CHAPTER V: A PLACE WITH THE PIGS

5.1 Introduction

Athol Fugard's thirty-year career has been characterised by socio-political involvement. With the play *A Place with the Pigs* he seems to be retreating from the heat of the battle to a more introverted drama. Unlike anything the author has ever written, it is yet a logical progression from *The Road to Mecca* and it shares with his other works an evident concern for the human condition. The play transcends the local South African situation and becomes a universal, yet intensely personal, parable. Fugard himself explains to Marianne Thamm (1987:10):

... I have my own experiences of putting myself in a pigsty but I have succeeded in getting myself out of them. This play is about acceptance of your life, of taking responsibility and taking the consequences of your actions.

The pigsty, the mess that is your own life, is of your own making and only you can get out of it. This is a play about self-liberation.

*A Place with the Pigs* studies man's baser characteristics such as cowardliness, fear and the ever-persistent focus on the all-important "I". Yet there are a number of side-issues latent in the play. They are listed by Ann Dry (1989:101) as follows: self-imposed exile, guilt, patriotism, ideology versus instinct, self-knowledge and deceit. The list is endless.

The play was based on a true story as is the case with *The Road to Mecca*. It is about a deserter from the Soviet army in the Second World War, who goes into self-imposed exile in a pigsty for forty-one years. Fugard emphasizes, however, that this is not a play about Russians in a pigsty in Russia. The didascalies are explicit: it is a "pigsty, in a small village, somewhere in the author's imagination" (p. 1). He also tells Thamm (1987:10) that the play is actually set in South Africa: "It takes place in my mind and my mind was cultivated in this country".
The story is about Pavel Navrotsky who has deserted from the Russian army and has been hiding in a pigsty ever since he returned home. He dreams of being liberated but lets every opportunity to fulfil his dream slip through his fingers because he is a coward. He is afraid of mankind and of himself. Fugard himself declares: "That character, Pavel, is a fool. A pompous, self-indulgent, self-deluding fool" (in Thamm, 1987:10).

It is Pavel’s wife, Praskovya, who lifts him out of the mire of his existence and sets him on the road to mental and physical freedom. Once again it is the female character who has the strength to decide to do something about the situation in which they find themselves. Although Praskovya is not as strong as Hester in Hello and Goodbye, she reminds us of this character, whereas Pavel reminds us of Johnnie who loves to wallow in self-pity. Like Johnnie who needs crutches to lean on, Pavel needs a psychological crutch: his slippers. At the end of the play, Hester beats Johnnie when he lies on the floor without hope. Likewise, Praskovya gives Pavel a hiding. The only difference is that she does not stop before Pavel gets up and stands on his two feet again!

5.2 Dramatis Personae

In this play the female character, Praskovya, cannot be discussed in isolation as she acts as a foil for the male. She is caring, gentle and stable, whereas Pavel is selfish, aggressive and emotionally frustrated. She is a considerate person, dedicated and supportive to her husband’s whims and whines. She is the catalyst that makes things happen. At the beginning of the play Praskovya is portrayed as the long-suffering wife who cloaks herself in mediocrity and subservience to her husband’s will. When Pavel tells her she is late and she denies it, he does not even call her by her name: "Don’t argue with me, woman!" (p. 2). She bears this treatment because she is portrayed here in the traditional role of a woman: she has no will of her own but adheres to her wedding vows that she will serve her husband. She tells him like a dutiful wife: "I have got your suit, your fine black suit shaken out and aired and all ready for you" (p. 7). Yet we find early traces of rebellion in her attitude: "God only gave me two arms and two legs, and I’ve been working them since I woke up this morning as if I’d been sentenced to
hard labour" (p. 2). She is trapped by their circumstances just as Pavel is trapped in his pigsty. She cannot lead her own life as a free woman and she complains about the ten years of her life which she devoted to her husband: "Sometimes, coming in here to feed you and them, it feels as if we've been at it for twenty" (p. 3). Praskovya not only rebels against her traditional role as wife, but also against her traditional role as mother. Although she does not have children, she often nurses Pavel like a child: "I had to feed you like a baby" (p. 4). She calls him "a pathetic creature" and recalls how he broke down when she gave him his slippers: "Sobbing in a way that nearly broke my heart" (p. 4).

Although Praskovya appears weaker than Fugard's other women characters at the beginning of the play, she is nevertheless stronger than her husband. She is also more practical. When he admires his slippers she admonishes: "You should wear them, Pavel. One day the rats are going to find them" (p. 5). When Pavel plans his escape during the ten-year celebration of liberation he gets so caught up in his almost naive idealism that he loses sight of the true and very harsh nature of human beings. He believes he will be accepted and forgiven for his betrayal, because "the speeches will have an elevating influence on their thoughts and feelings ... They will have been lifted up to a higher plane ... They will be forgiving ..." (p. 6). Praskovya is more realistic and points out reality to him:

Boris Ratnitski forgiving? Or old Arkadina Petrovna? She packed off a husband, two brothers and three sons to the war and not one of them came back. They say she's got a picture of Hitler somewhere in her house which she spits on every morning when she wakes up (pp. 6-7).

