APPENDIX A

FUGARD'S CAREER

Harold Athol Lannigan Fugard was born on 11 June 1932, on a farm near Middelburg in the Cape Province, in the semi-desert Karoo region of South Africa. The Karoo, as Errol Durbach describes it, is a `landscape of unremitting desolation flanked by mountain ranges which intensify its isolation and ensure its inaccessibility' (1987:5). Its villages are widely scattered and its population is predominantly Afrikaner. In an interview at Yale, the playwright revealed his deeply ingrained love for the Karoo: `if anybody were to cut me open, if you could do a sort of X-ray job on my psyche, you'd find something that looks like the Karoo' (quoted in Durbach 1987:8).

Fugard's father, Harold, a `crippled former jazz pianist, was descended from Manchester immigrants, possibly Irish-Huguenot in origin' (Walder 1986:xi). His mother, Elizabeth Magdalena, could trace her ancestry on her father's side back to the British settlers who arrived at the Cape in 1652 (Fugard in Seidenspinner 1986:110). Her father, Veldkornet Potgieter, was a descendant of one of the eminent Voortrekker families, `long settled in the Karoo' (Walder 1984:19). Fugard thinks of himself as being of `mixed descent', a white hybrid, `a bastardised Afrikaner (and) a product of cultural miscegenation' (Durbach 1983:19). This is because he has apparently `inherited both the narrowly Calvinist but independent attitudes of his mother's (Afrikaner) background', and the more liberal-minded and outward-looking attitudes of his English father to which he subscribes (Walder 1986:xvi). He claims his artistic inspiration comes from his mother, whom he cites as the `most powerful presence' of his life (quoted in Seidenspinner 1986:110).

In 1938 Fugard entered the Catholic Marist Brothers College in Port Elizabeth, a `windswept industrial town on the eastern seaboard' of South Africa' (Fugard 1993:381). Because he had his mind set upon becoming a motor mechanic, he completed his secondary education, on a council scholarship, at the Port Elizabeth Technical College in 1946 (Seidenspinner 1986:111). Here he had his first experience of amateur dramatics, both as an actor and as director of the school play, *Sunday Costs Five Pesos*. He was also on the editorial board of the annual magazine.

In 1950 a scholarship enabled Fugard to attend the University of Cape Town, one of the liberal English-language universities of South Africa, where he studied sociology, anthropology, philosophy and French. He received class medals for his first year results. Here he was influenced by the Catholic existentialist Professor of Ethics, Martin Versfeld. Fugard's lifelong interest in the Nobel laureate Camus also began at this time, as did his interest in Darwin and T.H. Huxley's evolutionary theories (explicit in *Statements after an Arrest under the Immorality Act*) (Walder 1984:21).

In 1953, Fugard set off with Perseus Adams (a fellow student who was to become a poet) to hitchhike through Africa. The two separated in Sudan, and Fugard signed

on as a supernumerary (deckhand) on the British trampsteamer S.S. Graigaur that sailed to the Far East, Japan and Singapore. Fugard was the only white man among the crew, and had to share, `for the first time in his entire life, the close quarters of the vessel's forecastle with Sudanese and Malay sailors' (Seidenspinner 1986:115). In 1954, in a pub brawl in Bombay, he was befriended by two Malay shipmates: `I thought I was all by myself and then I found two of the Malays from the ship by my side' (quoted in Seidenspinner 1986:115). He says the experience `liberated him from the prejudice endemic among those with his background' (Walder 1984:22): `After that things were different' (quoted in Seidenspinner 1986:115). It was also during this time that Fugard decided that he wanted to be a writer and made his first attempt at writing (Fugard interviewed by Fourie 1997:4). In his 1997 play, *The Captain's Tiger*, `The Author' reflects on this period in his life and the momentous decision made.

After a year Athol Fugard returned home and worked as a freelance journalist for the *Port Elizabeth Evening Post* (Walder 1984:22). In 1956 he became the regional news reporter for the South African Broadcasting Corporation in Port Elizabeth, and was later transferred to Sea Point, Cape Town. He married Sheila Meiring on 22 September 1956, against the declared objection of Sheila's father, Dr Ernest Meiring of Port Elizabeth (Seidenspinner 1986:118). Like Fugard, Sheila is half-Afrikaner, half-English. Originally an actress, she has become an eminent South African novelist and poet (Walder 1984:23). Fugard's marriage to this actress inspired him to become actively involved in theatre.

In Cape Town Athol and Sheila Fugard formed an amateur theatre workshop, the Circle Players (Vivier 1983:74). They hired the Labia Theatre for Sunday night performances. Sheila directed and did most of the writing; Fugard acted and then began to contribute `some rather pretentious little pieces' (quoted in Walder 1984:23).

Klaas and the Devil was first presented at the Labia Theatre, Port Elizabeth, and then at a local arts competition in the Scopus Club (a private theatre). The *Cape Argus* reviewer's impression was that the play `was most interesting but did not quite come together' (quoted in Seidenspinner 1986:119). Fugard himself judges it an `attempt, a bad one' to set Synge's *Riders to the Sea* in a South African fishing village (quoted in Vandenbroucke [1986:25]) and refers to this period of initiation as `pretentious' and `embarrassing' (quoted in Seidenspinner 1986:119).

The now-lost verse-drama, *The Cell* (1957), also staged at the Labia Theatre, was composed entirely in blank verse. It recounted the news article of a black South African woman who gave birth to a stillborn baby in prison (Walder 1984:23).

In 1958 the Fugards moved to Johannesburg. The only job Fugard could find was as a clerk in the Fordsburg Native Commissioner's Court where pass-law offenders were tried. He recalls: `Seeing the machinery in operation, ... how it works and in fact what it does to people' (quoted in Walder 1984:24) `was a revelation. If I think back, nothing that has ever happened to me has eclipsed the horror of those few months' (Fugard quoted by Benson in Vivier 1983:64). His loathing for the policies of the Nationalist regime originates from this period in his life.

While in Johannesburg, the playwright was introduced to Sophiatown, a `multiracial ghetto full of violence, energy and talent' (Walder 1984:24), by Benjamin Pogrund, a journalist friend from Cape Town. Out of the lives of his newly acquired black friends he created *No-Good Friday* and *Nongogo* (The Sixpenny Whore or Woman for Sixpence), written for black amateur casts. Although Fugard and his actors had to overcome divers obstacles, such as a shortage of funds, lack of public transport, and the extra work and time the rehearsal sessions demanded of them (Seidenspinner 1986:133), the theatre group's first production, *No-Good Friday,* had its première in the Bantu Men's Social Centre in Johannesburg on 30 August 1958 (Walder 1984:42).

No-Good Friday transferred for one night to the Brooke Theatre in Johannesburg. Since a by-law forbade integrated casts at this `white' venue, Lewis Nkosi substituted for Fugard as the white priest, Father Higgins. According to the African monthly, *Zonk*, the `critical European audience thundered with applause' (quoted in Walder 1986:43). *Zonk* also `praised Fugard for giving his unknown actors "a wonderful vehicle in which they could show their talents", as well as revealing "a great understanding of the African people and their way of life"' (1984:43).

Like *No-Good Friday*, *Nongogo* also saw the light in Johannesburg, on 8 June 1959 (Vivier 1983:65). Once again, Fugard was responsible for the direction. Nkosi maintained that the dramatist, being a white liberal, `could not and really did not know anything about the life of an African prostitute' (quoted in Mshengu 1982:174). Even though the last scene `offered "a deeply stirring exploration" of a shebeen queen's consciousness, *Nongogo* ... did not arise "out of our social experience"' (quoted in Walder 1948:48). Black audiences also complained of distortion and exaggeration, especially in this last, `highly "theatrical", even operatic' scene (1984:125).

Nkosi further denounced the drama for showing too `little concern with the politics behind the chronic violence and gangsterism in the ghetto'. Nevertheless, there still was, in his mind, `... a certain quality in the writing which saved the play from degenerating altogether into a B-type Gangster film of the Chicago genre' (quoted in Raymer 1976:4-5).

Mary Benson, on the other hand, finds nothing to redeem the work. She remarks that it is the `heavy-handed attempt of a novice in the field of social drama.... Its plot [is] too lengthy and its theme too obviously reminiscent of Pinter's *The Birthday Party* (in Seidenspinner 1986:260). Gerald Weales also deems *Nongogo* an awkward play, unable to conceal `the conventional stitching that holds [it] together' (1978:5). Perhaps this is because the drama, though `direct and uncomplicated in form and content', does `too much "telling" instead of "showing"'.[1] The structure, too is unimaginative. Finally, `there is very little depth of character or development. The sense of the action seems to be external' (Durbach 1983:26).

---

[1] Fugard himself describes *Nongogo* and *No-Good Friday* as `inflated verse dramas' (quoted by Benson in Vandenbroucke 1986:38-39).

In 1958-9 Fugard and his wife established the African Theatre Workshop in Sophiatown, a company using Method techniques and drawing on the talents of various people, such as Lewis Nkosi, Bloke Modisane and Can Themba (writers) and Zakes Mokae (a jazz musician Fugard met through the `non-racial Artists' Equity Organisation, the Union of South African Artists' [Walder 1984:5] and for whom the author was to write the part of Zachariah in *The Blood Knot*).

The small success of the Sophiatown plays enabled Fugard - with the help of a visiting Belgian director, Tone Brulin - to obtain his first work in the professional theatre, as stage manager with the National Theatre Organisation of South Africa, which opened at the Belville Civic Centre. Here `Fugard worked on plays by Shaw, Beckett, Ionesco, Pirandello, the South African James Ambrose Brown and others' (Walder 1984:25). This experience has given him a `crash course' in modern drama (1984:25).

In November 1959 the Fugards left for Europe. In Europe Fugard met Barney Simon, a year younger than he and `from a similarly near-poor-white background' (Walder 1986:xv). Simon had worked with Joan Littlewood in London and developed a `strong passion for the small-scale "workshop" venture she initiated' (Walder 1984:25). He is considered by Dennis Walder as the `only talent in white South African theatre to provide Fugard with any significant stimulation as a writer and director' (1984:25).

Like Simon, Fugard also worked for Joan Littlewood. She was the person to whom he had sent his introspective work, *A Place with the Pigs*. Charles Fourie writes in the *Mail and Guardian* of 15 to 21 August 1997 that the play `was misunderstood by audiences and critics, as Fugard moved closer to the psyche of the self as outsider, hiding out in the pigsty, attempting to reconcile himself with his environment' (4).

The Belgian Tone Brulin invited the Fugards in 1960 to help form a little company, the New Africa Group, in the Low Countries of London, with the aim of staging original South African plays. Among the members of this group were Clive Farrell, an actor from Sierra Leone, and the South African actor whom Fugard had met while stage-managing in Cape Town, David Herbert. After rehearsals in Brulin's apartment, where the New Africa Group lived, they presented Herbert's poetic experimental drama, *A Kakamas Greek*, in Brussels's Palais des Beaux Arts on 24 May 1960. Athol Fugard was in the title role, that of Okkie the Greek, a `Coloured' man attempting to pass for white in the Karoo region of South Africa. Sheila Fugard was the stage manager. Further performances were held in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague. This tour, according to Fugard, taught him much of what he knows about theatre craft (Vandenbroucke 1986:41). *A Kakamas Greek* went on to win the prize for the best entry at the Festival of Avant-Garde in Brussels.

The Amsterdam host of *A Kakamas Greek*, Toneel-groep Puck, selected Brulin's anti-apartheid play, *De Honden*, to produce in its weekend series launched on 13 November 1960. The drama, `based on a black journalist's experience of ill-treatment and exploitation' on a farm manned by prisoners, `mostly offenders

against the pass laws' (Seidenspinner 1986:125), was directed by Fugard (the first time he had ever directed somebody else's work), and for this he was regarded as a traitor by some South Africans. *De Honden* ran for a total of four weeks. Shortly after this the New Africa Group dissolved because Fugard, Herbert and their wives wanted to go home.

The Fugards returned to South Africa in 1961. Fugard found employment as director of the African Music and Drama Association's Rehearsal Room, a `privately owned club, drama school and workshop of the Union Artists' (Seidenspinner 1986:126) which he helped establish (Vivier 1983:74). On 27 May of that year, the Fugards' daughter Lisa Marie was born.

It is Weales's conviction that the two years that passed between the `clumsy' *No-Good Friday* and *Nongogo* and *The Blood Knot* saw the playwright move from uncertainty to excellence (1978:5). Margaret Munro divines that the latter play's success is `due either to a greater veracity in its characterisation or to a sudden assumption of maturity by the playwright' (1982:14). Fugard himself remarks that *The Blood Knot* `marks [his] discovery of [him]self as a writer' (quoted in Vandenbroucke 1986:68)

The Blood Knot, which protested against the Population Registration Act, was first performed in the Intimate Theatre, Johannesburg and then in the Alexander Theatre. Like the journalists, `theatre people and assorted friends who packed the New Rehearsal Room of the African Music and Drama Association in Dorkay House', Johannesburg, were `gripped as never before by a passionate duet' (Walder 1984:1). In November 1961, Leon Gluckman (producer of *King Kong* and director of *The Blood Knot*) `started a nation-wide tour with a Union Artists' production of this first masterpiece of contemporary South African drama' (Seidenspinner 1986:127-8).

