration/interest among adults within those activities which involves the whole individual's knowing potential, dealing with creativity and spontaneity, such as story-telling, warm ups/improvisation, whereas the type of communication activities (eg: watching mini-dramas, listening or playing roles, interviewing and group discussion) involved significantly lower levels of concentration/interest. The conclusion derived is that people learn more when they are active rather than passive in this kind of work.

To reflect the results as the guideline to the whole process, further experiences and techniques were mixed with these elements, such as story-telling, and/or spontaneity and creativity through improvisation with a clown character. For example, a funny, wise,
character well-known to all of Iran as Molla Nasreddin (or Hoja) was highlighted. The stories of Hoja provide an incredible context for comprehending and knowing through metaphor, and have a specific place in Iranians' everyday conversation, so that the most popular metaphors are taken from these stories and some are even considered as national proverbs. Improvising through the clown character of Hoja provided analogies to the real stories of the participants. It showed two different aspects, that of the dormant and that of the conscious. It might be asserted that our unconscious or non-deliberate sense-making often occurs within a mechanism of humour, where we may merely cause laughter and then forget the event. laughing and ignoring the lesson simultaneously (Apte: 1986). By neglecting our power of interpreting and interacting with the events, we supress our potentiality to respond to the events actively. Through the clown character within the workshop, reflecting on each single improvisation dynamically, the relationships which constituted that creation were critically analysed and resulted in the consciousness about that event. At the end of the process, through the group discussions, the participants showed that a subsequent change in their personal constructs and their attitudes was inevitable.

Verbal communication through conversations and jokes (including various metaphors, proverbs and parables) was seen also working in the rural context. The Iranian farmers believe the most important part of an individual's learning takes place within everyday life. However, among the well-known people, such as the local leaders, those skilled in using metaphors and telling jokes were the most influential and had acquired a high power status within the community. The ability to combine fun and metaphors (particularly for a big owner in the area) created such a powerful communicative role for him that it was easy to impose his ideas on the people. In fact, the activity was revealed to have an oppressive function and potentially able to create a culture of silence in the rural Iran. This was interpreted in terms of the inequality in possessing the ability to communicate with others, that is, the ability for communicative action. In fact, possessing this ability by specific persons to use different verbal and non-verbal techniques to communicate to those without such a knowledge, reinforced their power and social status. In this regard, the statement of Waters (1989: 78) is relevant:

Freud ascribes literal accuracy to the old proverb - many a true world is spoken in jest. Jokes, especially tendentious jokes which are obscene or which attack others, are frequently expressions of true thoughts and feelings in the subconscious, even where the joke-teller does not consciously intend obscenity or hostility.

The significant role of jokes, humour, and clown characters in establishing horizontal communication and rapport was also openly recognised through discussions with some of these local leaders and progressive farmers, highly respected by the community.
According to their experiences, this tool, that is referring to the Hoja stories, had enjoyed a great success and appreciation in over fifty years work and helped them to solve people's family and social problems and to remain the most 'reliable' men in the area. Accompanying them during the day, the author's observations showed that in the group discussions, when the faces were showing tiredness and boredom, the discussion was turned to a funny story by these leaders to stimulate laughter, as well as help concentration on the issues. In such a way, the discussion continued as long as the potential for the laughter remained. A fascinating technique. The role of humour within the process in the opinion of one of the participants, is worth considering:

The humorous stories in the workshop impressed me profoundly. The free atmosphere for discussion helped me to relate to real problems in the community. The general atmosphere of a particular session affected me. There have been many times when I had carried the discussion out of the workshop with me and thought about it for a long time.

(Ali Bahrami - a participant farmer, July 1991)

It was discovered that a variety of metaphors might be created and used to help the focus for learning innumerable subjects and issues. For example, some old shy people in the workshop were so impressed by the themes that they showed their sympathy in a particular way, such as relating their own real stories to the stories of a clown character and analysing relevant personal experiences. "Most of the time I am inspired in my life by Hoja," said several of the participants.

Through openly discussing focused experiences, participants learned how to focus their own energies, imaginations, and their whole physical beings, and found ways to solve many problems. For example, one of the participants improvised an activity in which he was deliberately 'not focused', he did not listen, or answer what he was asked. Then, he repeated the same scene in full 'concentration'.

The significance of the 'forum theatre' workshops in this context was that it created an equal opportunity for all community members to learn and develop this art, to break the culture of silence through participation and empowerment. It has shown the potential for encouraging and animating such a human potentiality in all people and putting it in an order to get humans involved to learn through. Clearly, it led the individual participants towards exploring the problematic situations, making collaborative decisions, and also taking collective actions to solve local problems.

THE FUNCTIONS OF GAMES AND SONGS

We also used games and songs to arouse internal motives, stimulate creativity, to build confidence between the participants and relax everyone. The process was not merely
entertaining, rather it was emancipatory, freeing up dormant energies, focusing participants on activities of immediate concern.

Voices and bodies responded to the chance to operate outside the constraints of everyday life and to extend their operative ranges. Sometimes the games contained structural aspects and abstract concepts which could later be incorporated into improvisations but, in the initial stages, songs and games were used for their own sake and the enjoyment they brought.

THE RUDIMENTS OF SCENARIO-MAKING

Gradually the workshop participants came to understand the practical and theoretical problems of 'scenario-making', which is at the root of all improvisation. The crucial nature of the 'scenario' in formulating the abstract social problem as a play was the single most important discovery of the workshop. It lies at the heart of the work we are trying to do, and is the most difficult aspect of it. Scenario-making does not only mean a single-loop activity or such techniques as conflicts, irony, characterization and dialogue but, more importantly, the way in which an abstract social problem is (1) identified then (2) made concrete and particular as a story; then (3) made into a series of dramatized situations; which then (4) articulate the contradictions of society. We did not have time to make this whole process sufficiently clear to the village participants so that they could transform an abstract problem into a full-length play, but we made some progress. The process of rendering the technical data and explanations into Persian involved the group in a dialogue about the most relevant Persian metaphors. Then, practical examples were given to illustrate each concept.

To get over the problem of achieving a conflict situation, for instance, in performance, a discussion was created that resulted in understanding conflict as a difference of opinion which finally would place two characters in opposition to each other. Through creating common themes, a number of potential conflicts within the social context, such as the older and the younger, the big farmer and the small farmer, etc., were itemized. To analyse these elements, the participants moved into roles. For some, previously unexperienced roles were difficult to play, because the oppressed situation of a farmer prevented his having insight into the characteristics of an administrator. They then suddenly recognized that they were deepening their actual roles within the community. From this experience, I remembered what Benedetti (1976) calls "acting as a subject, but not as an object", and that the separation of personality from character may be possible theoretically, but almost impossible to achieve when acting. The participants found out that an improvisation might
take an issue, sometimes an abstract one, analyze it, then put it into story form before translating it into drama.

Example (1) Through the participant-observations and semi-structured interviews, as well as the workshop process, illiteracy emerged as a dominant issue. To put on this problem into a performance, many stories, painful and funny, were told and clarified the several dimensions which developed insights into the problem. Based on these stories a collective scenario was created:

There is an illiterate protagonist (a farmer) who receives a letter from his son who is fighting against the invasion of Iraq in the Southern borders of Iran. Our protagonist cannot read his son's letter. Therefore, he asks his brother-in-law to read the letter for him. But, once this fellow looks at the letter becomes extremely irritated and leaves the scene unexpectedly. This happens several times, as long as the protagonist-farmer requests different people for the reading - among the relatives, friends and shopkeepers. He almost loses everyone who respected him in the village. After a few days of wondering and despondency, thinking and worrying, he makes a decision: there is no other choice than to learn to read immediately. He enrols in a literacy training course being held in the village mosque every evening, and after a couple of months of hard work tries to read the letter:

"To whom who may read this letter: I write to ask you all friends and relatives to express your anger and irritation immediately after looking at the letter, so that we might together push my dad to learn literacy. God bless you all. Your brother and your son, Abed'Ali."

Example (2) some participants described themselves as being used as objects by the most powerful dealer in the market so that all their efforts would benefit the dealer rather than the farmer. They specified their case as those who run without any destination or reward, since the winner would be already determined: the dealer. They identified their role in the crop market as the oppressed, and the role of the dealers as the oppressors.

We decided to create a scenario of the stories which represented their current situation in the market, through discussing the marketing structure, their relationships with dealers and consumers, the oppressive aspects, and the ideal situation. The scenario represented a conflict which aimed to reach a resolution, a scenario which included all elements of the whole system they were living in: the family structure, the leadership phenomenon within community, the imbalanced farming policy dictated to them by the government, the potential capacity of the community for co-operative work on the marketing issues, the
levels of risk taking and finally, the constraints which could result in conflict and disrupt their communal harmony.

In fact, the specific characters had already been created in group discussions, and practiced within the mask process. Mask-wearing had created a ground for not only defining the character, but for putting their feet 'into its shoes', feeling it and learning it. They had actually stepped into the 'world views' of their own masks. This process created understanding and empathy with the whole system among the group of participants. The process was to define and to redefine the existing and also the ideal characters, and to recreate them, with the aim of the empathic understanding. This is in fact what Stalinavsky and Grotowsky call 'acting as a subject'. It means that the person who acts a character is not imitating it, rather he/she is becoming the character and learns from that. Boal, on the other hand, believes in acting on our situation to explore the oppressive factors that are imposed on the individuals in community. Subjective acting for Augusto Boal is a challenge to explore and to understand ourselves and the roles we are carrying in the society, to to elevate our roles within the context and through self-consciousness.

It was a big step to involve local people, emotionally and mentally, in the development activities. Their emotions and their thoughts were fully employed by themselves for the creation of their own knowledge. It goes without saying that the process comprised the characteristics of participatory research and collaborative inquiry, which involved people in the process of action research through story telling, mask process and the other improvised and creative activities. They carried out this research by completing one anothers' stories, and acting upon them. Their learning, however, took place through what Lewin (1946) considers as re-planning by reflecting on former actions.

It was observed that while the participant-villagers were creating their own masks, almost all of them, as well as the author, were continually changing - that is developing - the character of their masks by the adding or lessening of the materials such as plaster and clay, to reach and to touch their ideal feelings and expectations. During mask-making the author tried to establish a dialogue with all of them and ask about their understandings and feelings. A considerable number of farmers said that by doing that they were creating their desired characters and thinking about their real relationships with the others. In other words, the participants were involved in a thinking process. They were reviewing the people they were dealing with, interacting with their own feelings and making new judgements, and learning from them.

The most important result of such a process was a change in the perspective of the participants to acknowledge their own potentiality to work together, to find out the basic
problems and to overcome them. In an overall view, they shifted from having an individualistic goal structure towards a cooperative goal structure. Now, they have established a local crop marketing cooperative in Ziar, where there is no longer a chance for dealers to contact the small farmer separately, rather the farmers’ cooperative is a stronger body to make appropriate decisions in the market.

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

Identifying the big issues in the villages Pilevaran and Askaran as an ordinary task in the workshop was done through:
(1) brain-storming - i.e. dividing the participants into small groups of four to five and asking them to work out the major issues in a given time, for example twenty minutes, (2) listening to recorded story-tellings by the participants, (3) travelling by road to the target villages in the area where the rural people were approached for data and information about various aspects of the communities and simply by talking about the issues facing each community. The participants then returned to sift through what we had gathered and arrive at some apparent facts, analyze them and see if the issues and problems could be dramatized to reflect, as much as possible, the reality in the villages Pilevaran and Askaran. It was then the possibility of putting on a performance in each village was first mentioned.

In our conversations with the people on the farm-shelters, in mini-buses, village tea houses, in the mosque, and during the preparation and performance of the Ta‘zieh ritual, we did not meet with any so-called 'lack of communication'. The people were quite open in expressing their views of the agricultural policies and so forth, in many different places and occasions. The villagers were articulate in exposing the following issues:

- a lack of sufficient water for irrigation;
- conflicts upon water distribution from the irrigation channels;
- a variety of plant diseases;
- the lack of a consistent farming and marketing policy, and assurance of produces
- the lack of a sufficient medical care;
- non-availability of the spare parts of agricultural machinery and fertilizer in spite of the administrator's declaration that there was enough;
- dangers of making cooperative, united farms by the government in the area, as they compared this to the failed experiences of the former Soviet Union;
- lack of educational facilities;
- role of dealers in marketing problems;
- water scarcity and water stealing from the irrigation channel;
• water scarcity and water stealing from the irrigation channel;
• bureaucracy
• inefficiency of extension services, in the sense that farmers preferred their own experiential knowledge to that of the extension officers.

In response to the villagers who demanded a warranty for follow up action, we pointed to them, themselves, as the major source in improvement of the situation and emphasized that one reason for the research was to involve the community in making decisions for itself. Then we explained our hope of returning to the village to visit their actual initiatives and to watch plays performed by themselves.

The actual change which happened through our conversations was the view among farmers that the most reliable decisions lay in the community itself, and unmeasurable energy and power existed within them.

ROLE-PLAY

Role-play was frequently used to manage and resolve conflicts between farmers, extension officers and government workers in the community. In such cases, there were often three roles to be enacted: a difficult person, a reasonable person, and a mediator. The role of a mediator assisted not only to lower the boom but also to facilitate a joint analysis of the problem within a dramatic enactment. One of the participants might also play the role of an observer, to make comments after enactment to stimulate ideas among other participants. The roles contributed to the practice of new ways of viewing the same reality, that is, looking at the same phenomenon from different perspectives.

The objective of role-play was to place workshop participants in a role to let them connect with their contexts, feelings and expectations, as well as developing insights into problems. The actual process for understanding their world views also led them to analyse the situation in their role, through a dynamic dialogue. Four different roles which represented different social status within the village context were recreated by the participants. A set of folk tales were selected and enacted. This time the theme was focused on the roles of well-known social characters identified in popular stories. The process achieved a dramatic analysis of the ongoing issues, such as trust and mistrust among the community and the administrators, marketing problems as social phenomena, morality and immorality among people, physical environment as the living part of the universe that is essential and inter-linked with human life, and oppression and freedom in the socio-cultural setting. However, the other subjects or issues were revealed: personal independence and the need for cooperative work as two sides of the same coin, the need
for continuous lifelong learning, the consequences of increasing birth rate, and pastural and soil degradation as a phenomenon related to the communal wellbeing.

The first role-play was acted by the village teacher, the extension officer, a development worker and the researcher. Ramathan, the local technical leader, was the first farmer who intervened to replace one the four characters to take a role. However, his real role within the community was different. In the improvisation he played the role of a government official through which he revealed his perspectives and attitudes towards the government's role in agricultural policies before, during and after the revolution. In such a way, two-thirds of the participants played different roles. As a result of the process, a set of points and issues were identified. In other words, the different perspectives through the roles were recognized, were created or made clear. Furthermore, the open analysis of the socio-cultural and economic issues, as well as the sharing of one another's experiences, was an encouraging result of the process. For the next stage, group discussion provided the participants with a deep insight into the issues brought up, above. The procedure was as follows:

The first group, including the author and the extension worker, created an argument around a subject. In the beginning of role-play, each represented his real role in society, so that he would be able to discuss the issues from a personal point of view. In transition to the next stage of role-play, the same group changed the roles and enacted new characters familiar to the context. After the debate gained momentum, the author as the researcher who was role-modelling the farmer, asked for a volunteer farmer to replace him in this role. The other members of the first group in turn encouraged a farmer to replace them. Finally, there were three farmers playing roles.

As debate declined, farmers were replaced or the topics changed. The objective was for both researchers and farmers to better understand the situation surrounding the issues discussed. The dynamic of the process led us to create an interactive model of communication through:

1) Changing the roles within a particular topic or subject. (For instance, the roles were 'the minister of agriculture', 'the local government official', 'the dealer of the crop market', however the subject was fixed.

2) Changing the subject by maintaining the roles. To help visualisation of what has been done in the Iranian context, consider the topic of 'the North Atlantic's subsidised wheat and the problems of Iranian wheat producers in the domestic market' and the roles of 'A Western Minister of commerce', 'the Iranian minister of agriculture', 'the Iranian
farmer' and 'a merchant from Iran'. In the case that the subject remains and merely the roles change, we will have 'the Minister of Commerce of Iran' (instead of Western Commerce Minister), 'the Western Minister of Agriculture', 'the Western farmer', and the same 'international wheat merchant'. Role-play was found to be a good technique for developing insights into a problematic situation, and to be one of the most engrossing techniques in the workshops.

Every session was began by an improvisation presented through a dialogue. Besides, a symbol was used to attract attention and to concentrate imagination around the subject (e.g., a bucket of mud for thinking and discussing soil erosion).

A new 'clown' character whose role always began with serious objection had been created also. Through the dialogue, the role let the participant-actor object to every thing surrounding him. The main objective was to stimulate critical thinking by fun and entertainment. The role, in fact, represented a knowledgeable man who was concerned with ongoing problems such as environmental sustainability and human social action, whereas the second (ie: partner) role represented an official policy-maker.

After a few days of workshop process, through the improvisation of roles and the reflections, a number of theme subjects emerged and a clown character was chosen to be acted by the two leading local actors as participants in the workshop. As a result, twenty mini-dramas were performed in the beginning of evening workshops at the mosque. The title of the series was Mr. Objection, and each separate drama had its own title, eg. Hunger, Health or Pasture Degradation. This role had such an impact on the farmers that they were all repeating, in semi-jest, the familiar term used by the character, that is, "I have an objection". These mini-dramas were recorded by the radio team who were following the process, and broadcast on the radio in the rural program, during the time the project was progressing. In fact, the mini-dramas 'on the farm' and 'on the air' could be considered as the sample of effective co-operation between the two media and helped to create a lively atmosphere. The multiple use of the media reinforced our learning.

At the end of the process, the whole community, even children, were imitating the 'objecting' character, causing much laughter. After three months there was a much higher level of awareness and critical thinking in the community. According to the letters of two co-researchers who later wrote to me, the use of a 'devil's advocate' had stimulated really serious critical thinking within the community and had freed everyone to voice his/her opinion in the spirit of fun, but with a serious intention.
RECOGNITION OF THE INTERNAL MOTIVES

I explored the phenomenon that, despite the effectiveness of the approach for productive learning outside the workshop, most of the participants were still suffering from a lack of concentration, confidence and openness in terms of social interaction as their dominant behavioural patterns. It led me to hypothesise that only after the participants became aware of the roots of their conservative behaviour could they concentrate on and enjoy productive learning. Therefore the dramatic elements such as creative imagination and improvisation were also employed at the service of this psychological exploration.

It was the time to rethink about the terms local or indigenous knowledge which Robert Chambers (1983) had considered as useful knowledge. In essence, whatever we have in our memories, including the impacts of parental and environmental obligations and also the reflection of personal experiences on the mind as our 'constructs' constitute our existing knowledge. Furthermore, on a brain-cytological basis, according to Thomas and Harris (1973), each experience, either 'success or failure' and 'good or bad', is interlinked with the 'positive or negative feeling' it creates, and both of them will be recorded and kept in a specific part of our brain. Elsewhere, Maturana and Varella (1987) provide biological evidence to prove the fact that each experience would have a viable impact on the organism (or body) as a consequence of that experience. Local knowledge, which is impressed by the socio-cultural obligations and taboos, is therefore not necessarily useful knowledge. The environmental restrictions also may result in specific conclusions and patterns and affect the acceptance or rejection of new decisions, which necessitate 'adaptability' and 'relativity' as important factors in learning and researching. But the socio-cultural conditioning factor plays the basic role in the formation of feelings and the ways or patterns of thinking, and should be paid significant attention. Family or parental prohibitions are examples of social conditioning factors. Until learners identify these constraints, they will not learn effectively (as expected by Mezirow, 1981). Talking about self-awareness attributes provides learners with the knowledge of themselves that may be regarded as a shift from 'social level' to 'realised level' (Rowan and Reason, 1981).

