

**SINGING FOR THE FATHERLAND: FOUR SOUTH  
AFRICAN PROTEST PLAYS**

**BY**

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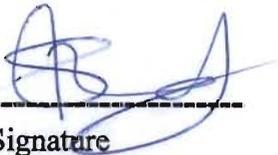
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fulfilment of the requirements of the Masters of Arts degree.**

**November 2004**

## Declaration

**I, Sunitha Panday, declare that this research under the title of: Theatre in South Africa (Apartheid and Post- Apartheid) is my own work. I have fully acknowledged all the sources I have used. I would also state that this work has never been submitted for any other degree or examination in any other university.**



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**Signature**  
**Miss. S. Panday**

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**November 2004**  
**Durban**

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## INTRODUCTION

South African Theatre is renowned for its combination of protest and innovation. Works by playwrights and theatre practitioners as varied as Athol Fugard, Gcina Mhlophe, Barney Simon, John Kani, Mbongeni Ngema and Fatima Dike, as well as groups... have excited audience and critics at home and abroad by engaging with immediate issues of apartheid through collaborative techniques which have crossed race and class boundaries, thereby challenging not just conventions of mainstream Western theatre, but also the very laws of the country. (Blumberg & Walder, 1999: 1)

Thus South African protest theatre has always been a vehicle through which the voice of South Africans, irrespective of race, could be heard. The theatre was a tool for healing, for empowerment, to educate, to reinforce unity and identity, and a weapon to fight with against oppression. Theatre even continued to fulfil this responsibility once apartheid had been dismantled. Four South African plays (two apartheid plays and two post-apartheid) will be critically examined. The plays are: *Woza Albert*, *Statements After Arrest under the Immorality Act*, *We Shall Sing For The Fatherland*, and *The Valley Song*. The plays will be evaluated in terms of philosophy, themes, plot, characters, landscape and theatre techniques.

Chapter one examines the historical context of South Africa from the period of colonialism, through the years of apartheid. It explores the effects of apartheid on the

non - European communities. The physical and psychological damage is examined. It also addresses the importance of theatre in post-apartheid South Africa.

Chapter two examines South African Black theatre and protest theatre. It goes on to explain the shape of South African protest theatre and its importance during the period of apartheid.

Chapter three examines the play *Woza Albert*, written by Percy Mtwa, Mbongeni and Barney Simon in 1983(it is important to note that the play was performed well before it was written). The play addresses the exploitation of Black South Africans in the work place, the economic world, and education. The playwrights focus on the Passbook system introduced by the apartheid government to monitor the influx of Black South African in the urban areas and how this disrupts their entire way of life. The play also communicates the importance of the Christian faith in the African community.

Chapter four, analyses the first of two Ahtol Fugard's plays examined in this thesis. The play, *Statements After Arrest Under The Immorality Act*, written in 1974 addresses three South African laws; the Mixed Marriages Act (1949), Immorality Amendment Act(1950) and the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act(1953). This play brought to the forefront the harsh realities of apartheid that affected all South Africans.

Chapter five is an examination of the 'post apartheid play', *We Shall Sing for the Fatherland*, written in 1979. Zakes Mda critically examines and exposes the African ruling class for their hypocritical standards, as he sees them as being no better than colonial rule. The play serves as a warning (as it was written in 1979) that South Africans should not be over optimistic about African leadership. The African ruling class are part of the African petite bourgeoisie that was a product of colonialism.

The final chapter is the examination of Athol Fugard's first post-apartheid play, *Valley Song*(1995). Fugard focuses on the optimism and hope the youth have in the new democratic South Africa. It draws attention to the fears the older generation have since they are on unfamiliar ground. Fugard talks to the issue of the denial of land rights and that the implementation democracy is not as easy as it is made out to be.

The conclusion of the thesis reinforces the importance of South African theatre, both protest and entertainment, as a medium for communication, education, and empowerment.



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# PRIVATE EYE

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## VERWOERD



## A NATION MOURNS

# Verwoerd Assassinated

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On September 6, 1966, Hendrik Verwoerd, prime minister of South Africa, was stabbed to death as he sat waiting for the start of a session of parliament in the government building in Cape Town. His assailant, Dimetrios Tsafendas, a white messenger, later said that he killed Verwoerd because he was too liberal.

To the outside world, this seemed an odd way of describing one of the founding fathers of apartheid. Born in Amsterdam, Netherlands, in 1901, Verwoerd had lived in South Africa since he was three months old. In 1937, he was appointed editor of a new Johannesburg daily, *Die Transvaler*, and during World War II the newspaper, under his direction, took a strongly pro-Nazi line.

Verwoerd became vice-chairman of the National Party of the Transvaal in 1946, was elected a senator in 1948, and appointed minister of native affairs in 1950. In this position he was responsible for framing the major part of the apartheid laws, designed to maintain white supremacy in South Africa.

In the election of 1958 Verwoerd won a seat in the South African House of Assembly. When the leader of the Nationalist Party, Johannes Strijdom, died soon after, Verwoerd became the new leader of the party, and took office as prime minister the following day. He then worked hard to remove South Africa from the British Commonwealth, and to establish an independent republic. In October 1960, a national referendum approved this move by a narrow margin. In 1963, Verwoerd authorized the arrest and detention of Nelson Mandela.

The photograph shows how the apartheid politician's death was viewed by the British fortnightly *Private Eye*. Founded in the fall of 1961, the magazine was full of topical comments, cartoons, jokes, and photographs with speech bubbles. The publication soon started to print stories that the mainstream press dared not run, for fear of libel actions. Many of those who were written about said the pieces were scurrilous, but much of what appeared in *Private Eye* at the time turned out to be true. Thus, despite its rather low-grade production quality, the reputation and sales of the magazine soared. It became the vanguard of the 1960s' satire boom, a movement that helped both create and reflect the irreverent spirit of the age.

*The quintessence of Private Eye, and of satire as a genre—castigating morals (in this case South African apartheid) by laughing at them. (Innes, 2002: 107)*

## CHAPTER ONE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

For two hundred and fifty years South Africa was a place where the forces of colonialism and the African chiefdoms did battle. The European colonialist wanted total control while the African chiefs were defending their birthright and their way of life. This all ended in the battle at Bambata in 1906 where the African people were finally disarmed and South Africa was under the control of colonialism. (Odenaal in Liebenberg, Lortan, Nel and Westhuizen, 1994/3:1) They were not satisfied with the physical control they had, they also desired control of the mind. They wanted the African to feel that, "if the settlers were to leave they would fall into total barbarism, degradation and bestiality." (Fanon, 2001:169) The picture of the colonialist being a harsh parent to the African for his own good is portrayed.

Colonialist domination, because it is total and tends to oversimplify, very soon manages to disrupt in spectacular fashion the cultural life of a conquered people. This cultural obliteration is made possible by the negation of a national reality, by new legal relations introduced by the occupying power, by the banishment of the natives and their customs to outlying districts by colonial society, by expropriation, and by systematic enslaving of men and women." (Fanon, 2001:190)

Thus the African was both physically and mentally displaced, as the colonialist embedded legitimisations for colonialism and white superiority. Colonialism began in 1652 with the landing of Jan Van Riebeck at Cape Town (Cape of Good Hope), however with the British realising the economic potential of South Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century they

began to increase their control and dominance. According to J.A. Hobson, the early twentieth century, “capitalist over production and corresponding under-consumption at home inevitably led to ruthless search for new markets.”(Hobson in Bristow, 1991: 128) South Africa, like the rest of Africa was seen by some as a New Jerusalem. Booth explains that Europe was plagued by unemployment, prostitution and crime whereas Africa was seen as the land plenty, free from all these vices. (Booth in Bristow, 1991: 132). However many Europeans did have a contrary perception that Africa was the savage ‘heart of darkness’, full of vices.

In South Africa colonial domination eventually evolved into **Apartheid**. It divided South Africans on the basis of colour and prejudiced them on this basis as well. “Apartheid is a structure which in important ways ensures the provision and reproduction of cheap labour for a capitalist society. It is, however, also a structure that ensures the continued domination of an alliance of two minority national groups over the majority, the descendants of the original possessors of the land.”(Kavanagh, 1985:9) The mental and physical displacement of the African people by the colonialists was manoeuvred in spectacular style and left the African paralysed. During this period of the so-called civilising of the African, the ‘Binary System’ came into effect. This term coined by Fanon means that “black is bad and white is good ...”(Poulos, 2004: 3)

While the colonialist sat back and marvelled at his work, the so called ‘civilising of the African people’, little did he realise that African acquiescence was only temporary. As

Andre Odendaal states, “the African people defeated, and denied any say in the running of their country- had to take the white man at his own game if they were to survive in the new colonial state. A new kind of politics was needed, they said. Explaining this, one of the new generation of educated leaders declared:

Your cattle (or rights) are gone, my countrymen!

Go rescue them Go rescue them!

Leave the breechloader (gun) alone

And turn to the pen.

Take paper and ink,

For that is your shield...(and) fire with your pen.”

(Odenaal in Liebenberg, Lortan, Nel and Westhuizen, 1994/3: 2)

Thus it is important to realise that literature is an ideological apparatus used by the both the state and masses. As Kavanagh states, “ The founders of Marxism emphasized that art was an important weapon in the ideological struggle between classes. It could reinforce just as it could undermine the power of the exploiters, could serve to defend class oppression or, on the contrary, contribute to the education and development of the consciousness of the toiling masses, bringing them closer to victory over their oppressors.” (Kavanagh, 1985: xiii) While the colonialist initially robbed the African of their birthright, culture and way of life, the rise of the African intellectual opened the possibility of the restoration of the African way of life and identity. The African intellectual as a product of the colonialist empire was initially wooed by the life style the

colonialist had to offer to them. Fanon addresses the issue of the native intellectual since they play a vital role in reinforcing culture, be they writer, poet, artist or playwright. According to Fanon the native intellectual goes through 3 phases before he reaches the stage of “an awakener and the voice of a new reality (Fanon, 2001:179). In stage one he assimilates the culture of the occupying power and sings the praises of this culture. In the second stage something is gnawing at him and he feels uneasy with the assimilated culture. He begins to recall things of his past and realises that there is nothing to be ashamed of in culture. This time is referred to as a point just before the battle. Fanon is very critical of the ‘second stage’ of returning to the people, as they are trying to restore traditional identities and traditional and traditional cultural practices. Fanon argues that these intellectuals merely want to show proof of their culture to the western world. Fanon states that you substantiate its existence in the fight which the people wage war against the forces of occupation...You will never make colonialism blush for shame by spreading out little known cultural treasures under its eye. (Fanon, 2001: 179-180) Fanon believes that you must be in living realities of Africa and part of that spirit that is involved liberating the African people. This is the final stage, the fighting stage; the native intellectual becomes the voice of the new reality of nation building. They used the very tools of the colonialists to fight back, ultimately to restore the African dignity, and identity. Tribal chiefs equally backed the desire for return to traditional identities; they wanted unity in their kingdoms. While it might be argued that the African people are governed by tribalism and not a single unified race, however in their diversity there also needs to be a sense of unity and allegiance to the African continent. This is equally echoed by Seme:

The demon of racialism, the aberrations of the Xhosa-fingo, the animosity that exists between the Zulus and the Tongas, between Basothos and every native, must be buried and forgotten; it has shed among us enough blood. We are one people. These divisions, these jealousies are the cause of all our woes and all our backwardness and ignorance today.” (Odenaal in Liebenberg, Lortan, Nel and Westhuizen, 1994/3: 4)

Seme was arguing for a post-tribal unity of the African peoples in South Africa to be strong enough to counter white rule. In South Africa from the late 1960's this new voice and reality was the Black Consciousness Movement. Its philosophy and central focus was to redefine 'black' identity in a positive manner free of racist connotation and to instil this identity in the African people. This ties up closely with Fanon's third stage, the voice of the awakner. This ties closely with Senghor's concept of Negritude: It "is not the defence of a skin or colour ...it is not even attachment to a particular race ...although such an attachment may be legitimate. Negritude is awareness, defence and development of African cultural values." (Oxely, 2004:7) It is a way life; it encompasses dancing, singing, food, socialising, etc. It is an instrument of freedom.

In South Africa the Black Consciousness movement made use of theatre as an effective means to heal, educate, empower, and facilitate change. South African Black theatre was no longer solely for entertainment. Protest theatre was forming strong roots in South Africa as a vehicle for the emancipation of the Black South African. As a theatre of

liberation it addressed all areas from education, the workplace, the political arena and community issues.