When the two man-cast play had its nine-day run in Port Elizabeth before a multiracial audience, Jimmy T. Mataya wrote in *Imvo Zabantsundu*'s edition of 7 April 1962 that theatre goers should be `grateful to the city Mayor's School Feeding Scheme Committee, the sponsors, for giving them the opportunity to witness drama at its best' (1982:72). The play, with its `poetry of poverty and dislocation' (Jacobson 1982:82),

> stealing its way into its seven scenes, has biting, scathing satire. Humour pervades though the subject matter is of deep seriousness. The production is a serious attempt to mirror some of the obnoxious laws designed to rule our daily lives as well as the strained relationships among the different races that make up our South African society. (Mataya 1982:72)

James Ambrose Brown, one of South Africa's foremost theatre critics and a fellow playwright, too, extols its `subtlety, its unexpected richness, its spark of penetrating dialogue, its humour and its deep pain', but what impresses him most is the `lack of heat and anger when dealing with a subject which usually generates unbridled propaganda' (1982:71).

Walder attributes the drama's appeal to the `fact that here was a new, indigenous South African play' (1984:60). It espoused the `anti-apartheid cause in its revelation of the disruption and tragedy caused by racial divisions which cut right into the familiar context' (Brink 1990:75)' - `yet did so with immense passion, humour and pathos, and "without ever mentioning that it is a problem or a political issue"', (as a reviewer of the *Rand Daily Mail* put it) (quoted in Walder 1984:60).

Walder's problem with the play is that `it permits, if it does not encourage, a naivety of response....' (1984:60). Lewis Nkosi also objected to the drama's `implicit quietism' which he imputed to `Fugard's distrust of politics (quoted in O'Sheel 1978:76). And Kenneth Tynan `all but killed it for British audiences' when he contended in *The Observer* of 10 July 1971 that the play, which is expressive of South African guilt, would seem `drably unadventurous' `to people who would not be horrified if their daughter married a Negro' (quoted in Walder 1984:61). To crown this, there are reviewers who regard *The Blood Knot* as a `racist work which shows up whites as preservers of civilisation and blacks as primitive brutes who think with their fists' (Cohen 1977:78).

An attack was also levelled at the style of *The Blood Knot*. Jacobson finds the dramaturgy `stiff' and the symbolism obtrusive (1982:82), while Walder decries the `overlong, and, at times, clumsy and repetitive' printed text (1984:60).

Be that as it may, I share John Raymer's conviction that `*The Blood Knot*, Fugard's first internationally-known and genuinely successful play, will no doubt become one of the enduring South African dramatic contributions to world theatre, for it is lyrically written, full of strong conflicts tension, and has memorable characters and universal themes' (1976:51-2). Jacobson (1982:82) also commends the passionate individuality of Fugard's two Cape `Coloured' characters.

One evening in 1962, Fugard was contacted at his home by a group of black men (a domestic servant, a messenger, a bus driver and a teacher) from New Brighton, a location in Port Elizabeth (Seidenspinner 1986:129). This assembly of would-be actors rehearsed their early plays at the Port Elizabeth branch of Rhodes University in the students' recreational facilities which were situation in the building of the old Port Elizabeth Snake Park. Students consequently named these actors `The Serpent Players'. The Serpent Players restored theatre to black audiences and were later to `become the Republic's first independently operating black experimental workshop to go beyond the amateur stage' (Seidenspinner 1986:129). Fugard writes in the introduction to *Three Port Elizabethan Plays* that their work

> is the only significant provocation and stimulus to myself as writer and director that I have encountered in South Africa. In the contribution of theatre in this country I think it is the only group of actors with a unique and important identity, a truly creative potentiality which if one day fully realised might be our most meaningful contribution to theatre. (1974b:xii)

In 1963 Athol Fugard publicly asked European playwrights not to grant any production rights to racially segregated houses. In this way he instigated an international cultural boycott of South Africa (Seidenspinner 1986:130). This boycott was maintained for longer than six years by more than sixty British dramatists and a number of their American and European counterparts (1986:130). Fugard's intention with the boycott was to elicit a reaction from the theatrical management who separated audiences, or excluded blacks, long before segregation became the law.

The Serpent Players produced a free adaptation of a township setting of Machiavelli's *The Mandrake* in May 1963 (Fugard 1974b:xi). It was `hailed locally as a masterpiece of improvisation' (Walder 1984:79). They subsequently presented Büchner's *Woyzeck* and Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*.

In 1964 *The New York Times* voted *The Blood Knot* the best play of the year (Walder 1984:26). With this the international career of this `most "honest" white South African dramatist of social protest' (Seidenspinner 1986:206) had begun.

In July 1965 the Serpent Players staged Sophocles' *Antigone*, which was to provide some of the material for *The Island*. Fugard did not get a permit to attend his own production since it was produced in a `black area'.

Also in 1965, John Bonisili Kani, formerly a janitor at the Ford plant, replaced a cast member, Winston Ntshinga, who was serving time on Robben Island, in *Antigone* (Walder 1984:81). Kani was to become one of the mainstays of the Serpent Players, a collaborator on *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and *The Island*, and still later the associate director of the Market Theatre in Johannesburg.

On 26 October 1965, *Hello and Goodbye* featured at the Library Theatre, Johannesburg. Barney Simon was in the director's seat.

Fugard's `improvised theatre' period commenced in 1966 (Vivier 1983:37) with the documentary drama, *The Coat: An Acting Exercise from the Serpent Players of New Brighton*, performed in Port Elizabeth in 1966. The idea for this work originated from reading Brecht's *Messingkauf Dialogues* (O'Shell 1978:69) and also from attending the trial of one of the Serpent Players, Winston Ntshinga, who was accused of belonging to a banned opposition movement. Ntshinga's wife, blues-singer Mabel Magada, accompanied Fugard to court. An elderly man from New Brighton who had just been sentenced to five years imprisonment recognised Mabel and gave her his only possession, his coat, with the instruction to return it to his wife (Walder 1986:xxv). The play consisted of a series of improvisations by members of the Serpent Players and `signifies Fugard's return to the style of improvisatory, experimental theatre' (Walder 1984:80-1).

Fugard wrote in the introduction to the *Statements* volume that the problem of the play and other similar experiments was that `too many "facts" got in the way of these performances, leaving the exercises "flat and lacking in the density and ambiguity of truly dramatic images"' (quoted in Raymer 1976:229).

In 1967 Kani introduced Winston Zola Ntshona, who acted with him when they attended New Brighton's Newell School, to the Serpent Players. One of Ntshona's previous jobs was that of factory janitor (Walder 1984:81) and he drew on this experience in the opening monologue of *Sizwe Bansi* which they were to co-write.

The Blood Knot was transmitted by BBC-2 television on 13 June 1967. A day later, on 14 June, the government confiscated the playwright's passport `for reasons of state safety and security' (Walder 1984:26) and on the grounds that his activities abroad were `prejudicial to the public interest' (Seidenspinner 1986:132). He was subjected to repeated interrogation and his papers were searched for proof of possible subversion. Instead of leaving South Africa on an exit permit never to return, as the government might have hoped, Fugard stayed on and continued writing, directing and acting.

The first of Fugard's plays exposing a segment of white domestic reality (Malan 1982:79) was *People Are Living There*[2]. Due to the dramatist's `search for his own "truth"' (Seidenspinner 1986:269), the work is `written more directly from life' than any of the others; `the characters involved and the dramatic incidents are almost literal transcriptions' of the experiences of lodgers at a boarding-house, called the Jubilee Hotel, at the bottom of Hospital Hill in Braamfontein, Johannesburg (Fugard quoted in Vivier 1983:32). Fugard and his wife lived in this `rambling, near derelict, double-storeyed house' with its `atmosphere of frustrated ambitions and violent undercurrents' (Seidenspinner 1986:111) during his term of office at the Native Commissioner's Court. Don, the existential scholar in the play, functions as the playwright's alter ego (Walder 1984:65).

People Are Living There `appears to be an aberrant work', as Fugard puts it (in Vivier 1983:32), in that it portrays white experience, is set in Johannesburg and not Port Elizabeth, and is more autobiographical than any of its predecessors. In addition, it seems to be without a `socio-political context of any significance' (Fugard quoted in Vivier 1983:32). The possibility exists that, after *The Coat*, the playwright came to the conclusion that great drama, like the masterpieces of music, should originate from the artist's integrity and experience rather than current referential `qualities' (Seidenspinner 1986:149).

On 13 March 1968, *People Are Living There* was first staged at Glasgow's Citizens' Theatre, with Robin Midgley directing. The drama, with which its author himself has expressed dissatisfaction (Wortham 1983:165), was turned down by the Johannesburg Repertory Players for the Alexander Theatre, situated in Braamfontein. Later it proved to be a sell-out here.

Robin Malan's impression of the play is:

---

[2] *People Are Living There* was originally entitled *The Silkworms* because `silkworms remained the central metaphor: of metamorphosis, of the inexorable passage of time and inescapable process of ageing, and of people as victims (Vandenbroucke 1986:109).

> It's a richly textured work. Fugard is skilful at selecting and manipulating his dramatic material, in action, in speech rhythms and in characterisation, so that the banal and pathetic become fleetingly profound and subtle. (1982:79)

However, Milly and Don disclosing at the end of the drama that they have only been playing games and that they were aware of this all along, is taken to be a

> mighty slap in the face of the audience.... [T]his sort of Pirandellian volte face is entirely unconvincing, it does not fit the context of the play, and is a cheap answer to the problem of how to resolve the unresolvable. (Malan 1982:80)

Despite its local success, *People Are Living There* never achieved the same international recognition as *The Blood Knot* did.

Mille Miglia, about a South African car race extending over about 1000 miles and `won in 1955 at the record speed of 97,8 miles per hour by Stirling Moss and Denis Jenkinson' (Seidenspinner 1986:108), was broadcast on BBC-2's Theatre 625 programme on August 5th, 1968, to be re-televised on 14 January 1970. Fugard used the practical knowledge of motor engines he acquired at the Port Elizabeth Technical College for the `deverbalised' (Seidenspinner's word [1986:227]) playscript of Mille Miglia, entitled *Drivers*.

Tom Stoppard acclaims *Mille Miglia* as `the experience of the week', and proceeds: `On the whole, the BBC's blurb that Mr Fugard "has great insight into people and a special talent for being able to write about them truthfully" seemed well confirmed' (1982:78).

In 1969 Fugard was elected as South African theatre's Man of the Year by a panel of arts critics, including Percy Baneshik of *The Star*, journalists and writers (Seidenspinner 1986:188). 1969 was also the year in which CAPAB (Cape Performing Arts Board) produced *People Are Living There* at the Hofmeyr Theatre on 14 June. On 10 July, an early version of *Boesman and Lena*, occasioned by the English Academy Conference on South African writing in English (a watershed event organised by Guy Butler), had its world première at the Rhodes University Little Theatre. Yvonne Bryceland (`one of South Africa's most experienced professional actresses at the time' [Walder 1984:26]) was Lena, Fugard was Boesman as well as director, and Glynn Day in blackface played the role of Outa. The cast took a total of eight curtain calls (Branford 1982:80).

Jean Branford remembers that this Beckett-inspired character study, which denotes Fugard's departure from the theme of black experience as advocated by the Serpent Players (Seidenspinner 1986:205), was `acclaimed by critics ... as a stunning revelation and as a grim and powerful play with a sustained flow of wit and joy shining off its surface of misery and desolation' (1982:80). What stands out for Jacobson, nonetheless, is the `passionate individuality' of the ugly, unloved and

destitute characters (Seidenspinner 1986:234), the `stark and comfortless' realisation the poor whites and Cape `Coloureds' have of what has been done to them, and what they do to themselves (Jacobson 1982:82).

As compared to Jacobson's approbation, blacks expressed discontent with the uncritical reception of the two `Coloured' characters by white audiences as well as with Fugard's `white' interpretation of the `Coloured' experience (Seidenspinner 1986:151). Even the anonymous `Waarnemer' of *Die Oosterlig* of 8 June 1970 felt `rather embarrassed' by the `ludicrous' presentation of the `shortcomings of the Coloureds' (quoted in Seidenspinner 1986:210). Some critics of the Black Consciousness Movement took exception at Fugard's `exploitation' of the `lot of the suffering to further his own ends' (Seidenspinner 1968:151).

On 18 September, *Hello and Goodbye* made a successful début off-Broadway at the Sheridan Playhouse, directed by Barney Simon. Abrahams speaks highly of Fugard's characterisation: The two individuals, marked, scarred (and) broken by life (Fugard quoted in Seidenspinner 1986:317) are `presented with such intimacy, intensity and humour, such a loving elaboration of concrete detailing, such a thrust of poetic realism, that they live for the imagination as no other characters in South African drama or fiction have begun to do - with the possible exception of Fugard's own Morrie and Zach in *The Blood Knot*' (1982:74). Gussow (1982:94), again, discovers a similar `classic purity and clarity' in this play as in the other two works of the Port Elizabeth trilogy.