When Pavel insists on wearing his soldier's uniform to the coming ceremony, it is again Praskovya who brings him down to earth and forces him to face reality. She used the uniform ... "And you're lucky there is that much left of it. When you gave it to me you said I must burn it, but I thought that was a wasteful thing to do with such a good bundle of rags, because that is all it was ... so I just stuffed it away in a corner and whenever I needed one ... " (pp. 8-9).
This unexpected development gives Pavel the excuse he has unconsciously been waiting for, for now he can once again hide behind Praskovya and evade exposing himself as the coward he is at heart: "Compassion and forgiveness? I stand as much chance of getting that from the mob out there as I do from these pigs ... I won't get a fair trial. They won't even give me a hearing. The moment I appear they'll throw themselves at me and tear me apart like a pack of Siberian wolves" (pp. 10-11).

While Pavel wallows in self-pity, Praskovya remains positive. As Fugard himself has claimed that Pavel is a pompous fool, it is proved when he tells his wife to pray for his freedom: "Then pray again ... pray harder! Bully God with your prayers. I don't just deserve mercy, I've earned it!" (p. 5). His wife does not lose patience, but assures him she will be praying even harder for him. She does not let herself be weighed down by Pavel's moaning when she returns from the ceremony and tells him he did the right thing to remain in the pigsty. When Pavel cries, "How is it possible! ... Instead of being diminished by my suffering, it seems to draw nourishment from it ... like those mushrooms that flourish and get fat on the filth in here ... Is my soul nothing more than a pigsty?" (p. 15), Praskovya calmly replies, "There are chores waiting for me in the house" (p. 15). She calls herself a simple woman who does not know enough to take on such a theological question: "These are all matters beyond my simple woman's head. I will leave you to deal with them" (p. 15). She walks away to do the washing, leaving Pavel in an agonised state of mind.

This child-like simplicity turns out to be almost humorous. In the scene where Pavel brutally kills the pig that ate the butterfly, Praskovya rushes to the pigsty when she hears the bedlam to find a blood-stained, sobbing Pavel. When she asks him what happened and he tells her "... it's my soul that bleeds", she replies unceremoniously: "Well then, there is something else in here bleeding in the old-fashioned way" (p. 18). When Pavel's distraught philosophising becomes too much for her simple mind, Praskovya chips in with what Pavel calls "a domestic triviality":

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All right, all right, have it your own way. But at the risk of making you even more angry, Pavel, I think I should also point out that only last week I had to let out your trouser seams because you're putting on a little weight around the waist (pp. 20-21).

She tells Pavel that he seems physically fit and that does not sound like a dying man. Pavel is desperate: "I meant it spiritually! Inside! Didn't you hear me? I was talking about my soul" (p. 21). When Praskovya answers doubtfully, "Oh, I see ... " (p. 21) we realize that she does not see at all.

Unlike Fugard's other plays Praskovya is portrayed as a very religious woman who does not attack Calvinism. It is her religion that sustains her throughout her ordeal. Praskovya remembers clearly that it was on a Sunday night that Pavel returned: "I know it for certain because the storm had kept me from church and I was trying to make up for it before going to bed by saying my prayers a second time, and then a third ... when I heard the scratching at the door" (p. 4). Like a child, Praskovya distinguishes between big sins and little sins when Pavel asks her to attend the ceremony and pretend he is dead: "All right, all right ... I'm going. But I'm telling you Pavel, this feels like a big, bad sin. Hiding you was one thing, but what you're asking me to do now ...!!" (p. 11).

The path Praskovya follows is straight and narrow and she does not accept any deviation from it. When Pavel laments his situation after he has killed the pig he complains that being in the pigsty is hell and that his joy at seeing the butterfly "might well have been the death rattle of my soul" (p. 20). To his annoyance Praskovya informs him, "You can't be both dying and in hell ... Because any little child will tell you that hell is where you will go after you're dead" (p. 20). Child-like she still believes in the destructive wrath of God. When she and Pavel slip out for a walk one night he feels delirious with freedom and fantasizes about sneaking "past the Guardian Angel for one last little taste of Paradise" (p. 27). She is quite adamant that they will not land in trouble: "It looks as if the Almighty had decided to turn a blind eye on what we're up to otherwise we would have been struck down long ago" (p. 27).
Due to her pious nature Praskovya tolerates insults and hardship to protect her husband and support him in every way possible. Pavel's "self-imposed banishment from the human race" (p. 3), makes Praskovya a prisoner as well: "You don't seem to realize that I hardly see anybody any more. The only dealings I have with the outside world now is when I take one of the pigs down to the butcher. For the rest, I'm as much a prisoner in the house as you are in here" (p. 11). She tolerates more from her husband than is humanly possible, because she has been taught that a man is the head of the house and must be obeyed at all times without question. She reaches the point, however, when her husband throws himself naked into one of the pens with the pigs, shouting, "I abandon my humanity! From now on, Praskovya, feed me at the trough with the others" (p. 32), when she stops being subservient and is filled with an inner strength that is even stronger than her abhorrence of sin. She actually falls down on her knees in the mire and prays to God:

Dear Lord Jesus, I am being tempted to sin very badly. Feelings I never knew I had have got hold of my soul and are trying to make me do wicked, wicked things. The reason for this urgent prayer, Lord Jesus, is to beg you, to beseech you ... please don't give me the strength to resist temptation (p. 32).