Drama in this research was found to be helpful tool to engage participant-learners in 'self-discovery'. In other words, it is a tool for 'self-reflective learning'. The result should be 'self-awareness' and 'perspective transformation'. That is when the participant has recalled his memories and becomes able to recognise his oppressive situation or irrational reactions.
In this study each participant became involved in a dialogue with himself, and as co-researchers they all became able to go a bit further in the area of psychology: to explore the repressive prohibiting factors caused in that situation.

As family foundation is the strong basis of social life in rural settings of Iran, the most tangible of conditioning ways are imposed by family. Therefore, the most relevant psychological approach for the participants to achieve self-awareness was found to be the three characteristics of personality considered by Thomas and Harris (1973), as: "parent, adult, child". It was a productive ground to look at the dominant part of the personality or character through improvisation that might be the child, adult, parent and enabled them to analyse the repressive factors imposed on them within each level, and to establish a balance of the three elements. Participatory drama was found applicable and helpful, not only for this kind of exploration but also to change the habitual patterns of both thinking and doing things.

**PROBLEM ANALYSIS**

As facilitators or as consultants we need to recognise the dominant characteristics of our clients to better cope with them. As learners we need to identify the dominant patterns in our ways of looking at the world and explore their origins to overcome and change them if necessary. Our drama-workshop created an informal learning atmosphere through which both I and my co-learners identified these patterns and their own constraints on being successful learners.

This time, I was more conscious about what I did, because I was always remembering funny things in Nepean workshops that seemed originally ridiculous to me. Now, I was convinced that one's identification of his/her conditioning obligations were the key to one's basic change in epistemology. In Nepean drama-workshops I had observed it objectively; in rural Iran I consciously explored it, and in both rural Iran and Australia I tried to help my co-learners aware of the dominant patterns of their thinking and behaviour.

As already discussed in the first phase of the field study at Nepean, the dominant parts of participants' personalities which were quite different from their personality 'out of the workshops' are often revealed during participatory activities. It was there that I hypothesised that the nature of involvement and participation in drama experiences might reveal the hidden aspects of the participants' personality and character (for example, the child, adult, and parent), each maintaining certain oppressive impacts on the individual.
As the process continued, we began to hold a discussion about traditional agricultural products and some alternatives to them. We got onto the topic of artificial foods. From there it was easy to move to their real needs and the changing world of the future. The participant-farmers began to see that, when an action was going to be taken, such as an increase in the land productivity and their wealth, how it might interrelate to the other parts of their socio-cultural structure. A discussion about the positive and negative impacts followed, including the interdependence between the components of a specific phenomenon or a social action.

**Example (3) Discussion about birth rate.** Increasing births were relevant to the demand for more space, food, fuel and clothing. Without family planning, increasing poverty and vulnerability will result. Because overpopulation was a tangible problem in the context, the discussion which was directed towards their real problems received maximum concentration and focus. Thomas and Harris (1973), have already emphasised the importance of relevant subjects in creating effective concentration in 'transactional analysis', that is, interactive behaviour. In other words, effective communication is the result of the agreement between the 'sender' and 'receiver' on the subject (Maturana & Varella, 1988). In this experience, the participants were involved in a group discussion seeking the alternatives and the solutions. My role was to facilitate them to **explore the inter-relationships between the phenomena** they discussed, as follows:

- Over-population;
- Poverty;
- New technology
- Extra released labour sources;
- Alternative jobs;
- Agricultural and rural industry;
- More use of nature;
- Allocation of more lands for the industry;
- Land degradation and sustainability;
- Credit loans and materials;
- The need for training and the vocational education.

The following dialogue is an example:

- "What about a health centre and schools for the children?" I asked.
- "We need our children on the land." Said a farmer.
- "But the rural industry ...." I said.
- "It is only words. That is not the reality. It takes ages to establish rural industry and
nobody will do it for us." Another farmer interrupted me.
- "You should do it for yourself. It is your life." I responded to him.
- "It is too difficult for us." He said.
- "Not as much as working in the burning sun." I retorted.
- "Why?"
- "In the future, your children may be willing to work in industry rather than farming, otherwise some of them, might migrate to another area." I explained.
- "This needs investment and cooperation, the people are unlikely to have it." interrupted a farmer.
- "A crucial point: alliance and cooperation. Cooperatives are an alternative, but you should think about the best you can do yourself." I replied.
- "If we do not control the birth rate here, nothing will prevent migration or poverty. Why not think about the contraceptive solutions? In my point of view, the birth control is one effective solution." A village teacher contributed.
- "Over-population affects our environment, since we do not have enough money to buy fossil fuel. So, we have no choice other than cutting trees, bushes and shrubs." said an old farmer.

It was a meaningful conversation. From my perspective it showed the men's world views. In fact, they pointed out the inter-relationships between the issues of poverty and environmental and pastoral sustainability. It opened a window to another relevant topic (sustainability) and after more discussion led the group to conclude that over-population was only one of the main causes of pastoral or environmental destruction.

**Example (4)** We began to talk about natural and artificial foods and the role of village-life in providing people with natural foods. We also agreed on exploring plastic products around us for their properties and applications. From there we moved to 'plastic' behaviour in people who hide their real feelings. Now it was easy to go beyond discussion towards 'real' and 'fake'. We began from seeing that when an action or characterization is done to impress others, it tends to be fake. A few examples (first really doing the action, then faking it) were done by all of us together as in the following:

- Create an action which reminds you of your childhood.
- Put your feet in the shoes of your parents and present whatever you remember from their behaviour.
- Present your personal reaction to your parents' behaviour. In other words show your own behaviour in the same situation your parent was.
- Challenge a resistant weed in the farm.
- Make a compliment to a guest.
• Enact an argument or a conflict.
• Enact the social role of the person you like.
• Enact the social role of the person you dislike.
• Enact the things you do in the event of an emergency.

Then the actions were analysed for their truth and their factual/ethical dimensions, in terms of shape, weight, texture, muscle involvement, and details of action that were needed.

However, through this transference participants were led to situations in which they became able to recapture and critically view their past, to recall the hidden aspects of their personalities, to see themselves in their 'mirrors' and finally get through to their adulthood as a stage of rational thinking. This process, helped them to analyse their behavioural patterns and to enforce their 'adult' as the basic part of personality in making appropriate decisions. Afterwards, a group of volunteers were asked to do an exercise in planning and sharing a simple action. The following are the examples:

• Advising someone
• selling the produce in market
• Fixing something
• Preparing the land (e.g., cultivating, sowing, irrigating, harvesting)
• Treating an animal
• Communicating with friends
• Punishing a guilty son.

After each action, our critique concentrated on the focus evidenced in dealing with the criteria mentioned above (ie: size, shape, weight, texture, placement, operating the object, as well as working together with teammates). A volunteer showed how one looks interested in what is going on in the workshop, but "really it is not true because I am thinking about my farm's irrigation tonight."

These experiences are a series of activities locked into each other. As a result, the world views, the behavioural patterns, the dominant aspect of the personality (ie: child, adult, parent), and the technical knowledge were all revealed, as well as the ways specific things were viewed by the participants. By using the metaphor of 'artificials' and 'naturals' or 'the plastic products' and 'the plastic behaviour' through both verbal and non-verbal processes, we tried to explore for the 'reals' and 'fakes' in our structured behaviours. From there we moved to analysing the 'village-subculture' in terms of the roots and the positive and negative elements. We also tried to learn from our 'subcultures' which underlay our attitudes and patterns. From this perspective, it was a satisfactory approach to our learning.
objective, as well as reaching the highest focus and concentration through verbal and non-verbal activities.

Example (5) A dialogue with the farmers: exploring recursiveness. The participants were encouraged to identify a number of reciprocal relationships within their social context. For example, the relationship between animals and humans was the most familiar to the villagers. Surprisingly, at the end of the workshop period, a number of paintings and photographs were shown in the workshop to illustrate the issue of mutual interaction in the world- the point which led to the actual analysis of such a relationship within our surrounding socio-cultural and environmental systems.

Another metaphoric way of practicing systems thinking and systems analysis in the workshop was initiated by the participants themselves through exploring the interdependence between various objects around us in the environment, and between the function of different groups of people in the community. One example was exploring the relationship between children, adults, and parents in the community, which led them to the exploration of all these aspects within themselves as individuals. Consequently, this helped us to explore our ideal characters which were hidden within us. One of the participants believed that the person who was in charge of the village council was incapable of holding such responsibility, since he regarded the others as children. Other participants also criticized the parent-child style of his commands and behaviour. The person who had criticised first was asked to define what he thought was necessary to be an efficient leader or a cooperative coordinator. He asserted that he had always desired that role. We insisted on making him clarify the role in detail as well. Through defining the role he explored his desired character and, as a result, during the discussion process he clarified the different aspects of that role. Therefore, the young villager practiced leadership within an improvisation. In other words, through looking at the different aspects of the character and its role in the community, he was acting on the cultural aspects of a social role.

The desirable environment was depicted through acting on a number of cultural roles and conflict situations. This is why such a thing may be considered as a cultural action - the point we reached through our group discussions and dialogue.

**STORY-TELLING**

Drama in general can be adapted and implemented by anyone simply through applying one or more than one of the elements (eg: story-telling, improvisation, and/or role play) that constitute a drama process. The more sophisticated the application of these
techniques, the more need for skills to facilitate the activity. Story-telling as applied in the context of this research is one of the drama techniques that is used in almost every moment of life when a reality is recaptured and expressed. Based on the field experiences, the constructivist way of using story-telling as an inquiry medium involves the dialectic of the individual stories in a group or a workshop process. A model that can be drawn out of this research includes three to six circles each of which, for example, including five participants telling their own stories on a certain thematic concern. The themes for each cycle would be different as the participants collectively choose one topic (already exposed in the workshop), to tell their already experienced stories. The facilitator may help each thematic group to synthesise the personal stories into one story which encompasses the most general aspects of all the different experiences. Then, after a certain given time, each group explains one story about its own topic. The group process continues by analysing each story in terms of exploring and connecting the interdependent elements of the all topics buried in different stories. In such a manner, the participants develop insights to avoid looking at just isolated topics but to view a problem in terms of its various relationships. Therefore, the final story would involve a collective theme encompassing different community problems (eg: societal; cultural; economical; health; water supply; educational) through a system of relationships. The final story, constructed collaboratively, is regarded as the consensus among the all participants and is valid, since it gets validation through interaction, firstly, between a number of personal stories, and secondly between the various topics. The following figure represents three groups of five working on their common concerns through their real stories. The interaction and commonality among each group will create a common story. Then the three groups challenge one another's stories to create a final collective story which involves everyone's themes and a consensual validity.

Group one

Group two

Group three

The Consensus
(A synthesised story)

Figure (25) THE STRUCTURE OF FORUM STORY-TELLING
Story-telling was approached in a dialectical manner to involve the participants in recapturing their real experiences, their dreams, and recalling and exploring their unconscious knowledge within a forum process. Story-telling was a ground to let both tacit and explicit knowledge interact, and to let the ideas communicate. It was approached in two ways: (1) recapturing past experiences based on an agreed-upon theme, (2) recapturing dreams (mostly to create an ideal solution).

When a dream was recaptured, then the realistic and non-realistic dimensions of that dream were discussed, new horizons were explored, while the others’ stories interacted and functioned to create a harmonious story which belonged to everyone. Then the participants were invited to improvise a certain solution to a problem they posed.

The technique of establishing a consensus through story-telling was found to be a flexible and productive way to catalyse collaborative inquiry. The participant villagers were convinced that they used different kinds of stories to describe certain events every day. They worked on agreed-upon themes in shared groups by telling their real stories. Each group in the given time, synthesised and finalised a collective story which represented the sharing participants. Each topic for every thematic group was a connection of different issues already exposed by the participants in the workshop. A person representing each group presented its own story before the others. After all stories were told, the common aspects which connected all topics together were identified through discussion and reflection to the extent that, at the end, there was only one collective story which involved all topics (separated stories). The final story was a consensus, and a system of interdependent issues. It was their life. This method involved imagination, metaphor, discussion, critique, and reflection, within which participants learned to look at their problems as the interdependent elements of a bigger system, that is, the whole community as a large system. The elements (topics) discussed in the workshop included:

- the supply of drinking water
- health education
- farming and animal husbandry
- technology and pastoral management
- extension services and evaluation
- over population and family planning
- economical situation and marketing concerns
- education and literacy through participatory approaches
- cooperative structures with a non-cooperative function
- cultural realisation, identity and self-esteem.
Through the whole process the participants were involved in an activity within which the story was continued. They created their own stories and knowledge based on one another’s themes. When there was any interest and energy left, some of the participants played an improvised piece. At the end of each session, the participants reached consensus and agreed on common themes, characters, social roles, the desirable, and undesirable circumstances. These accepted ‘norms’ in the later step were reconstructed, practiced and rehearsed through further improvisation. As a result, the general theme for a staged theatre performance was collectively and collaboratively created and performed in the real context of the community before an audience of fifteen hundred.

Moreover, the practice of recursive logic, through the exploration of the relationship between the issues, for example, "the application of too many chemicals; overgrazing; soil erosion; alternatives to productivity; sustainability; family welfare; household economy; gross national product (G.N.P.)", was achieved within the dialectical investigation of the participants' stories. This also led the group to discuss the issues of 'dependence, independence, interdependence' dialectically, and helped them to critique the false dependency view that the community's development would be exclusively in the hands of government. Before the discussions, they were considering the government as ‘the father’ and themselves as ‘children’ who needed particular care. In this workshop, we decided to transform the reality as primarily perceived by them.

Now they had to act on the reality as conscious subjects, and practice the subjective role, rather than being the object. They start to reveal the hidden aspects of their thoughts, for example, through practicing being subjects, as well as passive objects in relation to their social role. These developments, however, became the basis for an exposition in public among a larger community in the area. They exposed their ideas through performance to the large audience in the village school yard. After the presentation of the stage performance group discussions raised other local issues. This also created a ground for further conversation among the community members within a larger context of five neighbourhood villages.

Obviously, the theatrical processes assisted in the evaluation of some of the issues which had been already identified through both direct and participant observation, and also within on-farm analyses and village-level group discussions in the villagers' houses. During the process, also, alarming questions were repeated several times:

"What is the result of that? Who will do it for us? Who will listen to our voice? Are you sure that if we participate, the government will care about it? Are you sure that you can see the minister to give our message to him?"
Or some frustrating gestures and comments as for example:

"We talk to you and together. We believe in what you say and trust you. But nothing changes. We have already experienced it so many times. The 'white collars' came here, wasted our time and left for ever. They did not even turn their faces back to look at what was going on with us. It is their business to talk too much, and do nothing. So, why should we talk about the problems, when we are sure that nobody will come and cares about it?"

As a fruitful outcome of our critical conversation: the issue of dependence and independence was revealed in the following dialogue:

- "Why do you not change the reality and make another one?" I asked.
- "In a river we can not swim against the flow" (that is, an Iranian proverb), was a metaphor used by somebody.
- "But, if we construct or have a boat, then we can", was another metaphor in response to the first.

Afterwards, some volunteer-actors depicted this metaphor through improvisation: there was a river, waves (created by three participants through improvised movements), and a target on the other side. In the beginning, the only alternative was passing the river by swimming across it. They tried it in a few repetitions and failed. Then, after many discussions about alternatives, they agreed on making a boat. The emerging problem, now, was that no one knew how to make it. They improvised different ways of getting information: the first thing was to see a respected person in the community. Strangely, he was not a so-called religious leader, publically known. Neither was he an elected member of the village council, nor any district government official, even though popular and helpful to them. Rather, he was among them - a very ordinary person. Without him actually being among the actors, they called him Ramathan in the improvised play. He was a real person whom I had known for over eight years - and whose honesty, bravery, helpfulness (mainly in the events of emergency), social personality, talkativeness, generosity (particularly in the case of weddings and public ceremonies) and loyalty to the community's desires, was well-known not only in this village, but in an area of twenty neighbourhood villages. These qualities are recommended by the Muslim religion, and they had recognized them correctly.

Spontaneously, the enacted 'Ramathan' suggested that they get the information from those who had lived near the sea or a river for a long time or those organizations who might have had such experiences. The significant point is that the above issue (ie: how to make a boat) had not emerged through our dialogue, whilst they themselves improvised and added to our former discussions.
An audience of 1500 from the neighbourhood communities

The local people's participation in the lighting and drumming
Their own creative thought emerged through this challenge. Besides being emancipated and empowered through exploring the different choices of action, they were also hypothesis makers and testers at a realised level. Moreover, after the improvisation, another discussion was begun by the audience, and involved almost all of them in the analysis of their situation.

The participants finally changed their view that the government was responsible for putting the research results into practice. On the contrary, they agreed on independence and collective action. This time, they had also experienced the feeling of being a chairman or a minister, and were empowered to a certain extent through the process of improvisation. They now realized that it was they themselves who were responsible for making decisions and taking action, and that our co-operative inquiry or knowledge creation was not to give a prescription to outsiders to solve the community's problems. Becoming aware of not only their potentiality, but also the limiting conditioning factors. This created self-consciousness and a cooperative goal structure among them. In fact, they achieved this goal and developed the feeling of independence through participation in the workshop.

IMPROVISATION: A DEEPER INSIGHT TO THE PROBLEMS

Improvisational activities in the workshop functioned to release the individuals' energies, within which they explored their own creative potential, and the new ways of looking at the things. Most activities including games, creative imagination, creative movement and dialogue, involve improvisation. In most cases, when the participants identified a thematic concern through group discussions, then the theme was presented through improvisation. The improvised images led the participants to explore the different aspects of the theme and become involved in more discussion. The following is an example:

Within the workshop a collaborative (improvisational) image making process in conjunction with discussion and reflection on the created themes, led the group to identify the issue of 'isolation' as the form of oppression, the common thematic concern among the participants. Then in a large circle, each participant was asked to illustrate or present his own solution for the problem of isolation through integrating body movement with verbal expression such as a concise and illuminating sentence: "Let's talk; Why not friendship?; Fight to prove; Let's have a cup of tea" are examples.

In a large circle everybody improvised a liberating image theme through shaping their right hands into the space differently, each hand expressing a different perspectives: some
The narrator explains the situation to the audience.

A local leader and an unwilling farmer disagree.
blessing God, some requesting help, some assertiveness, others representing aggressiveness. Then, the alternative choices of action towards the oppressive situations and problems were discussed.

Through the improvisations, the holism of thinking/learning/acting was apparent, particularly when I was practicing spontaneity among the groups within the drama workshops. Improvisation as an act of discovery and creativity involved imagination, action and thinking. There was also always a tendency to talk about the action, that is, explicit learning through discussion. For example, in certain cases this appeared to function through building up an imaginative picture of our expectations with several changes of partner. The exercise rotated between the different partners in the workshop. Then, after the experience, the participants were brought together for discussion, so that they could share their introspective feelings. In the different workshops, some found it easy, whilst others failed to have any response to it. Some found that they preferred not to have company whilst in that mood, others appreciated it as helpful. Even when the response was little, or resulted in uttering platitudes, the discussion helped the clarification of the various responses and enabled the participants to see their unique unconscious knowledge, as well as what they had in common with others. In whatever case, the experiencing and then the discussion of the experience in an easy but open atmosphere reduced the fear many individuals had of their existing situation and feelings and enabled everyone to realize that it was possible for our emotions to be used by us (that is, at the realised level) rather than for us (at the social level), to be in their power, that is, the state of self-consciousness.

THE CLIMAX

One of our dramatic learning and empowering processes led to two improvised pieces that were performed among local people and reflected a real situation. The actors evoked sympathy among their local audiences towards the community's problems, and the people discussed the issues themselves, in public.

A village school with two classrooms was improvised. There were only fifteen benches and two classes for sixty five students. The actors' first improvisation was in fact the enactment of the community's despondency towards the re-opening of a village school.

Every night, the improvisation was repeated over a duration of six nights. Each night represented one year. The nights were showing the sequence of time within which no change or improvement occured. Consequently, after six nights of improvising the theme differently, a six-year old was twelve, and a twelve-year old child was eighteen. However,
The invasive yellow weed attacks the healthy grass.