In 1970 *Boesman and Lena* joined *People Are Living There* in repertory and the two plays were presented by CAPAB-PACT in association with Phoenix Players in the Alexander Theatre, Johannesburg. These works were also staged in other venues, including township halls.

After 1966 the Serpent Players turned their attention to documentary and experimental pieces of drama which they created during the rehearsal sessions. The crowning touch was *Friday's Bread on Monday* (an improvised essay into the hunger and desperation in the townships). It first appeared in 1970 (Vivier 1983:41).

In 1971, after a public petition of four thousand signatures had helped to secure Fugard's passport, the dramatist accepted an invitation from Nicholas Wright to direct *Boesman and Lena* at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, with Yvonne Bryceland as Lena, Zakes Mokae as Boesman and Bloke Modisane as Outa (Walder 1984:27). The production was transferred to the Young Vic on 15 August and was here again a sizable success. It aroused the interest of Ross Devenish, a freelance television documentary film-maker and director, and the latter persuaded the playwright to collaborate with him on a film version of *Boesman and Lena*, with Fugard and Bryceland in the title roles (1984:27). The collaboration with Devenish helped Fugard to reach a new, larger audience, as well as to experiment in a new medium.

Jerzy Grotowski's *Towards a Poor Theatre* came to Fugard in 1970 along with notes taken by Barney Simon and Mary Benson at the Polish director's New York lectures (Walder 1984:82). For Fugard, *Towards a Poor Theatre*, in conjunction with R.D. Laing's *The Divided Self* and `Bird of Paradise' (from *Politics of Experience*) (Vandenbroucke 1986:150), provided the impetus to develop a more intense form of improvised actors' theatre, as found in *Orestes*. Fugard shared the creation of this `most extreme excursion into a new type of theatrical experience' (Fugard quoted in O'Sheel 1978:69) with Yvonne Bryceland, Wilson Dunster and Val Donald (Vivier 1983:40). In the drama he attempted to `articulate by way of dramatic metaphor, very primitive if not archetypal experiences' (Fugard quoted in Vandenbroucke 1986:150). A real incident, the bombing of the Johannesburg station concourse in an act of protest by a white schoolteacher, John Harris (Walder 1984:13), was superimposed on two classic literary models portraying the emotional triangle of `murder, revenge and repentance and the experience of "mutilation" as a way to the human psyche' (Seidenspinner 1986:146): Aeschylus's *Orestie*[3] and Euripides' *Orestes and Electra* (O'Sheel 1978:69). After six weeks of rehearsal *Orestes* had its first exposure on 21 March 1971 at the Castlemarine Auditorium, Cape Town, as Project 1 of CAPAB's Theatre Laboratory. Fugard directed the experiment which `lasted for sixty minutes, had about 300 words, a lot of action - strange, almost somnambulistic action - and silence' (Fugard quoted in O'Sheel 1978:69). The `deverbalised' drama `relied entirely on the language of the actor's body, the complete control of his physical expressions and on the improvisation of images created or taking shape during the performance itself' (Seidenspinner 1986:227, 145-6). This experimental work `defied scripting until 1978 when it took the form of a descriptive letter to an American friend, photographer Bruce Davidson' (Gray 1982:9). Thereafter it travelled to the Transvaal (as the province was then called). In Johannesburg it was produced in a factory warehouse called Dorkay House.

Fugard judges *Orestes* `... one of the most important experiences I have had in the theatre ... the importance of *Orestes* was to suggest techniques for releasing the creative potential of the actor' (quoted in Vivier 1983:109).

On 18 November, *People Are Living There* opened at The Forum of the Repertory Theatre of the Lincoln Centre, New York.

On 28 March 1972, an early version of *Statements after an Arrest under the Immorality Act* (a play which bears witness to Fugard's increased preoccupation with the effects of apartheid legislation) with Fugard and Bryceland in the leading roles, was staged in a warehouse converted into a 240-seat venue: The Space/*Die Ruimte/Indawa,* situated in the vicinity of Cape Town's Malay quarters. The People's Space was opened on 25 March 1972 by Bryceland's husband, Brian Astbury, and its name was derived from Peter Brook's book, *The Empty Space* (1968) and from The Open Space in Tottenham Court Road (Walder 1984:28-9). The Space offered Fugard the right to fail with minute budgets at risk, as well as the

[3] In *Orestie*, Orestes and his sister, Electra, slay their mother, Clytemnestra, and her new husband to avenge the murder of their father, Agamemnon.

opportunity to break the conventions of orthodox theatre as this never-segregated open area evaded theatre segregation laws as well as censorship. Fugard's contribution was essential to the success of this fringe stage (1984:29).

In The Space Kani and Ntshona starred in their first major work, Camus's *The Just*, retitled *The Terrorists*. It was then (1972) that they decided to become full-time actors. They had to be classified as Fugard's domestic servants for this purpose (Walder 1984:81).

In March 1973 *Hello and Goodbye*, directed by Peter Stevenson, was shown at the King's Head Theatre Club, London, with Janet Suzman and Ben Kingsley (Vivier 1983:162). In September *Hello and Goodbye* transferred to the Royal Shakespeare Company's The Place at Euston, and here it was again fairly well received.

The joint commitment of Fugard, Kani and Ntshona issued in the collaborative workshop creations, *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972), with a facsimile passbook as programme, and the first version of *The Island* (1973), *Die Hodoshe Span*. *Sizwe Bansi*'s first appearance before a multiracial audience at The Space in Cape Town was cancelled by order of the police (Walder 1984:77). It reopened on 8 October 1972 in the same venue.

In the seventies, Fugard's preoccupation with politics became more prominent (Bowker 1990:2). The `satire and social comment that Brecht has in so much of his work ... [had] a second home and second lease of life' in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (Fugard 1982:7) which satirises the absurdities of the Pass Laws (Seymour 1980:277). *Sizwe Bansi* (the Xhosa phrase translates as `The people are strong' [Walder 1984:77]) was indeed set down as `one of the most overtly political, even propagandistic' (Raymer 1976:141) anti-apartheid dramas in the Fugard canon. It is a `"message" play; it is art in the service of political statement' (1976:153). This message or statement is that the South African government and white South Africans in general treat the black majority in a `horrifying way' (Barnes quoted in Raymer 1976:153). Black people's basic human rights are violated by residence restrictions, travel limitations, job permits, labour contracts, pass laws, and detention without trial and subjection to inhuman prison conditions (Steyn 1988:13). In essence, they are dehumanised (Seidenspinner 1986:186). The drama, nevertheless, while crying out against suffering, also shows that the most intolerable conditions - even the loss of identity - may be borne if one discovers and articulates a meaning for one's pain (Walder 1984:76).

Even though *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* has been the favourite of the three *Statements* plays, with enthusiastic receptions in Lagos, London, Accra, Ibadan, Toronto, Seymour states that `in many ways *The Island* and *Statements after an Arrest under the Immorality Act* confront and explore their political themes with greater depth and penetration....' The emphasis in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead,* in contrast, is on entertainment and thus `it can be experienced at a more superficial level... [and] responded to in the typical way Western urban audiences consume commercial entertainment' (1980:274).

Other critics lashed out against *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* for being, on the one hand, too political. Stanley Kauffmann, who made much of *Boesman and Lena*'s `universal' and `spiritual' values', said *Sizwe Bansi* was `superficial' and `only about the troubles of South African blacks' (quoted in Walder 1984:76). Nkosi, on the other hand, passed censure on Fugard for `shying away from the political truth' in this play (quoted in O'Sheel 1978:76). Russell Vandenbroucke defends the play against these allegations, stating that the critics who only pay attention to the politics of the play do it a disservice. *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* is political, without doubt, but it is not `one-dimensional, undramatic or inartistic as is sometimes implied by the pejorative use of "political"'. In addition, critics who simply name a play `political' and dismiss it out of hand, `short-circuit their analytical function' (1986:190). Vandenbroucke, however, does find fault with the structure of the play. In his eyes, the work is `somewhat formless and rambling', particularly the improvisational monologue at the opening which may last `anywhere from forty-five to seventy minutes, depending on the performance' (1986:182). The drunk scene and Bansi's disorientation also last too long. In addition, `so much factual information is imparted that the text becomes overburdened and becomes a general survey of living conditions for blacks in South Africa' (1986:167).

The Space was also the venue for *Die Hodoshe Span* (`Hodoshe's work-team'), the title under which *The Island* premièred on 2 July 1973 and appeared for its early performances. *Hodoshe* means `carrion-fly' (Walder 1984:77), and this was a nickname for a prison warder on Robben Island, the maximum security prison for South Africa's black political prisoners (Vandenbroucke 1988:192). (Kani and Ntshona used their own first names in the play [Vandenbroucke 1986:192].) Understandably, this polemical production had to tour in a `fugitive fashion' (Gray 1982:10). One such staging at the University of the Witwatersrand was accompanied by `mass arrests of student demonstrators outside' and the police chasing both actors and audience (1982:10).

Statements after an Arrest under the Immorality Act was written `in response to the political retaliation taken against Fugard' (Seidenspinner 1986:238) which accounts for its `racially explosive contents' (1986:148) and why Seymour believes it must be `harrowing in its impact on the spectators' (1980:274). Seidenspinner notes that the play `strikes an ideal balance between the author's emotional urgency regarding the subject of violation and the destruction of personal integrity and the broader political implications of the characterisation' (1986:148). Niven, Williams and Walder, nonetheless, do not share her enthusiasm. In Niven's view, the drama is `much less convincing than *The Island* and *Sizwe Bansi* .... The play outrages our conscience, of course, but it seems a portentous and loose-limbed piece of work by comparison with the concentrated anguish of the other two' (1982:90). Williams feels that the play is a `a `mixture of fairly realistic dialogue and portentous rhetoric illumined by an occasional flash of dramatic expression, but on the whole (it is) simply damnably dull' (quoted in Vandenbroucke 1986:179). Walder, for his part, frowns upon the `clumsy' and `abstract' dialogue (1984:92).

The *Statements* trilogy (*Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, *The Island* and *Statements After an Arrest under the Immorality Act*) was performed as part of the Royal Court's 1973

South African Season. Because these three works were `far more ideological, even propagandistic' (Raymer 1976:180) than any previous ones by Fugard, he was castigated by the South African cultural attaché for stirring up enmity against his country (Walder 1984:77).

No action was taken against him and his collaborators, however, as they were safeguarded by the plays' success (Walder 1984:77). *Sizwe Bansi*'s six-week engagement was even extended into nine months. The three plays were to become the `foundation of Fugard's reputation abroad as the most "honest" white dramatist of social protest of South Africa (Seidenspinner 1986:206), as well as those of his co-creators and actors, Yvonne Bryceland, John Kani and Winston Ntshona' (Walder 1984:28). The success of *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and *The Island* was also the reason for the Serpent Players' disbandment. Fugard, Kani Ntshona were often absent for long periods, touring with these productions (Vivier 1983:75).

Later in 1973 the film of *Boesman and Lena* was released in South Africa and at the Edinburgh and London Film Festivals, where it was again a triumph.

In February 1974 Fugard returned to South Africa to prepare the definitive production of *Hello and Goodbye* with Bryceland and Bill Flynn. It was presented at The Space on 26 July.

Sizwe Bansi is Dead and *The Island* transferred to the Ambassador Theatre in the West End in April, to end the twenty-one year rein of Agatha Christie's *The Mouse Trap* and to perform to full houses (Seidenspinner 1986:139). Alastair Niven recalls that the two dramas, `South Africa's most celebrated anti-apartheid plays' (Seidenspinner 1986:136) `... left their audiences subdued yet elated by their integrity and dramatic power' (1982:88). Shortly afterwards B.B.C.-TV televised a version of *Sizwe Bansi* (without the opening monologue) and the work was chosen by London Theatre Critics as the play of the year. In Walder's opinion, the `actors and co-creators earned the plaudits with which they were showered' (1984:87).

On 10 October of 1974, *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* commenced at the Long Wharf Theatre. Together with *The Island*, it played at New York's Edison Theatre and then, in 1975, it hit Broadway. Kani and Ntshona jointly won a Tony Award for *The Island* in the 1974-5 season in the USA. Only now did Fugard permit the publication of the two plays.

`The constant manoeuvres between [Fugard]'s artistic ambitions and his social conscience, between his country's `call to action' and his search for independence of the local issue [gave] birth to ... contradictory activities' (Seidenspinner 1986:189), such as the decision taken in 1974 that the playwrights' boycott was counter-productive (Gray 1982:11). On this score, the dramatist appealed to European writers to lift the boycott (Seidenspinner 1986:141), and `advocated the release of plays' even in theatres which were segregated under the Group Areas Act (Vivier 1983:71). His motivation was the concern that international links might be severed (Seidenspinner 1986:141) and the supposition that keeping South Africans culturally isolated from the values and critical ideas of the `free West' by

bereaving them of the works of international dramatists was `unwittingly lending support to a government whose whole wish was to keep its citizens in darkness' (Cohen 1977:47) and, at the same time, `discourage international support of civil disobedience' (Seidenspinner 1986:142). Fugard concluded in his *Notebooks* that he `would rather go on talking in a compromise situation than be silent' for `silence is treason' (quoted in Vivier 1983:71). Moreover, `anything that will get people to think and feel for themselves, that will stop them from delegating these functions to the politicians, is important to our survival. Theatre can do this ...' (Fugard 1974b:xviii).