Black theatre did not speak to the oppressors, as it did not want to be labelled as a witch-hunt. The essence of Black theatre was asserting self-respect and asserting dignity. However from the late 1970's South African theatre became increasingly political, as it began to address all facets of life that affected and oppressed the non-whites. Ronnie Govender wrote *The Lahnee's Pleasure*, which focused on the oppression and demoralisation of Indians. There was also an emergence of protest worker plays (*You Strike a Woman, You Strike a Rock; Woza Albert; Sophiatown; etc.*). While the intensive focus is on non-white writers one cannot negate the contribution of white playwrights. Athol Fugard also wrote plays that addressed the issue of apartheid, for example, *Statements after Arrest* that focused on the Immorality Act. In addition to the content, the technique of writing and performing of the plays were designed to make it accessible to the masses. The plays were made more to deal with performance than literature and they drew from the oral tradition. The staging requirements were simple (use of home made instruments) and they could be performed anywhere. The Black Consciousness movement and liberation movements used theatre as a vital tool to show the masses the evils of apartheid that plagued them and aimed at breaking the indoctrination that was embedded in their minds. It is important to note that South African protest theatre was not used solely by the Black Consciousness movement but also by other South African race groups who were not African. The focal point of theatre during the period of

apartheid was aimed to instil unity among all South Africans irrespective of colour and was in the process forging an inclusive South African identity. After apartheid, the theatre continued to address the area of politics but it no longer used race and colour as issues but focused on for instance gender, human rights and the African bourgeoisie.

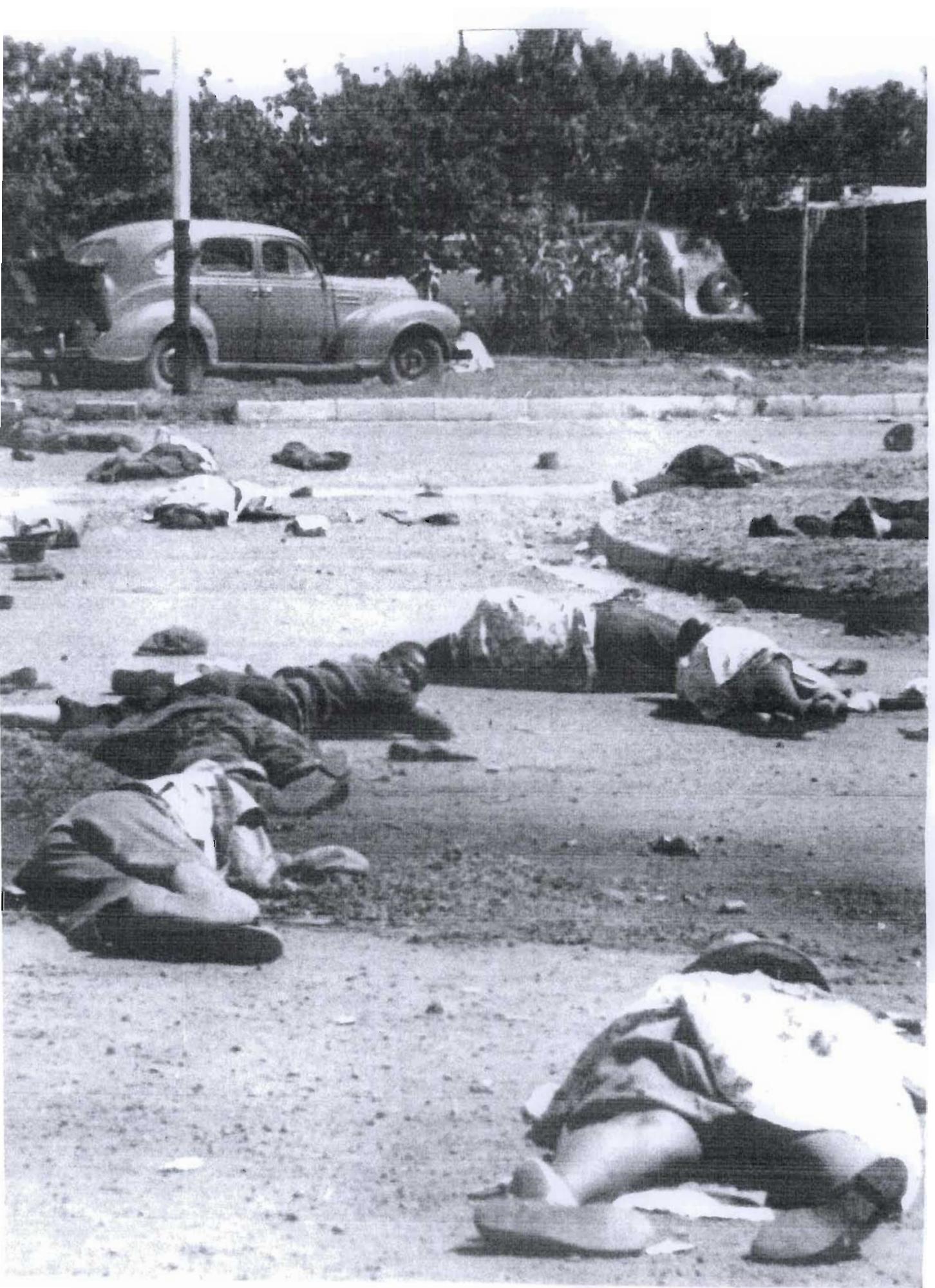
The aim of this thesis is to reveal how plays written in the apartheid era was created with a common goal in mind, that is to expose the harsh realities of apartheid, a system that dominated every facet in South African society. It will also reveal that the writers used the very tools taught to them by their oppressors. In addition some plays were aimed at restoring the once negated oral tradition. Thus the aims of the plays were two fold in that they firstly exposed the ills of apartheid and secondly they attempted to restore dignity to the African way of life and culture, which was destroyed by colonisation.

The second part of the thesis will concentrate on plays that addressed matters of concern that people living in a post-apartheid were faced with. *We shall Sing for the Fatherland* was written in the heart of apartheid and the *Valley Song* after the first election. It will reveal a critique of post-apartheid South Africa. Thus all the dreams that the masses had about instant change and a life of comfort and abundance are perceived to be still dreams. A new 'petite bourgeoisie' has come into control. Fanon describes the group aptly, realising they were created by the colonialist; Fanon places his faith in the rural

underclass/ peasantry to ensure that a true revolution moves forward. This will result in a National culture and consciousness emerging. He lost faith in the Petite Bourgeoisie since

the spirit of indulgence is dominant at the core of the bourgeoisie, and this is because the national bourgeoisie identifies itself with western bourgeoisie...it is preoccupied with filling its pockets as rapidly as possible...It will in practice set up its country as the brothel of Europe.(Fanon, 2001:123-133)

This is core of Mda's play: while it is referring to Africa as a whole it can be read as having pertinence to post-apartheid South Africa. It is common to find in the media articles concerning mismanagement of funds by government officials (for example Allan Boesak who was charged and jailed). South Africa will have to move beyond the first wave of the Petite Bourgeoisie hegemony. Only then can nation building be possible because we would have hopefully learnt from our mistakes. Therefore the theatre will always be used as a tool for us to see the good and the bad in society, so that we rectify our mistakes.



1960

# The Sharpeville Massacre

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March 21, 1960: in a moment of quiet after violence, men, women, and young children lie dead, dying, and wounded on a South African street, mowed down by police bullets. Their belongings are strewn around them: there is not a single weapon in sight. What had they done to provoke such a violent response?

Residents of Sharpeville, near Johannesburg, had marched to protest the injustice of apartheid, the policy of separate development for blacks and whites that had been codified by the white Afrikaner Nationalist Party in 1948. Under the repressive rules of the system, ownership of land by Africans was limited to "Bantu Homelands" (native reserves), and Africans were made to obtain permission before entering urban areas. Sexual relations and marriage between whites and nonwhites were illegal. The right to vote, which in any case was restricted to men, was denied to nonwhites. Many skilled occupations were reserved exclusively for white workers. As in the southern United States at that time, there was strict racial segregation in every aspect of daily life.

Sharpeville was held up by the South African government as a model of a black township, an advert for the success of separate development—some of the homes even had running water. When the inhabitants took to the streets, the authorities' response was swift and brutal—they feared rebellion, and insubordination would not be tolerated. The police opened fire on the crowd, killing 69 and injuring 178.

The massacre had lasting consequences. Abroad, there was outrage and widespread condemnation; within South Africa, the African National Congress (A.N.C.), which had previously opposed violence, now abandoned its policy of passive resistance. "Is it politically correct to continue preaching peace and non-violence," asked 33-year-old Nelson Mandela, "when dealing with a government whose barbaric practices have brought so much suffering and misery to Africans?"

There were further clashes between Africans and police. The government imposed martial law, and outlawed the A.N.C. Mandela went underground, encouraging sabotage of state and military targets, but was arrested in 1964 and thrown in jail, where he remained for more than 27 years.

*These unarmed black people were shot in the back while running away from South African security forces determined to break up a peaceful demonstration.* (Innes, 2002: 87)

## CHAPTER TWO SOUTH AFRICAN THEATRE PROTEST THEATRE

The study of South African theatre was biased in that it negated the African forms that existed in South Africa. The religious dance forms and storytelling that were crucial to the African culture were marginalized to simple public performance of entertainment. In addition since the dances served a religious function it was thought of as hedonistic from the Christian perspective. It was generally believed that the first forms of drama and culture arrived with colonialism. Kavanagh quotes Ruth Finnegan,

with a few possible exceptions, there is no tradition in Africa of artistic performances which include all the elements which might be demanded in a strict definition of drama- or least not with the emphasis to which we are accustomed (Kavanagh, 1985:43).

As the colonialist dismissed the culture of the African people, Finnegan judged African drama against the European drama and dismissed it.

South African theatre can be categorised into three stages, pre colonial, colonial and independent drama. For the purpose of this study the understanding of independent theatre is important. From the 60's onwards South African theatre took a new direction, as playwrights (irrespective of race) no longer saw themselves as an elite group emulating the colonialist way of life but as the voice of the masses. Fanon refers to this stage as the "fighting stage". While he makes this statement in relation to the native

intellectual, one can see the relevance of this affirmation to all South Africans as everyone was affected by colonialism. Colonialism moulded the identities of all races.

This coincides with the uprising of 1976. Steve Biko reinforced the importance of drama as an instrument to liberate and conscientise when he stated,

Black culture above all implies freedom on our part to innovate without recourse to white values. This innovation is part of the natural development of any culture. A culture is essentially the society's composite answer to varied problems of life. We are experiencing new problems every day and whatever we do adds to the richness of our cultural heritage as long as it has man as its centre. The adoption of black theatre and drama is one such which we need to encourage and to develop.

(Kavanagh, 1985:162)

The role of the playwrights who saw themselves as part of the liberation struggle was to be the voices that spoke against the atrocities of apartheid, to educate and empower the masses. Not all playwrights were part of the Black Consciousness movement, as one had to be African to be part of the movement, however this did not dissuade playwrights of other races from writing about the carnage of apartheid. Realising that the masses in South Africa could not read or write a tool was required to instil in them what it meant to

be African, Indian, Coloured or white as this was eroded by colonialism and the apartheid system that physically and mentally displaced South Africans. The colonialist embedded his biased reasoning in favour of colonialism and white superiority. It was relatively ineffective to write poems or novels although many Black writers did. Such writing it only would have been accessible only to the literate of South Africa and people outside South Africa. In addition writing in the apartheid era was a dangerous act and a writer very well could have been imprisoned or placed under house arrest. Therefore the use of theatre was an effective and safe tool to use, as the performances were oral, although playwrights and theatre companies also suffered harassment from the state.

Language played a significant role in drama as plays written earlier had to be in English or Afrikaans to be recognised as a work of drama, but disappeared as an issue as the playwrights no longer strictly adhered to this. They were breaking away from the control the colonialist had in terms of language, as the plays were multi lingual. Fanon saw language not as a set of words but as a weapon to control. Fanon states "A man who has a language possesses the world expressed and implied by that language...Mastery of language affords remarkable power"(Brantlinger, 125) According to Fanon when one speaks the language of the colonialist it means "above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of that culture."(Poulos, 2004: 1) Thus the multi-lingual form demonstrates the breaking of colonial chains and recognition of traditional languages.