Bruwer (1987:82) claims that this is the moment when Praskovya becomes an emancipated woman and owing to this new freedom she succeeds in restoring her husband's pride. First she tells Pavel, "I think you might have gone too far this time. This is very insulting, I'll have you know, both to me and to God. I married a man, not a pig, and as far as the Almighty is concerned, I'm sure he'd like me to remind you that you're supposed to be made in His image" (p. 32). Then she beats him with the stick he always uses to brutalize the pigs, until he was back on his feet again. Having gained insight into herself and her situation Praskovya has the wisdom to tell Pavel: "You're on your two legs again, Pavel, and talking. That's as much as I can do for you. Now help yourself ..." (p. 33). When she empties a bucket of water over his head it is reminiscent of baptism. He is reborn, baptized, and is now a new man.
When Praskovya beats Pavel back onto his legs again, it is contrary to *Hello and Goodbye* where Johnnie remains lying on the floor after Hester has beaten him until she leaves. After her departure he gets up but needs the support of his father's crutches. We realize that Johnnie will never be in control of his life again. He has usurped his father's personality and will use that as an emotional crutch.

In this play Pavel also uses various psychological crutches to support himself due to his inner weakness and cowardice. First of all there are his slippers. He blames his desertion on them, "... they lost their innocence and began to torment me: (p. 13) and then he refuses to wear them until he is a free man again: "No, my conscience will not allow me to wear these until the day when I am once again a free man" (p. 5). His emotional state deteriorates with his slippers, however. Scene Two starts with a dejected Pavel swatting flies with "the last remnant of his cherished slippers" (p. 17). Ironically he also tries to catch the butterfly with his tattered slipper. When he fails, the slipper is never mentioned again.

Another psychological crutch which Pavel leans on is his wife. Pavel never admits his cowardice or accepts responsibility for his own life until the beating. When Praskovya discourages him to attend the ceremony, Pavel cries despairingly: "I am trying to hold on to what little courage I have left in my bruised and battered soul. Don't destroy it! Give me support, woman!" (p. 7). When his courage fails him, he commands his wife to attend the ceremony, although she is just as frightened of the people as he is.

In Scene Three when Pavel and Praskovya go for a midnight walk, he does not have the courage to go as himself even though it is dark and everybody is asleep. He needs another crutch - a woman's outfit. This is the ultimate irony. If he does not hide behind his wife's skirts, he wears them, pretending to be "the mother or wife of some good family" (p. 26). This act confirms Fugard's concept that a woman is stronger than the male in times of crises.

Once outside the pigsty Pavel dreams up schemes to recover his freedom. It is actually amusing that when he gets too excited and
blasphemous Praskovya reprimands him: "Moderate your language, Pavel. This is not the way a good woman talks" (p. 28). As a man Pavel does not have the courage to establish his own freedom - now, dressed as a woman he wants "to follow that road into the future" (p. 28). Praskovya is the practical one when she asks: "But what about the house, Pavel ... all our things ... the pigs ...? ... You dressed as a woman, not a rouble in our pockets ...!" (pp. 29-30).

Pavel's emotional dependence on Praskovya is immediately apparent:

PAVEL: What do you mean? Aren't you coming?
PRASKOVYA: No, you walk alone. I've had enough. This is as far as I go.
PAVEL: You can't just abandon me, Praskovya (p. 30).

When Praskovya eventually returns home Pavel stands his ground for only a short while before he runs frantically back to the pigsty where Praskovya awaits him. He blames her again for not supporting him: "I was so near escaping. One small burst of courage! That was all it needed. And if you had given me a little support and encouragement, Praskovya, I would have found that courage" (p. 31). But Praskovya has been his crutch long enough. When she withdraws her support he loses all his dignity, his manhood and even his humanity. Figuratively speaking he falls flat on his face in the mire. The difference between this play and Hello and Goodbye, however, is that in the end Praskovya forces Pavel to abandon all his psychological crutches and accept responsibility for his own life. In the last scene Pavel is finally forced to face the fact of his cowardice and to come to terms with is own weaknesses.

Dry (1989:109) states that Pavel now undergoes a catharsis of emotion. He is physically, mentally and spiritually drained, and it is only now that he can begin to build on a foundation that has been purified by fear. In a long monologue Pavel critically analyses his feelings and argues with himself: "You know something, Navrotsky ... you're a total failure ... and a pathetic one at that! Praskovya was right ... all you've learnt in here is to whine and wallow in with self-pity" (pp. 34, 35). He delves deep into his childhood, looking for the origins of his cowardice.
when suddenly the solution to all his problems emerges with great lucidity:

    Unbelievable! So simple ... so obvious! ... just let them go. Yes - yes - yes ... of course. It makes total sense. Just ... open the doors, open the pens and let them go (p. 36).