Mshengu, however, opines that the playwright attacked the boycott only to `justify his involvement in segregated white theatre' (1982:175-6).

In February 1975 Fugard accepted a commission to write a drama for the Edinburgh Festival. He found the myth of *Dimetos* in Camus's *Carnets* (or *Notebooks*) (Walder 1984:97). After private previews of the play at The Space and at the University of the Witwatersrand, the work made its first appearance on 27 August at the Church Hill Theatre, Edinburgh, as part of the 1975 International Edinburgh Festival. Poor acoustics and the `thick South African accents' were only two of the reasons why the play missed the mark (Chaillet 1982:92). The `relatively ineffective' (Walder 1984:31) drama was revised and revived the following year at the Nottingham Playhouse and then in London's West End with Paul Scofield in the title role (1984:98-9). Walder recollects that `not even a clearer script and Scofield's presence could overcome the continuing problems Dimetos posed' (1984:99).

Sheila Fugard holds that *Dimetos* was the play her husband needed to write most (in Seidenspinner 1986:332). This drama marked a `complete break in Fugard's development as a playwright' (Vivier 1983:41). The author came to the realisation that stressing the naturalistic surface makes audiences miss the point - as if the plays offer no more than a `slice of life' somewhere (Walder 1984:48). Hence, he shelved social realism and being a `truthful witness' to his time in order to embark on a journey into the self (Seidenspinner 1986:153, 168), a `quest of self-discovery' (Walder 1984:109), to find his own personal truth. This is the ground for Seidenspinner averring that *Dimetos* `foreshadows the development of the autobiographical view as favoured in `*Master Harold' ... and the boys*' (1986:203) which, some years later, gathers and retrospectively enlightens the `symptoms of personal withdrawal' (1986:153). Gray refers to this period as the period of `poetic symbolism' (1982:21). Although traces of naturalism and realism are still present, the playwright now gravitates towards a `predominantly individualist [and] metaphysical directive' (Seidenspinner 1986:167).

Reviewers have shown a propensity for drawing parallels between the prototype of the anti-social genius, Dimetos, and his creator. Dimetos is a civil engineer who, having come to the conclusion that industrial society is doomed and humankind along with it (Seidenspinner 1986:186), washes his hands of the `claims of civilisation', just as Fugard apparently turned a deaf ear to `his country's call to action' (1986:198). Seidenspinner even goes so far as to say that the egocentric character of the play echoes the playwright's `divided self and fading social

solicitude' (1986:203) when he announces: `I'm tired of other men's needs, other men's disasters'. Because Dimetos `cannot come to terms with ... the expectation of his former community' as well as with his duty as guardian of his adolescent niece (Seidenspinner 1986:192), he confines himself to the safety of madness (1986:186), just as the socially weary dramatist `confined' himself to the `privacy of blank paper' (Vivier 1983:109) when he retreated from the `large, political environment of a diverse society' (Seidenspinner 1986:275) and reverted to the conventional method of playwriting.

The reactions with which this `profound personal statement' (Walder 1984:99) with its abstract subject - the condition of humankind - and mood of confusion, hopelessness and barrenness (Seidenspinner 1986:229) was received, ranged from `indifference and incredulity' (1986:168) to `disappointment and denunciation' (Walder 1984:98). Ned Chaillet ascribes these responses to *Dimetos*'s `unexpected non-political nature' (quoted in Walder 1984:99) (the action taking place in a `remote and timeless setting' [Walder 1984:99]). Amato supposes that audiences looked black upon Fugard as `craftsman at war' turning into Fugard, a `truly humane story-teller' (1984:201), and they inveighed against him for being too general and too vague. The dramatist himself also finds fault with this `most debated and least understood' of his plays (Seidenspinner 1986:202), but then with its `high-flown, possibly at times over-inflated style' (interviewed by Daymond 1984:24). Notwithstanding this, he sometimes calls it his favourite play (Vandenbroucke 1986:217).

Chaillet lists other problems: It is `too neatly a dramatisation of Camus's paragraph', with the symbolism of the decaying mammal too obvious; the first act is structurally weak, and the resolution based on Geometry is `extraordinarily convoluted' (1982:92-3). Nevertheless, he remembers the first staging as

> a haunting performance ... no other play I saw in the past year has so intrigued me. Austere and intense, but with its power in its language and simple, compelling stage pictures (1982:92).

And after seeing *Dimetos* a second time, he concluded: `In the past year, with the single exception of Edward Bond's *The Fool*, it would be impossible to find a more serious, not to say dour, new play on the English stage, nor a play with more latent power.... *Dimetos* will certainly grow in importance ...' (quoted in Vandenbroucke 1986:215). Brian Astbury had a similar experience: `When I first read the play I did not understand it at all, especially the final image.... The definitive production is yet to be done but I think it is his most important play ...' (quoted in Vandenbroucke 1986:215).

Seidenspinner regards *Dimetos* (in which the dramatist rivets his thoughts to the issues of art and authorship [Wertheim 1986:16]) as one of his `more ingenious pieces of drama' (1986:168). Vandenbroucke deems it a

> profound work of pure unencumbered imagination without simple analogues in the everyday world. The play's broad canvas and fugal interweaving of related subjects and metaphors make it the

> densest and most ambitious work Fugard has ever written.... *Dimetos* conforms to Coleridge's definition that great works of literature are those that contain the most content in the least space. (1986:206-7)

It is Gussow's opinion that this `experimental excursion away from Africa and into a mythical landscape, did not receive the attention and respect that it deserved....' (1982:94).

In 1976 Kani and Ntshona were imprisoned in Umtata, capital of the black homeland of the Transkei, for `anti-Bantustan remarks' expressed as part of their performance of *Sizwe Bansi* (Walder 1984:77), such as `Ciskeian Independence is shit!'. They were only released after an international actors' protest.

On 19 October, the Market Theatre, founded by Athol Fugard, Barney Simon and others, opened in an old Indian fruit and vegetable market. The Market Theatre, like The Space, was also a `site excluded from the Group Areas Act' (Walder 1984:30); thus it evaded segregation. This fringe stage, situated in Johannesburg, gave opportunity for free, honest, challenging contact between races. It meant collaboration and trust, instead of antagonism and rivalry. As such it can be considered the `crucible' of the future South Africa (Fugard interviewed by Brink 1990:78).

Because of the success of Ross Devenish's filmed *Boesman and Lena* at the Edinburgh and London Film Festivals in 1973, Fugard and Devenish collaborated again in the televising of other plays. On 5 March 1977, *The Guest at Steenkampskraal* flighted on B.B.C.-2 TV as a Film International Item. *The Guest at Steenkampskraal*, an adaptation of Leon Rousseau's *Die Groot Verlange* (Walder 1984:104), concentrates on the period the morphine-addicted Afrikaans poet, amateur zoologist and lawyer Eugène Nielen Marais (1872-1936) spent on a farm in the Heidelberg district, South Africa, in 1926[4]. Fugard identified with the tormented hero (1984:104) who was, like himself, widely read, steeped in especially English literature and was a decadent freethinker applying his attention to the working of the subconscious mind (1984:105). In the film Fugard played Marais. Devenish did the direction.

The Guest at Steenkampskraal was released in South African cinemas on 13 September. Since then it has been largely ignored (Walder 1984:98).

1977 is also the year when S.A.B.C.-TV filmed *People Are Living There* and *Hello and Goodbye* for transmission.

On 20 June 1977 *The Island*, with its original cast, played at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg.

---

[4] Marais committed suicide ten years later in the same countryside (Seidenspinner 1986:311).

In 1978 the Bryceland-Flynn *Hello and Goodbye* transferred to the Riverside Studios of London. Here it was filmed by B.B.C.-TV for transmission in March 1979.

The introspective *A Lesson from Aloes*[5] was premièred at the Market Theatre on 30 November 1978 with the author directing. Fugard was also in the role of the `Coloured' small-time political activist, Steve Daniels, who breaks a banning order to attend a meeting held by his comrades. An informer in the group betrays Steve and the latter is arrested by the government's Security Branch (Vivier 1983:114). Steve is then given the choice between imprisonment and an exit permit and exile, and opts for the latter (Walder 1984:114). Steve suspects Piet Bezuidenhout (played by Marius Weyers), a former member of the white Afrikaner Liberal Party, of having betrayed both cause and comrades (Seidenspinner 1986:314). Ironically, Piet's belief in the cause is betrayed by Steve's confession to the Security Branch and his voluntary exile (Munro 1981:476). Piet's wife, Gladys, has also been betrayed: by the loss of her diaries, `her inner life, as her diaries represented her sense of herself'.[6] She has further been `betrayed by her husband's inability to protect her from the police's invasion of their privacy', and psychological distress (1981:476).[7]

On 27 March 1980 the work - which Fugard styled a `celebration of the Afrikaner' (Walder 1984:114) - was enacted at the Yale Repertory Theatre in the United States, and reopened in New York where it had ninety-six appearances on Broadway.

Dennis Walder and Russell Vandenbroucke, as well as most international scholars, judge *A Lesson from Aloes* unconvincing for the reason that it is more about the moral and psychological tensions within human beings and their relationships, than it is about an authoritarian government's racist policies (Wertheim 1988:211). The second reason for this verdict is that, at the end of the play, the individuals are shown to be vanquished by their predicament (Seidenspinner 1986:337).8 The female protagonist's `survival mechanism is to allow her neurosis to envelop her'. Insanity liberates her from her harsh environment with its `pain and struggle' (Vivier 1983:115), and she returns to Fort England Mental Home. Piet, conversely, `decides to stay where he is' (1983:115). His aloes, `distinguished above all else for [their] inordinate capacity for survival in the harshest of possible environments'

---

[5] Earlier versions of *A Lesson from Aloes* were *The Informer* and *A Man without Scenery* (1963) (Vivier 1983:91).

[6] The diary Gladys keeps at present is blank. Vivier suggests that this implies that `Gladys is without a purpose in life and has no control over her situation or the mental illness creeping up on her' (1983:131).

[7] Fugard had lived through his wife's nervous breakdown and invested some of his own experience in Piet's impotence.

[8] Fuchs holds that `to survive, one must be a tough as an aloe' (1984:77).

(Fugard quoted in Vivier 1983:126), provide a metaphor for `Piet's tenacity and strength' (Vivier 1983:115). Nonetheless, Piet, who once resisted the defeatism of those around him (Walder 1984:115), can no longer conceive of a justification for his life (Seidenspinner 1986:316). So the play ends on a note of confusion, hopelessness and retreat (these being principal components of Fugard's imagery - `to madness, England or plants' (Van Holdt quoted in Vivier 1983:135).

Chiming in with the image of the *veld* - `the synecdoche of a country whose land is barren and whose heart has withered' (Seidenspinner 1986:318), and the symbolism of the aloes which `comprise[s] the feelings of affliction, bitterness, contempt, grief, sorrow' (1986:312), the audience is left with an awareness of `hopeless passivity and retreat' (Walder 1984:118). Life in South Africa is `intolerable' (Vivier 1983:116), and there is no prospect of positive change (1983:136-7). Margaret Seidenspinner reports that the pessimistic mood of the play aroused `very strong antipathy' in many local spectators, including novelist Nadine Gordimer (1986:339).

Vandenbroucke criticises the play's reliance upon the unravelling of secrets. This makes the work `the closest thing to a melodramatic mystery Fugard has ever written; the belaboured way the red-herring diary is made an important property is only one example in the play of this old-fashioned genre' (1986:237).

James Fenton, nevertheless, discovers a great strength in *A Lesson from Aloes* which stems `from its creator's intimate knowledge of defeat and the consequences of defeat' (quoted in Walder 1984:118). And Robert Greig deems the drama a major and remarkable work. This poetic tragedy with its `harrowing climax ... begins living and growing within you' as soon as you leave the theatre (1982:101, 103). Albert Wertheim simply designates *A Lesson from Aloes* as `what may be Fugard's finest play' (1988:211).

In June 1979 Fugard and Devenish collaborated for the last time when *Marigolds in August* was shot on location near Port Elizabeth.

On 11 June, Barney Simon's production of *Statements after an Arrest under the Immorality Act* opened at the Market Theatre.

People Are Living There played at the Royal Exchange, Manchester in September. In Paris, on 5 December, the French translation of *The Island* was shown. This year also witnessed the Afrikaans translation of *Boesman and Lena*, presented by SUKOVS in the Nico Malan Theatre, Cape Town.

In 1980 Fugard's mother died shortly before *A Lesson from Aloes*, as directed by the playwright, was brought to an international stage by Montreal's Centaur Theatre Company. After this, Fugard took up a six-month fellowship at Yale, and directed the drama again for the Yale Repertory Theatre, New Haven, Connecticut.