The distraught farmer laments the loss of his fields.
the reality was exaggerated as if it had happened over six years, without any positive action in response to the regular demands of villagers for a teacher. Every day, sixty five students gathered into the school yard and waited for a teacher to come: each time boredom and despair. Some parents decided to send their children to a remote area, whereas the others decided to stop their children studying. At the end, the performance ended without any change and comment. The dilemma or problem yet remained unimproved.

The outcome was that at the last performance a few angry villagers spontaneously intervened in the play and with loud voices and said: "Isn't there any literate person in the village to teach our children?" It was a very natural form of interaction, and demonstrated the complete attention and absorption of the audience.

The research process culminated in a final theatre performance embracing a relevant topic for everybody in the area. A specific kind of weed that had destroyed their crops (ie: a wide range of varieties from rock-melon to alfa-alfa) was symbolised through creation of an oppressor-oppressed power-relationship, while the community was being oppressed and not even the extension officers were able to improve the situation. Green colour was painted on fabric worn by some actors symbolising the land and healthy crop, whilst the yellow represented that particular weed resistant to any pesticide. The most inspiring part of the performance turned out to be the humorous dialogue between the land and the weed. In the dialogue, both the extensionists and farmers were blamed for not having any sympathy with the land, being short-sighted in the sense that they looked merely at the quick interest while neglecting the premise of long-term togetherness with the environment. However, in the scenario, the weed's resistance to the pesticides was due to its collaborative plan with the land to disappoint farmers of using any more chemicals to make them find out a new solution to the problem. The weed and the land decided to encourage friendship with the environment, and to alarm the people about the hazards of these chemicals to their lives.

This innovative performance was created through the collaborative work of villagers, students, farmers and a village teacher from the next neighbourhood, and attracted a crowd of approximately one thousand and five hundred people, including children, women, local administrators and many others.

The theme of the performance had emerged and been selected by the participants during the workshop to be prepared for a public performance. The story highlighted the oppressive consequences of the problem, and involved and connected to the two other forum theatre workshop pieces - one about a young farmer's struggle to assert his decision
The involvement of children and the elders

A group discussion after the play
for immigration to his family due to the lack of income, the other a case of a destructive weed in the farms which continuously had affected the village life, causing an economic oppression. The scenario involved a major problem of the community interlinking with the other social and cultural issues to encourage systemic thinking. The play uncovered a number of constraints of rural development, without prescribing any specific solution to the audience. Although the kind of interaction that is normally expected through forum theatre (in terms of replacing actors with other actors to improvise the solutions) was impossible due to our large audience, the group discussions after the play encouraged new ideas and enjoyed a productive collaboration from the local people and the administrators. A taped video of the activity was left with the community.

Finally, a mutual agreement was made among local administrators and farmers to establish a farmers' cooperative for the marketing of agricultural products. Due to a lack of sufficient irrigation water in the area and the common conflicts on the issue, farmers themselves agreed upon arrangements for a cooperative style of water distribution. Also, the community itself admitted that literacy training was an urgent need for every farmer and was encouraged to participate in the literacy activities.

LONG TERM EFFECTS

The administrators agreed to support the farmers' independent actions for the development of the area. The community's later follow up actions have involved also the formation of a local theatre group, and a marketing cooperative both of which have enjoyed a lot of appreciation from the local people. Although the villager-actors were primarily opposed to the idea that a certain interaction of audience within the performance was necessary, one year later they themselves found ways of involving their audience in the performance - through stopping the play at the crisis and asking the audience to propose a solution spontaneously.
(C) PARTICIPATORY WORKSHOP WITH THE ADMINISTRATORS: AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENSION

A follow-up participatory workshop with the extension officers and administrators at the extension/education department in Isfahan involved a group of forty-four people from different departments (i.e.: education and extension, health, animal husbandry, researching affairs, planning, organisation for nomadic affairs, rural industry in Organisation for Reconstruction and Development, Jehad).

The objective was to assess the participants' perspectives and expectations towards the theatrical learning experience in the area, as well as the community-directed learning projects, and to explore the feasibility of using drama techniques for fostering communicative action and inquiry in the fields of rural development and agricultural extension.

The method was a participative workshop in which creative dialogue, story telling, improvisation and some other techniques from drama were adapted to reconstruct knowledge and understanding of the cultural, communication and extension issues.

The one-day workshop was spent in reviewing and sharing their experiences. While in the earlier stages of using drama with Iranian farmers, each drama element (i.e.: story-telling, improvisation, etc.) was independently adapted and contextually worked out, in this workshop, in contrast, improvisation, creative imagination, story telling for making of the common, relevant themes, were integrated and geared towards the establishment of critical discussion and a consensus. The context here, was such that games and exercises were used much less than in normal workshops, while brain-storming, group story-telling and discussion were highly focused. Participants' expectations of extension emerged as the most common relevant theme and, through discussions and analysis, a collective knowledge around the subject was created. We reflected on the farmers' attitudes about the inefficiency of extension and discussed the shortcomings of the present, ongoing system, based on the participants' experiences, and sought for alternatives.

The participants highlighted the fact that, although it was claimed by the extension organizations that it was the business of extension to come to the people, there was a wall of prejudice between the researcher/extensionist (as the transmittor of the technical message) and farmers' participation in this educational activity. However, the concept of participation to them implied only an on-farm contact, but not at a more profound level to create collaborative knowledge and mutual understanding. They discussed the point that
all farmers revealed the same attitudes towards extension officers, regarding them as unskillful, urban settlers interfering in the farmers' business, and that some of the farmers had argued numerous cases to prove the inefficiency of the officers and to make fun of them. This perspective of rural settlers is strongly rooted in the way they have been primarily dealt with by the 'transmitters of new technologies'. Interactive commitment and challenges towards solving problems and dialogue as the basis of learning/researching has not been achieved. After working so long with the farmers, it was illuminating to hear the views of 'the other side'.

Discussions about the expectations of the participants towards extension revealed multi-concept perspectives of extension among them with a priority of subjects, although within a framework of technology transfer. This shared knowledge finally represented a basic change in the attitudes of the participants towards extension strategies and affected the long-term results of the workshop.

The information acquired at the end was categorized and the items were put in an order based on their priority by the participants themselves, which is reflected in the following table. The categorization of the issues involved a number of items such as 'extension strategies', 'extension clientele', 'the contents of extension programs', 'the communication channels for extension', 'the extension headquarters', 'the extension personnel', and 'the effective factors for success of the programs'.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number</th>
<th>topic</th>
<th>priorities</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 1.     | extension strategies | 1. promoting rural culture  
3. reconstructing and replacing passivity with creativity  
**economic:**  
1. reconstructing the village environment  
2. agricultural modernization  
**social:**  
1. disseminating innovations  
2. stimulating the talents and creating self-esteem  
**political:**  
1. resolving socio-ethnic problems  
2. preserving the status quo through focusing on security issues  
**generally-size based:**  
1. groups  
2. individuals  
**production style-based services:**  
1. subsistence farmers  
2. semi-modernized farmers  
**income-based services:**  
1. poor farmers  
**ownership-based services:**  
1. all sectors  
2. cooperative | 2. literacy education  
4. health education & family planning  
3. encouraging food and commodity products  
4. creating export opportunities  
3. organizing and advising  
4. poverty eradication  
3. the individuals and groups | 3. modernized farmers  
2. intermediate farmers | 3. private  
4. governmental |
| 3. | Extension contents | Production-based services: |
| 1. Pasturing |
| 2. Farming |
| 3. Poultry and animal husbandry |
| 4. Gardening |
| Services given based on age: |
| 1. The young - between 15 to 24 |
| 2. Very young - between 15 to 24 |
| 5. Handicraft manufacturing |
| 6. Fish production |
| 7. Herbs producing |

| 4. | Extension tool | |
| - Based on technology: |
| 1. Visual - including performing arts, films, video cassettes, exhibitions and showing farms |
| 2. Literary - including posters, pamphlets, magazines, bulletins |
| 3. Audio - tapes, and radio |
| - Based on communication target: |
| 1. Mass communication |
| 2. Group communication |
| 3. Face-to-face contacts |
| 5. Health and family planning |
| 6. Farm management and marketing |

| 5. | Extension target like the village cooperative | |
| 1. Established groups in the village |
| 2. The formal local leaders |
| 3. Informal or opinion leaders |
| 4. Rural and farm cooperatives |
| 5. Small holders |

| 6. | Successful adoption | |
| 1. Contact with the local leaders |
| 2. Frequency of contact with farmers |
| 3. Continual formal and informal educational programs |
| 4. Continual delivery services (e.g. agricultural inputs) to the most innovative farmers |

<p>| 7. | Extension administration | Organizational authority: |
| 1. Ministry of Agriculture |
| 2. Ministry of Reconstruction |
| 3. Both of the first and the second |
| 4. University |
| 5. Private |</p>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>1. village level</td>
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<td>3. regional</td>
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<td>3. de-centralized</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. semi-centralized</td>
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<tr>
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<th>extension focus</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. data gathering</td>
<td>3. educating rural people through audio-visual aids and the distribution of pamphlets</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. problem identification and informing the research department of these issues</td>
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<th>extension funds</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. government</td>
<td>3. merely the farmers' payments</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. a combination of the government and the farmers' found payment</td>
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<th>extension linkages</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. participatory or interlinked programs between research, extension, and delivery services</td>
<td>3. purchase of information from research organization</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. continual organizational contacts</td>
<td>4. breaking the wall between research and extension and linking them together</td>
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<th>extension personnel</th>
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<td>(a) officers' necessary qualification:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. general or common knowledge</td>
<td>3. field experience</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. specific expertise</td>
<td>4. subject matter</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(b) practitioners' qualification:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. specific expertise</td>
<td>3. field experience</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. general knowledge</td>
<td>4. subject matter</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1. both the women and men based in the situation</td>
<td>2. men</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. men</td>
<td>3. women</td>
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<th>13</th>
<th>geographical root of the officer</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. rural and living within the rural community</td>
<td>2. rural, living in the city</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. rural, living in the city</td>
<td>3. city dweller, living in the village</td>
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<td></td>
<td>officers' training</td>
<td>1. all kinds of training opportunities noted in the following</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>the effective factors - for a successful extension</td>
<td>2. practical on-farm training</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td></td>
<td>external:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. economical</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>internal:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>1. clientele's innovativeness</td>
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<td>2. legitimacy of extension</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>officers' motivation</td>
<td>1. moral</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2. appropriate medium and facilities</td>
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Table (4) THE CATEGORIZED INFORMATION ACQUIRED IN THE PARTICIPATIVE WORKSHOP
THE ANALYSIS AND COMMENT

After revelation and categorization of the information (mostly involving a tacit dimension), the participants of the workshop were facilitated to view critically their own product and critique (ie: reflect on) that information. This occurred through discussing those issues and looking at the epistemological roots of their categorized information.

Although the participants' perspectives and their expectations towards extension revealed a multi-dimensional view within the above priorities, the information reflected that they perceived only one function for extension, that is, technical or instrumental. Also, the data gathered in the workshop revealed a reductionistic orientation in the perspectives of the participants. These emerged to be the major issues of concern for working on to achieve a certain change and transformation in the participants' perspectives to take into account the emancipatory aspects of extension.

REFLECTING ON THE ISSUES

On the issue of culture-building - referring to the category of 'extension strategies' and determination of 'culture' as the first priority - participants commented that within the context of traditional extension, the powerful were often in a position to force their will on clients, irrespective of the wishes of the latter, which resulted in the erosion of the quality of the lives of community members. The consequences were alienation, isolation, vulnerability and social paralysis. Then, in the face of this outcome, we agreed on Margaret Mead's (1977:153) identification of culture as "the systematic attempt to invent new institutions to fill new needs in the international, national and local scene". We also agreed that the crux of the process of culture building was the creation of social frameworks capable of mobilizing and sustaining community participation in the design and implementation of programs. A strategy for extension, therefore, was seen to be a joint process of technical, communicative and emancipatory action.

The participants suggested that mobilization of the people's own theatre could be an important tool in efforts at culture building. Furthermore, in order to examine this contention, the group decided to take serious action.

Conscientization - referring to the category of 'extension strategies' under the sub-heading of 'political': we see 'preservation of status quo' as the second priority. This was critiqued to be a concept against the 'perspective transformation' and the Freirean notion of 'conscientization', and the need to shift from maintaining the status quo was seen as fundamental to a development process.
**Small farmers** - with regard to the category of 'extension clientèle' - participants reflected on the terms 'groups', 'subsistence', and 'poor farmers'. Consequently, they explored the effectiveness of group processes in both learning and development activities. Also the strategy of 'progressive and innovative farmers as the target of extension' was criticized. Some of the participants, explaining personal experiences, confirmed some applications of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of 'Cultural Capital' in rural Iran, and that the progressive farmers had not disseminate the knowlege they had acquired through extension and their community as well. It was also discussed that commercial farmers were acquiring their information from the private advisory services.

**Sustainability** - referring to 'pastoral' affairs as the first priority of 'extension content' - the group reflected on the interrelationship between pasture degradation and soil erosion, pasture management, overpopulation, the training of the grazers, as well as ecological problems, and finally explored the issue of 'sustainability'.

**Forum theatre** - referring to the category of 'extension tool' - the first priority was 'visual' media such as performing arts. Reflecting on this, we tried to identify the philosophy which underlay the application of all extension methods (ie: visual, literary, and audio). The participants accepted that the application of all these media within a top-down framework would function negatively, since the participation of people in having their say and making their own choices was neglected. It was suggested that there would be an alternative choice for the application of these tools to employ the inner resources of the extension clientèle and to involve them in creativity and innovation. Therefore, the consensus was that most of these tools were potentially adaptable for a humanistic, inside-out application. For example, folk theatre in a rural setting could function differently and instead of being a 'persuasive tool' it could be used to encourage critical thinking. In terms of mass media, also people-centred programs that involve dialogue with ordinary people in the rural communities was suggested as having the most relevant information for the broadcast, and could be an alternative to producer-based radio programs. Similarly, pamphlets and posters might be created through a group activity -in a creative workshop. Finally, 'forum theatre' was to be regarded as a humanistic style of theatre for research and extension programs which involved both the tacit and explicit knowledge through creating relevant themes, and reflecting upon oppressed roles in the ultimate recreation of the selected performance. Therefore 'knowledge creation' was defined as the major task for extension, but not 'knowledge dissemination'. The participants themselves, in the workshop, achieved 'reflection' through this analytical stage.
Interactive involvement - with regard to the category of 'extension target'- we agreed that not only the established groups or the local leaders were the target, but also the community in general and the official administrators' involvement (for organizational change) were to be a major emphasis. Consequently, the interaction between both the local organizations' and the community's perspectives was seen as the key factor to mutual empowerment to improve problematic situations.

Self-directed learning - the category of 'successful adoption' of the above was viewed critically, since it regarded farmers merely as the recipients of extension messages based on the 'adoption and diffusion theory'. Also the continuity of contacts and training programs were critiqued to be reflecting the parent/child relationship, and classroom-based education. Moreover, the continuity of giving agricultural inputs to the innovative farmers was seen as similar to 'reward and punishment' principle, known as the major characteristic of conditional learning and behaviourist psychology, and as creating and maintaining social prejudice. Contrasting to the behaviourist perception to change the behaviour of farmers, the participants were given some information about Kelly's model of 'man the scientist' and the fact that all humans make hypotheses and test these hypotheses within their daily life, but they needed facilitation to reflect upon these hypotheses critically. Consequently, an interest in the concept of 'farmers as self-directed learners' was awakened in the workshop.

Interactive organization - referring to the category of 'extension administration'-participants discussed the necessity of an interactive organizational structure for extension encompassing universities, extension departments, and consultancy groups or private advisory services.

Systemic interactions/holistic perspective - referring to the category of 'effective factors for a successful extension'- was viewed as a vital prerequisite for achieving a fruitful extension activity. The deficiencies of our linear ways of knowing, reasoning and thinking were analysed and discussed in terms of one-sidedness in the way we perceive a phenomenon or interpret an event, through 'personal cases' that each participant revealed. Thus, there would be the level and quality interaction between economical, cultural, environmental and or the othe factors which determine the success or failure of extension.

Finally, the group discussion clarified and developed the notion of systems thinking and systems epistemology, as some reflected upon their past experiences and revealed relevant stories. The session moved towards the conclusion that a new paradigm of research was the central need of all the departments. It was also agreed that the quantitative and reductionistic approach to research was a fraud of the past ten years of development work
and planning. It had caused a separation of the practitioners from their clients, and reinforced the domination of one-way-oriented planning and the parallel activities of the organizations, as well as wasting much time and money. The demand for an holistic and applicable theory or a methodology was clear. They also appeared willing to participate in a forum theatre workshop for organization change and development, and some participants from educational and research institutes also urged on their interest in learning the techniques to operate their own research and education programs. Beside, a seminar-workshop was conducted at the request of the Provincial Department of Extension and Rural Development at the section in the Jehad, that is, the Organization for Reconstruction and Development.

CONCLUSION

Not only did participants discover new resources in themselves, but they also gained a fresh perspective on what another person's life was 'really like'. For example, during the field experiences, farmers in a small village regarded a big land owner as 'a cruel thief': "He steals our underground water, because he has four well-engines, so he is not honest." This might be the only thing they were prepared to believe about those owning or using the new technology they themselves did not own. In this study the goal was to help them to perceive a reality from different angles, in this case, for example, to take other soundings of the role of big land owner - as father, husband, intelligent, innovator, a person with another human's aspirations and goals, one with four sucking engines on in the village and one who could also help the others: to share his facilities or even his experiences with the other farmers, to build a health centre (as he had promised), and to improve the situation.

In relation to the above experiences, the hypotheses of the extension department, that the farmers are reluctant to adopt of new ideas and cannot recognize their own basic needs and benefits, is invalid. The engaging nature of drama may lead both researchers and farmers to get involved in a dialogue, and move towards exploration of their expectations to analyse problematic situations in relation to one another and achieve a better understanding. According to my experience, the process will almost automatically result in participation and collaborative action, provided that facilitators are well prepared to use the psychological knowledge and the flexible techniques with both parties to reach consensus.

To find the appropriate form of drama, as well as using participative theatre as a means of participatory research, a systemic action research needs to be conducted, including four different recursive fluxes of 'planning, observing, acting, and reflecting'. The forum theatre
workshop was the most successful form of participatory drama in achieving participatory learning and researching objectives. The process allows for practicing recursive logic and systems or dialectical thinking, creating alternatives, and exploring possibilities within topics relevant to each group. The final research themes emerge as they are discussed, worked out and improvised. Observers are encouraged to enrich the choices of action against oppressive problem by replacing the actors voluntarily. This involves all participants in the collective work of knowledge creation, as well as in a process of experiential learning and action researching. Through creative drama and the forum theatre workshop processes, not only the issues and the solutions were identified, but the participants had also the chance to develop empathic feelings with the past, the present and with those who were collaborating with them.

In using drama as a medium for an inside-out extension activity (through researching and learning alternatives), significant and fundamental differences are revealed between performance devised by participants who preferred to 'make and show' plays to others, and participants who based their work on creativity, problem solving and collaborative work. The former believe in top-down modes of communication, whereas the latter are interested in group analysis. Furthermore, in our participatory drama processes, the learning which comes about is not merely something to do with the activities themselves. Rather, it is to do with the quality of the experience for the group and the relevance of the activities to the underlying purposes of the participants.

In the Iranian rural context, the participant-farmers were also enabled to touch on their real social roles within the group, as they explored a number of symbolic roles as equals. All participants in this type of activity were interacting at the same time with their real social roles and their symbolic roles, as well as with each other as individuals. They not only developed their networking systems through the process, but reconsidered their established networks. The most important thing was that they were exposed to a number of choices they had not noticed before. I consider this process of choice as one of the major characteristics of the empowering process. In my experience, the participants, after the end of the process, were clearly changed in two aspects: they changed their expectations (needs), and increased their choices of social action.

