CHOICE AND CHANGE IN RELATION TO IDENTITY AND MEANING IN SELECTED PLAYS BY ATHOL FUGARD: AN EXISTENTIALIST PERSPECTIVE

by

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SUMMARY

The study will explore the existentialist concepts of change and choice in relation to identity and meaning as they manifest themselves in six plays by the South African playwright, Athol Fugard: *Nongogo*, *The Blood Knot*, *Hello and Goodbye*, *Statements after an Arrest under the Immorality Act*, *The Road to Mecca* and *Playland*.

It is evident that Fugard endorses the first principle of existentialism: `Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself' (Sartre in Friedman 1964:136/20). In terms of existentialist theory, nothing has significance except by virtue of human creation. We are self-determining, the authors and the lawgivers in a world without rules and ethical systems. Our destinies are shaped by the choices we make. Moreover, by exercising choice, we define our identities and realise our potential (Kierkegaard in Grimsley 1967:33).

A choice, however, calls for the recognition of personal responsibility and entails the risk of existential isolation (Yalom 1980:319). On this score, many of Fugard's characters deny their choicefulness and relinquish responsibility to another. Those who flee from their choices lose access to their existential sense (Yalom 1980:320). On the other hand, characters who face the possibilities within themselves and assert the role they have to play in their own existences, are able to transcend despair and invest their futile existences with some significance, as Sartre (1958:554) puts it. More often than not, one of the meanings they discover after having made that `leap into action and commitment' (Yalom 1980:431) is that they are bound to others and can only become whole and fully alive in interaction with another existence whom they both accept and appreciate.

10 key terms: Fugard, six plays, existentialism, change, choice, responsibility, identity, meaning, death

INTRODUCTION

Athol Fugard's name is synonymous with South African theatre. As early as 1966, Lionel Abrahams rated Fugard a `native master' of the medium of drama (1982:74). A decade later John Raymer avowed that Fugard `had almost single-handedly revitalised the moribund South African theatre and remain[ed] unchallenged as South Africa's most illustrious contribution to world theatre' (1976:1). Derek Cohen, for his part, predicted that Fugard could be assured of a place in dramatic history (1977:74). The time that has passed since then has not only proved this prediction true but has added to Fugard's prestige. Nadine Gordimer affirms that `significant South African drama in English has been created, single-handed, by Athol Fugard' (quoted in Vandenbroucke 1986:273), and *Time* magazine has hailed him as the greatest active playwright in English (Brink 1990:75). His plays have been staged in various parts of the world. In fact, according to a television programme broadcast by the S.A.B.C. in September 1998, his plays are the second most-frequently performed after Shakespeare's in the United States. His works have been translated into a number of languages, among them French, Dutch and Afrikaans.

The reason why Fugard's dramas have won international acclaim, in Vivier's opinion, is that they fuse `all the divided and diverse aspects of South African Theatre' (1983:23) and reflect `African experience on both sides of the colour line' (1983:62), tapping the tensions of an existence under a contradictory and unjust government (1983:81), and in the process, shattering the `conspiracy of silence' that surrounded the lives of Black South Africans (1983:72). Temple Hauptfleisch adds in this respect that the dramatist accomplishes the integration of

> the expressiveness and the directness of the Afrikaans Theatre, the universality of the English language and the searing experience and unconventionality of the Black Theatre. Therefore, Fugard epitomises and is the initiator of a long sought after S.A. playwriting tradition - an expression of who and what we really are. (Quoted in Vivier 1983:23)

From this it is clear that Fugard's contribution to theatre cannot be overlooked,

and is worthy of close investigation. The place his works occupy in the context of South African drama is discussed in Appendix B of this dissertation.

Since Fugard is known to have been influenced by existentialist writers and their thinking permeates his oeuvre, this study will consider his plays from an existentialist perspective, with particular reference to the themes of choice and change and their relation to identity and meaning.

The philosophy of existentialism emerged from a deeply felt concern with the meaning of individual existence (Natanson quoted in Swart 1983:11). In terms of this theory, individuals define their identity and realise their potential by making choices (Grimsley 1967:33). A choice, however, calls for the recognition of personal responsibility and exposes humans to their isolated state in existence (Yalom 1980:319) - which, according to Erich Fromm, is the `primary source of anxiety' (in Yalom 1980:357). This explains why humans tend to transfer authorship to others (Yalom 1980:230).

Yalom deems death to be the `primordial fount of anxiety' and psychopathology (1980:29, 188). As is the case with existential isolation, one has to contemplate the transience of everything. Then one's outlook on life changes and one can appreciate life more fully (1980:31). The reward is a sense of meaningfulness (Bugental 1976:2).

Meaning may be eclipsed at times by the situation in which one finds oneself, as Camus and Sartre (in Yalom 1980:431) aver. In the face of the indifferent emptiness of the world (Peck 1992:70), there are still two choices available for human beings: either to forge meaning for themselves (Camus and Sartre in Yalom 1980:431) or to change their attitude towards despair and learn to value it (Yalom 1980:427-8). In doing so they can rise above their senseless existences (Walder 1984:53).

Because existentialist theory emphasises waiting and enduring (Peck 1992:70), it affords a useful frame of reference for dealing with South Africa in an apartheid

context, in which the oppressed could only wait (Gussow 1981:5) while others turned a deaf ear to their cry for freedom.

Major influences on his work will then be followed by a more detailed discussion of existentialist philosophy and psychology and their relevance to this study.

Athol Fugard has said that much of what he writes is autobiographical (Raymer 1976:2). His **career**, against the political context of the time, has a bearing on the existentialist concepts to be examined, and will be considered in Appendix A . Next follows a brief discussion of the political background to and critical reception of his work.

Political background to the plays

For information on the political context for Fugard's plays, I owe much to Russell Vandenbroucke's *Truths the hand can touch* (1986:282-287), Judylee Vivier's *Athol Fugard as Creator: Some Aspects of Fugard's Process as a Playwright and Director in the South African Context* (1983) and Nicolas Visser's article, `Drama and Politics in a State of Emergency: Athol Fugard's "*My Children! My Africa!*" in *Twentieth-century Literature* (1993:486-502).

Much has been written about South Africa's exclusive system of governance and jurisprudence, the cause of international censorship, consumer and sports boycotts as well as local unrest manifesting itself in a variety of ways. These ranged from strikes, race riots, urban guerilla actions, stonings and a host of other forms of violence and crime to passive resistance, protest journalism and literature, and political theatre (Mshengu 1982:171). Though racism had existed from the time of South Africa's settlement by Europeans, `it operated in a sporadic and ill-defined manner until 1948', when the National Party gained ascendancy (Vandenbroucke 1986:286). Then, apartheid (or the separate development of races), a term coined in 1929, was elevated to an ideology and an official state policy of total segregation on each level of daily life. This state policy begat scores of statutes, turning South Africa into a police state. It brought hardship and

misery to the black people who were deprived of any political power, including the right to vote and the right to parliamentary representation, while whites enjoyed all the benefits and became more prosperous.

Apartheid legislation affected all aspects of life. All persons were assigned to racial categories and no mobility among the various categories was allowed. Sexual relations or marriage between white, `Coloured' and black people was prohibited. Together with segregation in public places, residential and commercial segregation was imposed, even if this meant breaking down the houses of Africans and `Coloureds', packing their belongings into trucks and removing them to other areas. Africans could not live in the city, but had to stay in townships or locations; moreover, permanent residence in the urban areas was restricted 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. Should they want to live somewhere else, their `reference' or pass books, which they had to carry on their person at all times (failure to produce it constituted a criminal offence), had to be stamped by government officials. Any form of criticism of the government was criminalised, even if that meant only being in possession of banned literature, distributing pamphlets or belonging to banned organisations. Individuals convicted of threatening the peace and inciting others to violence could be repeatedly detained for ninety days without charge and court order, without appeal or trial, and could incur anything from steep fines and corporal punishment to long, even indefinite prison sentences. Lastly, individuals furthering the aims of `Communism' were placed under house arrest or banned for up to five years.

A more detailed description of the statutes passed during the apartheid regime in South Africa and the consequences these statutes had, may be found in Appendix C.

Critics and politics

Critics have differing expectations about how reality should be reflected. Bowker explains that literary traditionalists have an ahistorical approach and reflect on universal experiences and values. Humanists, again, demand an `aesthetic distance between the text and historical context'. For Marxist critics the historical setting is of consequence and the `authority of the experience [should] outweigh [the text's] transformation into an art object' (1990:4). Literary traditionalists and humanists are interested in the `relationship between literature and history only to the extent that it affects the status quo' (1990:4). Marxist theorists, again, give a political interpretation to Fugard's dramas and even read him as a Marxian or deconstructionist portraitist, whereas other critics see him as a `traditional liberal or even conservative analyst ... perceiving the economic structure of the country and its class relations as central, but not exclusive elements in the making of its pain' (Amato 1984:204). Amato even advances the notion that Fugard's plays leave one's `political universe intact' (1984:204).

It follows that authors and critics are confronted with an overwhelming social context and post-structural critical situation. In this context and situation no one discipline or discourse should be granted a privileged claim to primacy.

It is indisputable that all artists are influenced to a greater or lesser extent by their milieu. Vivier notes that `a theatre tradition ... encompass[es] the language, the beliefs, the politics and the way of life which is practised by a particular culture' (1983:1) since `all theatre has some social relevance because there are always social implications in a dramatic situation' (44). Ian Steadman furthermore is of the opinion that `drama and theatre are fertilised in space and time' (quoted in Vivier 1983:44), and Hermassi that theatre cannot be `individualised' out of its socio-political context (in Vivier 1983:202).

Divorcing drama from its context is also not Fugard's intention. `Having once proclaimed his "regional" affinities to be the backbone of his literary creation' (Seidenspinner 1986:312), his subject matter is derived from his socio-political and socio-economic environment and the political pressures that are integral to it.

The majority of Fugard's works expose a `microcosm of South Africa's explosive racial situation, revealing life under the prevailing system of oppression' (Green 1976:163).. Robert Green's view is that `art produced in such hostile circumstances must be vulnerable to political temptations and aesthetic dangers which are in equal measure aesthetic temptations and political dangers' (1976:167).

It is especially the critics who fall prey to these political temptations and aesthetic dangers. Some maintain that Fugard's dramas must be read only as agitprop works denouncing the prevailing system of oppression in South Africa, and that a failure to stress the politics of these society-related statements would render them meaningless (Walder 1984:18). Russell Vandenbroucke declares that this not only does a disservice to the plays - as the use of `political' often implies a limitation in a work of art - but also exposes the prevailing misconceptions about the relationship between `politics' and art (1986:90).

Other reviewers, again, who evaluate the plays not on own merit, but on the basis of their personal preconception of what art `should' be (Vandenbroucke 1992:311), upbraid the playwright for not making race the focus of his plays but human relationships (Brink 1990:75), that is, they take him amiss for an inadequate liberal and indeterminate political vision and his `unwillingness to reduce [his country's] dilemma to a conflict of right and wrong, of free-thinking Truth battling against dogmatic Evil' (Durbach 1987:16). As Brink puts it, these critics hold that the disguise of the political statement through play-acting is `a withdrawal into the comparative safety' of an aesthetic and/or existential response (1993:444).

Lewis Nkosi (1968), Hilary Seymour (1980) and Mshengu (1982) are three of these reviewers. All three `pinpoint a tendency in Fugard to universalise and to ignore the specificities of the South African context' (Holloway 1993:36), so contributing to the preservation of the status quo (Walder 1984:55). These writers also deem the emphasis the artist places on human dignity and noble endurance, and the liberal appeals he makes to notions of justice and decency, as weaknesses in his work. Seymour identifies `the promotion of humanitarian

ideals, reformist as opposed to revolutionary messages, the use of everyman figures or universal types in a limited socio-historical context, and the attachment of great importance to individual morality, as particularly limiting to the plays' political function' (quoted in Holloway 1993:37). To her, the accentuation of individual character - rather than class and economic position - is inadequate given the outrages occurring every day in South Africa (in Holloway 1993:36). This assumption of Seymour's is clearly based on the `Marxist presupposition that a mere indictment of the apartheid system is insufficient'; dramas `raising consciousness of oppression should indicate progressive ways forward in terms of class struggle' (Holloway 1993:38).

Zakes Mda shares Hilary Seymour's perspective. He suggests that the dramatist leaves no room for hope as he seems to say that `South Africa is a terrible place but cannot be otherwise' (quoted in Holloway 1993:38). Peck agrees with Mda and Seymour when he posits that Fugard's pessimism is often `so extreme that apartheid becomes part of the absurd human condition' (1992:71). Mda adds that the author does not feel bound to disclose `the sources of the suffering he attempts to depict ... and work out ways of overcoming it, but considers it sufficient that he should indicate its existence' (quoted in Holloway 1993:38).

Mda reports that the plays of sole authorship, in particular, are not a true reflection of the experiences of the people as they do not depict the oppressive aspects of South Africa's exclusive system of governance and jurisprudence (quoted in Holloway 1993:38). Amato quotes from an anonymous article, entitled `Art and Revolution in South Africa: The Theatre of Athol Fugard'[1], which states: `Fugard's opposition to apartheid confines itself to an indictment of racialism but not of the exploitative and destructive nature of capitalism as it operates in South Africa' (1984:203).

The rationale for this negative viewpoint of the playwright is supplied by Mshengu. Mshengu explains that while Fugard, as an Afrikaans speaker, has access to the language and culture of the `Coloureds' in South Africa and, as an English

[1] This article was distributed at the Conference on *Culture and*

speaker, to that of educated Black Africans, his efforts to transcend racial segregation by developing contact with black South Africans have been confined in the main to contact with educated English speakers in white areas, that is, with the intermediate classes of the black African group (1982:174). That the `life and culture of the black majority are inaccessible to him' (1982:174)[2] is not only due to his inability to speak any of the indigenous African languages but to also his race and class. Fugard himself lists Grotowski, Camus, Beckett, Brecht and Sartre among his influences, but `makes no mention of Fanon, Cabral, Nkrumah, Nyerere, Achebe or Ngugi' (1982:175). Therefore, Mshengu's conviction is that the playwright does not understand the true nature of the struggle of the majority, and that his version of `"the human condition" in South Africa is partial' (1982:171).

Es'kia Mphahlele does not mince matters. According to him, Fugard's politics `stink' because `... a white man speaks for the African' (quoted in Vandenbroucke 1992:311). Fugard's reply to those who think that his race disqualifies him from writing truthfully about blacks: `If the nature of human experience changes with a man's skin colour, then the racists have been right all along' (quoted by Marks in Vandenbroucke 1992:311).

Another critic of significance, Dennis Walder, concurs with Amato and Mphahlele that Fugard `sees things from the liberal point of view, and is unable to avoid that' (1984:125). Fugard's development furthermore mirrors the white liberal's failure to effect significant political change in South Africa, because he `too often retreats into self-scrutiny, fantasy, an obsession with the psychopathology of the isolated consciousness' (1984:100). Fugard's collaborator on the workshop plays, John Kani, seconds Walder by affirming that Fugard's `sympathy is nothing else but an extension of the imagination' (quoted in Weales 1978:2).

Resistance held in Gaborone, Botswana, in 1982.

[2] Probably for the sake of his argument, Amato does not cite the collaboration with The Serpent Players and the instrumental role this group of actors played in the development of the dramatist, as well as the fact that this collaboration was highly unusual in its time.

Taking these views into account, it appears that Fugard's failure to make race instead of relations (Brink 1990:75) his sole focal point inflamed both white and black left-wing critics. The latter were persuaded that even though his work has profound insight into human nature (Nkosi in O'Sheel 1978:76), an `imaginative response was inappropriate and irrelevant' in his social situation (Bowker 1990:3). What is appropriate is that he educate the world about what goes on in his country (Raymer 1976:2).

However, there are as many opinions as there are critics. Stephen Gray, for one, states that `the assumption that the politics in a Fugard play is an overlay, and that the human condition is somehow deeper, more profound and so absolute it is free of man-made laws and injustices, simply does not pertain in Fugard's world-view. Politics at all strata intersect within Fugard's characters at the roots of personality...' (1982:27). Mshengu points out that `by showing the human effects of racial legislation in South Africa [Fugard] effectively demonstrates its inhuman nature' (1982:171), and Mel Gussow asserts that the dramatist's plays make `such powerful political statements - they prove the validity of art as a social instrument' (1982:94).

In spite of his frequent harsh comments on the `evils' of the South African political system (Seidenspinner 1986:108), Fugard's plays will probably be a bitter disappointment to those expecting an outright condemnation of Afrikanerdom and the Nationalist regime. As the author himself makes known, `if anybody in an audience for one of my plays sits there expecting that I am going to make a political statement, or give a message, or lay out a blueprint for a better and juster South Africa, they are going to be disappointed' (1993:385).

Although regionalism is one of the `mainstay[s] of [Fugard's] motivation' (Seidenspinner 1986:219), most of his works being `squarely set in South Africa' (Collins 1983:371), he firmly refutes the label of political pamphleteer, stating that he finds most protest theatre boring. In his opinion, theatre is powerful enough without political pamphlets. This induces him to pay no regard to the message and concern himself only with the story (Fugard interviewed by Fourie 1997:5).

He cannot but be a story-teller (Fugard 1993:385). Russell Vandenbroucke avers that those who malign his plays for being individualistic, despairing, uninspiring, anti-revolutionary, and so on, assume that Fugard could `write another kind of play', that he could abandon his vision and trade it in `for a credo compatible' with that of the critics (1992:311). As the dramatist avows: `the moment I start to function on the level of political analysis, I think flatly, I think superficially - the magic goes out' (quoted in Amato 1984:204) and what he then writes lands up in the wastepaper basket (Fugard interviewed by Brink 1990:77-8).

On this score, the playwright is convinced that a duty may not be imposed on the writer from outside (Foley 1994:64). In this way he challenges Ernst Fischer's description of an artist as `commissioned by his society' (Seidenspinner 1986:185). His own `approach to writing, directing and acting is emotional and intuitive rather than intellectual' (Vivier 1983:101). As he puts it,

> ... what I'm out to provide an audience with is an emotional experience, not an intellectual one. Obviously ideas are involved, but my target is an emotional experience. I write and act and direct correspondingly. (Interviewed by Vivier 1983:188)

Foisting agendas on artists will limit theatre to one thing, the fulfilment of a revolutionary role, whereas it must remain multi-faceted (Warman in Vivier 1983:3). In Fugard's opinion, vociferous, strident protest writing will not survive as living literature (an idea which has also achieved currency in the post-apartheid era). Radical resistance literature has to make clear statements, and, for this reason, ambiguity, contradictions and paradox, the elements which enrich literature, are neglected (Fugard quoted in Foley 1994:63). In trying to be politically symbolic, resistance literature becomes `distant from the real life of human individuals', `dry and lifeless' (Fugard quoted in Foley 1994:68). Making a direct social commitment instead of writing from personal integrity and experience (Seidenspinner 1986:149) is set down by the dramatist as `killing one's soul' (interviewed by Brink 1990:78). Theatre, too, dies when `academics, philosophers, critics and politicians try to create agendas for art' (Fugard interviewed by Fourie 1997:5) based on their preconceptions of what art `should' be (Vandenbroucke 1992:311).

This compels him to declare that the artist's inspiration must come from within (interviewed by Brink 1990:77). His response to an image is subjective and emotional rather than rational and intellectual (Vivier 1983:101) and his dramas make `no concessions, either to fame and fortune abroad or to the dictates of authorities at home: either to the apostles of apartheid or to the leaders of the struggle who wish to summon up the arts as "instruments of liberation"' (Fugard interviewed by Brink 1990:76).

In fact, the artist has always `aimed at transcending the "merely" socio-political' (Brink 1993:439). In spite of the fact that his dramas are `inevitably political because of the nature of the South African context in which he writes' (Vivier 1983:80), he has never been a `"dissident" writer of his own accord or ... a pamphleteer for a certain cause' (Seidenspinner 1986:333). For example, in the seven-page introduction that precedes the three *Statements* works, he does not make a `single reference to [the plays'] ideological or socio-political context' (Brink 1993:439). He speaks instead of a relationship with himself and of self-exploration, and vows that he cannot `turn that necessary area of secrecy in [himself] into a public relationship with South Africa' (Walder 1984:27). That is to say, his `testimony is personal, and immediate; what matters to him is the individual experience' (1984:126) and not the education of the world (Raymer 1976:2). As he professes: `I try to celebrate the human spirit - its capacity to create, its capacity to endure, its capacity to forgive, its capacity to love, even though every conceivable barrier is set up to thwart the act of loving' (1993:390). Because he considers himself to be a humanitarian and a craftsman first, he finds the perception of himself as a political playwright so disturbing.

This dissertation will not deny that the South African framework has indeed had a great impact on Athol Fugard's works. Although he eschews the `label of political writer' (Post 1985:3), the `complexity of his position as a South African white liberal writer demands that his works be related to his socio-economic and political context' (Seidenspinner 1986:107). Apart from this, most of his writings do make strong political statements and `the reality of a statutory inhumanity is a ceaseless murmur at the level of their sub-texts' (Green 1976:168). Julien Mitchell surmises that `the truth being told is so saturated in politics that politics never has to be

mentioned' (quoted in Post 1985:3). Fugard himself is conscious that the `notion of telling a story in South Africa and not being political is naïve since politics is inscribed in everything one does in South Africa'. Nevertheless, he still insists, `politics is not my focus as I start out' (1993:386). His stage characters are the `ugly', `unloved', nameless' and `destitute' rather than the victims of racial oppression (Seidenspinner 1986:234) and his themes are of universal relevance: the search for identity, deception, human relationships, the breakdown of communication, man's often incredible inhumanity to his fellow man, the feeling of isolation and `lostness', the inexorability of time passing, and death (Vivier 1983:113 & Raymer 1976:2).

This is so since art, according to the author, is incapable of changing people: Only life can do that (in Vandenbroucke 1984:45). Since `ambiguity of expression' reflects the nature of life and is `superior to singleness of meaning' (Fugard quoted in Walder 1984:111), to put an exclusively political construction on art is impossible.

Thus, although regional material is used and the social and political aspects of South African existence are represented, Fugard transcends the particulars of the setting so that it serves only as a backdrop for the treatment of subjects of general relevance and significance, such as the human being's feeling of isolation, lostness and despair, and his/her struggle for identity, community, dignity and meaning (Vandenbroucke 1984:48), - in a nutshell, for the significance of life (Collins 1983:371). Social and political tensions which surface during the course of the dramas are but the `byproducts and outgrowths of personal and psychic interaction' (Wertheim 1988:211), that is, the psychodynamics of human relationships. The playwright therefore recreates the tragedy of his country together with the tragedy of the world. While he laments the attitudes, values and laws of apartheid South Africa, he also mourns the `pathetic inadequacies of individual "politics" in general' (Raymer 1976:4). Thus, his plays do not renounce `socio-political action in favour of an aesthetic and/or existential response' (Brink 1993:450-1), but are individual as well as society-related statements (Seidenspinner 1986:284).

The critics who argue for interpreting Fugard's output as an ongoing study in politics have to view his characters as one-dimensional mouthpieces for his ideology (Vivier 1983:56-7) who, as a result, are incapable of choosing alternative lifestyles. This is not the case. In the dramas, `interest in individual character and personal truth' overrides symbolic, metaphoric and political resonances, including the relation of the individual to class and the investigation of the nature of social associations in a historical and political perspective (Seymour 1980:278). Moreover, the delineation of the *dramatis personae* is most realistic, showing the playwright's profound insight into the human mind (Swart 1983:18).

Characters are often presented as ontologically bewildered (Vivier 1983:29) and alienated from their fellow human creatures. In some instances these characters try to establish contact with others and engage in communication with them - the `fundamental task' before them (Seidenspinner 1986:174), but the psychological games they play and the methods they use to manoeuvre themselves into positions of power often induce a breakdown of communication and only serve to isolate them further (Swart 1983:18); the outcome is an identity crisis.

In order to discover a consistent identity, the personae `rummag[e] into their histories' (Foster 1982:221), explore the memories and guilts of their childhood and youth (as recollecting the past may shed light on the present [Swart 1983:72]), and probe one another. Sometimes `psychological exorcisms and traumatic revelations' ensue (1983:48) and the characters recognise themselves and their fragmented society for who and what these really are. Like *The Road to Mecca*'s Miss Helen, they come to the conclusion that they do have choices and, by exercising these, display dignity even in the most inhibiting milieu. In this way they invest their futile existences with some significance. Swart puts it as follows: their `hopes of surviving with dignity ... intact and their desperate hunger for justice and clarity ... establish their absurdity, but also their nobility' (1983:7) and that of humans everywhere (Collins 1983:371).

The focus of the research will be on characters who accept their past, seize the options the present sets before them and resolve to shape their future destinies in order to survive their almost intolerable burden, in some instances even escaping

and transcending the voids of their current existences. The characters who are apprehensive of change, owing to an inhibiting ideology or their own nature, and remain trapped in circular, futile existences will be contrasted with the characters who grasp the opportunity to change.

It has been established that Fugard's works, although recreating the `tragedy of South Africa' (Raymer 1976:2), transcend the particulars of their setting to be about people in archetypal situations (1976:2) and become relevant to the universal dilemma of human existence (Vivier 1983:57). Therefore they are far `too complex (and) too rich' to be simply reduced to the category of ideological dramas (1983:59). For this reason, it is crucial to get `beyond crude ideologically-based literary criticism which is more expressive of the critic than of the author' (Munro 1982:13).

Even after the demise of apartheid, Fugard has shown reluctance to `change art into a propaganda machine of the Reconstruction and Development Programme of the A.N.C.' (Raghavan 1995:56). He avers that he refuses to `take orders from a cultural commissar' (Brink 1990:78), and will not advance a particular, narrow political cause by delivering `didactic, propagandistic (Marxist) literature' that toes a party line and thumps a `particular political drum' (quoted in Foley 1994:63). He regards it as his responsibility to `remain vigilant on behalf of the people' (Raghavan 1995:56), to keep on questioning life and theories. Lastly, he promises to remain what he has always been, a `person with both artistic integrity and a social conscience' (Brink 1993:440).

Influences on Fugard

During his career as a dramatist, Athol Fugard has been influenced by several individuals, theories and schools of thought. These will be discussed with a view to exploring how they have shaped the playwright's perception of the notions of identity, meaning, choice and change.

As a philosophy student at the University of Cape Town, Fugard came into contact

with existentialism when he studied under the Catholic professor of Ethics, Martin Versfeld. `The notion of dialogue [was] central to Versfeld: how it might be possible to communicate with, indeed love, one another, without exploitation' (Walder 1984:21). So, like Fugard, Versfeld was `obsessed with the possibility of love in a hate-ridden country' (Walder 1984:21).

John Raymer contends that `everything Fugard has written is realistic drama; sometimes it is poetic realism and sometimes it is straight "slice-of-life" realism' (1976:1). In this Fugard's inspiration came from William Faulkner, Tennesssee Williams and John Synge.

Faulkner explores general conflicts within a specificity of time and place. The region is a `starting point and locus' for his stories (Vandenbroucke 1986:282). Fugard's comment on the Southern author is `Thank God I've read my ... William Faulkner' (interviewed by Fourie 1997:5). Because Faulkner took `very simple, very specific stories, and ... made astonishing literature out of it (*sic*) ... (quoted in Vandenbroucke 1986:266); `he gave me [Fugard] total security to turn around and look at the specifics, the humble specifics of an Eastern Province world - well, made me secure in my love of those specifics, made me hand myself over to my love, love of a region, of a place, of my passion for it' (Fugard interviewed by Hough 1982:126). In short, Faulkner, steeped as he was in his milieu, as were Williams and Synge, made Fugard recognise that there is enough in South Africa to `tell a good story', a story that, by virtue of its regionalism becomes universal (Fugard interviewed by Fourie 1997:5). Plays such as *Boesman and Lena*, which draw `on the "code" of his time and on the "rhythm" of life that surrounds him' (Seidenspinner 1986:228), demonstrate the regional approach.

It is also Lena who attracts attention to another similarity between Faulkner and Fugard: the existential conviction that humanity is `capable of more than mere endurance'. In fact, an individual can prevail `because he has ... a spirit ... capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance' (Fugard quoted in Collins 1983:370), a spirit that will not be defeated by its predicament.

The Serpent Players of New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, and their township

audiences, together with the ideas of Polish director, Jerzy Grotowsky, `mark a turning point in [Fugard's] career' (Raymer 1976:228). Fugard cites Grotowski as his *agent provocateur* (1976:229); he found Grotowsky's ideas `enormously provocative'.

Grotowski experimented with a new theatrical language: the creative potential of his actors (Walder 1984:78). The actors are no longer passive vessels holding whatever the playwright puts into them, but they are creators, who, after being given a basic object, actively fashion a story around it (Raymer 1976:228). In his treatise, *Towards a Poor Theatre*, Grotowski expounds:

> If the actor, by setting himself a challenge, publicly challenges others, and through excess, profanation, and outrageous sacrilege reveals himself by casting off his everyday mask, he makes it possible for the spectator to undertake a similar process of self-penetration.... The performer engages in a sort of psychic conflict with the spectator. (Quoted in O'Sheel 1978:74)

In short, the actor sacrifices himself to the spectators so as to produce in them a `similar process of psychic discovery - the whole event to take on the intensity and significance of a religious ritual' (Walder 1984:79). This was the final objective towards which Grotowski worked (Vivier 1983:164).

Fugard's affinity for Jerzy Grotowski's actor's theatre (Vivier 1983:160) was evident as early as 1961 when he formulated his theory of `the pure theatre experience':

> ... the actor and the stage, the actor on the stage. Around him is space, to be filled and defined by movement and gesture: around him is also silence to be filled with meaning, using words and sounds, and at moments when all else fails him, including the words, the silence itself.... The cathartic possibility in theatre needs nothing more than the actor and the stage. (Quoted in Walder 1984:12)

In essence, the three dimensions, space, time and silence, comprise the `basic elements in which the actor operates' (Vivier 1983:159). Space and silence is nothingness; `the actor's confrontation with our being and nothingness' (Benson

quoted in Swart 1983:11).[3] The end product of this confrontation is an `existential moment of lonely spiritual freedom, in a particular place at a particular time' (Walder 1984:12).

In the early seventies Fugard then abandoned the writer's supremacy together with the complete, `prefabricated' text ordinarily handed to performers at the outset of rehearsals (Green 1976:170). In place of a conventional, `sacred' script with one identifiable author, he gave them, as in *The Coat* and *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, what he called a `mandate', not the final plotted and structured version of a text but a `cluster of images' (1976:170) on which all collaborate while the author observes. During rehearsals the actors are subjected to various forms of silence and seclusion until they begin to fill the silence with meaningful sound and action. In creating their own texts, they are under `no constraint from the exigencies of (a pre-existing) plot and sequential dramatic logic' (1976:170) but are free to improvise. The actors - to Fugard, `the most significant and vital "ingredient" of a theatrical experience' (Vivier 1983:84) - authenticate their roles (Walder 1984:3) by relating them to their own unique truths, experiences, history, personality, even the `very shape of their bodies' (1984:78) and communicate these to a live audience with whom they have an immediate and direct relationship. This is `poor' theatre as opposed to `pure theatre', and Dennis Walder is certain that `such a theatre *is* capable of bearing witness' (1984:95).

In attempting to utilise the full potential of the actors, Grotowski made use of only minimal staging. For Fugard the `trappings of the institutionalised, illusionistic theatre - buildings, props, costumes, lighting and so on' - have always been of interest only `in so far as they aid the primary function of drama: to find the "truth" of the "living moment"' (Fugard quoted in Walder 1984:4). Because he uses as few such resources as possible, Fugard's dramas have never been part of the conventional, mainstream theatre; in this way they implicitly challenge the prevailing assumptions about theatre in general.

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[3] Swart (1983:11) comments that the concepts of being, nothingness and meaninglessness confirm that Fugard's dramatic perspective is that of an existentialist.

Fugard has said that he admires Samuel Beckett more than any other dramatist (Raymer 1976:237). This Irish post-war existentialist dramatist is acclaimed by him as `a poet in the theatre' (Fugard quoted in Maclennan 1982:221). Fugard came into contact with Beckett's works when he directed a black cast in a Johannesburg production of *Waiting for Godot* in the autumn of 1962, and himself in June 1967 in *Krapp's Last Tape*. After having read *Malone Dies*, he confessed:

> I wanted to start writing again the moment I put it down. Beckett's greatness doesn't intimidate me. I don't know how it works - but he makes me want to work.... I suppose it's because I really understand, emotionally, and this cannot but give me power and energy and faith. (Quoted in Vandenbroucke 1984:47)

Fugard senses a strong kinship with Beckett. In the latter's works he discerns a reduction of all problems to the `borderline situation of being human' (Huber 1989:50). The South African dramatist feels that Beckett succeeds in `making man naked again' (quoted in Benson 1983:67) by portraying the disoriented, dislocated, alienated, bruised and absurd carnality of `estranged being(s) in an alien universe' (Swart 1983:2). These `socially undefined and clownish pieces of humanity', wander aimlessly, endlessly around (Raymer 1976:236). They `divert their fears to the physical concern with the "right place" and the "right time"' (Fugard quoted in Seidenspinner 1986:275), and the right somebody or something to furnish them with an identity and give meaning to their lives. Yet, all they are left with in the end is a sense of all-encompassing and eternal despairing futility. To a certain degree, the lot of Beckett's personae is similar to the social and political position of black South Africans: all the oppressed can do is to wait for the miracle of emancipation which never seems to come. According to Mel Gussow (1981:5), the Irish writer's works could therefore be read as an objective correlative of the black person's dilemma in a `country where the colour of the skin decides its citizens' social opportunities and where a lack of pigmentation is held to be a measure of superiority' (Seidenspinner 1986:252).

It is therefore not surprising that soon after Fugard's rise to fame, critics drew parallels between his work and Beckett's. Fugard's allegiance to the Irish

playwright is confirmed by his search for simplicity and purity (Vandenbroucke 1986:269). For instance, especially since *Boesman and Lena*, with its unity of time, place and action (Vivier 1983:35), his works have dispensed with a conventional plot with an `exposition and logical development through a climax to a dénouement' (Hough 1979:29). As in *Waiting for Godot*, physical action is at a minimum; a static situation is the focal point. Fugard's dramas, furthermore, nearly all use sparse sets with a limited number of properties; these sets represent a drab, featureless and even spaceless, inhuman `wasteland' or no-man's-land which does not seem to have `any inherent and consistent purpose, justice or value' (Swart 1983:6). The dank, dingy and `rubbish-strewn' settings (Raymer 1976:236, 141) are projections of the characters' state of mind, characters who are often in an `extreme situation' of metaphysical anguish (Vandenbroucke 1986:269), isolated and alienated, not only from others but also from their real natures, reason and reality. The decor contributes to the rendition of the misery, meaninglessness and irrationality of the `*condition humaine*' (Seidenspinner 1986:176) and existence. So does the repetitive and absurd language with its allusive connotations and the `taut and terse' dadaist dialogue (Raymer 1976:236) which serves the purpose of evasion instead of communication (Swart 1983:39).

Like Beckett, Fugard has a `penchant for one, two or three character' casts (Raymer 1976:236). *Boesman and Lena* and the brief one-act drama, *The Occupation*, like *Waiting for Godot*, feature a couple of tramps who carry their existential rubbish - dredged-up irrelevant memories of the past - with them (Vandenbroucke 1986:269).[4] These poverty-stricken social outcasts who do not amount to more than rubbish themselves (Raymer 1976:237) (the dehumanisation of people being an important Fugard theme [Seidenspinner 1986:186]) function as the embodiment of the alienation between individual and individual. Caught up in a state of anguished flux between time and eternity, they are not only homeless and friendless in a `virtual cosmic void' (Arthur 1992:10), but also without a stable

[4] As Marieken Swart (1983:72) notes, virtually all Fugard's characters try to establish a consistent identity through memory. This is because the past explains the present and remembering it may sustain one in the present.

identity and consequently `unpredictable in terms of a given psychological make-up' (Hough 1979:30).

The `endless cross-talk' (Walder 1984:55) in which the human derelicts, of especially the three Port Elizabeth plays, engage together with the questions they ask, which are phrased in a jerky and fragmented fashion, is indicative of the fragmentation of their psyches at the same time as it is a desperate attempt to break free from the `maze' of their confusion (Seidenspinner 1986:332) and make sense of their existences. These questions are never satisfactorily answered, and, like the displaced vagabonds' conversations and actions, are only exercises in filling time and are ultimately pointless. The catalysts, persons appearing for a brief moment on the stage, make very little difference to the drifters' destinies. After these catalysts leave, the drifters just `"drift on", neither saved nor damned but left alone to face eternity' (Vandenbroucke 1986:269) - that is, the `ordeal of daily survival ... without hope' (Hewes quoted in Raymer 1976:236) - and the ineluctable absurdity of all matter in the universe.

It was especially Beckett's early plays that influenced Fugard, Huber avers (1989:50). In *Literator* (1989:51-3) Huber lists three motifs from *Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame* and *Krapp's Last Tape* which recur in Fugard's plays and determine their plot and structure. The first is the nexus motif: `a formula describing a close, complementary relationship between two characters', which is held to be both necessary - even vital - yet `inhibiting and threatening' (1989:51). The characters do not really belong together and fervently desire to go their separate ways, but they are unable to do so because, in their search for their selves, they need to have their existence affirmed by another person (Laing quoted in Hough 1979:32). Boesman and Lena, Morris and Zach, Millie and Ahlers and numerous others all find that they are each other's fate.

The second Beckettian motif Fugard employs is that of being possessed by the past. Characters feel that they are caught up in `the calamity of yesterday' (Beckett quoted in Huber 1989:51). Time, to them, is a repetitive, shapeless, unpredictable and interminable void which denies them access to, control of and ultimately deliverance from it (Brinkley 1988:360). They are `victims and

prisoners' of their past lives and are deformed by them (1988:359). In contrast to Beckett's characters, some of Fugard's personae confront their personal history and their wasted lives, so coming to terms with and emancipating themselves from these (Huber 1989:52). When linear time is interrupted by or substituted for circular time and habit, suffering is the outcome. Suffering, in turn, grants characters a vision of their own lot: their decay and death (Brinkley 1988:356, 362). Nonetheless, in the process they are rewarded by procuring an identity for themselves.

The third motif is the play or game-model (Huber 1989:52). In Fugard's dramas characters `play at enhancing dialogue in stichomythic brevity, or like children, they imagine, recreate and relive scenes and experiences from real life' (1989:52) or past incidents. These make-believe scenes are enlisted as time-killers or as a survival mechanism. Often they are revelatory enterprises which `acquire a therapeutic function' for the `marked and scarred' characters (Fugard quoted in Seidenspinner 1986:317) or `they suggest links with the world outside of the text' (Huber 1989:52), for example life under the `pain-inflicted bondage of South Africa's apartheid legislation' (O'Sheel 1978:71).

Relevance to the outside world is where Fugard and Beckett are in opposition. While it is easy to impose diverse frameworks onto Beckett's general and unspecified text, Fugard's purpose in writing is `more specific, more social (and) more political than Beckett's (Walder 1984:55). This lies at the root of his reliance on concrete details (with the exception of *Dimetos*) which `restricts and focuses one's perceptions so that it is difficult to see more than a single context' (McLuckie 1993:423). In other words, an audience can read its own world into *Waiting for Godot*, but it can read only Fugard's world out of *Boesman and Lena* (1993:423). This is because Fugard translates a `closed Beckett-like situation ... into a context in which the stage game finds its relevance' (Weales quoted in Raymer 1976:236) in a specific political regime. As he is committed to analysing `social and political injustices and their effects on the individual' (Swart 1983:6) he culls his material `from life and from encounters with real people' (Fugard quoted in Walder 1984:10) (as is apparent from the exact information which is supplied on his characters' spatial locale [McLuckie 1993:428]). As a consequence, Beckett is

domesticated, localised and regionalised (Walder 1984:55).

In contrast, neither spatial nor temporal data play a role in the Irish playwright's dramas. In this way a stark world is created which acts as a `universal metaphor for the absurd (and immutable) nature of existence in both the physical and metaphysical realms' (McLuckie 1993:428). Fugard, on the other hand, `defines absurdity as a condition resulting from the human power structures that govern life' (1993:428); it is specific to a certain social or political milieu. Absurdity is not a condition of life itself. It is only a `part of life, an obstacle to be overcome by an equitable awareness of the self and the other, and the other's reciprocation of this awareness' (1993:428). So `Fugard turns a blind eye to Beckett's nihilism or what he considers a starkly pessimistic world-view' (Huber 1989:53). In his works positive values, like compassion, solidarity with and love for fellow human beings, are prominent. Whereas Beckett's deprived and discarded *dramatis personae* (Seidenspinner 1968:164) are `reduced to thinghood' and even rubbish by their senseless surroundings (Raymer 1976:237), and have, `apart from existence itself, no conceivable justification for their lives' (Seidenspinner 1986:316), Fugard's are not defeated by their own predicament (1986:337) and transcend despair when they embrace `lurid consciousness' (Vandenbroucke 1986:268). This optimistic philosophy is closer in spirit to that of Albert Camus and is the reason for my not regarding Fugard as a true dramatist of the absurd.

Brecht's `message', like that of Fugard, is altogether more optimistic than Beckett's or Camus's. Brecht propounds, as Fugard does in particularly his later dramas, that reality is not a fate to be born into, but one to be modified (Brink 1993:451).

Fugard directed a production of Brecht's *Der Kaukasische Kreidekreis* (*The Caucasian Chalk Circle*) in Port Elizabeth (Brinkley 1988:363). His company of amateurs, the Serpent Players, felt that this particular play had `urgent relevance to the lives of the people in the township' (1988:163). Brecht (like Fugard) portrays the hardship of the working class, while critically and satirically reflecting on its socio-political origins.

Both Brecht and Fugard - at times - keep their audience at arm's length, turning sentimental identification into `alienation' or `distancing'. (*The Coat*'s `what if' situation demonstrates this technique.) George Bernard Shaw suggests that the `"alienation effect" aims to create the possibility of *catharsis interruptus*, with the purgation taking place outside the theatre in the social arena' (quoted in Foster 1982:207). Some of Fugard's works, thus, are indicative of his contact with Brecht.

Brecht differs from Beckett on another point: the concept of time. Whereas Beckett's characters reconcile themselves to mere repetition, Brecht adheres to the `Hegelian-Marxist linear concept of time' (Brinkley 1988:353). The German dramatist's characters can control time as it `consists of a series of causally related events' (1988:361). When time is disrupted and becomes anti-linear, the purpose is didactic: the *Verfremdungseffekts* (alienation effects) serve to stress `time's mutability by political engagement and to awaken consciousness and resolve in the spectator' (1988:362). Fugard's manipulation of time, however, is never directly didactic. He depicts time as an unrelenting, irresistible substance `working against man's best efforts to stop its destructiveness' (Raymer 1976:195). In short, as Dimetos puts it, `Time stinks' (51). Considered from another angle, time can also be a constructive force in that it is also redemptive (Raymer 1976:193-4).

Fugard further contrasts with Brecht in that he refuses to reconcile art with `Brecht's rigorous political maxim, which uncompromisingly states that "it's wrong to talk about trees because it's a kind of silence about injustice", a judgement that, if applied to the South African situation, would demand that apartheid itself be the object of artistic strategies' (Seidenspinner 1986:185). Fugard observes instead the effects of apartheid on its individual victims. In addition, his `faith in the healing nature of artistic self-creation betokens - even in his most highly politicised works - a return to the valuation of the aesthetic' (Brinkley 1988:364), a realm which the other two writers - but not Albert Camus - neglect.

Besides Beckett, Camus (1913-60) for Fugard can be singled out as the most influential source of inspiration (Huber 1989:51). It was Martin Versfeld, Fugard's

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lecturer at the University of Cape Town, who initiated his student's lifelong interest in this French existentialist philosopher and writer. Fugard has recorded in his *Notebooks*: it is `impossible to describe the excitement, the total sympathy that exists for me with Camus's thinking. In the harsh but lucid world of his writing I seem to have found, for the first time, my true climate' (quoted in Seidenspinner 1986:179). Moreover, `Reading Camus is like finding, and for the first time, a man speaking my own language' (quoted in Vandenbroucke 1984:48).

Perhaps Fugard experienced such a rapport with Camus because both he and the French existentialist philosopher and writer were `raised in European cultures transplanted to Africa', in families with dominant women (Vandenbroucke 1986:267). Both belonged to the `relatively underprivileged sector' of the white community, with the South African being a member of the `lower middle class, verging on "poor white"' (Walder 1984:6). Both became journalists and wrote and directed for amateur theatre companies founded with their assistance (Vandenbroucke 1986:267). Fugard was labelled a traitor for objecting to the oppression of South Africa's indigenous people, yet insisted on staying. Camus, a radical left-wing political thinker, was exiled because of his `"liberal" proposals with regard to the Algerian struggle for independence' (Peck 1992:81).

Camus's and Fugard's perceptions of the role of the artist are also similar. Camus records in *Resistance, Rebellion and Death* (as translated by Justin O'Brien): `The world I live in is loathsome to me, but I feel one with the men who suffer in it... [One] ambition that ought to belong to all writers: to bear witness and shout aloud, every time it is possible, insofar as our talent allows, for those who are enslaved as we are', that is, those who live in `poverty ... among vain or humble people' (quoted in Peck 1992:70). Fugard's purpose in playwriting, similarly, is to `witness as "truthfully" as [he] can' to the lives of the nameless, dispossessed and destitute in his modest `little corner of the world' (Benson quoted in Vivier 1983:52). So, while the works of the South African dramatist are set in the Eastern Cape region and the characters members of the `poor white', `Coloured' and occasionally African section of the community, Camus's centre on Algeria and this North African country's white colonisers and despised local slaves (Walder

1984:6).[5]

Camus records in his *Notebooks*:

> Can one be moved by a city where nothing attracts the mind, where the very ugliness is anonymous, where the past is reduced to nothing? Emptiness, boredom, an indifferent sky, what are the charms of such places?