Nongogo started at the Manhattan Theatre Club in 1980. In mid-March of the same year Dierk Toporzysek performed Fugard's commissioned improvisation, *The*

Drummer, at the Louisville, Kentucky, annual festival of new American Plays. Reviews were favourable: It was looked upon as the best playlet in The America Project (Vandenbroucke 1986:250). Like *Mille Miglia* and *Dimetos*, *The Drummer* does not portray South African life.

Marigolds in August may be thought of as `the final part of a trilogy with the other Fugard-Devenish collaborations: the *Boesman and Lena* film, which focused on a `Coloured' couple's struggle to survive; *The Guest*, in which it was the turn of the Afrikaner' (Walder 1984:111); and now, the difficulties experienced by Africans in a society which places them into `unnatural' situations ... - like the marigolds which Daan, a garden and odd-job man, is made to plant' in winter (1984:111).[9]

The film commenced at the Johannesburg Film Festival on 12 April 1980, and in May it collected the Best Film, the Best Director (Devenish), and the Best Actor (Ntshona) and other *Rapport* Oscars. It was released on circuit in London in July to mainly positive reviews. The play was also screened at the 1980 Berlin Film Festival where a Silver Bear award was among the Russian prizes it won (Vandenbroucke 1986:248).

The author's only novel was published in 1980, after having been penned two decades earlier at the bidding of Andre Deutsch. *Tsotsi* is based on the writer's experiences in Sophiatown and records the conversion of a thug after an infant is dropped on his doorstep. Seidenspinner describes the work as the `most comprehensive case study of a black identity lost and refound' (1986:253).

Early in 1981 the University of Natal (Durban) conferred an honorary doctorate on Fugard. In April of the same year *Boesman and Lena* had its Dutch début. This coincided with the Dutch Parliament's suspension of cultural ties with South Africa. In June *A Lesson from Aloes* won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award as the best new play of the 1980-81 season.

As in the case of *A Lesson from Aloes*, the characters of incidents in *`Master Harold' ... and the boys* are `drawn more and less directly' from Fugard's own life (Collins 1983:369). In fact, he felt tempted to subtitle it: `A Personal Memoir' (Vandenbroucke 1986:251). For instance, Fugard's boyhood name was Hallie. The play's Hally, a white schoolboy, spits at a black servant, just as Fugard did many years before and now makes atonement for. Fugard's father was crippled, and so is Hally's. Fugard's mother acquired the St George Park tearoom in 1941 (Amato 1984:200), and this is the setting of the play. The only aspect where this drama, `the most totally and immediately autobiographical' of all Fugard's dramas (Collins 1983:369), diverges from real life is that the `action has a more cohesive form and clearer meaning than the actual incidents because they have been

[9] Walder points out that the `horticultural symbolism' is `somewhat forced' (1984:119).

ordered to a work of art rather than a historical recapitulation' (Vandenbroucke quoted in Wilson 1997:4). Because the origin of *`Master Harold' ... and the boys* was `so private and (also) so South African' (Collins 1983:370), it had its première abroad, at the Yale Repertory Theatre, New Haven, on 10 March 1982. Fugard directed, while Zakes Mokae was in the cast. It reached Broadway's Lyceum Theatre on 4 May 1982, with Lonny Price as Hally. Fugard's longest running play on Broadway, *`Master Harold' ... and the boys* had its final curtain fall only on 26 February 1983.

Once the drama's universality had been validated (Collins 1983:370), Fugard allowed it, a year later, to be exposed to South African audiences. Its first venue was the Market Theatre. *`Master Harold' ... and the boys* was banned as an undesirable publication as it `contained obscene language' (Amato 1984:198) (though the real reason could be that it warned white South Africans that `violence and destruction [were] inevitable, unless [they saw] and respond[ed] to the demands of their submerged, suffering population' [Walder 1984:113]). Shortly afterwards, the ban was revoked on the grounds that the play's literary merit vindicated the use of expletives (Amato 1984:199).

`Master Harold' ... and the boys was phenomenally successful in America, in Britain and in South Africa (Walder 1984:31-2). Michael Collins (1983:369) regards it, together with *A Lesson from Aloes*, as the best play Fugard has written. André P. Brink notes that some reviewers believe it to be altogether the most successful (1990:76). For example, Jack Kroll wrote: `If there is a more urgent and indispensable playwright in world theatre than South Africa's Athol Fugard, I don't know who it could be' (quoted in Vandenbroucke 1986:259) and three months later Frank Rich submitted in *The Star*:

> There may be two or three living playwrights who can write as well as Athol Fugard, but I am not sure that any of them has written a recent play that can match *`Master Harold' ... and the boys*. Mr Fugard's drama, lyrical in design, shattering in impact - is likely to be an enduring part of the theatre long after most of this Broadway season has turned to dust.... (Quoted in Vivier 1983:68)

Along with *Boesman and Lena*, *The Island*, *`Master Harold' ... and the boys* is Fugard's work which has been most frequently performed, critically analysed and `acclaimed most widely' (Colleran 1995:42). It has received the Drama Desk Award and the Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Play of 1982 (Vandenbroucke 1986:259).

The only criticism which has been levelled against the play is that it seemingly condones Hallie's racial insult and humiliation of the soft-hearted Basuto waiter, Sam (Walder 1984:125). In a twist of tragic irony, the real Sam Semela died just before John Kani arrived at Sam's house in New Brighton to take him to see the drama's South African début (Walder 1984:124) - and Fugard's public penance.

Seventeen days after the world première of *`Master Harold' ... and the boys*, on 29 March, *Fugard's People*, a dramatised colour documentary on the dramas and the *dramatis personae*, as well as on the relationship between Fugard's works and the

context in which they were created, was screened at the Johannesburg Film Festival.

In 1982 Fugard starred as General Smuts in the film *Gandhi*.

The Road to Mecca was first staged in May 1984 at the Yale Repertory Theatre in New Haven, Connecticut. After its début it was produced by Fugard himself at, amongst others, the Market Theatre in Johannesburg and the Spoleto U.S.A. Festival in Charleston, South Carolina.

`*My Children! My Africa!*' - in which the playwright returns to an `overt dissection of socio-politics' (Brink 1990:76) in his celebration of the youth of South Africa, white as well as black (Fugard 1993:487) - commenced at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg on 27 June 1989. The first Cape Town run was at the Baxter Theatre on 4 October. Thereafter it was presented in two New York venues (November 1995), the Royal Court Theatre in London (February 1996) and Toronto (April 1996).

Stephen Gray avows that the play is `faithful to the stage in South Africa, so powerfully, undefeatably magnificent' (quoted in Visser 1993:486). Brink, however, opines that the drama does not make a powerful enough theatrical statement. He attributes this to the `lapses into mere monologues with overtones of missionary zeal' (1990:76).

Playland (dedicated to the late Yvonne Bryceland), had its opening night on 16 July 1992 at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg. Barry Ronge, besides hailing it as a milestone in the history of South African theatre, pronounced:

> It is the most significant work Fugard has done in decades. Just as he was the dramatist who seemed to imitate and define the theatre of dissent in the `old' South Africa, this play seems to define the path ahead. (Quoted in Holloway 1993:36)

Miles Holloway takes Ronge to be misguided, although he concedes that the play has `significant emotional impact' (1993:41). The first reason for his being at variance with Ronge is that Holloway presumes Fugard to perpetrate racial stereotypes. Secondly, `miscegenation ... and the violation of servants by masters have been exploited to the point of cliché' (1993:39). Thirdly, the play's political message is `disturbingly inadequate given the exigencies of our society' (1993:41). The work seems to imply that confession and contrition - though psychologically cathartic - are sufficient restitution. To suggest that `national expiation' is the panacea to South Africa's problems is naive (1993:40). `Physical healing, in terms of practical programmes of economic and social upliftment, is as necessary as psychological purgation', if not more (1993:40). Not only is the impact of the play's message weakened by the omission of this element, but *Playland* also does disservice to the liberal cause and the various manifestations of black resistance (1993:40).

On 8 July 1994, three months after the elections, *My Life*, `Fugard's own watershed theatrical vehicle' (Blumberg [1996:458]), was enacted at the Rehearsal Room of the Monument at the Standard Bank National Festival of the Arts in Grahamstown. It then featured at the National Schools Festival at The Glennie in Grahamstown and at the Tesson Theatre at the Johannesburg Civic Theatre. The work, to which Fugard refers as a recital, not a play, is the `orcehstration of the images and stories of the personal biographies of five young women chosen to represent the racial divide in South Africa' (Blumberg 1996:458).

Valley Song, a play `situated on the threshold ... between the interregnum and the post-apartheid era' (Blumberg 1996:459), had its world début in the Market Theatre in August 1995, in the same year and the same venue in which *The Island* was restaged. Fugard directed and played the dual roles of the Author and Beukes.

Critics described productions of *Valley Song* in South Africa, America, and England as `superb', `stunning', and `his best ever'.... Garalt MacLiam, who also `heaped praise on Mbongeni Ngema's multimillion rand theatrical débâcle, *Sarafinia II*', raves about *Valley Song* in *Star Tonight* as follows:

> ... an enthralling piece of theatre: remarkable in its simplicity; remarkable in the beauty of its language; remarkable in its espousal of clear-cut values; remarkable in its emotional impact; remarkable in its description of the African terrain; and remarkable for the two evocative performances from playwright Fugard and his protégé, newcomer to the stage, Esmeralda Bihl. (Quoted in Blumberg 1996:459-60)

This adulation of *Valley Song* tries Marta Blumberg's patience as `it exceeds credibility' (1996:459). The American academic and theatre critic, Toby Silverman Zinman also divulged at a conference in London entitled 'South African Theatre As/And Intervention' that he regarded Fugard's recent play as `preachy and positively saccharine' (quoted in Blumberg 1996:462).

The Captain's Tiger was performed at the Pretoria State Theatre in late July and August 1997. Fugard played the role of The Author. The drama subsequently played in Port Elizabeth, Pretoria, and in Princeton and at the Manhattan Theatre Club in New York.

The Captain's Tiger is described by critics as an unashamedly autobiographical and documentary voyage of self-discovery, Fugard's return to the beginning (Wilson 1997:5 & Greig 1997:3). Andrew Wilson, in the *Mail and Guardian* (15-21 August 1997), is of the opinion that *The Captain's Tiger* `seeks to give the audience an insight into the creative wrestling ... of a twenty-year-old merchant mariner' (Greig 1997:3) `standing at the edge of his artistry, not only grappling with literary verisimilitude', that is, the artist's obligation to speak on behalf of the voiceless and not give his imagination free reign (Greig's alter-ego 1997:3); `but (also) with truth and honesty in terms of himself and his relationship to his parents' (Wilson 1997:4). As such, it is `largely a narrated, retrospective monologue' (1997:4).

Wilson observes that

> the production is not without some powerful, poignant moments, which highlight the potential of the play and its dramatic possibilities. Fugard's mental confrontations with the reality of his relationship with his father and mother are particularly moving and offer rare moments of real empathy for the audience. Similarly, the "boys own" bonding between cabin boy and ship's mechanic is humorous and charming, recalling Fugard's traditional mastery of human communication (1997:5).

For all this, the critic deems *The Captain's Tiger* `essential untheatrical theatre'. In the first place, the `stasis and dearth of visual stimulation make the production no more entertaining than a radio play' (1997:4). In the second instance, its ponderousness and lack of dramatic variety `militate against the text's desire to confide in the audience its very personal message' (1997:5). In fact, since the author `gained access to [the work's] underlying texture through the psycho-analytical dissection of his own mind and the unsparing, physical and psychological exhibition of his own personality on stage' (Seidenspinner 1986:284), the message is so personal and so private that it fails to `enlighten or entertain beyond itself-as-event' (Wilson 1997:5), and one is tempted to think that the `actual events were more cohesive and carried more meaning than the theatrical version' (1997:5). So instead of audience identification or empathy, there is only indifferent detachment (1997:4).

Robert Greig's review of *The Captain's Tiger* is just as ambiguous. He has even invented an alter-ego to express his vying emotions about the play. His alter-ego conceives of it as an `incredibly honest', `heart-warming' and `exuberant' play that `wears wisdom with grace.' Robert Greig himself concedes that it is a `marvellous memoir', but, because `Fugard's imagination cannot `create a character independent of himself, the autobiographical form of the play works against its own logic' (1997:3). In a nutshell, Fugard's memoirs are `icky' and `freakish' on stage (1997:3). Having seen the play myself, I agree.

APPENDIX B

SOUTH AFRICAN THEATRE CONTEXT

To fully appreciate Athol Fugard's contribution to the art of theatre in South Africa, it is imperative to investigate the theatrical context in which South African playwrights have functioned, and to place him and his plays in the context of the origin and development of drama in this country. For most of the following I am indebted to Judylee Vivier's M.A. dissertation, *Athol Fugard as Creator: Some Aspects of Fugard's Process as a Playwright and Director in the South African Context* (1983), Russell Vandenbroucke's book *Truths the hand can touch* (1986) and Margaret Seidenspinner's *Exploring the Labyrinth: Athol Fugard's Approach to South African Drama* (1986).