The use of the drama was not only effective because of its oral and multi lingual nature but the entire technique of the presentation of the performance was designed so that it did not alienate and intimidate audiences. From the 70's onwards a new performance style emerged which moved way from the traditional European style. This new method was Workshop Theatre. The process of creating was a democratic and collaborative process in contrast to the single playwright style. The focus is on performance as opposed to being a literary text and it was overtly political. It drew on performance styles that were part of the oral tradition, that is, narration, singing, dancing, and mime. It restored the oral tradition that was seen as not good enough by the white controlling forces.

The actual method of creating a workshopped play is divided into three stages. The first was the observation where the writers went out and observed people, conducted interviews and researched topics. The play was created from real life experiences and not from a fictional world. From the material collated the actors improvised scenes. From the improvised scenes, the group of actors and writers selected the most appropriate ones. Thus what is created as a performance, by performers and received by audiences, is

a certain kind of knowledge – a knowledge more practical and sensuous than cognitive- about the roles available for playing in that society, the conditions underpinning them, and the terms on which social actors may be mutually expressive. This where the actor becomes so crucially important and so much more than the interpreter of a script which is already finished which already means as much it can mean... there is

created in performance a dimension of meaning which communicates to the audience- beyond the explicitness of theme and subject. (Crow in Davis and Fuchs, 1996: 13-14).

This was an area that could not be controlled by apartheid or any system as it comes from within the performer. Crow states that Athol Fugard referred to this as,

Carnal reality of the actor in space and time. One of the effects, as well as purposes of the apartheid system was to prevent the full realization of that reciprocal recognition which is the basis of civilized society, and through which every individual acquires the sense of identity and of self-worth that Fanon called 'the certainty of ones self.' By its very nature that system denied, in the name of so called, 'separate development' the common humanity which must be the basis of the opened-ended potential for mutual expressiveness. (Crow in Davis and Fuchs, 1996: 14).

The staging techniques were simple as they made use of homemade versatile props. The focus was not on fancy props and costume. The process of workshopping plays was advantageous as one did not have to know how read or write in order to create a play. The very nature of workshop plays was political. Their focus was on apartheid and how it affected black workers who were manipulated by the white man, the unfair education system and community issues. Workshop plays are divided into the following categories:

political, worker, educational and community. They aimed at educating, empowering, and instilling awareness in the above areas. The technique and style made it possible to reach the masses as the plays could be performed at any venue. It also allowed the oppressed to give vent to their emotions, and to show the outside world what was happening in South Africa. The techniques used in these types of plays were not unique to the African tradition of drama as there are similarities to European experimental and Epic theatre. The South African dramatists used the tools taught to them by the colonialist to break the chains of apartheid and oppression. The use of minimal props, costume, and make-up and the exclusion of elaborate sound and lighting are techniques advocated by Grotowski in his theory of Poor Theatre, which is part of the experimental theatres types in Europe. According to Brockett, Grotowski drew the conclusion that theatre will always remain technologically inferior to television therefore should stop trying to compete with it. Grotowski found it more theatrical for the actor to transform from character to character using only his body and craft, as opposed to relying on technology to do it. He speaks of the idea of the 'Holy Actor' who undertakes the act of self-penetration and sacrifices the innermost part of himself. The actor must be able to construct his own psychoanalytic language of sounds and language. Thus the actor is able to cast off his everyday mask to reveal true his self. (Brockett, 1992: 263-266) The use of narration, posters placards and speaking directly to the audience (alienation techniques) are a Brechtian technique. Brecht was a practitioner for Epic theatre; he believed that theatre should educate its audience. To achieve this, the audience should not get caught up the illusion of the drama, at all times they must be made aware that this is a

make believe situation and they are in theatre. To achieve this he used alienation techniques to alienate the audience from the action on stage, so they could critically judge the action. By detaching them from the action he believed they would be thinking and examining the implication of the play. (Brockett, 1992: 219-225) A question that many have asked is, what has happened to theatre after the first democratic election? Theatre has not become less significant because apartheid was destroyed and democracy finally attained. Playwrights now no longer feel compelled to write about politics in terms of race; however an array of social issues was opened to them. Zakes Mda also states that theatre has become a form of reconciliation. However Mda's definition of reconciliation

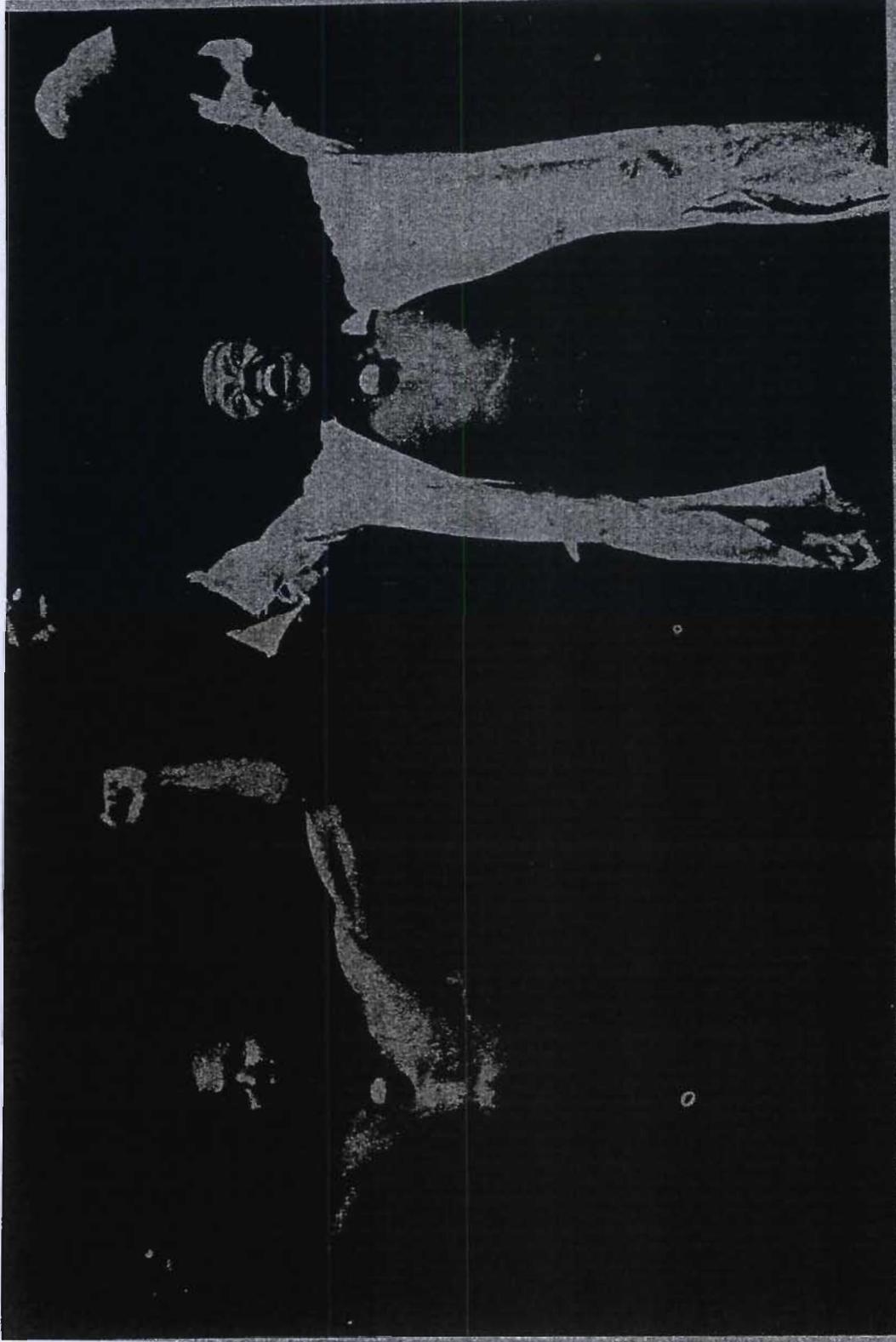
demands a strict perspective within Alternative theatre in which the reality of the polarized society is defined to present human beings from all racial and cultural groups, communicating, sharing and understanding one another's problems. (Blumberg and Walder, 1999:86)

South African drama was

set adrift[...] Writers[...] are now moving in new direction, finding new material, former rigid categorizations of generic marking may be avoided...For example, music-drama has become a category offered at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. Physical theatre, which combines movement/dance with some with some verbal component, transcends the specificities of eleven official languages, while it allows for a cross-fertilization of cultural practices. (Blumberg and Walder, 1999:11)

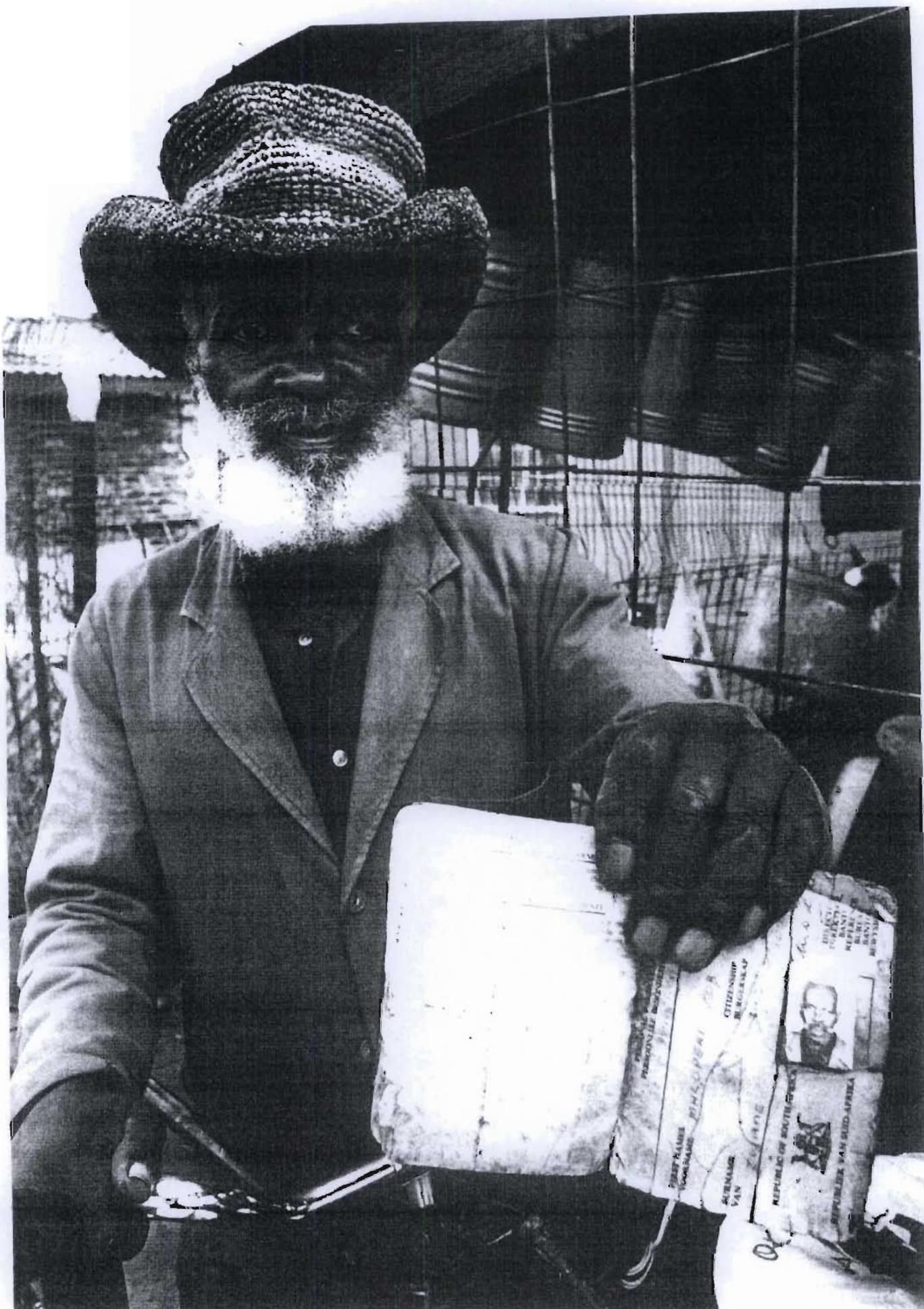
Post apartheid theatre,

is having to engage with its existing diversity-an engagement among residual, dominant and emergent forms of theatre expression. There is a strong call from some quarters to define a South African performance aesthetic; a need for closure, concurrence and affirmation. (Blumberg and Walder, 1999:50)



'WOZA ALBERT!'