`His answer is Fugard's too: "Doubtless solitude and, perhaps, the human creature"' (quoted in Walder 1984:53). Both writers then ponder the plight of the human creature, whom they view as a lone transcendent being (Yalom 1980:427) in search of consciousness, intelligibility, and revelation, trapped as s/he is amid the devastating conditions of a meaningless, valueless, indifferent and empty world (Raymer 1976:233). Camus's solution (and perhaps Fugard's) is that humans alter their attitude and fashion a life meaning for themselves. In Yalom's words, they are to see themselves soberly and confront the `very vortex of meaninglessness' (1980:427-8) until they arrive at a posture of heroic nihilism, and are transformed into metaphors of human endurance and survival without self-pity. (Besides Lena, Hester in *Hello and Goodbye* and Miss Helen in *The Road to Mecca* come to mind here.) In order to attain to their full stature, characters should join forces and metaphysically rebel against their absurd condition. In brief, Camus's dictates for conduct (and changed conduct at that) encompass the concepts of courage, fraternity, love, dignified defiance, secular saintliness and a certain element of transcendence.

`"Overwhelmed" by Camus's writings during the years of creating the three Port Elizabeth plays (1960-8), Fugard follows him to the brink of despair, where, nevertheless, may be found "finally the only certainty, the flesh"' (quoted in Walder 1984:53). Living without the traditional certainties of religion or history, confronted by a vast, indifferent emptiness, and knowing there is no escape from an eternal absurd fate, some of the South African playwright's characters are still

[5] Interestingly enough, both Algeria and the winter-time Karoo are known for their brilliant, almost harsh, sunlight and `severe landscape' (Fugard in Brink 1990:77).

able to continue, to rise above their senseless existences and destinies by relying on the life meanings they have created for themselves or `truths the hand can touch' (a favourite phrase of Camus's)[6] (Walder 1984:53). One of these `truths' is that they, like *The Blood Knot*'s protagonists, `are indissolubly bound, one to the other, by ties of blood or love' (1984:53): `*je suis, donc nous sommes*' (I am, therefore we are) (Brink 1993:443).

Hence Camus stresses that `a literature of despair is a contradiction in terms'. All three of Fugard's Port Elizabeth plays - *Boesman and Lena*, *The Blood Knot*, *Hello and Goodbye* - also `hint (at) the possibility of survival, even joy' (Walder 1984:53). Fugard thus imitates the French author in his conversion from the absurd to a `courageous pessimism', a more `optimistic positivism', a `philosophy of endurance' and expectation `beyond nihilism' (Huber 1989:54, 50).

Camus and Fugard, however, differ in one respect. Camus hypothesises that the ideal tragedy illustrates `the conflict between two powers ... each of which wears the double mask of right and wrong, good and evil' (Camus quoted in Amato 1984:208). In this way he makes provision for taking pleasure in life in the constant `presence of death' (Peck 1992:70). Since he does not consider change to be attainable, Camus does not advocate revolution; in Seidenspinner's words, `his inverted activism permits the individual to ignore the impending catastrophe' and turn his attention to the burden lying before him (1986:178): the absurdity of the human condition and the universe (Walder 1984:55 & Peck 1992:70). Social and political structures are simply thrown into the bargain. Such detached existentialist philosophising derives from the French dramatist's `contempt for "propaganda plays"' (Amato 1984:208).

In contrast to Camus, Fugard is aware of a specific political context. Yet his creations are not really propagandist in nature (Amato 1984:208) (this has been discussed earlier in the dissertation). `For all the "external", even documentary detail of his [dramas, they] always demonstrate a deeply personal concern for the

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[6] *Truths the hand can touch* is also the title of Russell Vandenbroucke's book on Fugard.

[plight of] the "ordinary", anonymous, *little* people with whom [the author] most closely identifies' (Walder 1984:5).

Another influential playwright, Eugene O'Neill, like Fugard, took an interest in the average person who is a lonely `outsider' in a valueless world. This individual's lostness is the key to his/her humanity (Raymer 1976:233). Although the anxious sufferer yearns to belong, the search for security is never successful. This is the case, because, as Raymer indicates, the structures which could provide for a secure environment - `society, the authority of religion, of the state, of tradition' - have been invented by people themselves. They have no significance of their own `except by virtue of [human] existence' (1976:233). It follows that humans are answerable for fashioning their own values and destinies (Falk quoted in Raymer 1976:233).

Fugard has never commented overtly on O'Neill's attraction for him, yet the latter's existential outlook is unmistakable throughout his oeuvre, particularly in the early works (Raymer 1976:233). Stanley Kauffmann thinks of *Boesman and Lena* and *Hello and Goodbye* as but another long day's journey into a very dark night. `And the quintessential dynamics is like that in late O'Neill: drama not by the encounter of obstacle but by the stripping naked of lives' (quoted in Raymer 1976:234).

Fugard may not admit to O'Neill's appeal, but of Leo Tolstoy he says: He was my great hero in my reading youth, and he still is (interviewed by Fourie 1997:4). Like O'Neill, Camus and Beckett, the Russian writer also grappled for most of his life with the crisis of meaninglessness (Yalom 1980:419). He searched for some meaning that would not be destroyed by death but would transcend it and make him matter to posterity (1980:465). His final antidote to meaninglessness was to engage in life.

Fugard was influenced to a lesser extent by another Russian author, Anton Chekhov (1860-1904). Chekhov depicts the stagnant quality of the indolent rural gentry in Tsarist Russia. His characters do not escape from unsatisfactory conditions because the wish does not result in action.

Both Fugard's and Chekhov's plays feature domestic settings, family relationships, strong females and the influence parents exercise over their offspring even after their deaths (Vandenbroucke 1986:265). Some of their *dramatis personae* triumph in their endurance of the present - after futile attempts to flee into the past or future (1986:265) - and their acceptance of time as an `unrelenting, irresistible force' obviates their best efforts to check its destructiveness (Raymer 1976:194).

As far as plot is concerned, both Fugard's and Chekhov's consist of a series of concatenate `actions' (Vandenbroucke 1986:265) which are not really actions at all. The subtext is significant.

Another resemblance between the two writers is the critical misapprehension of their output due to an overemphasis on its social aspects. For example, Chekhov `has been called, and not only by Soviet critics, a precursor of the Revolution' (Vandenbroucke 1986:265), whereas he and the South African dramatist actually `cry out against human suffering everywhere' (to quote Collins [1983:371]) while focusing on specific individuals rooted in a particular time and place.

Like Chekhov and Fugard (not to forget O'Neill), Tennessee Williams also contemplated conflict and psychological barriers in close relationships. But `while Williams's protagonists are often paralysed emotionally by a traumatic experience and rely on illusions to survive', several of Fugard's `marked and scarred' personae (Fugard quoted in Seidenspinner 1986:317) `face their traumas and illusions squarely' (Heller 1993:477),[7] gain insight and grow psychologically.

[7] Hester from *Hello and Goodbye*, Helen and Elsa from *The Road to Mecca* and Frieda from *Statements after an Arrest under the Immorality Act* come to mind.

Existentialist philosophy and psychology

Fugard's regard for authors such as Camus and Beckett reveals his affinity for the tenets of existentialism. Since his plays will be examined from an existentialist perspective - with particular reference to the concepts of identity, meaning, choice and change - it is essential to inquire into the theory of existentialism.

`Existentialism was first propagated in Germany after the First World War' by Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger (who rejected the title `existentialist' [Grimsley 1967:9]). It was later popularised by the works of Jean-Paul Sartre (Swart 1983:10). In the seventies the realist philosopher John Wild observed that existentialism was the most influential school of contemporary thought in France and Western Germany (Bedford 1972:11).

Existentialism emphasises the Socratic idea, `know thyself' (Bedford 1972:260). We discover our identity by exercising choice. . As Sartre puts it: `We shall never apprehend ourselves except as a choice in the making' (1958:479). In the process of making a choice which has `validity for the own existence' (Grimsley 1967:33), the self is constituted and the `personality is consolidated' (Kierkegaard quoted in Grimsley 1967:25). In other words, when *Dasein* (Heidegger's term for being and being in the world) chooses itself, it grows and begins to live fully (Heidegger 1963:67).

Though there is no reliable guide or foreknowledge of a particular decision's outcome, everyone is `condemned' to choose through action (Peck 1972:76). Intention counts for little, only action counts (1992:76). In fact, `to "exist" means to "act" (Grimsley 1967:9) and through action [the] identity is defined' (Peck 1992:76).

Because humans have free will and free choice, full responsibility rests on them to both create and interpret their realities, to determine who they are at present and will be in future. Even though others may limit their freedom, they are still the authors of their own existences and in a position to influence their experiential worlds, alter or

interpret these differently if they cannot be changed. There are no compelling external situations; in spite of their social situation they are not morally impotent (Sartre 1947:289) and nothing foreign can ever determine who they are and how they live - in short, the reality of their lives (Bedford 1972:256).[8] In epitome, existentialism refutes Sigmund Freud's *à priori* theory of psychological determinism by the unconscious and the libido.

Some of Fugard's characters, however, do not trust their own judgement and, on this account, reject the freedom to exercise a choice. Like Queeny in *Nongogo*, they present themselves as `innocent victims' (Yalom's term 1980:224), relinquish responsibility for the consequences of their actions and act on others' `musts' instead of on their own `wants'. Having someone else assume authorship for them is comforting and reassuring because when they are not the agent of the action - and, by extension, the master of their existences - they may lay the blame on others or on unforeseen circumstances. The drawback is that these characters become alienated from their inner selves and can neither attain to their full potential nor infuse their lives with purpose.

To acquire a purposeful existence, Bedford suggests that humans open themselves to and join forces with members of their community (1972:275). Martin Buber's opinion is that there is `... a sterile kind of heart searching ... (which) leads to nothing but self-torture, despair ...' (1958:135). This is because humankind's true environment is the universe (Tillich 1968:72). We are not `merely "in the world" but "with others"' (Grimsley 1967:50). In other words, the world and every one in it are `mutually included, the one in the other', and `it is as We, ever again as We, that we `construct and develop a world out of our experiences' in a meaningful manner (Buber 1965:107) Sartre argues in this respect:

> In order to get any truth about myself, I must have contact with another person (as...) the other is indispensable to my own existence, as well as to my knowledge about myself. This being so, in discovering the other

[8] As Tillich professes in *Existence and the Christ*: `Even deterministic explanations of man's predicament do not necessarily deny his personal responsibility' (1968:65).

> person I discover my inner being at the same time (as well as the potential for transforming myself). (1947:44).

Martin Buber explains why this is so:

> The inmost growth of the self is not accomplished ... in man's relation to himself, but in the relation between the one and the other, between men ... (1957:104);

that is, `in the midst of other Existents' (Grimsley 1967:47).

Thus, a person's potentiality for being whole lies in the acceptance and appreciation of another existence (Buber 1947:168), or `somebody seeing a little bit', as Lena puts it. The reverse is also true: a person who is lost to the world is also lost to himself.

On the other hand, there is the risk of being absorbed by the crowd (Bedford 1972:276). The crowd oppresses individuals, especially those who lack self-worth and despair at the idea of living as an `abandoned and isolated possibility' (Grimsley 1967:66), by the `tyranny' it exerts over the outlook (1967:51) in its persistent call for conformity. When the sense of `mineness' is renounced and the self dispersed in participation and identification (May 1961:78) with the `they', *Dasein* becomes an `impersonal entity which is "everybody" and "nobody"' (Grimsley 1967:51), but not itself. It then exists in what Binswanger calls the `anonymous mode' (quoted in Friedman 1964:516) and Deborah Foster `*medias res*' (1982:220).

In order for *Dasein* not to `fall away from itself' (Heidegger 1963:220), a balance has to be maintained between life-enriching solitude and life-affirming relations. We are individuals and apart from others at the same time as we are social beings and a part of others (Bugental 1976:101, 137). Few of Fugard's characters succeed in striking a balance between these two extremes.

Since a number of existentialists are alluded to in this dissertation, the most important of these merit further mention.

Sören Kierkegaard, of Danish nationality, is credited with being the father of

twentieth-century existentialism, and represents the Protestant Religious movement in existentialism. The German movement was spearheaded by Karl Jaspers, a cultural-religious existentialist.

In contrast to Kierkegaard's and Jaspers's, Jean-Paul Sartre's views are atheistic (1948:26). In his mind, humans are `free and alone, without assistance and without excuse, condemned ... forever to be free' (1947:290) Even if someone lets himself `be carried off, in helplessness and in despair, even if he let[s] himself be carried off like an old sack of coal, he [has] chosen his own damnation; he [is] free, free in every way, free to behave like a fool or a machine, free to accept, free to refuse ...' (1947:289). Thus, it is by our own agency that everything happens (1947:290); our lives are nothing but what we make of them through our various choices and actions.. Assuming the `situation with the proud consciousness' that we are the author of it (1958:554) and that it belongs to us since it is the `image of [the] free choice' of ourselves (in Friedman 1964:146) can lend some meaning to the most inhibiting milieu. Nevertheless, [the actualisation of the aim - making the time and place of the appointment with the self (Seidenspinner 1986:271) - is often thwarted by `being for others' (Peck 1992:77).

Martin Heidegger, the founder of phenomenology, agrees that only through a `rediscovery of Being can modern man be saved from the chaos which threatens him' (Grimsley 1967:38). Humans are liable for this rediscovery as they constitute themselves as well as their environment.

Martin Buber, psychologist, criticises Heidegger's notion of existence in his book *Between Man and Man* (1947). From Buber's point of view Heidegger's notion is monological: his `man ... can no longer really live with man: he knows a real life only in communication with himself' (1947:168). In plainer terms, the self is sequestered from others.

Two contemporary existentialist psychologists share Buber's views. They are James F.T. Bugental and Irvin D. Yalom. Their views on identity, change, decision and authorship, isolation and relation will be explored.

In *The Search for Existential Identity: Patient-therapist dialogues in Humanistic Psychotherapy* (1976), James F.T. Bugental writes that humans all flee from the nothingness which is at the centre of their being. This also implies that they are evading their existential sense or `I-ness'. To find their true identity, they must open themselves to their existential essence and be willing to change (2). Only then will they be rewarded with meaning.

Western society, however, encourages an identity that lies in one's achievements, education, titles, vocation and others' impression of one (Bugental 1976:54, 14), notwithstanding the fact that an identity founded on objectification and objective thing-ness is vulnerable to external circumstances. One cannot make an object of one's own being since the self is not an object. Besides, objectivity is transitory. True freedom is found only in subjectivity (1976:52). Accepting one's `subjecthood' leads to committed choices, involvement, authenticity in relationships, better mobilisation for action and vitality (1976:7).

Since the existential identity is constantly in transit, one should embrace change. Bugental's conviction is that if one tries to freeze one's nature, one will destroy oneself.

Bugental further holds that we are not to deny our choicefulness (1976:98). Having to make choices may be distressing, since choosing calls for the relinquishing of alternatives. If we rely on rules and principles to make the decisions for us or displace responsibility onto others (1976:99-100), we suppress our individuality, and the opportunity to change and experience the full meaning of our being is missed (1976:137).

Irvin Yalom concurs with several of James Bugental's assertions. In fact, he states this explicitly and frequently refers to Bugental in his treatise, *Existential Psychotherapy* (1980).

Yalom states that everything endeavours to persist in its own being (1980:8). But if one acknowledges the impermanence of existence, life is enriched and not impoverished because one gains a new perspective on life (1980:40) and acquires

a greater sense of its specialness (1980:31). One's perspective then also shifts from a `state of forgetfulness of being' (losing one's self in the everyday, objective world of appearances, diversions and objects) to a `state of mindfulness of being' (Heidegger in Yalom 1980:30) and the taking on of responsibility (Yalom 1980:31). Hence one ceases to use the world like a tool (1980:360) and attains a purposeful existence.

Yalom lists several strategies that humans employ to conceal the cruelty of the reality of their own mortality. Unfortunately, many of these coping mechanisms restrict growth, limit the ability to live spontaneously and creatively and ultimately result in a constricted and unsatisfying existence (1980:111). (Fugard's Johnnie is evidence of this.)

Such defence measures include the belief in a personal rescuer and dispenser of protection and meaning (Yalom 1980:113, 116) or, at the other extreme, the persuasion that one is special and inviolable (1980:141). Herman Witkin classifies people with rescuers as field-dependent (in Yalom 1980:141). Like *The Road to Mecca*'s Helen Martin, these people are likely to have a low self-esteem and feel ineffectual and powerless. They distrust their own judgement, bury their potential and accept `"oughts" or "shoulds" as [their] own wishes' (Yalom 1980:354).

Field-dependent individuals often suffer from isolation *angst* (Yalom 1980:142). Yalom quotes Martin Buber and Erich Fromm on this subject. Buber contends that the human being's basic mode of existence is relational (in Yalom 1980:367) and Fromm takes isolation to be the `primary source of anxiety' (in Yalom 1980:357). The fear of life (which Johnnie in *Hello and Goodbye*, experiences) is the fear of having to face it as an isolated being (1980:141) (as growth is a process of separation [Rank in Yalom 1980:361]). Thus, it is the apprehension of individuation, individuation entailing an insurmountable and eternal sense of standing out and of unprotectedness (Yalom 1980:361, 378).

Other shields against the dread of desolation and dissolution are merging with others or incorporating them. But real intimacy is not possible without two distinct

individuals. In such a unilateral relationship the other is transformed into an `it' with the `I', the subject, living off the `It', the object. This alliance is functional and exploitative and entirely wanting in mutuality (Yalom 1980:363-4).

Buber's `I-Thou' interpersonal affiliation, contrarily, is an effective way of allaying the pain of separation (Yalom 1980:370). The basic mode of the `I-Thou' relationship is dialogue (1980:366). Because one has in mind the entire being of the other, one directs what one says to the other as the person s/he is, or, one engages in genuine conversation. The I-Thou relationship, thus, has an element of inclusion and mutuality to it (1980:366). The `I' is influenced, shaped and altered in the reciprocal relationship with the `Thou', and the `Thou', simultaneously, becomes more alive (1980:365).

Yalom also refers to Abraham Maslow, the pioneer of the modern resurgence of humanistic psychology, who distinguishes - as Fugard also does - between love-need and needless love. The first form of love is infantile, passive and selfish. Characters (such as Blackie in *Nongogo*) who love in a `deficiency-motivated' manner, attempt to attract attention and affection by pretending to be either good or helpless (Yalom 1980:369, 371). They look for the presence of others who are greater than they to `swallow' or elevate them (1980:392). Their intention is to become the object of another's consciousness (1980:376). Eventually, this other senses that s/he is not loved but needed and grows weary of affirming the existence of the `deficiency-motivated individuals' (1980:369).

Growth-motivated persons, conversely, are independent (Yalom 1980:369). Like *Hello and Goodbye*'s Hester, they relate in an unneeding and selfless way and care about the total being of others, not only about those aspects that serve a purpose. Their objective is to make the others grow, and to this end they will give of themselves without expecting reward (1980:373).

Erich Fromm differentiates symbiotic union - a form of fallen love - from mature love (in Yalom 1980:370). Symbiotic love, usually consisting of an active (sadistic) and a passive (masochistic) form, is the exclusive attachment to one person (1980:372). In this state of fusion neither party is whole or free (Fromm in

Yalom 1980:370). The two protagonists in *The Blood Knot*, Morris and Zachariah, have a symbiotic relationship. Mature love, in contrast, is a brotherly union with all individuals, even with those who do not serve a purpose. In this relationship the paradox occurs that two beings become one and yet remain two (Yalom 1980:370) as the individuality of both is preserved.

On existential isolation, Yalom avers that the only and ultimate solution is to explore it and take it into oneself (1980:363, 398). Loneliness expands one's perceptiveness and sensitivity (Moustakas in Yalom 1980:398). Personal growth, thus, is catalysed by seclusion (Yalom 1980:400). If human beings acknowledge their discarded state in existence, they will be able to turn lovingly toward others; if they flee from it, they will be at cross purposes with others (1980:363).

The third aspect Yalom addresses is responsibility. He defines it as the capability for rational conduct and authorship which opens the door to change (1980:218). To be aware of authorship one has to realise that nothing in the world has significance except by virtue of one's own creation. Even the self originates from the choices we make; we will ourselves into being what we are (1980:230). This is every individual's constitutive function (1980:221).

Responsibility is linked to freedom (Yalom 1980:220). Those who welcome their freedom, for instance Hester Smit, are considered to have an internal locus of control.

Individuals with an external locus of control, for instance another person, cannot cope with situations of freedom and isolation in which decisions are to be made and action is to be taken. These persons often procrastinate (Yalom 1980:321) in an attempt to transfer choice to other individuals or institutions, or abdicate it altogether (1980:230). So Johnnie's father decides for him, and Elsa has to choose for Miss Helen.

According to Yalom (1980:318), a decision is difficult not only because one has to renounce other alternatives, but in that it exposes one to the anxiety of groundlessness and also endangers one's defences against death anxiety. By

confronting one with the limitation of possibilities, a decision challenges the fiction of specialness. And a choice, in so far as it compels one to recognise `personal responsibility and existential isolation anxiety' - because it is a lonely act - jeopardises one's trust in an ultimate rescuer (1980:319).

Existential guilt may be a `decision-blocking factor' in that the determination to change makes people realise how much they have wasted and wrecked their lives (Yalom 1980:320). The source of this guilt is often a transgression against one's potential self and destiny (1980:147, 285). It is the omission or failure to tap the possibilities within one and live the life allotted to one. It is self-condemnation for the repressed and unrealised possibility and potential, `the unused and unlived life' (1980:320).

Rollo May postulates that existential regret is a `positive constructive emotion' (quoted in Yalom 1980:278-9). Awareness of regret and self-reflection may allay despair, whereas to be ignorant of it is a deeper form of despair yet (Yalom 1980:278).

May also writes that responsible action begins with the wish (in Yalom 1980:302). Some individuals - like Zach in *The Blood Knot* - avoid authorship by not discriminating among wishes, but act impulsively on all wishes. Indiscriminate enactment of all wishes is a symptom of disordered will. Since `to wish is to lunge into the future', not to do so betrays an inability or reluctance to project oneself and to convert one's life (1980:311-2).

Otto Rank, one of Freud's first students and his close associate until 1929, lists three types of will (in Yalom 1980:293). The first is counter will or the opposition to another's will; the second is positive will or willing what one must; and the third is creative will: willing what one wants (1980:294-5). In order to attain the third stage - willing to be oneself - the first two stages must be supported.

Yalom's fourth and final topic is meaning. He emphasises that humans need meaning, either cosmic or terrestrial (1980:423), because without it life has no values, no overall perceptual framework and no religious or moral foundation on

which to base actions (1980:442). This gives rise to dysphoria (1980:218). On the other hand, the conviction that life has significance and is therefore justified (Seidenspinner 1986:316) relieves the misgivings that come from existing in a contingent world with neither an external pattern nor a pre-ordained grand structure (Yalom 1980:221, 423). For this reason, moribund persons who have a `purpose, firm ideals, and guidelines by which to steer their lives' can confront death with less despondency and live fuller lives (1980:442).

Viktor Frankl divides life meaning into three categories. The first is creative (what one accomplishes or offers to the world by way of one's creations), the second experiential (what one takes from the world in terms of encounters and experiences) and the third attitudinal (one's stance towards suffering and a fate that one cannot change) (in Yalom 1980:445). Activities that may give meaning to life are altruism, dedication to a cause, the creation of something new or beautiful, a hedonistic solution and, finally, self-actualisation or the realisation of one's existential potential (1980:435-41).

Abraham Maslow agrees that individuals will make an effort at self-actualisation - provided that their physiological requirements and the need for safety and security, belonging and love, identity and self-esteem are satisfied. Actualisation is a natural process and can take place `without the aid of any social structure'. In fact, society often causes the abandonment of a `unique personal development' (in Yalom 1980:438), as demonstrated by Fugard in *The Road to Mecca*.

In Frankl's opinion, those who do not realise themselves and are prey to existential meaninglessness, will often engage in compulsive and frenetic activity - which comes to the fore when the false centre of life either collapses or is at risk of collapsing (in Yalom 1980:452). These activities include crusadism (adventurousness, dedication to dramatic causes regardless of their content) and nihilism (the disparagement of endeavours which have value for others). Another sign of existential `sickness' is vegetativeness, when one is incapable of perceiving the point of anything (1980:450-1). *Playland*'s Gideon could serve as an example here.

Frankl also defines two stages of what he calls meaninglessness syndrome (in Yalom 1980:449). Existential frustration is typified by boredom and listlessness, lack of direction, apathy, emptiness, cynicism and questioning the point of one's activities. The characteristics of existential neurosis, again, are daredevilry, alcoholism, hyperinflation of sex, depression, obsessionalism and delinquency (1980:449-50). Queeny in *Nongogo* displays many of these symptoms.

When all meaning seems obscured by a given situation, Camus and Sartre believe that it is still possible to invent meaning, and then commit oneself to the fulfilment of that meaning (in Yalom 1980:431). Frankl proclaims that a life purpose can even be constructed by cherishing the vortex of despair and arriving, as Camus phrases it, `at a posture of heroic nihilism' in facing one's lot (1980:427).

Whereas death, freedom and isolation must be grappled with directly, Yalom's view is that the more humans seek meaning, the more it will elude them (1980:482-3). Engagement, a `leap into action and commitment' (1980:431), is his therapeutic antidote to purposelessness and also that of Hume, Camus, Tolstoy, Sartre (1980:481) - and Fugard. Meaningfulness is a `by-product of engagement' and one should not meditate upon this matter (1980:482-3). The dissertation will investigate which of Fugard's characters seize the option to make that leap into action and commitment, and shape their future destinies, and which do not.

NONGOGO

Athol Fugard has written that the time he worked as a clerk at the Fordsburg Native Commissioner's Court effected a change in his relationship to his country – and – was definitive in its influence on the writing of *No-Good Friday* and *Nongogo*. It was one of the most important – and traumatic – experiences of his life. `Having to rubber-stamp a black man's status to that of criminal or alien in his own country' (Fugard quoted in Seidenspinner 1986:122) was a `revelation' to him: I knew that the system was evil, but until then I had no idea of just how systematically evil it was' (1986:121). In an interview, `Afrikaner Humanist', published in *The Observer* of 18 July 1971, he reported that this episode was the `ugliest thing I've ever been part of. I think my basic pessimism was born there, watching that procession of faces and being unable to relate to them' (quoted in Vivier 1983:63-4). The experience left him `... angry. Very angry ... (and) with a such a sense of the need to say certain things, and to say them unequivocally' (Fugard quoted in Vivier 1983:67).

Fugard expresses these things in *No-Good Friday* and *Nongogo*, his first full-length plays. Together with *Tsotsi*, his only novel, these two works form part of the so-called Township trilogy.

The trilogy gives a taste of life in an African township as it deals with the daily experiences of those who inhabit the multiracial Johannesburg ghetto of Sophiatown. This is an exciting world full of energy and talent, but also of crime and violence. Black gangsters, victims themselves of the South African system of government, victimise other blacks in turn (Post 1985:7). The population of Sophiatown is not only the quarry of the gangsters, but also that of the corrupt `forces of "law and order", who enforce the apartheid system' (Mshengu 1982:172). `The key to life in the townships ... is *survival*' (Walder 1984:24). This is a theme that pervades Fugard's oeuvre.

In the trilogy Athol Fugard tried to tap the resources of black experience and create a specific and indigenous African drama. *No-Good Friday* and *Nongogo* then were specifically written for black acquaintances in a workshop setting, called the African Theatre Workshop. Except for a white priest who makes a brief appearance in *No-Good Friday*, the characters are all African.

The production of these plays `quite transformed the nature of the "erudite" theatre of the black intermediate classes' (Mshengu 1982:175). First, the dramas are South African rather than European. More particularly, they draw attention to the dilemmas of `black people in the urban as opposed to the traditional or pre-colonial milieu' (1982:175).

Both *No-Good Friday* and *Nongogo* were written during the author's period of social realism in the late 1950's. The works of this formative period treat social issues (Vivier 1983:25) - but in a broad, panoramic manner (Gray 1982:18). They focus on the enervating force of the black situation in South Africa, but they do not do so directly as an agitprop would. Fugard himself sees them as characterised by imitation and derivation (1982:122).

Nongogo, reflecting life in the black townships, seems as much in the naturalistic mode as *No-Good Friday* (Walder 1984:47). Fugard called it the `tough neorealism' of the American school (quoted in Walder 1984:47).

The neorealistic touches which are behind the shaping of the two plays disclose Fugard's enthusiasm at having encountered the works of William Faulkner (Fugard 1982:122). Like Faulkner, Fugard admits to his identity (Seidenspinner 1986:222) and uses details of a specific time and place and the experience of the characters in that place to explore general conflicts.

Faulkner's is not the only influence in this derivative early work. Russel Vandenbroucke (1986:39, 63), (to whom I am indebted for much of the information

that follows), notes that there are also traces of Albert Camus's, Eugene O'Neill's and Samuel Beckett's styles in his oeuvre. Barrie Hough, again, hypothesises in his unpublished M.A. dissertation (1979) that *Nongogo* is Fugard's tribute to Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire* (in Seidenspinner 1986:222).

Fugard, like Camus, reflects on the poverty among people who are often nameless and destitute and the psychological barriers and conflicts which form part of their close relationships. Both examine humans' search for consciousness and intelligibility amid devastating conditions (Raymer 1976:233). The origin of these devastating conditions is the absence of traditional certainties, such as religion, which can supply meaning and hope in the prospect of a vast, indifferent emptiness. The only meaning lies in the search itself. The pessimistic mood of Fugard's plays in general is reminiscent of Eugene O'Neill's work (Munro 1982:19).

To portray the misery and absurdity of human sensibility, Fugard, like Beckett, makes use of minimal staging and modest casts. In the play the `wasteland' is evoked by the broken glasses and vomit of Queeny's customers and the `"smell of filth" that lingers on in Johnny's memories' after his sodomisation in the mines (Seidenspinner 1986:237). In this way Fugard, like Beckett, depicts the disoriented, alienated and absurd circumstances in which humans find themselves. All are victims, the heroic as well as the not-so-heroic. It is possible to claim that the South African playwright's pessimism is so extreme that he, at times, accedes to Beckett's notion that absurdity is an exigency of life itself and not an obstacle that can be overcome. Apartheid itself becomes part of the absurd human condition (McLuckie 1993:428).

A Beckettian motif which features in *Nongogo* is the `nexus motif' (Huber 1989:51). This motif pertains to the bond between two characters which is, on the one hand, essential - even vital - and, on the other hand, inhibiting and intimidating. A second motif is that of time (1989:51). Characters are `victims and prisoners' of their past

lives (Brinkley 1988:359)[1] by which their existential sense is distorted. The third motif is role play or game-playing.

Nongogo was rehearsed at Jan Hofmeyr, a school for social workers next to the Bantu Men's Social Centre, where the play then also opened on 8 June 1959. Thandi Kumalo was Queeny and Sol Rachilo, Johnny. Fugard directed. From 15 to 27 June the play had a run in Darragh Hall of Johannesburg's Anglican cathedral. *Nongogo* was again produced in Transvaal in 1970. It was first performed outside South Africa on 27 November 1974, in the Crucible Studio as part of the Sheffield Fugard season. Peter James directed the staging. The drama was revived in Cape Town in 1978-79, and again on 12 November 1981, at The Laager, the Market Theatre, Johannesburg. This time the director was Lucille Gillwald. For information on the critical reception of the work, consult pages 210 and 211 of Appendix A.

Nongogo is `neo-classical in spanning little more than a day and being confined to a single room' (Vandenbroucke 1986:38). Twenty-four hours after Queeny, a shebeen queen and retired *nongogo*,[2] meets the door-to-door salesman, Johnny, and shares his aspirations of starting a decorating business, their dreams evaporate. Johnny succeeds in temporarily distracting Queeny from her ennui, but after he is told that she was a 25c prostitute when she was younger - and poorer - he leaves. Both he and Queeny resign themselves to the impossibility of ridding themselves of the weight of the past and of turning their lives around.

Not only does this early Fugard play focus on the influence of the past, but it also provides evidence of what would become enduring preoccupation with existential questions. These include the fear of time passing and of death, the assumption of

[1] As Queeny remarks: `I haven't learnt how to laugh it off and call it the good old days, or how to forget it' (69).

[2] *Nongogo* is township slang for a woman for two-and-six; in other words, a prostitute `soliciting among lines of gold-mine workers queuing for their pay' (Fugard 1993:235).

accountability for one's actions, and the quest for identity, love and meaning.

The stage directions to Act One immediately evoke a sense of meaninglessness.

> *The furniture is expensive ... but nevertheless there is a suggestion of slovenliness about the room.... She (Queeny) is a personification of the room: the very best but neglected.* (57)

The shebeen queen supplies the reason for her indifference towards her person herself: `I spend the whole day painting my nails, only now it's not so nice any more 'cause my hands are getting fat ... Fat and a little money. But what else? (66)[3] She also furnishes the reply to this last question concerning life's significance and her destiny: `Nothing' (66). She has gained little, no *raison d'être,* and one may assume that the shebeen queen would be glad to have her existence reshaped.

Yalom (1980:57, 197) takes distress about the visible effects of ageing as a sign of death anxiety. The play tells us that Queeny's mother passed away when her daughter was still young. Nothing now stands between the latter's empty existence and the grave. Yalom (1980:208) writes that if one has not fully lived, one fights shy of facing the prospect of non-being - and this sheds light on Queeny's present discontent.

In the face of mortality and meaninglessness Queeny appears to have found security in her physical appearance and her possessions. Her secret to staying alive has been to keep wanting things (93). She has been preoccupied with the demands of the present, the everyday world of things; this is proclaimed by her expensive furniture which jars with the township setting. Yet, when she acquired all that she aspired after, `that was the end' (94). Together with beauty and money, sex could

[3] Grimsley (1967:45) states that calling itself into question is a fundamental quality of a *Dasein* striving to make sense of itself.

have been another of the shebeen queen's defences against the vision of final dissolution and the abyss of nothingness or groundlessness, through the illusion of youth and vivacity it begets.

These forms of refuge are vulnerable to external circumstances and, in Queeny's case, they have dissolved over a period of time. At the outset of the play, she is disenchanted with the pursuit of material objects and despairs at the vanity of her existence.

Victor Frankl (in Yalom 1980:449) distinguishes between two stages of what he calls meaninglessness syndrome. The first stage is existential vacuum or frustration, a phase which is characterised by boredom, spiritlessness, lack of direction, questioning the point of one's activities and cynicism. Before Johnny's arrival, Queeny `just rolled over and died' (93). She could not distinguish the days from one another: `Giving it a name didn't make it any different from the rest' (94). She existed, as it were, in *medias res*. And this was like being in hell (69).

Whether Fugard consciously intended this or not, the character also seems to exhibit signs of the second phase of the meaninglessness syndrome, namely existential neurosis, which, according to Yalom (1980:450), is marked by daredevilry and depression. Queeny's rationale for funding Johnny's project is that Johnny `can have every penny [she has] got' and she is `going to enjoy waking up in the morning' (97) as she will be a different person.

Meaninglessness is interwoven with leisure (Yalom 1980:447). Because Queeny has not had not much to do during the day, time, to her, has become a repetitive, shapeless, interminable void. For instance, in her opinion, the clock does not change its tune (85).[4] In the distant past, she at least had some sense of purpose. For this

[4] But the clock does change its tune. It ticks off the seconds of wasted opportunities and the time that remains to change one's existence and imbue it with meaning.

reason it is important to her that Sam, who helped establish the shebeen, should remember what it was like before. She confesses: `When I look at you I think: He's forgotten.... I almost hate you when I think that, Sam' (67).

Queeny is aggressive not only toward Sam but also toward Johnny when he first sets foot in the shebeen. The only person with whom she sympathises near the beginning of the play is the wife of a customer, a woman with whom she has no contact. Lucille Gillwald believes that the shebeen queen's life demonstrates the dilemma which besieges the contemporary black woman. Secretly yearning for the traditional family and husband, she strives for personal and financial independence in a confined and confusing environment (Ronge in Gray 1982:38).

But Queeny finds that she cannot always shy away from interpersonal alliances and be entirely self-sufficient. Later in the play she admits that `Nothing buggers you up like yourself. It's good to need someone' (109). She seems to grasp that interaction paves the way towards change, growth and the acquisition of meaning. As Karl Jaspers expounds: `in communication I am revealed to myself together with the other' (in Friedman 1964:204) and *Existenz* `comes to itself through and at the same time with another *Existenz*' (Jaspers 1957:92). Interpersonal union in a loving relationship, moreover, is a mode of coping with the susceptibility of standing out, being `groundless' and unprotected. In addition, since Queeny's physical needs are satisfied, she now yearns for belonging and love, identity and self-esteem. She attempts to acquire the latter by fusing with Johnny in an exclusive affiliation.

This transformation from independence to dependence is expedited by Queeny's desperate desire for change. She is determined to prove herself and to be someone. For her, Johnny holds out the promise of release and a new beginning. His business enterprise is the `best thing' she has ever heard of (83). She has suddenly `woken up to something that looks like it may be fun and nice and clean' (84) and therefore she attaches herself to his venture. Earlier she has lamented: `"If only it was my life lying in pieces on the floor." Just sweep them away and start all over

again' (78), and now she implores the man, whom she views as somebody `trying to do something with [his] li[f]e' (73) to give her a chance (118). He is to re-decorate her existence as he decorates rooms; he is the one to assist her in the rescue of her true self. That Queeny takes the salesman as the object of her waiting is apparent when he leaves to buy material and `*she looks blankly at the door.... She is alone. She is alone again*' (61). Johnny has become her ultimate personal dispenser of protection, purpose and meaning.[5]

The reason for Queeny's choice falling on Johnny, and not on Blackie or Sam, is that he has a cause which she can share with him; secondly, he appears to be a man of action; and, lastly, he treats her as is she were no different from other women. As he informs her: `if other women can, you can. You're the same as them' (90). With the exception of this man, `no one ever really treated [her] like a woman, took their hat off when they came in [her house], said please or thank you or said they liked [her] smile' (99).

It follows that Queeny is eager to discover her similarities to other women. (Her anger towards Patrick, a patron, could be interpreted as an indirect reflection of her aspirations towards a normal life as she identifies with the pregnant wife he has left at home.) At first there is a tentative: `I'm trying to be a woman' (112), and later she declares: `I'm a woman, Johnny. I never stopped being one, but no one's given me a chance' (118). She also owns up: `I've had men but never one who treated me like I mattered far more than just a night in bed. Because that man I'll love' (118).

Because she hopes `to hold [this] man, make him want to stay' (112), she behaves towards Johnny as if he were her husband. She makes him coffee and breakfast, although she has never `cooked for any man before' (92). She gives him a wristwatch so that he will know when it is lunch-time and come `home'. She inquires

[5] But, Yalom (1980:444) cautions, if one actively looks for meaning, it will elude one.

about the prices of sewing machines and sews rings on the curtains. Although red is her colour (red being the colour of the `scarlet woman'), she thinks of hanging yellow curtains in the shebeen. She also buys knives and forks for the kitchen.

Queeny, certainly, appears to be committed to change. She announces: `I'm going to start to live' (99). To convince Johnny she is prepared to transform her life and to exemplify her devotion to her potential self, she slams the door of the shebeen in the face of would-be customers, a deed which is decried by Sam, amongst others, but which she feels is necessary. This is because the shebeen is the only thing anyone can point at in her life (113) - as she optimistically remarks - and because she believes that it is possible to change in one day (97). She is shown to have acquired a sense of pride in herself and her home. She divulges: `I [am] sick of drunks messing up my place' (116). She has reassessed her priorities and divested money of its former significance - no longer is she engrossed in material matters. (Sam, for one, cannot fathom how Queeny can `let ten quid walk out of [her] life without a farewell tear' [84].) She is now ready to make the leap into action and commitment and to assign the actuality of the past to oblivion (`those years are past and better forgotten' [66] and `I don't want no more talk about the old days' [87]). She will seize a present[6] and a future that promise so much more. She notifies Johnny: `This is our day' (91) and `We got the future to burn up. Tomorrow and the day after ....' (110). Merleau-Ponty (in Friedman 1964:385) maintains that by taking up the present one is able to liberate oneself from one's past.[7] Anticipation of the future and living in terms of the possible, according to May, constitute the `foundation of psychological freedom' (1961:79). The reason, Grimsley (1967:46) proposes, is that the more *Dasein* advances beyond and outside itself, the more it progresses toward itself.

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[6] Martin Heidegger refers to the present as the `moment of vision' (1962:387).

[7] Fugard implies, however, that one cannot simply forget the past as it `actually has happened' (1982:121). It remains part of the being-in-itself and exercises an influence on the present (Bedford 1972:316).

In the process of becoming the `clean' (93) woman the man seeks, the fallen woman transcends her concrete situation and seems to acquire a lofty purpose for her existence. She is idealistic, dedicated to Johnny's cause, and has adopted new goals. Queeny's concerns are now less personal than before and more self-transcendent and long-term. Her aim may even be that of guiding and aiding the next generation as epitomised by Johnny.

As the shebeen owner changes, the shebeen changes accordingly. The stage directions to Act II scene i disclose that the room's appearance has also improved. There are now yellow curtains, a tablecloth and flowers on the table. The shebeen functions as a physical image of conversion, and Margaret Munro (1982:18) advances the notion that with it Queeny's chances for `rebirth' have also improved. Nevertheless, the walls of the room and their functionality `define the limits of her freedom and power' (1982:19) to revise her existence, as does the name of the play.

Although Queeny claims (in Act II scene ii) that `it's the first time I've ever felt like this about someone' (112) (implying that she loves Johnny), the sentiment she feels for him could be put down as exploitative. She is not interested in his total being, particularly not in his past existence. Even though he must apprise her of `everything that happened to [him] from the moment [he] left [that] morning' (108), her reaction when he tries to tell her of his `initiation' into the brutality of the urban slums and the perilous nights in the men's hostel (Seidenspinner 1986:237) when the `big bursting men in [the] compounds' (95) blackmailed, robbed, beat and even sexually abused `the boys, the young ones' like himself, is: `Okay, Johnny, I heard you' (95).

Thus, the affection of the female protagonist is based on the need to have somebody. Johnny has to absorb her into himself as she has absorbed the bouncer, Blackie. (And now that Johnny is there, she will get rid of Blackie `just like that. That's how he came and that's how he can go' [110].) Hence both men are reduced to objects and

perceived in terms of their utilitarian function[8]. Johnny's role - as was Blackie's - is to safeguard the female protagonist against a confrontation with the limit-situations of desolation and dissolution despair. Moreover, he offers her a different role, a new sense of self, and, above all, meaning - something Blackie could not give her.

It is possible that Fugard dramatises Queeny's inability to establish a vital connection with others as an absence of a firm sense of her own identity. This is patent from her not wanting to take responsibility for her own future but instead transferring her choices to the active and directive Johnny. She is caught up in a *cul de sac*: in order to have worthwhile relationships she must probe herself and accept authorship. Yet, taking a major decision often serves to remind one of how much one has wasted and wrecked one's own existence. This could elucidate why the shebeen owner shies away from exploring her existential being - so much so that she evades her real name, Rose. Fugard calls the ability to name something `a small act of possession' (quoted in Vandenbroucke 1986:36). The denial of one's name corresponds with a disavowal of one's true identity and dissociation with the *Dasein*. This could explain why Queeny is confused - or deliberately misinforms the salesman - about how long she has had the shebeen.

Yalom notes that `responsible action begins with the wish' (1980:302). Despite testimony to the contrary, the shebeen queen cannot really wish. When Johnny suggests that she also sell, she counters: `Not today ... I got to prepare for our celebration' (95). And in her mind the business venture will only `last as long as it's got to' (98).

Queeny is shown to have shirked responsibility since her youth. After her mother's death, she `got out' (94), though she admits that she `should have stayed and tried to help' the other children (94). Many years later she comprehends that `you can't get

[8] In the `I-Thou' relationship, in contrast, the partners stand in an interaction in which each becomes more deeply him/herself as s/he `moves more fully to respond to the other' (Friedman 1964:543).

anything for nothing in this world' (65). Nevertheless, she still repudiates authorship when she insists: `I don't suppose it's my fault, or even Sam's' (62) (that they are the way they are). When she throws Patrick's coins back at him, it is Johnny who has made her do it (78). Later it is society which is blamed for her former lifestyle: `I did it because I was hungry' (117). She also has an excuse at hand for returning to being a prostitute: `If you were trying to forget something, but others kept reminding you of it ... wouldn't work, would it?' (94).[9] Although others may limit one's freedom, it is still the shebeen queen who chooses her own damnation.

Queeny does not embrace responsibility because she is unable to accept that disappointments and failures are the products of her own actions, and not accidents. Likewise, she cannot tolerate guilt, and tries to flee from it. Sartre suggests that assuming the `situation with the proud consciousness' that one is its author and that it belongs to one since it is the `image of [the] free choice' of oneself (1958:554) can lend some meaning to an absurd universe. This, then, is the constitutive function of every individual in the world, but it is a function Queeny does not fulfil. Consequently, her existence will remain devoid of purpose and she will not realise her unique nature. The bright colours of the curtains and tablecloth which are still visible at the end of *Nongogo* (when the shebeen queen dons her scarlet dress again) act as an `ironic commentary on lost possibilities' (Munro 1982:19).

Frankl stresses that, when tragedy seems to eclipse everything, one may still find meaning in assuming a heroic stance in facing one's fate (Yalom 1980:445). Queeny is left with a sense of all-encompassing despairing futility and fatalism after Johnny has raked up her past and rekindled it with the `warmth of [his] hate, the breath of [his] disgust' (118). The salesman, certainly, is not her Godot. And she may be seen not only as Vladimir or Estragon but also as Sisyphus, carrying the weight of the world by herself without anything or anybody to lighten it, unable to escape from the

[9] Her playing the role of the innocent and powerless victim at the mercy of the `vicissitudes of a capricious world' (Yalom 1980:246) and the hell caused for her by others is made manifest by the avoidance of the first-person pronoun.

labyrinth of the past. As long as she is confined in finite being and lives in a country whose government has, to a large extent, dispossessed her race of the right to improve their situation by honourable means, she will never be able to purge herself completely of sin. In fact, she may sink still deeper. Notwithstanding this consciousness, the character displays courageous pessimism when she concludes that all is well: there `are a lot of streets I haven't walked, lamp-posts I haven't stood under, faces I haven't smiled at' (119). At the end of the play she once again `dolls herself up into the real tart' (119) and pours the champagne she has bought for Johnny and herself for Sam and Patrick. The `self' the shebeen queen, like *Hello and Goodbye*'s prostitute, discovers `reside[s] in the carnality of her worn-out body' (Seidenspinner 1986:272). Despite a lack of respect and hope she will continue to serve the flesh; she will endure (Peck 1992:71). In this way she attains, what Camus calls, the absurd victory (in Friedman 1964:250).