This corollary made me to rethink what Robinson (1980) calls 'the network of real social relationship's. As he points out:

Any group has a network of real social relationships. These may range from total unfamiliarity and tentativeness with a new grouping, to long-established sets of friends and rivals with completely fixed expectations of each other in an old one. The actions of a group in a drama session, in role or out of it, are not just a response to what the [facilitator] asks them to do. They are all responses to the expectations they have of each other. We do not simply drop our normal social roles just
because we are asked to act-out another one. On the contrary: we now have two sets of roles to handle.
In working with a group for the first time, or with one which is uncommitted to drama, the [facilitator] needs to know how the real social network is operating. Otherwise whatever the group does will only ever make partial sense. For some individuals in some groups taking on certain roles may be all but impossible. At other times, particularly with people who are completely new to drama, it may not be taking on any particular role which proves to be difficult - for example a quiet person being asked to play an aggressive one - but the fact of doing it at all.

(Robinson 1980, pp. 165-6)

This experience shows that there is always potential for change. In other terms, people may be the victims of their circumstances, but they need not remain victims for ever.

Within the context of this research, the process of dialogue was productive and fruitful, mainly when more metaphors were explored and used by the two parties or within group discussions. We also elicited the schematic themes from their religious ritual, worked with the ritual-actors and created new scenarios. The process demonstrated that people have the most power to become involved at a caring and urgently involved level if they are placed in a quite specific relationship with the action, because this brings with it, inevitably, responsibility and, more particularly a viewpoint which draws them into an effective involvement. Through such a process, the social encounters (either during or after the main action of the play) become more complex and various. Within a traditional theatre, it is often achieved when, for example, the audience are invited to participate in a certain extent - to be a jury or basically in any situation where they may join in the moral or action decisions. The existing theatrical elements need to be identified, and be subjected to more creation and extension. This research showed that drama is potentially powerful and may be regarded more than a medium of entertaining, rather as a tool for creation of collective knowledge.

These are the communicative codes that are not usually recognized in formal or survey research. The results of this research has shown that creative drama and participative theatre as a systems approach provide the researcher with both the systematic (ie: words) and schematic (ie: metaphors and other symbolic forms) codification system and understanding. The researcher then may better understand the situation and more effectively reflect upon that.
(D) PARTICIPATIVE DRAMA WITH NOMADS

Nomadic people of Iran, inheriting a rich background in animal husbandry, pastoralism, and courage in defending Iranian borders, are now suffering from a state of dependence on the government, great difficulties in the transitional shifts from traditional/nomadic way of life to a new way which is not quite clear to them, degradation of pastures, animal diseases, health problems, as well as a state of suspension between the two worlds: the old world which is crumbling, and the new one which rejects them. You may see a number of migrant nomads in big cities like Isfahan gathering in groups and looking for construction work in the city’s squares. There are now conflicts between nomads who want to continue nomadic life stlye and the government officials in terms of beliefs about settlement and the kind of services nomads are given. The aim of this study was both the exploration of some underlying values about, and managing of the conflict.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LAND

It emerged, through observing and talking to slum settlers and the nomads in summer quarters close to Isfahan, that nomadism is held to be a 'life' (even among those who settled), and settlement is 'death'. There are now a large number of nomadic background construction workers in Isfahan, who have left their nomadic 'life', and every now and then visit their relatives in the tents. Some of them said that they felt in a vacuum when living in Isfahan, because they could not love the land and because it did not touch them. (Also, as it will be discussed later, the Australian immigrant farmers revealed the same thing: the fact that despite owning a plot of land, their relationship with their land was not empathic and sympathetic, rather it was mechanistic. They still had empathic feelings with the soil of their land in Lebanon or Vietnam. When I asked them, for example, "What are you doing here?" most of them responded, "This is our business".) In contrast to this way of looking at the land, the nomads in Iran, when asking to draw their 'life', collaboratively, they painted the heads of sheep, within an absolutely green context, a rifle, a few horses and a few goats in the front side, carrying a sack on their neck, without or with the feature of the tents erected close together. After painting, however, they explained that the goats were carrying seeds in the sacks, for sowing the pasture during passing the moutain. They also defined the green context not as 'a land' or 'pasture', rather, "This is our home." It is worthwhile mentioning the fact that, out of fourteen drawings, there were only two of them which revealed the features of children and women. The concept of 'home' and 'life' might well be located in the land itself, rather than in the people. Encouraging these sorts of relationship with land, through art or symbolic action, might be considered a basic ground for learning about nomads' views on land care and sustainability. The view of some administrators that nomads were irresponsible in regard to the environmental issues is
Visiting a nomadic area with local administrators in four wheel drive vehicles.

Being welcomed into a nomadic tent with customary hospitality.
revealed to be invalid, as the nomads' main interest was to maintain their ties with nature and the nomadic style of living. However, there were a number of other constraints causing the destruction of pastures.

THE FIELD ACTIVITY

This field activity was undertaken to explore a research methodology for a new way of looking at socio-cultural perspectives of nomadic communities in a collaborative way. The objective was to introduce and to refine research methodology based on creative drama techniques for participative, communicative interaction with nomads. The logic behind this type of intervention has been already explained, based on the need for epistemological shifts in the perspectives of various parties involved in the process. The nomads were asked to participate in drama/theatre activities to help with my research for my doctoral studies. I explained that the research was exploring a methodology for a new way of looking at social, cultural, and environmental problems viewed by nomads to find answers to the questions collaboratively. In fact, the activity from the beginning involved improvisations and at the same time emancipatory and empowering processes 'of' and 'by' the nomads who at this stage were looking for help primarily from the outside. As a result, the process helped them to think about themselves, and their potential resources, and to take action to improve their own contextual problems.

Two groups of Bakhtiari Nomads were involved. One group was at their summer quarters at Fereidoonshahr, Isfahan province and were contacted through the Nomadic Organisation Office with the cooperation of the Education Department of Jehad Organisation in Isfahan. The second group was temporarily resident on range land in the Bara'an district of Isfahan, where they had rented pasture on which to graze their herd. The researcher lived with each of the nomadic groups for a week at a time, during which improvised drama activities were organised. It revealed a major controversy among the different government organisations: that nomads were reluctant to co-operate in receiving the government's services such as vaccination, and in organised literacy training. In a workshop held at the Organisation for Nomadic Affairs in Fereidoonshahr, there was only one person who expressed the sympathy to the attitudes of nomads to the services they 'received', while the others (from the Education and Literacy organisations, and so forth) expressed their dissatisfaction about the reaction of nomads to the services.

Bakhtiari nomads were involved in improvised drama activities to recapture their past experiences, reflect upon them, and make sense of them. This creative process revealed the unexpected, unpredicted dimension of knowledge which never be achieved through the traditional research methods and techniques. In an enactment of the way a vaccinator dealt
Fluteplaying shepherds are found the world over. Flocks of up to five hundred sheep and goats forage in a grainfield watched over by the male members of nomadic families.

The Nomads' tents are made of fabric spun and woven from goat hair, which is warm, waterproof and hardwearing.
with their children, a nomadic family improvised and presented how the health agent treated a child, as though he was dealing with a sheep, which was an insult to them.

Spontaneous drama, when used in an anthropological research context, becomes a form of human interaction in which codes and patterns of behaviour are revealed for examination and analysis. Life events and actions are reconstructed and condensed in a stylized way. For example, each 'drama' engagement with the nomads involved all of the participants, including the investigator, in planning, observing, acting and reflecting. The point has to be made, however, that the process described as 'spontaneous drama' is a very carefully planned, managed and analysed event. Spontaneity refers to the openness and flexibility demonstrated in the chosen theme and the freedom of participants to change roles as well as outcomes, not to a haphazardness in the process.

The drama consisted of image making, creative movement, group story telling, improvisations, exploratory games, creation of scenarios and the negotiation and changing of roles. Issues and solutions were identified and the participants had an opportunity to develop empathy with the past and present and those with whom they were collaborating.

The enactment of the discussed problems revealed new insights into the issues and resulted in rapport and understanding. One knowledge revelation and rapport-building technique, which in the beginning seemed to be irrelevant, was drawing and painting. The two parties, that is, the people and the administrators, were asked to draw their own homes, then the common and or the underlying principles of the drawn pictures were discussed: shelter, belongingness, security, safety and comfort. Then everybody accepted that despite differences in the perceived home, there was a consensus as to what 'home' meant. In the same way, volunteers were asked to create the images of a happy and fortunate farmer as well as a nomad. These images were consequently discussed and proved the fact that there was no one with any hostility towards the local people, but that the controversy stemmed from the differences in perceptions and understanding. This is a way of understanding the tacit or dormant knowledge, which actually contributes to the process of participatory inquiry and development as well. Such techniques are used in early education and diagnostic psychotherapy in the West, especially with children and those who cannot respond with verbal or written language, but never before with rural people in Iran. In this study, it resulted in a continual dialogue between the two parties, as a way of overcoming the obstacles to a helping relationship and to enrich the alternative courses of action to solve the problems.
Through roleplay, the problems with child vaccination are explored. The overbearing attitudes of the healthworkers was found to be the main problem.

Nomads express and discuss their perspectives through paintings and creating posters.
COGNITION AND THE THEORY OF PERSONAL CONSTRUCTS

Acts of spontaneous drama with the nomads revolved around re-enactments of daily life, living conditions, emotions, sorrows, concerns and happiness associated with tribal, communal and nomadic life. Group discussion followed each dramatisation during which participants and observers explored various interpretations of the images that were elicited. The Nomads enthusiastically and willingly participated in drama activities and following discussions. They revealed a richly diverse range of perceptions and knowledge about herd husbandry practices, family relationships, past experiences and future hopes. The nature of the drama activities was such that all were involved in a co-operative process of self expression and then self exploration. The researcher at times was a participant in and at other times an observer of the processes, but was always involved in the research activity in a collaborative way. Avoided was the more traditional controlling, power-functional relationship which is so often assumed by, or is ascribed to, some social researchers' intent on quantitative and, less obviously, in so-called qualitative social data gathering.

The sources of conflict among the nomads and the local government officials were investigated through role-play in order to manage it more effectively. Role-play was first tested as a technique within conflict situations between administrators and nomads in a workshop held in Fereidoon Shahr. It involved creative enactment of the real roles in the being carried in the Nomadic organization and within the nomadic families, that is, improvisation of the roles: a difficult person, a reasonable person, and a mediator to investigate the grounded values and manage the conflict. As a mediator, I played a role not only to 'lower the boom' and propitiate the complainants, but to facilitate a joint analysis of the problem within a dramatic performance, where a number of choices were tried for their appropriatenessness without the risks of the real situation.

This process is what gives some insight beyond 'what people know' to 'how people know'. In this sense the process of investigation and the process of intervention are one and the same.

FIELD OBSERVATIONS

The processes of nomads' settlement by the governments of the last sixty years in Iran, has had a number of negative impacts on the nomadic life style, among which cultural impacts are the most considerable. The linearity of the programs for the nomads and the power related issues to these programs have distorted the normal independent state among them. The problem lies in the way that both the government and the nomads perceive the issues.
Five nomadic families gather to discuss their problems. An older man does the talking in a community where hierarchy is based on age and gender, but also leadership skills.

A conflict between the nomads and the administrators about the non-attendance at the literacy programs.
As the study aimed to test and develop a new method of dealing with soft systems involving people's epistemology and their ways of looking at their issues, some of the techniques of drama showed promise in developing a second eye. The issues included basically, the dependency belief, the inessential needs, and power structure.

An example. The nomads' expectations of their children as an asset to be invested in for the future of family revealed a constraint to independent development of the clan's new generation, which contrasted with the values of affluent rural settlers who invested their own lives for the future of their children. The nomadic family (on a rental range land in Bara’an district) were asked to improvise the role of devoting, highly responsible parents. The improvisation helped them to practice to change in the dominant way they perceived the phenomenon of parenthood. As a result of viewing their position differently, their perspective on the problem improved (or was relatively transformed) in terms of establishing new relationships with their children. This enactment (as engaging the psychology and feelings), by itself contributed to the review and reconstruction of the existing values towards parenthood.

The general point of the observations might be related to the first hypothesis of Boal (Chapter Four) that is, Osmosis - The Macrocasm and the Microcosm, which suggests that all an individual's patterns are rooted in the nuclear family which, in conjunction with the neighborhood norms, creates and reflects a 'group perspective'. This is similar to the outcome of a critical conversation, with two groups of Bakhtiary Nomads in the first and the second year of the research. They were asked to express their feelings about being a nomad. The first group, in the suburban area of Isfahan, were four nomadic families who had temporarily erected their tents on range land, where they had rented pasture on which to graze their herd, women and men depicted a happy and exciting life through their entertaining stories. In response to my question of how they could adjust themselves to such a hard living condition, a brave woman said, "We cannot tolerate your city for more than two days". These group of nomads were semi-settled in Yazdekhash, enjoying the aspects of both the settlement and the nomadic life style and had preserved their aesthetic values (along with other values).

In contrast, the second group of nomads were on their summer quarters in Fereidoon Shahr, where, in a poor, degraded pasture, the few erected tents were the only signs of life. The values of the nomadic system or life-style had been critically questioned by them, and they exposed to us (a team of researchers and the local education and health officers and administrators) merely their misery and problems, sometimes in an aggressive way. Even in response to my assertion that I had come from Australia to see these brave people, a young strong nomad said, "You came because you had heard we were miserable people?"
A group discussion on the major nomadic issues led to an analysis of their concerns: misery, basic needs, pasture, water, literacy, power, appropriate technology, etc.

SPECIFIC ISSUES

Spontaneous drama was generated around a number of topics such as:

- the power relationship between nomads and various government departments;
- problems associated with literacy and pasture management, and government programs;
- similarities and differences between nomadic, urban and rural life styles.

Through the acting roles and in discussions after the drama, a number of problem issues were identified. The reluctance of the nomads to participate in the government organised programs can be attributed to:

- the inconvenient time of the classes;
- resentment of the superior, aggressive approach of educators;
- the lack of personal courtesy shown by health agents;
- their lack of interest in becoming involved because of the perceived lack of future for nomadic people;
- the perceived irrelevance of literacy education when the priority needs were seen as improved health services, increased pasture production, sheep health management and water conservation.

THE RESULTS

- Abstract concepts of communication, co-learning self expression and creative generalisations were made real and acted out through participative drama.
- Reflections on the similarities and differences in perceptions between nomadic and other people increased awareness of commonality and led to the acceptance of the views of others.
- Participants stayed with and worked through concepts that they initially ignored or denied because of the threat or enmity it provoked in them.
- The technical issues of pasture management, animal breeding and genetics were discussed and built upon the local knowledge of the nomads about these issues.
- The Nomads felt empowered that they knew more than they thought they did and others shared in and supported their knowing.
- The nomads learned to relate to both the real and imagined world and thus
improved their understanding and control of both.

• The nomads improved communications, expression, sharing perspectives (joint meaning making) and understanding human experience through immediacy (from inside out).

• The process consciously showed shared life experiences as a rationale behind meaning making. Through this process the nomads revealed values, principles, priorities and their - ‘ways of knowing’.

• The process promoted an ethos of mutual support while at the same time acknowledged and accepted diversity of experience and opinions.

• The process encouraged creativity, linked with clarity, in communication. Tents became the symbol for the ministry and the ministry the symbol for power.

• Through drama the nomads tested abilities, they reflected on the past, they formed attitudes, made predictions into the future: they learned!
(E) FIELD-WORK WITH IMMIGRANT FARMERS IN AUSTRALIA

The present environmental awareness of Australian consumers on issues like pesticides, mono-cultures, chemical fertilisers, the recession which affects the Australian ethnic farmers' financial situation, and environmental problems like salination, flooding, erosion, greenhouse effect, ozone depletion, water pollution, coupled with the pressure to use 'high tech' machinery, and other issues, all make farming in a country like Australia a very stressful and hazardous job. Are all those problems manageable by modern Australian farmers? Do we need great scientists to tackle it? Is it society's problem? It is obvious that many farmers do ponder on these questions, if only once in a while. Hence, a group of immigrant farmers were informally contacted on their farms as well as being invited to attend a one-day workshop to discuss these and other problems and share their own knowledge of the issues. These farmers were chosen since they are major producers of vegetables on small lands, whose ways of farming affect the environment and the market as well. Also, due to the ethnicity issue and language problems there was not a successful relationship between themselves on one hand, and with the Government extension staff on the other.

Based on the several meetings with immigrant farmers on their farms, it is clear that one of the most common problems within the Hawkesbury area of New South Wales is the application of too many chemicals. Market gardeners who use chemicals have rarely noticed the problem themselves, since they look for an instant income, which runs counter to the sustainability arguments, and consumers' health concerns. Broad symptoms include soil degradation, and consumers' health problems. The increase in the application of chemicals is already caused by intensive advice from the extension department on the issue and the introduction of seductively versatile pesticides and fertilizers onto the market. Regardless of its (economic) environmental dangers, it seems to farmers to be a vital part in their business to attract a better market. Therefore their use, almost without question, has became a part of farmers' attitudes or, beyond that, part of their personal construct systems.

The objective of this stage of research was to foster group dynamics, through enhancing creative thinking, dialogue and imagination (as derived from drama techniques), to identify farmers' knowledge and values relating to this knowledge in the area of chemical use, as well as to stimulate collaborative learning among farmers and extension practitioners. The method was exchange through personal dialogue, story-telling, and follow-up through a group workshop.
Discourse with a Vietnamese vegetable farmer and a Phillipino-Australian Department of Agriculture extension worker in NSW, Australia.

Dialogue with a Maltese nurseryman and his son in NSW, Australia. They specialise in seedlings which are then sold to small farmers. As a middleman, he tends to be more successful than the farmers.
WHO ARE THE IMMIGRANT FARMERS?

There are a large number of immigrant families of Lebanese, Greeks, Vietnamese, Maltese, Italians, and Chinese who live in the Western Sydney area and who are involved in growing vegetables in small holdings of five to twenty hectares. The length of the farmers' citizenship within the research contacts varied from five to thirty years, except the Italians of a second generation.

According to observations within the context of this research, there are three different groups of farmers: 1. Farmers (owning one hundred hectares of land or more) 2. Market gardeners (owning between three to ten hectares of land who generally are known by the number of their crops - eg: forty thousand tomatoes - and are economically dependent on their land income) 3. Hobby farmers (owning different numbers of hectares of land, but without it having any essential economic influence in their life style, and being mainly a complementary, luxury (hobby) activity).

The farmers we met within the Hawkesbury and Nepean areas in NSW, Australia were, generally, among the market gardeners. They are unsatisfied with their land income (they said they could not afford the packing and chemical expenses, as well as competition with progressive or big farmers), and some of them were being supported by a second job in a different business. Besides there was a distinct difference between Iranian farmers and these Australian immigrant farmers which was crucial: while the former considered their farming as their 'whole life' (interconnected with the religion, social prestige, and family relationships), the latter strongly considered their farming as a business that, if unsuccessful, might be replaced by another one. Whereas for Iranian farmers giving farming up meant a fundamental change in their life (socially, culturally, and economically), within the Australian context, the immigrant farmers' goal structure is mainly individualistic and concerned with profit.

In the first stage, direct on-farm contacts were made to explore mainly their belief systems, as well as their reason for using too many chemicals. Immigrant farmers in Australia live and work in isolation, so that their mental and behavioural patterns are also individualistic. In spite of the ethnic and cultural diversity, they are strongly influenced by the Australian capitalistic tradition, the main reason for their individualistic goal structures. On the other hand, despite the lack of a horizontal communication among these farmers, most of them were willing and interested in participating in a cooperative organization of marketing. In fact, the domination of big farmers in the vegetable market was the main reason for their interest in cooperative work, as it offered the best solution to
A Vietnamese farmer grows tomatoes under a plastic canopy. He and the extension worker discuss the viability of chemical fertilisers.

Discussing marketing and accountability in terms of expenses for chemicals and labour costs, and possible alternative ways of achieving a profit while operating ethically.
competing the big farmers. In response to the question: "What is the best suggestion for improving the problems of the market?", some of them suggested that establishing an Ethnic Farmers Association would work and be very helpful.