(Mtwa, P, Ngema, M, and Simon, B, 1983: 15)



An old black man from Taskane township near Johannesburg shows his pass book. These were used to regulate the movement of black people before their abolition in 1986. (Preston, 1995: 188)

## CHAPTER THREE

### WOZA ALBERT

From 1948 the non-whites of South Africa were confronted with the merciless system of apartheid. The period was characterised by tortures, marches, killing of political activists like Steve Biko and wars in the African townships like Sharpeville and Soweto. All of this was fuelled and ignited by the apartheid regime and the desire of non-whites in South Africa to be free and have a voice in the administration of their country. The writers of South Africa could not ignore this disruption, be they African, Indian, Coloured or white. “ As The National Party government entrenched itself and its repressive system, theatre was increasingly used as a means of criticising the monolithic apartheid state.” (Marketing Council of South Africa, 2004:1). Two plays that directly address the laws of the country are *Woza Albert* and *Statements after an Arrest under the Immorality Act*

The writers of *Woza Albert* were Barney Simon, Percy Mtwa, and Mbongeni Ngema. Simon was born in 1933 in Johannesburg but spent many years overseas under the apprenticeship of Joan Littlewood where according to Anne Fuchs he was exposed to ‘British People’s Theatre’ that addressed the issue of theatre in society. (Fuchs, 1990: 13) Ngema and Mtwa decided to make contact with Simon as they began to tire of the idea that theatre was merely for entertainment, and they wanted theatre to play a role in shaping society. Working with Simon they to come learn of the theatre practitioner, Jerzy Grotowski and the techniques he employed in Poor theatre. They were intrigued by the idea that all that was needed on stage was the actor and audience. The use of elaborate

costume, stage décor, lighting, sound, and make-up were irrelevant. According to Lisa Wolford in Hodge's *Grotowski* referred to the actor as a 'holy actor', who went under the act of self-penetration in order to remove all masks that would prevent true acting. (Hodge, 2000: 107-200) Having understood this, they realised that *Woza Ablert* could be performed with only two actors, a tea- chest and coat rail with few items, while the message had to come from the actors. Mtwana and Ngema

had achieved a new form of drama without having to reject either popular traditions or a popular audience, their 'vision' was that of the new urban majority of South Africa and as such might well be termed 'Popular theatre'.(Fuchs, 1990: 86)

Protest theatre , as a response to apartheid, attempted:

to say everything and if a unifying theme can be found it is that of apartheid. An ogre of a theme, forever present, expansive and melodramatic as the plays themselves. At times the plays gesture, thematically, in all directions in spectacular fashion with little analysis and contextualisation. It is as if the practitioners are confident that their audiences, and history, know and feel the story that is being retold and that they will make the necessary contextualisation. Their task is merely to reveal what is being repressed, to say what is being whispered and to demonstrate what will or must happen. (Gunner, 2001:51)

This description fits *Woza Albert*, and most workshopped plays. However all South African plays, would not fall under the same banner, as the analysis of Athol Fugard's play *Statements After An Arrest under The Immorality Act* would reveal a highly contextualised play and intensive character development. In addition to the unifying theme of apartheid, the general idea was to depict man opposed to society. In this context society meant the white government and the white people. This was a dangerous and unfair assumption to make, as not all white people were in favour of apartheid. The sub themes in the plays were religion, politics, pride, dignity, the urban context and human relationships.

The land and landscape in *Woza Albert* was portrayed as hostile, deceptive, dangerous and lacking emotions. It was personified as a harsh and cold mother, being stern for the own good of the child (for the child to be kept in line). The name of the mother was apartheid. The writers of *Woza Albert* made the South African people aware of the undiluted truth of the oppressive system that required the African people to carry a Passbook, which afforded them an opportunity to find work in urban areas. The Land Act of 1913 accorded most of the land to white ownership and placed the African in so called reserves. This largely prevented the African people from owning their own farms, which was part of their livelihood and source of wealth. This displaced the African people's way of life and was crippling their survival as their survival and way of life was linked to the land. This was one of the crucial forms of displacement in terms of land and place. Thus they had to find a way to feed their families, and this meant being employed by the

white man. The Pass system was used to control the influx of Africans in the urban areas but also to keep them in line. This had a ripple effect on the family structure, morals of men and women, Christianity, human rights, injustices and education, which are addressed in the play.

Althusser's concept of interpellation, which explains the relationship between the state, the classes and ideology, sums up the purpose of *Woza Albert*. According to Althusser,

in class divided societies characterised by exploitation, individuals are socialized into, subjected to, given identities which serve the interests of the dominant social groups in that society. In class societies the Ideological State Apparatuses function to produce individual subjects with the appropriate forms of consciousness, who will be reconciled to their position in that society, who will therefore agree or consent to, the perpetuation of that particular system of domination. (Wade, 2002: 9)

In South Africa instead of class the major factor is race. Protest theatre was educating, empowering and instilling awareness amongst all South Africans by disrupting the ideological strategies of the state.

*Woza Albert* begins with the issue of the Passbook, which is also addressed in scenes 16 and 18. This law cannot be examined in isolation as it has an effect on the entire life of Africans. It was a control mechanism used by the Afrikaner government, which firstly

reduced the African people to grovelling and ridiculing themselves, just so they would not be sent back to their rural areas.

Mbongeni (effusively): Oooh, my pass my Constable (move to Percy holding out his pass) Here's my pass my lieutenant...

Percy: You work, here? If you worked here your passbook would be written Market Theatre, Johannesburg' But look it is written 'Kentucky Southern Fried'... This is vagrancy, you're unemployed...

Percy: Hey, you lie, you Fuckin entertainer

Mbongeni: Ag nee my Brigadier, I am self employed (Simon, Mtwā And Ngema, 1983:3)

In this scene Mbongeni is mocked because he is not in the place he supposed to be. In the work place you had to be "still their dogs" (Simon, Mtwā And Ngema, 1983: 30) or you could be dismissed with out even having a say in the matter. In addition to being jeered at, the vulgarity of the language exposes the lack of respect that the white people had for African people.

Once again in scene 16 grown men are treated like children and belittled as they wait for their 'special' outside the pass the office. The pass is portrayed to be something good like sweets or gifts, yet it is a passbook that they have to grovel for. This is actually

perpetuates their humiliation as it is a licence for more grovelling and creates resentment among themselves.

Percy: Morena! Morena-a-a! where are you ? Come to Albert street! Come to the Pass office! We need you here Morena Ja Morena , this is the most terrible street in the whole of Johannesburg! Ja Morena, this is a street where black men must come and stand and wait and wait and wait just to get a permit to work in Johannesburg!... and wait again for their bosses to come in their cars to give you work (but back to Mbongeni). But I'm lucky! I have a six month special!...

Percy: Aaah, jealous, You jealous.

Mbongeni: Have you got a job? Have you got school fees for your children...we've all got specials but we're still their dogs. (Simon, Mtwana And Ngema, 1983: 30)

After receiving their specials they have to compete against each for the job. This was a divide and rule tactic used by the white bosses so that the black people would have not loyalty to one another but their white bosses. The statements that they make during their so-called outbidding of each other are incongruous and bordering on being ridiculous but also sad.

Percy: I make nice tea for madam, my boss. bush tea, China tea, English tea! Please, Baba... (Simon, Mtwa And Ngema, 1983: 30).

It is difficult to imagine China tea being served in Soweto or an African person knowing about China tea. This heightens their plight and desperation to get a job and this rightfully explains that there is nothing special about the six or three month specials. It is ironic or even comic that the pass office would be situated in a street called Albert since the name Albert is be associated with Albert Lutuli an A.N.C. leader

Scene 18 once again vividly depicted the manner in which the white man wielded his power when an African man queried anything; it also demonstrated the lack of respect shown by the white man towards the African man. This can be deduced by the use of vulgarity and the manner in which the white man manipulates the Pass Book System. The white man reprimanded, reduced salaries used bribery and even created spies in the work place in order to keep African workers in check.

Mbongeni: There is jobs!!! Ten thousand bricks. This morning there are many people at the gates looking for work. And you chased them away.

Percy: Zuluboy, you're getting cheeky, huh

Mbongeni: I'm getting cheeky. Its true

Percy: I'm cutting down your salary...

Percy: too many black Kaffir babies all over the country. (sharing this with the audience) their babies cry waa...

Percy: Bring your passbook.

Mbongeni: Why?

Percy: You're fired. bring your passbook. I'm signing you off...(Simon, Mtwa And Ngema, 1983: 46).

Most prevalent in this scene is the enforcement and abuse of the passbook system and the theme of injustice are portrayed powerfully. The colour of one's skin allowed the white man to treat grown men like children. Fanon describes this aptly when states that, "colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state, and will only yield when confronted with greater violence."(Fanon, 2001: 48). In the above analysis is revealed one of the monstrosities and this could not have being committed by rational people or by a fair system. This system aimed to attack the African people physically and psychologically.

The passbook system in addition disrupted the entire African way of life as it prevented families from being together, thus encouraging other vices like infidelity. African men and women could not be with their spouses or children, sometimes for an entire year. The white bosses expected their workers to stay without their spouses and families in order to have more hours of work production without any interference. Children had to be left with grandparents on farms and their parents yearning for companionship of the opposite sex had to seek the company of others. This is depicted in scene 10; "tell her tooka, tooka her nose (tickles the boys nose), she must visit me at the men's hostel..." ...(Simon,

Mtwa And Ngema, 1983: 19). However it was not always about companionship but the need to supplement their very diminutive salaries that drove woman had to have these boyfriends. The African values they were brought up to adhere to were being compromised, consequently this eroded the marital and family structure.

*Woza Albert* goes on to explore the violation of human rights This is addressed firstly in the scene with Aunty Dudu, which shows that once an African person was of no use, predominantly the old and frail in the African community, they were discarded without any financial aid, and even had to rummage in dirt bins. Secondly African children had to work because of the lack of money in their house- holds (scene 10) and to pay for their schooling. Therefore they could not have the privilege of an education.

The one theme I do find problematic in the play is the portrayal of their loyalty and strong belief in Christianity; the entire play is based on the second coming of Christ. The play does however challenge ostensibly Christian white South Africa by demonstrating its inability to adhere to Christian values embodied in Christ.

Apart from exploring the human suffering that confronts Africans *Woza Albert* also considers the resistance options open to Africans. *Woza Albert* covertly translates this motif into a good and evil. Morena and his followers against the evil of apartheid. Equally important in the play's discourse is the consideration of the kind of Christianity that is relevant in South Africa.(Gunner, 2001: 50)

According to Fanon when one speaks the language of the colonialist it means, “above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of that culture”(Poulos, 2004: 1). This would also apply to religion; it will have the same implication, it is a tie to colonialism as colonial missionaries introduced it. However the value of *Woza Albert* as a protest play against apartheid cannot be underscored as it addresses all the issues that create anxiety and affect the African people in South Africa.

The writing style of the writers is equally effective, as the satirical play is entertaining and at the same time it is able to address the issues of apartheid and effects on the African society. It employs the use of contrasts for example; the idea of the jumbo jet being faster than the donkey and the killing in a church when a church is supposed to protect and nurture life. The utilizing of theatrical staging techniques of protest theatre that audiences can identify with come across clearly.

The use of contrasts is potent as it reinforces the inhuman treatment by the Afrikaner government. In scene 17 the writers speak of Regina Mundi church being tear gassed during a church service. The government did not consider the pandemonium it would cause, as the church was filled with hundreds of unarmed women, children and old people. It also revealed they had no respect for a religion they instilled in the African community as they so easily desecrated a Christian place of worship. Colonialists portrayed themselves to be superior to the African people, who needed to be saved by the white man This idea is reinforced by Brantlinger, “the African was a creature to be pitied, to be saved from slavery, and also from his own darkness...-that he could be

Christianized and perhaps civilized”(Brantlinger, 1985: 166). However with such a merciless attacks on innocent people one questions who needs to be saved and who is actually uncivilized?

The staging techniques employed is simple and effective; they are hard hitting and aimed at visual impact that evoked the emotions of the audience. The venue does not have to be a theatre but any open space or informal stage. The actor’s use of chants, slogans and songs is what an audience can identify with. The swearing while it induces laughter, is an uncomfortable laughter, as it makes the audience think of what their response would be if they were the victim This is the use of black comedy as the vulgarity brings out the ridiculousness of the situation and instils sympathy.