A reason why the shebeen queen takes so quickly to the salesman may be that there are many similarities between their characters. In fact, Johnny may be seen as a younger version of Queeny.

Like Queeny at the beginning of *Nongogo*, Johnny values his uniqueness. He informs Sam: `Name's Johnny, I come from Alex and I sell table cloths' (72). He ostensibly has a solid identity, being conscious of his `I'-ness or existential presence. He is a man with `big plans for the future ... Somebody who's got somewhere to go' (112). Thus, he seems to have a goal in life (at least in Queeny's eyes) and actively engages in the universe.

Behind `recourse to small business enterprises lies confidence in ... individual initiative' and the possibility of upward mobility, which, to Russell Vandenbroucke (1986:169, 37), is a theme central to both *Nongogo* and *No-Good Friday*. To all appearances, Johnny pins his faith on the first principle of existentialism: `Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself' (1948:28). As he assures Blackie:

`Of course you can if you try' (103). He foresees that trading in table cloths - and ultimately having his own interior decorating business - will realise his dream of independence and provide an asylum from the haunting memories of his past (concerning the sexual degradation he experienced at the mines). Furthermore, dedication to this creative cause could afford an escape from nothingness as well as a sense of purpose. Queeny might also be perceived by Johnny as an opportunity to be creative: he tries to revive something in her. He philosophises : `You see, it's important, Queeny ... trying to make life better. I'm not saying my idea is going to change the world, but maybe it will give us a bit more guts, and make waking up tomorrow a little bit easier (80).

Besides the creative cause, money is also conceived of as a defence against groundlessness and the deprivation of *apartheid*. As Johnny sighs: `Money. It could mean security, three meals a day, a roof over your head and independence ...' (73). From this statement it is clear that he is concerned with his physiological well-being as well as with his safety.

But the character occupies himself not only with his own needs. His *Dasein* is `concerned' (Grimsley's expression 1967:51). He ostensibly has mature, brotherly love for other people who are the `subject[s] of "care"' (1967:50). He feels accountable for them, believes that he owes them a chance, just as he should also be given a chance to change. (`It wasn't just that I owed you a start ....'[91], he tells Queeny.) For instance, he offers Blackie a job and encourages Queeny to better her situation and herself:

> You said you were getting sick of life the way it is ... so why don't you start changing things? You could start with this room....
> And you'd start getting proud ... and *then* let anybody try leaving marks on your table, or on your cloth, or messing up your floor. (80)

Johnny also attempts to reconcile the shebeen queen to her existential being. He asks what her real name is and why she keeps running away from it. He inquires

whether there is anything she wants (93).

Johnny comes to the understanding that in Queeny's eyes he is an `it' and not an `other' or a `thou'; he is an object and not a person. He is not so much loved as needed as he is her means of eschewing existential isolation and groundlessness. The perception of this prompts Johnny to ask: `And when you get tired of selling rags, will I also go just like that?' (110).

On the other hand, Fugard's design may be that Johnny's character be regarded in a less flattering light. Johnny is intent upon self-expression and privileges his self; therefore he cannot establish true rapport with others. For example, he has never had a girlfriend. He also does not fully enter Queeny's world - including her past - and accept her otherness. She is only a `court of appeal' (Buber 1965:79) whose function is to listen to him. When he tells her: `It wasn't just that I owed you a start ... I looked at you like I've never looked at another woman before' (116), he has already compared her to a good-looking apple with a worm in it (112) and is on the verge of bidding her goodbye.

After being disillusioned with Queeny, Johnny voices his opinion of other people and the world in general: `It's when you're small and need people that you get buggered around. We've got to be so big we don't need anybody' (108-9). Hence he engrosses himself in his professional endeavours and material objects. When he has a toast, it is to themselves since `nobody else gives a damn' (115). All he strives for is to `get away from a world that is small' - too small to recognise his humanity and potential - and `stand in the street and have a damned good laughing session at the world' (110).[10] He does not even fancy having Queeny, for: `Maybe we'll still be buggered around, by each other. I suppose the only time you're really safe is when you can tell the rest of the world to go to hell' (109).

[10] Camus hypothesises that it is the metaphysical rebel who `attacks a shattered world.... He confronts the injustice at large in the world with his own principles of justice' (1961:29).

Thus, in this play, Fugard dramatises the plight of an individual whose goal of self-sufficiency affects not only others adversely but also himself. Johnny is interpersonally isolated - he does not `know [him]self any longer' (112). According to Buber, the world and every one in it are `mutually included, the one in the other' (1937:93), and `it is as We, ever again as We, that [we construct and develop] a world out of [our] experiences' in a meaningful manner (1957:107), meaning being derived from reaching out to and engaging in dialogue with others and establishing unity with them. Confirmation that Johnny's existential sense has gone astray is his aversion to waiting. Waiting drives him `mad' `because you don't stop thinking when you're waiting' (117) and he has `got to stop [him]self thinking' (112). He furthermore lies to Queeny. Yet, in an ironic display of double standards, he demands of Queeny that she be honest with him (116) as he has been honest with her.[11]

With regard to his potential for success in business, or in anything for that matter, Johnny is unable to sustain action. Long before he is acquainted with Queeny's past, he checks her enthusiasm about the business with: `It might work' (82) and then with: `Maybe it doesn't work' (92). A possible explanation is that Johnny does not want to be held accountable for his deeds; his dreams and wishes are just that. So others have to take authorship for him,[12] for example the men in the mines who physically and sexually assaulted him until he was `worse than an animal' (113) and the shebeen proprietor. She is to give him a chance: `I'll go out there just now and do my damnedest to sell ... but don't make me. Let's just see how it goes' (92), and not make him `scared to come back' (92)[13]. Johnny also lays culpability at the door of

[11] Johnny also demonstrates his double standards in his insistence on having a `clean' wife (93), whereas he himself is not clean.

[12] In this respect he is similar to Patrick. Johnny, in fact, identifies with the lost dreams of this frequenter of the shebeen: `I also felt like that' (79). Johnny spills the champagne Queeny has bought; Patrick, in turn, spills his drink, as served by Queeny, on Johnny.

[13] As he measures success in objective and material terms, he is convinced that

society (`Let's blame the stinking bloody world' [113]) or a higher power (Let's blame what sent us into this world because nobody with any sense would choose to come' [113]).

Just as Johnny permits himself to become the prey of his surroundings, he lets Queeny's past linger on in his memory. Even though he has assured her that you `can wash off something from the past if you try hard enough' (92); `Of course you can if you try' (100), he does not allow her or himself to assert their role in their existences and alter their lot. After this disillusionment with her he concludes, `sometimes I get the crazy idea that a man can change the world he lives in. Hell! You can't even change yourself' (113). Queeny is `filth' (118) and that is all she can ever be because one cannot simply sell oneself and buy `a brand new person' (114).

Since the character cannot make a lasting commitment, he also considers it a waste of time to talk about the future (110). His fatalism (`The only future we've got is tomorrow if we're unlucky enough to wake up' [110]) proves that the creative and productive approach have provided only temporary respite from meaninglessness and nothingness.

Some critics, such as Russell Vandenbroucke, submit that the obliteration of Johnny's - and Queeny's - dreams is `largely foreordained' (1986:37). `As if written to conform to Zola's dictates in "Naturalism on the Stage", Johnny and Queeny have been mechanically predetermined by their milieu' (1986:37) and made impure in moral terms by forces outside their control. They are innocent victims, defeated by of South Africa's socio-economic system. Johnny blames `the stinking world out there' (113) and Queeny explains prostituting herself by saying, `I did it because I was hungry' (117). I concede that the South African society of the time provides a strong case for this argument.

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he will be rejected for not being financially successful.

Nevertheless, deterministic explanations of one's predicament still do not constitute a denial of personal responsibility, as Tillich (1968:65) avers. Lena, for one, (in *Boesman and Lena*) heroically assumes authorship for her life despite the most debilitating circumstances imaginable (`Can't throw yourself away before your time' [220]). Johnny, however, fails to change. This is because he chooses to be a victim. He is no longer a man `who's got big plans for the future, somebody who's got somewhere to go' (108), but elects to remain locked in a present purposeless existence and the past, without any alteration effected. As he says, `I still got the same thoughts. I'm the same man as yesterday, the day before yesterday and the day before that right back to the mines' [114]). The meaningless existence will be resumed, and Johnny, once again, will tread the streets that lead nowhere (111).

The salesman's intrusion is resented by Sam, part of Queeny's life, and he plots to reveal her history to the newcomer, Johnny. The charade's intention is to wreck illusions by revealing to Johnny that Queeny's past will be part of her future.

Sam is like Johnny in many respects. He is independent and shares Johnny's belief in personal grandiosity. This is exhibited by the stage directions by which the playwright introduces the character:

> *He is a large and self-assured man full of the sort of confidence that a little money breeds.... In his movements about the room he frequently stops in front of the mirror for inspection and small adjustments to his clothing.* (63)

Both Sam and Johnny are power-seeking and strive for total autonomy.[14] Isolation[15] and existing in `bad faith' (Bedford 1972:267) are the outcome.

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[14] Queeny even observes that they talk alike (91).

[15] As Queeny points out, Sam has nobody (97).

Sam, like the shebeen queen before Johnny's arrival, is caught up in an existential vacuum. Fugard reveals this in the character's cynicism. Queeny notes: `It's a bad habit Sam's got. He doubts everything' [96]. The character's cynicism, which manifests itself in the disparagement of activities which have meaning for others (such as Johnny's venture), reveals that he also suffers from existential `sickness', as cynicism can masquerade as a sophisticated approach to life.

Sam seems sophisticated because affluence is his escape from the awareness of nothingness and mortality. He immerses himself in his business, this representing the world of appearances and things (which is in opposition to the world of emotions, imagination and fantasy). Existentialists might say that his *Dasein* has fallen away from itself, and has `fallen into the "world"' (Heidegger 1963:220), more specifically, the environment of shop and shebeen. Without a sense of self, the objects in his shop, his attributes and attainments are to sustain him in the present. On this score, he cannot comprehend how Queeny could `just let ten quid walk out of [her] life without even a farewell tear' (84). He also wonders whether it is `that bad' (97) when she announces that Johnny can have all her money. Sam furthermore is sure that Patrick will not denounce him to Queeny, because he has paid him (101). The character's materialism and his tendency to objectify are reflected, finally, in his approval of `Sixpence' as a name for Patrick's child.

Unlike the shebeen queen, Sam is unable to divest objects of their meaning. This exploitative and hoarding character is accountable to no-one but himself and lets others exist only as part of his own experience. As the pimp of the sixpenny whore, he actually succeeded in making an object of a human being, whose life he controlled and manipulated and whom he treated as a parasite would - as a source of supply. She had to take the `whole Goddamn city to bed with [her] so that [he] could get fat and rich' (99). As she exclaims, putting herself in the object position: `You got fat and rich and smooth on me. You worked me like men work horses and it lasted a long time' (99).

Sam's jealous panic after the arrival of the `fancy boy[, a] straight man that makes like everything else is crooked' (99) may be ascribed to the insecurity which is produced partly by Queeny denying his contribution to her enterprise and existence: `It was my money, Sam, and this is my place. It's got nothing to do with you' (78). Insecurity is also the motive for his apprehension of the future and clinging to the past. He reminisces: `In the old days when we were ... you know what I mean ... I used to talk about the shop and you used to talk about having your own shebeen' (65). He exhorts Queeny not to forget the past. At the end of the play he is heard to announce complacently: `It's like old times again' (120). In essence, Sam does not transform himself but instead arrests his own development. The reader has to agree with the summation of him as supplied by Queeny: `You haven't changed, Sam' (66).

Blackie is Sam's accomplice in disclosing Queeny's unsavoury past to Johnny. Blackie aids Sam because he is terrified of losing his employer. He depends on a limited environment, the shebeen, and disperses himself in participation with its `queen'. He could be seen as simply an adjunct to the shebeen owner and not a character in his own right. This may suggest the reason for the `made-up' quality of his name and his reluctance to make his own decisions.

In an indifferent world Queeny affirms this `wish-blocked' (Yalom 1980:303) individual's existence and gives him a sense of identity. She reprimands Sam: `His name is Blackie' (63). She also supplies him with a function. She needs him for protection (64) and he `stays around because it's nice to have a man around' (64).

Queeny furthermore removes responsibility from the bouncer. She apprises Johnny:

> Blackie's not the same as Sam. He's ugly, all right ... but then he was born that way. He didn't choose it. If he was straight I think he would have been a good man. But being crooked like that nobody has given him a chance. (75)

Thus, the shebeen queen assumes that the bouncer cannot shape his own future by choosing for himself and acting autonomously on these choices. Her opinion is that his handicap and society's reaction to it have pre-determined his destiny.

Blackie's attachment to Queeny is exclusive since she is his ultimate rescuer. His existential dependence on her may be deduced from Fugard's stage directions. He waits `for Queeny to say something else ... something he will understand' (65). Later he attempts to attract her attention, and, when she finally does notice him and he shows her the clock he has stolen as a gift for her, he receives a curt: `I heard it once and it doesn't change it's (*sic*) tune' (85). Blackie's response to this rebuff is to remind his employer that he will do anything for her provided that she does not shout or laugh at him (86).[16] The bouncer goes along with Sam's scheme only because he is convinced that Johnny will drive a wedge between himself and Queeny: `If he comes, I must go' (100). Blackie cannot love Queeny, but needs someone greater than himself, to protect, take responsibility for and dominate him, someone to whom he can abdicate choice.

The bouncer is unaware of his existentially empty condition and the complicity which induced this state in the first place (Foster 1982:220). For example, he imparts to the salesman that he has no desire to turn his hand to anything else: `I don't even want to try' (103).

Another character who is shown to be oblivious to his existential predicament is Patrick. As revealed by the stage directions, he is `the true "little man"' (67), anxious to please others, who, in Heideggerian terms, allows his *Dasein* to get carried along by `the nobody' (1962:312), and surrenders his identity to collectivism. Living and acting in collectivism is what Binswanger calls the `anonymous mode' (quoted in

[16] When Patrick laughs at Queeny, and in particular her past, he is almost killed by Blackie.

Friedman 1964:516). In this mode one is separated from one's personal self and is reduced to an `impersonal entity which is "everybody" and "nobody"' (Grimsley 1967:51). Not perceiving that complicity with others lies at the root of his `*medias res* existence' (Foster 1982:220), Patrick displays a dependent pose towards others. Not only does he respond to what they say and do, but bends himself to their norms and standards. In brief, others are to swallow him and decree his destiny. For example, Sam has to pick a name for Patrick's fifth child. Naturally, neither communication nor meaningful relationships are brought about in this way and growth is checked.

Like Sam, Patrick considers money to be the solution to his difficulties and is astounded when Queeny no longer wants to sell liquor to him. He furthermore wryly observes that the only thing he will ever be likely to give his fifth child is a name and `that's not much, huh?' (76).

It is patent that Patrick has not planned for the future of his child. Neither does he accept the fact that his failures are the product of his own past actions (or that, as Queeny puts it, `you mess up your own life' [77]). Like Sam, he transfers responsibility. Apartheid South Africa is the justification for his and other blacks' distress (`They just about made it so we can't live' [76]).

Regardless of the depressing circumstances in which Patrick and the rest of the characters of *Nongogo* find themselves, they are not the prey of their predicament (Seidenspinner 1986:337). They may still seize the opportunity of their togetherness and defy destiny, yet they do not choose to. Neither do they alter their perception of their lot. Instead, they prefer to remain long-suffering, passive victims. This is because stagnation is safe whereas reformation and innovation challenge the status quo. However, as Munro postulates, the existences of Fugard's characters are never again quite so contingent upon social and environmental imperatives as in this play (1982:20).

THE BLOOD KNOT

The Blood Knot, part of the Port Elizabeth trilogy, and the play that made Fugard known (Weales 1978:4), was written upon the playwright's return from England in 1960. At this stage he was twenty-nine and had been active in theatre for only five years.

The Blood Knot opened on Sunday, 3 September 1961 on the third floor of an abandoned factory, Dorkay House, in Eloff Street, Johannesburg. Fugard christened this `makeshift, "fringe" or "unofficial" venue' (Walder 1984:11) the `Rehearsal Room'. The play was presented by the African Music and Drama Association. `On 8 November *The Blood Knot*, cut to two-and-a-half hours, reopened under professional management at the Intimate Theatre, Johannesburg' (1984:2). In March 1962 the final (140th) performance of the play took place in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth. The following year, on 22 February, it was launched - not very successfully - at the New Arts Theatre, Hampstead, London with Zakes Mokae as Zach and Ian Bannen as Morris, directed by John Berry. In this production - the first of Fugard's to be presented overseas - a black man appeared together with a white man on stage whereas in South Africa it had been customary for whites in black-face to play the roles of blacks and `Coloureds'. In this respect, the play defied the ruling South African racialist ideology. In 1964 Berry directed it at the Cricket Theatre, New York, with James Earl Jones and J.D. Cannon. On 12 June 1967, the B.B.C. broadcast *The Blood Knot* in its Theatre 625 series. In 1974, *The Blood Knot*, together with the other two Port Elizabeth plays, *Boesman and Lena* and *Hello and Goodbye*, was published with a detailed introduction written by the playwright.

The Blood Knot belongs to Athol Fugard's chamber theatre period. The works of this phase are often semi-autobiographical. They are also one-set and small-cast. Whereas there are eleven characters in *No-Good Friday* and five in *Nongogo*, there are only two personae in *The Blood Knot*, two in *Boesman and Lena*, two in *Hello and Goodbye* and four in *People are Living There*. Stephen

Gray writes that the dramas of this period in the playwright's career examine `intimate relationships within a small social nexus' (1982:19), and Marieken Swart adds to this that they explore two of the playwright's major concerns: alienation and the consequent search for identity (1983:14). Consequently, overt action is minimal; what takes place is mostly on a psychological level. The time of day, in the four plays, with the exception of one scene in *The Blood Knot*, is late afternoon extending into night; the season is autumn, descending into winter. Wortham believes `the mood projects itself upon and at the same time reflects the state of mind of Fugard's characters in their landscape' (1983:167). The night and winter, besides having literal connotations, also carry spiritual significance: they represent the darkness and coldness of the soul. The themes of existential anguish in microscopically detailed entrapment, the consequence of lost innocence and experience, and of `the inhibiting grip' (Gray 1982:19) of the inescapable past on the present, recur in each one of the four dramas. The characters are all taken to the frontier of self-knowledge where they shed their illusions, accept compromises and face their lives with Camus's `courageous pessimism' (Weales 1978:8).

Gray furthermore suggests:

> All four plays have as their dynamic an enactment of a process of growing desperation, which precipitates emotional crisis, which in turn triggers a leap into self-awareness. This leap is a climactic expansion of the characters' feeling of identity and meaning, a reaching for understanding which makes for a resolute dénouement. (1982:9)

In his introductory note to *The Blood Knot* Fugard states that this drama marks his discovery of himself as a writer (Vandenbroucke 1986:68). He further deems it `the nearest [he has] yet come to [his] one conscious ideal in Theatre. This is a return to what [he] prefer[s] to think of and talk about as "the pure theatre experience"' (1982:39). The work is in the style of `poor theatre', although less a matter of Grotowski's theory, which only reached the South African author in 1970, than a matter of preferred practice (Walder 1984:12). The play's home base is also naturalism, although Fugard departs from it in the imaginative

games the characters play to `while away the uneventful hours in the "labyrinth"' (Seidenspinner 1986:291). During these self-conscious games the brothers break loose from concrete external circumstances, and, with time and space in suspension (Swart 1983:25), they take refuge in illusion. Illusion and reality meld at times to the point where it is impossible to ascertain where one stops and the other begins.[1]

Fugard attributes the improvement of *The Blood Knot* over his earlier plays to his encounter with European theatre. The work established the essentials of Fugard's drama and set the pattern for the dramas which were to follow.

The Blood Knot is deemed the `first fully-fledged example of Fugard's skill as playwright' (Munro 1982:14) and, as it was the first to be staged overseas, it signalled the inception of his international career. James Ambrose Brown declared that `Fugard's *The Blood Knot* ha[d] given the South African play international status' (1982:71). *The New York Times* voted it the best play of the year. Other critics' impression of the drama is detailed on pages 212 and 213 of Appendix A.

The drama's inspiration, setting, dialogue and texture are essentially local. The entire action takes place in a one-room shack, `the equivalent of a cell' (Rae 1971:68), in the non-white shantytown of Korsten (Walder 1984:70), on the northern fringe of Port Elizabeth, a city regarded as a place of the lonely, the lost and the forsaken (Wortham 1983:166). Port Elizabeth represents a South Africa, portrayed here, in the words of Margarete Seidenspinner, as the `land of waste and devastation, as a desert of rubble and ruins where humanity withers and dies' (1986:230). With its confrontation of a `white' man and his `black' brother[2] and `shifting pattern of dominance and dependence between them'

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[1] The function of these games is not only to pass the time, release accumulated pressures, tensions and hatreds, but also to transcend wretched environments and the present, and to recapture the past when there was little conflict between the brothers, when life was better and an equitable and happy world of dreams appeared attainable (Swart 1983:25).

[2] The two brothers, Morris and Zachariah, actually belong to the race of Cape

(Walder 1984:52), the play, on a symbolic level, presents a `microcosm of South Africa's explosive racial situation' (Green 1976:163). John D. Raymer (1976:12) actually conceives of it as a South African parable.

But *The Blood Knot* is far more than this. Dealing with conflict, it focuses on the friction between two entirely different worlds: the white Western, urbanised and technologically-orientated society - worshipped by the manipulative light-skinned brother, Morris[3] - and the pre-industrial Third World, embodied by the black brother, Zachariah (Raymer 1976:50). The play may thus be interpreted as a `parable about Western technology's impact' on a non-Western culture (1976:49). Difficulties arise when the former attempts to `convert the latter to its own self-aggrandising purposes' (Steyn 1988:48). One reading of the play is that it denounces Western civilisation and colonisation (Raymer 1976:27).

Hence *The Blood Knot* revolves around the physical and mental differences between two brothers, differences that are put down as racial (Walder 1984:57). Morris, whose point of view dominates the play as it does his brother and who precipitates most of the action, has a light skin, so light that he has lived in white society - whereas Zach's skin is darker. In the drama Morris has returned to Zach's shanty and has been living with his brother for a year, in a domestic arrangement in which Zach is the breadwinner, while Morris tends house and saves Zach's earnings for a farm where they can live together in tranquillity, free from the indignities they are suffering at present. In the year that they have been together, Morris, the `intruder' (Cohen 1977:78) - yet head of the household - has tried to influence and control his brother's outlook. He has robbed him of carnal pleasures and `offered him, as substitute, an illusionary dream of escape' (Weales 1978:6-7), an `imagined "better" future' (Seidenspinner 1986:289). Acting as a role model, Morris has imparted the `white and civilised' `virtues of routine,[4] discussion and brotherly love' (Walder 1984:57), and sought to make

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`Coloureds'.

[3] Raymer remarks that Morris `lives as if he were punching a time-card in a factory' (1976:187).

[4] They always have polony and chips on Fridays, for instance.

Zach - who admires his sibling's pale pigmentation - recognise the finer things in life, such as education and poetry (Cohen 1977:77). The attempt, while partly successful, has also produced resentment in Zach, who has begun to recognise the restrictions imposed by his `manager' (Raymer 1976:28) on his lifestyle (Cohen 1977:77). For one, he no longer has contact with his former companion, Minnie, who `brought music, women and booze in his life - dancing, sex and sweet forgetfulness' itself (1977:77) - to compensate for the `stench and degradation of Korsten' (Seidenspinner 1986:290). The puritanical Morris is appalled by Zach's relishing his sexual exploits. To counteract this and to subdue Zach's sexual frustration and lust and distract him from `immediate gratification' (Weales 1978:7), `Morris suggests the ... substitute of a pen-pal of the opposite sex' (Swart 1983:28). The eighteen year-old Ethel Lange replies to Zach's letter as written by Morris. But Morris's plan backfires with Ethel's second letter. This letter is accompanied by a photograph which reveals that she is white. Moreover, Zach suddenly decides he enjoys the idea of `this little white Ethel better than [their] future, or the plans, or getting-away, or foot-salts, or any other damned thing in here' (44). This, however, is not for long. A third letter conveys Ethel's intention to come on a visit to Port Elizabeth. Zach is terrified as he realises the impossibility of a `Coloured' man meeting a white woman. Ethel's Oom Jakob, with his hairy fists, brings home to him `the menacing reality' of the white world with `this brutal intrusion into [his life] of the sudden and real possibility of physical danger' (Cohen 1977:80). Zach thinks of a way out: Morris can stand in for him by assuming the mantle of whiteness. He then takes the forty-five pounds put by for the farm and spends it on `an outfit for a gentleman' (70) for Morris to wear when he impersonates him. Morris objects, proclaiming that `there's more to wearing a white skin than putting on a hat'; `it's that white something inside you, that special meaning and manner of whiteness' (73), that is, he has to sound and act like a white man. Soon enough, however, Morris switches from resistance to passivity to an active desire to meet Ethel Lange. The two brothers then play a dangerous mini-drama of self-discovery. To add to the dramatic tension, Morris shifts into the antagonist role, that of a haughty and insolent white `baas' (87) who is visiting the park where the black Zach works as an attendant. As Morris starts feeling at home in his role, he

lashes his brother with the tongue by calling him names, such as *Swartgat*. The intelligence that Ethel is going to marry `Luckyman' Stoffel and that the correspondence is something of the past induces the brothers to repeat the game. `Under the strain of the moment [their play] develops into an emotional whirlpool' (Seidenspinner 1986:291) and the two brothers begin to chase after each other, `round and round in a vicious circle' (to quote from Sartre's *No Exit* [1955:31]). The game brings to the surface the deep hatred the `simple, trustworthy type of John-boy' (95) fosters for the whites (Cohen 1977:80). The ringing of the alarm clock catches him on the brink of violence (Walder 1984:59). The dramatist has the play end with the brothers realizing that there is no `future' for them, their money being spent. The only consolation lies in their brotherhood.

When he wrote *The Blood Knot*, Fugard was a self-proclaimed liberal and subscribed to the liberal axiom of the 1950's that all men are brothers, having a universal mother (Rutherford 1976:267). In the play he runs the colour barrier through the nucleus of the brotherhood, depicting with insight and sympathy how the bond can assume the nature of mutual ensnaring. `The theme of universal brotherhood', moreover, is a `seemingly ironic choice of subject' for a country `where the colour of the skin decides its citizens' social opportunities and where a lack of pigmentation is held to be a measure of superiority' (Seidenspinner 1986:252), but it is typical of Fugard that he does not use his South African background simply to concentrate on victims of racial problems and structural violence (Rutherford 1976:267). He sees the human predicament fully and he sees it whole. He `takes a particular South African issue' (1976:267) and applies it to larger and more universal enigmas, such as the wish for escape, independence, identity and fulfilment, these contending with the need to depend on somebody. As Buber would put it, it is the existential quandary of an alienated, isolated and powerless individual who feels accountable for another existence that has been entrusted to him/her (1947:61). This individual tries to cope with and relate to this existence whose suffering is witnessed, whose pain is felt (Vivier 1983:30). It is an existence with which one may clash but which one still cannot shun because one is tied to it, `either with a bond of love or a

bond of blood' (Fugard quoted by Rae in Vivier 1983:31). The futility each of the two brothers in *The Blood Knot* expresses is a reflection of the condition of all men, not simply of oppressed groupings. Due to Fugard's refusal to romanticise the personae, the audience not only witnesses but empathises with them and the issues that agitate them. As a consequence, *The Blood Knot* is not primarily a political play (Wortham 1983:169) and has had local as well as international appeal.

One of the issues *The Blood Knot* deals with is the torment of being different and being regarded as inferior because of this difference. According to Dennis Walder, the play `reveals the impossibility of segregating, without cruelty and violence, people defined as "different"' (1984:62). The brothers in *The Blood Knot*, Zach and Morris, are differentiated by their psychological and intellectual make-up as well as the shade of their skin. Whereas the memory of their mother should give them comfort and fraternal harmony, their `almost complete inability to recognise the same woman as their mother' (Rutherford 1976:270) (`it sounds like some other mother' [48]) increases the tension and widens the chasm between them (Swart 1983:26). Anna Rutherford explains that `it is their colour that has established their identities in the South African society'; these are not innate identities, but have been `created and imposed by outside forces' (1976:267). The `sins of their births' (95) determine their destiny, `fulfilling it would seem Noah's prophecy' (Rutherford 1976:267): `And he said, Cursed by Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren./And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant' (Genesis 9:25-27). Noah's curse is the one that has befallen Zach (Rutherford 1976:26). While `Morris remembers soft hands, journeys to church and a lullaby' (Foster 1982:206), Zachariah recalls `soapsuds on brown hands', crooked toes, skew toenails (47-8), `hardened feet, journeys to the butcher shop and a blues song' (Foster 1982:206). The light-skinned son was also given a top, marbles and tackies whereas the darker child had to experience the `humiliating rejection of a second-class, black identity' (Swart 1983:31).

The brothers' divergent childhood reminiscences substantiate the black-white polarisation that they represent symbolically. Zach, the darker brother, is depicted as the inferior of the two. He is innocent, spontaneous, fun-loving and pleasure-seeking, illiterate, inarticulate; in short, the child of nature. He functions at a basic, almost instinctive carnal level, his chief interests being drink and sex. `He lives only for the warmth and satisfaction of his body' (Raymer 1976:13) and disregards moral and religious demands. As Morris comments: `That's life for you. The passing of time and worthless friends' (13).

Fugard describes the sensual Zach as `the unfettered life impulse, an impulse that resents being dominated by clocks or schedules' (quoted in Rae 1971:75). Zach then also envisions time as a continuum which is to be enjoyed, not as `composed of segments' which must be kept track of and `somehow be made as useful and productive as possible' (Raymer 1976:46, 192). Whereas Zach craves the immediate sensory satisfaction of his needs, his brother, being `white/Western in his linear-time orientation' (1976:46), delays gratification.[5] In the character of Zachariah `the white man's prejudiced, archetypal image of the black man is (thus) reflected' (Rutherford 1976:271).

Zach is employed as a `watch boy' by the local park authorities, a job reserved for black people. In this menial position, he is treated as little more than a labour unit or worse, a `waste product' (Raymer 1976:27), not only by his employer and whites in general but also by his brother who is `on the lighter side of life' (64) - the reduction of human beings into things (Seidenspinner 1986:316) being a typical Fugard theme (Raymer 1976:186). What his brother cannot comprehend is that Zach relishes the world's momentary delights because he would be glad to forget the hardship which is part of his daily existence.

Since Morris's arrival, Zach has had more time for himself as Morris sees to the household affairs, and is bored, listless and apathetic to most of his brother's

[5] Ideally, one should participate in the present, but not to the extent of existing exclusively in it. Bedford (1972:273) recommends that the present be integrated with the past and the future.

ideas. All he wants to do is to `jump into that lake and swim away' (28), to no particular destination at all. Too much leisure serves as a breeding ground for a sense of meaninglessness (Yalom 1980:447). Zach wishes his circumstances to change, but he is not sure how.

In an attempt to escape from groundlessness and to acquire meaning, Zach constantly recollects the time when he surrendered himself to the collectivism of an existence in *medias res* (Foster 1982:220). That is when he and his mate, Minnie, caroused `together' (7) and achieved the orgiastic states brought on by their hedonistic pursuits of `Golden Moments' (9), women and song. Loath to answer for their existences and keen to forget their individual being, they immersed themselves in everyday, worldly diversions and pleasures. Ultimately, their self or *Dasein* was dispersed in participation and identification with the conformist anonymity of *Das Man* (May's term [1961:78]), so that it became, as Grimsley (1960:51) would phrase it, an `impersonal entity which [was] "everybody" and "nobody"' but never itself. After Morris's return, Zach's peace of mind is shattered. He is confined to the shack and deprived of his shields against meaninglessness. Hankering after his licentious past of no work, worries, or hurry (51) does not really help, for bygones cannot sustain one in the present.

By taking his recourse to others, Zach can make compensation for his insignificance. Raised in an `other-directed culture',[6] the character is a social being. He therefore strikes a dependent pose towards others, who have to complete him, as is seen in relation first to Minnie and later to Morris. For instance, he is `hypnotised' by the sound of Morris's voice (11). Morris is also permitted to construct and develop a world out of his experiences, and to govern his life.

The reliant Zach is shown to have a low self-regard. He says of himself: `I'm a

[6] M. Bedford (1972:5) submits that individuals who are the product of an `other-directed culture' take it that their advancement does not hinge upon how well they perform, but on how well they can co-operate with others.

sort of slow man' (43), and also refers to himself as a `*hotnot*' and `*swartgat kaffer*' (26). He also predicts that Ethel, the pen-pal, would scream should she ever see him, and if she were to smile, it would be condescending (56). Lastly, Zach has to convince himself of his own worth by imploring his mother in a dream monologue: `I got beauty ... too ... haven't I?' (82) and by informing his brother that he is no dog (60); he `may be a shade of black, but [he goes] gently as a man' (44).

Zach's low self-esteem originates from others' treatment of him. He is abused at work (his employer, a white man, calls him `boy' [35]), at the shops (where he is suspected of being an `agitator' [72]), and by a girl who shouts at him that he is a `black *hotnot*' (16). Upon receiving Ethel's reply his own brother alienates Zach further from his environment by drawing his attention to his `ontological dilemma as a `Coloured' in a white-oriented world' (Swart 1983:17-8). When Zach asks: `What is there as black as me?' (62), he is niggled about the pigmentation of his skin (Swart 1983:23):

> What is there `to equal you? To match you? How about a dangerous night. Try that for the size and colour of its darkness. You go with it, Zach....
> Midnight, man! Like the twelve strokes of midnight you stand before my wondering eyes. (62-3)

Morris divulges to his brother in the staged confrontation between white and black in the park: `The sight of you affects me, *Swartgat*' (91) and refers to him as a `mistake' (93), and discloses that he experiences the urge to vomit at the sight of him `crawling around like some ... some ... thing' (91). Poking Zach with an umbrella, he also vociferates: `You're horrible' and

> You know something? I hate you! What did you mean crawling around like that? Spoiling the view, spoiling my chances! What's your game, hey? Trying to be an embarrassment? Is that it? A two-legged embarrassment? Well, I hate you, do you hear! Hate! ... Hate! ... Hate! (93)

It is logical that Zach should incline towards deriving signification from an ideal of white superiority. Zach associates whiteness with rightness and with intellectual

`brightness' (Raymer 1976:21). He blurts out: `The white woman thinks I'm a white man. That I like' (40)[7], and Morris `must be quite a bright boy with nothing on' (65). Externals can `play a role in the establishment of identity' (Rutherford 1976:272) and Zach dons his brother's hat and coat in the hope of acquiring a surrogate identity, that of the white man, and then receiving the treatment accorded to him (1976:271). Yet Zach cannot assume Morris's identity (1976:272): `*the hat is too small and so is the jacket, which he has buttoned up incorrectly, while the trousers are too short*' (81). And `*the final effect is an absurdity bordering on the grotesque*' (81). When he subsequently addresses his dead mother while role-playing, he reveals the efficiency of the white man's propaganda by admitting the doubts which assail him: Morris has been such a burden as a brother because of his fair skin, but, on the other hand, `some things are only skin-deep' (82).

Although merging with others and renouncing the directness of personal decision may create comfort, it makes Zach feel even more unworthy as embeddedness also leads to the loss of self and stagnation. If the wish lays the ground for the exercise of free choice and autonomous action, Zach avoids wishing by not discriminating among wishes, but acting impulsively on all of them. For example, he does not care whether there is jam or peanut butter on his sandwich (14). And when Morris demands that Zach chooses between three women as prospective pen-pals, Zach proposes: `Let's take all three' (23). Yalom (1980:312) advances that `to wish is to lunge into the future', and not to do so betrays the inability or indisposition to project oneself into the future and to convert's one's life. Zach then also exhorts Morris not to give him `all that shit about the future and plans' (45). As he says: `I was in here ten years without plans and never needed them' (13). Zach is the one to throw away the tin with their savings for the farm. Fugard could be suggesting with this action that the elusion of the future is a way of dodging change and shielding oneself against the consciousness of ineluctable mortality.

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[7] According to Marieken Swart, `contact with a white woman would not only provide the character with a novel sensory experience, but would also give him an opportunity' to avenge society's rejection of him (1983:30).

Zach's depersonalisation is aggravated by Morris who has to have absolute power. Zach believes the source of all good is outside himself and he cannot fathom why his brother is so loath to enjoy female companionship. As he observes: `You've been here a long time now and never once did you go out, or speak to me about women. Not like Minnie did' (34). Zach needs others but he does not love them. Like Blackie in *Nongogo*, he reduces others to objects with a function to perform, that of warding off isolation. (Once again Fugard addresses the question of love without need or exploitation.) He tells Morris: `I can't use her (Ethel). You can' (66). He is not interested in the `you' of others. Thus, there is no genuine conversation or dialogical relationship. For instance, Zach falls asleep while Morris is talking to him. This reveals the cause for his poor success in establishing lasting interpersonal unions: Minnie does not come around any longer, Morris has left Zach before and intends doing it again. It appears that others simply grow tired of affirming Zach's existence.

Estrangement from the existential essence can give rise to the disclaimer of answerability and vice versa (Bugental 1976:99). When it dawns upon Zach that he may not cherish `the thought of this little white girl' (44), he articulates: `The whole, rotten, stinking lot is all because I'm black' (62) and `I am too ... truly ... too black' (61). He reproaches his brother: `You see, you were too white, so blindingly white that I couldn't see what I was doing' (63) (when he decided to enter into correspondence with Ethel),[8] in this fashion ascribing his conduct to colour and defining himself as the hapless victim who is incapable of altering his circumstances. The consequence of authorship avoidance is that he is deprived of the opportunity to infuse his life with purpose.

Nevertheless, towards the end of the play Fugard has this character revert from a `state of forgetfulness of being' to a `state of mindfulness of being' (Heidegger's terminology 1962:210-24) (`I'm a man with a taste for thoughts these days' [44]). He suspends satisfaction; when Morris announces that it is

[8] Morris, for his part, transfers responsibility to God: `your sun was too bright and blinded my eyes, so I didn't see ...' (95).

supper time, he receives a curt: `later' (80). Zach also assumes responsibility for himself. This is partly due to the black-man-white-man (`boy-*baas*') game he and his brother play during which the latter prods and pushes Zach to face up to the painful reality of his `black' identity. In Zach's letter to Ethel (the pivotal third party who represents the excitement of `forbidden fruits' and whose existence contributes towards the brothers revealing their aspirations, so precipitating the crisis), Morris will write: `forgive me, but I was born a dark sort of boy who wanted to play with whiteness' (58). In a bitter and savage parody of the Christian marriage ceremony (Swart 1983:32), self-deception is replaced by `reflection and insight' (Vandenbroucke 1986:57) as the fantasy of white superiority is exorcised with Zach enacting the role of the subservient black man. The *dramatis persona* ultimately decides to be what he is (63). He understands that he can never have the `snow white' (61) Ethel because he can never be anything other than what he is and she `wouldn't want [him] anyway' (61). Vandenbroucke (1986:54) believes that there are no choices for this character. Hence he is shown to embrace the `consequences of his blackness' (Rutherford 1976:280) and exult in all his `black days, black ways, black things' because: `They're me. I'm happy' (62). As Swart (1983:17) puts it, Zachariah revels in the positive potential and worth of black consciousness. Vandenbroucke, in addition, conjectures that the identity Zach has found through Morris's aid `may be a limiting one, defined primarily by his race, but, at least, Zach has the security of that identity' (1986:58).

Zach has already explained his altered self to his deceased mother as follows: `I got sick of myself and made a change' (81). And even later he apprises his brother: `I've changed.... I took the right!' (95) He assumes control and will henceforth assert himself in his society.

Zach, attentive to his own presence, now also becomes more responsive towards that of others. He literally places himself in Morris's shoes when he dons his suit. And in the make-believe encounter with his mother he sympathetically asks if her feet still ache (80). His life meaning is attitudinal in that he engages in his own existence and that of others.

One more thing remains for the character: he has to banish the unhappy memories of the past[9], when a washer-woman, his mother, treated him as if he were a base creature, like a caterpillar, whereas his brother was elevated, given the freedom of movement of a moth that could fly `from darkness to light' (90)[10] In an illusion, he upbraids his mother with: `Don't you recognise your own son?' and demands to know:

> Whose mother were you really? At the bottom of your heart, where your blood is red with pain, tell me, whom did you really love? (81)

By the end of *The Blood Knot*, Fugard has Zach chase away his mother's memory, interrupt Morris's musings and get Morris to do the same. No longer does he reminisce about what once was. He is reconciled to the present. As John Raymer puts it, `he wants his life and he wants it now' (1976:51).

If Zach used to be Christmas Past, then Morris is Christmas Future. Morris perpetually reminds his brother: `We're saving for a future' (8). He regards the future as `the most precious thing a man can have' (68-9) and `the best years of a man's life' (30). He has even invented a game of a `white' future (Raymer 1976:35) in which he and his brother are the proud and prosperous possessors of a farm. Even though tomorrow may be deemed the dominant mode of time (May in Friedman 1964:449), Morris's slavish dependence on his dream `exerts a tyrannical control over each moment' of his and his brother's day (Seidenspinner 1986:289), and, in the process, he dissociates himself from the present, and with it from his own being in the present. So Morris, caught as he is

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[9] May remarks that one cannot let oneself `recall the significant events of [the] past and re-experience them until [one] is ready to make some orientation to the future on the basis of these memories' (in Friedman 1964:450).

[10] The moth, of course, symbolises Morris's trying for white (Raymer 1976:43). Moths are attracted to light (39), and so is the character to the `light' of white society.

a time warp, is estranged from his existential sense and consequently does not get the most out of life. Evidence for this is found in the way he spends his days: in a one-room shack, withdrawn from the world, communicating with nobody but his brother, a brother who should also have no-one else.

It is not surprising that Morris feels as if he is in darkness (70). Whether Fugard consciously intended this or not, he has fashioned a character who is lost to the world because he is lost to himself, as self-realisation in the world is the only road to existential self-realisation (Jaspers 1950:39).

As purposelessness is often the aftermath of excessive leisure, one may take it that Morris smarts under existential meaninglessness. At the beginning of the play, the dramatist has him walking aimlessly about the room (3). Morris later mentions previous meanderings through the `big, empty world' (10) which also led nowhere and to nothing:

> The road goes on and on, passing all the time through nothing.... I'm telling you, man, it was nothing instead of something, some any old thing like a donkey, or a dog, or children kicking an empty tin ... There was nothing.... (74)[11]

Because the character has so little to live for but does not want to change; he clings to routine and his few possessions with might and main. Among his prized possessions are an alarm clock and a Bible (Walder 1984:57), both of which he uses to avoid `getting desperate' (20) and to imbue his existence with some consequence - both terrestrial and cosmic.

Besides the future, Morris also endeavours to locate meaning, happiness and hope in the past. Therefore he persists in the `quest for a childhood' (Rutherford 1976:270) - or rather `memories of affection and happy days' (Cohen 1977:80) - that both he and Zachariah can relate to. He strikes a point of common ground

[11] Many existentialists hold that in this historical hour there is no guidance from or participation by God. In fact, God seems to be absent from the universe (Bedford 1972:253-4).

in the sentimental recollection of the two of them playing around in a derelict Chevrolet (Rutherford 1976:270). Then they took their time and chances (51) and could refashion their lives. In contrast to their present predicament, in the `remember-when-life-was-better' (Raymer 1976:30) or `happiness game' (Seidenspinner 1986:291), they are going somewhere. They have a destination: `slipping through the streets, passing homes and people ...' (49-50) until they can say: `We've found it' (50).[12] Unfortunately, the harmony and joy attained by these reminiscences vanish when reality returns.

In addition to the `sentimental and loving recreation' (Cohen 1977:80) of an Edenic past, Morris also engages in fantasy and day-dreaming, for instance, that all men are brothers and can live in peace together. This pastime provides a respite from reality, so making it more bearable.

One of Morris's visions is of progressing up the social ladder. For this reason he adheres to the Western work ethic of ambition and self-sacrifice, as well as a Puritanical attitude to the flesh and its desires. That Morris has ambition is made apparent by his aspiration for a pastoral retreat. He also works rigorously: he cleans his and Zach's abode like a dutiful wife, and prepares food and a footbath for his brother. He disapproves of Zach's former friends as well as his appetites, and imposes an ascetic, puritanical lifestyle on the latter in an attempt to preserve the purity of his body. (For example, Zach is not to mention Connie Ferreira, the girl he raped.) Other activities that supply Morris's life with a goal are dedication to a cause - his brother - and altruism. For this reason Morris needs to be assured that his presence profits his brother. He pathetically seeks acknowledgement, reassurance and gratitude (Swart 1983:29). Initially he reminds Zach: `If it wasn't for me, you wouldn't have nothing (11), only to plead later: `I'm helping you, aren't I, Zach?' I want to believe that' (18). He also points out that it pays to have a brother who can read (55). One may infer that,

[12] However, according to Raymer, this `imaginary journey back in time and through space .... symbolises the absurdity of Zach's and Morris's situation. Doomed, they are "passengers" (residents) in a "vehicle" (pondok)' (1976:49). Their lives are heading nowhere.

in his mind, being needed will justify his existence; thus, he does his utmost to make himself indispensable to his brother (23). Yet it is only his assistance that he makes available to Zach, not his self. Nor does he expect mutuality; he is concerned with Zach but does not wish Zach to be concerned with him as well.

