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.