Finally the landscape is exemplified as alien, discomforting, and controlled, as the white man uses methods to keep the African community away from the city. The urban landscape is equally seen as dangerous and hostile since it is characterised by marches and tear -gassing of innocent people inside churches. They were also not allowed to have warm family relations in the city. Likewise they could not warm up to a city that was only driven by economics with no value placed on human feelings It was source of pain and humiliation. In South Africa the “ black townships,” sprawling areas of insubstantial ‘match box’ houses created as sources of labour for the white cities to which they were linked, were devoid of all amenities apart from the odd stadium. Soweto, for instance, with a population of more than a million in the 1970’s, had one nightclub, one hotel, one

cinema and two outdoor arenas.”(Marketing Council of South Africa, 2004: 1) Their way of life was displaced, firstly with the enforcement of the Land Act of 1913 that resulted in them no longer being allowed to roam the land of their ancestors freely. The second form of displacement was with the passbook system, which was a mechanism that prevented them from justly obtaining employment and bringing their families to the cities.

As Gunner describes it the play ends with a victory dance, which implies that the prophecy of Christ coming and saving them is fulfilled. “*Woza Albert's* typification of Morena’s resurrection and interventions, which results in liberation, suggests either a complete pre disposition towards divine intervention or political activism that is organised around Christianity. This ambivalence is reflected in the ending of the play which is resurrection of Morena’s victory of Africans with little account of development or the link between these two phases” (Gunner, 2001: 51) The victory is also indistinguishable as it assumes or presents this unification that is not present, as if the writers automatically know it will happen. This could be wishful thinking on their part, as unity is not so easy to achieve, as plays like *We Shall Sing For the Fatherland* and *Valley Song* would reveal.



*Stöckenström and Solomons in Struggle after an Arrest under the Immorality Act, Johannesburg, 1979.*

(Gray,(ed) 1982: 199)

## CHAPTER FOUR

### STATEMENTS AFTER ARRESTS UNDER THE IMMORALITY ACT

During the apartheid system the spotlight was on the anguish of the black communities which echoed a false assumption to South African society and the rest of the world that the white community was unscathed by the tyrannical rule of the Afrikaner government. While the apartheid system accorded privileges to the White-people, it at the same time controlled their way of life as well. Athol Fugard's plays drew attention as to how all South Africans irrespective of colour were affected by the racially controlled system

Athol Fugard was born on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June 1932 in Middleburg. His family later moved to Port Elizabeth, where his mother ran a boarding house. He studied at the University of Cape Town. After his marriage he was employed as a

clerk in the Fordsburg Native Commissioner's Court, where pass law violations were tried. Very likely that his time on the SS Graigour, where he had met men of many races and nationalities, played a role in making him poignantly aware of South Africa's racialism and its troubling effect on the lives of South Africans of all races. (Wertheim, 2000: 3)

Fugard was the manager of African Workshop Company in 1958. For Fugard the theater

is a place to enact both realities and dreams, and it is thus a microcosm and possibility model for the world beyond the playhouse doors. Being

part of this theatre company allowed him to begin his work. With above aim in mind they performed Fugard's first full-length play *No good Friday*. He also promoted the idea that if the entire world's a stage, then the stage and the acting and the performance it witnesses can also be played out in the world. (Wertheim, 2000: 3)

His work experience in Belgium and Holland proved to be equally vital since "Cultural links between Low Countries and South Africa were influential at the time and with the New Africa Group Fugard established himself as an actor and director." (Gray, 1982: 18) The New Africa group being an anti-apartheid theatre group provided Fugard with invaluable experience. However it also estranged him from the state, which removed chances of him being re-employed by the state theatre. According to Gray the period from 1969 to 1971 is referred to as his period of social realism. "Themes of pain of experience, lost innocence and of the inhibiting grip of the past on the present moment" (Gray, 1982: 19) were vividly explored in his plays. The Chamber plays (written during 1961 to 1970) drew attention to the "tenacious examination of the minimalising effect of their time on the human potential, and the fragmentation of the individual psyche under the pressure of South African society." (Gray, 1982: 19) This line of thought while having arose in the Chamber plays has found its thread in all of Fugard's plays. Fugard's plays are context specific to South Africa, and focused on the harsh effects of apartheid on all races. His plays can be divided into the Port Elizabeth plays

(also known as the Chamber plays), Acting Against Apartheid plays, and Post Apartheid plays.

Fugard's themes in the plays certainly bear evidence of being influenced by existentialist philosophers and theatre practitioners of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. An analysis of his plays reveal that he that he was profoundly influenced by the philosophy that 'man has to pass through various states of suffering to reach a sense of freedom.'(Roux, 1998: 42) Images of the world being empty, hopeless and futile and the focus being on the real life situation display the influence of Samuel Beckett (absurdism) and Ibsen and Chekhov (realism). Fugard uses "climatic expansion of the characters' feeling of identity and, a reaching for understanding which makes for a resolute denouement."(Gray, 1982: 19)

The characters in his plays are generally drawn from the destitute that are fighting to retain their dignity and are obsessed with finding love and to be loved which is important in a hate ridden country such as South Africa. We are exposed to the anguish, the fear and despair that these characters feel. The above emotions stem from an oppressive, cold, social and political system of apartheid. This system has trapped South Africans to a point were they could not breathe. This is portrayed vividly in the play *Statement After Arrest under the Immorality Act* (1974).

The play is set in small town in the Karroo called Noupoort. Its focal points are around three South African laws which are summed up by Samantha Naidoo quite aptly The first act was the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, Act No. 55 of 1949. This

prohibited mixed marriages between white people and other races. The government was not too particular if other races groups inter married, as long they did not marry whites. The second act was the Immorality Amendment Act, Act No 21 of 1950, amended in 1957(Act23). Once again this act drew attention to the white community and prohibited adultery and, related immoral acts between white and black. The perception created was that the white race was to be kept pure and should not contaminated by other races. The third act was the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act No.49 of 1953. The quality of public amenities, public buildings and public transport for the white community was of better quality and separated from other races with the aim of eliminating contact between whites and other races. 'Europeans Only and Non European Only' signs were put up. (Naidoo, 2001: 24) These acts drew attention to the fact that the white community in the midst of all their privileges was the most affected by these acts as they were denied to love freely.

In the play *Statement After Arrest under the Immorality Act* these acts are contravened. There are two characters Frieda Joubert and Errol Philander. Frieda is an unmarried White woman and Errol a married Coloured principal. They befriend each other because Frieda makes special arrangements for him to use the library, which non-whites are prohibited from using. A friendship grows which develops into a sexual relation. Set in the heart of the apartheid era they were treading on dangerous ground, as they were going against the law. This is heightened by the element of fear that prevails through out the play.

(Match flares in the darkness, she scrambles away)

Woman: No!

Man: Please

Woman: No!!

(The match dies. Darkness) (Fugard, 1974: 82)

Man (terrified. Covering his genitals with his trousers he talks desperately to the torch shining on him) Look...look-before you make-up your mind let me you something ...I'm ...I'm Principal.... I ... I won't do it again... I 'm frightened. Ja, I 'm frightened. (Fugard, 1974: 96)

Fugard's use of language, the punctuation and use of vocabulary intensifies their fear and the level emotional trauma.

The play is further complicated as Errol Philander is a married man and South Africa being a Christian society would not have condoned a relationship of this nature. Therefore their relationship is immoral on two levels: it is an extra marital affair and he was tainting a white woman. Robert Cushman stated what offended was

not by the nature of the South African Immorality Act but by the Immorality of the characters, commenting, Mr. Fugard's state-crossed lovers are hardly Romeo and Juliet, the man is an adulterer and the predominant feeling is fear, as much of his family responsibilities as of

the law. So their love-scene is given over as much to recrimination as to affection. (Wertheim, 2000: 70)

However this play is of vital importance as the laws against mixed marriages resulted in South Africans fleeing the country. If they did return they were not recognized as married husband and wife and had to live separately. Therefore notwithstanding the issue of adultery that does to some extent overshadow the potent message of the play, that being in apartheid South Africa one was not free to love and that the government controlled the most important human emotion, should not be forgotten.

The play explores and exposes the effects of the apartheid system through the following themes: love and its denial, the lovers need to be loved, the manner in which the apartheid system strips the characters of their dignity, the dark versus light, and the emptiness and hopelessness the characters feel.

As stated earlier one of Fugard's themes is the obsession with love in a society filled with hate and anger. In South Africa with love being governed by laws, this emotion was fuelled with duty and guilt, as the state and religion told people who to love and how to love. This is depicted effectively by Fugard with the symbolism of light and dark as the play opens with Errol and Frieda in darkness, the curtains are drawn, the light is off and they are not allowed to walk outside as a normal couple would have, as they are afraid of getting caught. Their relationship only exists in the darkness.

(Match flares in the darkness, she scrambles away)...

Woman: You don't understand

Man: Understand what? There is seeing and being seen. Which one are you frightened of? Me or You? (Fugard, 1974: 82)

They are also denied the right of seeing each other clearly, as they have to feel their way to each other and knowing each other by touch as opposed to sight. In the opening scene Frieda will not allow Errol to even strike a match stick, as it will allow the light into the room. The light is a harsh indicator of the reality of their situation as illustrated when then police enter.

(A blackout during which the policeman exist. A sequence of camera flashes in the darkness exposes the man and woman tearing apart from their embrace; the man then scrambling for his trousers, find them, and trying to put them on; naked crawling, around on the floor, looking for the man. As she finds him, and tries to hide behind his back, the flashes stop and the torches are shone on them. The woman scrambles away, finds the blanket, and covers herself. The torches are relentless.) (Fugard, 1974: 96)

The issue of light and dark in addition creates an inversion of meaning. Normally the dark is seen as sinister and evil but here it is a form of shield for the lovers and the light is harsh and lacks nurturing, especially the scene when the policemen mercilessly flash the light on, not even allowing them the dignity of dressing. The lovers themselves however bring different meaning to the darkness and light. For Frieda darkness allows her to escape the color of her skin, the light is too harsh, yet Errol is tired of hiding he wants to be seen, the darkness is frustrating him.

Woman. Don't!

Man. Why? What about me? I want to be seen. I want you to see me.

(Moves suddenly into a faint patch of light from the drawn curtained window.) The brightest spot in our world. Here I am. Me. Can you see?

(Fugard, 1974: 83)

The light is destructive even though Errol is frustrated by the lack of it. If they are caught they will be jailed. The light at no point is associated with warmth and comfort. This comes across clearly when they are caught. The light is harsh, penetrating and clinical as it is vigorously shone on them.

This introduces the next theme: the government strips the dignity of people, accords no value to love as they desecrate it and affords no respect to their citizens, as they make the lovers scurry like animals for cover. They are dehumanized and analyzed like data.

Policeman. Frieda Joubert. Ten, Conradie Street. European.

Errol Philander. Bontrug Location. Coloured.

Charge: Immorality Act

Joubert runs the library in the town...(Fugard, 1974: 94)

Werthiem's analysis equally supports this as he states the report culminates

in six blinding, terrifying, quick- succession flashbulb photos taken of the couple. Then suddenly and momentarily illuminated darkness presents Frieda and Errol in grotesque, dehumanized nakedness like frightened animals in the glare of headlights. (Werthiem, 2000: 77)

The policeman treated the scene as a crime scene and treated them as perpetrators, as this was a crime of love under the apartheid system. Instead of love, feelings of fear, hate, animosity, and superiority was instilled.

And I'm terribly frightened they will find out. That the dogs will tell them. Because they can see...

What will they do if they find out about us?...

They lock the door

They ask the questions

They will try you ...

Guilty. (Fugard, 1974: 106-107)

The South African context seems to instill absurd themes and images of society being empty and hopeless which are symbolic of how the characters feel. Both the characters are drawn from destitute environments. Frieda Joubert is an intellectual stuck in a small town with no stimulus. Errol Philander was probably the only person she could have an intellectual conversation with. Frieda is also in need of nourishment, as Noupoort is similar to one of those

isolated towns in central Mexico- it is likely...they might be a lone pair of intellectual equals who are separated by the colour bar from knowing each other as peers. Apart, their lives are as jejune as arid, dusty Noupoort, which is aptly caught in the throes of drought. (Werthiem, 2000: 70)

Errol Philander is searching for the meaning of life. While he may love his family, he can no longer communicate with his wife intellectually and emotionally. The drought in Bontrug is also symbolic of the relations in Bontrug, there is no love physically or emotionally as both the people and the land are dried up, as they are receiving no long-term nourishment. Everything about Bontrug is unappealing to him. He wants to explain to Frieda how apartheid has made non-whites grovel for basic rights and made them feel

like a worthless rag. He describes to her how he sees the Coloured people as rags, they are poor, they smell and he states with a rag you use it and throw it away. It is imperative to realize he is not just referring to their outside appearance.