Morris ostensibly grasps that man is a social creature and that others are essential to his self-realisation. His greatest desire is to be at home in the world. Because of his light skin he has never quite belonged to the `Coloured' community in which he grew up. Swart (1983:30, 37) hypothesises that his unstable position on the fringes of the two racial groups and his consciousness of dissimilarity have deprived him of self-confidence. His yearning for acceptance and affection and a place of warmth and security where he will fit in both physically and spiritually (1983:20, 38) induces him to embark on a physical as well as emotional pilgrimage. Yet, he cannot make one friend in Oudtshoorn or even find one friendly face, and by the wayside he is chased away by a white man standing by a fire and holding a stick in his hand. This man looks down on Morris literally and figuratively, for he is situated at the top of a high hill and he is white (Raymer 1976:46-7). The latter incident causes Morris to return to Korsten and the brother with whom he shared a carefree youth and who has always been accepting of him. Yet even in the safety of the limited environment of the shack where he is not required to experience life at first hand, he still dreads the outside world which has rejected him[13] and the disillusionment which follows in the wake of reality.[14]

This is so since Morris, in spite of the religion he seems to espouse, does not really have a `stabilising belief on which to build, no faith to justify his existence

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[13] Compare this with Bedford's view (1972:276, 259) that people should reconcile themselves to the factual reality that they have to live within a community, and that it is their obligation to open themselves to and establish close relationships with their neighbours as they rely on others' judgement to discover their own identity.

[14] Swart (1983:32) observes that although a dreamworld may function as a refuge from pain, an identity based on illusion or pretence is tantamount to psychological suicide.

or explain his fate' (Swart 1983:38). In fact, Fugard portrays him as so concerned about losing his own conflicted centre that he rigidly refuses to go out and actualise his potential. So he holds fast to routine and adjusts to a shrunken world space. In other words, he surrenders part of his potentialities to save what is left, his means of alleviating *angst* without directly dealing with it. Another way in which the character copes is to `concentrate on the blood-line that links him' to his brother (1983:20). Brotherhood, although an `ill-fitting jacket' (1983:22) is a retreat from the outside world, providing comfort and meaning. Because this brother exists, to quote Buber, `in the darkness the light lies hidden, in fear salvation, and in the callousness of [his] fellow-men the great Love' (1967:98).

For this reason, Morris informs Zach that `of all the things there are in this world I like most to hear you call me that' (brother) (19). He is preoccupied with the word `brother' and extracts various connotations from it. In Scene One it is `brotherhood.... Brotherly love' (19). The familiar combative `men-at-arms' is changed to the unified `brother-in-arms, each other's arms' (19) because, as Swart notes, `"armed" with Zach' Morris will conquer his fears' (1983:21). In Scene Two of Act I `brothers' is a `woolly' word `like old brown jackets a size too big. But what does that matter as long as it keeps (*sic*) out the cold (of old age), and the world?' (27-8) To Morris, the word has a `broody sound' (19). Marieken Swart (1983:21) proposes that words such as `broody', `breeds' and `eggs in a nest' reveal the character's horror of exposure as well as his overwhelming need for security and sense, giving rise to a `naive longing to return to the uncomplicated, embryonic state that precedes awareness'; to regress rather than to progress. `If given a choice he (Morris) would probably crawl back into the womb' where he and his brother both began life (1983:21).[15]

It is beyond doubt that the relation Morris has with Zach, like Zach with Morris, is

[15] Morris could be classified as `a fate-trapped victim'. Avid to adopt `Sisyphus's down-to-earth perspective', in the hope of acquiring an `intimate knowledge of his surroundings, ... identify his position and disentangle the paths of the past from those leading towards the exit' in order to reach an advanced stage of the journey, `his attention is distracted from the way out' of the labyrinthine existence (Seidenspinner 1986:281).

`not the *you* and *me*; it is the *we*' (cf. Sartre 1958:246). Neither can make do without the other. After all, they have the same background. Morris uses memories and games to establish the dependency of two brothers who live in harmony and unity. Furthermore, he slips Zach's coat on when the latter is asleep, this becoming a kind of communion with the other (Swart 1983:22):

> You get right inside the man when you can wrap up in the smell of him.... It helped a lot. It prepared me for your flesh, Zach. Because your flesh, you see, has an effect on me. It feels, you see. Pain, and all those dumb dreams throbbing under the raw skin, I feel. (21)[16]

But Morris does not feel at one with his sibling's flesh only, but also with his mind. He accuses Zach: `What about your dreams? They kept me awake these past few nights' (58). He takes it that dreaming is dangerous: `All they (the police) need for evidence is a man's dreams' (9). He therefore insists on Zach sharing everything with him and is offended and wounded when he does not:

> Who would have thought it? That one day, one of us would come in here with a secret and keep it to himself. If someone had tried to tell me that, I would have thrown up my hands in horror. This is how friendships get wrecked, in secrecy. (53)

In this way Morris endeavours to become more and more the object of Zach's consciousness, and, additionally, to be in command of his mind.

Morris, claiming that he is on his brother's side (6), is the one who sets out the rules of the game (Swart 1983:29). In order to escape an unaccommodating past and present and to protect his own interests, he selfishly imposes his viewpoint and vision on Zach.[17] In other words, Zach is not accepted or even

[16] Morris's desire to become flesh of his brother's flesh has strong biblical connotations and confirms, according to Marieken Swart (1983:22), that brotherhood has become Morris's religion.

[17] Considered from an existentialist point of view, even if Morris's convictions are valid in his own situation, he still may not force them on his brother (Bedford 1972:257).

recognised in his otherness but has to exist only as part of his brother's experience - he is not given the freedom to find his own being. Hence there is no true communication or equality, only domination and objectification. For instance, Morris will write on Zach's behalf that `Zachariah' has a brother who has been to Oudtshoorn twice (32). That is also why Morris resents it so much when Zach refers to himself as a `*hotnot*' or `*kaffer*' (26) and why he considers the insult to his brother (`Go to the gate or go to hell' [6]) as an insult to himself as well. It also explains his hostility when his brother does not share everything with him. Zach furthermore is forced to share his sibling's isolation (Swart 1983:20), and any contact with an outsider who might usurp Morris's position is perceived as a threat. On this score, Morris deflates his brother's reveries of `Golden Moments at two bob a bottle' (9) with Minnie. However, in a such a state of fusion neither party is free or whole. Ironically, Morris insists that fraternal feelings exist between him and Zach. Notwithstanding this, Martin Orkin argues that Morris's effort `to invade his (brother's) body is not ... an attempt primarily to dominate so much as an attempt to understand his brother's body in a way the state has forbidden - that is, not as impure but as the body of a brother related to him by blood' (1988:28), a brother who can make Morris's own self present by accepting and affirming his existence.

Morris's desire to merge may be imputed to possible perturbation at the thought of the finitude of all things and the conviction that fusion with his brother will bring about safety. We are told that Morris's mother died when the brothers were relatively young. This may account for Morris's apprehension of death. He utters that he and his brother did not say the word `Mother' enough and he now experiences a certain sadness whenever he is reminded of her demise (19). There is now nothing between him and the grave. Fear of death is also reflected by Fugard in his obsession with time. Morris melancholically mentions that Autumn is `the beginning of the end of another year' (20) and asks: `Where do they go? The good times in a man's life?' (52) Seidenspinner sees Morris's conviction that the `exertion of a purely mechanical control over each second' by means of the alarm clock, so limiting time to the `moments of the "now"' `suffices to master the present and the future' (Seidenspinner 1986:291, 295). This is

suggestive of his terror at time passing and the meaninglessness of life in the face of mortality (which, nonetheless, could be *Dasein*'s `*ownmost* and uttermost' possibility as it learns about itself in the anticipation of giving itself up [Heidegger 1962:307]). Morris then also muses that it is bitter that neither he nor Zach can recall on which day he returned, a day when he was not recognised by anyone and felt like `a stranger in [his] old home township' (20). Lastly, after Zach complains of a taxing day at work, his brother induces him to think of his own finitude too by asking him if his heart is still beating (37).

Zach is Morris's rationalisation - or rather excuse - for not pondering the possibility of his own dissolution and for remaining innerly static. The relationship he has with his brother is dramatised as based on need and not on love. It may be described as `I-it',[18] functional[19] and exploitative.

In this alliance of theirs, the *dramatis personae* are presented as fluctuating between active and passive roles. In a childhood game, Morris was Tarzan and Zach his ape (51). At the outset of *The Blood Knot* these roles are reversed. Morris, masochistically, casts himself as Zach's servant: he makes him food, kneels before him and washes his feet - so `proving' that he is a `gentle Jesus, meek and mild' (80). It is also possible, Raymer argues, to view the character as representative of the `guilty white liberal attempting to allay his guilt by being a do-gooder' (1976:17). Morris even offers up his own meal to Zach after the latter has smashed his plate to pieces in a fit of fury. But Morris's subservience is only a charade for the manipulation and exploitation of the other. The role of servile underdog is one he has chosen for himself and Zach simply has to play the part assigned to him. Zach is to work while Morris stashes the earnings away for the farm he covets. It is evident that Morris supports the `white European-American code of putting off present pleasures' for illusory and far-off gratification (Raymer

[18] Zach is reduced to an `it' due to Morris's refusal to accept that his brother is existentially different from himself. Since he does not experience Zach's side, he does not direct his words to the person Zach is. As a consequence, the character will not overcome his `solipsistic predicament' (Friedman 1964:543).

[19] Zach's function is to listen to his brother and do his bidding.

1976:51).

`Although Morris maintains that the existence he [envisages] is for both of them, Zach has nothing to do with its conception or its design' (Foster 1982:206). However, as Zach is the financial backbone of the plan and it would be unrealisable without him, Morris has to exercise control over his brother's money, time and thoughts. So he devises artificial shackles, such as mockery, humiliation, psychological blackmail and the restriction of individual freedom to chain his brother to him (Swart 1983:15) and to convert him into a `more "functional" work-machine' (Raymer 1976:183). In essence, Morris manipulates Zach by means of his verbal proficiency. He grasps the `potency of words' (Cohen 1977:79) and with these he can create `scenes of their past whose beauty (comforts his sibling and) inspires him with fondness and love', so distracting him from his own desires. At other times these words induce insecurity (1977:78). The second way in which Morris controls his brother is by the rigid, military routine neurotically maintained with the aid of the alarm clock; the third, by the calendar; the fourth, the Bible - and the narrow Calvinistic religion it represents in South Africa[20] - and the last, the remote pleasure of a pen-pal who is to divert Zach's attention from immediate gratification.[21] When the illiterate Zach grows too self-assured and independent for Morris's liking and withholds Ethel's letter, Morris psychologically assaults him by calling upon him to spell his name. When Zach cannot do so, Morris gleefully proclaims his supremacy in this struggle for domination: `I win!' (55). And when Zach proudly recognises the name on the envelope as his own, Morris again undermines his confidence by: `Since when are you the only thing that begins with a Z?' (55) Zach is to rely on Morris exclusively so that Morris will have a reason for being and for being as before.

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[20] God, apparently, is watching Zach with `His Secret Eye to see how far [he goes]' (46).

[21] Foster (1982:203) remarks that `substituting a pen-pal for solving the need for female companionship is equivalent to Morris's attempt to deal with the issue of being black in South Africa by passing for white. Both are futile solutions for real problems and the parallel relationship between them is evidence of the absurdity of both.

The ambivalent way in which Morris treats Zach is a measure of the dichotomy in his own nature and the conflicting emotions he experiences in relation to his skin colour and that of his brother. He cannot approve of himself as either `Coloured' or white - that is why he gets undressed in the dark (65). Morris's is an insecure identity, a `divided self' at ease in neither role (Vandenbroucke 1986:55). He professes that to know and accept oneself completely is to be at peace, happy and whole, yet his sensitivity about his sibling's pigmentation and his own betrays that he himself is not at peace (Swart 1983:31). Morris associates `black with "darkness" and loneliness' and white with `"light" and life' (Seidenspinner 1986:308): `Always to light, I thought, Everything always flying, or growing, or turning, or crying for the whiteness of light' (69). He even confesses that he is critical of colour (73). `White is right' -the white birds that fly to light are `untouched by the filth and misery which pervade the lives of the blacks' (Cohen 1977:79) - and `Coloured is wrong' (Raymer 1976:15) and to be shunned.[22] During the perilous `"search-and destroy" game' (1976:31) which churns up the rough memories of the past (Seidenspinner 1986:291), he apprises his brother:

> I feel your presence. So I think, I'll move further on. You see, you bothered me as I passed. Moments of recognition, you know, at first sight, and all that. So I'll take this road. I mean ... I'll have to get away if I want to admire the beauty, won't I? Yes. It's a good road.... so I'm climbing up the hill in this road, putting miles between us; and now, at last, there ahead of me is the sky, big blue; and I hurry on to the top where I turn against it and look back at you... far behind me now, in the distance, outside the gate. (90)[23]

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[22] This is a comment on South Africa's socio-political situation at the time in which whiteness meant opportunity and privilege.

[23] Ironically, as Morris recalls:

> I touched the other thing [beauty] once, with my life and my hands, and there was no blood, or screaming, or pain. I just touched it and felt warmth and softness and wanted it like I've never wanted anything in my whole life. Ask me what's the matter with me for not taking it when I touched it. (34)

That Morris looks down upon Zach is again exhibited by his use of the word `bruise' in: `I wish that old washerwoman had bruised me too at birth.' (63) The bruise is Zach's dark skin, and, as Rutherford (1976:279) contends, as a bruise it must be a flaw. Morris feels contempt for his brother and forces him to suffer the indignity and degradation of a black man by exploiting his ignorance and gullibility (Raymer 1976:16). He diminishes the latter's self by forcing him, for example, to take a closer look at the treatment he receives as a park attendant, and derives sadistic pleasure from the other's existential confusion and pain. Zach shows his resentment in an indirect manner by complaining about the foot-salts, about Morris's food, and by relishing past delights. The situation with the white pen-pal is a weapon wielded against Morris. Fugard has Zach take charge when he appropriates the `future' tin and spends his savings on an expensive outfit for Morris that will enable the latter to pass for white. The second and last time the brothers re-enact the South African ritual of the white `baas' abusing the black `boy', Zach is disingenuous. When he compliments his brother on his appearance in the suit, saying `It made me feel good' (87), he is not interacting spontaneously but plotting to vent his bitterness (Rutherford 1976:281).

Although Morris is the stronger, he bears the burden of existential self-condemnation. This accounts for his contradictory conduct. In the scene where he dons the suit Zach has bought for him, he is simultaneously `performing an emotional striptease', peeling away his interior defences and laying bare his innermost desires (Swart 1983:37). Morris is remorseful because he, Judas-like, betrayed Zach when he deserted him in an attempt to break the barrier of his `Coloured' identity and identify with the oppressor (Raymer 1976:183), in the process casting behind him his origin, their fraternity and his race (`Didn't you see how I turned and looked back at you, at all that is past and forgotten? [90]).[24] In Angove's view, `Zach is the physical reminder of Morrie's limitations'. His dark flesh is the `concrete representation of the reality of Morrie's (contemptible `Coloured') heritage' (1987:26), that is, his African roots (Seidenspinner 1986:294), and this illumines why the `hotnot joke always gets'

[24] Yet, as Raymer (1976:25) makes known, the power of the past cannot be underestimated.

Morris (27).

Morris further sees himself as a modern, vagrant Cain who `wandered away, a marked man, on a long road' (19),[25] the mark being his guilt (23) for not confronting the challenge of his individual existence. On the road without end, he was, to use Sartre's words, `enveloped in this monstrous silence, free and alone, without assistance and without excuse, condemned to decide without support from any quarter, condemned ... to be free' (1947:290). That is to say, having severed himself from the `familiar security of the everyday world' (Grimsley 1960:28) in order not to see his brother's eyes and to be free (90), he found himself an `abandoned and isolated possibility in a finite existence' (Grimsley 1960:66) - the inevitable aftermath of absolute freedom, according to Sartre (1949:290). Then, for the first time, it dawned on him: `why men build homes, and the meaning of that word "home"' (75). And in the silence he heard `the voice of [his] brother's blood [crying] unto [him]' (19), like that of Abel. He returned for the following reason:

> I couldn't stand that look in your eyes any more. Those bright, brotherly eyes in my dreams at night, always wet with love, full of pity and pain.... God, such lonely eyes they were! ... watching and sad and asking me, why? softly? why? sorrowfully, why? ... Why did I do it? (79)

This one extreme experience has made Zach present to Morris for all time. His conscience - crying `Where were you? - imparted to him that his resentment of and conscious rebellion against his negritude made him a `Judas to his own flesh and blood' (Raymer 1976:22). In addition, he had desecrated the blood relationship and transgressed against his integrity and true self as represented by the person he left behind (1976:36) - `too high a price to pay for acceptance' (1976:234). Swart goes further than this when she postulates that `the

[25] `Allegorically speaking, the road is similar to the one' travelled by the Boer pioneers `into the South African interior'. The Boers hoped the road would take them away from English domination. But `the road just [went] on and on, passing all the time through nothing' (75). As Morris's attempt at turning tail fails, so did that of the Afrikaners (Raymer 1976:37-8).

attainment of an ideal of whiteness would have been fatal because it would [have meant] the denial of an essential part of [Morris's] being' (1983:35).[26] That Morris appreciates the danger he was in is illustrated by his drawing on the image of the moth to depict the quest for lightness and whiteness and the associated freedom (Raymer 1976:43): `Look at me, will you please! I too flew from darkness to light, but I didn't burn my wings' (90). He has earlier mentioned that `a man can hurt himself' (46) and that he `sustained eternal injuries' (61) when he made an effort at being what he was not. Raymer confirms that the character's `wings [were] singed in the flight' to white (1976:45).[27]

The self-destructive games in which Morris engages are indicative of his contrition, born of the apprehension that his mistake could have constituted a destiny for him. His regret is also personified by the spectre of the mother who haunts him `all day, all along the road, the long, unending road' (91) and, now, from where she hides behind a tree, is a sad `spectator' to his and his brother's final game (Swart 1983:42). To free himself of the inhibiting presence of his conscience he reviles the memory of her with his brother in racially-loaded role-play:

> Morris: *Voetsek* off! We don't want you! You old bitch!
> Zachariah: Bugger off!
> You old bitch! You made life unbearable! (92)

Together they stone their mother, who is really a `unifying force' in their enactment of apartheid (Swart 1983:42). However, as Swart (1983:42) hypothesises, the devastation of the source of origin is also a negation of themselves. Morris is at last caught by his sense of shame (Vandenbroucke

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[26] Consciousness, however, may entail turning against and denying one's self (May 1961:84).

[27] Raymer (1976:29) draws a parallel between butterflies and South Africa's whites, as Morris - a light-skinned `Coloured' - compares himself to a black moth that cannot `resist the fatal attraction of the white, luminescent lamp' and is scorched by the flame (Seidenspinner 1986:289). In his childhood, Morris and his brother chased butterflies, but the insects remained `always just out of reach, soaring easily, beautifully through the soft South African air' (Raymer 1976:28).

1986:56). By going full circle and returning to the lowlands of Korsten, Morris does what he feels ought to be done, and by caring for his brother he seeks expiation and atonement for his erroneous conduct. Looking after Zach is also looked upon as his divine mission which is to dispense significance to his empty existence (1986:23).

Even though Morris has come back to his brother due to guilt (Fugard quoted by Rae in Vivier 1983:31), the dark shadow of responsibility, he does not appropriate authorship for long. This is evidenced by the following interchange regarding the letter they have written, on his suggestion, to a white woman.

> MORRIS: You know what you done, don't you?
> ZACHARIAH: Me?
> MORRIS: Who was it then? Me?
> ZACHARIAH: But what?
> MORRIS: Who wanted women?
> ZACHARIAH: Me.
> MORRIS: Right. Who bought the paper?
> ZACHARIAH: Me.
> MORRIS: Right. Who's been carrying on about Minnie, and Connie, and good times? Not me. (40)

Shortly hereafter, Morris poses the rhetorical question: `I'm to blame, am I? All right. I'll take the blame. I always did, didn't I? But this is where it ends. I'll say I got nothing more to do with it' (43). Ironically, this is also where Morris's development comes to an end. At a later stage it is his deceased mother and Ethel who are accused (85). Even later Fugard has him even brand God with reproach: `your sun was too bright and blinded my eyes, so I didn't see the notice prohibiting' (95). He presents himself as the innocent victim, so depriving himself of the opportunity to transform his destiny.

The `notice' is the law prohibiting a black man from passing for white, which is what Morris has done. He has indulged in illusory dreams by trying to `whitewash away his facts' (58) and has flown away like one of the white birds (Cohen 1977:79). He justifies his deception of himself and his brother as follows: `It didn't seem a sin. If a man was born with a chance at change, why not take it'

(79). Although it is commendable that Morris has aimed at his own `improvement' and confronted the `injustice at large in the world with his own principles of justice' (Camus 1971:29), one cannot disavow one's true identity or establish it at the expense of another.

Another technique used by the playwright through which his characters may acquire a meaningful identity and perspective as well as an understanding of each other is through the games they play. As time and space are suspended during these games (Swart 1983:25), they `serve as balm against the present and reality' (Cohen 1977:80). That is to say, they `keep the world at bay' (Seidenspinner 1986:291). With the exception of one, these games are initiated by Morris.

From the moment Zach decides to hold on to Ethel's letter (`We done it, and now I got it and I'm keeping it' [44]), he becomes more and more assertive. Morris's confession enables him to take revenge by effecting a reversal of their roles so that he becomes the inquisitor, giving his brother, the defendant (Swart 1983:36), the benefit of his eyes. Stripping his brother of all protective layers, Zach notices for the first time the `Mr Hyde in Morris, that ugly white supremacist aspect Morris had hoped to hide' (Raymer 1976:15). `Zach now has all the positive answers' (Munro 1982:16) and he manipulates Morris into the archetypal role of the white man. In this fashion, the `full range of white anti-black phobias' is exposed (1982:16). Morris's aspiration of a white future is wrecked as he gains the insight that the black man is an inescapable part of his identity - past and present. The real bastard is Morris himself (90). The `nightmare park fantasy' game (Walder 1984:62) - in which Zach's deep hatred for the whites is exposed (Cohen 1977:80) - increases in intensity until violence threatens to erupt. The once arrogant white oppressor who proudly paraded in front of the oppressed black man now begs for mercy in an adapted version of the Lord's Prayer. Before Zach can become Cain, the murderer, the two brothers, `like boxers in a ring are saved by the ringing of [the] alarm clock' (Swart 1983:43). The action shifts back to the surface structure and Morris and Zach are `jerked back into historical time' (Rutherford 1976:282-3) and plunged into reality, and along with

this, `their established identities within South African society' (1976:277). They come to the conclusion that they just got carried away by the game and should be `all right' as long as they `play in the right spirit' (96). The black brother once more submits to the white one's authority and things are as they were.

However, there is one major difference. Morris has learnt to be more objective towards himself, self-critical, and he begins to recognise himself for who he really is. If there is one truth the play stresses, it is to accept oneself as one is, and not to try to change because it is impossible (Vandenbroucke 1986:65).

When Morris accepts himself and his culture, he becomes more like Zach. Zach has exorcised the past and now lives in the present without hope or illusion but with courage, and so Morris relinquishes his future fantasies: that of passing for white as well as owning a two-man farm (a vision for which he has traded the first dream). His acquiescence in spending the farm money is the first sign of his willingness to reconcile himself to present time, and face the limitations and hopelessness of the future. When he lets go of the game of the future (Raymer 1976:35), self-delusion, unfounded faith and naive optimism give way to perspicuity and subjectivity (Vandenbroucke 1986:46), and Morris discovers himself as a free spiritual being. Hence he resets the alarm clock that used to direct their daily routine (Seidenspinner 1986:289) but now has stopped like the old Morris, and proclaims: `I'm Morrie' (86). Having previously hesitated,

> I'm not just going to jump right in. Men drown that way. You must paddle around first (73),

he now, like the clock, will make a fresh start as he is `wound up' again. He will set the time, as he and his brother are now in control of the clock, and not it of them.

Morris might not be able to alter his circumstances, but he can learn to live with them; he will not be defeated by his predicament (Seidenspinner 1986:337). Besides, as Paul Tillich imparts, `man's predicament do[es] not necessarily deny his personal responsibility' (1968:65). This is because decisions carry more

weight than conditions or one's environment as there are no compelling external situations; individuals are ultimately self-determining (Bedford 1972:256). Fugard has this character, then, forsake the belief that there is a supra-human being who creates and guards him. Morris accepts accountability and his constitutive function in an indifferent and contingent universe (Yalom 1980:357, 423). From now on he will no longer simply witness the life process; he will actively partake in it - in its pleasures as well as its pain.

The play ends the way it has begun: the two brothers in their shack at the end of the day. The repetitive, circular structure (Walder 1984;62) of the drama underscores the fact that their bleak lives will continue, as the lake `never changes colour.... like a face without feeling' (13-14).[28] Fugard describes them as heavy, hopeless and `almost prostrate on the earth' (quoted in Weales 1978:8), in an inimical and absurd world. Locked into `a dreadful routine of simply carrying on' (Cohen (1977:72) - with their games, foot-salts and the alarm clock (Vandenbroucke 1986:61) - they have no happiness or hope. Like Vladimir and Estragon, they are unable to `draw any comfort from the traditional Christian doctrines of divine preordination and salvation' (Swart 1983:38). As Morris seems to be saying: `Now we know'. What they know is that there is nothing for them to cling to: the future is an `empty symbol' (Cohen 1977:77) and so is the after-life. Neither does the past afford mental support (Seidenspinner 1986:296). `The only certainty they can rely on is their intuitive understanding of "now"' (1986:264). Save this, they are forlorn and all is futile. (At least, for Estragon and Vladimir a little hope remains in that Godot may still come.) Yet the characters do not simply surrender to despair and die. As Zach exhorts Morris:

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[28] The lake, in which huge `industries disgorge their poison' (Cohen 1977:78), is reminiscent of Dante's lake of fire and brimstone (Raymer 1976:40). The brothers think of the lake as a malignant being (it has `a face without feeling' [14]). `Given its stagnation, its active hatred of people in Korsten, its stench, its death-like stillness', there are two feasible interpretations: the lake represents South Africa's apartheid policy - which cannot be eschewed - and, `on a more personal level', the lake symbolises the `mysterious and often disconcerting human condition' (Raymer 1976:40).

> A man can't just stop like that, like you. That's definitely no good, because.... You want to know why? Because a man must carry on. Most certainly. Otherwise who is going to sweep the floor? *Ja*. Ever think about that? If everybody just gave up, just sat down and couldn't carry on ... why, nothing would happen. Isn't that so. One by one we would just topple over and nothing would happen. So that proves it, doesn't it? We *must* carry on. (83-4)

To Derick Cohen (1977:77), what is so affecting and inspiring is the way they cope with their situation. They are resigned to their situation but not defeated. The rephrasing of the familiar `tomorrow is another, yet another day...' (60) suggests the burden of acceptance they will bear. `"Stoic endurance" is the key note' (*sic*) (Edmans quoted in Mshengu 1982:171).

The brothers finally come to comprehend that when all else fails, they still have each other, entangled as they are, however much they may even resent it, in a symbiotic, unbreakable knot, on the one hand sustaining and unifying and, on the other, constricting the flow of life and, as such, destructive. The bond between them is based on `their need to be respected' and, more importantly, to have life in the eyes of another (Hauptfleisch 1982:187). It is an invisible bond of love and hatred that, because it will remain, precludes complete independence and freedom (1982:187). As Morris announces: `anywhere, any place or road, there [is] still you' (79); `We're tied together, Zach. It's what they call the blood knot -, the bond between brothers' (97). The drama ends with the psychological recognition and reaffirmation of the fraternal, mutual dependence of the one on the other, the way in which the one complements the other (Rutherford 76:283). Meagre as this may be, it is more than many of Fugard's subsequent characters will have.

The harmony and camaraderie experienced during the brief escapes from reality shed light on the decision to `make cathartic fantasy a permanent part of their lives' (Swart 1983:28). So the brothers take refuge in illusion (1983:26), this being preferable to the comfortless reality of life which is increased by the

disparity of their personalities[29] and the complexity of their social and political situation (1983:28). They also succeed in inventing meaning for themselves. They cherish the very vortex of their groundlessness, come to grips with their absurd condition and assume a bold, heroic stance in facing their destiny. As Morris wryly comments: `I think there's quite a lot of people getting by without futures these days' (96). He even succeeds in mustering some enthusiasm: `we got a lot left, you know! [*Little laugh*]. Almost a whole life ... stretching ahead ... in here ... [*Pause*]' (96). This Sisyphian insight is the basis for the play's resolution.

[29] According to Seidenspinner, the original function of the games was to `assist the two brothers in reaching a deep understanding of each other' (1986:291).

HELLO AND GOODBYE

The next major success after *The Blood Knot* was *Hello and Goodbye.* The play made its début at the segregated Library Theatre in Johannesburg on 26 October 1965 after being previewed in Dorkay House - a former clothing factory in Johannesburg that now housed a group of students. Athol Fugard featured in the role of Johnnie and Molly Seftel played Hester. Barney Simon directed, and named the group the Phoenix Players. On 16 November of the same year the drama opened in Pretoria, and in December it toured to Cape Town. On 18 September 1969, it was staged off-Broadway at the Sheridan Playhouse with Martin Sheen and Colleen Dewhurst. Barney Simon was again the director. Peter Stevenson directed the drama, starring Ben Kingsley and Janet Suzman, in March 1973 at the King's Head Theatre Club, London. In September the play transferred to the Royal Shakespeare Company's The Place at Euston. On 26 July 1974 the definitive production of *Hello and Goodbye* premièred at The Space in a never-segregated open area in Cape Town, with Bill Flynn and Yvonne Bryceland. The Flynn-Bryceland duo had its 200th performance in Johannesburg in May 1977. SABC-TV filmed *Hello and Goodbye* in that year, and the following year, BBC-TV followed suit. For what the critics, Abrahams and Gussow, say of the play, see page 217 of Appendix A.

The work, which confirmed its creator's theatrical promise (Vandenbroucke 1986:78), is included, with *The Blood Knot*, *Boesman and Lena* and *People are Living There* in Fugard's chamber theatre period by Stephen Gray (1982:19). Like *The Blood Knot*, *Hello and Goodbye* is a two-character work set in an environment of poverty and no privacy: the action is confined to a barren and dank room. The drama is also almost Aristotelian in its unity of place and time (Green 1982:174).

Hello and Goodbye is the `harrowing account' (Walder 1984:66) of the encounter between a brother and sister who meet again after twelve years of separation. They are brought together `long enough to say "hello", Hester's first line, and "goodbye", her last' (Vandenbroucke 1986:70). Inverting the stock male-female roles, the unemployed brother, Johnnie, has been housekeeper

and sick-nurse to the pivotal third party in the play, the now deceased father, a railway official who had been crippled in an explosion. Although the father never appears in the play, `his presence is felt as strongly as a physical reality because of the many references to him and the complexity of emotions he arouses in the other characters' (Swart 1983:49). Raymer contends that this resurrected `omnipresent menace' exemplifies a typical Fugard device: that of the present absent (1976:207).

Raymer also recommends that *Hello and Goodbye* be read as an allegorical representation of the Afrikaner experience in South Africa (1976:92). In terms of such an interpretation, Johannes Cornelius Smit could be set down as a caricature of the Afrikaner stereotype as socially defined at the time. `He falls into the category of puritan Afrikaner ... who adheres to the God of the Old Testament, a religion which "exalts law and order above justice, legality above compassion, stability above change"' (Paton [1979:31] quoted in Angove 1987:32). This embodiment of the Afrikaner apartheid past then also ruled his `inferiors' - his wife and children - with a rod of iron (Raymer 1976:92).

Hester, in reaction to her father's despotic demands, has decamped to become a prostitute in Johannesburg. After Mr Smit Senior's death his son remains alone in the small cottage. Shortly after the opening of *Hello and Goodbye*, the dominant character - Hester - returns to the squalid home, ostensibly to claim her share of the money which she believes her bed-ridden father received as workman's compensation from the government, but in reality she has come to try and `establish a consistent identity through memory' (Swart 1983:72).[1] Hester's myriad questions, shock techniques and scorn shake the foundations of her brother's world and precipitate a crisis in his life. In order to protect himself- his principal needs are shown to be safety and security - Johnnie pretends that his father is asleep in the next room. His sister cajoles and threatens him to help her get the family's possessions out of the old man's bedroom (Cohen 1977:75), only to discover that he is dead. The cowering Johnnie is finally compelled to admit the crushing truth: there is no money and nothing to expect. Hester exits to

[1] As Swart observes, the `past often explains the present' and remembering it may sustain one in the present (1983:72).

return to Johannesburg. Johnnie, alone once again, toys with his father's crutches which have been unearthed in the search and, at the drama's macabre conclusion, decides to take on the identity of the dead parent.

It is evident from the plot description that, in contrast to the two plays previously studied, *Nongogo* and *The Blood Knot*, *Hello and Goodbye* is not directly related to South Africa's racial policies. In a period deemed dehumanising by many, it seems that Fugard, in this work, has foregone his examination of the country's racial tensions for a concern with social and economic forces as well as the in-depth exploration of characters in a no-choice situation who nevertheless still try to find fulfilment or escape (Raymer 1976:236).

Hello and Goodbye has the same dramatic structure as *The Blood Knot*. In both works, a sibling drops in, after a long absence, on a brother who has kept house in the meantime. The two siblings of *Hello and Goodbye*, although white, are no better off than the two `Coloureds' of *The Blood Knot*. Intimidated by a Calvinist father and society respectively, Hester and Johnnie are as isolated and friendless as Morris and Zachariah are. Both sets of siblings grapple to secure some sort of foothold that will hold them up sufficiently to live (Green 1982:164-5) (as is revealed by their continuous references to their full names [Angove 1987:29]). Nevertheless, they become more and more desperate, and this triggers a crisis of meaning. Through the `joint reconstruction of a shared childhood' (1982:169), they eventually hit upon a means of communication. While they probe each other's lives, mutual disguises, masks and pretences are stripped away until, the two are `confronted, at the climax, with their naked selves. This new knowledge, achieved through debate and cross-examination, is the basis for [both plays'] resolution' (1982:163).

Contrary to *The Blood Knot*, *Hello and Goodbye* is not so much a description of a relationship between hostile siblings as it is of the brother's and sister's separate personalities and different attitudes to their lives (Vandenbroucke 1986:69). When the two at last do communicate, they `only reach a compromise that will reinforce their separation: he will keep the house' and she will take the compensation paid out to their father (Wortham 1983:172-3).

The opening monologue of the play belongs to Johnnie. The first thing that strikes one about this character's existence is its emptiness, so much so that he thinks of the frogs' croaking and crickets' chirpings as `little happy noises' (159). Besides, `anything is better than silence' (159), as `silence isn't what you think it is. Silence is waiting - for it to happen, anything - a noise, or a groan or a call' (159). So silence has become his greatest enemy - since it forces him to rely on his own resources and aggravates his loneliness and the emptiness of the house and his life.[2] He sometimes just experiences the urge to just `break the monotony. Open the door and leave the house' (102).

Hunched over the kitchen table as *Hello and Goodbye* opens, Johnnie reports: `A day will have passed. Emptier. It will be ... emptier' (102). Johnnie is obsessed with time. The dramatist's own fascination with time goes back, in his words, to humankind's `central dilemma - the fact that life dies. And the passing of those seconds. The span can literally be measured.... It's death knocking at the door' (Wilhelm 1982:112-3).

Johnnie's life lacks significance. Many years ago he and his father existed vicariously through Hester's liaisons with men, but after she left, there was `nothing else' (137), no escape mechanism, but `waiting for nothing in particular with the City Hall telling the time, same time, ding-dong, start to count forget to finish because it's all the same' (104). Even now he `moves mechanically through, and finds no meaning in life' (Raymer 1976:236).

According to Johnnie, the only change is that he is older, and then only a fraction (101). He cannot face the real change: that he is free to fashion his own future - and profoundly alone - after his father's death.

Like Zach from *The Blood Knot*, and Queeny from *Nongogo*, Johnnie seems trapped in an existential vacuum. However, he does not want to recognise this.

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[2] Marieken Swart (1983:7) suggests that silence and solitude afford an opportunity for introspection. But if one's resources are limited, then one will become estranged from the essence of one's being.

Like that of Zach's brother, Morris, `Johnnie's inner struggle ... is projected outward' (Swart 1983:62). He fights the `"beast" of his unconscious' (Seidenspinner 1986:265) by occupying his mind with games and compulsive activities - such as tapping a spoon against a glass and counting the tapping sounds.[3]

When such little arithmetical exercises and the addition and multiplication of minutes and seconds fail to avert Johnnie's attention from groundlessness and purposelessness and induce forgetfulness, he resorts to idle talk. Repeating advertising jingles is a means of warding off a complete breakdown (Green 1982:165); for as long as he can ramble on he feels that he is in control of his fear and also that he has some use (Swart 1983:59). His words serve to conceal the truth instead of leading to `openness of being'. Language, in this case, has degenerated into `mere chatter which by its verbosity seeks to obscure the *Dasein*'s abandonment and blocks the way to an understanding of being' (Grimsley 1967:56). It follows that, notwithstanding all his efforts, Johnnie remains listless and without direction - further evidence of an existential vacuum.

Lionel Abrahams (1982:75) observes that resignation, evasion and retreat bespeak everything this introspective and morbid character does. For example, Johnnie recalls that he was `useless and getting in the way' (103) when the corpse of his father was taken away. Like the anti-social Morris in *The Blood Knot*, the male protagonist of *Hello and Goodbye* is `another example of withdrawal from the world' (Fugard 1982:43), with neurosis being his method of adjusting to a curtailed world, as May (in Friedman 1964:443) would put it. To compensate for his dependence on a limited environment, Johnnie also contrives a dream world (Swart 1983:48). As he recollects: `my moment, everybody hurrying away from it, leaving it, for me, just me, there in the shadows and no questions asked, for once enough, ME is enough, need nothing, whisper my name without shame ...' (104). After his father's death, he is portrayed as cherishing his solitude above everything. This accounts for his leaving letters unopened and ignoring his sister's questions or lying when he does answer

[3] Irvin D. Yalom (1980:452) conceives of compulsive activity as a manifestation of existential `sickness' or meaninglessness.

them. Johnnie also begs Hester: `Leave us alone. We're doing all right' (126). By overlooking her needs - he does not even welcome her after a twelve-year separation - he neglects her situation The character is perhaps at his most violent when he dares his sister to commit suicide (one of the climaxes in the play): `Now! You said nothing matters. Prove it. I dare you!' (151)

With the exception of his father, other people are viewed by Johnnie as his hell (Swart 1983:47). This is because contact with them will involve bearing up against reality and Johnnie, instead, opts for isolation and limitation (Swart 1983:66). Existentialists aver that truth always involves the relation of one person to another (May in Friedman 1964:452) and that man's true environment is the universe (Tillich 1968:72). Thus, a `subject without a world' can never truly `be' if the subject does not make use of relationships to open itself to other subjects (Heidegger 1963:152). This character, then, is made to affirm something which is less than his `essential or potential being' (Tillich 1952:71), and the most extreme form of missed being or non-being, namely insanity, already lurks on his horizon (Swart 1983:65).

The *dramatis persona*'s groundlessness and feeling of nothingness may be ascribed to the recent demise of his father. This limit-situation has left him in a limbo as his life centred around his father. Suddenly the purpose of his life has been lost - that of being subordinate to and caring for his disabled father - and the false centre of his existence has collapsed, leaving him insecure. His mind still spins round in a circle with virtually all his thoughts revolving around his father, which also happens to be the subject he most wants to forget (Swart 1983:63) (just like Morris and Zach are bent upon weaning their thoughts of their mother). Fugard has Johnnie - with complete honesty - announce that he has neither norms and standards nor an `identity of his own beyond the one provided for him by his father' (1983:84), (`the one vital, meaningful link in his life' [1983:84]), and this clarifies why Hester's wishing her father dead is the `wickedest sin in the world' (126). An identity is `established in, and must exist in time', as Anna Rutherford puts it (1978:275), yet - or for that reason - Johnnie cannot exactly recall when his father died: it was `the other day' (159).

Martin Heidegger writes that in reflecting upon and anticipating death (as Hester

does when she recalls beholding her mother's face in the coffin and knowing `she was dead, and what it meant, being dead' [150]), the *Dasein* can understand itself in terms of its distinctive possibility (1963:435), but in Johnnie's case, the consideration of expiration is what Yalom refers to as a `fount of fear' (1980:29). The character perceives himself to be in `a hole, black and deep, among all the little thoughts. Suddenly there's nothing, and I'm falling!' (105) The father is no longer, and there is nothing that stands between the son and the grave and that will avert the latter from being depersonalised - as his father also was when he made his last journey: `Finally just a thing. Horribly heavy. IT. Smothered by a sheet. Shoved in a hole ...' (103). The dehumanisation of people is an `important Fugard theme' (Raymer 1976:186).

Besides the loss of a parent, another cause of the dread of non-being, according to numerous existentialist writers, is having too much leisure (Yalom 1980:447). Fugard's Johnnie has no career, and he has very few tasks to perform after his father has passed away. Whether the dramatist is aware of this or not, in Johnnie he has a character who exemplifies the outcome of having too much time on one's hands in terms of his perception of purposelessness.

Not having enrolled in the Kroonstad Railway School may be taken at one level as an act of loyalty, commitment, dedication, and self-sacrifice on Johnnie's part (Vandenbroucke 1986:74). But his father was the son's reason and his excuse. The reason was that the son chose not to appreciate the uniqueness of his personality, take charge of his own existence and experience the separation required for him to grow into manhood. That is to say, he despaired at the idea of living as an abandoned and isolated possibility (Grimsley's words 1967:66) and could not muster the necessary courage to risk everything by breaking with his previous, safe situation (1967:25). The last point is disclosed by the description of the leave-taking:

> He (his father) gave me one of his railway shirts - even made a joke, with tears in his eyes - said it would fit when my muscles were big. So there we stood with tears in our eyes, him on his crutches - me with my suitcase. He came to the door and waved to me all the way Valley Road.
> [*Pause.*]
> I got as far as the bridge. Nine o'clock in the morning, sun shining,

> the world a hustle and a bustle, everybody busy, happy - only him, back there.... (153-4)

Keeping company with an old, bed-ridden man was a good and noble cause - and excuse - for which the `marked and scarred' son (Seidenspinner 1986:317) could stay at home (Simon 1982:46).

The character could be so afflicted by his father's fate because the father was - and still is - his ultimate personal rescuer, his defence against the discernment of death and the dispenser of meaning to his existence. Because Johnnie dodges self-determination, he has always been the `good boy', `absolutely perfect in the way Daddy wants him to be' as Barney Simon proposes (in Rae 1971:113). When he was little he told tales on his prodigal sister, Hester; he just `wanted to make [his father] happy by telling him the truth' (131). Later, as a grown man (at least in appearance), he faithfully did his father's bidding:

> I fetch, I cook, I sweep, I wash, I wait ... it was ME. What I wanted....
> I come when called, I go when chased, I laugh when laughed at.... (154)[4]

Johnnie also listened with interest to his `favourite story' (131) of how his father had lost his leg. But he did a lot more than that. He abdicated accountability and self-actualisation. On this score, he repeats his father's words even after he is dead. Johnnie does not wish to choose himself in order to `win' himself; this `wish-blocked individual' (Yalom 1980:303) rather negates his own identity and so `loses' himself. He willingly allows himself to be incorporated with his parent, becoming an `adjunct' (Walder 1984:66), a living puppet to this authority figure. As he emphasises: `I am his son. He is my father. Flesh of his flesh' (155).[5]

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[4] The use of the present tense reveals that Johnnie has not yet come to terms with his father's death.

[5] Like the relationship of Queeny with Johnnie, Blackie with Queeny, Morris with Zach and vice versa, the one Johnnie had with his father, is `I-It' and not `I-You'. It is, to employ Abraham Maslow's term, based on `deficiency love': the immature emotion which adheres to the principle of `I love because ... I need you' (in Yalom 1980:369).

Coleen Angove observes that this wretched character is Fugard's embodiment of `unquestioning servitude' (1987:39). Barney Simon (1982:47) supplies the reason for Johnnie's submissiveness. To Johnnie, the father is almost God.[6] Marieken Swart (1983:82) suspects that the two have fused into one in Johnnie's mind (1983:82). The character attests to this himself: `what he wants, or God wants, I can do' (154). Consequently, he has adopted a dependent pose towards his father as one would towards the Almighty.[7]

After his father has died, Johnnie's masochistic tendencies are brought into even clearer view. They are never more explicit than when his sister later pulls the crutches out from underneath him and kicks him when he is on the ground. He cries out to her: `More! Explode! Swallow me up. Let the mountains fall! This is the end of the world.' (158) These also happen to be the words Johnnie uses when he describes the explosion which mutilated his father.

As his father has been swallowed by the earth, Johnnie seeks to be swallowed by someone bigger than himself. Being an individual means accepting authorship for personal choices, standing out and being vulnerable to isolation. But for Johnnie, safety is the foremost preoccupation: `Safety first' (105). By virtue of this, Johnnie did not mind being confined, dominated and even dehumanised (Raymer 1976:186) by his father; `he (the old Mr Smit) was not to blame. He was no problem' (154): in prison the son felt protected (Foster 1982:220).

According to Yalom (1980:128), the fear of life is the fear of separation, individuation - and insulation. While individuals from a stable and loving background are able to tolerate division and isolation, those whose childhood

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[6] John Raymer (1976:96) agrees that Father Smit may be conceived of as the God of Judeo-Christian belief. And since God cannot be dead, Johnnie's father is also alive.

[7] Hester is quick to spot the irony:

> God help you. God help us. No chance of that, my boy. He never gave a damn about what happened in this house. And I don't blame him. Who the hell would have wanted anything to do with us? (146)

was turbulent cling to the family for shelter and remain immature. Yalom, similarly, comments that a person's early socialisation in an inconsistent and uncongenial milieu begets the demand for an `external locus of control' (1980:264). In Johnnie Smit, Fugard has come up with such a character.