Praskovya immediately leaves the house (her prison) and joins her husband when she hears the commotion of the pigs being freed. She does not even panic although she knows that their livelihood depends on the pigs. She realizes that Pavel is once again a whole man, a man that she can be proud of. Pavel confirms this when he states: "I'm going out there as myself" (p. 39). By the very act of freeing himself, he has freed them both. Praskovya is so happy she wants to laugh and sing: "... we sit here on the brink of ruin and all I want to do is laugh" and "I feel a little light-headed and silly ... silly enough in fact to want to sing a little song ..." (p. 38). Fugard himself refers to laughter as the "best survival mechanism" (in Thamm 1987:10). Pavel could not have done it on his own: he had to be shocked into awareness by his wife. Praskovya is the one person who ultimately helps Pavel to help himself. She is the one who forces him to look at his situation, to try and understand his actions. She forces him to face his fears, to face his guilt like a man and it is only when he has freed himself from emotional pain that he can function wholly again. Dry (1989:129) compares him to Shakespeare's King Lear, who has to be utterly stripped, physically and emotionally, for a complete catharsis of fear and guilt. It is only when he reaches rock bottom that he can begin to gather the threads of his life again and freedom becomes a real possibility.

Praskovya's deeply religious spirit forces her to compare their freedom with the serenity found in a church: "It is like being in church, isn't it? You feel you've got to say everything in a whisper ... and think only good thoughts. And so ... suddenly so calm. And peaceful ... I never thought it could ever feel like this in here" (p. 37).

Ann Dry (1989:115) states that although simple, Praskovya is the kind of woman Pavel needs. Not only does she remain realistic throughout the play, but her inherent optimism knows no boundaries. She never
lets herself get bogged down by Pavel's despair for a moment, and she is supportive to the very end. The last line in the play says it all: "If it's any consolation, I think we're in time for the sunrise you missed yesterday" (p. 40). These words are essentially optimistic as Fugard underlines the fact that it is never too late to change or to come to terms with one's own weaknesses and frailty.

5.3 Didascalies

As in The Road to Mecca the title of the drama A Place with the Pigs highlights the most important aspects of the fictional world.

On the surface the play is about a Russian deserter who lived in self-imposed exile in a pigsty. However, it has already been established that the title implies much more than that. At a personal level the title indicates Fugard's own life. He has experienced the depths of despair more than once in his lifetime therefore the story of Pavel is very personal to him. Just like Pavel he has to face the consequences of his own actions and rise out of the mire. Therefore he calls it a "play about self-liberation" (in Thamm, 1987:10).

The play transcends the personal, however, and becomes universal. It is a story about everyman, anywhere in his own pigsty, be it political, social or economic. The play is loaded with hidden meaning and symbolic possibilities. Fugard states that the play is also perhaps a reflection of the current state of many white liberals in South Africa, "guilt-ridden and self-indulging" (in Thamm, 1987:10). It is about freedom as portrayed by the butterfly and Pavel and Praskovya. It is about hope for the future (sunrise) and modern man's struggle against time and transience. But most of all it is about courage.

All these themes encompassed in the title have not been explored, as many of them are embodied in Pavel and this dissertation is about women characters. It has already been established, however, that the title also reflects Praskovya's state of mind, because she is trapped with her husband; she also struggles to obtain freedom and overcome fear. She not only liberates herself, but also her husband.
The concept of time is an important aspect of the play. It not only binds Pavel, but promises him his freedom. The concept of mankind trapped by time becomes universal. The didascalies highlight the passage of time and its importance in the written text as well as in the performance. At the beginning of Scene One the stage directions indicate the following:

Walls are covered with an attempt to keep track of the passing of time ... bundles of six strokes with another one across for the seven days of the week, the weeks and necessary odd days circled into months, the months blocked off into years ... 1944 to 1954 (p. 1).

Ann Dry (1989:120) states that time becomes relative for Pavel, for he loses all sense of the concept of what is late and what is early. For Pavel, everything will always be too late. Even when Praskovya feeds the pigs an hour earlier so that she can help Pavel with his speech for the ceremony, he accuses her of being late. What he does not realize is that it really is too late for Praskovya, or anyone else for that matter, to help him. He can only help himself. Pavel is obsessed with time. Fugard uses the device of repetition to emphasize the slow passage of time and how heavy Pavel's guilt weighs on his own mind. For ten years he has been imprisoned by his own conscience in circumstances which would make the most hardened wince. When he revises his speech, he rambles: "Yes, for ten years ... Ten years! Has it really been ten years? ...Yes ... ten years, two months and six days to be precise (pp. 2-3).

The universal meaning of time, its relativity, is beautifully expressed by Pavel: "I've had days when it felt as if I'd been in here a hundred years. Two hundred! I've already lived through centuries of it" (p. 3).