Man: I don't mean their clothes. The people inside looked like rags ...I wanted to bring them to the library. I wanted you to see me with them...Would have given them tea in your cups? How long before you wanted to go? You understand now. The reason I don't want your water it's just the whole of Bontrug is thirsty. (Fugard, 1974: 91)

The place Bontrug is symbolic of Errol as he is in need of sustenance and of love. Their neighboring town Nourpoort is capable of giving it to them. However Errol is struggling to accept both Frieda's love and water. Frieda confuses this with pride.

Woman: And I said ...I said I will send you some of mine and you...

Man: Two buckets, lady. Got to be ready with my at twelve. Cause they sending to us...me...and my buckets...two for each...

(The woman now starts to lose control. The man's 'performance' has now degenerated into a grotesque parody of the servile, cringing 'Coloured')...

Man: Just a little ... We're thirsty...please, Miesies. (Fugard, 1974: 99)

Errol speaks for the entire community of Bontrug: they feel ashamed of who they are, as their pride and dignity is stripped away. He teaches his children to be proud yet he himself has no pride.

Man: I 'm Proud! Proud! I teach my children how to spell that word I say to them ; Proud AS A Peacock! Me? Holding my breath and sweating, really sweating. man, because suddenly we heard something and I thought. They've found us...I hid under that little bridge over the spruit...people relieve themselves there!...I was on my hands and knees among shit...(Fugard, 1974: 90)

In addition he is consumed with guilt and fear, as he has fallen in love with someone else and he is now an adulterer. As the land is arid and craving for nourishment so are the characters. The characters are obsessed with finding love so they can be nourished and hope to survive with some thread of dignity. At the end Errol states the apartheid system teaches its citizens all the things they cannot have while flaunting it in their faces. The one thing they will throw in your face and the same time ensuring that you know very well you cannot have it, is love.

Man: I must understand it

I can see, I can taste, I can feel, I can hear, I can't love (Fugard, 1974:105)

According to Werthiem Fugard may not have rendered all the aspects of apartheid in his plays, however he has used his art to bring South Africa to world attention. (Wertheim, 2000: 3) With a context like South Africa that was fueled with racism, no one irrespective of race could escape unscathed; this is vividly depicted in his plays. At the height of apartheid he risked writing a play that directly attacked the laws of apartheid. He exposes his readers to the human condition of South Africa and the plight of South Africans, which is equally heightened by the pressures of apartheid but nevertheless common to mankind in all societies: "his use of race is symbolic of isolation and alienation of all men."(Vandenbroucke, 1985: 144) The landscape is equally symbolic of this effects of apartheid,

an evil system isn't a natural disaster. There nothing you can do to stop a drought, but bad laws and social injustices are man-made, and can be unmade by men. It's as simple as that. That's not political theory. It's a plain fact. We can make this a better world to live in. (Gray, 1982:7)

While this a message for society as a whole Fugard addresses the South African people. If the harsh mother of apartheid is removed, South Africa will create a society that is capable of loving rather than one that is hopeless and consumed with hate.

## CHAPTER FIVE WE SHALL SING FOR THE FATHERLAND

The year 1994 was overwhelmed with aspirations of freedom, joy, and triumph, which were ignited by the build up to South's Africa's first democratic elections. This year was also witness to South's Africa's first African President, Nelson Mandela, being sworn in. The phrases rainbow nation, housing and money for all, removal of poverty were on the lips of all South Africans. However once the dust settled, reality jolted many South Africans as their feet began to touch the ground. Disillusionment replaced optimism as their dreams of an idyllic life did not materialise. The income gap between poor and better-off black South Africans increased as the government pursued policies designed to improve the economic power of the middle and upper classes. The masses soon realise that having a democratic election does not eliminate biased, racial and class attitudes. Individuals in a country whether African, Coloured, white or Indian were not so eager to relinquish their privileges acquired during the apartheid rule. This was a common scenario in all African countries after their independence.

Janabari: That is what I have been saying all along, Serge. And you thought I was being rebellious. All long Serge. I have been trying to show you that we are not getting our share of whatever there is to be. That is what the learned ones call capitalism, Serge. It has no place for us... only for the likes of Mr. Mafutha and the other fat ones in the Chamber of Commerce and the Stock Exchange. Serge, I have been trying to tell you

our wars were not merely to replace a white face with a black. (Mda (ed), 1995: 22)

This statement is made in by Zakes Mda in his play, *We Shall Sing For Fatherland* (1979), which directly attacks the African bourgeoisie for not relinquishing their privileges attained during the colonial rule and breaking the ties of colonial control. The African bourgeoisie instead continued to exploit the masses for their benefit and became puppets to the ex-colonial powers. Thus the African people were no better off than before.

Zakes Mda Zanenmvula Kizito Gatyeni Mda) a prominent South African playwright was born in the Eastern Cape in 1948.

The son of A.P. Mda a lawyer and an influential ANC member and later a PAC activist, he spent his early years in Soweto. During 1963, his father was detained in the Nationalist Government clampdown on black political groups. After his release his family went into exile in Lesotho. Here Zakes completed his schooling. (Holloway, 1995: 2)

Zakes plays are deeply concerned with social and political issues in African and Southern society. Mda's play, *We shall Sing For The Fatherland* was written in 1979, at this point in time South Africa was still under the yolk of apartheid, therefore one should not blindly mistake it to represent South Africa only. This play is a bitter comedy "about veterans returning to a civilian society that either ignores them or treats them as garbage. The victors become as degraded as the vanquished while their military discipline is a

façade for petty crimes and self deception.”(Holloway, 1995:15) Mda having observed what happened to other African states that attained their independence is in part using his play as an eye opener and warning of what could very well happen in South Africa. During 1979 South Africa’s political struggle was at its pinnacle. Black South Africans were buying into the dream of one nation that would flourish under democracy where South Africans will be free from the chains of apartheid. Possibly Mda believed that by exposing the mistakes that previous newly African governments made, South Africa would not replicate these mistakes.

Fanon an African psychiatrist studied the effects of colonialism on African nations. An area that sparked an immense interest was the African ruling/middle class, as they were a product of the colonialist. Fanon often referred to them as the *Petite bourgeoisie* or the National ruling class, as they came to play a major role in the postcolonial era of the newly independent African countries. Instead of truly democratic societies emerging, a false conception of National consciousness and ideology developed. The *Petite bourgeoisie* (African ruling class) created by the colonialist was a safety net and draw card in the African countries as the African ruling class slavishly followed and believed the colonialist. The colonial powers created the African ruling class to ensure they would not have revolts during their control and would retain their ‘control’ after independence.

They picked out promising adolescents, they branded them with a red hot iron, with the principles of western culture, they stuffed their mouths full

with high- sounding phrases...they were sent home, white washed.

(Fanon, 2001:Preface)

This group was financially rewarded, as they attained government employment and were stepping higher each time on the ladder of success. They were not going to give all this up or cut the hand that fed them so well. Through the African ruling class the white colonialist ensured their control even after independence. This is equally echoed in the play.

Banker: As I was, Mr.Mafutha, I am going to back you all the way for the chairmanship of the Stock Exchange.

Businessman: That is very kind of you, sir, I too, am going to put hard work into it to show that I am worth the office...And with your backing I am sure of success. (Mda (ed), 1995: 13)

In this extract one can observe that the African businessman still uses the words, 'sir' 'kind of you'. This reflects the he still sees the white man as superior and he becomes subservient and insecure as he thanks the banker for helping get this position. The white man is portrayed as dominant and confident, as he addresses the businessman by name and provides the assurance that he has everything under control.

Supporting Fanon's theory on the Petite Bourgeoisie, Ngugi wa Thiongo's analysis of the postcolonial era was equally vital to the understanding of this period. Ngugi referred to this era as Neo-colonialism. Neo-colonialism is the

continued economic exploitation of Africa's total resources and of Africa's labour power by international monopoly capitalism through continued creation and encouragement of subservient weak capitalistic economic structures captained or overseered by a native ruling class. In the political sphere, this class will often make defence pacts and arms agreements with former colonial masters as a guarantee of its continued claim to political power. (Killam (ed), 1984:36)

The African ruling class because of their fear, their naivety about how to rule a country and the flaunting of power and money in their faces led them to make a pact with the devil.

Banker: All big business is in foreign hands. Foreign investment, you know. Surely in the interest of huge sums these people have invested in your country one should expect some little mistrust- especially as we have so far never had an African wielding power in the Stock Exchange... and one cannot blame the white concerns. (Mda (ed), 1995: 13-14)

The implication in this statement is that the African cannot effectively manage the economic sector of their country and therefore the white people are justified in their fears,

these once again instilling insecurity in their ability and reminding them of their dependency on the former colonial powers. Thus at the end of the day they were mere puppets of the former colonial ruling class.

During their pact making, the National ruling class slowly began to forget what they had fought for and the masses were in no better position now than before independence. As Fanon states,

African unity, that vague formula, yet one which the men and women of Africa were passionately attached, and whose operative value served to bring immense pressure to bear on colonialism. African unity takes off the mask, and crumbles. (Fanon, 2001: 128)

This most aptly captured in the play.

Mda's style of writing exhibits much evidence that he was influenced by absurdism and Beckett's style of writing. According to Brockett absurdist theatre held the belief that a great sense of futility enveloped society, a pessimistic view that arose after two world wars that caused the death of six million Jewish people and irreversible damage with the dropping of atomic bomb. They argued that human existence was absurd because there was a gap between man's hope and the irrational universe into which he was born. Absurdist essentially believed that society was out of harmony, that stemmed from futile wars, and the evils of capitalism. In addition was the incongruence that some countries were starving while other countries were decadent and there was a perversion of role

models, as politicians took advantage of their power for personal gain.(Brockett, 1992: 228-232) These are the essential issues that Mda addresses in the play *We Shall Sing For The Fatherland*. The influence of Becket can be seen with his use of the two Beckettian characters that are found in Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting For Godot*. The plays are set in an open space, they use tramps as their main characters and these characters are searching for answers and waiting for their lives to turn around. In *Waiting For Godot* the characters are waiting for Godot to tell them what to do whereas in *We Shall Sing For The Fatherland* Sergeant Major and Janabari are waiting to see exactly for what they have fought. The liberation was not just to replace a white government with a black one, but real change. Both plays end with the shedding of illusions as painful as it might be. In *We Shall Sing For The Fatherland*

the colonial and postcolonial eras provide backdrops to larger indigenous issues which the writers feel need addressing...the dichotomy between old and new must be bridged as both ideally should co-exist in a symbiotic relationship. If the destruction of one continues at the insistence of the other, then the continuation of antagonism and one-upmanship will continue. (Agboluaje, 2004: 3-4)

The locale of the play is an African country. The play primarily takes place in a park except for scene three, which takes place in a graveyard. The central characters address themes of betrayal, exploitation and condemnation of political, social, and economic practices. Sergeant Major and Janabari were freedom fighters that had faith and trust in

the cause they were fighting for, that is the liberation of their country. However, all they achieved was a park bench for which they have to pay a bribe. Through out the play corruption and bribery are flaunted in their faces in form of the Banker, Ofisiri and Businessman. This proves to them that nothing has really changed, besides the colour of their government. At the end of the play they become the voice of the playwright, as questions are raised about Africa as a whole: can it be totally free and stand on its or will Africa always to a greater degree depend on the white man?

Sergeant: Janabari, that trampled fire made me realise that its high time we asserted ourselves, and fought for what is by right ours. We have been pushed around and shitted upon too much. That is why I am holding my ground in this park, I am not paying anymore rent for it. What we have given already to Ofisiri for his stain remover is enough to have bought the park – or at least the bench we are sitting on.