The juvenile years of this character were a time of uncertainty and disquietude. His father is presented as an ill-tempered and iron-fisted man who had no empathy with either his children or his wife. As a child Johnnie also received no sympathy from his older sister. As he remembers: `I'm crying and she's got her fingers in her ears.... Her fingers in her ears, and shouting or singing at the top of her voice to drown my crying' (117).[8]

In Irvin Yalom's view (1980:157), those who are dependent upon others, like Johnnie Smit is, often conclude that they are powerless and ineffectual. The result of this is that they cannot make decisions - as these will compel them to trust their own judgement and act autonomously. These impotent individuals prefer to relinquish responsibility - for example, Johnnie maintains that it is his sister who made him drop the crutches (153) - and remain inert. Alternatively they act and they act on others' `musts' instead of on their own `wants'.

The above throws light on Johnnie's disinclination to explore his potential as well as his freedom to alter his experiential world and live fully as a unique human being. This accounts for his not having left his father to pursue his own career. It also explains why Fugard has him choose now not to accompany his sister to Johannesburg.

That the character chooses to stay the way he is[9] is patent when he does not

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[8] Hester's version, again, is that when her brother tried to join in the games she and her friends played - the Valley Road Gang - he got in the way. He could not play anything and just made a nuisance of himself, always hanging around and `mess[ing] up some good times' for her (136). Moreover, when they got back home, Johnnie always told tales on her. So she began to chase him away by throwing stones at him.

[9] Yet, he has earlier declared with no apparent irony: `Always forward. That's me in a nutshell' (121).

respond to his sister's questions. He hides not only from others, but also from himself. At times he even avoids the first-person pronoun (`You're on your own, Johnnie Smit.... From now on it's you - just you and wherever you are - you in the middle of a moment' [160]). As Morris takes recourse to the Bible, so Johnnie is represented as resorting to his father's trust in providence. Hence, it was God's will that he did not attend the railway school. His religious allusions, whether from the Word or traditional prayers, are trite and hackneyed (Angove 1987:30). The iteration of his father's stories and his chiming of ready-made phrases (`they say'), platitudes and clichés further testify to his lack of original response (Swart 1983:65). Swart justly states that `these familiar phrases not only boost [the character's] faith in established norms and give him confidence, but they may also be interpreted as a bid to make some sense of a formless existence without dealing with the reality of it' (1983:65).

As Johnnie has long ago banished reality, the dramatist depicts him as having no trouble deceiving himself and others. The subterfuge starts as soon as he refuses to reply to Hester's questions about his father. (Ironically, Johnnie is the one to point out that when Hester does not respond to his interrogation it is a `danger signal' [117].) An honest answer would be an admission the character cannot accept. Later he disagrees with Hester's assertion that everybody has to die sooner or later (131), pinning his faith on the Wilson's Beef and Iron tonic of which he administers one tablespoon to his father after each meal and which, if Johnnie were to be believed, `works wonders' (120). Besides, if Hester were to discover that his father is not really in the room, then his whole life will be unmasked as idle, empty and futile in her presence: he has pretended that he spends his days nursing the cripple, who is making a `splendid recovery' (114), but how will he be able to account for his time - and life - if the invalid is no longer there? (Green 1982:168) His pathetic solution is to `cloak himself in fantasy' (Swart 1983:59).[10]

One of the climaxes of the drama occurs when the dramatist has Johnnie's self-

[10] Swart remarks that one way in which Johnnie relinquishes reality is by `refusing to formulate it in words' (1983:64). For example, he does not pronounce `Our Father' when he prays as these words will rake up the memory of his own father.

delusion shattered by the `physical reality of Hester's blows' (Swart 1983:83). He concedes: `You're on your own, Johnnie Smit.... From now on it's you - just you and wherever you are - you in the middle of a moment' (160), and she now concludes that this is the end (160). He has to ask himself, `Of what?' (160), as if it could be his own existence that has ceased to be.

After the first revelation, Johnnie also confesses that he is ashamed of himself. `Of being alone. Just me in my whole life' (161). He cannot cope with the consciousness that he is now all by himself and that he creates his own fate. He further realises that he has and has had choices; like Hester he could have quit the sanctuary of his home and joined the railway school: `I could have gone. It was up to me' (153), but he changed his mind (121). What happened, thus, was by his own agency, not by his father's or even God's.

For a brief moment, Johnnie has been honest with himself. But he cannot transcend his conditioned nature and lapses back into pretence. He exclaims in defence: `Why not? It solves problems' (162). One self-delusion, that the father is still alive, is traded for another: that the ghost will come back and keep him company by haunting him (161).[11] In waiting for the ghost, like Vladimir and Estragon for Godot (Raymer 1976:236), the character finds deliverance from or, at least, temporary assuagement of his loneliness and groundlessness.

Johnnie pieces out a minimal new life for himself by assuming the dead man's `identity, his story ...' (Abrahams 1982:75) to the `exclusion and negation of his own' (Swart 1983:86). As Hester has `claimed her mother's dress as a memento', Johnnie pounces upon the relics of his father, the crutches, insisting that they are his inheritance (Vandenbroucke 1986:75). By becoming a cripple in his imagination (Walder 1984:69) - and, what is worse, a `prisoner in the spurious realm of his self-deception' (Raymer 1976:107) - he opts for a dependent, diminished life. Yet, in Barney Simon's view (quoted in Rae 1971:110), Johnnie's choice constitutes an act of dignity, while Robert Green maintains that

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[11] *The Blood Knot*'s Morris and Zachariah, likewise, imagine their dead mother to be watching them from behind a tree (Raymer 1976:208).

> Johnnie's final decision to live as his father is brave and tough.... If self-knowledge is the beginning of wisdom, then Johnnie is on the way to being a wise man; he may have assumed the guise of a cripple, but his crutches should not blind us to his new mental strength. His father's crutches, therefore, symbolise, Johnnie's new-found support rather than his incapacity.... (Quoted in Swart 1983:85)

The father's crutches will allow the son to escape from anonymity and futility; they will comfort and `carry him through the future' (Angove 1987:40). Now Johnnie will be able to leave the cottage without fear and hold his head up high (Abrahams 1982:172). To Green, the male protagonist is stronger than the female at the end of *Hello and Goodbye* because `he has taught himself to cope with the reality of his own weakness' (1982:172). He is an `existential hero; in Jean-Paul Sartre's sense, he has realised himself as "truly human", in Sartre's godless world in which there is no lawgiver but man himself' (1982:172).

My point of view, as well as that of several critics, is that Johnnie, like Hamlet, is too weak to exorcise the ghost of his father. According to Swart, he needs the memory of the deceased `as much as Morris needs Zach and their game of make-believe' (1983:84). As he cries out: `I NEED SOMETHING. LOOK AT ME! (155). Therefore, the character admits the resurrected `omnipresent menace' (Raymer 1976:207) back into his life, and imitates the latter's gnarled condition. Johnnie's apparent resolution to complete the identification process actually marks continued irresolution (Vandenbroucke 1986:75). He will never be able to `stand' (Swart 1983:83) and he will never `meet [others] in a real way', as Buber (1947:166) would put it. Neither will he know himself. He has become a `pathetic mental and emotional cripple while pretending to be a physical one' (Swart 1983:84). `A Beckett-like character in a Beckettian "no-exit" situation' (Raymer 1976:236), he will, like his father, live in the `fog of the past and the miasma of some future ... salvation', and will plan `his tomorrows by concocting a story of his yesterdays' (Vandenbroucke 1986:76). Abrahams justifiably predicates that one of Fugard's strengths is his Proustian ability to make the past come alive and haunt his characters in the present (1982:174).

The purpose of Johnnie's pretence is to evoke pity and to induce others to save

this poor, helpless, disabled man. One rescuer will be replaced by a number of others who will confirm him as what his father was, but not as what he himself potentially can be. Nevertheless, this `living thing' (Seidenspinner 1986:316), Johnnie, will still have a cause for continuing (162).

> They can look now. Shine their lights in my face, stare as hard as they like. I've got a reason. I'm a man with a story.... They'll say shame, buy me a beer, help me on buses, stop the traffic when I cross the street ... slowly.... (162)

Although he is now `a man with a story' (84), it is not his own story. Russell Vandenbroucke (1986:76) describes Johnnie as an existential coward, and this is an assessment with which I agree.

In his last monologue,[12] Johnnie utters the words: `a different me' (162). This character will indeed be different as he has acquired make-believe confidence and has put the gloss of illusion upon his future, but he will not be himself. In addition to his not investigating the aspects of his inner being, thus not disinterring his existential sense and potential, he jettisons his own personality. So Johnnie settles for a false identity (Foster 1982:222) and lives a lie because he is too cowardly to confront the intolerable truth of his own depersonalisation, insubstantiality and anonymity (Swart 1983:84). His decision is the epitome of Sartre's `bad faith' (Vandenbroucke 1986:76). Merged with the departed, he will not live fully - creatively and spontaneously - but will always be condemned to a second-hand existence. Walder (1984:89) even refers to Johnnie Smit as a `no more than a living ghost'.

`Resurrection' (163), the final word the character speaks, is one of Fugard's bitterest and cruellest ironies, in both Walder's and Vandenbroucke's views (1984:67; 1986:75). Its religious overtones hark back to the beginning of the play when Johnnie computed the number of seconds that had passed since Christ's birth (Walder 1984:67). As alone at the end of the play as he was at the beginning, the protagonist's `presumed moment of triumph is actually one of

[12] Camus (1971:248) comments that on stage, as in reality, the monologue precedes death. This is applicable to Johnnie, since he disowns the little that is left of his existential essence.

abject personal failure' (Vandenbroucke 1968:75), of a rebirth that has miscarried (Walder 1984:67). Instead of the oedipal pattern in which the son kills the father, the dead father continues to maim the son and the son surrenders himself to remain in an eternal twilight zone between life and death. As Johnnie deliberately ignores his conscience - calling his *Dasein* to be itself and to be in the world, as Heidegger (1963:314) would phrase it, one may conclude that there is no redemption for him.

Swart observes that *Hello and Goodbye* features two characters who are `like the twin sides of a coin' (1983:77). Fugard (1982:44) postulates that these two protagonists represent for him contrasting opinions and actions and the consequences of these. Confrontation sets the tone for their relationship. While Johnnie is the conservative element (Abrahams 1982:77), settling for `safe, shadowy insubstantiality' (Swart 1983:77) in a *medias res* existence of complicity with his father (Foster 1982:220), Hester[13] - a blend of vulgarity and brazen callousness together with vulnerability and a need for affection (Walder 1984:69) - is the rebellious element[14] who attacks the world and suffers the risks involved in an attempt to acquire totality of being (Swart 1983:77). Like Milly in *People are Living There*, Hester is also `the dominant character who instigates the action' (1983:49).

While Johnnie may be considered a dependent individual with an external locus of control, Hester `relies solely on ... her own ability and determination to survive' (Swart 1983:75). In contrast to her brother who stays at home, she, like the female protagonists of *Boesman and Lena* and *People Are Living There*, apparently grasps that `there is only one life and one chance to live it' (1983:61). For this reason she is not a passive spectator of the life process - as her brother is - but actively engages in the world, tackling her life with aggression, courage

[13] Hester is the most mercilessly dissected female Fugard character. As the dramatist submits in his *Notebooks* (1960-77): `Hester gives me a chance for the ruthless honesty I admired in Faulkner's *Wild Palms* - statement of Camus's "courageous pessimism". No other character of mine is as close to the "bone"' (quoted in Seidenspinner 1986:244).

[14] For instance, she orders her brother to tell her father that he is a liar (147).

and perseverance (1983:61). Unlike her brother, she does not recoil from change.[15] She has been able to turn her back on paternal authority and family ties,[16] together with the sexual morality of the Calvinist church and other traditions she judged obsolete (Green 1982:166), and has gone to Johannesburg, the `city of change, where the new South Africa is being created' (Raymer 1976:94) to eke out a living there. In Raymer's opinion, Hester is a `symbol of hope in *Hello and Goodbye*' (1976:93) as she `inculcates all of the Fugard values: freedom, courage ... ambition, and rebellion against stale thinking' (1976:94).

Seen from this point of view, Hester grew spiritually when she expanded her physical horizons beyond Port Elizabeth's narrow confines (Raymer 1976:193). Her brother, just the reverse, retreated to avoid exposure and became even more isolated (Swart 1983:69).

Judged from another perspective, Hester's substituting Johannesburg for Port Elizabeth could amount to regression as the indulgence of immediate needs took precedence over moral exigencies. Such a lifestyle usually begets tension and despair. In the metropolis, Hester is doomed to freedom. To Sartre, the inevitable outcome of absolute freedom is that one will find oneself utterly alone, devoid of happiness and purposefulness (in Bedford 1972:31). This is the case with Hester who is privy to `loneliness in its bleakest form' (Wortham 1983:173). First, she is cut off from family - `There's no fathers, no brothers, no sisters ...' (134) - and friends. Secondly, she is just another prostitute, one of many faces (162), moving from room to room and man to man, and for none of her clients she exists as an individual. In the third instance, she lacks her brother's religious faith which blindly believes against the understanding. This is revealed when she remarks: `There's no ... Sunday, or sin' (134) and later shouts: `THERE IS

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[15] Hester says of her return:

> but to think of it still the same, the way it was, and I coming back to find it like that...! Sick! It made me sick on the stomach (112).

[16] In this way she opposes personal justice to the `justice' wielded by her father.

NO GOD! THERE NEVER WAS! (155).[17] She has come up with her own rules of conduct and a system of beliefs unrelated to the realm of religion. Her fate depends on herself and there is nothing and nobody to hold on to. In short, the character of Hester Smit is forlorn. To quote Sartre, she is `enveloped in this monstrous silence, free and alone, without assistance and without excuse, condemned ... forever to be free' (1947:290).

Hester's clients do nothing to lessen her loneliness. The relationship they have with her is `I-It'. No real dialogue takes place; language, instead of leading to openness of being and truth, `degenerates into mere chatter' which `blocks the way to an understanding of being' (Grimsley 1967:56). Thus, there is no element of inclusion between Hester and her clients. Instead of responding to her needs, these men treat her as an object, using and abusing her and then tossing her to the winds when they have served their purposes, the dehumanisation of people featuring again as a theme here (Raymer 1976:186). After more than a decade of this, Hester can no longer stand not having an address, a name and a number (128) - that is, an identity of her own - and she returns to her family. Although she detests her father, whom she describes as a `crook' (150), she is at least alive in his abhorrence of her (Angove 1987:36) and could have her existence negatively affirmed by him. Despite her protestation that she is not `hard up for a home' (128), her puzzled `Where do you belong?' (128) makes it clear that the need for a home and family `is beyond reason - it is an existential reality' (Wortham 1983:172).

According to Abrahams, `the power that makes the character of Hester a great literary conception comes from the tension between the opposite poles of her caring' (1982:76). On the one hand, she is portrayed as inclining towards individuation, fervent to account to no-one but herself; and, on the other, as thirsting for intimacy. Hester may be apprehensive of interpersonal relationships since others cannot be controlled and may reject her - as she has been rejected by her father and countless men who dream about other women and call out the names of these women after having had intercourse with her (128).

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[17] Camus maintains that the metaphysical rebel is not necessarily an atheist, `but inevitably he is a blasphemer' (1971:30).

Among the reasons why Hester has chosen to leave Johannesburg for 57A Valley Road, Port Elizabeth, bringing all her possessions with her, is her guilt at having left. `Where were you?' is the cry of one's conscience, (according to Buber [1947:166], and this is the cry Hester has heard and heeded. Furthermore, she has to ascertain whether her all-consuming hatred of her home is justified since she cannot make peace with the treatment she received at the hands of a father who held her in contempt because she resisted his `worn-out ways of doing things' (Raymer 1976:93).[18] It may well be that she hopes to effect a reconciliation with the old man and stay with him till the end of his days. The last reason for her coming back is that she is encaged in an existential vacuum in her Johannesburg room. She reports: `one week to notice it's walls again and a door with nobody knocking, a table, a bed, a window for your face when there's nothing to do' (128), and later also: `There's nothing. The fairy stories is finished' (134). Hester is a victim of meaninglessness; this is also attested to in her cynicism and nihilism. For instance, she expresses the wish for the world to be annihilated in a nuclear explosion. In fact, she would `die laughing' if this were to happen (151).[19]

In contrast to Johnnie, who will not risk experiencing the `bitterness of despair' (Kierkegaard quoted in Grimsley 1967:26) and so loses sight of the significance of life, Hester realises that she cannot obliterate the past. Although she looks upon her `unhappy childhood [as] the cause of her present unsatisfactory life' (Swart 1983:67)], it is part of who she is. More than that, it was also the only time in her life that she experienced some affection and a sense of belonging (1983:69).

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[18] Therefore she entreats her brother: `Does he ask about me?' When Johnnie replies in the negative, she maintains: `But he remembers me' (125). Johnnie's `I don't know' elicits the brash: `Just because he doesn't remember or isn't thinking about me doesn't mean a damned thing' (125). (Of course, the entire interchange is ironic as the father is dead and can neither ask about his daughter nor remember her.)

[19] One could argue that Hester discerns that because she exists, meaningless cannot be the real truth. This could also explain her reappearance - she longs to locate light in the darkness of the past.

Consequently, while Hester ransacks the old boxes, strewing their contents over the stage, Fugard has her delve into her own history as well. In pursuit of truthful answers - something Johnnie sets no store by - she recreates her childhood. She craves only one beautiful, worthwhile memory of herself `somewhere, some other time' (128) which she can take back with her and use as an `emotional and spiritual transfusion to inject into an existence that is completely lacking in beauty' (Green 1982:169):

> There must have been something that made me happy. All those years. Just once. Happy. (147)

This memory has to replace the resentment resulting from a youth spent in a house that was never a home. She sneers: `Happy? In here? Don't make me laugh. Nothing in here knows what happy means' (122) and `Home sweet home where who did it means Hester done it' (127).

The journey back into the past also has to provide a beginning from which the disorientated person can progress into the present. Hence `the present (will) become a little more stable because it is linked to something and no longer floats in limbo' (Swart 1983:72).[20]

It is incontestable that the monetary compensation Hester searches for is only a rationalisation for her home-coming (Vandenbroucke 1986:72). Swart submits that the search is for compensation in a much broader sense: restitution for the `psychological disability' which she attributes to a `crippling childhood' (1983:70). Money and material security have to make up for a meaningless present and `the terrible tomorrow' (in Hester's words [140]), for what she believes she has never had: the respect of others.

Vandenbroucke (1986:72) gathers that this character is looking for her heritage rather than her inheritance: `the meaning of [her] name' (128), her own identity, one that is not like `second-hand poor-white junk' and `used up and old' (146) as

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[20] Fugard's *Notebooks* details: `The second act - suitcase after suitcase, box after box, their contents spilling out onto the floor. A growing chaos in which Hester flounders, almost drowns, as she finds her past, her promise, her life ...' (in Walder [ed.] 1974b:xiv).

everything else was: her vests which were passed on to Johnnie and her father's socks and shoes worn by her and her mother respectively (113). Even life in the cottage was

> second-hand ... used up and old before we even got it. Nothing ever reached us new. Even the days felt like the whole world had lived them out before they reached us. (146)

Hester now resolves: `something is going to be mine - just mine - and no sharing with brothers or fathers....' (123). She will no longer be one of the `second-hand Smits of Valley Road' (113). According to Chris Wortham, her `speech sounds like an existentialist set-piece' (1983:173) recited by one in search of her identity.

One of the climaxes in the play occurs when Hester finds her mother's dress. As she strips the wrappings off the parcel, she simultaneously unwraps her own feelings. The tender act of laying claim to the dress as a memento (134) betokens the `first break in (the persona's) façade of bitterness' (Vandenbroucke 1986:74). The mother was the one respite from ruthlessness (1986:74) and embodied for the daughter the reality of love (`she was a chance in here to love something. I wanted to. The hating was hard' (156).[21] As Hester informs her brother: `Mommie didn't hate me' (113). Despite her tender feelings towards her mother, she could not come to terms with her mother's weakness and subjugation to her family (Abrahams 1982:76), and despised her for this:

> She worked harder than anybody I ever seen in my life, because she was frightened. He frightened her. She said I frightened her. Our fights frightened her. (149)

Hester also blamed her mother for her early defeat, the `indirect result of [her husband's] bullying' (Raymer 1976:188) (`I hated Mommie for being dead' [149]: `She fell into her grave the way they all do - tired, *moeg*. Frightened!' [150]) The daughter resolved never to follow in the `fool' (151) of a mother's footsteps. She promised herself then and still does: `no man is going to bugger it up for me the way he did for Mommie' (151). So she has become a whore, in the anticipation that prostitution will provide her with the independence and power

[21] Swart (1983:80) hypothesises that Hester's hatred made her immune to love.

over men her mother never had. Her opinion of the institution of marriage is

> One man's slave all your life, slog away until you're in your grave. For what? Happiness in heaven? I seen them - Ma and the others like her, with more kids than they can count, and no money; bruises every payday because he comes home drunk or another one in the belly because he was so drunk he didn't know it was his old wife and got into bed! (150)

- and of married women:

> I'll tell them. Happy families is fat men crawling on to frightened women. And when you've had enough he doesn't stop, `lady'. (142)

Instead of yielding one pleasant, beautiful ghost, the boxes are as empty as Hester's and Johnnie's lives and their father's bedroom (Vandenbroucke 1986:75-6) Even the smell of their mother is gone and her dress is no more than `an empty rag .... lost among the rubbish' (156). As Walder puts it, everything Hester touches serves only to confirm the `emotional and material poverty of her childhood, of the family's crippling spiritual inheritance' (1984:68). `All I'm inheriting tonight is bad memories' (140), concludes Hester, and `All we unpacked here tonight is mistakes (151). Her assessment of her background has been accurate: their being born and being dead, in fact, their entire existences are mistakes (151). Moreover, the self she has to learn to live with is nothing but a combination of `bad memories' and `second-hand rubbish' (140) (Seidenspinner 1986:244). The character is further reminded of her own ingratitude and callousness towards her late mother. Her defence is that there was `so much to hate [she] forgot she was [t]here' (156).

Fugard's female persona's failure to find anything of significance augments her awareness that the world has no pre-ordained grand structure and sense. There is nothing to shield her against this devastating comprehension. The future holds no optimism nor the past mental support (Seidenspinner 1986:296). She concludes that rubbish is all there is (155). The universe is indifferent to her. `She knows what life is waiting for her. All the hope of an escape from it is stripped away' (1986:76). Nevertheless, Hester decides to `go back to a room' (128) and to `get back to it (her life), in it, be it, be [herself] again the way it was

when [she] walked in' (162). As she speculates: `That's me - a woman in a room. I'm used to it now.... the dark rooms, the many faces - and one of them me, Hester Smit' (162).[22] The self she discovers resides in the `carnality of her worn-out body and her ultimate acceptance of mortality' (Seidenspinner 1986:272). In this fashion, she progresses from `counter will' to `creative will', to use Rank's classification (Yalom 1980:297).[23]

The actress Molly Seftel expounds that the character's situation

> may be much the same physically but this time it will be different because somebody else will be watching. Somebody will be watching all of it - it will not be God - it will be her. [Hester] is taking on responsibility now .... for her own life. (Quoted in Rae 1971:105)

At the end of *Hello and Goodbye*, the character of Hester Smit has invented her own life meaning and she commits herself to the fulfilment of that meaning, even if this means resigning herself to the emptiness and pointlessness which she feels to be her `spiritual lot in a Godless world' (Wortham 1983:173). After all, this is the existence she has chosen for herself. Like the female protagonist in Sophocles's *Oedipus*, the one in *Hello and Goodbye* finds that the absurd victory is to resolve that `all is well', as Camus (in Friedman 1964:250) would phrase it. Her life purpose, to employ Victor Frankl's definition, is both experiential (based on experiences) and attitudinal (her stance towards an immutable fate). Instead of flinching, she has the strength to assume a heroic stance in facing her lot, displaying courage and dignity - not bitterness - in the face of pain and disappointment. She will live, `if not fully, (then) at least authentically' (Raymer 1976:188). Nietzsche's aphorism applies in this respect: `That which does not

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[22] Angove expresses the view that Hester literally experiences life `in the dark' (1987:34).

[23] Yalom applies Otto Rank's categories of will. First there is `counter-will - opposition to another's will, then positive will - willing what one must - and, finally, creative will - willing what one wants' (Yalom 1980:295). The first two stages are to be supported and transformed into creative will (1980:297). Hester's counter-will was not brooked by her father. Yet, her arrival at 57a Valley Road may be interpreted as her exercising either positive or creative will. The realisation that there is no other alternative for her but to return to Johannesburg and resume her old occupation and resigning herself to this is consistent with positive will.

kill me makes me stronger'. Existential psychologists would entertain the notion that the character, having gone through traumatic personal recognition, attains redemption. Even Lionel Abrahams (1982:77), who views Hester as defeated and doomed to hell, has to agree with the character that she is still alive (132) - and life always has the power to change itself.

Despite the individual differences between the two personae of *The Blood Knot* (*Hello and Goodbye*'s predecessor), Morris and Zach finally discover their interdependence and the strength of the bond that links them, and at the end of the play they renew their relationship. The siblings of *Hello and Goodbye*, however, part at the conclusion of the play, and this is perhaps forever. Though the drama is seemingly more pessimistic than *The Blood Knot*, the female protagonist's fortitude and persistence are reminiscent of human presence and possibility `in the face of overwhelming odds' (Vandenbroucke 1986:77). Dennis Walder summarises it best when he postulates that Hester's is a stubborn determination that will not be defeated (1984:23). In creating this `symbol of hope' (Raymer 1976:93), Fugard, once again, has proven himself to be a dramatist of hope - not of despair.

STATEMENTS AFTER AN ARREST UNDER THE IMMORALITY ACT

With the three Port Elizabeth Plays (*Boesman and Lena*, *The Blood Knot*, *Hello and Goodbye*) and *Statements after an Arrest under the Immorality Act*, Athol Fugard's reputation as a major modern dramatist was established (Walder 1984:54-5). *Statements after an Arrest* is Fugard's favourite (Vandenbroucke 1986:191), the one, he avouches, `which sort of lurks in my life ..., the one that I think could still move me more than any of the others' (1982:129). Perhaps this is because the drama was written in response to political action taken against the playwright and his family (Seidenspinner 1968:238) and it is also the one which `most nearly approaches his own views' (Walder 1984:93).

The play was commissioned as the opening production of The Space in Upper Long Street, Cape Town. An early version was presented in March 1972, featuring Yvonne Bryceland, Percy Sieff and Christopher Prophet, with Fugard both acting and directing. The work was again performed in 1974 at the Royal Court Theatre in London, with Yvonne Bryceland and Ben Kingsley playing the `state-crossed lovers' (Cushman 1982:87). Together with *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and *The Island*, it rotated in the repertoire for over two months, being both artistically and financially successful.[1] In 1978 *Statements after an Arrest* was staged at the Manhattan Theatre Club. In the same year, this drama, together with the other two projects contained in the *Statements* volume, *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and *The Island*, was published in German. On 11 June 1979 Barney Simons's production of *Statements*, with Wilma Stockenström, Vivian Solomons and Wilson Dunster, opened at the Market Theatre. The critical reception the drama received is recorded on pages 220 and 221 of Appendix A.

Sizwe Bansi is Dead, *The Island* and *Statements under an Arrest under the Immorality Act* can be classified under the improvised or the actors' theatre period.

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[1] Alistair Niven, in the 1975 *Commonwealth Newsletter* (no 7), writes that this season of plays by Athol Fugard was `the most ambitious programme of its kind yet seen in Britain' (1984:88).

At this time Fugard made use of the theatrical techniques of Jerzy Grotowski, his `agent provocateur', in his works (Raymer 1976:230), and particularly in *Statements after an Arrest*, which has less bearing on social reality than any of the earlier plays (Walder 1984:90). The period is also distinguished by the use of the lives of others - their histories, experiences and even the shape of their bodies (1984:78) - as raw material during the creative process, the elevating of actors from mere interpreters to co-creators and the writer 'demoting himself to the role of catalyst, recording organiser and `scribe' (Gray 1984:20). So, instead of elaborate production, dazzling technology and sanctified texts, there is minimal staging and impromptu inventiveness by the performers; in place of a predictable format there are self-inventing, open - yet concentrated - structures, and in lieu of the "conspiracy of silence" (the author's phrase) characteristic of the commercial circuits, there is unadorned `statement' (1984:20-1).[2] In this way the orthodox concepts of unique authorship, the copyrighting of communal experience, and the "mechanical linkage" of plot in Western theatre[3] are challenged, and `an alternative theatre is promoted as part of a counter-culture which is the polar opposite of the South African state version' (1984:20-21).

Raymer maintains that the collective projects - in which the playwright collaborated with, in particular, The Serpent Players of New Brighton, Port Elizabeth - `emerge[d] as authentic statements about the inequities endorsed by the apartheid legislation' (1976:181), while Gray (1984:20) posits that their intention was consciousness-raising, probably since their conception coincided with the post-Sharpeville wave of repression which ensured that barely any opposition against the state could be expressed. The theme of all three works, which are `far more ideological, even propagandistic, than any previous Fugard dramas' (Raymer 1976:180), then, is survival amidst a degrading, dehumanising and ultimately destructive environment (Vandenbroucke 1986:235), an environment which could reduce human beings to

[2] This format was employed in *The Coat* (1966) and was later reverted to in *My Life* (1994).

[3] In *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and *Statements after an Arrest under the Immorality Act* comment is also passed on Western story-telling devices, such as letters, photos and theatre, and these devices are supplanted by `semi-organised talk' (Gray 1984:21).

objects (Colleran 1990:45). Cohen surmises that this particular play presents `a total image of the flinty cruelty of South Africa's institutionalised' racial system (quoted in Post 1985:5), a system which appeared at the time to have `no vestige of a beginning, no prospect of an end' (84).

The title of the drama under investigation points to a particular piece of apartheid legislation, the infamous Immorality Amendment Act, Number 23 of 1957, which was a law prohibiting sexual relations across racial lines (Colleran 1995:42). The title also anticipates the charges read out by a policeman (1995:44), the pivotal third party in the play and the catalyst precipitating and controlling the action, as well as the disjointed interjections and dystopian monologues (Baker-White 1992:239) uttered by the miscegenate couple. The legal term further denotes the distance between the actions of the characters and the accounts that are extracted from them (Colleran 1995:45).

Although Fugard makes an interracial sexual liaison central to the play, possibly in an attempt to `legitimate and humanise what was legally and morally' prohibited (Colleran 1995:48) under South Africa's apartheid régime, the aim, in Gray's opinion (1982:90), is universality. The focus is not so much on immorality, whether legal or religious (Vandenbroucke 1986:183), but on the ancient and ubiquitous conflict between individual rights and the laws of the government which intrude upon the most private aspects of the lives of its citizens. While certain socio-political factors are chronicled, the images of the work transport the audience beyond the private pain of the characters to allude to the agony experienced by an entire community (Walder in Brink 1993:443).

The play itself was prompted by six police photographs of a white librarian and a `Coloured' location school principal from De Aar, South Africa, who were caught in the act of lovemaking near Fugard's birthplace. The pictures of the two cowering `like trapped animals in the harsh glare of a torch' (Walder 1984:91) appeared in 1966 in an Afrikaans newspaper.

The action of *Statements after an Arrest under the Immorality Act* adheres to the Aristotelian unities of time and space. It is confined to a summer night which is

spent in the back room of the library in Noupoort,[4] a village in South Africa. Although the work consists of only one act, it can be `broken into two (roughly equal) halves' (Baker-White 1992:228).

The first half may be interpreted as an expository introduction initiating the themes. At the opening of the play, the two protagonists, a `Coloured' school principal - Errol Philander -and a white librarian - Frieda Joubert - are seen lying naked on the floor, having just made love. A `choreographed series of variations upon [this] ... image' (Walder 1984:90) constitutes the rest of the drama. The characters' hopes, ambitions and fears of discovery are revealed in logically connected realistic dialogue as they reminisce about their first meeting, jest and quarrel. Time within the drama remains a relatively linear and predictable frame for the action.

The second half of the work commences with the entrance of arresting officers, who represent the security apparatus of the apartheid system (Raymer 1976:206). In a sudden shift of time forward, Detective Sergeant Du Preez, in heavy, authoritarian officialese (Baker-White 1992:238), recounts the investigation and details the charges against the two and how they were arrested. The arrest itself, as well as the spinster's and the married man's reactions to their discovery, are then recreated and re-enacted. After the security forces have imposed a `violent separation on the interracial lovers' (Peck 1992:68), the play takes a stylistic turn. The tone and structure also change. Vandenbroucke puts it best: `What had been a fairly conventionally psychological play, an apparently realistic love story unfolding in a straightforward logical manner and representation style, suddenly becomes something quite different' (1986:185).

Seminal to the stylistic transfiguration of the work is the intermittent and unremitting rhythmical sequence of the cruel and dehumanising police photographer's flashlights (Raymer 1976:191). Firstly, they add to the dramatic impact as they make the mood `eerie and surreal' (Vandenbroucke 1986:187), so

[4] Noupoort translates as `narrow gate'. Perhaps this name was deliberately chosen by the playwright to draw attention to the parochial mindsets of its residents. The Biblical connotations of the name also make the village an ironic setting for the events of the drama.

as to render palpable the nightmare of the interracial couple when they are intruded upon (Walder 1984:91). Secondly, they expose the `Coloured' man and the white woman physically, as well as emotionally and psychologically. The lights further `freeze [them] in theatrical space and time' (Baker-White 1992:229) and accentuate the `temporal disjunctions' (Vandenbroucke 1986:187) that exist between their words and actions and those of the policeman, who functions as the Present Absent in the play (Raymer 1976:207). As Errol Philander and Frieda Joubert lose their grip on reality and `continue in a state of mental alienation' (Fuchs 1984:76), acting like `automata' (Raymer 1976:190), the `formal ground of the [theatrical artifice] (shifts) from representational realism' (Baker-White 1992:229), *cinéma vérité*, to an amorphous anti-realism (1992:236). Simultaneously, `the generally simple and colloquial dialogue of the first half' (Vandenbroucke 1986:186) is substituted by `staccato spatterings' (Raymer 1976:191). The `brief and sharp interjections' in the mode of `fractured and repetitive montage' (Baker-White 1992:229) serve to bring the characters' unconscious into consciousness while they `relive and recount in detail the circumstances of their initial sexual encounter' (1992:237) in the presence of the police. To Baker-White, the `semiotic indeterminacy immanent in the ellipses and silences of the realist dialogue' of the first part is `exposed and concretised' (1992:243) when the personae `blurt out their "statements"' in the frenetic scene following: `panic-stricken, guilty (explanations and) excuses' for what is inexplicable and inexcusable to the police, which `become confessions, which become fragmentary, semi-poetic revelations' (Walder 1984:92) of the lovers' deepest desires, inner conflicts and insecurities.

According to Baker-White, Fugard's `abandonment of realism' in the second half of this `most Grotowskian work' of his (Walder 1984:90) could illustrate the `surrealist warp of time, the dadaist dismissal of logic, and the symbolist ideal of sensory bombardment which sought to produce a more immediate aesthetic response than the scientific sensibility of realism allowed' (1992:236). The transformation of `fictional time and place (`real' time and `real' place) `into present-tense theatrical' and anti-realist time and place is furthermore regarded by Baker-White as proof of the author's `identification with another *fin de siècle* movement, that of the futurists' (1992:236).

Throughout the play the two protagonists then also hint at the theme of time. At the opening it is the female who observes: `There's no sense of time. Everything very still' (81) and later: `Too dark. I can't see the clock' (94). She does not keep track of time because she longs to exist and act outside its framework. Her partner on several occasions asks her what time it is, but also once `escapes man's inexorable dependence on a bondage to time' and space (Angove 1987:51) when he contemplates an existence that is three billion years old (1987:52). Time seems circular, immeasurable and indeterminate (Baker-White 1992:236), as if it has `no vestige of a beginning, no prospect of an end ...' (84) (to borrow Errol's words).

Having `no vestige of a beginning, no prospect of an end ...' is how Frieda conceives of the time before she made Errol's acquaintance and now when he is not with her. Errol has infused her existence with purpose.[5] This is reflected in her recollections:

> I was ... [*Pause.*] I was waiting for him. I was always waiting for him. I tried as long as I could to think he might still come. Then at half-past five I thought to myself ... No, he's not going to ... and suddenly ... nothing. There was ... nothing. Just lock up and go home, have supper, go to bed, try to sleep so that tomorrow and its chance of seeing him would come. (97)

and

> going home after I'd closed the library began to be different. I had something to do, and think about at night. (101)

Frieda has earlier confided in her lover: `you are my chance. I don't want to lose it' (89). Therefore, she chooses to stay with him, even if she expects him to hurt her:

> I knew he was going to hurt me. I mean, not on purpose, but it just seems we can't avoid it. So I waited for it. It came. He said he supposed he shouldn't have come. (97)

[5] Sartre, Buber and Jaspers, *per contra*, postulate that one has to locate meaning within oneself (Bedford 1982:264).

In Vandenbroucke's opinion (1986:184), this quiet and unassuming character initially[5] comes across as very different from Fugard's typically strong women who jump at the opportunity to change (only think of Queeny, Hester and Elsa). Frieda Joubert, in contrast, owns up to being afraid of `everything. Me ... you ... them.... The dinosaurs and those hairy ... missing links ... that look like baboons, stand like men, and could almost smile' (83) - that is, evolution or transformation.

In her apparent dependence on the male protagonist and desire to please him - up to the point of exhibiting masochistic tendencies (`I knew he was going to hurt me.... So I waited for it' [97]) - she is depicted as insecure and weak. She attaches herself to Errol because she is in love with him, and she may also view him as a protector, even a rescuer. (This sheds light on her ability to remember the minute details of their meeting.)

Fugard's Frieda could be seen as `fallen into the "world"', which is the phrase Heidegger (1963:220) uses to denote identification with and absorption in another to the degree of losing one's own being. This is evident when she pleads with Errol: `What must I do? Please tell me' (92). When she cannot discern him in the darkness (I can't see the clock. Or you' [94]), she utters: `What are you doing? (94), and when the Special Branch bursts in upon her and Errol, her first instinct is to scurry away like a frightened animal, `*[looking for the man. As she finds him, [she] tries to hide behind his back ...]*' (96).

In a relationship where one partner subjugates him/herself to the other, everything inflicted upon the latter has an impact upon the former. When Errol struggles in vain to pull up his trousers without exposing himself, his mistress is filled with horror (96). When his appeal for her `respect for him as an independent individual is substituted by an embarrassingly grovelling picture of servitude' (Angove 1987:54), she is on the brink of hysteria (99). Sartre's assertion that `love as a fundamental mode of being-for-others holds in its being-for-others the seed of [one's] own destruction' (1958:377) is applicable here.

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[6] The emphasis is on `initially' as she grows in stature during the course of the play and begins to transcend her own limitations.

It is possible that Fugard's Frieda bends to Errol's will as she recoils from existential isolation and self-determination. She recalls one instance in her childhood when she was alone, `entombed in the long passage way of family home' (Colleran 1995:46):

> The shutters must have been closed because it was all dark and quiet. Then somebody opened the front door at the other end and suddenly I saw all the sunlight and noise of the street outside. I started to walk towards it, but before I could get there the door closed. I was so upset! (86-7)

The darkness and silence in the house are suggestive of a birth that is `blocked' (and therefore does not occur) and dissolution. Frieda is also troubled about the ravages the aging process (a sign of the decline towards death) leaves on her body:

> Skin around my knees is just starting to get a little slack.... Lines around my mouth are starting to worry me. Hair causes me concern. I think it's going off. (101-2)

After the experience of the door being shut in her face when she was a child, she, dreading visibility and exposure, remembers how one day in the library she yearned for everything to vanish:

> But I just went on stamping and wishing it would get still darker so that everything would disappear - him, me, the room, what I was feeling - just disappear.... [*Frightened of what she had just said; very loudly* ...] No. No! (98)[7]

Nevertheless, by contemplating one's demise, one also takes cognisance of the future.[8] For example, the librarian, `incapable of entering into the spirit of the

[7] Further confirmation of the character's anticipation of death is the anecdote she shares with Errol of snakes slaughtered while copulating: `They killed them.... Their ... the pieces kept moving ... for a long time afterwards' (85).

[8] Existentialists regard existence toward death as the very summit of existence (Heidegger quoted in Friedman 1964:542). Because, when *Dasein* faces the fact of its dissolution - as Errol does when he has the epiphany - its perspective of life and time is broadened. *Dasein* is liberated from its `lostness in those possibilities which may accidentally thrust themselves' upon it (Heidegger 1962:308) and it is

provocation' of the forty-three cents game (Seidenspinner 1986:292), proposes to the principal that if she were to have only a few cents left, she would save some of it for the next day (87). Being prepared for tomorrow and planning for it indicates that she is able to transfigure her own being.[9] At the same time, Seidenspinner feels it bears witness to her `white' outlook (1986:292).

Even though Frieda appears to rely on Errol, this is because she, with her `"white superiority" consciousness' (Angove 1987:54), has sensed that dependence would be less intimidating to his masculine ego. That she has become conscious of her own identity is clear when she reprimands him:

> I'm not no one. I'm also me. I'm the other person on the floor. With you. (85)

From being shy and submissive, she has matured into someone who is able to balance solitude with relations and being a part of others with being apart from others.[10] Most existentialist philosophers agree that `with others' is an element of `being-in-the-world': not in isolated *Existenz* but in participation and communication with others may one reach one's self and learn to live fully (Sartre 1947:44-5 & Jaspers in Friedman 1964:204). However, `in order to be able to go out to the other, [one] must have the starting place, [one] must have been, [one] must be, with [one]self' (Buber 1947:21), that is, independent and self-aware.

Fugard's interest in the subject of selfless love is notable in his characterisation of

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individualised to its `ownmost potentiality-for-Being' (Heidegger 1963:294). Heidegger holds that the more *Dasein* understands itself in terms of this potentiality, the more unequivocally does it choose and discover the possibility of living fully, `and the less it does so by accident' (1962:435).

[9] May (in Friedman 1964:449) takes the future to be the dominant mode of time. This is because *Dasein* is characterised by possibility and exists as `pro-ject'. While it is constantly moving `ahead of', `beyond' and `outside' itself, directing itself upon what is still to come, it is, simultaneously, propelled towards itself (Grimsley 1967:46). This notion, of course, also features in phenomenologist thinking.

[10] The equilibrium Frieda maintains between being separated and related is again visible at the moment of the arrest. At first she hides behind Errol, but later `she scrambles forward, and, using her blanket, tries to shield him' (96).

Frieda. The persona is portrayed as relating to the principal in a selfless way, and her concern with his `thou' personalises the physical aspect of their relationship. She cares about him and his needs; this is unmistakable when she inquires: `Are you sure you are happy?' (87) and `What will make you happy?' (92).[11] She also bids him to be proud of himself (92) after he has lashed out against himself for his own sense of shame and humiliation. And, although she initially cowers behind him when the security forces intrude upon them, she immediately afterwards takes the blanket, with which she has covered herself, to shield him (96).

Angove, *per contra*, takes this to be a `subconscious condescending reaction' (1987:53). She adds that, notwithstanding all Frieda's efforts to understand Errol, `under the tension of police confrontation', instead of being enraged or justifiably defiant, she reverts to the role she has been conditioned to since birth: that of being the protector of the black man. In the process the latter is denied the opportunity to acknowledge his responsibility and guilt (1987:53).

Because her life meanings are evolved, Frieda does not conceal her emotions or lie to others, but communicates herself as she is. For example, she confesses that she loves Errol (82)[12]. She is further portrayed as mature in that she assumes accountability for what she has done before as well as for what she will do in future. Moreover, she does not refrain from making choices (and with choices changes). When the other wavers between staying with her or returning to the location, she urges him:

> Go home. Take your conscience and your guilt and go back to

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[11] Raymer, nonetheless, hypothesises that

> her uneasiness about the game illustrates [too well] the problems faced by `Coloured' and black persons, problems that she, for all her `liberalism', has no comprehension of and no real curiosity about. Like many Liberals, she would like to look the other way. She finds it hard to endure even if only in her imagination what it must be like to be non-white in South Africa (1976:203).

[12] To Binswanger (in Friedman 1964:516), the dual mode of love and friendship is essential to the existential experience.

> Bontrug and look after your family. I've also got problems. I can't add your adultery to them. If you haven't got the courage to say No ... to anybody ... me or her ... I'll do it for you.

To this she adds: `Take me with you. Now' (93).[13]

From the quotation above two inferences can be drawn. First, Frieda refuses responsibility for Errol's guilt and cowardice. She is the author and the mistress of her own destiny. Secondly, like Morris from *The Blood Knot*, she entertains the illusion that `it is possible to live outside one's socio-cultural heritage' (Angove 1987:53) and that `love can be divorced from cultural differences' (1987:49-50). Nevertheless, that the *dramatis persona* is also sensible of her similarities to others and feels answerable for their actions as long as she co-exists with them. This is discernible from the first person plural pronoun she employs when imploring Errol, after he has verbally battered her: `Is there nothing we can do any more except hurt each other? (93). She also intimates that if she had forty-three cents, she would send a telegram, with the following message appearing on it: `Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who ...' (88).[14] In addition, she reveals that she has thought about Errol's family (103).

The intrusion of the representatives of the apartheid ideology, functioning as a fulcrum between the drama's apparently disparate halves, temporarily rattles Frieda Joubert's confidence and, as Raymer (1976:192) submits, it even seems to addle her mind. Her mental disintegration is apparent from her `compulsive "babble" taking on a Beckettian tenor' (1976:191).

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[13] Later, when he does not answer the police's question about the library key he has in his possession, she interposes: `I gave it to him' (104).