My observations show that the individualistic pattern of behaviour is mainly due to the individualistic structure of farming in Australia from the outset. Migrants spent their personal energies and talents on establishing their own farms and created a new life style for themselves. Similarly, during recent decades, when new migrants came to Australia from different ethnic backgrounds, they faced the same problems as their fellows had coped with in the beginning. They needed resources and credit, but first of all the knowledge of farming - which they acquired and developed through their direct confrontation with their surrounding system rather than gaining the knowledge in a family context, passed down from generation to generation. Therefore their knowledge is their private property. It is their commodity and capital. It may be the reason why a Lebanese female farmer, twelve years ago, paid sixty dollars (a day) to a Yugoslav farmer, just for information about vegetable growing which, when finally given, was inaccurate, so she fired him from her property. Multiculturalism, and the lack of empathic relationships between them might be among the other reasons that have led such farmers and market gardeners to work in isolation.

These farmers are very concerned with the word 'share' and this is the main reason they are reluctant to taking part in any meeting or workshop. They want to know more about topics that offer them a real advantage. Almost all of them were revealed to be self-directed learners and life-long learners. As one of them asserted: "On the farm, we learn new things each moment and every day". Most of them have not had any previous farming experience, and have learned everything in Australia by their own motivation and initiative. In response to the questions, "Under which conditions would you attend a workshop?", or "What expectations would you have?" most of them responded:

- to learn what we need
- to become a better farmer
- to be quicker
- to be creative in doing what we value
- to not lose any of our work-time
- to save money and time
- to enjoy the time
- to find a sense of belonging and friendship.
A Maltese farmer and his wife who work as a family demonstrate their success.

Exploring sustainability issues and the adverse effects of overuse of chemicals on consumers and on the land with a Lebanese family.
THE PROCESS

Co-ordinating with the Department of Agriculture, and through the generosity of an extension officer, some of these farmers were visited at their farms and households. The inquiry was planned in three stages - not necessarily hierarchical:

1. exploratory
2. group planning
3. change (forum theatre practice).

LET'S TALK ABOUT OURSELVES : THE WORKSHOP

Eighteen participants, including immigrant farmers, extension staff, academics of agriculture and post-graduate students of agriculture, were involved in the dialogic workshop which was held in the former Hawkesbury Agricultural College (now University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury), Richmond, Australia, in July 1992. The main objective to hold the workshop was to encourage peer learning by creating a friendly context, to put the ideas of the different ethnic backgrounds together.

All that was needed was for farmers to bring themselves and their creative minds to shape the outcome of the day. Lunch was also provided to allow for a social aspect.

The workshop started with a brief, introductory speech by each participant. The aims of the workshop was explained to the participants: to create themes about environmental issues and agriculture and to establish rapport between extension work, the farmers and the University (a source of farmers' information system).

Story telling was selected as the most compatible and adaptable technique to avoid boredom and increase participation from everyone and hopefully some information would be shared. Through story-telling, the participants revealed their personal stories and through interaction agreed upon a common theme - which included their major concerns and represented the commonality among the group. Farmers in collaboration with the academics and the extension worker (Johnny C. Capuyan from the Department of Agriculture in New South Wales) told the stories of their lives and careers, and were involved in group processes such as brainstorming. The crucial point was the dynamic of the workshop which led automatically to the exploration of a number of interdependent relationships and the review of their dependent world view.
Discussions among farmers on their issues of concern were facilitated. The techniques used in the first stage were: direct observation, semi-structured interviews, family-group discussions and, most importantly, creative dialogues.

In the afternoon, two young Filipino women who had been invited already to run the workshop (at the time, one of them was the coordinator of an active theatrical and cultural action group, PACIN, in Sydney) began with unexpected games and warm-up activities without any consideration of its relevance to the age and the occupation of the participants and the fact that they had already spent a morning together. There were two lines of string fixed across the workshop with some clips on each line. Participants were given blank sheets and were asked to write their quick comments and hang them on the line, based on themes that the facilitators would give them. The quickest participant would be the winner!

It did not take long before some of the old participant farmers found it threatening and one of them left the workshop with an expression of anger: "I am not here to play games like a child", he said. This person, on the other hand, had been very active in the morning session. The workshop had to be turned suddenly back into a new atmosphere of story telling and creative dialogue, which it was supposed to be up to the end. The point is, these so-called 'expert facilitators' lacked the appropriate skills and highlighted the need for facilitators with both the practical, cultural and the psychological knowledge to run such workshops - those who understand 'cultural action' beyond the pre-determined boundaries, or merely in terms of theatrical action. In this case, the young women turned out to be ill-prepared for the situation, with no empathy within the group situation. The other reasons of the young women's failure were their gender and their young age. I intervened and asked the women to use a questioning technique and brain-storming activity, which followed with a group discussion around the explored issues. However, within the workshop generally:

- Learning occurred through bringing the memory into consciousness: when starting the active involvement of telling personal stories, everyone's tendency was to tell their own stories, and others to listen and compare with their own.

- Learning was taken away from the classroom, to where they had more control.

- Every participant appreciated his/her own knowledge, as well as the others', and in dealing with a problematic theme was supported by the facilitators and the co-learners in the group.

- The facilitators, held participants (farmers) in regard, and provided them with
comfortable surroundings.

- The process provided substantial necessities for self-directed learning, (explained in the literature) such as: self-awareness, acquaintance with the urgent and basic problems (by changing the perception of a problem), group learning, facilitation, and finally developed a learning network through acquaintance with the new, experienced human resources to make learning challenging and absorbing.

- Within the workshop, people took part with their whole being without necessarily having their own personal agenda, whilst the process itself led them to reveal personal themes. These themes became the real topic of discussion. In such a way the content of the learning situation was controlled by the learners and not imposed by the facilitator.

- Another basic element was the many valuable and profound discussions which took place out of the workshop sessions, creating an informal balance among participants and groups to their mutual benefit.

The major problem, despite the differences in ethnicity, native language and culture was the same. On the other hand, the individual experiences and perspectives varied from person to person. A consensus was necessary to cope with the issue of sustainability as the common problem.

"There are just too many questions to be asked and too many answers are expected to be answered. Normally, the answers might or might not necessarily serve the interests of the local farming communities, but very often serve the interests of the multinational corporations, or even governments in an event of an upcoming election. Too many so-called experts will advise the farmers to do certain things when they are not sure if they are right or wrong."

(A participant in the workshop)

The workshop allowed exchange of experiences and information among farmers. This consequently promoted solidarity among farmers, focusing on common issues and problems, as well as looking for the answers collectively. From the exchanges, farmers got the power to work together on some issues which needed to be resolved in the community. This could ultimately serve the interest of farmers themselves. In the events of any reluctance or astonishment, the facilitator adapted the technique to the taste and expectations of the participants as flexibly as possible. The achievement of the workshop and the interaction, as well as the reflection upon each story and segment, was greater. Therefore, seven months of working with the Australian ethnic farmers resulted in two types of outcomes:
a. the results of the on-farm observations and investigation,
b. the outcome of the one-day, Hawkesbury workshop.

A REFLECTIVE OBSERVATION

Through this study, observations of the Australian farming system reveals the fact that it is the value systems and cultural heritage of the ethnic groups which underlie and determine the relationship between small farmers (eg: market gardeners) on one hand and the environment on the other, and that it is the 'tacit dimension' to values and belief-systems which is conventionally neglected or ignored, while is the most important and part of the determining values, the key to decision making and behavioural patterns.

Working with Australian immigrant farmers in the context of this research reveals the fact that the process of diffusion is mainly due to the mutual benefits of those who tend to share their knowledge. In other words, the economic status of the farmers (eg: their land size) and consequently their similar cultural capital creates a secure atmosphere and determines the level for sharing knowledge.

Market gardeners can ill afford the time or money for consultation, and they make the contact with extension only when their conditions seem incurable. Extension, in spite of its intentions and services, has managed to serve only the relatively affluent. Frequent and working contact was seen only among those extension officers and farmers who overcome the asymmetrical relationship and succeed in establishing horizons for mutual communication. Farmers usually contacted the extension officer by telephone.

Regardless of their different ethnic backgrounds, immigrant farmers in Australia are mainly affected by the greediness of the capitalist context of Australia (this comment is exactly what a Lebanese family said.)

Many of the immigrant farmers have not previously been engaged in agricultural activities, and their current position in vegetable growing is a consequence of trial and error. It may be the main reason why they are so keen to acquire any sort of knowledge (mainly technical) about their activities.

There is no sense of 'community' among these farmers who are of the different nationalities, therefore there is no tangible knowledge diffusion or horizontal communication. Regardless of the length of their residency in Australia, they are physically and technically isolated. The only regular source of information for them is the
Department of Agriculture which, according to all visited families, would mostly result in only a pamphlet at the time of making contact.

Generally, the extension services within the area are being used by the farmers in two different ways: (1) by the direct contact of the farmer with extension staff at their office, which results (most of the time) in giving strict advice or a pamphlet to the farmer. "The extension staff tend not to leave their desks," said a farmer; and (2) the on-farm visits of extension officers, which includes mostly a short visit to see the crop and to give technical advice, and sometimes a cup of coffee is included too. Migrant farmers are very cautious about sharing their knowledge and experiences with others. The following statements are the examples:

- "Once a researcher from the department came here and asked for my assistance in researching a variety of vegetables, but after a few months working together, he is refusing to inform me of the results." (A Vietnamese farmer)

- "In 1978 I paid a migrant farmer from Eastern Europe sixty dollars for one-day advice in tomato growing. At the middle of the same day I found him cheating. Then, I pushed him off and said, 'Get out of my farm!'" (A female Lebanese farmer)

Regardless of their individualistic goal structure in the area of knowledge, these farmers are willing to have a marketing association. It is the solution they suggested for coping with the domination of big farmers on the market.

Immigrant farmers revealed their unwillingness to attend seminars. Their reasons are (1) it is so tedious, (2) too scientific, (3) their own physical and mental tiredness. In contrast, some of them welcomed a blend of fun, entertainment and technical affairs. Also, the lack of a sufficient skill in English seems to be another issue, since some of them still use a mimic language to communicate with the extension officer on their farm.

Contrasting to Iranian farmers who used the terms 'farm' and 'life' interchangably, Australian immigrant farmers, when talking about their farm, markedly used the term 'business', and not even 'the farm'. They talked about an alternative job as if their current 'business' was not profitable enough to pay back their investment and energy. Furthermore, two households talked about a second job they held to cover the losses of growing vegetables. 'We spend too much money on chemicals, labourers, and packages,' said a Lebanese farmer. In contrast, in the rural and nomadic context of Iran, when talking with them on the farm or in their tents about the phenomenon of migration, for example, agitation and sorrow clearly appeared on their faces. In a nomad's tent, the elder son of the family (currently a painter in Tehran), visiting his native home for the holiday, was emotionally involved in the dialogue. "I have lost my whole way of life, and everything is
terrible in the city." He said. Obviously, his concern is moral and about the 'whole life', but not the 'vocation', even though he blamed the aggravated economic conditions and the vulnerability of the nomadic life which had forced him to leave his family.

The main issue that emerged through our dialogue, was the lack of empathy among the farmers themselves on one hand, and between the farmers and their environment on the other. Despite twenty years of living and working in Australia, some of them were proudly talking about the value of the soil structure and properties in their native country. In response to questions about why they spend too much on chemicals and fertilizer, many of them reflected that it was not their concern and that they were living in Australia temporarily. Even in terms of ethical concerns for the consumer, they did not care, except for one household whose produce was directly sent to their own community. Hence, whenever there is 'empathy' the farmer might respond to the 'sustainability' messages of extension, which might result in an improvement in ecological conditions.

THE OUTCOME OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop showed that farmers have their own solutions to the ongoing issues encountered every day at work. Despite a very high interest in technical advice, it was revealed that, regardless of the ethnicity issue among these farmers, there was another necessity for integrating culture with extension to increase the efficiency of the activity. That is the emerging issue of sustainability in the context of Australian farming systems which involves value judgements within the context of its economic, environmental and socio-cultural consequences on one hand, and the ethical issues which derive mainly from the different goal structures of the individuals involved in various farming activities and the related areas such as marketing on the other. It is referred to in some fundamental statements that emerged during and after the workshop:

- "As an extension worker, I believe such a learning, consequently, may bring about social change in terms of co-operative activities, as well as self-consciousness and personal growth among farmers."

- "Many of small farmers are naive about how some agro-businesses operate. For instance, in the context of marketing there are always temptations and pressures to act unethically."

- "I know extension department can't teach ethics the way it can teach pest management, for example, but I think farmers should be sensitised to issues with ethical dimensions."
"Actually, the issue of ethics was one of the reasons I took part in this workshop."

"As a farmer specialising in market gardening over fifteen years, I became increasingly upset on most occasions with the non-ethical relationship among farmers in regard to sharing their true experiences and also in the market, even with some extension staff who seem to have been using me for their own promotion."

"As the extension officer, I have felt strongly a need to do something through dialogue, to establish relationship, to share with farmers' lifestories and to pass on my knowledge. I have been, most of the time, in search of the new ways to get through my clients' views and expectations. Most of my colleagues have objections to the way I treat farmers; they tend not leave their desks."

"As farmers we do need technical advice specific to our own situations, but nobody cares. Packaged advice is not the whole story."

CONCLUSION

To have sustainable agriculture, we need firstly to create or to encourage a 'culture of agriculture': to restore our relationships and empathy with environment. Therefore, in such situations, extension needs to establish initially a medium by which such a culture is created and empathy is achieved, a medium capable of awakening the unconscious or the tacit knowledge of the people. It is however, in the arts (and, according to the literature and the experience of this research, particularly a creative drama process) which, depending on the context, covers a range of forms, including creative dialogue or spontaneous drama action and a popular or a forum theatre. Regarding the isolation of migrant market gardeners within the Australian context, creative dialogue was revealed as the most applicable and appropriate method initially, which bridges the present and the future of the farmer with his past. The interconnectedness between the concerns of the past, present and future as the focus of empathic dialogue, to some extent resulted in brotherhood and universality. However, it is very important that, though simpler than the craft of theatre, facilitating creative dialogues needs a general knowledge of psychology that is lacking in the average extension officer. Hence, it is on this point that the application of Kelly's personal construct theory in agricultural extension, by Salmon and others in Australia deserves respect and appreciation.

To sum up, it was hypothesized (by the Extension Department) that ethnic farmers who used too many chemicals were lacking a knowledge of sustainable agriculture, or the
intellectual capacity to realize the hazards of this over-consumption and its negative impacts on the ecosystem. Accordingly, the efforts of extension for improving the problematic situation was grounded on the giving of advice, on informing the farmers of these hazards, even through discussing the issues of economy in purchasing too many chemicals. However, without considering the issue of ethnicity and value systems of the farmers, their activities had not been effective enough to convince them not to do so. The workshop, from different aspects may provide us with new insights towards the problem:

- It is the function of value and belief systems which determine the quality of relationships between farmers and their environment;

- Misunderstanding (that is, a lack of empathic communication) is the result of neglecting the crucial role of value systems; and

- Believing in the potentiality of farmers as 'knowers' would elicit the implicit or tacit knowledge of the farmers. If this happened, then dialogue and understanding may be achieved.

- The process revealed the issue that the differences in age, religion and ethnicity among immigrant farmers must be paid attention to if extension is to achieve rapport with these groups of farmers.
(F) FORUM THEATRE WORKSHOPS AMONG HAWKESBURY STUDENTS

(1) FORUM THEATRE WORKSHOP AMONG THE POST-GRADUATES

I was invited to run a workshop in a one-week postgraduate residential (by the head of the School of of Social Ecology) at Hawkesbury. On 14th July 1992, the first integrated drama workshop among postgraduate students was held. Thirty-two volunteer students of different ages participated. The workshop was a joint participative context for both academics and the post-graduate students. They consciously became involved in an activity to overcome the lack of rapport within the institution and to make the Freirean concept of conscientization concrete for them. The time limit, as well as the strangeness of theatre concept within a new context, were among the constraints. As a result, a two-hour forum theatre workshop was designed and facilitated. However, the minimum time for holding it with a hope of success, as already had been experienced during the research process, was two days. Therefore, this two-hour workshop was considered as brief introduction to forum theatre techniques, as well as exploring its potential capacity. During this short workshop, techniques used in image and forum theatre were presented and discussed in relation to their practical application. Also, a number of issues with alternative solutions were suggested, selected, discussed, imaged and acted out by the small groups of participants. The most relevant concerns of the group were revealed through a participatory research/discussion process. The intensive exercises, due to the time restriction, created a dynamism within the workshop as a result of which there was no experience that seemed repetitious and tedious, rather all seemed to be challenging and absorbing. The assistance of a co-facilitator from the group itself was also significant. The details of the issues are:

- disaffected high school students and teachers
- children's rights
- economic order
- age-ism in Western culture
- management by committee
- teenage pregnancy
- gender issues
- limited resources for people
- Aboriginal self determination
- multicultural understanding
- minority relationships
- language
• ethnic groups
• bureaucracy
• top-down communication

These issues were analysed in terms of their oppressive impacts on the individuals in a group, and categorised in the three categories of oppression in:

• educational systems
• vertical communication
• ethnic and minority communities.

Around these issues three different groups worked together to clarify the various aspects and applications of 'oppression' within each category, through references to their personal stories. Every group created a collective story (a shared system of personal constructs), translated it into symbolic actions, and presented before the other participants in the workshop. Then the improvised product was discussed among the all participant students and created a wider picture of each issue. As a result, these were highlighted: prejudices in the conventional education systems of Australia which prevented the students being creative and participative; prejudices in the conventional 'extension' programs which ignored farmers' participation and knowledge; and prejudices in a multicultural society among ethnic and the minority groups.

(2) A TWO-DAY FORUM THEATRE WORKSHOP AMONG UNDERGRADUATES AT HAWKESBURY

A consequent invitation was sent to me by Graham Bird, a senior lecturer from the School of Social Ecology to involve the first-year students (all different ages) and to introduce them to the participative world of drama. On the 21st and the 22nd of October 1992, a forum theatre workshop was run among undergraduate students in the first year of the Social Ecology courses in the Faculty of Agriculture and Rural Development at the University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury. Sixteen students of different ages were involved in a two-day, creative drama activities and group discussions. The workshop started with the warm ups, trust games, 'sculpture' and 'mirror' exercises, which led towards creative image making, identifying thematic concerns, as well as story-telling, scenario-making, discussing and acting.

The sharing of experiences in the workshops was effected mostly through games and exercises that were designed to illustrate certain aesthetic and organizational concepts and principles. The students' senses were developed to use keener perception and, beyond
Brainstorming - Identifying and classifying the thematic concerns and issues (Forum theatre workshop at Hawkesbury)

Participants are united against oppression
(The chair and the table represent an oppressor/oppressed relationship)
sense-perception, they were encouraged to use their power to create with imagination, ideas, realities and new situations. The ability to think laterally was also developed along with spontaneity and flexibility. The workshop, in addition, provided an opportunity for interaction and, as people learned how to listen, they developed the power to communicate not only through words but also through action.

A basic underpinning of the participative drama activities was the group process. As a result, the group in the workshop was a microcosm of a bigger world outside, the dynamics of the group reflecting the dynamics of the outside world. All activities in the workshop such as improvisations, trust and leadership games, and also the exercises within which group interaction occurred, were affected by group dynamics. Almost all of the workshop exercises ended up as group activities, although initially some (such as image making in image theatre activity) started with individuals. As the exercises progressed from simple to complex, the working method also progressed from individuals to a subgroup to the big group. The sub-groups, moreover, were given a chance to process their own dynamics. That means that each participant talked about what transpired during the group’s activity and each one was given a chance to speak about his/her experiences with particular co-participants and with the group in general. giving and receiving feedback, therefore, constituted a vital feature of the entire group process. The participants were constantly asked to give their comments and observations at the end of each exercise and, whenever possible, to give their suggestions and recommendations. Since this was most of the time built into the exercises, the participants were encouraged to give qualified criticism that would benefit everyone concerned. Toward this end, guidelines were given so that criticisms were constructive, properly motivated and well-directed. Tactless and personal criticisms which were more harmful than helpful were avoided. Finally, the synthesis discussion at the end of each workshop-day was important, because it was during this period that the participants reflected on and assessed their experiences. At this stage, experiences were elevated to the level of concepts, integrating the learning that had been gained.