Janabari: That is what I have saying all long, Serge. And you thought I was rebellious. All long Serge. It has no place for us...only for the likes of Mr.Mafutha and other fat ones in chamber of commerce and for the stock exchange. Serge, I have been telling you that our wars were not merely to replace a white face with a black one, but to change a system which exploits us, to replace it with one which will give us a share in the wealth of this country. What we need is another war of freedom. Serge – a war

which will put this land back into the hands of the people. (Mda (ed), 1995: 25)

The trampling of the fire is symbolic as it was the last straw for them, it made them realise that their government does not care for their welfare. The ideas expressed follow along the lines of Fanon when he addresses the issue of the African bourgeoisie. Fanon lost faith in the African bourgeoisie and placed faith in the peasant class to ensure that a true revolution moves forward. This will in a way create an authentic National culture and consciousness. He lost faith in the African bourgeoisie as

the spirit of indulgence is dominant at the core of the bourgeoisie, and it identifies itself with western bourgeoisie...it is preoccupied with filling its pockets as rapidly as possible.(Fanon, 2001: 123)

The theme of betrayal is highlighted throughout the play since the characters Sergeant Major and Janabari who were soldiers from the wars of liberation are scoffed and scorned at. The African bourgeoisie has forgotten about them and treats them as an eyesore and nuisance.

Ofisiri: Well, I have come to ask you to take your carcasses off this park. I told you last week that we are not prepared to tolerate hoboes, especially in the city centre...

Business looks the other way and walks on with offended pomposity.

Banker smiles condescendingly at the hoboes...(Mda(ed),1995: 8-9)

They feel betrayed by their country and they would have been better off if they died fighting; then they would have been honoured. Having survived the war they live in disgrace and dishonour.

Janabari: Yes Serge. We fought for the Fatherland, but we did not die.

(Mda(ed),1995: 11)

Janabari being the younger of the two recognise that they have been betrayed. He also realised the irony that their situation is no better than before. The Serge however is in denial of the betrayal. He chooses to ignore the greed and corruption because having to acknowledge it would mean that his life's dedication to the freedom struggle would have been for nought. All they created were African fat cats (as the name Mafutha literally means fat). He would also have to acknowledge that the working class was used by the revolution that starts out morally but degenerates into corruption.

Mda's focus on the betrayal of the working class also exposes and condemns the political, economic and social practices of the newly elected African government. The

African bourgeoisie is like a cancer to the working class, firstly physically by leaving them to starve and beg. Also destroying the spirit of hope and freedom of the working class, by making them feel they fought nothing. The African bourgeoisie hides their real agenda under the banner of African consciousness and African renaissance.

Businessman: You don't think the white concern will cause trouble for me when I take up the chairmanship?

Banker: You won't give them a chance, man. If you do your job well how can they cause trouble for you? The only thing you have to do is to listen to our advice. I met with your minister about this. They too are quite clear about this. They know that without us they wouldn't be where they are now...(Mda (ed), 1995: 13)

It is evident that the African people are given jobs out of tokenism, they were just puppets to nod while the white man made all the decisions. This was even sanctioned by the government. Mda exposes their double standards and that their morals and beliefs were up for sale to the highest bidder. The African ruling class is what one commonly refers to as a coconut, black on the outside and white inside. Ngugi explains this exploitation explicitly: under colonialism

this economic and political struggle is waged under the banner of racial nationalism. It is "we" black people against "them" whites, African versus Europeans...But under neo-colonialism, political and economic

struggle assumes its true class character despite any and every attempts at ethnic mystification. Its now the African peasants and working masses together...against the native ruling class. (Killam, 1984: 39)

The landscape after a freedom war is fought and won should reflect freedom itself, in the manner of the people's movement and their access to facilities. In *We Shall Sing for The Fatherland*, the two hoboes are denied free access in the public park; they have to pay a bribe to squat in the park. They were also denied landownership prior to the war and still are denied any form of land ownership, as no provisions were made for them after the war. Their eviction from the park can be compared to the Land Act of 1913 as it is orchestrated in a similar manner. Sol Plaatjie vividly and painfully described the implementation of the Land Act.

The cruellest twist was that the Act came into effect in mid- winter. Paatjie tells several stories of piteous suffering that he personally witnessed, as he travelled to Hoopstad...a man called Kgbadi ...his baby was sick when the eviction took place. Its condition worsened with the jolting of the wagon and soon it died. The stricken parents, with no right to land, had to bury it beside the ...(Sunday Times, 2000: 3)

The white government knowing full well of the adverse conditions during winter evicted the African people off their land. The African government, being fully aware as well of the extreme weather conditions, repeats the merciless act. In both instances the African people were deprived of warmth and sustenance. The two characters froze to death as the

result of the eviction. A further twist to their fate is that even in death they are still denied access, this time to the house of God. They are given a pauper's burial with no religious ceremony. However the rich Mr. Mafuta is given a glorified ceremony since he is rich enough.

Sergeant: One of the big brass in town. The priests have decided he was wealthy enough to go to heaven...

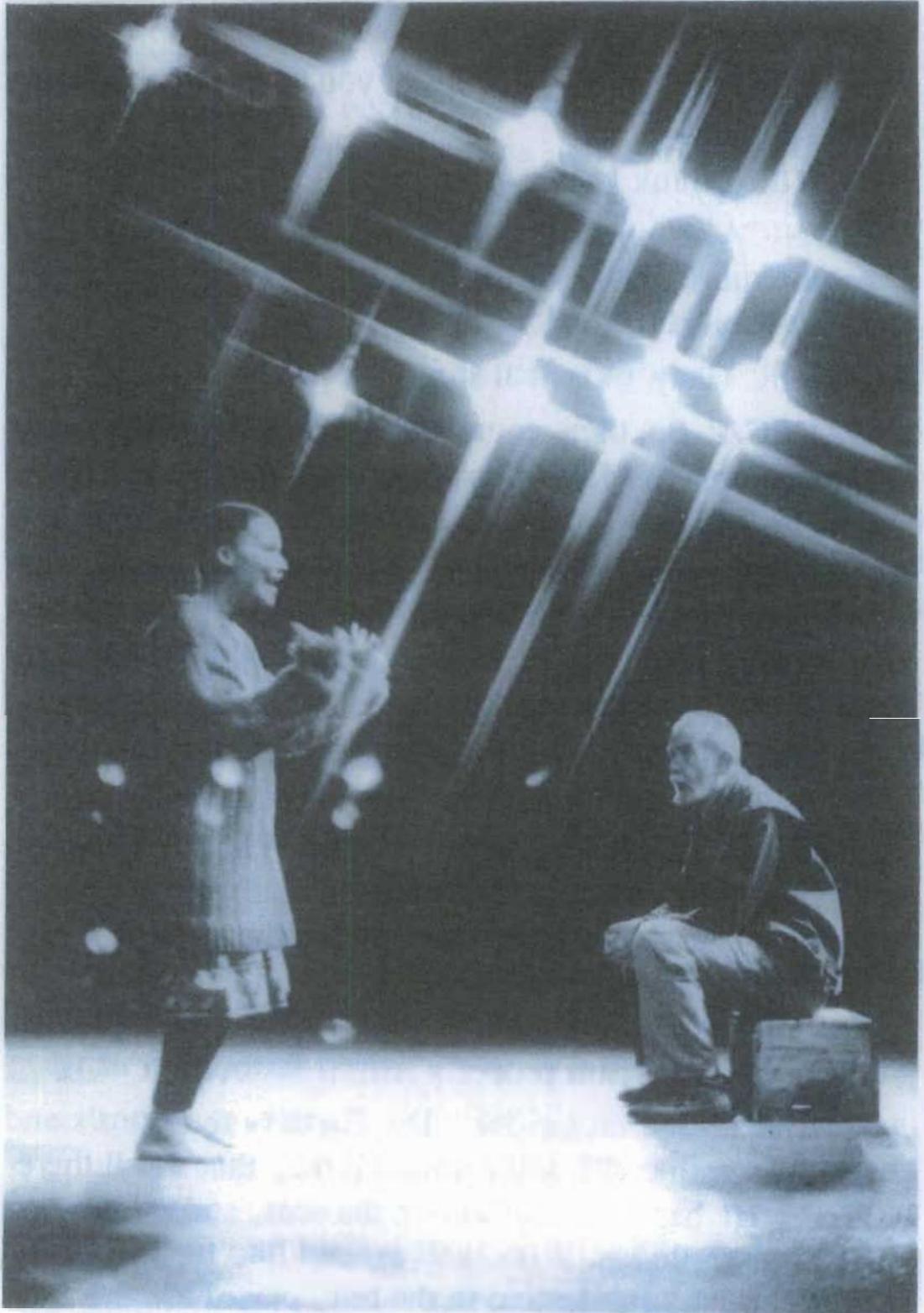
Sergeant: What about us, Janabari, where are we going?

Janabari: How the hell do I know? Let's go (Mda (ed), 1995: 25)

They were denied a place to stay and displaced in life and this even continues after death.

Zakes Mda in his *We Shall Sing For The Fatherland*, undeniably reveals that at the end of the day, in a capitalist society there is no 'for the people, by the people.' As Kwame Nkrumah wrote, black power

means the true creative of black people through a people's control of their forces of production and equitable distribution of the products of their sweat to enhance the quality of all their lives (Killam,1984: 43).



*'A dream must be big and special.'*

(Fugard, 1996: 57)



Above: Nelson Mandela, President de Klerk and Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi have time for a smile after signing the National Peace Accord on 14 September 1991 in an attempt to end township warfare. (Preston, 1995: 196)

## CHAPTER SIX VALLEY SONG

The era of democracy was initially met with both trials and tribulations as it had only toppled the system of apartheid on paper. While the Truth and Reconciliation Commission addressed the physical violation and massacres carried out under the banner of apartheid, the government did not address the psychological damage on people in general. This psychological impairment is discussed both by Frantz Fanon and Edward Said. Fanon refers to it as a 'Binary System' in which black is bad and white is good; this becomes embedded in the minds of the African people. Edward Said later studied this concept in his research on the effects of colonialism in the east. He has given a significant study of how "historically bound cultural systems, such as the Orientalist Discourse... can perpetuate themselves as psychology." (Poulos, 2004:3) According to Said, the European perceives the Oriental to be inferior in term of mind, behaviour, morals and intelligence. Thus the colonialist whether in the east or South Africa operated with similar mindsets and they ideologically conditioned the colonised into believing that the white man was superior and their saviour. This could not be erased by one democratic election.

For South Africa democracy spelt a brighter future for the younger generation; however for the older generation their present life whether good or bad was being upturned and this instilled fear and anxiety.

The process of dismantling apartheid and creating new

social-political structures have produced changes in the densely complex configuration of South African society. In the 'post-apartheid,' post-colonial era, theatre practitioners have also had to make adjustments.(Blumberg and Walder, 1994:85)

During the era of apartheid it was almost an unwritten rule that all playwrights had to write about the political freedom struggle if you wanted to be popular. Not writing about it was like professional suicide. Thus the writers themselves were not artistically free as they were bound by duty to the political struggle. In the post-apartheid society theatre had taken a new direction as the issues they began to address no longer had to be only political, and ranged from sexual identities, cultural enrichment, role of women in society and education. Artists were freeing themselves

from the expectations generated by South African theatre's strong association with euro centric Western forms providing the potential for new and creative combinations...Physical Theatre, which combines movements/ dance with some verbal component, transcends the specificities of eleven official languages, while it allows for a cross-fertilization of cultural practices (Blumberg and Walder, 1994:11).

Athol Fugard was internationally the voice of the anti-apartheid struggle that South Africans were going through. It was "his outcry against apartheid that helped to bring a world understanding to the politics and society", (Turvin, 2004:1) and his first post-

apartheid play is no different, as he once again brings to the forefront the fears and aspirations of South Africans stepping into a democratic society. His play, *Valley Song* (1995) is set in a small town, New Bethesda in the Karoo, in the heart of the Coloured community. The play focuses on a poverty stricken Coloured family, Veronica, an aspiring teenager whose ambition it is to become a singer. The second character is Buks, her grandfather (who also takes on a double role of the white man), who is facing the possibility of losing his 'akkers', a piece of land he has worked all his life on but does not have ownership of. The 'akkers' is not only a piece of land but also his home and it has all his memories of his family; losing the land would be like losing his family all over again. To add to this, he believes he might also lose Veronica and it all overwhelms him.

Buks: But I can also see she is starting to get restless. She nearly as old now as Caroline was when she ran away. And she looks so much like her Betty it really does frighten me. And there is also the white man looking at the house and the land. He is going to buy, Betty, I know it. And then what do I do? I know what you want to say...Have faith in the Lord Abraam Yonkers...and I do...it's just asking a lot of it these days. And He's not making me any younger! I feel too old now for all these worries...(Fugard, 1996: 50)

While Buks's wish is for Veronica not ever to leave the farm, Veronica is the voice of the new South Africa, who is not going to remain in prescribed roles given to her during

apartheid. She finds the 'akkers' too small and stifling. Even her grandfather cannot keep her there as her dream and desire is too strong.