[14] Frieda is indeed religious. When Errol mentions that he is afraid of the doctrine of Bishop Usher - the defender of creationism - that `God created the world ... the act of creation took place on October the twenty-sixth, four thousand and four B.C., at nine a.m., she objects to this ostensible blasphemy: `You shouldn't.... Try ... please try to understand' (84). Sören Kierkegaard (in Grimsley 1967:21), differing in this from several other existentialists, writes that the religious stage is the final stage in the development of the human being. A person recognises him/herself as a creature who must stand alone before God, as well as the absolute and unconditional demands imposed on him/her.

The arresting officers are not seen behind the source of light and their `lack of human response' (Raymer 1976:206) transfigures them into disembodied, `omnipresent menaces' (1976:207) and the librarian's (as well as the principal's) nemeses (Vandenbroucke 1986:188):

> WOMAN.... [*Pause as they both wait innocently and eagerly for a response to what they have said. Nothing. The silence slowly becomes a threat.*] Say something. [*Mounting hysteria.*] SAY SOMETHING!... (101)

Endeavouring to elicit some reaction from the intruders, Frieda confesses (Raymer 1976:206):

> Yes, we have made love. I switched off the light. Yes. Yes. Guilty. No doubt about it. Guilty of taking my chance and finding him. Hands, eyes, ears, nose, tongue ... totally guilty. Nothing is innocent. (101)

She accepts her guilt just as she `accept[s] the authoritarian logic which condemns [her]' (Walder 19874:92). Angove (!987:54) ascribes the absence of anger - or even hostility - to cultural indoctrination.

Experiencing her own objectification, she applies the question-and-answer technique of a police interrogation to herself (Raymer 1976:192). According to Raymer (1976:191), this gruesome and grotesque self-examination stresses the stylised and `unrealistic' enactment of the arrest, in addition to being a demonstration of the dramatist's use of role-playing:

> You say you have no previous experience of men. That you were a virgin, and yet you took the initiative. What would you have done if Philander had rejected you?
> Hated him.
> Would the fact that a coloured man had rejected you have humiliated you more than if a white man had done so?
> By the time it happened his colour did not mean anything to me any more.
> Did you encourage Philander?
> Yes.
> Why?

I wanted him. (102)

This rather bizarre admission may be an attempt to expiate the contrition which could be occasioned by her religious convictions in addition to the government's Immorality Act. Nonetheless, as existentialist philosophers maintain, all beings in whom self-consciousness has developed denounce themselves at one or other stage; it is part of existence and could, moreover, effect change. The anxiety attendant on remorse is a constructive emotion, for, as Martin Heidegger expounds, in full existentialist jargon, it has the `character of an *appeal* to *Dasein* by calling it to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-Self; and this is done by way of *summoning* it to its ownmost Being-guilty ...' (1963:314).

Rollo May agrees with Heidegger. He intimates that an uneasy conscience is the outcome of denying one's existential potentialities by locking them up within the self, so failing to fulfil them (in Friedman 1964:448). The librarian, notwithstanding, has neither forgotten nor `missed' her being. Therefore, shortly after the first impulsive confession and clearing of her conscience, she announces that she is not ashamed of herself (104). She *chose* to give Errol the key to the back door of the library and she knew what she was doing when she seduced him. She was *not* the victim of vicissitudes. By having her face her accusers directly and appropriate answerability for her actions, the dramatist highlights his protagonist's courage and strong character.

Whereas Frieda has earlier shied away from light (whether in the form of a lit match, an open curtain or the police's camera shots), this contrasting with Errol's demand to be seen (Angove 1987:52), in her last speech she resigns herself to the fact: `I don't want to see myself but it will happen' (105). Despite the humiliation of the exposure and the embarrassment her body has caused her before, when the torches trap her another time, `she is unaware of the light shining on her. She studies herself, quietly, privately' - and objectively:

> Ugly feet. The soles have got hard patches. My legs are bandy. Good calf muscles ... probably got them riding to school on my bicycle up a steep hill each day. Skin around my knees is just starting to get a little slack. I enjoy making the muscles in my thighs move. Hair is very mousy ... very sparse.... I think the area around

> my waist is quite nice. Few soft and feminine contours around my hips. (101) My breasts are slacker than I would like them to be. (102) My neck is unattractive. My face is quite interesting but can be very plain sometimes. Lines around my mouth are starting to worry me. Hair causes me concern. I think it's going off. (102) Ashamed of my hands. Nail-polish has come off in patches. Skin looks very old. (101-2)

Even though it may be argued that she views her body as an object, it is significant that the description of herself is concluded with:

> I think there is a lot of me in my hands somehow.
> My favourite colour is blue....
> My favourite flower is.... (102)

This, together with the predominance of the first person singular pronoun, shows that Frieda Joubert, in spite of her initial insecurity, perceives herself to be a centre of possibilities. She furthermore accepts her body for itself and comes to value it. My conviction is that this is the author's way of illustrating the character's taking cognisance of and affirming her physical as well as psychological identity. This paves the way for the discovery of the `free spiritual being' (Grimsley 1967:32) which is capable of change.

In her last monologue, Fugard has Frieda confront her ultimate isolation. She takes it into herself, thereby transcending it:

> I am here. You are not here. I know that without even trying to find you, as I did once, because nothing can be here except me. That doesn't mean I don't want you. But you are gone from other places. The pain will come. I'm holding it far away. But just now I will have to let it go and it will come. It will not take any time to find me. Because it's mine. The pain is going to be me. I don't want to see myself. But I know that will also happen. I must be my hands again, my eyes, my ears ... all of me but now without you. All of me that found you must now lose you. My hands still have the sweat of your body on them, but I'll have to wash them ... sometime. If I don't, they will. Nothing can stop me losing that little bit of you. In every corner of being myself there is a little of you left and now I must start to lose it. (105)

The character also recognises her lover as the subject for whom she has formerly consented to be an object. It dawns upon her that she cannot continue to hold on to

the known and the safety he embodied for her. She has to advance into an unknown and uncertain future by herself. Although at first she craved for belonging and love, she has grown during the course of the play and is now set on satisfying the highest needs of her being (in correspondence with Maslow's pyramid): self-esteem and self-actualisation. This is the meaning she has created for herself which will sustain her throughout the trauma.

Whereas the persona of Frieda Joubert is presented as weak at the beginning of *Statements after an Arrest under the Immorality Act*, it is just the opposite with Errol Philander. Errol is the one to ask her: `Which one are you frightened of? Me or you?' (82). Whereas she avoids the light, he orders her to look at him. He is ostensibly frightened of very little, deriving his confidence from the epiphany he had a year ago while reading a book on geology:

> Then suddenly those words: "... no vestige of a beginning, no prospect of an end...." I stopped. I had to. it was a `comprehension' - ja, of life and time ... and there in the middle of it ... at that precise moment ... in Bontrug, was me. Being me, just being me there in that little room was... the most exciting thing that had ever happened to me. I wanted that moment to last forever! It was so intense it almost hurt. There was nothing I was frightened to see. (84-5)

`Extracting himself from the burden of a history, a culture, a social existence, he experienced freedom' and his uniqueness within eternity (Angove 1987:50). It further struck him that he was part of an `awesome process' toward liberation: `a bright moment unfurled against the immensity of time' (Raymer 1976:195) because he himself is a `product of an evolutionary process ..., evolved out of the contact between the races in the Cape', and, as such, `one of the truest South Africans' - a fact conveniently forgotten by the powers that were (Walder 1984:93).

Fugard's Philander is seemingly in contact with his existential identity. For instance, he notifies Frieda: `Here I am. Me' (83). He does not hesitate when it comes to voicing his discontent (`Hate it! Bontrug. The braks that run out at me when I get there. My school. The children I teach. My home' [91]). Although his cynical and

`fatalistic approach to the relationship[15] reveals a ... realistic view of life' (Angove 1987:50), he still allows himself to daydream about an altered future:

> But if that one day I also had a real chance to start again - you know, to make everything different - and forty-three cents would buy me even just the first brick for a five-roomed house ... I'd spend it on that and go hungry.... (89)

The principal is confident that the present year will be different as he will turn his hand to the creative solution: `this year ... I'm really going to teach. You watch' (89).[16] It appears from this that Errol has a purpose which he will fulfil in future.

Whereas the female character has some regard for religion, the male is apparently aware that in order to exist, he must rebel. Errol is alarmed by the claim of Bishop Usher, defender of creationism, that the world was created by God (84) for `if God didn't exist, everything would be possible' - this being the very starting point of existentialist theory (Dostoievsky in Sartre 1948:33). The principal, like the teacher in *The Road to Mecca*, is `determined on creating a human situation where all the answers are human, or, rather, formulated in terms of reason. His partiality for the factual is evident when he apprises his mistress:

> There was a point ... a billion or so years after the beginning of the earth, when the surface cooled sufficiently to permit water to accumulate in liquid form. Up until then it had just been gaseous....

Whereas Fugard's Frieda makes mention of `those hairy ... missing links ... that look like baboons' (83), his other protagonist, being fascinated with facts, knows exactly where, when and by whom the `Australopithecus' was discovered: `Fossilised skull in limestone quarry in Taung, Bechuanaland. Raymond Dart. 1930'. He can even

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[15] For example, his `There is no tomorrow. Just today' (84) `allud[es] to the illegitimacy of their relationship and predict[s] the destruction of their existence' (Seidenspinner 1986:293).

[16] Nevertheless, the creative solution has failed Errol thus far: `Like my correspondence course. Three assignments unopened. In my drawer' (89).

His studies have been neither inspiring nor rewarding and though he has had the opportunity to find fulfilment in teaching, he has not yet experienced it.

cite his sources: `The conclusion of Charles Lyell after a good look at what was happening on the surface of the earth. *Principles of Geology*, 1830' (84). Errol is therefore portrayed as reasonable. Jaspers proclaims that *Existenz* itself only becomes clear through reason, reason being `salvation from nihilism' (Jaspers 1950:46).. Because *Existenz* and reason are inseparable, `each disappears with the disappearance of the other' (1950:67).

Life and death are as interdependent as reason and existence are, and Errol does not avoid the subject. He explains to Frieda: `the difference between life and even the most complex of chemical processes are (*sic*) ... a degree of independence from the environment;[17] sexual reproduction; and, finally, a susceptibility to death' (82). He also knows that because `life lives, life must die' (82); nothing can ever remain as it is. In Yalom's view (1980:165, 31), meditating on mortality provides a new perspective on the present and imbues it with intensity. This is so because, when *Dasein* contemplates itself as the `possibility of no-longer-being-able-to-be-there', it is `assigned to its Heideggerian `ownmost potentiality-for-Being' (1963:183) - which is accomplished through adjustment.

Regardless of whether or not Errol actually meditates on his own mortality, the fact remains that he understands that `life must die' and he still does not live life to the fullest. This is reflected in his remark: `Oh ... another day. Nothing special ... until now' (81). Yet the mere mention of Bontrug in the alien surroundings of Frieda's home `breaks the bubble of illusion' (Angove 1987:53) and restores the stark reality that one's `socio-cultural environment ... is carried within one's genes' (1987:53). The character, thus, is unable to create meaning out of the situations in which he finds himself and life, to him, is a matter of prolonged suffering (Walder 1984:93).

Seen from this angle, the `forty-three cents' game may be nothing more than an attempt on Errol's part to assure himself that his existence has significance, albeit hypothetically. At the same time it invites Frieda to participate, at least intellectually, in his situation by conveying to her the `immediate importance of his everyday

[17] It appears that Errol appreciates the existential truth that in dependence on a limited environment one becomes a limited self.

hardships (for example lack of water and public conveniences, provision of food, work and accommodation') (Seidenspinner 1986:292). The objective of the game is to work out what he - and she - would do with a few coins if they had nothing else: no family, no home and, most importantly, no tomorrow (87). In contrast to what he has claimed before, it is patent that Errol is reluctant to envisage the future, because, if he resigns himself to what is to be, he also has to take on responsibility - not only for what he has done before, but also for what he will do and think and feel from now on until his end. Instead, he resolves to buy a newspaper and read `what happened in the world yesterday' (87-8).

Moreover, it could be that Errol hopes that Frieda will remove accountability from him and that she will revitalise his present purposeless existence. As he muses:

> I don't know. I can't tell. I can't see or do anything properly any more, except come here.... (93)

Some existentialist psychologists regard the orgiastic state of sexual intercourse as a means of swallowing others or being swallowed (Yalom 1980:393).[18] Errol is happy when sex is good (87). Yet, as soon as the act is something of the past, he has to ply his mistress with questions regarding his presence: `What about me? I want to be seen. I want you to see me' (82). He also moves into a `faint patch of light from the curtained window' and announces: `The brightest spot in our world. Here I am. Me. Can you see me?' (82-3) and `You can see me?' (83)

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[18] Kierkegaard sorts sex under the aesthetic stage. This stage is characterised by `spontaneous vitality and an immediacy which is dominated by the needs of the present moment and the pursuit of pleasure and enjoyment' (Grimsley 1967:20). Nevertheless, the aesthetic type of existence is incomplete and begets tension and despair.

Like Kierkegaard, other existential philosophers also have a negative view of sex *per se*; that is, sex without love to personalise it. Errol admits: `I can't love' (106). In addition, he is unfaithful to his wife. Existential writers further look upon sex as an obstacle to living fully and as doomed to failure (Friedman 1964:537). To Berdyaev and Sartre, sexual desire is nothing other than the desire to get hold of the other's `free subjectivity through his objectivity-for-[oneself]' (Friedman 1964:536). In other words, passion's purpose is possessing the other as an object in order to serve one's own turn.

Thus, it may be deduced that, like Lena and Helen, Errol Philander endeavours to establish himself in another's eyes. It is not so much she who depends on him, but he who relies on her to give meaning to his being; she is the object to be manipulated for the selfish end of unearthing his *raison d'être*. Authenticity, instead, involves people's `acceptance of ... the fact that they ... give meaning to life by every act' (Coates quoted in Bedford 1972:314).

Further confirmation that the relationship Errol has with his mistress is not a mutual `I-Thou' (as hers is with him) but a unilateral `I-it' (Yalom's classification 1980:366-7)[19] is that he does not really listen to her. On one occasion the stage directions indicate that he acts as if he has not heard her (85). She, for her part, recalls an earlier conversation:

> we talked a bit. But I didn't really listen to him because ... he wasn't really talking to me. (97)

We may infer that the principal's `dialogue' (in which there is the opportunity to overcome his solipsistic predicament, grow in interaction with the woman and discover the truth, is no more than a disguised form of monologue, centring exclusively on himself. Thus, his words do not answer the existential question of what he has made of himself but are `chatter', the utterance of the everyday world which disguises *Dasein*'s abandonment by its verbosity (Grimsley's notion 1967:56). In epitome, her claim does not stand over against his own in equal right; her side is not experienced, nor does he empathise with her `otherness' (which happens to be the basic principle of marriage, as Buber [1947:61] contends).[20]

Seen in this light, the female character's initial insecurity is intelligible. Her wearying of playing the part the other has conceived of for her is inevitable; the entrance of the police voyeur simply expedites the breakdown of their relationship. So, as

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[19] Frankl and Yalom (1980:440) posit that the inability to establish mutual relationships is a manifestation of undeveloped life meanings.

[20] Buber also calls it `reflection' when `a man withdraws from accepting with his essential being another [person] in his [or her] particularity' (1947:23).

Weales proclaims: `although *Statements* is concerned with what the state, through the Immorality Act does to Woman and the Man, it is also about the way [the two protagonists] fall short of understanding each other (1978:10).

It is logical that Errol should be anxious about losing the dispenser of meaning in his life. Yet, instead of locating the reason for his mortification within himself, he faults Frieda for it (albeit subconsciously). This is prominent each time he elicits conflict with and inflicts psychological pain on her. He does not understand why he does this; all he knows is that he `can't help it' (89). (Someone who cannot recognise the reason for his/her actions or feelings obviously cannot change.)

Angove, however, has an explanation for Errol's conduct. First, his love for Frieda is irrevocably part of his bitterness at not being allowed to have all that she represents (1987:52). Secondly, he constantly reminds himself of the framework by which he is circumscribed (1987:52). And, unlike Morris from *The Blood Knot*, he will not make the `mistake of trying to break through the barrier of his predestined existence' (1987:52). Consequently he is `natural and loving to [his mistress] only when he has transcended the barriers of time and space in his recollections of an existence where there is "no vestige of a beginning, no prospect of an end"' (84) (Angove 1987:52). `When plunged back into reality, Errol almost defiantly makes his siding with his own people clear', and his language once again becomes `permeated by bitterness and aggression' (1987:51).

Notwithstanding - or perhaps because of - the fact that Fugard's Philander is divided between his love for Frieda and his loyalty towards the `Coloured' people, he works towards being a self-contained self. His turning back upon himself is justified by the assumption that he has an appreciation of the absolute truth.[21] He recalls the night of January the twenty-six, almost a year before, when he was reading and suddenly had a `"comprehension" - *ja*, of life and time' (84-5) and of his being an integral part

[21] Yet, as Sartre (1962:45) submits, in order to get any truth about oneself, one must have contact with others. The truth is lost to those who shut themselves off from others in self-will (Jaspers 1950:48). Moreover, since ones' `true environment is the universe (Tillich in Friedman 1964:377), one can only become whole by virtue of one's relations to other people (Buber 1947:168).

of it.

Someone who strives towards self-reliance will turn down other people's assistance. So when Frieda offers Errol water after she has been informed of the water-level of the location dam, so acknowledging her social guilt (Angove 1987:51), he responds with: `Thanks, but I'll go along with Bontrug' (90). When she insists, he loses his patience:

> *Your* water. You want to send me some of *your* water. Is it so hard to understand? Because if you can't...! (90)

Frieda admits that she does not understand a thing (91). Instead of explaining to her that her privilege blinds her to the fact that the water is not *hers*, furthermore that her response to the `Coloureds' basic and immediate need reflects the white South African's person's `ignorance of the utterly invidious and degrading practical implications of such a dilemma' (Angove 1987:51), thirdly that her proposed involvement is idealistic and impractical[22], and lastly that he feels an obligation to cast in his lot with his people, he lets her know that she should not even try to comprehend because she cannot.[23] Because communication paves the way for the truth, and truth unites people (Jaspers 1950:48), `[t]here is nothing left to say ... Nothing to do' (104) between the two lovers at the end of the drama and he forsakes her when he slinks away from the pool of light in which he and she have been standing.[24]

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[22] She also assures him: `We're going to have prayers for rain next week. Wednesday' (89).

[23] Vandenbroucke conjectures that this impasse hints at the `difficulty of understanding across racial lines' (1986:185). This may be so, but, then again, we can only partially know others.

[24] John Raymer remarks that even though Errol's and Frieda's love disintegrates, what is of real importance is that their affair could happen in the first place.... `This interracial love affair is itself a moving "statement" about the possibilities of love conquering the terrors of apartheid' (1976:206-7).

In Grimsley's view (1967:54), one who balks at dispersing his self in participation and seeks specialness instead, as Errol does, may often surround himself with objects to substitute for people. The principal will spend his last few cents on a brick for a five-roomed house (89). He also intends buying a car (89). One may presume, on the basis of the metaphors of property he employs (Colleran 1995:45), that Errol's *Dasein* is bound to objectification, possessions supplying him with a sense of identity. However, Grimsley propounds that `to be "in the world" is not to be related to objects alone. We are not `merely "in the world" but "with others" and this "with others" is an essential element of being in the world' (1967:50) as we reach our own selves in the presence of others (Sartre 1948:45). Meaning therefore cannot be found in isolation.

Thirdly, an individual who longs to be unique is often concerned with his own position. Errol Philander, who is the head of a school, is ashamed of himself, firstly because he betrays his wife and children, and then, whenever he calls upon his mistress, he has to subject himself to various ignominies which strike at the root of the sense of specialness he wishes to sustain. These include waiting until it is dark, using back doors and hiding `on hands and knees among the shit' (80) beneath the bridge.

For these reasons, the principal feels insecure and inferior. He describes himself as a coward (93) or - worse - a *brak* (88)[25] that is `hungry enough to make every mistake ... even bark' (89). He also takes it that he cannot `see or do anything properly any more, except come here, and even that [he does] thinking it's a mistake' (93). This is because he is so `buggered-up inside that [he] say[s] "No"' when he means "Yes" (90). In fact, he judges that he is not only literally but also figuratively `in the shit' (91).

[25] A *brak* is a mongrel. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1989:653) defines a mongrel as a `dog of no definable type or breed'. It also has the derogatory meaning of a `person not of pure race', the product of interracial intercourse.

Someone who does not perceive himself as having worth has trouble loving others (Bedford 1972:316). Neither of the relationships Errol has fulfils him and the one with Frieda founders soon enough under pressure.

Rather than being honest about the fact that he transgresses against himself and Frieda by failing to fulfil his potential, so bringing himself to his entire being, Errol alternates between blaming God and Frieda. Having vicariously experienced what it is like to be white, he is discontented with the school where he teaches and the schoolchildren, his home in Bontrug - in short, his entire world:

> So I say to myself: "Careful, Philander. It's yours. It's all you can ever really have. Love it. You've got to." Sometimes that's easy too. But you see, even when I do ... there's still you. (91)

His mistress, nevertheless, is the one who has to give him a chance (89) as he supposes he cannot create and take it himself and change (`if that one day also had a real chance to start again' [89]). It is possible that he inflicts pain on her because he suspects her of begrudging him this opportunity. Then again, it is not within her power to give it him as existence supposes autonomous action.

Philander does not assume authorship for hurting his partner's feelings. According to him, he does not do this on purpose. Moreover, since his stance is unintentional, seeking to conduct himself differently is of no avail as what he does and says is simply beyond his control (89).

The character further believes that it is beyond him to leave his family. As he muses: `I'm not ... strong enough to hurt them, for something I wanted. What would happen to them if I did?' (93)

What Errol actually *should* say is that he not strong enough to make a choice and make sense of, or alter, his existence and so determine who he is.[26] In lieu of

[26] Frieda, in contrast, strives to convince herself that her lover had too strong a feeling of responsibility towards his family to have an affair with a white woman just because he had the opportunity to do so.

committing himself to a certain course and acting on it, he takes the cowardly way out and lets others make the decisions for him. Human reality, however, is not given automatically but depends upon the individual's courage to comprehend itself as a choice in the making (Sartre 1958:478). Heidegger (1963:68) agrees that *Dasein* has to `choose' itself in order to grow and win itself. Grimsley puts it succintly: Existence is action. It `is not; [it] becomes' (1967:24).

Irvin Yalom (1980:312) contends that letting others and `oughts' decide for one, or not discriminating between wishes, is symptomatic of a disordered will, something that emerges in a conversation Errol has with Frieda:

> She asks me, What do you want?
> I don't know.
> Yes, you do.
> Everything.
> You can't have it. Choose.
> I can't.
> You're a coward.
> I know.
> You realise it's useless.
> Yes.
> What will you do if they find out about us?
> I don't know. So she tells me.... (106-7)

The principal furthermore does not have to uphold previous decisions he has made, for example that of getting married. In terms of existentialist thought, no choice is binding and all choices can be remade; one is always free to turn and `veer off onto a new road of existence' (Bedford 1972:279). However pitiful his life [has] become', he still has it within his power `physically to get up and leave' his wife (Cohen 1977:76).

Guilt is the corollary of not shifting for oneself.[27] By not exploring his existential possibilities and making personal progress, Errol cannot answer the call of his being - `Where art thou?' - with `Here am I' (Buber's phrases 1947:166). This is never more obvious than after the arrest. Exposed by the police flashlights, the *dramatis*

[27] In turn, the dread of being found blameworthy and condemned may thwart the taking of sound decisions and acting on them (Tillich 1952:79).

persona's precarious sense of self, which his mistress earlier had to affirm, gives way. Without even for a moment `questioning the moral rectitude of his accusers' (Angove 1987:55), he breaks down and becomes the servile, cringing `Coloured' (99) he has deep down always suspected himself to be. He implores the white woman: `Water, Miesies. Please, Miesies ... water ...' (99),[28] this being reminiscent of the black man-white man game Zachariah and Morris used to play in *The Blood Knot*. When Frieda reacts with bewilderment, he mutters: `I'll ... I'll just go. I'll use the back door' (99), and she discovers that there is `dust on his shoes. Him. His feet. His thoughts' (100). From the perspective of her `white superiority' (Angove 1987:54), he is not her equal - either physically and psychologically. Vandenbroucke (1986:189) postulates that the nadir of humiliation Errol reaches at this point surpasses even his previous self-loathing.

As if imagining that his occupation will exonerate or restore some dignity to him, Philander then says: `I'm ... I'm Principal.... I ... I won't do it again ...' (96). It appears that under pressure he reposes trust in his career and abilities, and not in himself. He is estranged from his existential identity. Bugental (1976:14) avers that an identity which is based on objectification is dependent on external circumstances and the impression others have of it. Errol feels, however, that everyone sees right through his public persona (`I know you see' [106])[29] after he has visualised his flight from `everything but especially God' (106). Not only God, but also the dogs `can see' (106).

Experiencing his own objectification after the violation of his privacy, Errol reports on events in the past tense, as if viewing these and himself from a distance:

> There was nothing left to say. I had thought there would be. That if it ever happened, and we had known it could, that there would be something left to say, to her, to myself. Something to say to them.

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[28] It seems that one of the ways in which the state tyrannises or terrorises its subjects can be seen in the effect of the police's actions on Errol. Already fragile and humiliated by his history and circumstances, he regresses and cannot realise the growth and transcendence that might otherwise have been possible.

[29] This is what Sartre refers to as hell in *No Exit* (1955:17).

> But when the light went on, it burnt out all the words I had left. Nothing to say. Nothing to do. (104)

When the cruel reality of the intrusion strikes him fully, he switches to the present tense, but without discarding the same short, clipped sentences:

> They find you.
> They put on the light.
> They take the picture.
> They take your name.
> And then they take you. (106-7)

Since the security officers have robbed him of his identity, he responds to what *Das Man* commands, and also transfers authorship to the latter:

> That on the night of January the twelfth 1966, I ... who had been made in his image ... did lose a part of me. They did it I say. They dug a hole and buried it. Ask the dogs. (107)[30]

The ellipses in the quotation above separate the subject from the predicate; the same applies to the auxiliary verb `did'. In this fashion Fugard illustrates that Errol does not consider himself to be the agent of the action, therefore not answerable for it. He is incapable of functioning adequately, either psychologically or physically. Earlier he said, `I can't see or do anything properly any more ...' (93). His legs are now also beginning to fail him. Moreover, wherever he goes, he cannot elude the omnipresence of God:

> I'm running away very fast, from everything but especially God, because he mustn't know. But the street doesn't work any more. Because when I reach the end where the stones and the darkness should start, the light goes on.... But I can't run very fast. My hands get in the way .... And then I reach my house. But I don't find anyone there, only God, waiting in the dark. And now I'm too tired to run any more.... (106-7)

As in *The Road to Mecca*, the Lord is depicted as anything but a loving Father. In

[30] However, there is one moment in the drama when Errol recognises the role he plays in his destiny. This is when he declares: `We knew all right what we were doing' (101).

fact, the dramatist has the protagonist associate God with whites and with the enforcers of law and justice. This is made explicit by the following quotation:

> I just think he (God) must have driven there by car because otherwise how could he have got there before me. He lives in the town .... God shines a torch to see what she looks like. Did he have it, he asks her. Yes, she says. Then he asks me: "Why did you let them do it?"
> So I tell God I don't smoke and I don't drink and I know the price of bread. But he says it makes no difference.... (107-8)

Errol feels that he has to account to God for not recognising the demands imposed on him. Hence he takes the only way out. He confesses: `I can't love' (106). In the end he is, as his name says, just a philanderer. He has not only wronged his wife, his children and his mistress, but he has also erred against himself. This is because one can only grow to a whole in interaction with another (Buber 1947:168), *Existenz* only becoming `real' if it comes to itself through, and simultaneously with, other existences (Jaspers 1957:92),.

In the character's last speech - a `bleakly pessimistic' one, verging on despair (Walder 1984:93) - the stage directions specify that Errol must stand alone again, having earlier crawled away into his own private world (Raymer 1976:190). Forestalling God and the police, His `arbitrary agents of destruction' (Anon quoted in Angove 1987:55), Errol pronounces sentence upon himself: `guilty' (107) and starts executing it. Like the jackal that bit off his foot to free itself (which he mentioned before), Errol now symbolically dismembers and emasculates himself (Walder 1984:92):[31]

> But I know you see.
> An arm without a hand.
> A leg without a foot.
> A head without a body.
> A man without his name....
> And then I'm in Bontrug. And the dogs don't bark at me, they laugh.
> They're all standing up and walking around their back legs to show

[31] The person on whom the character of Philander was modelled went one step further: he committed suicide.

> me theirs. (106-7)[32]

His dismemberment `... represents a culmination of all those emasculated men - Morris, Johnnie, Boesman - robbed of their ability to act, even to function at all' (Walder 1984:92). In fact, the playwright calls `every arrest under the Immorality Act a vestigial re-enactment of the castration ritual' (quoted in Vandenbroucke 1986:189).

In Errol's scenario, after the arresting officers have unmanned him, God wants what is left of him:

> And then I start to give him the other parts. I give him my feet and my legs, I give him my head and body, I give him my arms, until at last there is nothing left, just my hands, and they are empty. But he takes them back too. And then there is only the emptiness left. But he doesn't want that. Because it's me. It's all that is left of me. (108)

Thus, the effort of the finite self to become `the centre of everything gradually has the effect of its ceasing to be the centre of anything' (Tillich 1968:71). The only thing the principal can ultimately lay claim to - and hold onto - is the emptiness within himself: the Special Branch cannot reach there and God would not have it. At last he has something to call his own, however insignificant that may be. In this fashion the character affirms his `I-ness', although the `I' which is affirmed is a negated one - which is, as Errol assumes, all `Coloureds' are allowed in South African society. The female persona, however, has demonstrated that a desire for change has to arise within oneself. Possibly on this account, Dennis Walder (1984:93) surmises that *Statements after an Arrest under the Immorality Act* could be considered the most inward of all of Fugard's dramas.

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[32] Frieda, just the reverse, gains control over her body: `I must be my hands again, my eyes, my ears ... all of me' (105).

THE ROAD TO MECCA

The Road to Mecca was first staged in May 1984 at the Yale Repertory Theatre in New Haven, Connecticut. In 1985 it was performed at the Lyttelton Theatre, London, with Yvonne Bryceland as Helen. Thereafter it was presented in Johannesburg at the Market Theatre, once again in London, but this time at the National Theatre, and at the Spoleto USA Festival in Charleston, South Carolina. In 1988 it appeared at the off-Broadway Promenade Theatre in New York.

The title page of *The Road to Mecca* proclaims that the play was `suggested by the life and work of Helen Martins of New Bethesda'. New Bethesda is an isolated, rather backwater village in the `remote fastnesses of the Eastern Cape' of South Africa. A semi-desert region, its landscape is one of `unremitting desolation ... flanked by mountain ranges which intensify its isolation and ensure its inaccessibility' (Durbach 1987:5). Its villages are widely dispersed and their population is composed mainly of Afrikaners.

An inhabitant of such a Karoo village, `a meek, obedient, church-going little widow', as Fugard wrote in an article published in *Twentieth Century Literature* (1993:386), `shocked everybody in [her] community by doing two things: she stopped going to church and she started sculpting'. For about a quarter of a century, she

> transformed her little Gothic house with its Gothic darkness into a light-filled palace of the most unbelievable splendour. In the large yard around her house she created - self-taught - statues, all of them with an eastern theme. She called it the camel-yard. She was obsessed. Her inspiration came from the Rub of Omar Khayym. She saw those last twenty-five years of her life as a journey to Mecca, Mecca not being the real Mecca of Saudi Arabia, but the Mecca of [the] imagination.... (1993:386)

The mythic goal of Mecca in the desert was attained by way of her art. When she was seventy-five years old, the visions ceased coming and she could not complete her work. Being old and alone, suffering from arthritis and weak

eyesight, she fell into a deep depression (Fugard 1993:386).

In the play, the townspeople of New Bethesda have decided that Miss Helen should go to the Sunshine Home for the Aged, a home for the elderly run by the Dutch Reformed Church in Graaff-Reinet. Their motives are not altogether altruistic as they want to be quit of the old woman who has outraged them with her unconventional `hobby'.

Helen does not want to go, but also does not know how to say no. On this score, she writes a letter to a friend in Cape Town, imploring the latter to come to her. Although there is a difference of forty years between the two women, they have much in common. Elsa is the only person who appreciates `Mecca' - Helen's home and her statues - and, like the artist, she is also a rebel, in this case against the aberrations of South Africa's apartheid regime. Furthermore, both Elsa and Helen have found self-fulfilment outside of marriage and motherhood. Helen has her Mecca, and Elsa has her students whom she teaches radical material (Heller 1993:473).

On her way to her friend in New Bethesda, Elsa gives a ride to a indigent African woman and her baby. After giving the woman some cash, Elsa drops her off where the road forks to walk the last eighty miles to Cradock with the baby on her back.

Even though Elsa and Helen `provide the focus of the whole event' (Durbach 1987:3), the local *dominee* appears in the doorway at the end of Act One. Reverend Marius Byleveld has come to persuade Miss Helen to fill in the application form for the Sunshine Home. He finds her irresolute and suspects that this has something to do with the `stranger's' presence. He then questions Helen about her relationship with Elsa. Elsa and later also Helen explain and illustrate to Marius why Helen cannot leave her Mecca. Marius is defeated and leaves, the form (still) unsigned.

In the last few moments of the play the two women are once again alone. Elsa discloses why she has been so irritable all night. Her lover has gone back to his

wife and Elsa has aborted the baby she was expecting. Helen empathises with her friend's pain, and, for the first time, Elsa cries about her double loss. `By reaching out to each other the two women achieve greater insight into the meaning of their lives' (Heller 1993:477).

It is patent from the plot description that *The Road to Mecca*, like *Dimetos* and *The Guest: An Episode in the Life of Eugène Marais*, is a play about art and the artist (Wertheim 1986:16), a play that deals with the genesis and nature of `artistic inspiration, the responsibility of the artist to his vision, the subjugation of the artist by that vision and the opposition of that artistic vision to the conformity of the everyday world' (1986:18). In addition, the drama also looks at what happens when the redemptive function of art no longer prevails and when the artist can no longer `lie' value into existence (Durbach 1987:12), that is, when the `spirit of creativity dies'. This is the one death that frightens Fugard, for he foresees one day also having to cope with the dreaded moment of the extinction of his creativity and silence, like the reclusive widow with the darkness of artistic impotence, old age and death (interviewed by Brink 1990:79).

The village of New Bethesda is approximately twenty-four kilometres from Fugard's place of birth. In an interview at Yale, Fugard - whom Durbach alludes to as `the disaffected Afrikaner ... the traitor to ... national ideology, the outcast from the tribe whose art has made him anathema to the community and isolated him in the terrible freedom of his craft' (1987:4) - said, `Helen is me'. He added that he wrote this deeply personal - if not autobiographical - drama because he `couldn't help responding to this very eccentric character in this strange little community - a community which was in a sense hostile to her life' (Foreword to *The Road to Mecca* 1984:13). The rationale for this hostility was that her exotic existence deviated from and, in fact, defied their `traditional pieties' (Heller 1993:473), and `offended their sensibilities' (Wertheim 1986:18). Thus, the life of Miss Helen may be taken to be a prototype of that of the creative artist in an antagonistic environment (Heller 1993:473).

The theme, then, centres on the struggle between the creativity and enlightenment of the unconventional, non-conformist sculptress and the

repressively conservative and authoritarian Dutch Reformed Church (Wertheim in Arthur 1992:9). Errol Durbach reminds us that the Dutch Reformed Church was often called the National Party at prayer (1987:6), as it sanctioned this party's policies. In the play the Church is represented by the third and last character,[1] Reverend Marius Byleveld, and, to Colleen Angove (1987:88) and Albert Wertheim (1986:23) alike, he is the stereotype of the Afrikaners of New Bethesda (1987:88), embodying the narrow-mindedness, stubbornness and bondage that apparently characterise the dark side of these people's mentality. Miss Helen, again, whose nature `falls away' from conformity and rigidity (Durbach 1987:6), may be viewed as the `mother' of the liberal conscience of white South Africa, the inspiration and the model for emancipation (1987:6-7). The play is about the dialectical struggle between the pastoral voice of the local minister - who tries to manipulate the conservative community's maverick, his attempt backed by the `patriarchal establishment discourse of the Afrikaner tradition' (Bowker 1990:9), and the feminist discourse of the English-speaking teacher from Cape Town for the allegiance of this same maverick (Durbach 1987:16).

In addition to this, the play also concentrates on women's ideologies. The whole of the first act is taken up by a dialogue between two women (Wertheim 1986:18), the one a `progressive' teacher, the other a descendant of the Boers. As the teacher undertakes a geographical journey from Cape Town to New Bethesda, a metaphoric `trek from enlightened South African liberal attitudes into the stagnating world of reactionary nineteenth-century Afrikanerdom' (Durbach 1987:3), the other makes a spiritual journey, from her cottage in the village of New Bethesda to the source of her creativity and artistry: an imaginary temple in Mecca (Wertheim 1986:21, 24).[2] The function of the teacher is to be a `crusader whose calling it is make the voiceless (artist) think for [herself]' and to clear or

[1] By limiting his drama to three characters, `Fugard maintains the Aristotelian unities' (Wertheim 1986:17).

[2] Fugard explains that this is not `the real Mecca', but the Mecca of the mind, `that golden city, that other place, that extraordinary world we all want to reach at some point in our lives' (1993:386).

create a metaphysical space for the latter in which she can stand up for herself and conduct her own competing discourse (Bowker 1990:10).

Although Miss Helen's physical environment is unconventional, her house being converted into a mosque-like shrine of `light and extravagant fantasy' (15), her mind is in darkness. Her use of clichés (for example, `Patience is a virtue, virtue is a grace...' [17]) evinces that she has few, if any, opinions of her own. She further subscribes to the scriptural sentiment that marriage is sacred. In her mind Katrina, her one other friend in the world, should not make a change and leave her husband for another man, simply because she is married. The self-sufficient Elsa, with her `strong opinions and up-to-date liberal feelings on social injustice and the position of women' (Wertheim 1986:19), ascribes the older woman's narrow view to the remnants of the `Afrikaner' in her (22) that dominate her thinking. To substantiate this, Helen is convinced of the sanctity of orthodoxy and disapproves of Elsa's ridicule of the New Bethesda congregation. Her taking the decision of the church council (to sell her carefully decorated house and go to an old-age home) as final reveals how pervasive the influence of the church is.

Notwithstanding this, Miss Helen has not attended a church service in fifteen years. She no longer feels a kinship with the members of the congregation and has severed all lines of communication with them; there is no sense of belonging (Angove 1987:83). She makes a clear distinction between herself and the community by referring to the latter as `they' and not `we' (25). When one of `them', the minister of the church, brings her some potatoes, she tells him that he `shouldn't have bothered' (50). She furthermore takes exception at being included in a discussion of the habits of the Afrikaners, so disavowing her cultural roots.

Elsa provides an accurate assessment of her friend's character - divided between conformity to certain institutions and self-expression - when she labels her `history's first reactionary-revolutionary' (28). The contradictions in Miss Helen suggest the cause of Elsa calling her a hypocrite (24). The contradictions in the persona of Helen Martins may be accredited to Athol Fugard's insight into

the human psyche.

An instance of such contradictory conduct is when Elsa criticises the village people and Miss Helen comes up for them. There may be two explanations for this. Firstly, Elsa is an outsider. Secondly, early socialisation has brought the artist to adhere and conform for many years to the convictions and customs of her community, even if this was at the expense of her own needs and wishes - all for the sake of not being ostracised. A society which has `remained largely impervious to the enlightened political values of the twentieth century' (Durbach 1987:5), together with the austere brand of Calvinist religion preached by the minister of the Dutch Reformed Church has acted as an obstruction to self-expression and self-actualisation; these have curbed her potential and reduced a free spirit to that of an insecure, frightened, old woman.[3] To cite from Sartre's *Sein und Zeit*, hers is a society in which `each is the other and nobody is himself' (quoted in Grimsley 1967:51). Accepting the dictates of society as an external locus of control deprives Miss Helen's *Dasein* of its answerability. In a sense this is comforting and reassuring, as somebody else assumes authorship for her destiny. On the other hand, the existential essence, incorporating the confidence that one has the power to act on one's own behalf, falls into decay,[4] and the opportunity to realise one's potential is lost (Grimsley 1967:4, 51). This is the motive for Miss Helen putting down her strong-minded friend's efforts to get other people to think and act for themselves to `deliberately look[ing] for trouble' (27). Her advice to Elsa - who is to appear before a Board of Enquiry on account of her telling her class to write to the State President on the subject of racial inequality - is to tell a `little white lie' (28) and `say [she's] sorry and [she] won't do it again' (28).

Unlike Elsa, Fugard's Miss Helen is quite accustomed to beguiling others as she had years of practice, sitting next to her late husband, Stefanus, in church - `all a

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[3] Even now the character does not interfere with the decisions made by her community, such as the prohibition of the sale of alcohol, but passively puts up with its intervention.

[4] Miss Helen even supposes that the ability to create depends on visions that come to her from time to time and which are completely beyond her control (37).

terrible, terrible lie ...' [70]. Now again she dodges her friend's questions or lies to her without batting an eyelid. For instance, she lets Elsa understand that the people of the village leave her alone whereas they have been pressing her to go to an old-age home. She also `got tired' of her old curtains (26) and the scabs on her hands are due to a `little accident at the stove' (41) when making prickly-pear syrup. In reality she has burnt both the curtains and her hands in a domestic fire she started. Perhaps Helen's worst fabrication is the claim that she trusts her friend and that her `doors are wide open' when she is with her (32). When Elsa is informed by Marius Byleveld that `Helen knocked over a candle one night and set fire to the curtains' (63) (as opposed to Helen's `One of the lamps started smoking badly and there was a little accident at the stove' [64]), she exclaims bitterly:

> [T]hen all our talk about trust! God, what a joke. You've certainly made me a fool of myself again, but this time I don't think it's funny.... Don't let us ever again talk about trust between the two of us. (64)

It is possible that the character can so easily put a false construction on reality because she is shown to exist in what Jaspers calls a `shell of solitude' (1950:49). Sartre postulates that in order to arrive at the truth - something which precedes change - one must have contact with another person (1948:45) since truth is communicable. Camus furthermore writes that `every ambiguity, every misunderstanding, leads to death' (so when Miss Helen speaks evasively or falsely, she shuts herself off from others, so `killing' herself for them); `clear language and simple words are the only salvation from it (death)' (1961:247). Perhaps the artist is conscious of her spirit ebbing, for she writes in a letter to Elsa that `this, surely, is the darkest night of my soul' (38).

It is not only the persona's soul that is affected but also her body. In the stage directions Fugard makes mention of the `suggestion of personal neglect' (15) about her. Miss Helen's lack of concern about the way she looks may be attributed to her lack of regard for herself, which is betrayed, for instance, when she recollects that Elsa did not appear to notice her when she first arrived. Like Lena in *Boesman and Lena*, the artist yearns to be seen. Over the years she

has `got used to rude eyes, staring at [her] and [her] work, dismissing both of them as ugly' (34). Narrow-minded intolerance and misunderstanding have eroded her sense of self and, as a result, her ideas have dried up and everything is in a state of stagnation. But Elsa's eyes are different. By Miss Helen's admission, they are eyes that she can trust (34) to approve of her and her creations, give her courage, renew her faith in herself (Heller 1993:474) (35) and fill her mind with original, new ideas. To put it differently: the older woman depends on her friend for self-appraisal, self-knowledge and ultimately the affirmation of her own identity. Rollo May holds that for `any human being the possibility of acceptance by and trust in another human being is a necessary condition for the `"I-am" experience' (in Friedman 1964:447-8). Anna Rutherford agrees that `a means of establishing your identity is through your image in the minds of other people, the recognition of yourself through others' (1976:276). Miss Helen believes that her friend possesses the secret of her artistic energy: `It is only through your eyes that I now see my Mecca' (39), the artistic ideal, the source of creativity, and, by extension, her self. Sartre calls this phenomenon `being-seen-by-another' (1958:257).

Like the characters in Eliot's `The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock', who are incapable of action and involvement because of their awareness of how others see them, Miss Helen lets `I dare not wait upon I would'. On this score, she desires an active and forceful partner - or rescuer (such as Elsa) - to whom she can transfer responsibility and who will decide on her behalf. In order to accomplish this, Fugard has her pretend to be defenceless: `you know I don't know how to fight back'; `I can't fight them alone, little Elsie. I need you' (38) and `Won't you help me, little Elsie, please, and speak to him as well? You are so much better at arguing than me' (42). Instead of standing up for herself, as Elsa urges her to, the artist (whether consciously or subconsciously) desires her younger friend to allay her apprehension of isolation and fundamental groundlessness. One may surmise that Miss Helen loves Elsa because she needs her - the three words `I need you' then also appearing in a letter to Elsa. She needs Elsa to bear up against Marius, whom Helen allows to patronise and bully her, and his manipulative rhetoric, the aim of which is to get her to capitulate to his suggestion (Wertheim 1986:18) that she retire to a home for the

elderly. To Elsa Helen bewails her lot, demoting herself to the object position: `all they want is to get rid of me' (60), as if she has no control over it. One cannot really criticise the minister (who, incidentally is invested with great sympathy by the playwright) for his paternalistic attitude to this recalcitrant parishioner. Elsa, nevertheless, accuses him of taking the `grossest advantage' (62) of the old woman and treating her like a child. For example, he speaks about her and not to her. Yet, as Sartre points out: even if someone lets himself `be carried off, in helplessness and in despair, even if he let[s] himself be carried off like an old sack of coal, he [has] chosen his own damnation; he [is] free, free in every way, free to behave like a fool or a machine, free to accept, free to refuse ... (1947:289). Throughout the play Miss Helen rejects the difficult freedom to determine a design, to exercise personal choice, to continue choosing anew, and finally to comprehend that she alone is accountable for who she is and what she makes of her life. Being the source of things is too distressing. Thus, Reverend Byleveld hits the nail on the head when he remarks that Helen is not free, but trapped `with an illiterate little `Coloured' girl and a stranger from a different world as [her] only visitors and friends!' (70) Ironically, it is the stranger from the different world who scolds Miss Helen for not possessing enough faith in her life and her work to defend them against the scepticism of others (64).