`The first record of theatre performance in South Africa relates to a comedy staged in 1635 by the survivors of a Portuguese vessel wrecked on the Natal coast' (Vivier 1983:2). The first permanent theatre building was erected in 1800 by Sir George Yonge in Hottentot Square (now Riebeeck Square), Cape Town, and was christened the African Theatre (Seidenspinner 1986:32).

The first indigenous play to be written in English, according to Russell Vandenbroucke's survey, seems to have been Kckincoz, by Charles Etienne Boniface (1787-1853), in 1843 (Vivier 1983:3). Boniface, a French immigrant, was not only a trailblazer of the colonial stage - in that he developed some of the standard features of South African theatre (such as the inclusion of lines in other languages, for example the ethnic dialects of the Cape Province [Seidenspinner 1986:31]) - but also a journalist, translator, actor, director, teacher of seven modern languages and an accomplished musician.

Even before Kckincoz was written, the Dutch Reformed and the Methodist Churches `objected to the "sinful practices" of the stages' (Seidenspinner 1986:34). Colonial theatre experienced `decades of inertia' (1986:34) which ended when Queen Victoria came to power in 1837. Civilian theatre, in the `Drury Lane' style, arrived on the dramatic scene. In 1857, Sefton Parry established the first company of professional actors in Cape Town. He also developed the Harrington Street Theatre (1986:35).

In the 1890's a few `rudimentary plays' in Afrikaans saw the light, for instance D.P. du Toit's farce *Di Gedriegers* (1893) and the dramas of S.J. du Toit, *Lifde getrou tot in di dood* (1896), *Magrita Prinslo* (1897) (Vivier 1983:3). However, it is Melt Brink who is regarded as responsible for the transformation of the Dutch Theatre into Afrikaans and he, together with JH de Waal, is cited as the founder of Afrikaans Theatre (Vivier 1983:3).

`The first full time professional dramatist' (Seidenspinner 1986:38) of the early twentieth century was Stephen Black (1880-19831). Black, who was also a boxer, journalist, novelist and `South Africa's first and only actor-author-stage

manager at the time' (Vivier 1983:4), wrote for the working classes, focusing on the major contentious issues of the time, for example the illicit diamond trade and interracial alliances (Seidenspinner 1986:38). `In his first play, *Love and the Hyphen*, he examines and exposes five levels of social distinction'; the highest level being the `home'-born Englishman, then the English speaking South African or Colonial, followed by the Dutchman or Afrikaner. `On a much lower rung' there is the `Coloured' (such as the writer himself) and the Black man (Vivier 1983:13). Each of these characters has his/her own peculiar accent (Woodrow in Vivier 1983:13). Black's works denote the beginning of indigenous English Theatre.

Afrikaans and English Theatre companies were formed in the twentieth century, such as the Johannesburg Opera and Dramatic Society (1919). Theatre Trusts, such as African Theatres Trust Limited (1913), were also established (Vivier 1983:4).

The mid-1920's were determining in the development of indigenous theatre (Vivier 1983:4). Afrikaans theatre was revived (Seidenspinner 1986:44), and black people also become involved in the genre when Bantu Men's Social Centres were introduced in the townships. These centres assimilated black workers from rural areas into the cities' predominantly Christian cultural activities (1986:37). In 1925 the first Black play in South Africa in an African language was published. This piece, called *Debeza's Baboons,* was written by G.B. Sinzo. The first troupe of Black actors saw the light in 1927, and they were the Matetwa Lucky Stars, who staged popular sketches on traditional themes in Zulu (Mshengu 1982:163). The founding of the Bantu Dramatic Society in Johannesburg soon followed under the aegis of H.I.E. Dhlomo (Vivier 1983:5). The Bantu Dramatic Society relied on European classics, their first production being Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (Seidenspinner 1986:44).

A `Coloured' amateur organisation was founded in 1933 in Cape Town. The Eoan Group was a `multi-faceted agency', and musical productions featured among their diverse activities. The Eoan Group survived until the end of the Second World War, when the Cape Coloured Theatre Guild was called into existence. After that, `Coloured' Theatre was in decline (Vivier 1983:5).

Unlike the twenties, the thirties were unpropitious to the theatrical genre, although there were a couple of English playwrights, including Bertha Goudvis and Reverend Cecil Tugman. *Dr James Barry* by Olga Racster and Jessica Grove, together with a dramatisation of Sarah Gertrude Millin's *Mary Glenn* under the title of *No Longer Mourn*, even got as far as a London stage (Vivier 1983:7).

In spite of the thirties being designated as `depressed', (Vivier 1983:7 & Seidenspinner 1986:40), one work had an enormous impact on South African theatre. In 1936 H.I.E. Dhlomo, a Black author, wrote a play which was published in English: *Nonqquase: The Liberator* or *The Girl who Killed to Save* (Vivier 1983:5). This drama signifies the beginning of Black indigenous theatre as it was the first serious attempt on the part of a Black person to write about the

experiences of Blacks in South Africa (1983:6). The play provided an alternative to the established theatre of the time since its author took a deliberate stand against the earlier endeavours of the Bantu Dramatic Society which had been restricted by `white' influences. The drama also represented a protest against the English theatre tradition favoured by the commercial theatre, which promoted plays that were written abroad with no particular relevance to South Africa. The subject matter of *The Girl who Killed to Save* is derived from a tribal past, the play being a written rendition of a Xhosa epic recounting the story of the 1856 and 1857 national suicide of the Xhosa people (Seidenspinner 1986:40) - but comment is continuously passed on the `social structures and attitudes of the present' (Vivier 1983:6). This disastrous chapter in South African history is interpreted by Dhlomo as a triumph for Christianity and `civilisation', as it broke the power of the traditional rulers and diviners and delivered the Xhosa into the hands of the Christian missionaries and European employers (Mshengu 1982:161). Dhlomo is an important figure in the literary history of South Africa not only due to his plays, but also for his literary theories and criticism. As early as the 1930's the writer adumbrated the `racial developments which were to occur in the Black Consciousness Movement of the 1970's' (Vivier 1983:7).

During the two decades following the production of *The Girl who Killed to Save*, a multitude of new theatres saw the light in and around Johannesburg. The cause for this was that, after the Second World War, South Africa was exposed to the fertility of world culture, national crisis and the upsurge of racial conflict and awareness. In 1942 the Johannesburg Afrikaanse Amateur-Toneelspelers was inaugurated, in 1943 the Johannesburg People's Theatre, in 1947 the National Theatre Organisation and in 1955 the Intimate Theatre (Vivier 1983:8).

The National Theatre Organisation (N.T.O.) of 1947 had its origins in a society instituted in 1938 to `link together all amateur theatrical societies' (the Federation of Amateur Theatrical Societies of South Africa) (Vivier 1983:8). The formation of the NTO was a milestone in the development and the establishment of South African Theatre as the NTO wanted theatre to make a considerable contribution towards the growth of the education and cultural life of the whole community, and towards the elimination of racialism between the English and the Afrikaans speaking communities (1983:9). This organisation continued until 1963 when its function was taken up by the four provincial performing arts councils: the Cape Performing Arts Board; the Performing Arts Council, Transvaal; the Performing Arts Council of the Orange Free State and the Natal Performing Arts Council (1983:9).

The development of indigenous theatre was dormant during the period ranging from 1935 to 1955. Alwyn Andre's impression of black theatre in South Africa at this stage is `that it was essentially imitative rather than creative, and amateur rather than professional - performing plays written and produced elsewhere first' (quoted in Vivier 1983:8).

During the 1940's and early 1950's Ezekiel Mphahlele and Khabi Mngoma presented dramatic performances in Soweto, `usually under the auspices of school festivals' (Vivier 1983:9). The Syndicate of African Artists was formed

specifically for this purpose. The Syndicate eventually became Union Artists (1983:9), and, with the assistance of theatrical promoter Ian Bernhardt, acquired its own premises in Dorkay House, an abandoned factory warehouse (Walder 1984:45). The formation of Union Artists was the second landmark in the development of Black Theatre as Union Artists brought together teachers, artists, writers, musicians and all people interested in the theatre (Vivier 1983:10).

The meeting of these multifariously-talented people opened the door to the `township musical'. *King Kong* (1959), an African Jazz-Opera based on the life of heavyweight black boxing champion and slum hero, Ezekiel Dhlamini (nicknamed King Kong), boasted the whole range of the township `jazz' repertoire: from shebeen jives and penny whistle blues to tribal choirs and liturgical music (Seidenspinner 1986:72). The musical score was by `township' composer Todd Matshikiza, with the other musicians, singers and actors also black. Production, direction and script, however, were in the hands of whites. Not only was *King Kong* a local hit - the names of `Miriam Makeba, Hugh Masekela and Dollar Brand are to this day associated with South African black music' (Seidenspinner 1986:73) - but it also attracted overseas contracts (Walder 1984:44). Directed by Leon Gluckman, the play was staged in London and its success supplied Union Artists with the means to instigate the African Music and Drama Association (1984:45), `to sponsor a theatre workshop and drama school' (Vivier 1983:10). In turn this ushered in a new theatre in 1961, the Rehearsal Room. The first production of the Rehearsal Room Group was Athol Fugard's *The Blood Knot* in 1961 (1983:10). The Rehearsal Room Group also performed works by Beckett, Pinter, Sartre and Steinbeck.

Theatre became more active after the defeat of Smuts, with the victory of the National Party in the 1948 election and the legislation enforcing `apartheid' (separate development of the races based on racial segregation and oppression) (Vivier 1983:10). These developments sparked an interest in racial and socio-political affairs. The time of the early 1950's is alluded to by Mervyn Woodrow as `a renaissance of English drama' (quoted in Vivier 1983:10) and Harry Bloom, the main author of the *King Kong* script, describes the musical entertainment and dramatic activity in the black urban areas at this stage as follows: `There were ... the singing groups who seemed to spring up in every shack and back alley of the townships.... They were at their best when singing of the simple things of their own world, or about events in the newspapers', such as bus boycotts, riots, political trials. `Because of the lack of suitable plays and halls, trained producers and playwrights, the only form of theatre, beside `variety', that was ever seen on the township stages was in the nature of impromptu sketches' (quoted in Mshengu 1982:166).

Individuals and groups who made use of the impromptu form were Victor Mkhize, Louis Rathebe, the Manhatten brothers, the Inkspots, the Woody Woodpeckers and the Midnite Kids. In short, it is incontestable that, in the 1950's, there existed in the black urban areas a genuine, independent, popular musical and dramatic culture which was widespread and pertinent to the quotidian and political experiences of the people. This culture functioned organically in the life of the community (Mshengu 1982:166).

During 1949 and 1969, as much drama was written in South Africa as in the whole nineteenth century (Vivier 1983:10). Although several of the post-1950 plays did not meet with much success, the few that did make it dealt with South Africa and its compounding socio-political issues, particularly the colour controversy; for example Lewis Sowden's *The Kimberley Train*[1] which opened in 1958 in Johannesburg; Basil Warner's *Try for White*; Alan Paton's *Sponono* and Guy Butler's *The Dam* (1952) (1983:11), a verse drama which portrays `the coming together and the working together of all races in South Africa, which like the water in the dam, has life-giving properties' (1983:14). Its creator, in addition, is placed by Mervyn Woodrow at the root of `the renaissance of English drama' (quoted in Vivier 1983:14).

In the late 1950's the culture of Black independent, popular musical and dramatic activity had an untimely death when certain impresarios become conscious of its commercial potential and `drained the talent out of the black areas into musical packages directed initially towards white South African audiences and then towards export' (Mshengu 1982:167). The commercial section of Union Artists was seen as one of the exploitative companies. Owing to the exploitation, Gibson Kente took his play, *Sikalo*, out of Union Artists in 1966 and registered his own theatre company. Together with *Lifa* and *Zwi*, *Sikalo* became the most popular theatre entertainment in black South Africa (1982:167). These plays were rivalled only by Sam Mhangwane's *The Unfaithful Wife* (1965), a play which remained popular for twenty years.

Probably as a consequence of the conduct of certain impresarios, the Publications and Entertainments Act was promulgated in 1963, by which the Publications Control Board came into being.

In 1965, yet another amendment of the Group Areas Act extended racial segregation to theatres (Seidenspinner 1986:131). (The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act and further amendments to the Group Areas Act made in 1960 had bearing on only clubs, cinemas and restaurants [1986:125].) Racially mixed productions were either restricted or declared illegal (1986:46). In a nutshell, `South African theatre was forced back into subjugation and deprived of its platform' (1986:47).

In 1969 the Black Consciousness Group, T.E.C.O.N., was set up in Natal. This group produced, in the tradition of `erudite' theatre[2], Harold Pinter's *The Caretaker*, and in 1971 an adaptation of the *Antigone* legend, *Antigone in '71* (Mshengu 1982:168). The setting of both these productions was South Africa, and the theme is resistance to an unjust government. The tradition of `erudite' theatre, with its close relationship to European trends, was transformed by the Black Consciousness Group into militant defiance of the government's racialism (1982:168).