The next description borders on the poetic - seconds, minutes, hours seem to drop like pebbles into the pool of life: "Time ... leaden-footed little seconds, sluggish minutes, reluctant hours, tedious days, monotonous months and then, only then, the years crawling past like old tortoises (p. 3).
The passing of the seconds, minutes, hours and days are all described with very negative adjectives. This not only emphasizes his attitude towards time, but also how slowly time passes for him. It is quite understandable, for he has nothing better to pass the time with, other than torturing beasts. Pavel does not succeed in escaping from the feeling of guilt or fear. Even though he has only been in a physical sty for the last ten years, Pavel has been in an emotional pigsty all his life. He experiences life extremely negatively. His very existence revolves around 'pig shit and time. Just as my body and every one of its senses has to deal with pig shit ... smelling it, feeling it, tasting it ... just so my soul has had to reckon with Time ... (p. 3). Time has as little spiritual meaning for him as pig manure has for him physically.

Ann Dry (1989:122) claims that Pavel has been hidden away from society for so long that he no longer recognises basic human behaviour: 'I've been in here so long, I've forgotten what human nature is really like'' (p. 10). Pavel realises that his moment of weakness ten years ago will remind citizens of their own weaknesses they do not want to confess or be reminded of. For most of the community, time has erased all guilt and healed all hurt and despair. It is most likely only Pavel who carries his own private hell with him and for whom time has become an enemy and not a friend. He therefore delays the time of his own salvation.

At the beginning of Scene Two the didascalies state that a lot of time has passed: 'His calendar of days has been defaced by a tally of flies' (p. 17). Days no longer have any meaning for him. The future no longer looks promising as he has nothing to look forward to. His occupation with the flies and the pigs emphasizes his mental digression:

"Look at what my life has been reduced to. Nine thousand seven hundred and eighty-five dead flies! The days of my one and only life on this earth are passing, while I sit in mindless imbecility at that table swatting flies. And when I get bored with that, what is my other soul-uplifting diversion? Tormenting the pigs..." (p. 21).

Pavel has not always been like this. There was a time when he was like other men, planning for the future, dreaming of a family, more pigs and
bigger, better sties. Now his only ambition is a "hundred thousand squashed flies" (p. 21).

Pavel feels his life has less purpose than that of the pigs: "Crude as it may be, pork sausages and bacon does give their lives a meaning" (p. 21). At this point Pavel even discards his slippers, a symbol of his freedom, and throws them into the mire. He feels that a "life with nothing sacred left in it is a soulless existence ... It is not a life worth living" (p. 22).

The didascalies at the beginning of Scene Three again indicate that a "lot more time has passed" (p. 23), but now time cannot pass quickly enough for Pavel:

PAVEL: Is it time yet?
PRASKOVYA: Just a little longer.
PAVEL: You said that at least an hour ago.
PRASKOVYA: There are still a few lights on in the street ... Be patient ... Just hang on a few minutes more (p. 23).

Two interesting aspects occur in this scene. Time becomes important to Pavel and he disguises himself as a woman. These two aspects seem to give him courage to see himself as he really is and for the first time in the play he admits his weaknesses: "For all of his fifty-one years, Pavel Ivanovich Navrotsky has been a frightened man ... and I'm so tired of it now, Praskovya ... tired ... tired ..." and "I'm a coward, Praskovya ... I have been driven by fear" (p. 24).

Pavel's self-imposed exile acquires a universal meaning. All mankind are hiding from something or someone, or even themselves, at some time during their lives. Pavel hides away from bullies during his childhood; from trouble; from his father. He hides under his bed; in the cupboard; in the cellar; in the shed at the bottom of the garden. He even has a secret little book in which he keeps a list of all the places he can hide. When he grows up he hides inside his wedding suit; behind his uniform; in a pigsty. He even hides in a woman's outfit. Yet, the moment is not right to acquire insight and become a free man. He still relies too heavily on Praskovya so that when he wants to follow the road
to the future and ultimately freedom, he abandons this freedom to come running home when Praskovya deserts him.

Scene Four does not extend any information about time except that it is night. Pavel's hour of liberation has come. When he frees the pigs he frees himself and Praskovya as well. He comes to terms with himself, therefore he tells Praskovya: "I'm going out there as myself" (p. 39). He has the courage to face the future as a whole man. The past becomes unimportant to him. It vanishes just like the night vanishes before the sun. A new day is born - and subsequently, a new life for Pavel.

Boekkooi (1987:2) states that Fugard takes the large outer space of the world we live in and diminishes it until it is small enough to encorporate humanity - and everything that gives it meaning and value in a microcosmos. That way space becomes without boundaries or limits - it is universal.

Stage directions indicate that Pavel finds himself in a pigsty. It is noisy and filthy in there and its occupant has no purpose in life except to hide and keep track of the time. Man's regression and utter degradation is apparent in the increasing deterioration of the pigsty.

In Scene One the decor indicates a primitive living area in the pigsty resembling some order and purpose. The walls are covered with writing and the pigs are squealing. Scene Two shows distinct signs of deterioration. There is no mention of a living area or any resemblance of order or purpose. The walls are defaced and dead flies are everywhere.