The researching nature of the process emerged through the exchange of several topics, as well as the selection of the most relevant theme among the group, 'the Hawkesbury Approach', that is, a self-directed learning program for the learning of the theory and practice of agriculture. Accordingly, three different topics (ie: isolation, the gender relationship, top-down communication style, and design) each representing an oppressive situation were selected and worked out in groups of five to seven. This theme had been put into a story, and was played by a group (five students) during of which almost all participants, including an academic member, interacted and replaced different roles to show their solution to the problem. Some of the observers intervened in the process of
One of the groups enacts the oppression of a Third World farmer by Aid agency officials.

A second group plays out its own scenario about oppression created by the use of jargon within the Department of Agriculture.
acting more than once and replaced two or three roles to show their solutions at different levels of the problem. Finally, when there were no more volunteers to interact with roles, a consensus was reached on the final product - a synthesis of all participants' creative challenges towards researching a solution to the problem.

The workshop mostly focused on forum theatre techniques. The dynamics of the workshop involved all participants with images and stories of their own sense of oppression. The groups with common shared issues were formed. After all personal stories were told a final scenario was synthesised. The personal stories were based on the theme each participant had agreed upon. In such a manner, many unpredicted elements were proposed by on the topic to create a scenario which represented every one in that thematic group. 'Commonality' was created among the participants through linking and connecting the participants to the group towards making a consensus. The exploration of 'oppressor in the head' (referring to the psychodramatic exploration of oppression by Augusto Boal as the 'cop in the heads') lead the individuals to explore the internal destructive forces which were the outcome of the external socio-cultural obligations even from early childhood. As a result, within the feedback of the participants at the end of the workshop, some had expressed their new state of consciousness about themselves, as being oppressed in family, workplace, social interaction, and so forth. Some had explained that it was the first time they realized that 'oppression' could exist 'out of the Third World' and among the affluent societies or within our relationship with the household members or our fellows.

Involvement in the forum theatre workshop assisted the participants to explore the patterns, to be spontaneous in relation with the others and to reflect upon which they improvised. It was a process through which a general understanding of theories-in-use (for explaining interpersonal behaviour) was achieved. Forum theatre created a behavioural world in which participants exchanged their knowledge, even about difficult and personal matters. For example, participants, while discussing their common issues and creating a scenario upon them, publicly tested their own openness to express anxieties or despair, etc. As participants they also had the option to test how far they could go in making discussable issues of doubt and mistrust that frequently arised in relationships between themselves and the facilitator.

THE COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE : REPORTS ON THE SUB-GROUP ACTIVITIES

The members within each of the sub-groups discussed their theme, told a story based on their personal experiences, explored their role as an oppressed person, and consequently put the whole understanding of the issue into the words. Holistically and collectively, they
A third group dramatises oppression within gender relationships.
finally created a scenario. At the end of the workshop, at the facilitator's request, a representative from each sub-group made a report on the sub-group's internal activities, as well as giving the scenario. Also, the participants were asked to make judgements personally, to critique and to reflect on the whole process.

In the following, there are two categories of responses: firstly the sub-group reports, and secondly the personal feedback of the individuals.

CATEGORIZATION OF THE SUB-GROUP REPORTS

(1) The 'gender-relationship' sub-group worked out a scene in three episodes representing females' oppression by males in different social contexts.

(2) The ‘top-down communication’ sub-group searched for the lack of understanding between students and academics at Hawkesbury and created a exaggerated scenario in three stages discussing (a) the use of academic language by facilitators and or students to create an oppressive situation; (b) the issue of talkative people and quiet people and, the oppression and repression of quiet people; and (c) the issues of mutual respect and understanding among the 'community of learners'.

(3) The 'design' group tried to show just how much influence large institutions or companies could have on a culture, as well as how such an influence could result in general oppression of individuals and social prejudice. For example, the following quote reflects the challenges of the group:

"Our scenario started out under the heading of 'design', but as we began to discuss just how we could present this scenario, we found that the issue of money was of paramount importance. Third world debt and cultural exchange became more relevant to the central theme. To enable 'backward' societies to participate in modern economies, loans are arranged through a United Nations - backed World Bank. The bank does not lend if a country's social structure is unstable and does not inform the recipient country about the full costs of 'modernization'. In our scene, we tried to give a view of the social associations of the headlong rush into the global economy. What we did was examine only a couple of aspects of this complex problem, the increased application of military hardware, displacement of people and lack of education, but there are many other aspects of this problem. There are the environmental costs of priorities changing and the problem that an often uninformed government can face when it comes time to begin paying the loan back." (A group of participants)

FEEDBACK FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

At the end of the two-day workshop, most participants reflected upon their activity and concluded their comments in the following statements:
"I found the workshop to be both moving and fun. I saw a lot of changes in people over the two days. I also saw that many people of the group had their eyes opened to issues that they couldn't see into before. A worthwhile workshop to be used among different groups of people. Good to open up issues which are hard to discuss."

"Liberating and helpful. Forum theatre is a wonderful way to bring important issues up to allow new ways to look at them. The awareness of oppression in our own lives was a new learning for me. Oppression has taken on a new meaning - it will be interesting to watch my new actions in the future."

"This course of theatre has been one of the best methods of learning that has happened this year. I was all ears and my level of retention was high. Challenging oppression is challenging stability which is subjective to the players and measured against what standards? Focussed in its operation and its conclusion was valuable."

"Very interesting workshop: story telling through theatre. Although at first confronting became exciting and stimulating. As the two days went on: I found it very liberating through enactment and action events and found new solutions."

"Great. The workshop gave me a chance to explore the possibilities of drama in the various life situations that we encounter."

"I fully engaged and enjoyed this workshop. Forum theatre did help me express feelings in a topic that concerned me. But it seemed to drag on and become less helpful in my learning process."

"Valuable to interact in this playful yet intense way with course members, to illustrate and observe relevant issues."

"The theatre workshops take a lot of energy, as I feel quite exhausted, but I really feel it has helped to understand, approach, situations. The situation which we analysed was a real situation which we all feel connected to in some way. Enjoyable two days!"

"The workshop made me want to further involve and be involved in theatre as a medium and helped me insight into theatre as a tool. Helped me look through the eyes of others, to some extent."
"Interesting. The workshop made me able to act out an unresolved situation in an assertive way, and strengthened me. I feel it would be better if there was more acting and less talking."

"(1) Very novel experience. (2) More participatory than usual. (3) Marginal increased participation from quiet members. (4) Drama is a vehicle for exaggeration of salient points. (5) The nature of oppression doesn't diminish, rather changes tone in response to perception of consequence (fear)."

"The workshop made me more aware in the processes of oppression in our group and society."

"It was quite liberating, and I enjoyed the acting and felt comfortable expressing my thoughts and feelings."

"When we started by being asked to lie on the floor (for deep breathing and warm up), I thought "Oh God, no!". It got better though and I found it very stimulating."

"Initially I felt imposed upon, almost oppressed, but after a while I became comfortable with the process undertaken, in developing and exploring the most crucial issues. It was liberating."

"I believe the workshop was extremely effective and stimulating. Theatre could be more incorporated in course and involve more outside community people."

"I fully engaged and enjoyed this workshop, explored the gaps between the desirable and the real, communicated, made new friends and renewed old. I thought every one participated with a great infusion of energy, and the discussions in morning sessions were dynamic." (Appendix 2)
CHAPTER NINE

THE OUTCOMES

This chapter reflects upon the outcomes of the interactive communication model which helped the researcher gain insights into many aspects of rural development in both Iran and Australia. The record of the outcomes falls into two categories: factual and reflective/interpretative. Factual results are based on the researcher's participation and observations, while specific critical issues are reflected and interpreted to develop insights into them, assumingly for generalisation.
CHAPTER NINE

THE OUTCOMES

THE FACTUAL OUTCOMES

• The importance of the participative theatre as an empowering, inquiry process in the rural and community development contexts was highlighted and put onto the agenda of the extension and development organisations, academics and a number of postgraduate candidates from different nationalities as well as having ramifications for community and theatre workers in many areas;

• An actor-oriented field methodology and method for exploring knowledge processes was developed;

• Drama proved to be a potential medium for involving people in the researching and learning of different aspects of local knowledge;

• Participative theatre activities encouraged community level decision-making, and shifted the power base back to the community;

• The awareness and dynamics of the creation of a cooperative context for appropriate changes by the people themselves were increased;

• Liaison between the development of communication and referral among community based organizations was facilitated;

• Community research and assessment of needs related to rural development and the welfare of the farmers in the target area were assisted;

• Maximum community participation in the pursuit of extension' objectives in the target area was encouraged;

• The full participation of farmers in decision-making about local issues was successfully promoted;

• The decision-making processes of formal extension organizations for the purposes
of promoting a systemic/participatory model of community development were provided for;

- The development of self-help programs and local interest groups was assisted and encouraged;

- Groups and persons who had an interest in issues relevant to the rural development with community-based processes of facilitating farmers' participation in decision-making affecting agricultural issues of development were identified;

- The community organizations which met community needs and/or the needs of special interest groups were supported;

- The perception of the development and extension organizations about the processes of top-down communication for extension and adult education, as well as the perception of farmers about themselves (as the subjects), and their relationship with the societal and environmental systems changed;

- A flexible method of theatre for systemic interactions, which is participative, inquiry-based and critical, was adapted and developed;

- Farmers followed the programs themselves and local groups worked out their problems through story-telling and theatre (in the Iranian context, the teacher of the village-school now has taken on the role of facilitator);

- As the concern of this research with extension for development was basically methodological, it changed both the conventional application of drama in a socio-cultural setting and the context within which drama experiences were conducted;

- The negative attitude of farmers and nomads towards themselves, and their dependence on the government was relatively transformed;

- The local issues among rural people were identified, constraints were explored, problems were enacted/discussed, the people's choices were enriched, and rapport was established between the farmers and the government development workers;

- The extension officers and practitioners reviewed critically their traditional patterns, and a consensus was reached on the establishment of an effective system of communication through dialogue with farmers and,
• The farmers revealed the crucial differences in their feelings towards the sense of belonging and ownership, and were convinced to relate themselves to their present context to increase their empathy with land and to decrease the application of chemicals to save both the environment and the consumers. In all aspects, empathetic feeling lead to sympathy, a crucial cultural element of systems agriculture and sustainable development, that is, a cultural and a systems understanding of the social phenomena.

THE INTERPRETATIVE GENERALISATIONS

As a result of the whole process of inquiry, the myths of 'unsuccessful communication' and 'lack of communication' were revealed to be invalid in the actual world of a community where a group of people approach a common goal and work together. Within such a context, trust was found to be the main issue upon which a reciprocal communication would be built and 'dialogue', an open, horizontal communication, would be achieved.

The focus of this research has been to appropriate 'participative theatre' as a means of systemic communication and development. The research, by focusing on the psychological and emotional involvement of farmers and communities, transcends the physical and cognitive approaches to participation through integrating learning, researching and entertainment within the 'endogenous' approach to development. In doing so, the study has adapted creative drama techniques to tap into farmers' cultural codes and values, their perception of their own problems and alternative solutions by eliciting their tacit dimension of knowing, and finally bringing their self-learning potential into a state of consciousness. The process therefore becomes a conscientizing/empowering process.

The method has been developed in conjunction with action research methodology to focus creative involvement and discussion on the local issues. Numerous scenarios can be devised using this format to generate genuine dialogue between indigenous people and outside researchers who aim to facilitate change and consciousness.

The research illuminates the fact that every human-based development process is a learning and a researching process, through which the participants are concerned with the context and, within dialogue, explore the dialectical relationship between themselves as 'the knowers' and their context as 'the known'. This relationship in some cases might be oppressive or repressive, and the process leads the participants to see the source of truth neither in the world nor in the self but in their relationships and their experience of
patterns (Salner, 1986). In other words, both the researchers and the learners learn in a manner different from deductive and inductive conventions, according to their context, that is, their physical and social environment. Within the workshops in this study, storytelling emerged to be the most compatible and adaptable technique to increase participation from everyone, and the application of participative forum theatre in particular, and the integrated drama processes in general, aim to develop an actor-oriented knowledge systems 'theory' and method for analysis, design and facilitation of knowledge systems and knowledge processes.

If action research is characterised as experiential, critical, participatory, emancipatory, systemic, and qualitative, then, participative drama in general, 'forum theatre', and 'forum story telling' in particular, are a most powerful means of action research.

The study reveals the need for cultural, emancipatory and communicative roles, in conjunction with andragogical and technical roles, for agricultural extension, the principles from which this proposition has been derived stemming from systems methodology. Also, based on Kant's phenomenology, and the cognitive psychologist Kelly's theory of personal construct, the study supports the idea that humans are personal scientists, that self-directed learners construe realities, and that their knowledge has two dimensions, that of the explicit and that of the tacit, or implicit. As a result, 'local knowledges', including indigenous knowledge, which is used in social interactions by people themselves, and personal knowledge which is tacit and stems from people's accumulated experiences of life are revealed.

Through observation of a number of cases, it has been distinguished that feelings and emotions are attached to the meanings people make within everyday life experiences. The knowledge of people about a certain situation and the way they interpret it determines the way people feel in a certain situation, and the framework of ideas and concepts people bring to a situation, determines the way they interpret it. People can become conscious about their feelings through an exploration of their frames of references.

This study also explores drama as an inherited human potential which is naturally used in everyday life within certain ways to increase personal fulfillment. This potential can be activated and brought about in a conscious state. The context of drama, therefore, is not for processing of any information or a means of top-down communication, rather it is the message, the interactive/ systemic communication, and a means of creating 'personal knowledge'. Through interaction with others, this becomes a collective/ social knowledge (a consensus) as relevant for the appropriate change and development.
Creative dialogue and drama processes illustrate that farmers are insightful and have their own solutions to the ongoing issues they encounter everyday at work, however through participation they expand their insights towards their problems. The participative dramas and story telling function as a 'shared awareness system of communication' since, as Mayfield (1985) pointed out, "Effective communication requires that people have an opportunity to experience a shared awareness" (p.98).

Such a shared awareness system occurs through workshop processes which gathers and exchanges experiences and information among farmers. This consequently promotes solidarity, focusing on common issues and problems, as well as looking for the answers collectively. From the exchanges, farmers developed the power to work together on some issues which needed to be resolved in the community.

A forum theatre workshop combines psycho- and socio-drama techniques. Psychodrama relates individual to her/his self and helps a person to identify and work out a personal problem. This by itself, can be critiqued as well, since the individual is left out there without finally exploring and changing the power structures which constitute a problem. Participative, socio drama relates the individuals to the group, without considering psychological shifts within each participant. In contrast, forum theatre takes into account both sides.

Figure (26) THE PARTICIPATIVE EXTENSION PROCESS
In the context of rural extension, the differences in objectives, culture and in some instances language, between the extension client and the government agents, are such that co-operative action is most unlikely to occur. Most of the obstacles in the way of collaborative action can be attributed to the differences in ontology and epistemology held by the various parties. Differences are exacerbated when these are not recognised and addressed, and disagreements and prejudices are reinforced. In such circumstances, meaningful communication and accommodation of differences so necessary for sustainable co-operative action, will not occur. In contrast, this is challenged through creative drama, since there are no barriers in drama to experiencing new things and allowing for involvement in a way that contributes to the simultaneous examination and improvement of theory and practice.

The following table classifies and characterises two major trends in extension:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The paradigm</th>
<th>The Philosophy</th>
<th>The Psychology</th>
<th>The kind of Learning</th>
<th>The Modes of Communication</th>
<th>The Methods and Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Traditional Extension (Non-participative) | Positivism (objective) | Behaviourism (mechanistic) | Passive (conditional) instrumental (changing behaviour) | Top-down (vertical) | (a) Visual:  
- computer software  
- film  
- video & tv  
- traditional theatre  
- folk media (puppetry)  
(b) Publications:  
- posters  
- pamphlets  
- brochures  
- magazines  
- newspapers  
(c) Audio  
- radio  
- tapes  
- speech  
- seminars |
| **Humanistic Extension (Participative)** | Phenomenology, critical | Personal Constructs, human-centred | Creative self-reflective, emancipatory | Interactive (Horizontal) | Participatory or Dialogic Workshops (Forum Theatre)  
- popular theatre  
- forum story-telling |

Table (5) TRADITIONAL AND HUMANISTIC EXTENSION PROCESSES

In order to give a ‘good performance’, extension policy-makers and practitioners must not cocoon themselves in a social milieu or environment which is in any way limited or exclusive, rather they must stimulate new ideas. Also, since policy formation and decision-making are influenced by a host of political, social, and economical factors, there are ways of unlocking these elements. Forum theatre encourages all committed parties to reveal
their themes and stories respectively, interact and compromise, select and finally create a desired situation. The process also involves group planning, acting and reflecting.

Even if the old paradigms of 'extension' are privileged within a particular situation, they can be reinforced through complementary emancipatory approaches by means of forum theatre to enable a psychological involvement along with physical participation in the extension process. The relationship between the two paradigms of 'extension' is explained in Checkland’s statement (connecting 'hard systems' convention with 'soft systems methodology') that: "The thinking of the 1950s and 1960s, and its victories, remains with us. That thinking and its methods are there to be used when appropriate: it is simply that there are now some additional ideas and methodology complementary to that developed in the years after the Second World War" (Checkland 1985, p. 764).

'Extension' within the group dynamics of a forum theatre workshop can shift towards a 'learning organisation' if it follows the five new component technologies which are crucial in building organization known as "systems thinking, personal mastery, mental modes, building shared visions, and team learning" (Senge, 1992). These components highlight the need for a vehicle to cope with 'emotional or psychological blocks' (which impede active participation and emancipation), that is, what Wilber (1979) discusses as "creation of boundaries and a persistent alienation from ourselves, from others, and from the world", to improve mental modes and personal mastery. The vehicle must function through group process to arouse and encourage team learning, and establish a shared awareness system of communication. Systemic communication through participative drama processes has shown promise as a methodology to overcome these obstacles to collaborative action. Finally, it involves the participants in a way that contributes to the simultaneous examination and improvement of theory and practice, that is, praxis.

REFLECTION ON FIELDWORK

In reviewing the outcomes of a 'drama process' involving the grassroots communities in the both rural Iran and Australia, I have perceived that the farmers have a personal response to daily life experiences which, in most cases, is spontaneous or improvised. These inside-out reactions represent the potential creative (inner) resources of all human beings, to cope actively with unpredicted and problematic situations. Participative activities can provide the individual participants with an environment through which they share expectations that functionally may result in group cohesiveness during the process. This has applications in community development and is very close to the concept of 'forum theatre' depicted earlier, and the vision of 'learning or researching communities' as follows:
The vision is one of 'learning or researching communities' with people joining together and sharing their problems in ways which allow them to 'learn their way through' the complex issues they are facing. Farmers, and members of their families, are thus encouraged to accept responsibility for their own learning and development, and through co-operation and participation, develop what has been called 'social learning' - where 'individual learning and behaviour are shaped by the nature of the group activities in which the individual participates, and through which he is molded and which, in turn, are frequently molded by him'. (Bawden and Russell 1990, p.14)


... human beings, in their interactions with one another, design their behaviour and hold theories for doing so. These theories of action, as we have called them, include the values, strategies, and underlying assumptions that inform individuals' patterns of interpersonal behaviour. We have distinguished two levels at which theories of action operate: There are espoused theories that we use to explain or justify our behaviour. (...) But there are also theories-in-use implicit in our patterns of spontaneous behaviour with others. Like other kinds of knowing-in-action, they are usually tacit. Often we are unable to describe them, and we are surprised to discover, when we do construct them by reflecting on the directly observable data of our actual interpersonal practice, that they are incongruent with the theories of action we espouse. (Schon 1987, p. 255-6)

In this case drama is not a medium for communication, it is the systemic communication, the message. The kind of learning embedded in the activity is implicit, which as Courtney (1988) has pointed out 'is a naturally occurring, unconscious, cognitive act, an automatic process of a human mind operating in any complex environment with rich underlying structure with which it must interact'(p.10). Unlike the mass media which suspend people between two worlds through manipulating their values and destroying their relationships, forum theatre creates, restores and/or enriches the communication, depending on situations. In the participative context, 'improvisation' in conjunction with group interactions, link personal issues with the common problem of the group in a community where a consensus is reached. Through improvisation, an individual reveals tacit or implicit knowledge representing his/her uniqueness, however, it is interaction that leads participants towards socialization.