---

[1] Walder (1984:9) posits that *The Kimberley Train* anticipates the subject of *The Blood Knot*.

[2] Mshengu (1982:164) derives this term from Italian Renaissance theatre.

In the early 1970's the government's detente policies gave rise to more forbearing official attitudes towards black popular culture and subsequently there was a resurrection of black writing (Mshengu 1982:167). Moreover, during this period whites and blacks co-operated or competed. The experimental theatre workshop in Johannesburg, the Imita Players in East London and the Ikhwezi Players in Grahamstown are examples of this multiracial `fringe' or `town' theatre that continued in the tradition of the `erudite' collaboration between blacks and whites (Mshengu 1982:168). As before, Black commercial or popular theatre and `erudite' theatre partly unified in a rising tide of militant political theatre, such as Gibson Kente's *How Long* (1973), followed by *I Believe* and *Too Late*. However, the majority of works still conformed to government policy. `Glossily packaged "African" musical and plays', following in the wake of *King Kong*'s triumph, such as Professor E Sneddon and Welcome Msomi's *uMabatha*, Berta Egnos's *Ipi Tombi* and Joan Brickhill's *Kwa Zulu*, all exported to other countries, were designed by white managements with the blessing of the authorities (Walder 1984:44). The material was derived from the `Bantu' traditional culture the government sought to impose, presenting a highly romantic - and just as inaccurate (Seidenspinner 1986:73) - picture of black South Africans as a `crowd of smiling, dancing, bare-breasted rural illiterates' (Walder 1984:8) or `converted, amenable savage[s]' (Seidenspinner 1986:85). The mode of production and marketing was capitalist (Mshengu 1982:169).

The theatre of the dispossessed, conversely, sought to revive authentic urban African traditions and reintegrate these into the cultural life of the community (Seidenspinner 1986:78). The style of the theatre of the dispossessed is documentary and serious, the tone militant and the setting `poor' (1986:74). Voice, traditional dance, mime, the actor's body language and facial expressions are integral features. Celebrated works in this genre include *Pula* (Rain) and *Imbuba* (Unity). This double bill, as performed by Matsamela Manaka's Soyikwa's Theatre Company, won, amongst other prizes, the First Fringe Award at the Edinburgh Theatre Festival (1986:78).

As dramas in the English medium saw the light, so did those in the medium of Afrikaans. Playwrights making a contribution to the development of drama in this language include Louis Leipoldt, H.A. Fagan, D.J. Opperman, and the `Sestigers' (the writers of the sixties) group. The *Sestigers* consisted of Dutch Reformed churchmen and intellectuals. They moved away from the Aristotelian concept of tragedy towards the modern and the Absurd, as was the trend in the European Theatre. They were also influenced by the existentialists, particularly Camus. The *Sestigers* were incapable of reconciling Scripture and apartheid. On this account, their writings were censored and they were denounced as traitors, apostates and heretics by the Afrikanerdom (Walder 1984:93). They were ostracised from the community, their publishers threatened, and their books publicly burned (Durbach 1989:16).

A playwright also starting to produce in the sixties and whose plays express revolt against authority is André P. Brink: *Die Verhoor* (1970) and *Die Rebelle* (1970).

The most popular of modern Afrikaans playwrights is possibly P.G. du Plessis (born in 1934). His social drama *Siener in die suburbs* (1971) is a local play, making use of a suburban Afrikaans `dialect' (Vivier 1983:19).

Pieter-Dirk Uys is another popular Afrikaans satirist. He mixes Afrikaans and English in his plays. His themes fluctuate between social satire to polemical political satire on the South African situation. Due to this, many of his plays have been banned (Vivier 1983:20). A number of Athol Fugard's dramas have also been outlawed for the same reason.

In contrast to the playwrights just mentioned who were all whites, Adam Small (1936 -) is `Coloured', and he continued Stephen Black's literary heritage. His record-breaking *Kanna hy kô hystoe* (1965) is written in the Cape `Coloured' dialect, and is situated in these people's violent and tragic surroundings (Vivier 1983:19). The play, which is valued as `amongst the masterpieces of contemporary South African drama', was withheld from white audiences for more than five years (Seidenspinner 1986:38).

Lewis Nkosi is a black dramatist and critic. His realist play, *Rhythm of Violence*, about the bombing of a Johannesburg hall during a (white) Nationalist Party convention, is an indictment of an unjust and cruel government and a `warning to would-be revolutionaries' (Raymer 1976:213) in its disclosure of the South African police's approach to civil disorders and black agitators of even underground associations (1976:216). Raymer maintains that the informative yet searing *Rhythm of Violence*, next to Fugard's *The Blood Knot* and *Boesman and Lena*, is the most noteworthy of all plays emanating from this country (1976:213).

APPENDIX C

POLITICAL BACKGROUND TO THE DRAMAS

In 1924 Jan Christian Smut's South African Party was defeated by James Barry Munnik Hertzog (1866-1942), a defender of racial non-integration (Seidenspinner 1986:45).

The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (number 55 of 1949, amended in 1950), also called the Immorality Act, was among the first statutes introduced by the apartheid government of 1948 onwards (Vivier 1983:178). This Act was a legislative prohibition against `any immoral or indecent act', such as carnal intercourse and marriage across the colour bar.[1] The Consolidating Act number 23 of 1957 `entrenched the colour bar in more explicitly sexual terms that did its predecessors' (Colleran 1995:42). The latter Act stipulated that any kind of sexual act (not necessarily intercourse) between those classified as white and those not classified as white, was unacceptable. Russell Vandenbroucke (1986:287) and Jeanne Colleran (1995:42) refer to these laws as the cornerstones of apartheid legislation.

Yet 1950 is the year considered by Errol Durbach (1987:509) as the *annus mirabilis* of apartheid legislation. In this year the Population Registration Act helped to arbitrate on race classification as it assigned all persons to racial categories, thus separating the various races (Vivier 1983:178). There were four racial groups: white, black or Bantu, `Coloured' and Asian, with the last two groups having more political rights than blacks as they were `represented in the central government by a statutory number of white representatives' (1983:51). There was no mobility among the races, and a child's future was determined at birth. Thus, biology was destiny.

The Group Areas Act, also passed in 1950, was described by Dr Daniel F. Malan, then prime minister, as the `kernel of the apartheid policy' (Carter in Vivier 1983:178). The objective of the Group Areas Act was to `change racial segregation into a concept of total alienation between the races and to lay the cornerstones of a legislation that directly aimed at the politically sanctioned disenfranchisement of all non-European South Africans' (Seidenspinner 1986:11); in other words, to deprive Blacks, `Coloureds' and Asian citizens of their civil and political rights and liberties. Not only did the Group Areas Act entail `increased insistence on `social' or `petty' apartheid - that is, segregation in public places' (including theatres), in the use of public transport and facilities (such as benches, lifts and lavatories) (Walder 1984:14) - but it also demarcated the areas of permissible domicile for Africans, as well as `extended residential

[1] Fugard's *Statements after an Arrest under the Immorality Act* describes the effect of this piece of legislation on the lives of a white librarian and a `Coloured' school principal.

and commercial exclusion to `Coloureds' and Asians' (Vivier 1983:178). Hence certain areas were declared to be for the use of a particular race. Other `disqualified persons' were ordered to move from the areas, such as is the case with Boesman and Lena in Fugard's similarly named play. `In the vast majority of cases whites remained secure while [other groups] were uprooted' (Vandenbroucke 1986:286). Although whites comprised approximately fifteen per cent of the population, they `controll[ed] more than eighty per cent of the land and also retain[ed] mineral rights to much of the land they did not control' (1986:286).

Black people, nevertheless, could `enjoy "separate but equal" rights in the homelands or Bantustans, so that there [was] no injustice in their dispossession of such rights in the white areas' (Walder 1984:14). However, as a result of industrialisation, black men born in the reserves or homelands went to the cities and worked, for instance, in the mines in order to support their families rather than taking part in sub-subsistence farming, in this way fulfilling the `traditional' role of peasant or small farmer. Once in the cities, the men were assigned to live in townships or locations situated on the outskirts of the cities. This was done in accordance to the Urban Areas Act of 1923. If a rural black person, such as a wife, wanted to visit the urban areas, s/he might do so, but only for seventy-two hours unless in possession of a special permit. If that person chose to remain longer, s/he was `"endorsed out" and forced to return to [the] homeland' (Vandenbroucke 1986:287). Moreover, when the white-governed economy had no need any longer of the black labourers staying in the townships, the latter were obliged to return to the homelands. If they refused to leave the cities, the Minister of Native Affairs could send them to resettlement camps in terms of the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act of 1951 (Vivier 1983:178).

The upshot of the resentment at the Group Areas Act, pass laws, liquor raids and inadequate amenities was a defiance campaign launched in 1952, with eight thousand people deliberately contravening apartheid regulations (Walder 1984:35) and riots erupting in Johannesburg and surrounding areas. In answer to the opposition and protestations, the government formulated a never-ending series of security legislation of which the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 was the first (Vivier 1983:180). This Act declared the Communist Party unlawful (Walder 1984:35).[2] `The government defined Communism not only as Marxism-Leninism,' but expanded the definition to include any doctrine of which the objective was to bring about `political, social, industrial or economical change in South Africa', even if it only was by criticising the government, inciting antagonism between the races or introducing the idea of racial equality (Vivier 1983:180). The Suppression of Communism Act made it possible for the Minister of Justice to place under house arrest or ban any `traitor' (such as Chief Albert Luthuli, a leader of the A.N.C.) furthering, or likely to further, the aims of `Communism'. The accusation of being a Communist required no proof, it could not be appealed and did not have to be explained. In terms of this legislation, together with the Unlawful Organisations Act (1960), the General Law

[2] This Act is alluded to in *The Coat*, *The Island* and *A Lesson from Aloes*.

Amendment Act (1963) (popularly known as the Sabotage Act), the Terrorism Act (1967) and the Internal Security Act (1976), the government had the authority to control persons suspected of promoting feelings of hostility between the races; to provide for repeated ninety-day detentions without court order or charge, without appeal and trial, without legal counsel for a detainee (who was often subjected to solitary confinement); to place the burden of proof of innocence on accused saboteurs or anyone suspected of knowing about certain types of political offences; to ban organisations, even if they were not `Communist', but were perceived as jeopardising the safety of the state; and to `ban individuals for up to five years and to re-impose such bans as soon as they expired' (Vandenbroucke 1986:287).

Under a banning order dissidents were precluded from belonging to any political organisation. In addition, their mobility was restricted, and they were denied free communication. `The only alternative to the banning order was "voluntary expatriation" under an exit permit which prohibit[ed] any return without the Government's permission' (Durbach 1989:11).

Other legislation introduced to secure the apartheid policy and white control of South Africa included the Native Laws Amendment Act and the Natives Act, both instituted in 1952. The first Act `eliminated home ownership and other long-held rights of urban Blacks; it restricted permanent residence in the urban areas to those who could prove that they had been born in the cities, who had lived there continuously for fifteen years, or who had worked for the same employer for ten years' (Vivier 1983:178-9). The second Act, the Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act, made it mandatory for all Africans sixteen years of age and over and those `previously exempted from the pass laws' to carry `reference books' on their persons at all times (1983:179).[3] The `reference book' or passbook had to furnish its owner's identity number, his/her photograph, place of origin, employment history, tax payments and skirmishes with the police (1983:179). An employer had to sign the book monthly, and no black could leave a job for another without a discharge signature. If such a person wanted to live somewhere else, the book had to be stamped by a government official. Because of the limitless powers given police, any black could be stopped at any time and asked to produce the book. Failure to do so constituted a criminal offence. By enforcing this Act, the government sought to monitor the movement of Africans in and out of the cities (1983:179). Together with the Native Laws Amendment Act, the Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act strove to keep the number of Black people in urban areas within bounds (1983:179).

The Native Resettlement Act of 1953 enabled the government to move Africans staying in Johannesburg to a new reserve about 19 kilometres away (Vivier 1983:179). In 1956 and 1957 Sophiatown, the multiracial freehold section outside Johannesburg, was reclaimed for whites; all `Coloureds' and blacks

[3] The impact of these two Acts is witnessed in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and *Marigolds in August.*

were evicted (1983:179). `A similar implementation of the Group Areas Act gave the government [the right] to remove `Coloureds' from District Six in Cape Town and from Simonstown in 1966'; this process was `successfully' completed only in 1982 (1983:179). The procedure of resettlement was used to literally cut the ground from under Africans, `Coloureds' and Asians who competed with whites, residentially and commercially (1983:179-80). According to Robert Rotberg (in Vivier 1983:180), about 500 000 people were removed from their homes under the Group Areas Act.

In 1953 three other pieces of legislation were passed, one of which was the Separate Amenities Act. The Public Safety Act licensed the `governor-general to declare emergencies for up to a year, during which arrests could be made and detentions without trial were possible' (Vivier 1983:180). The Criminal Law Amendment Act made provision for the imposition of steep fines, corporal punishment and long, even indefinite prison sentences for individuals convicted of threatening breaches of the peace and inciting others to violence. These laws turned South Africa into a police state (1983:181).