It is into this space that the butterfly enters; an object of utter beauty among the filth. Symbolically the pigsty resembles man's dark inner-self, ugly and totally corrupt. The butterfly is a promise of the outer world. It brings back memories of childhood for Pavel when he was still free and innocent. When he tries to capture the butterfly, Pavel is trying to capture that which symbolises innocence and freedom. It is a futile action; something which he can never achieve while he remains in the pigsty. The didascalies indicate that "it keeps eluding him" (p. 17). This is symbolic of his futile chase for freedom. It will evade him forever unless he comes to terms with his own humanity.
When the pig eats the butterfly Pavel is devastated, because his last image of his childhood is destroyed and with it his link with the outer world. He informs his wife: 'This is my punishment, Praskovya ... to watch brutes devour Beauty and then fart ... to watch them gobble down Innocence and turn it into shit ..." (p. 20). Pavel completely loses his grip on reality and on himself and kills the pig barehanded. His physical space becomes a slaughter-house where chaos reigns.

In Scene Three the didascalies portray the deterioration of Pavel's soul as equal to the deterioration of the space in which he lives. The walls of the pigsty are now covered with graffiti consisting of "obscenities and rude drawings of the pigs" (p. 23). Pavel's mental agony is such that he appears sick: "Laboured, desperate breathing" (p. 23). It is almost as if the pigs are aware of his suffering because for once they are "in a subdued mood" (p. 23). This prepares the reader/spectator for Pavel's attempt to leave the pigsty (self-liberation) and face the outer world. His midnight walk turns into a disaster, however. He does not have the strength to broaden his horizons and face the consequences himself. When he runs back "a dishevelled, desperate figure" (p. 31), his regression is complete. His whole existence drops to the level of bestiality and he is little better than the pigs he lives with. He seeks sanctuary in the pigsty; this confined space seems like a haven where Praskovya will give him the necessary support.

However, every good woman and wife has her limits. For the first time we see her physically entering Pavel's living space, stick in hand, bare-foot and skirt tucked into her bloomers. When she hits the living daylights out of him, she forces him to come to terms with his life. He is naked, having shed his clothes which link him with his past, but he is not lying down. Although he does not realize it immediately, he has been washed clean of all his fears and cowardice and petty thoughts.

In Scene Four the pigsty is not described or referred to. These confines are already fading. When Pavel finally opens the pens Praskovya experiences it thus: "She sees the open door, the empty pens and realizes what Pavel has done ... A few stunned seconds as the two of them listen to the virginal silence in the sty" (p. 37). Praskovya then
compares the sty with a church. This symbolizes Pavel's redemption, his liberation into the outside world. He may go to prison or face a firing squad but "... those men, looking at me down the barrels of their guns, will be 'home' in a way this sty could never have been" (p. 39).

Not only does Pavel then clean himself, he also tries to clean the walls of the pigsty. His restoration is complete.
CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

My aim in this dissertation has been threefold. Firstly I have attempted to illustrate the biographical influence of women on Fugard's life and subsequently his writing. He grew up in an era where many Afrikaans-speaking people moved from farms to cities due to the depression. They could not find work easily as they were not educated, and therefore they were classified as poor-whites. Some generations earlier the forebears of Fugard's mother had probably been farmers. That means that the farmer and his sons performed hard, physical labour outside the house from before dawn until after dusk. In the evening they returned to a clean, tidy home and a cooked meal.

Soon droughts and diseases forced these farmers to seek employment in the cities where physical strength was regarded as of no importance. The men had to seek employment while the women had to rear the children on their own. They were used to rearing girls, but the boys who had accompanied their fathers on the farm and received their role models from them posed a threat. The women became harsh and hard, managing to cope only by imposing harsh discipline on the children, finding their security in the ability to maintain a set routine in the house. These women stayed at home because of the burden of children, cooking for their menfolk and cleaning the house. Subsequently, the women imposed their will on the household and the children, while it was the duty of the husband to go out and work to provide for these women and their offsprings. The men soon lost their self-confidence and stood by passively, seemingly powerless to control the situation.

The legacy of this neglect is twofold. Firstly the children came to accept the mother as the dominant figure in the home, whilst the father was viewed as subservient, not deserving of respect. Although Fugard's mother did not fill this traditional role of staying at home with her children, (she ran a small general dealer's store with her husband), she probably grew up in a household as described and carried on the tradition of dominance. Fugard admits freely that it was his mother who dominated his childhood.
This concept of the submissive male and domineering female is portrayed in all the dramas discussed in this dissertation. In **People are Living There** and **Hello and Goodbye**, Milly and Hester are coarse and unrefined, and both have been unhappy due to a man: Milly because of Ahler's rejection of her, and Hester because of her father's religious demands: "Sick. It made me sick on the stomach" (p. 112). Milly takes a stand to make people notice her, and Hester is strong enough to walk away from her squalid surroundings where she and Johnnie are "nothing but rubbish...second hand poor-white junk" (p. 155). Johnnie is too weak to face the challenge so he stays. Although Fugard does not give us insight into the character of Hester's mother, the impression is that she kept the family together. When she died, the family unit disintegrated, leaving Hester embittered and Johnnie helplessly dominated by his father.