Veronica: I hate those akkers. Yes. Hate them. I know that's a big sin- to hate the earth what God created – but I can't help it...I would rather go hungry than plant another seed in that ground I mean. It gives us food but it takes our lives.(Fugard, 1996: 81)

Fugard plays devil's advocate, on the one hand he celebrates democracy in the form of Veronica, then voices the anguish in a post apartheid South Africa, by addressing the dilemma that Buks finds himself in. With this play Fugard brings to the forefront important issues on land reform and restitution, rural unemployment, the control and privileges that white people still have.

The movement from apartheid to democracy was relatively a smooth transition, however it still brought with it severe problems that the democratic South Africa would have to unravel and solve. As in all his plays Fugard addresses the theme of universal human plight and feelings related to it. According to Roux, he explores people's efforts at coping in the face of despair and finding the courage and spirit to survive with some dignity. He focuses on how a particular social system has caused so much suffering and highlights the theme of fear, as the characters search for a new meaningful life. (Roux, 1998: 45)

The grandfather, Buks is trying to find a solution that will allow him to still hold on his 'akkers', since he is too old to start all over again. The fear of not being able to live on the akkers makes him swallow his pride and he goes to speak to the white man to keep him on. He also wants to ask the white man to keep Veronica as a maid at the house, as his wife Betty was. This angers Veronica, as her grandfather is deciding for her and she does not want a future on the farm.

Veronica: No Oupa!...

Veronica: What I'm trying to say Oupa is that I also got ideas other ideas about what I want to do...about my future and everything.... Oupa musn't decide...(Fugard, 1996:60)

To Veronica the land is oppressive and a trap, it sucks the life out of them, until they give up their dreams and she believes that they can escape living on the land. However for Buks the land has a contradictory effect, for him the land is everything, his memories, life, beauty and God's gift. This is his underlying reasons for being depressed, the very thought of losing the land makes him shudder. This is evident right at the beginning of the play: he is saddened because the land is going through a drought and one cannot admire her beauty.

The drought is experienced on two levels, the first the physical one. This leaves the land empty with no juices for nourishment, as Buks states in the opening lines of the play that

the “soil is still bone dry and rock hard with the frost.”(Fugard, 1996: 37) The characters are also empty and are waiting to be nourished by their dreams. For Veronica, it is to be a singer and for Buks to be able to remain on the land and see it thrive as it once did. He also needs to be reassured that he is not going to lose Veronica as he lost her mother. His worry and distress can be observed when Veronica sings the railway song: it is reminder of how her mother ran away and how his wife only returned with Veronica (her mother died giving birth to her).

The play draws attention to another important theme that is often explored by Athol Fugard, that is, the search for purpose to life and meaningful identity. Fugard focuses on the nurturing and the growth of a child. You shower a child with love, protection, and warmth. Watching the child grow instils both gratification and sadness because as much as you may want to hold on to the child forever, you have to let it go; or else you will stifle the child. Fugard use the symbolism of the pumpkin to illustrate this message.

Buks: Flat white Boer pumpkin. You know them – those big, round white beauties...this is how they start out, one of these, together with a little prayer for rain, in a hole in the ground. And a good year.(Fugard, 1996: 37)

Fugard comes

on stage to show the audience the handful of pumpkin seeds that can grow into beautiful pumpkins and 'delicious eating'. Describing the pumpkin and holding up a seed for the audience ...Even for the most elementary vegetative growth and productivity, then, the equation must bring together the earthly realities- ground and rain and the poetically transcendent prayer. This homely truth is the thread that in the deceptively simple *Valley Song* binds together a complex weave of analogous ideas encompassing the growth and the development of vegetables, adolescents, the nation...(Wertheim, 2000: 216).

For Buks the seeds of hope will bear fruit if he is allowed to stay on the land and see it flourish once again. For Veronica hope is not on the akkers but in the city where she hopes to become a singer. According to Werthiem it is also important to know that she is not rejecting her grandfather and the valley but it is not her dream. She tells Buks she will sing of the valley she knows and loves. (Wertheim, 2000: 220).

#### Fugard

brilliantly uncovers large and paradoxical truths of parenting that provide insight into his position as a white man...We work so hard so that our children will have advantages in life we did not enjoy so that their lives will be an improvement on ours (Wertheim, 2000: 222).

Author: Like your Oupa I don't want to see you go. It means the Valley is changing and that selfish part of me doesn't want it to happen....It involves letting go of things and I've discovered that that is a lot harder than I thought it was.(Fugard, 1996: 84)

Fugard hints of the new South Africa and the advantages it provides to its people, something they were previously deprived of. Therefore the pumpkin seeds are not only symbolic of the growing child but also the flourishing of a new democratic South Africa. This would create envy and happiness in the people who fought for the country's freedom. They would not have enough time to enjoy the fruits of democracy, as the youth would have. At the same the youth need to be cautious and not overconfident that all their dreams will automatically come true. They need to be realistic when setting their goals. This advice is given when Author speaks to Veronica;

Author: Oh yes they can believe me I know what I'm talking about. It's a very special hurt- the big dream that didn't come true. It's like your friend Alfred and that old second hand bicycle he wants to buy. If he doesn't get it won't be so bad...about a shiny brand new one and believes-with all his might-that he is going to get and doesn't because the only work he can find is occasional odd jobs that don't even pay enough for him to feed his family...That's a recipe for bitterness. (Fugard, 1996: 67)

Fugard once plays devil's advocate, as he encourages and discourages her. Author's (the white character and voice of Fugard) "intent is not to discourage her but to test her mettle, strengthen her resolve and encourage her not to lose sight of those goals and dreams."(Wertheim, 2000: 218) Democracy only provides the opportunity to reach one's goal: that everything will not come true overnight and democracy does not guarantee a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow.

Author uses the same technique with Buks from fading away so as to prevent because Veronica has left. He entices Buks to give the land one more try, knowing that Buks cannot resist the temptation of seeing the land flourish one more time.

Author: Ja the ground is soft and wet and waiting. And look what I've for you! ( he produces a handful of shinny flat, white pumpkin seeds)  
Pumpkin seeds! Imagine it Buks. An akker full of shinny flat, white, Boer pumpkin as big a donkey-cart wheels (The devil laughs and starts to leave)  
Come...Come...that's it....Come (Fugard,1996: 86)

The subject of landscape, land, and land rights is critically explored. The landscape is portrayed from conflicting points of views. For Buks land holds eternal beauty and the drought is destroying it. A very colonial perspective is attached to the land. The Afrikaner symbolism of land, the idea of the 'Fatherland' is put forth by Buks.

Buks: God made them Ja! All these mountains that stand around and guard the village. He put them down here. That's how big He is He is Everything...everything you can see with your eyes, or touch with your hand...He made it. (Fugard, 1996: 76-77)

Buks entire life revolves around the land; however this sentiment cannot be shared with Veronica as she sees it as entrapment. The period of apartheid specified role functions for the different race groups. The nonwhites were indoctrinated to serve the white people as servants in some form. The era of democracy opened a whole new world, which the youth were willing to grab a hold of.

Veronica: There plenty of jobs in Johannesburg so I'll be able to get work and pay for my singing lessons because if I become a very good singer Oupa I can earn lots money. (Fugard,1996:74-75)

Fugard highlights that the "process of decolonisation involves redefining ourselves too, or at least questioning who we are and by what right any of us can claim to speak."(Blumberg and Walder, 1999: 101) With this line of argument he also addresses the issue of land rights. In 1913 South Africa had passed the Land Act preventing nonwhites from owning land; they were allowed to become tenant farmers. This is the underlying reason for Buks' dilemma: a white man is allowed to purchase the land that is

part of him. He is so set in his ways, that he does not want to listen to Veronica about land restitution.

Buks: You think those groot Kokkedoore are going to worry about me and my few akkers? Anyway I don't think they even know where the village is...No leave the government out of it. Every time they stick their nose in your business you got to pay... (Fugard, 1996:58-59)

Fugard raises the question

of who really owns land. In South Africa, as in other settler-colonial territories in the process of decolonisation, the basic demand of the historically dispossessed for the return of land has to be met, although that is not proving easy. Nor is it in the play. (Blumberg and Walder, 1999: 102)

The *Valley Song* being one of the first post-apartheid plays draws attention to the emotional tug of war that South Africans are going through, as to whether to remain in their so pre-designed apartheid roles or to venture forward in the new dreams that democracy has offered them. It also aims at allaying fears of South Africans as they move into a new era.

Athol Fugard steps out of the past, moving deftly from reflecting on what once were once his country's grim realities to contemplating his country's future possibilities. (Coulborn, 1996: 2)

## CHAPTER SEVEN CONCLUSION

### LITTLE BLACK BOY

MY MOTHER BORE ME IN THE SOUTHERN WILD.  
AND I AM BLACK, BUT O! MY SOUL IS WHITE  
WHITE AS AN ANGEL IS THE ENGLISH CHILD  
BUT I AM BLACK AS IF BEREAVED'D OF LIGHT

WILLIAM BLAKE

### MASKS ! MASKS !

BLACK MASKS, RED MASKS, YOU MASKS BLACK AND WHITE-  
MASKS AT ALL FOUR POINTS FROM WHENCE THE SPIRIT BREATHES...  
HERE DIES THE AFRICA OF EMPIRES IT IS THE AGONY OF A RUINED  
PRINCESS.

AND OF EUROPE TO WHOSE NAVAL WE ARE BOUND...

LEPOLD SENGHOR

Colonialism and neo-colonialism has put the African in state of agony, dilemma and an identity crisis. The first poem depicts a point when the African people are grappling with their blackness that they wish to shed, to be white on the inside and outside. The second poem portrays the African people at the juncture of de-colonization and their identity is still a blur, as the persona feels that the tie with Europe is indestructible as they connect as mother and child. Thus they will forever don the masks of the Europeans. Colonialism stripped away the identity of the African people and dangled trinkets in front of them, to attract them to aspire to the colonial culture. It was not long before the authentic culture became a fading memory.

The mental and physical domination and displacement of African people by colonialists was manoeuvred so as to ensure power remained with the white minority, which had a crippling effect on the African people. Therefore the concept of place cannot be understood in simplistic terms of landscape as it involves a

complex interaction of language, history and environment in the experience of the colonized people and the importance of space and location in the process of identity formation. (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 1995: 391)

The South African writers equally brought this to the forefront since as artists they could not negate the social, political and economical context of their work. By addressing these issues in their work it made South Africans constantly realise that their place, identity, and environment were contested and they had to empower and educate themselves to arrive at answers.

Since the demise of apartheid the question in the minds of all is what direction will art take. Questions on how “to nurture a ‘non- oppressive Afrikaans, how to nurture African languages not only as repositories of past cultures but as mediums of contemporary thought.”(Chapman, 1996: 429) South African has come full circle in the sense that it has experienced all ages: oral, colonialism, post-colonialism and neo-colonialism; it now needs to escape simply binary alternatives. As Wade explains in *Rethinking South African Literary History*:

What we need, as South Africa emerges into postcoloniality, is not the perpetuation of literary-critical orthodoxies of either left (Marxism) or right (Afrikaner Nationalism, liberalism) and least of all some romantic-organicist construction of an 'essential' national identity, but a vibrant theoretical experimentalism impatient with all dogmatism... we similarly need to 'defamiliarize' traditional automated perceptions of our literary past to construct a shocking renewed, unrecognisable cultural history. To do so is to align critical practice with the more radical potentialities of the larger democratic transformations occurring in the present... ( Smit, Wade and van Wyk, 1996: 2-3)

South African playwrights and theatre during the years of apartheid, "not only identified and protested against the political and social evils of the system but also explored the constraints on social interaction and expressiveness, and their psychological consequences( Davis and Fuchs, 1996: 15). With South African plays one would recognise that the focus is no longer solely on the political context. We have the introduction of educational, feminist, gay and lesbian, etc. theatre. The South Africans playwrights no longer have to feel pressed into addressing political issues, they now address issues that affect South African in whatever context and it still continues to entertain, empower, and educate. As Fanon states if an artist wants to be truly apart of

his people and create work that is a reflection of that culture he has to work with living realities not trinkets of the past.

You must yourself be a living part of Africa and her thought;  
you must yourself be an element of that popular energy called  
forth for the freeing, the progress and the happiness of Africa.

(Fanon, 2001: 165)

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