Individuals must be free to choose the level and style of their involvement. Whatever the level of involvement chosen, learning through drama is not passive, rather it is inter-active. It activates the mainsprings of the participants. A drama reveals the whole person - all that an individual is, not just the conforming behaviour. The interaction that drama provides helps participants to create themselves, their own values and knowledge (in Kelly's terms, their construction systems). Participants in drama freely expose themselves as far as they need or want to - and both the atmosphere and the process lead them to share what they know and feel. The facilitator, however, must not tell them what they should know or feel. They effectively respond to the degree that they are sensitive in their perception of what others are about, what values they hold, what desires or objectives they have. Drama
helps people to learn how to discipline themselves to an awareness of their effect on others and a reflection on the quality of their interactions. They have opportunities to test their own values, sense the importance of those values, and begin to assert them voluntarily.

Through drama, individuals explore their potential talents as theory builders, and as personal scientists. Hence, it builds confidence. They acquire the feeling of mastery over events, the sense that they are equal to life. This in turn leads them to more comfort and openness, and develops their personality and provides them with the ability to take part in social activities or to participate in research programs as co-researchers. Furthermore, as a facilitator of drama processes, I have helped participants discover that they knew more than they thought they knew. The participants that were put into situations of pressure had to tackle and re-align the relevant information from their past experience and bring it to bear on the present imagined moment. As they identified with the people in the crisis of the drama, they began to discover resources they had not known they possessed. At the same time, they saw themselves in new ways that they might well remember in desired or different situations.

Drama and its learning dynamics suggests new ways of involving farmers in participatory inquiry by focusing on farmers as 'actors' rather than 'passive audience'. Hence, a drama-based learning process in extension would be a farmer-oriented approach, not educator-oriented, and a two-way process rather than a one-way communication. It also covers all groups of farmers and community members (not merely a target group), regardless of their social class and overcomes such constraints in development work.

The inquiry process within such a socio-cultural context needs the involvement of the physical and the emotional. In such a way the investigation into problem solving becomes more deeply focused and opens windows for both the parties involved: the local people and the administrators. The process results in empathy and rapport, which in itself widens the level of involvement. Drama shows that hypothesis making and knowledge building, inherent in the nature of humankind, is more effectively achieved through individuals' interactions within a group and their collective action. This methodology has shown the value of drama in emancipating individuals who are steeped in a culture of silence and oppression. The participants learn how to interconnect with the elements that have oppressed them. As a consequence, they explore their own interactions with the world and gain the power to consciously interact with the events surrounding them. The process helps individuals to realize their creative potential and to release, explore, become aware, select, master and apply this potential for personal growth and development in a larger sense.
Such a challenging process is an empowering researching tool that reveals thematic concerns as well as providing the vision of overcoming barriers and insight towards relative achievement. Forum theatre's major value for research is the revelation of common themes among participants issues. Furthermore, the thematic or orientational thrust takes into consideration the participants' concrete realm of values, problems, experiences, ideas and situations as the most authentic sources for creative expression.

The exercises within the workshop process are used as tools to dynamise the participants' investigation of their world and to prepare them to participate or get actively involved in their own society. Warm-ups and physical exercises are daily fare in the workshop as a form of release from physical as well as psychological tensions that tend to reinforce inhibitions. The release exercises are important to free participants from the fear of failure or of committing mistakes and, ultimately, to make them realize that the physical ability to express what one thinks or feels and to recognize one's expressive potential is the essence of empowerment. The group dynamics facilitate interaction among participants leading to mutual trust and friendship, teamship and community spirit.

The people involved in such a creative process are empowered and 'conscientized' through exploring their potential human energy and knowledge. Such communication with both self and others is systemic, empathic and cathartic and includes also the environment. The following recursive model may be proposed:

![Diagram](https://example.com/diagram.png)

Figure (27) A SHARED AWARENESS SYSTEM OF COMMUNICATION
The elements of drama (eg: metaphor, games, role play, improvisation, and so forth) have specific functions, each of them reveals a certain aspect of implicit knowledge which is not normally stated through verbal language. The drama elements in this research created a free atmosphere for the farmers to explore their potentiality and self-directedness for involvement in the educational and developmental activities, therefore the former was considered as prerequisite to the latter. Moreover, the revelation of the knowledge through the functions of drama provided the researcher with more meaningful information than could be acquired by conventional research techniques such as interviewing and questioning.

The observations of both rural Iran and rural Australia showed an alarming increase in the demand of farmers for the technical input: chemicals, pesticides, agricultural machinery, as all were seeking for short-term solutions from the beginning. The major problems in both contexts were regarded by farmers to be mostly as technical. On the other hand, there existed complaints of ethical problems in the relationships between the different parties involved in the farming enterprise and in marketing.

The dialogic workshops with the different groups of farmers in either contexts showed that although a problem involved both the 'ethical' and the 'factual' elements, these two were not always in a balance. Although the ethical and the factual elements of a certain problem or solution were embedded in one another, they differed from context to context. For example, a highly religious context, such as rural Iran, which involved the ethical and cultural factors in every single decision the community made, demanded more focus on that consideration and the analysis of value elements constituting peoples' problems in the community. On the other hand, in a less complicated religious context, such as the migrant farmers in Australia, where farming is constituted basically as a technical relationship with the land (isolated from a cultural and historical heritage), and the farms were operated under a more unified system of management and administration, the factual elements seem to be of more importance to extension workers and farmers alike. Other issues involving class and gender also tended to differ greatly from context to context, but all could be explored.

Finally, cultural action workshops made sense only to those participants whose major concerns and problems were tied up with those cultural issues. There were farmers who had short-term aims and whose concern was productivity and profitability. These were reluctant to come to cultural action workshops, as they insisted in turning the focus of the workshop to the 'basic-need' approach to technical management of farms. However, the way a facilitator interprets cultural action depends on his/her knowledge of transactional psychology and the skills needed to dynamise a group or to facilitate group processes.
Even with the group of immigrant farmers who asked for more and regular technical advice, this includes not only the short-term advice they pursue, but the ecological and long-term sustainability issues. Moreover, to deal with sustainability means to deal with people who care about their environment and the future of following generations, which again involves peoples' psychology. Therefore, the kind emancipatory learning/action among Australian immigrant farmers differed from the one of the Iranian farmers. For the farmers in Australia it included an awareness of the oppressive effects of chemical and technological input on the environment and its feedback to the farming communities as well as ways of self-management to eradicate ecological problems. In the case of this research, in many dialogues with farmers, they expressed their motivation and interest to cope efficiently with the problems of 'sanitation', 'land degradation', biological pest control, and the co-operative style of marketing.

Overall, feedback of workshop processes demonstrated the fact that oppression has bonded many groups of humans in certain ways and that if analysed and explored through drama, a deep consciousness of how to tackle it, and how to facilitate other learning tasks emerges. It may be strongly asserted that Habermas' and Freire's stress on the need for emancipatory learning is a prerequisite task for other learning domains, that is, technical learning and practical learning. The drama process in general revealed its potential in providing the creative opportunities for both.

FACILITATING ELEMENTS

A number of facilitating principles arose from the fieldwork. The workshops need to be run by a team of at least two facilitators. Ideally, while one facilitator runs an exercise, another notes the proceedings of the session, recording observations about the strengths and weaknesses of the process, suggestions, participants' comments, to be utilised later. In the workshops with larger groups, a team of three facilitators is better (two people co-facilitating major exercises, the other documenting). Also, consultation with the participants before and after the workshops is crucial. Getting to know them and their community beforehand prepares facilitators to anticipate particular needs and requirements for specific groups, while post-workshop analysis and discussion enhance the interactive understanding and rapport between the two parties and provides them with resources to conduct their own self- or community-initiated group activities. A process of discussion/reflection transplanted within the body of the group dynamics in the workshops elevates the participants' understanding from a social (ie: primary) level into a realised level.
FINAL REMARKS AND A NEW HYPOTHESIS

Kidd’s popular theatre tries to balance the actor/spectator energies in the theatre, whereas Boal’s theatre of the oppressed breaks down the linear logic and method of Aristotelian theatre and claims equal right for both of the parties to act and to reflect as protagonists.

In general, ‘reflection’ through discussions within creative drama provides individual participants with a mechanism through which they are able critically to view themselves and their relationships. The central hypothesis has been that such a critical analysis procedure clarifies the socio-logical dimension of oppressive structures and transforms the perspectives of the participants. This process of codification and decodification helps people move from a sense of fatalism and passiveness to critical consciousness where they can define solutions to their own problems. 'Problem' here encompasses a whole system interms of thinking/ social/ economical/ cultural/ and environmental issues within the community. However, as the testing of drama methods was in progress, a new hypothesis emerged: the integrated drama/theatre experience creates a coherent process of growth and development from the levels of the personal to the group to the community. This combination links all the methods together and creates a developmental process beginning from the individual’s perspective transformation, towards group interaction (ie: the verbal and physical dialogue within the theatre workshop) incorporating communication/discussion (through public performance) resulting in an increased community awareness and finally collective action to solve or improve the problem. This results in different types of learning from self-reflective/experiential to social and emancipatory shown in the following diagram:

![Diagram](image_url)

Figure (28) PROCESS OF SYSTEMIC COMMUNICATION AND PERFORMANCE
Within the first stage consciousness comes out through the spontaneous, self-revealing actions of individuals; in the second stage individuals share their awareness of social conditioning factors and get the power to work together as a group; in the third stage they communicate their consciousness with a larger community; and the fourth stage involves informed action by the whole group to eradicate or improve their problem, within their own context. The ultimate collective action of the community is subject to further investigation to inform the theory upon which the action is taken.

Systemic communication allows different parties of a societal or organizational system to interact with one another's epistemologies. Through critical conversation a context is created for sharing awareness around social conditioning factors and certain conflict issues, as well as within evaluation processes. The other areas of implication are social therapy and organization behaviour. A workshop process is able to enhance group effectiveness and individual mastery towards building trust and self-esteem. With its emphasis on collaborative yet rigorous inquiry, it serves as a powerful grassroots model for extension and development practitioners at all levels. Since participative drama and forum theatre workshops develop interactions among a group, that is, a systems approach, they create a 'shared awareness system of communication'. Thus, the approach calls for the transformation of farms and extension organizations into communities of inquiry, characterised by:

- persistent inquiry aimed at increasing knowledge and understanding
- the fostering of mutual cooperation, critical conversation trust and respect
- reasons for opinions, and the selection of appropriate rather than irrational reasons
- farmers and extension workers who are prepared to 'try out' ideas
- the prominence of meaningful conversation and dialogue as key dynamics of the process of inquiry
- an abundance of imagination and open-ended questions which serve as 'invitations to inquiry'
- thinking which is self-correcting and thinkers who care about the procedures of inquiry
- a growing awareness, on the part of farmers and the members of communities, that they must accept responsibility for their own views and learn to think for themselves.

The orientation of extension must involve a systemic process of technical, emancipatory and communicative action. Participation through drama empowers farmers and develops their 'personal communicative actions', and provides them with free choices to acquire
relevant technical knowledge themselves. It improves their experiential knowledge through enabling them to:

- validate personal experience,
- reflect upon and learn within direct experience,
- share others' experiences and,
- helping others develop insights into their own experience.

In the first three stages, farmers become dynamic self-directed learners, whereas at the fourth stage they themselves become independent, autonomous extension workers.

The thesis proposes popular theatre and forum theatre as participative vehicles of literacy and adult education, agricultural extension, community development, cultural action, social change, human inquiry and systemic action research. Further applications of forum theatre are in the areas of systemic communications for organizational change, administrative development and evaluation processes, that is, at the management level.

Finally, during the different phases of this research, the complexity of the 'problem' in some occasions, resulted in much a deeper insight within which I constantly reconstructed my construction systems and reflected upon past understanding. Thus, I may now agree with Salner (1986, p. 227)) who said "epistemic development occurs in relation to the complex".
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX (1) POPULAR THEATRE IN INTERNATIONAL DOMAIN
(REPRODUCED FROM MWANSA 1991, WITH SOME ADDED DISCUSSION)

In the mid 1970s Convergence - an international journal of adult education published in Canada - printed a few articles about popular theatre and development. For example, in 1977, Ross Kidd and Martin Byram entitled their paper "Popular Theatre and Development: A Botswana Case Study" in Convergence No 10. Afterwards, in 1978, the Participatory Research Group in Toronto published a paper entitled "Popular Theatre: A Technique for Participatory Research", as well as the publication of UNICEF monograph "Popular Theatre as a Tool for Community Education in Botswana". Following these works of Kidd and Byram, many new challenges were explored within a number of projects.

By the late seventies a widespread demand for using theatre as an educational medium was seen in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

Michael Etherton published a book and a number of papers on the development of theatre in Africa, while Ross Kidd and his colleague Martin Byram created linkages between popular theatre activists in Africa, Asia, The Caribbean and Latin America and tried to work out the most appropriate usage of theatre as a tool for communication.

- The Chalimbana Workshop (1979) in Lusaka (Zambia), was attended by 77 participants (adult educators and popular theatre workers) from seven countries including Botswana, Tanzania, United States, Zambia, South Africa, Canada, Lesotho and two liberation movements (the ANC and SWAPO). One major outcome of the workshop was the consolidation of participatory research as a method for investigating and analyzing issues from communities, a methodology which has been replicated in most of the popular theatre workshops.

- International Seminar: the Use of Indigenous Social Structure and Traditional Media in Non-formal Education and Development (1980) in Berlin (Germany). Although the focus of this seminar was on developing countries, a wide range of views on indigenous structures and folk media in a number of countries around the world was expressed. Seven countries are represented in the case studies: Indonesia, Bolivia, Java (Indonesia), Upper Volta, Botswana, India, and Bali (Indonesia). However, among the
traditional media, 'popular theatre' was most discussed in most papers. The outcome of the Berlin meeting was publication of the book *Tradition for Development: Indigenous Structures and Folk Media in Non-formal Education*, edited by Kidd & Colletta (1980). The work examines field experiences in using a culture-based approach to nonformal education. Section one contains an introductory paper and nine case studies and focuses on indigenous institutions and processes in health, family planning, agriculture, basic education and conscientization.

Also, the introductory paper discusses indigenous sociocultural forms as a basis for nonformal education and development.

Section two concentrates on the performing arts in both mass campaigns and community nonformal education programs. In this section an introductory paper overviews folk media, popular theatre and conflicting strategies for social change in the third world. The seven case studies consider the specific strategies used in Brazil, Sierra Leone, China, India, Mexico, Jamaica, and Africa. Section three contains the seminar reports developed from discussions by the four regional working group: Latin America, Africa and the Caribbean, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. A summary of plenary discussions is reflected in the following:

* **Thunder Bay Workshop (1981):** a meeting of Caribbean popular theatre artists with their African colleagues from a number of countries. It expanded the position and influence of popular theatre. Also, some valuable suggestions were made and important advances were achieved such as: establishment of a popular theatre course at the University of Guelph in Canada; launching a Popular Theatre Newsletter to be edited on a rotational basis, as well as the creation of the Canadian Popular Theatre Alliance and Caribbean Popular Theatre Alliance.

* **Bangladesh Workshop (1983) in Dhaka (Bangladesh):** a gathering of sixty popular theatre activists as the representatives of national associations. The participants shared skills and the methodology used in Botswana-Zambia, PETA of the Philippines, as well as the technique of simultaneous drawing. As a result of the workshop, the International Popular Theatre Alliance (IPTA) was created. This organisation is still very active especially in Australia.

* **Zimbabwe Workshop (1983):** one hundred participants (predominantly Africans) with attendees from Canada, India and Germany. One important outcome of this meeting was the creation of the Union of African Performing Artists with its Secretariat in Cameroon. As an outcome, Ross Kidd (1984) has created a report on the working group. To describe the project, he has focused on the one of seven working groups at a theatre-
for-development workshop in Zimbabwe, which details the process followed by many groups and reveals some of the major learnings, dilemmas, contradictions, strength and limiting factors found in a practical village-based theatre-for-development process. However, a brief discussion of theatre-for-development (TFD) presents this drama form as an experimental, collaborative process designed to take theatre out of urban enclaves and make it accessible to the rural masses, presenting such common concerns as crop production, water shortages, immunization, literacy, and family planning. A day-by-day diary account of this working group illustrates an overview of, and specific tasks involved with, the production of a "theatre pungwe" - that is people's theatre. Furthermore, a TFD model lists educational objectives for the drama process and defines the workshop objectives, which are: (1) to train development cadres and theatre artists in theatre-for-development and, (2) to start a TFD program in Murewa area of Zimbabwe as a training and popular education/culture program. The report's concluding sections provide an analysis of the workshop, including constraints relationship with villagers, organizational strategy and team work.

* Kumba Workshop (1984) in Kumba (Cameroon): A nationwide challenge in theatre for development was held in Yaounde, 28-30 November 1984, and in Kumba, 1-16, December 1984. According to the published report of the workshop entitled "Hammocks and Bridges" (1985) in Yaounde, Cameroon, University of Yaounde: "The Kumba Workshop on Theatre for Integrated Rural Development" was organized to achieve the following objectives:

(1) to initiate theatre people, development agents and village communities in the practice of theatre for conscientization and mobilization; (2) to demonstrate the process with a view to enabling the Cameroonian authorities to evaluate its potential as a means of development; (3) to contribute to the search for new methodologies in the practice of theatre for integrated rural development; (4) to provide a practical experience in village-based theatre involving villages in analyzing data and in the drama-making process; (5) to assess the effectiveness of the methodology, both in its immediate feasibility and long-term impact.

Also, a detailed report is presented on the workshop and the experience gained is evaluated. Finally, it is concluded that theatre for integrated rural development is an extremely valuable method of adult education and rural conscientization/mobilization but that if it is to be fully beneficial it needs to be pursued as an on-going process.
* **Nigerian Workshop (1984) in Igyura (Nigeria):** The International Popular Theatre Workshop for Development, was organized by the Benue State Arts Council in Nigeria. Participants, who were mainly adult educators, came from government ministries and development organizations, and the aim was to train them in dance and theatre skills. After basic drills, they went out to villages, discussed problems expressed by the villagers and then, together with the villagers, drew up a drama outline of the village situation, analyzing the problems and possible solutions. They then acted out a play to both villagers and invited officials who might have some influence on the problems. The entire experience greatly improved communication between all concerned and encouraged the villagers to continue with this medium of self expression. (Aruha, 1984)

* **Los Leones African Tour (1989):** consisted of six peasant musicians from Mexico who toured Africa (Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Kenya) on a South-South exchange. The main objective of the tour was to support cultural work in the Adult Education movement in Southern Africa and to expose Latin Americans to artists in the states. One outcome was the great impression on the local activists so that some have now written songs talking about their tour experiences. The tour members themselves were aesthetically and politically stimulated by the trip, and their experience was documented by Catherine Macleod, a Canadian playwright and trade unionist, who is now planning follow-up work.

* **Eastern Caribbean Workshop (1990) in La Plaine (Dominica):**
Caribbean Popular Theatre Organization (ECPTO) workshop held on December 6th to 9th, 1990. The objectives of the workshop were as follows:

- to share experiences and compare strategies of the popular theatre methodology in its current and past uses
- to carry out an analysis for the future consolidation of the methodology
- to make connections between popular theatre and other forms of popular communications.