That Helen lacks faith in herself is evident from her repeating Elsa's phrases and complimenting the latter on having come up with them (32), and even tolerating Elsa's outbursts, pleading with her to have patience and also taking the blame on herself when her (Helen's) letters are not answered. Miss Helen's excessive reliance on `Elsie' (17) also sheds light upon her feelings of desolation, her deep depression and desire for death now that she has reached a petrifying impasse: `Everything is ending and I am alone in the dark. There is no light left. I would rather do away with myself than carry on like this' (39]).[5] Her suicide attempt could bespeak her loneliness and despair as well as be a plea for attention and love.

[5] It is never established whether Helen's setting the house on fire was accidental or intentional.

Strangely enough, Helen herself has never really loved anyone nor had `any important trusts to betray' (32). This is because she has not opened, and still does not open herself to others. Marius Byleveld observes that the villagers `behave towards [her] in the way she apparently want[s] them to, which is to leave [her] completely alone'. It is *her* `manner which ... keeps them at a distance' (60); it is she who spurns their love `for the company of [the] cement monstrosities' (69) standing outside in her garden, and not they her. It is *her* lifestyle that is `unnatural' and `grotesque' (70).

In epitome, Miss Helen is a character who is unable to balance life-enriching solitude with life-affirming relations. For her it is either the one or the other. Before her husband's death she suspended her self-awareness by merging with Afrikaner society (Durbach 1987:5), and afterwards, she has imposed isolation on herself as she has turned her back on her `staunch Calvinist surroundings' (Seidenspinner 1986:153) and stopped `being the meek, church-going little widow ... all expected her to be...' and has `dared to be different' (66). Released from the constraints marriage imposed on her, she was not going to be restricted by the straitening values of either the church, the *dominee* or the villagers. She has rejected this enslavement and emancipated herself through art. Colleen Angove (1987:84) deems art an egocentric occupation - perhaps because the artist depends on `fantasies born of the imagination' (1987:81) in order to create. Now Miss Helen still exists for her art and herself alone, Elsa being only a means to an end, an instrument of inspiration. In Heideggerian terms, she does not recognise that *Dasein* (`an "I" characterised by "mineness"' [Grimsley 1967:50]) is found in *Mitsein*, that is, in the `midst of other existents' (1967:47) - that *Dasein* and the non-*Dasein* (the world) are inseparable, in constant interaction, being two interdependent aspects of a single structure. This structure is `being-in-the-world' (1967:50) which Heidegger believed to be a `basic state of *Dasein*' (1963:86).

As for self-realisation in the world, Sartre states in *Existentialism* that `I reach my own self in the presence of others' and `in order to get any truth about myself, I must have contact with another person' as `the other is indispensable to my own

existence, as well as to my knowledge about myself. This being so, in discovering the other person I discover my inner being at the same time' (1947:44) as well as my potential for transforming myself.[6] It is Martin Buber's opinion that `I become a self with other selves and am confirmed in my uniqueness through being made present by others in dialogue' (Friedman 1964:542-3). In summary, reaching out to others is rewarded with insight into the essence of one's own existence (Heller 1993:477).

Miss Helen is presented as not interacting spontaneously and selflessly or engaging in dialogue with others, having lost the mode in which a living `I-Thou' relationship or interhuman sociality is effected. Instead of inducing openness of being, Miss Helen's language is chatter, the utterance of the everyday world, which by its verbosity endeavours, in Grimsley's words, to obscure *Dasein*'s abandonment, and blocks the way to an understanding of being (1967:56). That the old woman refrains from genuine communication, or, as Elsa puts it, that she does not drop her defences and lay herself wide open (31), is demonstrated by her disinclination to discuss the letter she has written and to listen to what her friend has to say (although this could also be due to prolonged isolation and desperation). Hers is monologue disguised as dialogue. She does not address Elsa's `thou' and the topics of her conversation are mostly herself, her isolation, her desperation, and, finally, her art.[7] Since `the movement of communication is at one and the same time the preservation of, and the search for, the truth'

[6] Other existentialists confirm the centrality of these concepts. Buber remarks that `the inmost growth of the self is not accomplished ... in man's relation to himself, but in the relation between the one and the other, between men ... (1965:71). Karl Jaspers's contribution to this subject is: `The process of realising [my]self does not develop in isolated *Existenz* but only in communication with the others ...' (in Friedman 1964:204).

[7] Elsa is only an audience to this drama, as she is precluded from acting in it. Nevertheless, she still does her level best to get Miss Helen to take her gaze away from herself and towards others. For instance, she mentions the destitute black woman on her way to Cradock and inquires about the people of New Bethesda (`What's been happening in the village? Give me the news' [22] and `Tell me about Katrina. What has she been up to?' [23]). She keeps on challenging the older woman (Miss Helen declares at the end of the evening that her friend has been `challenge' [78]).

(Jaspers 1957:79-80), the origin of the truth being communication (1950:48), the truth is not disclosed until late in the play when the artist finally bares her true self.

Fugard's Helen is not in touch with her inner self on account of her confusing the human being with the artist. She conceives of herself after the `fashion of the objects' (Grimsley 1967:54) by which she surrounds herself. She takes it that she and her house and garden are one, that they are the real Helen (34), mirroring her very soul:

> This is the best of me, Elsa. This is what I really am. Forget everything else. Nothing, not even my name or my face, is me a much as those Wise Men and their camels travelling to the East, or the light and glitter of this room.... all of them are *me*. (35)

Bugental holds that neurotic individuals have the idea that they are their attainments, their surroundings, anything but themselves (1976:14). Without her wonderland of objects the protagonist of *The Road to Mecca* considers herself `a useless old woman getting on everybody's nerves ...' (35). As having a candle (the symbol of light) was her only reason for growing up, her cathedral of candle-light and glass is now the `only reason' (35) for being alive. When she is no longer able to produce images for a `fantastically reconstituted paradise in the midst of wilderness, destitution, loneliness and spiritual distress' (Durbach 1987:3), she will probably fall victim to an inner] drought and darkness which will ultimately destroy her life: `If my Mecca is finished, Elsa, then so is my life' (40).

It is obvious that external objects console the character and give her courage, and now that she cannot fashion them any longer, Elsa has to take over this role. But human beings cannot be manipulated as light can and courage has to come from within.

Devotion to transitory diversions and things at the expense of the existential identity is, in Heideggerian terms, the `everyday', `fallen' mode (Yalom 1980:359). Heidegger also maintains that to exist `in the world' is not to be solely related to objects; it is to be related to others as well (in Grimsley

1967:50). This is because `without the objects of the world, existential communication has no means to become visible; without communication the objects of the world become pointless and empty (Jaspers in Friedman 1964:204). And Miss Helen does indeed become deeply depressed when she does not have Elsa with whom to share the joy derived from beholding the fruit of her artistic efforts. She becomes suicidal when her creative muse forsakes her. The centre of her life disintegrates and she comes face to face with nothingness and non-being:

> But the worst thing of all ... suppose that I'm waiting for nothing, that there won't be any more pictures inside ever again, that this time I *have* reached the end? Oh God, no! (37)

This is not the first time that Miss Helen's `inside' (as she calls it) is a vacuum. During the years that she was married, her existence was also devoid of direction and she did not really have a reason for being; it was solely habit that kept her and her Stefanus together. The same is true for tradition and, in particular, religion. As she unbosoms herself to Marius, the spokesperson for the establishment: `your sermons, the prayers, the hymns, they had all become just words. And there came a time when even they lost their meaning' (70). She has experienced what many existentialists believe to be endemic in the twentieth century: the sense that God, in the traditional form, is absent from the universe and that faith and the church are without vitality and power (Bedford 1972: 251, 254, 270). After Stefanus passed away, `nothing hurt any more' (71) because Miss Helen herself had died long before. The `black widowhood' (71) apparel she wore was to mourn for the `beautiful, light-filled, glittering life' (69) she could have had, had she had the courage to resist the prohibitions imposed by her society upon individual thought and artistic freedom and realized her potential. She felt guilty and made use of the opportunity to change. Like Eugène Marais, another artist about whom Fugard has written, she countermanded cultural and communal bondage and the constraints of conventional Christianity (Durbach 1987:6). She became a kind of `religious visionary' (Williams quoted in Angove 1987:84), her creative imagination enabling her to move beyond her geographic, concrete location. She embarked on her own pilgrimage in pursuit of a `mystical vision' of a different kind of truth, the truth of personal fulfilment (Angove

1987:79). Through her art she was spirited away from the Afrikaner cottage and `the restraints and darkness of New Bethesda' to a mythical and abstract landscape and right `into the centre of the temple in the heart of Mecca' (Wertheim 1986:24). Having reached this alternative Eden during `moments of spiritual freedom' (Seidenspinner 1986:241), her life meanings became both creative and self-actualising (Frankl's terminology) as she discovered forces within herself, explored her artistic talent and developed her inner vision. The satisfaction she attained in this way could not be parallelled by the stability and security the church supposedly provides (Angove 1987:80).

On the negative side, since self-expression and self-actualisation focus only on the self, the formation of mutual relationships is foiled. In this way Frankl's genuine meaning, as found in self-transcendent goals, is thwarted (Yalom 1980:439-40). Martin Buber summarises it as follows: `There is a sterile kind of heart searching which leads to nothing but self-torture, despair ...' (1958:135).

When the `pictures' (36) cease to enter the non-conformist individual's consciousness, she has more leisure than she can cope with and is shown to fall prey to an anguish and despair that threaten to eradicate the courage that once was hers. No longer can she escape the ennui of everyday existence and her `annihilating, narrow-minded neighbourhood' (Seidenspinner 1986:241) by playing like a child with her `magical toy' (72) of light and colour. Now she is not only estranged from her subjective centre, but also despairs at her being an `abandoned and isolated possibility in a finite existence' (Grimsley 1967:66).

According to existentialists, despair compels the individual to consider his/her Being-in-the-world; it changes the perspective and guides the individual to inner awareness. Kierkegaard postulates in *Either/Or* that `every man who has not tasted the bitterness of despair has missed the significance of life, however beautiful and joyous his life might be' (1959:175). Despair, in the second instance, lays a `burden of responsibility' (Grimsley 1967:26) upon the individual for what s/he did and felt and thought yesterday and what s/he will do and feel and think tomorrow. In *The Road to Mecca* a character is dramatised who does not deny that she is in despair, but who comes to comprehend that by every act

she performs, she alters her own self, feelings, failures and suffering, and that it is within her power to rise above determinism and fashion her destiny.

At first there is a tentative: `I'm quite capable of looking after myself' (40) which is followed by `I can do anything I want to, Elsie ... if I make the effort' (41). Initially qualifying her ability with words and phrases such as `quite' and `if I make the effort', the sculptress eventually announces, expressing herself with an emotional intensity and authority which force the others to listen to her in silence (45): `I can manage by myself' (45); `I've worked out a plan' (58). In spite of what everybody thinks, Miss Helen is confident that she is not mad because she can tell the `difference between what is real and what is not' (73). And regardless of the pressure exercised - the blackmail and the mental battering (as Elsa would have it) - she makes the courageous decision not to sign the form which will reduce her little Mecca - a fantasy of light, glass and mirrors, and the lasting reminder of her journey to the real Mecca - to a `few ornaments in a small room in an old-age home' (73) and herself to a shell of the person she is now. Fighting for her vision and committing an act of defiance in the process, she wins the battle for the seat of her subversive art which is her home. The darkness of her depression lifts and she emerges as a beautiful and radiant, powerful and triumphant creature. Her extraordinary being and vision of brilliance and beauty mesmerise and unite the feuding Elsa and Marius (Durbach 1987:7). The pastor cannot help observing that he has never seen Miss Helen as happy as this, that there is `more light in [her] than in all [her] candles put together' (74).

Now that Miss Helen's existence has been validated, she can afford to be less self-absorbed. She has shed enough tears for herself; now she will cry for others (77). These others are also allowed to participate in her pleasure. Elsa is told to light all the candles in the cottage, so that the artist can reveal to Marius what she learnt the night she became an apprentice and joined the Wise Men of the East in a study of `the celestial geometry of light and colour' (72). Elsa is later instructed to blow these same candles out. In this way Miss Helen is accommodated to the `darkness of mundane experience' (Durbach 1987:18). Elsa's laughter when her friend mistakes Valiums for artificial sweeteners, makes the artist as proud of herself `as any one of [the] statues out there' (79).

The sculptress has grown a great deal in one night. She has changed from being a diffident, self-effacing old woman at the beginning of the play, who has pleaded with her friend for assistance, into a self-assured person who knows that she is loved, who confronts her problems squarely and asserts herself as an autonomous, unique individual. Whereas Elsa has been the more active partner, the physically weak Helen is actually spiritually stronger (Heller 1993:476). At the end she takes the lead and adjures the younger woman to stop screaming and express her emotions through tears. When the latter does cry, Miss Helen comforts her in a motherly fashion (1993:476). She also contradicts Elsa when she corrects her words, `I'm dead, Helen, dead, dead, dead ...' (78) with `No, you're not. You're tired ...' (78).

A lesson that Fugard has the character learn is that responsibility is towards herself. Another lesson that goes hand in hand with the first one is that honesty is an essential ingredient of a true friendship. The truth, then, is what makes the interior defences separating the two women crumble. The artist, evasive at first, promises her friend: `I won't lie to you' (78). She subsequently owns up to her insecurity and fear (`I'm frightened, Elsie, more frightened than that little girl ever was ...' [46]) as well as her struggle with senselessness, now that the radiance has faded and darkness is encroaching upon her soul and everything is ending.[8] This confession brings in its train Elsa's trust, another battle which Miss Helen wins.

Thus, the cliché that even the darkest cloud has a silver lining applies. Miss Helen also acquires the knowledge that the road to her visionary Mecca, the wonderland of artistic accomplishment as well as her defence against wilderness, destitution, loneliness, spiritual distress and darkness (Durbach 1987:3), was a road she had to travel alone - no one could keep her company. Now that it is over, there is only herself at the end of it (78). Fugard's celebration

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[8] However, Durbach hypothesises that to banish darkness is to banish despair - and also reality; it is to move into the `fantasies of the insane where illusion insulates the dreamer against the world' (1987:11).

of the solitary independence of the artist (Seidenspinner 1986:284-5) arrives at the insight that every person is ultimately alone. Yet she would not have it any other way. Her creative activity has given her much pleasure and her existence has had significance, even if it was only for a time. Now that the candle of her creative power has burnt out and she is at the end of her spiritual road (`The journey is over now. This is as far as I can go' [73]), she grasps that she must confront another darkness - the darkness of the soul - as well as discover a new motive for living: `Just as I taught myself how to light candles, and what that means, I must teach myself now how to blow them out ... and what that means' (78).[9] She has to explore other spheres of her personality, embark on a new spiritual quest, one on which `there is only me ... at the end of it' (78), the person and not the artist. Her blowing out the candles is symbolic of her acceptance of, her accommodating herself to, an inescapable reality which comprises the completion of her Mecca (the *Ding an Sich*[10]) and the renunciation of the consoling hope of her `life-lie' (the fact or fiction on which existence is founded). Thus, she wins her lifelong battle against darkness, the darkness outside as well as the darkness within: the absence of artistic vision and courage. She heroically accepts the fate that she cannot change and finds meaning in resignation.

Whereas Miss Helen is resigned to her lot, Fugard's Elsa is impatient and irritable. Shortly after her arrival, after having spent several hours in absolute solitude while driving from Cape Town to New Bethesda, she brusquely charges Helen to stop fussing (16) and to leave her alone (17). Here is an individual who is independent of others to such an extent that she turns down their assistance (1980:152) with aggression.

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[9] Fugard referred to this metaphor in his graduation address at the University of the Witwatersrand where he received an honourary degree: `what Miss Helen realises ... is that to be a true master you have got to know not only how to light them [the candles], but also how to blow them out.... the affirmation in my play is Miss Helen's recognition and acceptance of that necessity' (1992:77).

[10] *Ding an Sich* translates as `the thing in itself'. Wertheim (1986:21) uses it as a synonym for the artistic ideal.

The reason why the English teacher returns time and again to the little village in the midst of the `God-deserted wilderness of the Karoo' (Durbach 1987:3) - `where everything has been all but damned out of existence' (21) - is because she will not meet with censure from the artist should she reveal who she really is, or, as she puts it, have `her stockings down' (18). She compliments Miss Helen on `the rare distinction of being the only person who can make me make a fool of myself ... and enjoy it' (18). From this it follows that Elsa relishes the moments when she can freely express her inner emotions.(68).

Elsa is committed to communicating; words are important to the language teacher. For instance, she has given her class the homework exercise of composing a five hundred-word letter to the State President. When there is no point in talking about a matter, she articulates her despondency in an audible way as well - by screaming. Karl Jaspers, in his essay entitled `Communication', theorises that communication is a prerequisite for the evolvement of the inner being and reason, since the `process of realizing oneself does not develop in isolated *Existenz* but only in communication with the others.... I become myself only in communication' (in Friedman 1964:204, 203).

From the letter to the State President on the subject of racial inequality Elsa has instructed her class to write, it appears that she, unlike Miss Helen, occupies herself with the future. Fugard has endowed her with a strong social conscience and she wonders what is going to happen to her country. She would be grateful if not only her pupils, but also her friend and the other inhabitants of New Bethesda - which could be regarded as the `spiritual landscape of the Afrikaner' (Angove 1987:82) - were to share her concerns about a changing South Africa. As she warns Miss Helen: the valley `can't cut itself off from the twentieth century for ever.... Your little world is not as safe as you would like to believe ...' (25). Although the conservative villagers would like their world to remain as it was in the past, and resent any disruption of their routine, Elsa understands that not adapting to a changed political climate (Durbach 1987:5), that is, freezing themselves in time, will have catastrophic effects. It seems that Fugard's teacher grasps the idea that `human existence is not a static entity but an active

principle, which is ever in movement from state to state' (Grimsley 1967:31).

Existentialist philosophers, such as Sören Kierkegaard, designate the crowd as the `untruth' (Grimsley 1967:34): it is unreliable and constantly shifts its position. The parents of the children Elsa teaches as well as the school board may be compared to the crowd which `distrust[s] anyone who with a free lifestyle and original ideas' (Heller 1993:476). These people oppress the liberal-minded teacher with the demand that she conform. Yet Elsa, with her radical ideas, resists the complacency that the general collective offers to those who avoid answering to the genuineness and uniqueness of their respective existences (Buber 1965:108). Instead, she takes a stand against collectivism, conformity and rigidity.

The assertive Elsa is clearly a rebel. Her role and that of Miss Helen seem to epitomise Camus's words: `only two possible worlds can exist for the human mind, the sacrosanct (or, to speak in Christian terms, the world of Grace) or the rebel world' (1971:26-7). Her purpose in life is to incite those who share her environment to engagement and even to insurrection. As long as she is on the earth and in the classroom, `a little subversion is possible' (28). As Elsa informs the sculptress: `Rebellion starts, Miss Helen, with just one man or woman standing up and saying, "No. Enough!" Albert Camus. French writer' (28).

The same French writer holds that the rebel is also a blasphemer (1971:30). The reader does not need the admonishment of the pastor, Marius Byleveld, in order to discern that phrases and interjections such as `For God's sake' (17, 22), `Oh my God' (62), `God, what a joke' (64), `God Almighty, what a day!' (64) uttered by Elsa are indicative of irreverence.

The rebel furthermore is a person who is `determined on creating a human situation where all the answers are human, or, rather, formulated in terms of reason' (Camus 1971:26), reason granting salvation from nihilism (Jaspers 1950:46). S/he is a humanist. (Christian) religion, by contrast, cannot be probed by rational understanding or contained within the limits of intellectual concepts (Grimsley 1967:36). For one, it is impossible to prove God's existence by

reason. The approach to God must be through faith, and this is a faith which flies in the face of all logic. Elsa's blasphemy betrays that she subscribes to Sartre's concept that the person alone is the creator and the law-maker; the latter is `the being whose project is to be god' (quoted in Yalom 1980:221) over a contingent and cruel universe (Yalom 1980:220) deprived of the guidance of an omnipotent and just force (1980:113).

Elsa, indeed, has a strong sense of justice. She declares that Katrina, the seventeen-year-old `Coloured' girl who visits Miss Helen from time to time, does have rights. Katrina has made an erroneous decision in marrying Koos Malgas, but as it was her choice, she can remake it. The teacher's ideal of self-sufficiency and freedom demands that the girl find `somebody who will value her as a human being and take care of her and the child' (22), instead of staying with her husband (as Miss Helen says she should) who subjects her to battery.[11] In Elsa's opinion, `there is nothing sacred about a marriage that abuses the woman' (22). In fact, by making a `subjective choice which has unconditioned validity for [her ...] own existence' (Grimsley 1967:33) and by confronting her destiny (Durbach 1987:4), Katrina can consolidate her individuality. That she does not do so, Cohen assumes is largely the point of the play but she can (1977:76).

So the position Fugard has Elsa take is that the girl is not to cling to the known by remaining a victim of existing power relations between men and women, but that she should advance into the unknown. This notion suggests that the teacher exemplifies the first principle of existentialism, which is that individuals are nothing else but what they make of themselves (Sartre 1948:28). Elsa, thus, deems every person to have the freedom to influence her situation; hence the person is accountable for her own choices, actions and ultimately the reality of her own life. Full responsibility for the existence rests on the person, and as Katrina should be allowed to make her own decisions, so the `Coloured' community of New Bethesda should not have theirs made for them by the white

[11] Koos Malgas, in real life, was the man who sculpted the statues in the garden at Helen Martins's prompting. Fugard excludes Miss Helen's `Coloured' worker not only from the artistic process but also from the text, referring to Malgas only as a wife batterer. This begs a few political questions.

minority.

On account of this conviction of hers, Elsa prods Miss Helen to stand on her own feet and fight for her rights. When Miss Helen beseeches the younger woman to speak on her behalf to the pastor on the subject of the old-age home,[12] Elsa retorts by asking her what *she* is going to do when he arrives (48). When the sculptress feels herself on the verge of capitulating to the will of the church and calls out: `Why don't you stop me, Elsa! I'm going to sign it' (61) (the application form for the Sunshine Home for the Aged), Elsa's advice is to hurry up and `dispose of [her] life so that [she, Elsa, and Marius] can get on with [theirs]' (61). She also demands of Miss Helen: `Why were you "crying out to me in the dark"? To be an audience when you signed away your life?' (61). When Miss Helen begs her friend one last time not to abandon her, the latter retorts, `You've abandoned yourself, Helen! You were the first to jump overboard ...' (64), so reminding her of her responsibility to her future.[13] Besides these rather brutal remarks, Elsa also informs the old woman in other, gentler ways that she does have options. She can at least say no, whereas others do not have that privilege. However, it is not Elsa's place to do this for her because Miss Helen herself is aware of what is best for herself (62).

One of the people who do not have the opportunity to say no is Patience, a young, homeless, black hitchhiker whom Elsa has given a lift en route to New Bethesda. Having lost her husband and being herself considered of no economic use and expendable (Bowker 1990:8) by the white `baas', her husband's employer, Patience has been forced to leave the farm on which he worked (Durbach 1987:3). The lot of this - possibly - `most exploited victim' of the South African situation (in the opinion of Bowker [1990:8]) has touched Elsa deeply, and she has given her some money. Yet she is aware of the fact that

[12] One could also debate that fashioning objects with her hands is Miss Helen's way of expressing herself whereas Elsa makes use of words. It is possible that the artist takes words to be meaningless, for at one stage she compares them to cold, little stones (70).

[13] Errol Durbach (1987:14) submits that it may be advisable at times for the existential idealist to wear the mask of cruel detachment.

what she has done for the woman will not alter her fate (`It wasn't a real contribution to her life and what she is up against' [22]), and this thought has been troubling Elsa. One may infer that Elsa has empathy with others, to the extent of entering their world and experiencing it (this certainly would explain her irritability). If one were to employ Ericson's classification, one may perceive the character of the teacher to be in the `generative state': her concerns are social, altruistic, philosophical and long term (Yalom 1980:440-1). She is interested in the welfare of all people, even those who do not serve a purpose for her, such as Patience and Katrina. She does not see others as sources of supply, but attends to them in a `need-less fashion' without expecting any reward. In other words, she involves herself with the `thou' of people (Yalom's phrase 1980:365), feeling, as Sartre puts it, that `the original relation of the Other and my consciousness is not the *you* and *me*; it is the *we* ...' (1958:246), with the `we' including the `thou' and neither one superior to the other. That Elsa is cognisant of the importance of love and the fact that it is not an exhaustible commodity is clear from her utterings: `That's the big [word] all right, and it's quite an event when it comes along' (31), and `I can see myself loving somebody else again' (31) (here pertaining to another man).

Elsa's sense of authorship, unlike that of the white inhabitants of New Bethesda and Cape Town, is not impaired by the crowd's convictions. As long as she is in this world she behaves as though she holds herself accountable for the activities of the human race in general. For this reason, she actively engages in the universe even if this distresses her.

Besides requesting her class to correspond with the State President and giving Patience a lift as well as some money, other examples of Elsa's social engagement are that she sends clothes for Katrina's baby, so that the child looks `as prettily dressed these days as any white baby' (22). She also plans on asking Gertruida, a neighbour of Miss Helen's, to take Helen to Graaff-Reinet, 54 kilometres south of New Bethesda, for a medical examination.

Someone who takes responsibility for others does not avoid accepting authorship for her own actions. Elsa gives the credit for this to Miss Helen who

challenges her `into an awareness of [her]self and [her] life, of [her] responsibilities to both that [she] never had until [she] met her' (66). It follows that Elsa has a firm sense of self: she is dramatised as being conscious of her own emotions and aspirations, and is capable of rational conduct (she makes the decision to terminate her affair with a married man). She does not doubt that she creates her own feelings and failures; everything, including her broken heart, is the product of her own decisions and actions;[14] she is no `innocent victim' of circumstances beyond her control. Neither does she transfer blame to other people. She remarks that she must not make David sound `like a complete bastard. He wasn't without a conscience' (30). Instead she chants an admission of guilt: `ding-dong, wrong-wrong, tolls Elsa's bell at the close of the day!' [30]). Someone who admits that she is the mistress of her own destiny is a person capable of change.

Accepting authorship may be accompanied by regret for wrongful doings, with aggression being the consequence of culpability (Yalom 1980:277, 320). Elsa's temper flares up on several occasions in the play as she attempts to displace her anger and grief to Miss Helen. Later, when she confesses to the cause of her exasperation, she adds that the illicit relationship has left her `with a profound sense of shame. [Of] myself' (29). She does not lie to herself about her liability, even if this means she is racked by remorse. She has learnt her lesson from a situation `rotten with lies and deceit' (29). In retrospect she refers to the affair as a `stupid mess' (29) and remembers that `before it all went wrong, there were a couple of times when [she] wasn't so sure [she] liked it' because she `knew that [they] were all going to get hurt ...' (30).

Elsa has insight not only into her own relationships, but also into Miss Helen's. She understands that Marius and the villagers do not think of her friend as a `harmless old lady' (65) and of the statues surrounding her decorated house as an innocent hobby. These statues not only proclaim their creator's individualism,

[14] However, there is one instance when Elsa intimates that it appears that people, including herself, do not have much choice in the matter of falling in love. This may once again be ascribed to Fugard's flair for characterisation: human beings change their minds and contradict themselves.

but are also seen as pagan and monstrous. Miss Helen's narrow-minded neighbours are both frightened by and jealous of her `beautiful, light-filled, glittering life' (69) which, in Elsa's opinion, is an expression of freedom (67) and indicative of her friend's having found meaning.

However, it is also possible to put a different construction on the character of Elsa Barlow as depicted by the dramatist. For one, she is faulted by the pastor for using Miss Helen to prove `some lunatic notion about freedom' (69). This censure is perhaps supported by Elsa's own testimony: `One dusty afternoon five years ago ... I met the first truly free spirit I have ever known'. According to the teacher, Miss Helen is not someone who talks about freedom; `she's lived it' (67). The `little wizard' (32), through her subversive and dissident, if not heretical vision of an `unchristian' Mecca and her spiritual revolution, has embraced a freedom that is even lonelier and more desolate than the `arid heartland of South Africa' (Fugard 1993:386) (the Karoo) - the freedom of thought and creativity - and has become to Elsa the embodiment of an artistic ideal. Her pursuit of her art is interpreted as the affirmation of `the vitality of Elsa's vision of the liberated woman' (Durbach 1987:12).[15] The artist, contrary to this view held of her, avers that she only obeys the promptings of some inner drive. And whereas Elsa describes Miss Helen's existence as `beautiful, light-filled and glittering' (69) and emphatically believes that the latter does not belong in a home for people who have come to the end of their lives, Miss Helen reckons that her life is at an end and she actually ponders terminating it herself. When she returns the application form to Reverend Byleveld without having signed it, Elsa looks upon this act as Miss Helen affirming her right as a woman (74), that is, she has broken a lance for womankind, and not for herself.

Elsa, thus, treads the stage imposing the demands of her own conception of

[15] The innocent interchange between the two women about one of the statues gains a whole new meaning seen from this perspective. To Elsa the half-cock, half-man creature is on the point of dropping his trousers. Miss Helen disagrees: `And I've told you before. He's not dropping his trousers, he's pulling them up' (36). Yet Elsa remains unconvinced: `Take another good look at his face. That's anticipation, not satisfaction' (36).

freedom upon others (Durbach 1987:14). Her liberal feminism and her view of the free woman make such extraordinarily difficult existential exigencies upon her friend, who, to her, is the paradigm of the ideal of freedom, that `freedom' itself becomes a burden (1987:14). The character allows no compromise, and human fallibility is construed as betrayal.

Despite Elsa's insistence on independent action, she herself has not been able to sustain the drive towards freedom. When she and David were still together she supposed herself to have discovered `the reason for being the person, the woman, [she was] for the first time in [her] life' (29). She found the fact that `another person could do so much to your life, to your sense of yourself' (29) disconcerting.

When the relationship foundered, she made the vow that she would never again trust anyone. Consequently, Elsa now holds herself in reserve. She informs Miss Helen that she has not `come up here to talk about [her]self' (27). There is to be no mutuality; the barriers of her own being will not be breached. Accordingly, Fugard has her eschew the singular first-person pronoun, especially in the subject position, and employ the second-person pronoun or, when she makes mention of herself, the plural first-person pronoun: `if you're going to make decisions which affect other people, you should find out what those people think' (25); and: `Let's face it, we've both still got a little girl hidden away in us somewhere' (18).

Even though Elsa has empathy with others, there are times that she does not wish to become immersed in others' troubles. She has not communicated with her friend in three months, even though she received one anguished letter after another from Miss Helen. She accepts the older woman's pat explanation for the burn scabs on her hands, though she cannot help noticing that `there seem to have been a lot of little accidents lately' (41). She is also only too ready to forget about the last letter (43). Elsa, finally, does not respond to Miss Helen's references to suicide, such as `I would rather do away with myself than carry on like this' (39), except to enjoin the latter to keep quiet (43) as she has `had it' and `it's too much for one day' (47). The solutions this character proposes to her

friend's problems are all practical and do not entail emotional involvement and exposure on her part. The sculptress is to see a doctor who is to prescribe a `little "regmaker"' (44) for her depression.

Though solicitous, Elsa also keeps her distance during the encounter with the black woman. This is noticeable when Miss Helen observes that her friend talks about Patience almost as if she does not care (22) and when Elsa confirms that her kindness was only `a sop to [her own] conscience and nothing more' (22). In her assistance she may well incline towards the homeless woman, but it is still her aid, and not herself, that she makes available. Her life does not open to another - as is the case in an existential relation (Buber 1947:170).

If Elsa holds herself in reserve during the first half of the drama, her exposing herself towards the end of it is incontestable. The dénouement takes place when she lays down the part of the strong and self-sufficient woman and owns up to her feelings of isolation, impotence and self-loathing.[16] Miss Helen is informed about the abortion, when Elsa put an `abrupt and violent end to the first real consequence [her] life has ever had' (75). The teacher further concedes that she envies the sculptress, because there is nobody who loves her as Marius loves Miss Helen; human connections are lacking in her existence. Durbach theorises that Elsa's character is delineated as `free, but abandoned - betrayed by life, by her lover, [even] by her own right as a woman to terminate her pregnancy' (1987:16). Moreover, she may have to share Patience's fate, a person with whom she strongly identifies and for whom there is no promise of a glittering Mecca (75), a heaven on earth, but just a plodding on `from nowhere to nowhere' (Durbach 1987:3) for the rest of her life. Yet the playwright has Patience have something which the other does not have. The black woman has found peace and she bears her lot with stoic resignation. In fact, Albert Wertheim (1986:24) imagines the black woman to be an allegorical figure of patience while Errol Durbach speculates that she is `the paradigm of woman's

[16] Wertheim thinks of Elsa as basically a weak woman. Her heart may be in the right place, but her habit of mind is to `wash away or to vomit up' the distasteful rather than deal with it (1986:20).

soul under the Afrikaner regime, incapable of resisting subjection' (1987:6). Patience's name brings to the rebellious Elsa's mind her own impatience with the South African government, Miss Helen's indecision and the charade of helplessness she puts on, along with the pastor's interference in the two women's relationship and in the affairs of his congregation.

The teacher eventually learns that nobody exists in a vacuum, and that women, in particular, are related. She establishes a figurative family with Patience (who is about her age) and Miss Helen (Durbach 1987:7), announcing that Patience's baby is hers and that `Patience is my sister, you are our mother' (77). Her `mother's' interest restores Elsa's trust in humankind and she implores Miss Helen to open her arms and catch her for she is going to jump (79); she is going to make the leap into complete commitment. The bond between the women has been tested, the test catalysed by Marius's harassment (Heller 1993:476) and although it has nearly been severed, it is stronger than ever after their reconciliation. `The last few lines of dialogue affirm the two women's love and trust in one another' (1993:4771). `To Fugard, it seems obvious that patient progress, love and trust are the non-violent elements that can effect change' in society (Wertheim 1986:25).

The function of the character of the Reverend Marius Byleveld of the Dutch Reformed Church in the play is, amongst others, to subject the relationship between the two women to trial (Heller 1993:474).

Marius Byleveld's first words are `Miss Helen! Alone in the dark?' (48). To the pastor, whose task it is to spread the light of Christianity to the conservative inhabitants of New Bethesda, Miss Helen's bizarre existence is a challenge. Ironically, though the minister is invested with great sympathy by the dramatist, the artist equates him with the repressive forces of darkness and death that stand in `opposition to her life, her art, her candlelit, illuminated vision of Mecca' (Wertheim 1986:22-3) - `the golden city, that other place, that extraordinary world we all want to reach' (Fugard 1993:386). He is, after all, the one who drew the curtains and closed the shutters (47) after having conducted her husband's funeral. And `all those years when [she] was working away, when it [statue after

statue] was taking shape, he was there as well ... Standing in the distance, watching and waiting' (46). With him around, there is an `odour of death' (71), as there was when she and he sat in the gloom and talked after her husband's funeral. Rejecting the vegetables he brings, which have been dug up from the darkness of the underground, Helen rejects Marius and what he represents for her.

Notwithstanding Miss Helen's view of Marius, the character may be read in another way. For one, the minister could be deemed the playwright's portrayal of an existential individual. He accepts responsibility for the fact that he gives meaning to life by his every act and decision (Coates in Bedford 1972:339). Although Marius Byleveld hoped that the harsh and forbidding Karoo village was going to be the place where he escaped from the `deep and very painful wounds in [his soul].... Wounds [he] thought would never heal' (53), that life had inflicted on him, it is here that he acquires the insight that the Almighty has ordained a coherent pattern to the universe. In this divine system suffering has significance: it has changed him for the better. Marius's `life-lie', if you like, is religious and he fulfils it by devoting himself to God, by living in harmony with and advancing the fullness and goodness of the creation on earth. This he does, for instance, when he works the soil and plants vegetables, such as potatoes, beets and radishes, in his garden.

On the whole Marius has a high purpose in life. According to Irvin Yalom (1980:460), those with a high purpose are usually conservative, idealistic, dedicated to a cause and involved in organised groups. There is no doubt that the pastor is conservative. He disapproves of Miss Helen's eccentric lifestyle. He is idealistic in believing he can `convert' her, being dedicated to the cause of spreading the Word of God and protecting people against themselves.[17] Then he is involved in an organised group, the church. The character has made the `leap into commitment', and is represented as rewarded by a sense of

[17] In essence, Marius and Elsa are two extremes. Elsa is rebellious, applauds Miss Helen's verve and emboldens the latter to act of her own accord. Thus, the artist has a character on either side of her - one the rebel, the other committed to the sacrosanct (to use Camus's classification).

meaningfulness (1980:481-2).

Marius - having discovered the significance of his existence - accepts without much difficulty that he is progressing into the future and nearing death. He has recently had his last will and testament revised and implores Miss Helen to do the same, since they are `at an age ... when anything can happen' (57). Psychologists posit that the perspective of one who considers death shifts from trivial matters to a higher mode of existence (Yalom 1980:31).

Consequently, the minister accepts authorship not only for himself, but also for Miss Helen and the `Coloureds' of the village (whom he views as the `white man's burden' as Durbach [1987:9] puts it). His mission in life is altruistic; it is his ambition to contribute to the development of his community. In his ardour, he is shown to use even his pulpit to impose his patriarchal discourse onto others in order to regulate their existences. He attempts to take charge of Miss Helen's life; it is `the sooner we decide, one way or the other, the better' (56), and not `the sooner you decide ...'. He also launches `into long monologues, giving [Miss Helen] very little time to respond to his scolding and cajoling' (Heller 1993:474). But in fairness, it is Marius's objective to have her spend the remainder of her days in comfort.

Unlike the sculptress, the pastor does not hide displeasing truths from others. He admits that he is frightened by what Miss Helen has done to herself now that `the humble potato has been crowded out by other things' (50), and that he is `bewildered and jealous' (69) since a handful of visits from a school teacher from the Cape Province count more to Helen than his friendship of twenty years. He also confesses that in the past he `had an actor's vanity' on the pulpit while listening to his `*Dominee*'s voice and its hoped for eloquence ...' (53).

On the other hand, there is the distinct possibility, again, of casting the character in another light - which further testifies to Fugard's ability to give human dimensions to the personae of his plays. The pastor, for one, allows himself to be led by appearances. By his own testimony he only began to feel uneasy about Miss Helen's `idle whim' (67) on the first Sunday she did not come to

church. As long as superficial, outward appearances are upheld, he lets himself be `lulled into a false sense of security as to the fundamental spiritual well-being' (Angove 1987:79) of his congregation. It is only after Miss Helen's house is visibly transformed into a `grotesque nightmare' from a Gothic tale that he makes an effort to rescue her from `heresy'.

Because of his attention to appearances, Marius Byleveld also wonders at how a white inhabitant of New Bethesda can be friends with `an `illiterate little Coloured girl and a stranger from a different world' (70), that is, people who are not from the same background, upbringing and race as she is.[18] Envious of her intimacy with Elsa, he treats Elsa as if she were an `ignorant and intrusive outsider who does not understand the Karoo' (Heller 1993:474) and the traditions of its people by constantly reminding her of her alien status. Angove (1987:82, 88) submits that this behaviour reveals the intractable Afrikaner's clinging to exclusivity - and consequent conformity. Yet, according to Marius, it is too late for him to change (52); he is too old to undertake the journey Miss Helen has travelled (73) and to commit the act of `cultural defection' (Durbach 1987:15) - as he sees it. He does not perceive that *Dasein* is not a substance which exists in a `passive "whatness"', but a `possibility' and a `project', continuously moving ahead of, outside itself, and directing itself upon the future to become what it truly is (Grimsley 1967:46).

The minister will not allow his nature to `"fall away" from conformity' (Durbach 1987:6) because he abhors freedom, as he himself professes. After fifteen years he still finds it mind-boggling that one of his parishioners could prefer the isolation of cement and glass to the company of her fellow-parishioners and God. The comparison of the concepts of `God', `Heaven' and `Hell' to inflexible, unaccommodating stones (70)[19] is beyond his ken. He `glories in the repressive

[18] Unlike Marius, Miss Helen is used to travelling to far-away places, if only in her imagination. This may be the rationale for her not looking upon people who are from the same country and who speak the same language as she does, as strangers.

[19] According to Elsa, the `small minds and small souls' (66) of New Bethesda throw stones at Miss Helen. `God', `Heaven' and `Hell' (70) could very well be

status quo and for [him] any act of enlightenment or freedom is a life threat' (Wertheim 1986:23). The character's rigidity is further reflected in the meticulousness with which he puts on his spectacles, opens his notebook and inquires into the details of Miss Helen's confirmation.

Perhaps the minister shudders at the thought of freedom because grasping it means foregoing the familiar security of the everyday world and being confronted with loneliness. Fugard's Marius has always longed for himself and Miss Helen to find `each other again and be together for what time was left to [them] in the same world' (74). But after the artist reveals her fulfilment to him, it dawns on him that he has lost her forever and that he will have to find a life to live by himself. Whether he will ultimately make a difference to his destiny, given his disposition, is doubtful. Nevertheless, by juxtaposing these two characters, the pastor and the artist, the playwright may intimate that the answers to South Africa's social problems, which are a product of conservative Afrikaner stubborn determination, might emerge `through marrying that very same Afrikaner stubbornness and tenacity to an inspired vision of freedom' (Wertheim 1986:18) as incarnated by Miss Helen Martin.

Yet, Miss Helen has not always been the embodiment of freedom. When she was married to Stefanus and when her imagination is devoid of images, she rejects the freedom of being the source of things and of accepting authorship for her choices and actions. Then society functions as an external locus of control and Miss Helen abides by its dictates.

When the candle of her creative power flares up again, Helen exists for her art alone. Her home and her garden become the centre of her universe and, in fact, who she is.

Miss Helen finally recognises that the human being is more important than the artist and that being in the world means to be related to objects as well as to others. Now she can brave darkness and discover a new motive for living.

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the `stones' they use.

Elsa is Helen's antithesis. Unlike her friend, Elsa strives against society's insistence to conform. She realises that the individual is the creator and lawgiver and that responsibility for the existence is incumbent on the individual. Elsa, like Miss Helen towards the end of the play, discerns that actualising the self goes hand in hand with loving others without need. In such an existential relation, mutuality is established and change becomes possible. And this, ultimately, is the case in *The Road to Mecca*.

PLAYLAND

Playland's opening performance was on 16 July 1992 at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg. This production by Mannie Manim was directed by the dramatist himself. John Kani played the role of Martinus Zoeloe and Sean Taylor that of Gideon le Roux, with Bill Flynn as the disembodied voice of `Barking Barney' Barkhuizen. The play was dedicated to the late Yvonne Bryceland.

Barry Ronge, as cited by Miles Holloway, calls the work a `landmark in the history of South African theatre' (1993:36). It is also the most significant work by the playwright in decades. Just as Fugard was `the dramatist who seemed to initiate and define the theatre of dissention in the "old" South Africa, *Playland* seems to define the path ahead' (quoted in Holloway 1993:36).

Holloway (1993:39) proposes that one may read the drama, with its notions of accountability, reckoning, judgement, confession, expiation, forgiveness and reconciliation, as a `symbolic statement of the moral and psychic condition of South Africa' during the transitional period. The frequency with which the *dramatis personae* refer to each other as `black man' and `white man' implies that they are meant to `represent the South African racial spectrum' (1993:39).

The white man is Gideon le Roux, who is an old soldier. During the period of his military service he was transformed, so to speak, into a `killing machine'. At one stage he had to dispose of the corpses of twenty-seven men shot in combat. An old woman, presumably the mother of one of the soldiers, watched while he was lifting the bodies onto a truck, and it suddenly struck him that what he was doing was a `terrible sin' (56).

In the year that he has been back home, nothing seems to have made sense to Gideon. He has come to the fun fair in the hope of forgetting for a while. Here he encounters the amusement park's night-watchman-*cum*-handyman, Martinus Zoeloe. To Gideon, the black Martinus represents Swapo and he harasses the

latter into granting him forgiveness. Martinus, however, has his own issues with which to contend. To him, Gideon `becomes' Andries Johannes de Lange, the white man who violated Martinus's fiancée and whom he subsequently stabbed to death.

Even though Martinus served a sentence before officially being pardoned, he feels that this is not atonement enough. His actual `crime' is having no compunction for what he has done. Indeed, when the judge inquired during the trial whether he had any remorse, he replied: `If I saw that white man tomorrow I would kill him again' (49). Because he cannot forgive, he cannot expect God to forgive him.

At the end of the play the two men listen to and accept each other's confessions. They then leave the stage together, determined to forget the past and grasp present and future opportunities.

In Miles Holloway's opinion, the sharp delineation and individuation of the two characters diminishes the effectiveness of the parable (1993:30). According to this critic, the characters, who come from a specific class and context, do not embody in any unambiguous way a specific political bias, thus militating against a `metaphoric or representative reading' (1993:39).[1] Andrew Foley agrees: `the intellectual aspect of the symbolic, metaphorical resonances is left to look after itself' (1994:68). My personal conviction, expressed in the words of Holloway, is that the `intermingling of the personal and the typical is (simply) a hallmark of Fugard's work inasmuch as his critique of society is usually obliquely, even tangentially, expressed through an exploration of individual anguish and struggle' (1993:39).

This may very well be the reason for the divided response of critics to the play.

[1] Even the rape of Martinus's betrothed does not necessarily depict `the enforced domination of the black majority by a white minority. The rape might simply be a gratuitous act', performed without political motive. The lust and passion with which De Lange dishonours the woman sustains this interpretation (Holloway 1993:39).

White reviewers were generally in favour *of Playland*, while blacks were more reserved and even negative. The literary academy attacked Fugard for not launching a direct attack on the anomalies in South African state policy.

Fugard wrote the drama, set at the turn of the decade, after the speech of F.W. de Klerk, given on 2 February 1990, in which the Prime Minister announced the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of dissident organisations (such as the A.N.C.) as well as the repeal of all apartheid legislation. In this interregnum, past prejudice was giving way to a more democratic order. Like the *dramatis personae* in the play, the audience - as a matter of fact, all South Africans - were expecting the dawn of a new epoch in the history of their country. Nonetheless, when the drama was staged in 1992, negotiations among the parties to the transition had broken down again.