1953 was also the year when the `old' Liberal Party was founded. This party was opposed to the cultural and racial policies of the Afrikaner Nationalist government, and, like the African National Congress in the early years of its existence, represented an alliance of all racial groups dedicated to both non-violence and constitutional and parliamentary means to redress grievances and to affect change. In plainer terms, peaceful and humanitarian resistance were exercised from within the system (Seidenspinner 1986:45). Alan Paton was the first vice-president of the `old' Liberal party and was its leader when it `disbanded in 1968, when multiracial political parties became illegal' (Walder 1984:16). The liberals (including those who were not directly affiliated to the party, such as Fugard) tended to `come from the intelligentsia: university lecturers and students, lawyers, clergymen, journalists - and writers' (1984:16) and had a `close relationship with black intellectuals and intermediate classes' (Mshengu 1982:162). Fugard has mentioned in a television interview: `I unashamedly describe myself as a liberal' (quoted in Visser 1993:489). This is so since he shares liberal aspirations: those of tolerance, openness, flexibility, mutual accommodation, universal political rights, freedom of speech, equality before the law, equanimity and empathy. Like the liberals, Fugard presumed that `individual moral precept [was able to] change social conditions and that morals make men, rather than men morals' (Seymour 1980:287), that is, political change is only possible once there is greater understanding among diverse people. On this score, people have to enter into dialogue and build bridges (Walder 1984:16). Fugard's plays, similarly, appeal to humans' better nature.

In 1954 Dr Malan, a former *dominee* of the Dutch Reformed Church (Seidenspinner 1986:11), retired from the premiership, and Hans Strijdom, the Lion of the North, took over the mantle of apartheid. When he died in 1958, Dr Hendrick F Verwoerd, previously Minister of Bantustan Affairs, became the new Prime Minister of South Africa (1986:117). Dr Verwoerd initiated a more thorough form of apartheid than before, taking even more drastic measures against the discontented.

On 26 June 1956, five congresses, the African National Congress, the South African Indian Congress, the South African Coloured People's Organisation, the Congress of Democrats and the South African Congress of Trade Unions rallied at Kliptown outside Johannesburg and formed the Congress of the People. The Freedom Charter - based on the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights - was adopted as a minimum programme of demand.

Especially after the 1960 Sharpeville massacre, blacks increasingly came to the conclusion that violence was the only means of bringing about political transformation (Peck 1992:81). The carnage at Sharpeville was the upshot of a protest campaign arranged by the Pan Africanist Congress (P.A.C.) (Vivier 1983:181). Together with Robert Sobukwe; `a language teacher at the University of the Witwatersrand, and a former member of the African National Congress (ANC)' (1983:181); the Africanists broke away from the African National Congress on 2 November 1958 to form the Pan-Africanist Congress in April 1959 (Mshengu 1982:173). This was so since Sobukwe and his followers suspected that the involvement of the A.N.C. with the other racial groups had `weakened, distracted from' and seriously jeopardised the efficacy of the A.N.C. (1983:181). This language teacher and his supporters were prepared to use `any and all means to wrest control from whites - in order to introduce a government of, for and by Africans' (1983:181). The Sharpeville bloodbath was the indirect result of this rivalry between the A.N.C. and the more radical P.A.C. (1983:181).

The African National Congress's intention was to schedule a campaign against the pass laws, preparing for a day of passive resistance and national defiance on 31 March 1960. The Pan African Congress retorted by scheduling a similar protest ten days earlier (Vivier 1983:182). In Vereeniging `between three thousand and twenty thousand people (witness accounts differ) presented themselves at the local police station without their passes', thus provoking arrest (1983:182). `The police panicked' (1983:182), shot and killed between sixty-seven and sixty-nine persons and wounded between one hundred and seventy-eight and hundred and eighty-six. In Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town, a week of mourning was held. During this week work stoppages were sponsored by the P.A.C. and A.N.C. (1983:182). Africans mobs rampaged in and around these cities, demanding immunity for the strikers, an increase in wages and the abolition of passes.

In response to these requests, the government, determined not to be `swayed from [its] chosen course' (Walder 1984:56), declared a State of Emergency (which lasted five months) and started arresting Africans, detaining them for up to ninety days without charge and incommunicado (Vivier 1983:182). On 30 March 1960, Philip Kgosana, a P.A.C. leader, together with fifteen thousand Africans, marched from Langa, near Cape Town, towards Parliament, only to be denied an interview with the Minister of Justice and to be `arrested along with his principal cohorts' (1983:183). Altogether, over the whole of South Africa, about `twenty-three thousand Blacks were arrested and two thousand anti-apartheid activists detained' (1983:183). A few days after Kgosana's arrest, `the P.A.C.

and the A.N.C. were both banned in accordance with the hastily enacted Unlawful Organisations Act' (1983:183). All interracial alliances were terminated so that whites who opposed the régime could not openly associate with people of other races to express their dissent. In addition to the above, enforced exile, censorship and acts of intimidation (Walder 1984:56) stunned Africans and their sympathisers into silence,` not only politically, but also artistically' (Vivier 1983:183). However, two offshoots of respectively the A.N.C. and the P.A.C., Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation) and Poqo (pure, that is, purely for Africans) turned to violent protest in the form of acts of sabotage (Walder 1984:56).

In 1961, 52,3% of the Union of South Africa voted to withdraw from the British Commonwealth and sever its cultural ties with Great Britain after 156 years, in order to implement Verwoerd's and the National Party's racial policies (Seidenspinner 1986:126-7). On 31 May 1961, the Republic of South Africa was born, an independent, isolated country at the remotest point of Africa.

In July 1963, the principal resistance movements, which had to operate underground after Sharpeville, were almost wiped out when an informer led police to the farm in Rivonia, near Johannesburg, which was their hide-out. `Mass trials on charges of sabotage' and conspiracy to overthrow the government followed (Walder 1984:119), of which the verdict was life sentence for the leaders. One of the leaders was Nelson Mandela, and he was to spend twenty-seven years in the correctional facilities on Robben Island and elsewhere.

On 6 September 1966, Dr Verwoerd's rule ended in his assassination (Seidenspinner 1986:13). Mr John Balthazar Vorster, previously the Minister of Justice, succeeded Dr Verwoerd as South Africa's Prime Minister.

Over the years the number of black students at universities gradually increased. The upshot of this was a large group of educated black Africans who, though also rejecting separate development, no longer subscribed to the liberal ideology of the white English-speaking intellectuals (Mshengu 1982:167). These students regarded liberalism as a sop to the conscience, an evasionary ploy on the part of whites (Durbach 1989:7). Worse, it was perceived to be a counter-revolutionary betrayal of the `Cause' in its condonation of separate developmental structures. In this way liberalism ensured the `provision and reproduction of cheap labour for the capitalist class' (Mshengu 1982:160) and divorced the superstructure from the social and economic bases of society (Seymour 1980:287). Liberal intellectuals, thus, were looked upon as dominators - rather than allies - who imposed English cultural hegemony on the African people (Mshengu 1982:162).

As a result of the continued `brutal oppression', the liberal position, as a response to the South African situation, `earned for itself a reputation in the popular imagination' not only for compromise, but also for `effeteness, shallowness, incompleteness and inefficacy especially when confronted with the strident demands of political extremism', as Holloway recalls (1993:41). Lewis Nkosi adds that `liberal values were associated not only with compromise but

with defeat: its virtues of tolerance, rational discussion and scepticism [being] equated with lack of will, vacillation and a hopeless effeminacy' (quoted in Seidenspinner 1986:172). Hilary Seymour has the final word: `no matter how well or effectively [Liberalism was] presented, as a response to the South African situation it was `caught in the web of its own contradictions' and was ultimately `negative in its impact' (1980:288).

Students therefore found the `ideological base for an alternative black (intermediate class) hegemony': Black Consciousness (Mshengu 1982:167). The Black Consciousness Movement was fuelled by the activities of the South African Students' Organisation (S.A.S.O.), the South African Students' Movement (S.A.S.M.) and the Black People's Convention (B.P.C.). It was also encouraged by Frelimo, the party of Black Marxists who had effected a *coup d'état* in Mozambique (Vivier 1983:184). Frelimo, like guerillas in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and Namibia, buoyed up the spirits of those who reposed their trust in the effectiveness of externally supported liberation (1983:184). The Movement reached its apogee in the early seventies.

On 16 June 1976 the Soweto riots erupted. Thousands of schoolchildren marched through Orlando in order to protest against Black educational and political disadvantages (Vivier 1983:183). (The government had decreed that elementary schools' medium of instruction had to be Afrikaans as well as English.) The police fired into this group of marching children. `Death and destruction engulfed the twenty-eight townships of Soweto', rapidly fanning out to the Black ghettos of Pretoria, Port Elizabeth, East London, Cape Town, Witbank, Ladysmith, Carltonville and Klerksdorp and to the segregated university campuses (1983:183). The toll of the riots included one hundred and forty killed during the first week and at least six hundred and sixty-one dead in the first eleven months. Besides the dead and wounded, over one thousand people were apprehended in the first seven months after the riots had started (1983:185).

On 19 October 1977, a month before the national election and five weeks after the Black Consciousness student leader, Stephen (Steve) Biko, died of head wounds sustained while in detention (Vivier 1983:185), the government banned S.A.S.O., S.A.S.M., the Black Parents' Association (formed after the riots), the Black Women's Federation, the Christian Institute, the Union of Black Journalists, the *WORLD* (`the country's major Black daily') and a multitude of other organisations (1983:185). Virtually anyone who owned banned literature, or dared to speak outside of parliament contrary to the government or who distributed pamphlets was either detained without trial and tortured or banned (1983:186).

Although the ascent of the Black Consciousness Movement in the later 1960's and 1970's and the events and aftermath of the Soweto riots brought the hegemony of oppositional politics under scrutiny, the moment at which it was compelled to retreat was when the non-racial United Democratic Front was founded in 1983. The purpose of this movement was to oppose the proposed new constitution of P.W. Botha's government, with its inclusion of `Coloured' and

Indian South Africans and its exclusion of Africans. The Eastern Cape was something of a heartland for the U.D.F. (Visser 1993:496).

Following the massive state repression originating from the widespread rejection of the elections under the new constitution in August 1984, student protests broke out. These protests were due to oversized classes, inadequate facilities, under-qualified or unqualified teachers, shortages of textbooks, lack of science laboratories and equipment, excessive corporal punishment, frequent sexual harassment - `in short all the symptoms of an educational system which allocate[d] seven times more money per white pupil than per African pupil' (Cooper in Visser 1993:499).

The incident that sparked off the school boycotts in the Eastern Cape region occurred in January 1984 in Cradock, when the school principal and chairperson of the Cradock Residents Association was dismissed from his post by the government because of his `success as a community leader and his growing national and even international stature as an important figure in the U.D.F' (Viiser 1993:499). In July 1985 the former principal, Matthew Goniwe, together with his fellow teacher, Fort Calata, and two of their U.D.F. colleagues, was murdered by agents of the South African state. The victims were repeatedly stabbed, after which their bodies were mutilated and incinerated (1993:499).

Later in 1984 the student boycotts converged with broader community and national political initiatives due to the exclusion of Africans from the new constitution. To add insult to injury, the Congress of South African Students (C.O.S.A.S.), an affiliate of the U.D.F., was banned. In mid-1985 the State of Emergency was imposed in the Eastern Cape and certain other parts of the country. Nearly twelve thousand people were detained without trial in 1985 (of which over half were school-age youths), fifty-two people were charged with `treason' in six different trials, twenty-seven people just `disappeared' and, by midyear, over three hundred people were killed (Visser 1993:498). On 12 June 1986, a second State of Emergency was imposed on the whole of South Africa in response to the continued civil disobedience and political dissidence.

Besides direct coercion (as described above) to ensure segregation and cheap labour for the ruling capitalist class, Afrikaner Nationalists also employed more indirect forms of ideological and cultural domination. From 1948 onwards the youth and the working class were indoctrinated in the nationalist ideology and culture with its Calvinist base. The Nationalists further suppressed the English-speaking culture in black groups, imposing instead a `Bantu' education and culture that had their roots in pre-colonial society (Mshengu 1982:161).

Due to international condemnation and sanctions, the government was finally pressured into making some changes. During the last half of the eighties the Mixed Marriages Act was abolished. The Immorality Act was also repealed, as well as passbook legislation.

In January 1990, in Parliament, President F.W. de Klerk announced the unbanning of the African National Congress and all other previously proscribed

political movements, the lifting of all restrictions on the press, the release of Nelson Mandela and other black political leaders, as well as the repeal of all remaining apartheid legislation.

On 27 April 1994 a one-person-one-vote election was held in South Africa. All citizens were given the franchise, regardless of race. The African National Congress amassed an overwhelming 63% of the total votes.[4] An apartheid government was at last replaced by a democratic one, spearheaded by Nelson Mandela who was inaugurated as the President of the New South Africa.

[4] In 1998, when the next election was held, the A.N.C. garnered 65% of the votes. Mandela's Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki, took over the reins.