The workshop, focused on the social functions of popular theatre, how to get drama to change behaviour of young people, on the environment, on drugs, etc. (Esprit, 1990)

* **International Popular Theatre Workshop (1991) in Rehoboth (Namibia):** The representatives who presented papers were from Namibia, Philippines, Netherlands (ICAE), Jamaica, Mali, Canada, Australia, South Africa, and Swaziland. The outcome of this workshop was a collection of presented papers entitled *International Popular Theatre*
Workshop, Rehoboth, Namibia 1-14 August 1991. The introductory papers is a cultural overview of Namibia, explaining 100-year history of colonisation by the Germans and South Africans which formally ended on 21st March 1990. It generally speaks about the need to explore leadership in a setting of a community theatre group which, by its nature, is a "collective effort, collective research, casting, playmaking". It also considers the 'culture' as a total way of life. Among the articles, a briefing on the Rehoboth community and its social realities or issues was presented.

* International Popular Theatre Exchange in Sydney, Australia (1993) involved a number of forms aiming for the same goal. In Australia, twenty years after the first conference in 1972, within a sixteen-day training workshop and open forum, a number of world-wide approaches were presented and discussed. However, except for Boal's forum theatre approach, there was still a dominant trend in the use of theatre performed by more knowledgable people for the rest of the community. This shows again a persuasive or top-down approach, but not a participative and holistic one. This illuminates the need to thrust towards integrating elements of theatrical action with social learning and systemic thinking fostering individuals' psychological development as well as community's betterment.

The first two days involved performances, the International Festival of Peoples' Theatre (April 3rd & 4th), whereas the rest of the program was allocated to training workshops. It ended in a two-day open forum in relation to popular theatre movements in Australia, the Asia-Pacific and Beyond (17th and 18th April). In the open forum, according to the program published by Community Aid Abroad/Freedom From Hunger (the host), popular theatre, theatre for people's development and community development theatre were discussed. Also, all these names were given to a type of theatre that is being used throughout developing countries for community education, community development and mobilization for action, and as a rehearsal for social change. Most approaches involved grassroots activities within a top-down context, except for a paper by the author (Khatoonabadi 1993) about a field project of using drama as a researching tool with Iranian nomads, and in both rural Iran and rural Australia, which discussed an inside-out drama process of eliciting local knowledge.

The other approaches, in general, use indigenous cultural traditions of theatre, that is, popular theatre, to raise issues within a community for discussion and debate. In this manner, in a non-confrontational way, decisions that a community must make can be discussed and resolved through puppetry, story-telling and other popular theatre methods. Also, some representatives presented and explained their experiences: how popular theatre is used in conjunction with literacy programs, health and especially AIDS education, women and population programs and for training of community development workers.
APPENDIX (2) AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FROM THE SCHOOL OF
SOCIAL ECOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY,
HAWKESBURY FOR FACILITATING FORUM THEATRE WORKSHOPS

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY
Hawkesbury
Social Ecology Centre

28th October 1993

Dear Ahmad

On behalf of the staff and course members of the Degree in Social Ecology, I am writing to convey thanks for your leadership of the Forum Theatre Workshop on October 21st and 22nd.

The course members have been very enthusiastic about the workshop.

Thanks also for your paper with Robert Woog on "Drama as a Researching Tool ....." This is interesting and conceptually valuable to me.

Sincerely

[Signature]

Graham Bird
APPENDIX (3) THE LIST OF PAPERS WHICH HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES


* CULTURE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF IDEOLOGY, VALUES AND ETHICS IN ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT. Submitted to the Conference: Public Administration and Sustainable Development. Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EROPA, Tehran, 1-5 November 1993.)
THE MAP OF IRAN
SYSTEMIC COMMUNICATION
AND PERFORMANCE

A HUMANIST LEARNING APPROACH TO AGRICULTURAL
EXTENSION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

AHMAD KHATOONABADI

Ph. D. THESIS, 1994

SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY, HAWKESBURY
and
THE FACULTY OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY, NEPEAN
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

Except where the contribution of others are acknowledged, this thesis is the result of my original research. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree at any other university.

24 May 1994

Ahmad Khatoonabadi
The threats which face the world today are all threats to the maintenance of systemic relations on which we depend.

(Geoffrey Vickers, 1983)

To nearly every modern problem there is an intellectual answer; but that, unfortunately, is not enough, for we have passions as well as minds, and they are more difficult to educate.

(Cecil Lewis - Sagittarius Rising)
ABSTRACT

This study posits a model of 'rural extension' which begins from humans, not from technology or information. The model has been used to facilitate community development at the village level. The innovations start from and are developed by the community in a cultural context and the technology, therefore, is appropriated at need by the community itself.

The research illustrates the potential of drama and participative forms of theatre as empowering 'action' learning/researching tools to reach people in rural communities, and as a means of involving those communities in creativity and learning about themselves and their environment collaboratively. A comparison is made between explicit knowledge, which is revealed through people's physical and verbal involvement, and that of emotional and psychological knowledge, which is revealed through symbolic representation, in this case - drama. This study intends to show how a systemic action research approach steps beyond the cognitive level and gets through to the inner resources of individual participants.

The bases for the research were: the School of Agriculture and Rural Development, University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury and the Theatre Department, the Faculty of Visual and Performing Arts, University of Western Sydney, Nepean.

In this dissertation, the writer seeks to integrate participatory approaches with community development and human inquiry, humanistic approaches to education, experiential learning theories, and drama education theories and methods. The work has linked the phenomenological school of thought with Habermas' theory of communicative action, participative development, systems thinking, Paulo Freire's dialogic learning, group learning, Augusto Boal's forum theatre (that is, discussion theatre), and popular theatre and participatory action research.

The research illuminates the fact that what the German philosopher Jurgen Habermas calls 'emancipatory learning domain' can be achieved within creative drama processes through critical reflection, which release the human inner resources and move individuals from passivity towards a state of exploring oppressive situations (that is, self-consciousness), developing initiative and taking action in real life. And, as a process of forum theatre involves participants in the practice of reciprocity and dialectical thinking, it provides an interactive, systemic context of learning and inquiry. The central questions which this research addresses, are:
What are the functions and the methods of participative theatre (as systemic communication) in the process of social change and development?

How can these participative forms of theatre elicit whole aspects of local knowledge, that is, tacit/explicit knowledge, facilitate learning and foster critical thinking through grass-roots participation?

The ideas were formulated and tested through intensive field experiences with Iranian nomads, Iranian farmers, immigrant farmers in N.S.W., Australia, and within a number of workshops with different groups of students at Hawkesbury. This includes a critique of rural development in Iran, examinations of rural extension from a critical perpective, drama and theatre as process, learning and conscientization, personal construct psychology, systems thinking, learning through metaphor, action theory, Boal's participative forum theatre-theory, and action research. It utilises field experiences in rural Iran, Iranian extension /education practitioners, and groups of immigrant farmers and students in Australia. The field study in Iran involved five villages in the Northern and Southern Bara'an of Isfahan alongside the Zayanderoud River, and in Australia, a large area in the West of the New South Wales between Windsor and Wollongong. The field studies aimed to clarify the socio-cultural and ecological aspects of the development in the mentioned areas.

Finally, the study explores drama as a form of systemic communication (that is, dialogue through a number of group activity techniques) which is capable of breaking through many layers of social 'conditioning' and facilitating self-consciousness. It offers an empowering tool and a way of thinking, a language for personal expression, a process for the elicitation of cultural codes and tacit knowledge, and a means of group and community development within the context of issue identification, consensus making and choice enrichment. The field experiences show that theatre can be used not simply as means of communication or entertainment, but as a systemic language for self-realisation, self-expression, and participative research and development.

The research proposition: Drama as a critical analysis procedure should clarify sociological and cultural dimensions of oppressive structures and should help in the transformation of perspectives of the participants. This process of codification and decodification should help people move from a sense of fatalism and passiveness to critical consciousness where they can create, restore and/or enrich communication to define and design improvements to the development of themselves and of the communities of which they are part.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank a few of the many friends who helped me with this project. One of them is Professor Richard Bawden of the School of Agriculture and Rural Development, University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury, one of the most energetic and friendly scholars I had ever met, who taught me about systems thinking and facilitated the action research. He introduced me to the Faculty of Visual and Performing Arts, University of Western Sydney, Nepean to work with two academics in the Theatre Department: Anne Marshall, from whom I learned 'the most effective communication' and about drama, and Gordon Beattie whose workshops in community theatre were the most inspiring I have experienced. Richard Bawden sparked new horizons in my mind, and Anne Marshall encouraged me at all stages of the inquiry, particularly with the final drafts. I thank both of them.

I would like to thank also many other academics and friends in the University of Western Sydney, both at Hawkesbury and Nepean for their unforgettable support: Dr. Bob Fisher, Dr. David Russell, Dr. Robert Woog, Susan Clark, Lexi Cross, and also Ben Ross in whose workshops I learned about 'forum theatre'.

In addition, thanks must go to the rural people of Ziar, in Isfahan, Iran, for their support, cooperation and trust, without which my fieldwork would have been impossible, and the extension workers in both Australia and Iran who were so generous with their contacts and information at various points in my journey.

Finally, I offer my thanks to my wife, whose constant affection I value most highly, and my family in Iran whose long-distance support in many ways helped me to reach my goal.
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PREFACE

From 1980 to 1990 I worked as a writer/producer of rural radio programs in Isfahan radio station of Iran, while at the same time working as a consultant of the department of animal husbandry in a large agricultural organization. The ten years of simultaneous development work and broadcasting activities among native communities of Iran revealed the urgent need for a participatory approach to development. Working along with farmers, and talking to them about health and animal diseases twice a week through radio programs were valuable experiences. I also gained inspiration from the face-to-face contacts with local groups of farmers and nomadic people when sharing with the legacy of their rich, ritualistic culture.

In 1983 I moved to Tehran and was promoted as the director of economics and development programs at the central radio station of Iran and worked there until 1990. In Tehran I experienced a wider range of practices, such as producing development-related and rural programs broadcasting right throughout Iran and involvement in consultation activities within three large agricultural organisations. There was a view prevalent among the experts in our organisation that it should be the role of rural opinion leaders to transfer messages to powerless and vulnerable groups. This view reinforced the passivity of a great number of clients and disenfranchised 'grassroots' people from participation in their own programs and being involved in feedback processes.

Experiences of working as a practitioner of animal husbandry with rural people in the first three years showed that the poor villagers of Isfahan (Southern and Northern Bara'an district, and Badroud of Natanz) demanded more than 'technical advice'. 'Development' was construed by them as a socio-cultural issue involving many aspects of their life, their creative energies, their own solutions to the local problems, their expectations of participation, and particularly involving their ritualistic and artistic traditions as ways of expression and social learning. This awareness led to a village-level allocation of a large space in the locality providing a venue for public gatherings, arts exhibitions, handicrafts, rituals and, occasionally, youth theatre performances based on religious themes. The peoples' strong motivation to share their indigenous knowledge and to be appreciated in public was undeniable. The most attractive part of these activities to me was learning about peoples' different perspectives and valuable experiential knowledge, which provided essential lessons for those committed to the process of rural development.

In 1985, establishing a team at the central radio station and working collaboratively with the radio correspondents and a large number of extension and development practitioners
provided a valuable learning context. The preliminary agreement among us led to the next action: to take the making of the radio programs themselves into rural communities. Consequently, several formal and informal meetings with the central Department of Extension at the Ministry of Agriculture in Tehran were held to organize on-farm radio shows and to facilitate the production of 'problem-dramas' in villages throughout Iran. The Extension Department agreed to establish an audio section within the organization to create an effective bridge with the radio program. One of the experienced extension workers was also allocated to assist the team to facilitate the performance of touring shows. The team's activity was based on participation through introductory, coordinating sessions with the local development and agricultural extension organizations, local and religious leaders, teachers and the farmers to explore local issues. Most of these sessions stimulated new ideas through dialogue with the different parties and encouraged participation, collaborative learning and social investigation at a local level. Follow-up activity involved the people and local organizations in dealing with which issues were identified. Our team, while living with, interacting with and interviewing farmers, came to understand and appreciate their culture. Farmers were generally open, collaborative and hospitable.

Within the on-farm radio shows, farmers were involved in creative activities through contest and role-play to explore and discuss major issues in order to foster innovation (ie: change in the peoples' long term habits of doing things). The team aimed to extend farmers' communication networks to link them later with different official organizations where they could express and discuss their issues. The horizontal communication between the radio program, the local extension staff and the farmers improved, but new insights towards solving local problems were not achieved, since the activity was essentially expressive but not self-reflective. There was rarely any follow-up discussion, problem analysis or reflective action. However, these radio programs could be considered as preliminary participatory, researching activities (in terms of collecting various ranges of data from the local issues) to help farmers to participate in their own programs and to share their own knowledge with the larger community of farmers listening to the program. The farmers created their own 'voice', as well as provided the radio programs with relevant and appropriate materials.

The approach resulted in unpredicted encouragement and participation from and among the younger farmers, the villagers and various extension organizations. The many letters the program received each week were proof of its relevance and popularity. The entertaining 'radio-show' was the style of these programs and included competitions, games and 'problem-dramas' based on local issues, played by the farmers themselves, following through with questions about their problems. In contrast to customary formal radio interviews, through which farmers seemed to be reluctant and conservative, these on-farm radio shows encouraged a high level of enjoyment and participation. Role-playing in conflict
situations and a sort of 'image theatre' were created by the participant-villagers themselves. The program production team, although theoretically uninformed about the process, was leading creative, participative workshops in a large number of villages of Iran. At the end of each trip, the team edited and broadcast six specific recorded programs and produced a lot of extra material for regular broadcasting in other programs.

The procedure was that the team firstly made a decision to travel to a particular area, and preparing for a long journey. Although general issues were always discussed beforehand, the team would set off without any specific topic in mind. On arrival, the team tried to make contact with the community leaders and the district extension officers, as well as the local organisations, to coordinate the program and hold productive discussion with them. It was the farmers and villagers themselves who collaborated in the preparation of a location for the shows and setting the scene - one of the important points that led me to undertake this study on the participative, inside-out learning/researching functions of drama and popular forms of theatre.

The team made many long trips to different ethnic communities once every couple of months, each trip lasting between twelve to twenty days. In most cases the team members were warmly welcomed by local people and accepted as guests. The fact emerged that farmers, and villagers generally, had a stronger motivation and willingness to listen to themselves than to the content of our program broadcasting on the air, for listening to their own ideas rather than listening to the programs which were prescribed for them (that is, those written, spoken and played by 'others' on the radio). Through an assessment of the programs (broadcast) in the provinces of Tehran, Semnan, and Markazi for a Masters thesis, I had also discovered that out of the five radio styles (i.e: radio talk, panel discussion, radio interview, radio drama and contest), 'radio drama' was the most successful (Khatoonabadi, 1989).

The critical point was that, although the 'on-farm radio shows' and role-plays or 'problem-dramas' on the air could foster some discussion on common national concerns (such as land degradation) on a village-level scale, the approach was far from the natural processes of communication, which are interactive and appreciative, and it did not achieve any active/organized response from its audience which was, as usual, left without follow-up action. In most cases, despite the fact that local problems were being defined properly, rarely were the conflicts resolved or a high-quality investigation and analysis of the problems which originated in the community obtained. There was mostly recognition of the problems, but not a commitment to solve them. I decided that there was more I needed to learn about such phenomena if I was to improve this situation. I enrolled in a Ph.D program at the
University of Western Sydney to this end, working with both the Faculty of Agriculture at Hawkesbury and the Faculty of Visual and Performing Arts at Nepean.

During the years of co-operative work with radio drama, I wrote radio-drama scripts for the rural audiences but never directed a play, so the following activities were necessary for the development of a new methodology:

- Participation in the theory and practice of 'action research' for development, systems agriculture, and 'soft systems methodology' with the Hawkesbury learning community at the University of Western Sydney, (1990-1993)

- Participation in the theory and practice of drama, community theatre and the methods of directing at the Theatre Department, University of Western Sydney, Nepean (1991-1993)

- Participation in the Forum Theatre Workshop, held at Newtown High School of Performing Arts, by the NSW Community Arts Association (NSWCAA) in Sydney (February 1992)

- Participation in Training Workshops, International Popular Theatre Exchange, held by Community Aid Abroad, Sydney (2-18 April 1993)

- Participation in Augusto Boal's Theatre for the Oppressed and the Challenge of Change, and the Clown Workshops at Drama Action Centre, Sydney (May-June 1993)

The first part of my field project was carried out in the same region in Isfahan: Bara'an. As in rural Iran, local leaders are the common stimulators for any grassroots participation. In the context of this research, they were contacted and, due to my professional status among the community, having been involved previously in a three-year development work, the study started with rapport and understanding. The consultation and broadcasting activities, such as talking to the farmers on the radio in Isfahan, had provided me with a close relationship with the opinion/technical leaders within the local communities. Moreover, at the time of this study, I was invited to participate in planning groups, as well as in the local decision-making sessions at the Extension and Education Departments of the development-related organizations in Isfahan.

In doing this study, I faced the challenge of learning a new paradigm of research in social phenomena, introduced to me as systemic action research by Professor Richard
Bawden of the School of Agriculture and Rural Development, University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury. Besides, I was strongly encouraged to approach action research through 'drama' - the strangest academic task I have ever undertaken in my life. Therefore, I had two different challenges: to cope with new paradigm research methodology (involving both the systemicity and the action), and participative drama methods - both of them unknown to me at the time. For those of my associates who were initially exposed to the idea, the newness of the topic area, as well as their doubt that one could connect agricultural development with theatre, have been made clear in their letters to me.

The conduct and accomplishment of action research is an unpredictable process of inquiry which does not allow any predetermined hypothesis. It is an activity without a framework of time, predetermined questions, or intention of gathering designated data. The action determines the direction, and the latter leads to a number of norms and assumptions, to be worked out within further action. There were occasions of uncertainty and concern about the achievements. The energy and thought spent were immeasurable. However, the aesthetic, leading nature of 'action research' itself was a key factor providing systemic, critical thinking, ethical norms, and meaningful insights to be reflected upon through more actions. The whole activity reinforced and developed 'daring', 'risk taking', 'communicating', and 'coping' with unpredictable happenings of real life processes. Also I had to read and evaluate the voluminous literature of several disciplines other than my own in order to find out where significant changes were occurring and where major new ideas were emerging and connecting - that is, in education, theatre, philosophy, psychology, development, and research methodologies.

Beyond all of these dimensions, to write a thesis - an action research one - in a second language was a challenge, bigger than the learning and doing of the action research and the participative drama methods. In this regard, I'd like to quote Bob Dick (1993: 82):

Action research? It isn't understood. It's damned difficult to do well. It's not easily publishable. It just happens to be a far better paradigm in some situations and for some purposes, as other paradigms are in other situations and for other purposes.

The thesis is divided into three main parts. In part one, there is a critique of rural development and extension in Iran (Chapter 1) followed by the research outline including aims, objectives and methodology (Chapter 2). Quantitative research methods are largely discarded, while qualitative methodologies are appreciated for their value in human inquiry. Part one, thus sets the problem and introduces action research methodology to deal with it.

In part two, I explore the theoretical frameworks for alternative approaches and methodologies for development activities. A general critique of agricultural extension
(Chapter 3) is made from the point of view that conventional extension activities have not been very successful in aiding rural development. Chapter 4 posits a sense of wholeness through participation within group dynamics of participatory drama, and analyses the dimensions of drama and theatre as a process for development. In Chapter 5 learning theories and conscientization will be discussed in conjunction with the aspects of learning and empowerment through drama. Systems of thinking and acting (Chapter 6) refers to the philosophical, and psychological interpretations of constructing a reality through the dialectic of thinking and acting, for example, phenomenology, construct psychology and systems thinking. Chapter 7 discusses systemic action research in relation to forum theatre as a qualitative, participative method of group learning and inquiry. By discussing the issues of participation (a major principle for systemic action research), empowerment, dialogue and critical thinking, the argument illuminates an alternative to community development.

In part three (Chapter 8) I describe the participative field experiences undertaken as the putting into practice of the theories and analyse these experiences in terms of the theoretical frameworks. Finally, the research outcomes will be discussed in Chapter 9.