In **The Road to Mecca** Elsa appears to be relentless and hard. She does not tolerate weakness - not even in Miss Helen. When she discovers that David has lied about his marital status, she is devastated, partly because she loves him, but mostly because she expected him to be honest and not to betray her trust. She thought he was as strong as she and when he is revealed as a weakling, she rejects him and his child which she is expecting. Initially she even bullies Miss Helen and appears to be the more strongwilled of the two. Miss Helen, on the other hand, appears helpless and fragile when Elsa arrives, but it is soon evident that she is regaining her confidence. Poor Marius stands no chance against the two females. Elsa tells Helen: "...you deserve a few bravos for your performance tonight. I'm proud of you. I told you that you never needed me. And you did more than just say no to him. You affirmed your right, as a woman..." (p. 75).

In **A Place with the Pigs**, Praskovya is portrayed as a simple peasant woman, yet she is the strong one from the beginning, sheltering her cowardly husband during his self-imposed exile in the pigsty. On the surface she appears to be subservient, cooking for Pavel and performing her duties at home: "There are chores waiting for me in the house" (p. 15), "...there is a pile of dirty clothes waiting for me" (p.16) and "I was making cabbage soup and dumplings" (p. 22), but there the parallel to the traditional role of female ends. She is strong throughout. When
Pavel wants to escape from the life she knows, she urges: "No, you walk alone. I've had enough. This is as far as I go" (p. 30). When he returns to the pigsty, she takes a firm stand: "I think you might have gone too far this time...I married a man, not a pig, and as far as the Almighty is concerned, I'm sure he'd like me to remind you that you're supposed to be made in His image. So for the sake of everybody concerned, please get out of there" (p. 32).

My second aim in this dissertation was to illustrate that although Fugard's women characters suffer great hardship, they survive. In People are Living There Ahlers rejects Milly because he wants a child when she is fifty years old. She feels humiliated and angry because she has wasted ten years of her life. When the play starts, Milly appears querulous and weak, feeling sorry for herself. She quarrels with Don and Shorty and demands that they make her laugh. Juxtaposed against them, she soon reveals her inner strength. She vows to rise above her circumstances, making people witness her life.

In Hello and Goodbye Hester has a very unhappy childhood. They are poor-whites, therefore she is not educated to find a proper job in the city, forcing her to revert to prostitution. They were very poor and she remembers how their best clothes always had to go into boxes and the boxes stored away in a cupboard; how she had to wear her old shoes and her father's socks; how Johnnie wore her old vests and her mother had to make do with her husband's old shoes. Hester claims there 'wasn't enough of anything except hard times" (p. 139). She remembers even "the birthdays were buggered up by a present you didn't want, and didn't get anyway because it had to be saved" (p. 140). Hester also hates her father, because he treated her mother badly and told her as a child that he hated her. She remarks to Johnnie: "So he still hates me. I wasn't expecting miracles. Any case I also got a memory. Don't think I've forgotten some of the things that was said to in here." (p. 113). Initially Hester is full of hatred against her family, her school friends, society and men in general, but as the play progresses she comes to grips with herself and decides to return to Johannesburg. She encourages Johnnie to do the same: "Anything's better than this, Boetie. Get a job, a girl, have some good times (p. 161). Hester wants her life witnesses just like Milly does, but she does
not reach out to people on the outside, she reaches within herself and in that lies her strength: "...somebody's watching all of it. But it isn't God. It's me" (p. 162).

In The Road to Mecca Miss Helen struggles to regain her creativity as an artist and she has to resist a very headstrong Marius who wants her to go to an old age home, leaving everything she loves behind. She is feeling helpless and depressed and also a little guilty that she could never mourn her husband's death properly because she never really loved him. When Elsa walks into her life she is revived. When the play starts, Miss Helen is scared that she is losing her creative ability: "There is no light left" (p. 39). Elsa is her lifeline: "It is only through your eyes that I see my Mecca" (p. 39). When Marius pressurizes her to give up her life's work, she nearly submits to paternalistic forces rather than showing defiance. When Elsa lights the candles for her, however, her courage returns. She informs Marius that she will not be completing the forms. She affirms her right as a woman.

Elsa is portrayed as strong from the beginning. She speaks on behalf of all women when she urges that Katrina should know what her rights are and that Miss Helen should talk back. She also identifies with Patience, thereby showing her resentment of racial inequality. Elsa's only flaw lies in her emotional isolation because of the "stupid helplessness" (p. 77) of women.

In A Place with the Pigs Pavel is the main character, but it is his wife, Praskovya, who forces him to become physically and mentally free. In the beginning of the play she serves him like a dutiful wife, but in the end she beats him until he stands on his own feet.