The action of *Playland* spans the period from the sunset of 31 December 1989 to the sunrise of the New Year and decade. It takes place in the `escapist milieu' (Holloway 1993:38) of a small travelling amusement park on the outskirts of a town which is in the middle of the great pan of the Karoo. Holloway intimates that `the Karoo, geographically and as a literary motif, may be regarded as the heart of [the] country: it embodies the soul of the nation unclouded by the exigencies of metropolitan experience' (1993:38).

The play seems to start in *medias res* with a black man stomping on stage. Among the first words uttered by him are:

> I'll see all of you down there in Hell. That's right. All of you. In Hell! And when you wake up and see the big fires and you start crying and saying you sorry and asking forgiveness, then it's me who is laughing.... You tell lies and cheat and drink and make trouble with the little girls and you think God doesn't know? He knows! He sees everything you do.... (8-9)

This exclamation shows that Martinus believes that an omnipotent force is concerned with him, one that will judge individual actions.

As is the case in earlier plays (such as *The Road to Mecca* and *Statements after An Arrest under the Immorality Act*), Fugard presents God, through the eyes of his characters, as not absent from the universe, but as ruthless. He will commit those who sin against him to an eternal inferno: `suffering and agony non-stop' (33).

Martinus Zoeloe, in contrast to Playland's workers and its guests - at whom Barking Barney's `banal promotion of pleasure' (Holloway 1993:38) is levelled - has ostensibly extricated himself from trivialities. He has a solid sense of his own identity. When Gideon informs him, `You haven't got a name. You're just a number. One day I counted you twenty-seven times' (46) and then decides: `I'm calling you Swapo' (46), he rejoins with: `My name is Martinus Zoeloe.' (46)

Individuals who are mindful of their own identity do not repudiate responsibility for the consequences of their actions. Martinus does not deny culpability: `Andries Jacobus de Lange, the Deceased. I killed him.' (48) In addition, being Playland's watchman, he feels himself answerable not only for himself, but also for others. At the same time, he does not surrender himself to conscienceless collectivism (Foster 1982:220) (as the *skollies* and fun-fair-goers seem to do).

On one level, Martinus's guilt may be taken as normal.[2] The playwright has created a character who, upon killing another, understood that he injured, in Buber's words, `an order of the human world whose foundations he knows and recognises as those of his own existence and of all common human existence' (1965:127).

On another level, Martinus's guilt could be regarded as neurotic[3]. He remarks:

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[2] Normal or existential culpability is seen by Tillich as integral to existence (1952:49) as it constitutes a fundamental part of *Dasein* (Yalom 1980:277). It is also `universal in the sense that it characterises every human being in whom self-consciousness has developed' (May in Friedman 1964:449).

[3] Neurotic (or psychotic) guilt anxiety is inappropriate to a situation and may be attributed to an abnormal state of mind. It generally issues from either

`I know I have killed one man, but I have done it too many times. Every night when I sit here I wait again in that little room in the backyard' (58). Holloway maintains that the nature of the offence is also problematic. `Rape evokes opprobrium and sympathy' and Martinus's crime of passion and protectiveness could be interpreted as `constituting a justifiable homicide, which the audience can understand and condone.' (1993:39) Besides, Martinus has served a lengthy sentence for it. Yet, the handyman, in accordance with his literal, almost childlike, Biblical understanding, deems himself doomed:

> He (God) talked to me in a dream....
> `It's no good Martinus. I can see into your heart. I can see you are not sorry for what you did.' So I said `That's true God. I am not sorry.' And He said `Then I can't forgive and you must go to Hell.' (32)

Although Martinus, like Queeny and Helen, acknowledges his sin, he is engulfed by such rage and bitterness that he is unable to atone for and relinquish it. He asks himself: `What is it that makes a man feel sorry?' (54) When Gideon expresses contrition about the men he has killed (55), Martinus is (almost} envious because Gideon is not beyond salvation. Miles Holloway states that the entire encounter between the two *dramatis personae*, Martinus Zoeloe and Gideon le Roux, `rests upon the need for contrition and forgiveness' (1993:40), a need of which the black man, in particular, is acutely aware.

When Gideon orders Martinus to forgive or to kill him, Martinus is tempted to take the second option. Because if he pardons this white man, then he must also pardon the employer of his betrothed who had his way with her: `and if I forgive him, then I must ask God to forgive me ... and then what is left?' (58) His existence would lose its purpose. Besides, he knows `nothing' (58) about granting absolution: `My heart knows how to hate Andries Jacobus de Lange.

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remaining with oneself (Buber in Friedman 1964:224) - as the watchman does - or fraternising with *Das Man* (the collective consciousness of the crowd) (Boss quoted by May in Friedman 1964:449) - as Gideon does. In either case, the potential self is repressed and fullness of being is bypassed (Yalom 1980:147, 285).

That is all it can do' (58).

Martinus therefore isolates himself.[4] He watches the amusement park's visitors who 'come to play' because 'they all want to forget' (16) from a distance and drives those away who venture too close (often with verbal abuse). He apprises Gideon: 'The secrets in my heart got nothing to do with you. So go. There is nothing for you here. This is my place.' (36) Gideon can come back the next day:

> Your Playland is safe. Martinus will watch it for you. Martinus will watch all your toys and tomorrow you can come and play again.
> But now it is my time! Now night-watchman Martinus Zoeloe is in charge. (45)

When Gideon refuses to return to his 'own' (white) people, on the score that there are 'things to settle' (46) between him and Martinus, the latter is made to retort: 'There is nothing between you and me.... To hell with you' (46-7). He has finished with Gideon and Gideon is to get out of his way and leave him alone (47); because, if they 'make trouble for each other', then Martinus knows what will happen: he will kill a second white man. Thus, he will resort to violence should he be forced to go out and have contact with another.

Jaspers holds that 'there can be no man who is a man for himself alone, as a mere individual' and that *Existenz* can only come to itself through another *Existenz* (1957:77, 92). In other words, Martinus will not have a *raison d'être* if he chooses to exist as a self-contained creature who has to account to no-one but himself and God. Instead of confining his emotional environment - as his physical environment is restricted[5] - the character, in the words of Buber, will have to 'stand up to [others], concern [him]self with them, meet them in a real

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[4] Sören Kierkegaard hypothesises that it is fear of the good that causes certain individuals to 'shut themselves up in their solitariness and cling desperately to the evil which holds them fast' (Grimsley 1967:31). Little by little, they sink deeper into the swamp of their 'sin'.

[5] Although he has been touring for fifteen years with Playland, the company follows the same route and stops at the same spots every year.

way, that is, with the truth of [his] whole life' (1947:166).

The justification for this is that only in genuine, challenging dialogical relations[6] with others can one discover truth (communication is, after all, the form in which truth is revealed [Jaspers 1950:48]) and define the *Dasein* (Bedford 1972:257). Martin Buber rightly predicates that `all real living is meeting' (quoted in Friedman 1964:543).[7] So when Martinus condemns others to hell he dooms himself as well as `every destruction of the other is [his] own' (Jaspers 1957:91). The handyman's sentence is having to live in a shrunken world space, literally the `little room' (60) in which his life has stalled.

On the surface, the other major character in the play seems to be just the opposite of Martinus. Whereas Martinus is overtly distrustful of others, Gideon calls the watchman his friend (9) before even knowing his name, and introduces himself as his `old friend Corporal Gideon le Roux' (28). When he is apprised of Martinus's name, it is: `I want us to be buddies. Me and you. Gid and Marty' (28). In an attempt to humour the black man, Gideon also expresses admiration for him: `That's what I like to hear. Somebody who is not afraid to speak his mind' (9) and `That's a good one. I like it' (14). The aggrieved watchman is also urged to `speak up.... It's the only way to put an end to all the nonsense that is going on' (9).[8]

Although one of the premises on which existentialism rests is that, since others

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[6] An alliance between persons that has an element of inclusion to it is termed a dialogical relation by Buber (1947:97). Dialogue is the basic mode of the `I-Thou' relationship (Yalom 1980:366), a relationship which is typified by turning towards the other (Buber 1947:22) and engaging in `genuine conversation' (1947:97); that is, dialectically participating with and, virtually, *in* the other.

[7] Grimsley affirms that the self is `concerned' (1967:51).

[8] Shortly thereafter, Fugard has Gideon contradict himself when the ex-soldier advises Martinus to carry on with his job `and to hell with everything else' (10). Work has to function as a diversion or escape mechanism so that Playland's night-watchman will not ponder his problems.

are indispensable to personal definition (Bedford 1972:257) and all beings should go out `from their centredness to participate in other beings' (May 1961:78), if this participation and identification is taken too far, individual identity is sacrificed. Gideon was brought up to think of others, and, while doing military service in Namibia this instruction became propaganda: `First thing you learn up there in the bush. Don't ever desert a buddy' (30). Now, at home after the war, he has egged himself on: `Get out Gideon le Roux. Get among the people. Join in. Grab some fun. Look for romance!' (13), and at the amusement park he endeavours to establish communication with as many of the fun-fair goers as possible.[9] He tries `too hard to have a good time' (as revealed by the stage directions to scene 2 [25]). `He tells jokes, tries to sing alone with the music ..., creating an image of forced and discordant gaiety.' (25).[10] During all this, he is painfully aware of not fitting in, of not belonging. This induces him to metaphorically describe the amusement park's guests as a `fucking herd of Karoo Zombies grazing on candy floss' (35) and `a crowd of fat arses ... having joyrides in Playland' (35) and to proclaim that `any resemblance between [himself] and them is purely co-incidental' (35). Still later Gideon concedes that there were lies in his laughter (59). This, of course, distanced him even more from others.

It is feasible to infer from the above that Gideon does not really have in mind another's particular being, nor the intention of getting to know and establishing a mutual relation with another who is not part of himself,[11] but different `in the definite, unique way which is peculiar to him' (Buber 1965:79). Although he does not want to be alone, he has no propensity to participate in another's possibilities, transforming these instead into `dead-possibilities' (Sartre

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[9] However, as Jaspers (in Friedman 1964:203) and Yalom (1980:186) point out, if one suppresses one's separate identity, communication will be thwarted and no meaningful relationships will be found.

[10] Yalom (1980:452) postulates that frenetic activity forewarns one of the collapse or the imminent collapse of the false centre.

[11] Permitting the other to exist only as one's own experience is called `reflection' by Buber (1947:23).

1958:288). For instance, he is not `remotely interested' in the troubles of the neighbouring village, Noupoort. As far as he is concerned, `they can drop an atomic bomb on that dump' (20). The watchman's supposed political convictions are made out to be `all that one-man-one-vote-kak' (18) and his utterance regarding the fires of Eternal Damnation is treated in similar vein: `I suppose if you believe in that Bible stuff it could be, but speaking for myself ... [*Shakes his head*] ... no thank you.' (15) Gideon further expounds:

> [G]uess what, my friend ... there's no sign of your Heaven and Hell anywhere! Put that in your old Bantu pipe and smoke it. (19)

When Martinus insists that the Day of Judgment is coming, he is again scoffed at (`it happens to be fairy stories my friend, stupid fairy stories'), then to be requested:

> So if you don't mind, keep them to yourself please. This is supposed to be Playland, not Sunday School. I came here to have a little bit of fun.... (16)

Camus (1971:247) claims that where there is no free exchange of conversation, there can be no communication. Instead there is chatter or the `utterance of the everyday world', which, as Grimsley submits, `seeks to obscure the *Dasein*'s abandonment and blocks the way to an understanding of being' (1976:56).

It is apparent that Gideon has trouble entering into a `real relation of being to being' (Buber 1947:167) where there is no `you' and `me', but a `we' (Sartre 1958:246). It is safer to have his experiences as an `I'. This may very well be the reason for Martinus's reluctance to reveal anything about himself and, as Maree conjectures, his assumption of the black person's `traditional mode of resistance to white domination and intimidation' (1995:31): that of withdrawal and avoidance.

Meaning, however, is located in the `between' and *Dasein*'s potentiality for being `there' and whole lies in the acceptance, appreciation and confirmation of another, as Buber (1965:71) avers. Even though Martinus may be just as limited and conditioned as Gideon is, the two together may attain to the unlimited and

the unconditioned - meaning - as it appears to be the case at the end of the drama. For this reason, I disagree with Maree (1995:31) who avers that neither of the playwright's two protagonists can be the confessor of the other.

In the light of the view that truth, in the interhuman realm, presupposes establishing contact and communication with another and granting to the other a share in one's being (Buber 1965:77), Gideon's assertion that he is in possession of `the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth' (30) is ironic. Even though Martinus is instructed to `spill the beans' (34), he is originally not permitted to participate in Gideon's being in turn. When he learns that Gideon has committed `Number Six' (36) - murder - and that he will not be the only one to go to hell, the handyman is notified: `mind your own business, Martinus Zoeloe. The secrets in my heart have got nothing to do with you or anybody else' (36). Still later Martinus has to hear that there is `nothing' between him and the white man (53).[12]

Gideon's contention that he is aware of the truth is further ironic because, in order to protect himself, he deceives himself. For example, when he returns to the watchman after having tried `too hard to have a good time' (59), he mentions that he has forgotten all his troubles: `[his] sick Ma, [his] stupid job, the stupid bloody foreman at [his] stupid bloody job, [his] stupid bloody car that [he] already know[s] won't start when [he] want[s] to go home....' (29), whereas the list is testimony to the contrary.

These issues Fugard depicts Gideon as dealing with are but the symptoms of a more serious, underlying condition. The character has difficulty appreciating his liberty in an altered universe and coming to the realisation that he creates his own feelings and suffering; in short, he denies that his *Dasein* has to choose and realise itself without guidance.

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[12] An inquiry into his own being, however, will also not elicit the truth as it entails turning back on the self and exhausting the energy that could be spent on `the Thou' (Friedman 1964:519).

Because he is unable to face the implications of suddenly being absolutely answerable for his actions,[13] Gideon denies having decision-making ability. He apprises the watchman: `We've got no choices man' (58) (just to gainsay himself when he informs Martinus that the latter indeed has a choice [58]). Existentialists, in contrast, aver that `human reality can choose itself as it intends but is not able *not* to choose itself' (Sartre 1958:479) (italics mine), the ground for this being that `only in the moment of ... choosing and acting does one most truly exist' (Bugental 1976:43). Indeed, as Grimsley (1967:24) puts it, the medium of existence is personal decision. Thus, not to choose is not to be - and non-being is indeed the intention of Gideon le Roux who wants to go `round and round and up and down' until he can forget `who the bloody hell [he is]!' (29), or not be who he is (57), that is, he desires to be disoriented and dispossessed of his identity.[14] He defers the rather dubious decision to Martinus: `Forgive me or kill me. That's the only choice you've got' (58).

In the past, when he was in the army, Gideon could disown the `directness of personal decision' (Buber 1947:202) and the assumption of authorship for the actions of the group (Bedford 1972:277). Since he was under orders and subject to propaganda and religious sanction, *das Man* exercised a `tyranny over [his ...] outlook' (Grimsley 1967:51) and oppressed his *Dasein* until he surrendered and dispersed it in the fallen Being of `the Others' (as Heidegger [1963:164] would put it), or the nameless multitude. The soldier, at that time no more than an `impersonal entity which [was] "everybody" and "nobody"' (Grimsley 1967:51) with no volition of his own, was carried along by the conscienceless crowd, or the army authority, who made the judgments on which he relied and created the rules to which he conformed. Thus, the mainspring of his actions was outside himself and he existed in a `fallen state' (Buber in Yalom 1980:370), of collective amnesia or `forgetfulness of being' (Heidegger's terminology, in Yalom 1980:30)

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[13] Among the implications of accountability are exposure to existential groundlessness, isolation and dissolution.

[14] Ironically, it is here, at the fun fair, that an appeal will be made to his sense of individuality: `Gideon le Roux! I say your name. Please now, listen to me' (47).

in *Lord of the Flies* fashion (`The only thing going on inside you is a sort of wild feeling.' [55]). He became `a drab automaton, merely a cog in the wheels' (Bedford 1972:255) in this *medias res* existence of complicity (Foster 1982:220), committing atrocities against his fellowmen in the ruthless perpetuation of a policy of white supremacy.

However, as Bedford (1972:256) points out: there are no compelling external situations; nothing foreign can ever determine what we feel, who we are and how we live. In spite of our social situation, we are *not* morally impotent and it is still by our *own* agency that everything happens. We are, after all, as responsible for the `war' as if we ourselves declared it, because we had - and still have - the freedom to behave `like a fool or a machine, free to accept, free to refuse' to respond to social expectations (Sartre 1947:289).

After returning from the border, Gideon's alternative to the tragedy of war is to live casually, forgetful of being - in short, in bad faith. (Nevertheless, he claims that he is `not bosbefok[15] or anything like that' [12].) He eludes confronting his culpability and attributes his actions to the `Law of the Jungle! Kill or be killed ... and don't think about it.' (36) He even attempts to make light of the slaughter of the Swapo soldiers:

> "Twenty-seven Swapo cabbages in the garden Sir!" That's a joke. Didn't you get it? Swapo cabbages. I counted the dead men like my Pa use to count his fucking cabbages. So don't just stand there and stare at me like a bloody baboon. Laugh! (52)

Gideon, who is initially indisposed to confront the challenge of life, takes the attitude of a self who has to answer to no-one (Buber 1965:108) and does not seek forgiveness from those whom he has injured. Consequently, the call of his present being - `Where art thou?' - does not receive the reply: `Here am I' (Buber 1947:166), and Gideon is unable to answer for his existence and make the most of it.

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[15] `Bosbefok' is army slang for the emotional instability which could ensue from witnessing and committing atrocities in a war situation.

Like the *skollies* at whom Martinus yells at the beginning of the play, Gideon is portrayed as fascinated with certain finite experiences. Instead of coming to grips with his existential anguish, this war casualty tries to use the world - possibly symbolised by the fun fair - as a tool and absorb himself in its various transient diversions and tranquillisation, dissolving his *Dasein* into `the Others' in such a way that `the Others, as distinguishable and explicit, vanish more and more' and the dictatorship of the *Dasein* `of everydayness' becomes prominent (Heidegger's notion 1963:164). He even contemplates casual sex, that is, spontaneously responding to the desires and needs of the moment which then take precedence over moral and religious considerations (Grimsley 1967:20).

Even though Gideon le Roux is able to distinguish between right and wrong, he is at first averse to admitting spiritual values. Probably sensing that reason, as grounded in existence, is salvation from nihilism (Jaspers 1960:46),[16] he requires the answers to life's questions to be formulated in reasonable terms. He explains his philosophy to Martinus: `Real is what you can believe because you can touch it, and see it, and smell it ... with your eyes wide open.' (33) It is the ex-soldier's point of view that one does not need to wait for

> Judgement Day to find out what that word means. Hell is right here and now. I can take you to it. It's called the Operational Area. (35)

The devil is also real and `here and now' as `he wears a khaki uniform, he's got an AK47 in his hands.' (35) Thus, what *is* for Gideon must manifest itself within the temporarility of the world. (Christian existence, on the other hand, according to Grimsley, is an `absurd' paradox as it is not based on `objective certainty' and cannot be `probed by the understanding' or contained within the limits of intellectual concepts [1967:33, 37].) So when Martinus quotes the Sixth Commandment: `Thou shalt not kill', Gideon refutes both religious and personal

[16] Nonetheless, when reason is not supported by intuitive feeling, it may give rise to emotional detachment (Grimsley 1967:7). Like Fugard's Gideon, the individual will then not make a decision nor take action.

responsibility by rationalising his actions as follows:

> everybody knows there's times when you got to do it.
> What about self defence? Or protecting women and children?
> What about Defending Your country Against Communism? (17-8)

When the morose Martinus warns:

> You can try to forget as hard as like but it won't help, because all the things you did are written down in the Big Book, and when the day comes you will stand there and *He* will read them to you (16-7),

his reply is literal: `try to imagine just how big that book has got to be if what everybody is doing wrong down here is written in it.' (17)

Gideon then also hurls defiance at the values that could constitute a spiritual centre. He makes numerous derisive references to religion throughout the play. These include: `This is now the Big Baas himself we're talking about' (32) and `I'm gat-full of the Bible' (18). The disillusioned former soldier maintains that Martinus's problems come from `those black crows up there in the pulpit taking advantage of simple-minded people like [him]'. Martinus is exhorted to swear that his

> New Year's resolution for 1990 is ... No More Dominees! No More Sermons from the Dominees! No More Bible Stories from the Dominees! No More Bullshit from the Dominees! Hallelujah and Amen! (30-1)

and to `forget about Him (God) man. He's forgotten about us. It's me and you tonight. The whole world is me and you' (58).

The quotation above is evidence of Gideon's resistance to Martinus's insistence that putting others to death is Biblically proscribed. Gideon is a rebel. To him, there is no direct assistance from God and everything depends on people themselves who are responsible for fashioning their own fate during their finite existences. By inference, Gideon could contemplate that the black man - who

believes that God created the world and therefore remains passive to a certain extent - will also have to answer the existential question of what he has made of himself. `He who asks him is his judge, namely he himself, who, at the same time, stands against him.' (Tillich in Friedman 1952:58)

According to Yalom (1980:50), religious individuals do not dread dissolution as much as non-believers do. Agnostics are deemed forlorn, because, along with God, perceptual frameworks and systems of values which could give significance to existence disappear (1980:221). As Gideon expresses it, quoting the Bushman tracker of his unit: `When we die, we die. The wind blows away our footprints and that is the end of us' (18-19). There is no Judgement Day, neither is there a heaven and a hell.

To my mind Fugard's ex-soldier may be suffering from a sense of what Heidegger termed *Unheimlichkeit*[17], that is, he feels foreign in the world due to the exphemerality of existence. Gideon's first encounter with the distinctive possibility of *Dasein*'s finitude was when his father passed away: `The only dead person I had ever seen was my Pa when we all said goodbye to him in his coffin.' (51) Then, he found his and his father's pigeons lying around in pieces in their cage after a cat had sown destruction among them. He compares the end of these birds to that of the `fucking freedom fighters' (12), the Swapo soldiers whom he decimated while defending the border. During this time there was only one thought churning in his head: `You're alive Gid! Stay fucking alive' (55).[18] It is logical that the character should return from the Namibian frontier, terrified by the thought that he, too, will one day die.

Heidegger postulates that when *Dasein* perceives itself as the `possibility of no-

[17] `*Unheimlichkeit*' translates roughly as `unhomeliness' or `not being at home'.

[18] The arrival of the New Year is marked by a cacophony that `imperceptibly begins to suggest the sound of battle' (41), and that gets progressively more violent. Gideon, in his imagination, is back at the border, and, to remind himself of reality, reassures himself: `Easy Gid ... you're alive! ... easy does it ... you're alive ... it's over ... it's all over and you're alive ...' (41).

longer-being-there', it is liberated from its lostness in the `they' as well as the multiple possibilities which present themselves to it, such as taking things lightly and avoiding authorship. Heidegger further intimates that anxiety in the face of death is `anxiety "in the face of" that potentiality-for-Being which is one's ownmost possibility' (1963:294-5). *Dasein*'s uttermost possibility for existence, that is, for achieving fullness of being therefore lies in surrendering itself to the inevitable (1963:435). Gideon le Roux, however, does not appear to accept the inseparability of life and death (Bedford 1972:61), death being the very summit of life (Heidegger quoted in Friedman 1964:542). This could account for his not realising himself and drinking `life to the lees'.

Gideon's sense of *Unheimlichkeit* also indicates an existential vacuum of meaninglessness. (Meaninglessness is often concomitant with a dread of death.) The symptoms of this condition, as specified by Yalom (1980:449), are boredom, listlessness, cynicism, a lack of direction, questioning the point of one's activities, emptiness and an identity crisis (1980:449). Gideon undeniably finds life monotonous. He confides in Martinus:

> Hell, this year now really went slowly hey? I thought we'd never get here. Some days at work it was so bad I use to think my watch had stopped. (11)

This is because he has a `stupid job' and there is a `stupid bloody foreman at [his] stupid bloody job' (29). Without a religiously-based meaning system, Gideon furthermore is cynical about Martinus's convictions. That he lacks direction is disclosed by his words: `Believe me I tried, but I just couldn't get things going again' (11).

However, by identifying the problem, it is incontestable that the character suspects that there must be a meaning which gives meaning to all meanings. As Buber affirms: `in the darkness the light lies hidden, in fear salvation, and in the callousness of one's fellow-men the great Love' (1947:98). Gideon's approaching the watchman may thus be interpreted as an enterprise for light, for salvation and love.

Thus, Fugard has created a character who is, unwittingly perhaps, in search of a context in which he can encounter and experience existential guilt (May in Friedman 1964:445). In this context he will be able to recall and re-experience his past,[19] the past being a constituent of the present. Furthermore, since the past is neither fixed nor finite, it can be composed and reconstructed (Yalom 1980:348). Once the playwright permits Gideon to alter the significance of his memories, he will be able to confess, repent and beg forgiveness, so liberating himself from yesterday's captivity and unresolved guilt and consigning both to oblivion. Only then can he advance towards - and enter - a future that promises reconciliation. (This, of course, applies to other South Africans as well.)

Near the beginning of the drama Gideon has appealed to Martinus to let bygones be bygones (28).[20] He decides that now is the time to settle matters between them (46): `It's me and you tonight. The whole world is me and you. Here! Now!' (58) Hell also happens to be `right here and now' [35]), not on Judgement Day. Hell is having been to the border and surviving with shame. (Ironically, Martinus has remarked earlier that today was the `Day of Judgement' [14], the red and black colours in the sky suggesting to his mind the Fires of Eternal Damnation.) Notwithstanding Gideon's conviction, the past cannot simply be effaced; it must be accounted for - otherwise it will haunt one in the present and arrest future progress.

The disinclination to grasp the significance of the past, so conceiving of and establishing a basis for future existence, lies at the root of spiritual *malaise*

[19] Gideon prefers to remember only the pleasant parts of the past and to forget the rest as is notable from this recollection of the pigeons he shares with Martinus:

> I'm sitting up there on the Border one day - and this is now years later, remember - and I suddenly find myself thinking about them and how lekker it would be to start up again....
> From then on that was all I use to think about. (12)

[20] Existential beings, *per contra*, abide in a combination of all three the tenses (Bedford 1972:316).

(Eugene Minkowski quoted by May in Friedman 1964:450) and, in fact, moral despair. Despair brings the `vanity of all finite things' to mind (Grimsley 1967:26), and Gideon is disgusted with the `bloody world' in which `there's no respect left for nothing no more', only `nonsense' (9).

Not only does the character view the world with disfavour, but he also hates himself; `everything else is just pretending' (59). Yet he cannot act on his self-loathing, so he pushes the caretaker of Playland to the edge. When physical violence does not elicit the desired response, Gideon turns the other's life story into ridicule. He remarks that it is `a fucking joke', `a bad joke' (49) that the black man murdered Andries Jacobus de Lange just for `screwing [his] woman' (49). Not only does he dismiss the validity of motives for and underplay the severity of this offence (Maree 1995:31) in comparison with the homicides he, Gideon le Roux, has committed, but he also presents himself as all white men while Martinus becomes Swapo:

> If screwing your woman is such a big crime, then you and your brothers are going to have to put your knives into one hell of a lot of white men ... starting with me!
> We've all done it. And just like you said, knocked on that door in the backyard, then drag her on to the bed and grind her arse off on the old coir mattress. That's how little white boys learn to do it. On your women!
> And you want to know something else, Swapo? They like it from us! Your woman was crying crocodile tears. I bet you anything you like she had a bloody good time there with the baas humping away on top of her.
> Now do you understand what I'm saying? If you want to kill that white man again, now's your chance. He's standing right here in front of you.
> Try to make it two. You got nothing to lose Swapo. You already got your one-way ticket. You can't go to Hell twice.
> You're an amateur, man. What you did was child's play. I was with the pros and for ten years we were up there on the Border sending your freedom-fighting brothers to Hell....
> Those brothers of yours were full of shit.... (50-1)

When his taunts are all in vain, Gideon once more expresses his desire for death, but more explicitly this time. The moment of crisis occurs when Martinus

is confronted with the odd choice: `Forgive me or kill me' (58). Gideon has to be either pardoned or damned by his confessor and judge. It has dawned on him that existing without exoneration is not living; it is like being in hell.

Martinus is defeated by the decision:

> ... kill you? No. I don't know if I can do it again. I know I have only killed one man, but I have done it too many times. (58)

As a last resort, he listens to what the other has to say, turning from an `unwilling confessor into an interested one' (Maree 1995:31):

> you tell me you are laughing at dead men but I can see it is a lie.
> Why are you trying so hard to make me believe it? (48)

At a later stage he questions Gideon again, now more directly:

> Are you hiding something away like little Martinus?
> I am going to ask you, but you must tell me no more lies. What is the true feeling inside you? (53)

When Gideon rejoins with a `Leave me alone', Martinus insists:

> No, you must tell me now. You must speak the truth. What is the feeling you got inside you? (53)

`The humanitarian impulse prevails' (Holloway 1993:39), and the white man lowers his defences and openly and honestly communicates with the black man. Gideon recognises that he has `fucking feelings for Africa man' and inquires: `Which ones do you want? Bad feelings, sick feelings, hate feelings?' (53) At the confessional climax of the play he admits that he has just been dissembling and that he is consumed by culpability. He has already disclosed, `I bury you every night in my sleep' (46) and at the beginning of the play claimed that Martinus would send him to hell if he knew what he, Gideon, had done. Gideon's existential regret stems from the sense of being bound up with all living things, and yet it seems to him that, whenever he gets the chance, he deals a death blow to them. He recalls a holiday spent in Mossel Bay when he was `still

just a little outjie in a khaki broek' (56):

> So one day I catch this lekker fat little fish and I'm all excited and I start to cut it up and then - *Here*! man, hundreds of little babies jump out of its stomach on to the rock....
> I just knew that what I had done was a terrible sin. Anyway you look at it, whether you believe all that stuff about Heaven and Hell and God Almighty or not it makes no difference. What I had done was a sin. You can't do that to a mother and her babies. (56)

His insight into his `sin', nonetheless, did not prevent him from repeating it again, many years later:

> So then what the hell was going on man? There I was on the back of that lorry doing it again, only this time it was men I was sommer throwing into that hole. (56-7)

At the limit-situation of the decimation of the Swapo insurgents, Gideon tore off the mask and gloves he had been wearing. This symbolic gesture marks his realisation of the import of his crime and the rediscovery of himself as having a nature common to those of other humans. It constitutes a revolt against indoctrination and unjust laws, aimed at instilling terror.

After unmasking himself, Gideon went looking for an old black woman, who he presumed was the mother of one of the soldiers, and who had been quietly watching from a distance.

> I wanted to tell her about that little boy. I wanted to tell her that he knew what was right and wrong. I don't know what happened to him, what went wrong in his life, but he didn't want to grow up to be a man throwing other men into a hole like rotten cabbages. He didn't want to be me. And when I had told her all that, I was going to ask her for forgiveness ... but she was gone. (57)

The ex-soldier confides in Martinus: `Kill somebody and sooner or later you end up like one of those landmine wrecks on the side of the road up there on the Border - burnt-out and bloody useless' (58), and `Inside me I'm still at that hole outside Oshakati. That's where I go every bloody night in my dreams ...' (59). He parodies himself: `You're alive Gid!', and bitterly adds: `What a bloody joke.

I'm as dead as the men I buried and I'm also spooking the place where I did it' (59).

Martinus has also acquired insight about himself and changed. No longer is he the subservient black worker.[21] His response is: `To hell with spooking! You are alive' (60). Gideon is not to squander his life; instead, he is to plunge into it and live it spontaneously and creatively. He is to switch from being a spectator of the life process to being an active participant. As a start, he has to commit himself to the future and plan for it.[22] He must go home and `do it. Get some planks, find some nails and a hammer and fix that hok. Start again with the pigeon-birds.' (60) When Playland returns to the village the following Christmas and New Year, Martinus wants to do `like [Gideon] said ... look up in the sky, watch the pigeon-birds flying and drink [his] tea and laugh!' (60) He, in turn, will leave his room and, as Gideon puts it, let `old Andries spook there by himself' (60).

Both characters thus succeed in transcending their socio-political situation and projecting themselves upon a more equitable, brighter future. While the *Dasein* of each moves `ahead' of, `beyond' and `outside' itself, it also moves toward itself (Grimsley 1967:46). The crisis is resolved and the *dramatis personae* `find a new understanding and appreciation of each other in a world that holds more than just [their] individual catastrophes, hurts, regrets and sadnesses' (Manim 1992:xiv):

> Martinus: Do you hear what I am saying Gideon le Roux?
> Gideon: I hear you Martinus Zoeloe.
> Martinus: Do you understand what I am saying?
> Gideon: Ja, I think so. And you also hey.... Do you understand me Martinus Zoeloe?

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[21] Holloway, nonetheless, divines that the `white man will continue to occupy his position of privilege, while the black will loyally remain the good and faithful servant' (1993:41).

[22] Eugene Minkowski maintains that the `inability to conceive of and live in the future is the fundamental condition of depressions and other forms of psychological unhealth' (quoted by May in Friedman 1964:450).

Martinus: Ja, I understand you. (60-1)

The protagonists also no longer consider each other as a fictitious `court of appeal' whose sole function is to listen, but they direct what they say to the other `as the person he is', to use Buber's words (1965:79). This acceptance of each other, again, frees them to become attentive to their own beings (May in Friedman 1964:448).

The taking on of responsibility for each other's existence furthermore evinces that Fugard's *dramatis personae* are becoming the authors of their own destinies. Gideon's *Dasein* has been wrenched away from the `they' and, like Martinus's, has been liberated and individualised. It can now comprehend itself `on the basis of its (distinctive) existential possibilit[ies]' (Grimsley 1967:54). Martinus's potential being, again, has been exhumed by the white man, and by granting Gideon a share in his being, he may be seen to embrace the universe as a whole. It is therefore possible to conclude that both characters, Gideon le Roux and Martinus Zoeloe, as they leave the stage together, have resolved their inner conflicts, overcome their seemingly `fixed' natures and are redeemed in this, probably the most optimistic of Fugard's plays.

CONCLUSION

Others

One of the premises on which existentialism rests is that who we are is defined and confirmed in relations with others. Fugard's characters who make themselves available to others and communicate their dreams, aspirations as well as their insecurities, anxieties and frustrations (Hauptfleish 1982:88), discover their existential essence, optimise their potential and `construct and develop a world out of their experiences' in a meaningful manner (to use Buber's words [1965:107]).

It is possible to take the participation in others too far. *The Road to Mecca*'s Miss Helen has difficulty discovering her existential identity because she does not resist the restrictions imposed by her society on individual thought and artistic freedom but conforms to the crowd's norms and standards. Consequently, she finds himself in `*medias res*, and does not `fathom the ... complicity that brought [her] there in the first place' (Foster 1982:220).

Nongogo's Queeny, like Miss Helen, desires someone to insulate her against the limit-situations of desolation and dissolution despair, a rescuer. Such an exploitative relationship, based on domination instead of communication, is known as `I-It'.

No genuine dialogical relations exist between Morris and his brother. Existing only as part of Morris's experience, Zach feels even more unworthy because embeddedness leads, at best, to an existence in *medias res* (Foster 1982:222) and, at worst, to spiritual disintegration.

In the `I-Thou' interpersonal alliances (Yalom 1980:365-6), contrarily, `the original relation of the other and my consciousness is not the *you* and *me*; it is the *we*' (Sartre 1958:264). In other words, one person turns towards and

`move[s] more fully to respond to the other' (Friedman 1964:543). One such character is Elsa who has unselfish love for and empathy with others, and is concerned with guiding even those who do not serve a purpose for her to their full potential.

In contrast to Elsa, there are characters who eschew communication and interhuman relationships in toto. Human connections with others will compel Johnnie Smit to confront the reality of his existential emptiness (Swart 1983:66) - so he attempts rather to exist as a self-contained creature who has to account to no-one but himself.

Because `every destruction of the other is [one's] own' (Jaspers 1957:91), the existentialist ideal is to balance life-enriching solitude - being apart-from-others - with life-affirming relations - being a-part-of-others. Frieda, for example, in *Statements after an Arrest*, is conscious of her own identity as well as of her having a nature similar to others.

Responsibility

For existential writers, humans are the authors of their own existences. Because there are no unalterable external situations, they can rise above determinism if they choose to confront the challenge of life.

Some of Fugard's characters do not trust themselves to determine their own future. The only decision *Hello and Goodbye*'s Johnnie Smit takes is to abdicate accountability. He does not wish to choose himself in order to `win' himself; he negates his own identity and `loses' himself. The existence he has chosen for himself is the epitome of Sartre's `bad faith' (Vandenbroucke 1986:76). Hester Smit, on the other hand, declares: `It's my life and I'll do what I like' (113). Hester is not fate's puppet but the designer of her own destiny. Because she decides who she is and will become, she displays courage and fortitude even in the face of despair.

Like Johnnie, Miss Helen also pretends to be incapable of autonomous action, but it dawns upon her that her responsibility is, in the first place, towards herself and that she has to assert the role she plays in her own existence. Miss Helen is credited with challenging her friend, Elsa, `into an awareness of [her]self and [her] life, of [her] responsibilities to both that [she] never had until [she] met her' (66). Elsa realises that she creates her own self by every choice she takes and every act she performs.

Playland's Gideon at first refutes responsibility for the activities of the `crowd' by rationalising his and his fellow-soldiers execution of the Swapo men. When he `turns and veers off onto a new road of existence' (Bedford's phrase 1972:279) and assumes answerability for his actions, he empowers himself and acquires meaning.

Time: Past, present and future

The motif of time features in all Fugard's plays. As Abrahams avers, one of Fugard's strengths is his Proustian ability to make the past come alive and haunt his characters in the present (1982:174). Although remembering the past may sustain one in the present (Swart 1983:72), many of the dramatist's characters are portrayed as prisoners of their personal history (Huber 1989:51-2). For instance, Johnnie Smit and *The Blood Knot*'s Morris cannot liberate themselves from the captivity of the past and endeavour to locate meaning, happiness and hope in what was. On the other hand, Johnny and Queeny in *Nongogo* wish to believe that `you can wash off something from the past if you try hard enough' (92). It is *Hello and Goodbye*'s Hester who discerns that one cannot assign the actuality of the past to oblivion. It explains and influences the present and remains part of being-in-itself. Journeying back into the past, moreover, can assist the disorientated personal in the consolidation of a consistent identity, an identity that can progress into a present that is a little more stable because it is anchored in something (Swart 1983:72). *Carpe diem* is, after all, a theme that

permeates Fugard's oeuvre.

As for the future, Eugene Minowski holds that the `inability to conceive of and live in the future is the fundamental condition of depressions and other forms of psychological unhealth' (quoted by May in Friedman 1964:450). By contrast, anticipation of this `dominant mode of time' (May in Friedman 1964:449) and living in terms of the possible may be the `foundation of psychological freedom' (May 1961:79). Hesitating to envisage the future and projecting oneself into it (Grimsley 1967:46) - as illustrated by Johnnie Smit in *Hello and Goodbye* - reflects a reluctance to change one's existence.

Death

Fugard's fascination with time goes back, in his words, to humankind's `central dilemma - the fact that life dies. And the passing of those seconds. The span can literally be measured.... It's death knocking at the door' (1982:112-3).

Heidegger describes death as `the very summit' of existence (quoted in Friedman 1964:542). This is because, at the limit-situation of death, *Dasein* sees the simplicity of its fate (Heidegger 1963:435): that its uttermost possibility-for-Being lies in giving itself up' (Heidegger in Friedman 1964:129). This is what Miss Helen does when she blows out the candles in her self-created Mecca and resigns herself to the inevitable: `The journey is over now. This is as far as I can go' (73). On the one hand, resignation could result in disintegration, as Levy (1973:79) advances. From a Faulknerrian perspective, however, Miss Helen may be seen as immortal because she has a `soul, a spirit, capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance' (quoted in Collins 1983:370).

Meaning

Fugard focuses on disorientated human beings who are `heavy, hopeless and

almost prostrate on the earth' (Fugard quoted in Weales 1978:8), yet search for intelligibility and significance. There is nothing for them to cling to: no guidance from an omnipotent and just force, `no stabilising belief on which to build (and) no faith to justify' their lives or explain their fate (Swart 1983:38). In a nutshell, the world has no pre-ordained grand structure. Locked into `a dreadful routine of simply carrying on' (Cohen (1977:72), struggling with all their available resources to understand, and failing to do so, just how and why they got there in the first place (Foster 1982:221), a large number of his characters are forlorn. There is no glittering Mecca at the end of their roads. They will die as gracelessly and anonymously as they have lived (Levy 1973:79). Tragedy seems to eclipse everything.

Hello and Goodbye's Hester craves one memory of herself `somewhere, some other time' (128) which she can take back with her and use as an `emotional and spiritual transfusion to inject into an existence that has become only a matter of endurance (Levy 1973:79). Instead of a memory, she finds only `rubbish' (155). Bravely returning, like Lena and Queeny, to the `same form of bondage [she] had when she entered in the opening scene of the play' (Hauptfleisch 1982:188), the character invents her own life meaning and commits herself to the fulfilment of that meaning, even if this entails resigning herself to the emptiness of her existence. `She knows what life is waiting for her' (Vandenbroucke 1986:76), a life during which she will be, to quote Sartre, engulfed by this `monstrous silence, free and alone, without assistance and without excuse, condemned ... forever to be free' (1947:290). As Levy declares, `Fugard's empty stage disguises no untold secret, no hope ...' (1973:79).

To Cohen, `what is so ineffably human and normal and affecting' is the ways in which Helen and other Fugard characters who are in intolerable situations `cope with hopelessness' (1977:77). They recognise that the `present is illusory, the past ... unreal (and) the future empty' (Foster 1982:223). `They recognise that all is useless, yet they do not go mad with grief, despair and incomprehension' (Cohen 1977:76). `They do not just give up and they do not, in fact, do the rational thing: they do what is irrational and yet inevitable'. They defy destiny

when `they continue to live, not in hope of future succour, not in the hope of a better after-life - (but) simply ... as they must' (1977:77). `Their heroism, if we may call it that, consists principally in their ability to continue day after day as even slim hopes are finally extinguished' (Levy 1973:79). Fugard adds in *Twentieth Century Literature*: `Whatever else I have expressed, I've tried to celebrate the human spirit - its capacity to ... endure ... even though every conceivable barrier is set up to thwart the act of (endurance)' (1993:390).

The human spirit endures once it creates and interprets its own reality and fate (Bedford 1972:265) and articulates a meaning for itself. This meaning hinges on coming to grips with the `senselessness of ideals and purpose' (Walder 1984:78). In other words, stoic endurance of an absurd condition - Fugard's characters' `spiritual lot in a godless world' (Wortham 1983:173) - is the keynote (Edmans quoted in Mshengu 1982:171). Only then can the characters transcend the meaninglessness of their existences.

Change

Fugard seems to subscribe to the notion that *Dasein* is not a static entity which remains unchanged but a `possibility' and a `project', perpetually moving ahead of, outside itself, and directing itself upon the future (Grimsley 1967:46). In other words, `existence is not; existence becomes' (1967:24). By virtue of this, the dramatist's characters have to muster the courage to risk everything by breaking with their previous conditions, and transform themselves. Otherwise they will remain trapped in circular, futile existences.

The two female protagonists, Hester in *Hello and Goodbye* and Elsa in *The Road to Mecca*, do not shrink from change. *Mecca*'s, Marius, *per contra*, wants his world has to remain as it was in the past, and he resents any disruption to his routine.

Identity

Fugard often presents characters who are, at best, ontologically bewildered and, at worst, in an identity crisis (Vivier 1983:29).

Nongogo's Queeny's continuous denial of her own name corresponds with a disavowal of her true identity. In other words, she is dissociated from her *Dasein*. Morris, likewise, is so anxious about losing his own conflicted centre that he refuses to go out, but holds fast to routine and adjusts to a `shrunken world space' (May 1961:78). Lost to the world, he is also lost to himself (Jaspers 1950:39). Johnnie Smit, like Morris, affirms something which is less than his unique `essential or potential being', in Tillich's words (1952:71). He is too much of a coward to confront his insubstantiality, depersonalisation and anonymity (Swart 1983:84). So he settles for a false identity (Foster 1982:222) and lives a lie. For this reason, the most extreme form of missed being or non-being, namely insanity, already lurks on his horizon (Swart 1983:65).

Johnnie's sister, Hester, quite the contrary, has returned to her family home to discover `the meaning of [her] name' (128). In order to do so, she probes herself and her brother. Exploration of the past and introspection result in traumatic revelations, self-delusion giving way to insight, and psychological exorcisms (Swart 1983:48). At last, Hester - and other Fugard characters who follow her example - is rewarded with the profound perception of her `personhood' (1983:86).

Rebellion

According to Camus, `only two possible worlds can exist for the human mind: the sacrosanct (or, in Christian terms, the world of Grace) and the world of rebellion ...' (1971:26-7). `In order to exist, man must rebel' (1971:27), not merely endure. This is because `every rebel pleads for life' at the same time as s/he struggles against `servitude, falsehood, and terror' (Camus in Friedman

1964:217), and affirms that these three afflictions are the cause of silence between human beings and prevent the latter from rediscovering themselves in the only value which can save them from nihilism - the `long complicity of men at grips with their destiny' (Camus 1971:248). Like Elsa Barlow, the rebel attacks the world and suffers the risks involved in an attempt to acquire totality of being (Swart 1983:77). As Elsa apprises her friend: `Rebellion starts, Miss Helen, with just one man or woman standing up and saying, "No. Enough!"' (28).

Among South African dramatists, Athol Fugard is certainly that man. His dramas comprise the `human story' with all its ambiguities. Because they are an `authentic and thought-provoking report of his life and his times', they will stand the test of time (Seidenspinner 1968:339). Fugard himself will rank among twentieth-century theatre's great dramatists (Raymer 1984:238).

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).

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[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:

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[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.

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[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'

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[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).

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[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.

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