My third aim in this dissertation was to trace a line of development in Fugard's women characters. If we start with Milly in People are Living There, the didascalies nearly trick us into believing that she is going to be portrayed as the slovenly, down-trodden, bored housewife in her kitchen. We soon learn that she is not the traditional housewife but that she keeps boarders. We find that she turns her kitchen into a boxing ring, courtroom, confessional and finally a room for a party. Milly wants dignity despite her circumstances and above all she does
not want to be forgotten by mankind. We have to remember that she does not have a child (like all Fugard's women characters) as a monument of her life.

In **Hello and Goodbye** Hester progresses from the housebound female, serving and pleasing her husband to something unheard of in the Afrikaner society of that time - a prostitute. Except for it being immoral, a prostitute represents exactly the opposite to being a subservient housewife and mother serving only one man. In Hester's life men do not have names and are faceless in the dark: 'There's man. And I'm a woman. It's as simple as that. You want a sin, well there's one. I Hoer. I've hoered all the brothers and fathers and sons and sweethearts in this world into one thing...Man" (p. 132). Hester launches a strong attack against Calvinism. She blames it as the reason for her mother's untimely death; her father forcing Johnnie to spy on her; and what marriage has become: "They live in hell, but they're too frightened to do anything about it because there's always somebody around shouting God and Judgement" (p. 150). She also criticizes the institution of marriage giving men "a licence to do it. Happy families is fat men crawling on to frightened women. And when you've had enough he doesn't stop, 'lady'. I've washed more of your husbands out of me than ever gave you babies" (p. 142) and "Marriage! One man's slave all your life, slog away until you're in your grave. For what?" (p. 150). She admits to having had an abortion: "I've done it. And I don't care a damn. Two months old and I got rid of it" (p. 150). Hester embodies all women who rebel not so much against tradition, as against the hypocrisy of clinging to empty values.

In **The Road to Mecca** the two characters, Miss Helen and Elsa, are not as crude as Hester. Elsa is an educated woman occupying a much-respected profession as a teacher. She is strong and self-reliant. No man can dominate her - not even when she falls in love with David. When she expects his child and discovers that he is married, she aborts it. It is as if she controls life itself. Just like Hester, Fugard ensures that Elsa is not confused with the stereotyped mother-figure, even though she "mothers" Miss Helen.
Miss Helen is also far removed from the coarse world of Hester, because she is a refined artist. She is an intellectual with a vision far beyond those of the villagers. When Miss Helen starts making her statues, it is frowned upon by society, not only because they are strange, but because it is not considered respectable for a woman to choose such a worldly profession. The people of New Bethesda respect her when she is a housewife, married to Stefanus and attending church every Sunday like a dutiful Christian. After Stefanus's death, however, when she starts creating statues of a heathen nature, thereby not only defying the traditional role of a mourning widow, but also her religion, the villagers reject her, thinking she is strange. Although Marius is in love with her, it is inevitable that she rejects him, because he is the stereotyped male who will dominate his wife, not allowing her to continue with her career, as it is regarded not suitable for a minister's wife to be an artist of idols.

In Afrikaans communities such as New Bethesda it is regarded as traditional for older people to move in with their children or to go to an old age home. Miss Helen does not conform to this norm at all.

In *The Road to Mecca* Fugard also explores female bonding for the first time. Through this bonding the two characters emerge stronger than any of his single females. Elsa becomes the spokesperson against the helplessness of women, the threat of ageing and the plight of black and coloured women. She stands up and lets herself be heard.

It is actually almost an anti-climax when one deals with Praskovya in *A Place with the Pigs*. She is not such a strong character as all the others and initially it is almost sickening to observe her subservience. She is considerate, patient and dutiful and adheres to her wedding vows, despite the fact that she knows her husband is a coward. She seems trapped by her circumstances just like her husband. Yet we soon come across traces of rebelliousness and soon realize that she is an utterly devoted Christian (the first of all Fugard's women characters). Praskovya also seems the simplest of Fugard's characters; a plain woman who says that all intellectual matters are beyond her "simple woman's head" (p. 15). Yet when Pavel starts acting like a pig, she prays to God not to give her strength to resist the temptation to beat her
husband until he was back on his feet again, which she promply did, making her a woman of action. She defies the image of a simple woman when she exclaims: "That's as much as I can do for you. Now help yourself..." (p. 33). She removes all Pavel's psychological crutches and forces him to face the responsibility of his own actions.

In conclusion, the women characters portrayed by Fugard in his plays, show clear evolution and development from the earliest plays up to The Road to Mecca and then reveal a troublesome "regression" in A Place with the Pigs and even in a play called My Children, My Africa, not discussed in this dissertation. Further investigation of his dealings with female characters would seem to be strongly indicated.

Athol Fugard himself has the last say: "I love women. In all my plays ... the affirmative, positive statement is invested in the woman. The men are always weak links in the chain of life. That's not by choice: That's just the way I see it. I think men are, and always try to be, predictable. The analogy is between chemistry and alchemy. With men, you've got sulphuric acid and iron feelings, and you put the two together in a test tube and you've got an absolutely predictable result. With women, you're talking about the alchemist's crucible, into which you can put gross metals and strange solutions and come up with something beautiful. I think the female psyche works in infinitely more mysterious ways" (Achiron, 1986:58-86).
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