THROUGH THE SHATTERED LOOKING-GLASS OF THE S.A. COMMITTED PLAYWRIGHT: A SEMIOTIC STUDY OF TWO PLAYS OF THE 80s

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The idea of freedom is central to the concept of South African committed plays of the 70s and 80s. How this idea is realised depends not only on the socio-economic and political context of the playwright, but also on his ideology which influences his whole outlook on life. What the playwright perceives reality to be, is withdrawn from the world, contemplated and reworked, and returned as a literary/performance text. As a result of this withdrawal from the world, the text is then not a simple mimetic reflection of reality, but a codified reflection on reality.

The first chapter focuses on the theoretical framework which I have used to analyse Woza Albert! and A Place with the Pigs, namely semiotics. This approach is fundamental for the analysis of any play as it not only studies the performance text, but the dramatic text through which the playwright's ideology is manifested.

As ideology, therefore, plays a significant role in both semiotics and the process of realisation of the dramatic text, the second chapter is solely devoted to ideology and the writer's task as he perceives it within his broad sociocultural framework.

The third chapter offers a brief overview of plays written from 1704 till the 1980s which have freedom as central theme. The development from agit-prop to plays which explore the human condition beyond the confines of political sloganeering emerges from this study. Two plays which seem to have transcended the boundaries of political propaganda are Woza
Albert! and A Place with the Pigs. The concept of freedom is manifested differently in each play in accordance with the playwright's ideology, and they are, therefore, not comparable in the direct sense of the word.

Woza Albert! is written from an Afro-centred ideology and freedom is ultimately seen as liberation from the physical oppression represented by the white government in South Africa. The characters look outwardly for salvation which takes the form of the advent of Morena. Once they have achieved freedom physically, they are liberated emotionally.

A Place with the Pigs investigates man's freedom from his own illusions of fear. Freedom, therefore, comes from within and circles out to liberate him in every aspect of his existence.

This dissertation, therefore, aims to study plays which have moved beyond the confines of reality, to planes of more unrestricted "universality". They have shattered the looking-glass of reality to reveal more than man is often prepared to show, which is neither easy nor comforting.
UITTREKSEL

Die vryheidsидеe staan sentraal in die samestelling van Suid-Afrikaanse betrokke toneeltekste van die sewentiger- en tagtigerjare. Die manier waarop hierdie vryheidsидеe realiseer, hang nie net af van die sosio-ekonomiese en politiese konteks waarin die skrywer leef nie, maar ook van sy persoonlike ideologie wat sy hele lewensuitkyk beïnvloed. Dit wat die skrywer ervaar word onttrek uit die werklikheid, deurdink en verwerk en sy ervaring van die werklikheid weer as literêre of toneelteks verbeeld. As gevolg van hierdie ontrekking uit die werklike wêreld, is die teks dan nie net 'n eenvoudige mimetiese weerspieëling van die werklikheid nie, maar 'n gekodifiseerde refleksie op die werklikheid.

Die eerste hoofstuk lê veral klem op die teoretiese raamwerk, naamlik die semiotiek wat as basis dien vir die analise van die tekste Woza Alberta! en A Place with the Pigs. Hierdie benadering is fundamenteel in die analise van enige toneelteks aangesien dit nie net die toneelteks bestudeer nie, maar ook die dramateks (literêre teks) waardeur die skrywer se ideologie gemanifesteer word.

Aangesien ideologie 'n belangrike rol speel beide in die semiotiek en die proses waardeur die dramateks gerealiseer word, word die tweede hoofstuk hoofsaaklik gewy aan ideologie en die skrywer se siening binne sy eie breër sosio-kulturele raamwerk.

Die derde hoofstuk bied 'n kort oorsig oor toneeltekste met vryheid as sentrale tema wat geskryf is van 1704 tot die 1980s. Die ontwikkeling
vanaf agitasie-propaganda tot tekste wat die menslike staat (cf. human condition) verken tot verby die grense van politieke slagspreuke word in hierdie studie aangetoon. Woza Albert! en A Place with the Pigs is twee tekste wat skynbaar buite die grense van politieke propaganda uitgestyg het. Die konsep van vryheid word in elkeen van die tekste verskillend gemanifesteer op grond van die skrywer se persoonlike ideologie en is daarom in direkte sin nie vergelykbaar nie.

Woza Albert! is geskryf teen die agtergrond van 'n Afrika-gesentreerde ideologie waar vryheid primêr gesien word as 'n bevryding van die fisiese onderdrukking uitgeoefen deur die wit regering in Suid-Afrika. Die karakters soek uiterlik na bevryding wat gerealiseer word in die koms van Morena. Eers wanneer hulle fisies bevry is, kan hulle emosioneel bevry word.

A Place with the Pigs ondersoek die mens se ontkoming aan beide sy eie illusies en sy vrese. Vryheid kom dus van binne en kring uit om hom in elke aspek van sy bestaan te bevry.

Die doel van hierdie studie is dus om toneeltekste wat verby die beperking van realiteit tot meer ongebonde "universele" vlakke reik te bestudeer. Die tekste het die mense se beperkende illusies versplinter deur meer te openbaar as wat die mens gewoonlik bereid is om te wys wat nóg maklik nóg gerusstellend is.

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"I am not going to force myself to read bad novels and worse poems simply because the authors are committed to the South African struggle ... A lot of liberation literature is rubbish ... but if I say so, I am accused of being a white bourgeois in fear of accepting the truth about South Africa. By now I feel I know that truth which frees me to say that bad art is bad art. That's a simple aesthetic judgment, based upon the judicious use of grammar and the ability to write a sentence that does not contain a slogan. I am also giving up on relevant theatre because it is all relevance and not theatre anymore" (Ronge, 1987:4).

My very first reaction to this article was one of surprise that one of South Africa's leading theatre critics should dare to condemn what every other theatre critic seems to condone. It pleased me that at last there was someone who seemed to realise that once you have seen one exciting display of vigorous gymnastics and endured more than your fair share of verbal abuse and controversy by socially and politically aware actors, you have seen them all. It is when all the excitement has passed that you realise that, for all the exuberance and energy, not much has been said. It is at this stage that you realise that you need more from theatre than political statements and gut emotion. That missing dimension is a discovery "of an identity beyond apartheid and the obvious political context" (Steadman, 1988:10).

Of course it would be naive to believe that one could escape politics or ideology, for explicit politics permeates every aspect of our existence in
present-day South Africa and every stance we take is ideologically determined. Every choice we make, or do not make, every step we take, or do not take, is politically and ideologically determined. Therefore, to strive for a theatre which does not deal with politics or which takes a neutral stance ideologically, is not only unrealistic but frankly impossible. If it is impossible, therefore, to ignore the political factor in a South African play, how could a political play remain "political", but still be more universally "acceptable"? What ultimately becomes acceptable is ideologically determined, for no play can be interpreted completely objectively without a framework of reference coming into play. Since it is, therefore, becoming increasingly obvious that a diet of politics alone is no longer satisfying (from a Euro-centric point of view), in which direction is South African drama moving?

It is becoming increasingly obvious that the relatively one-dimensional approach to theatre is no longer acceptable to sophisticated theatre-goers. Over-simplification of the complexities of the ideologically influenced political arena only serves to scratch the surface of the real and intensely individual problems caused by apartheid and concomitants restrictions on everyday life. Beyond the obvious struggle and conflict lie the realities of a loss of basic human dignity and the lack of recognition. How these realities are manifested in plays is determined ideologically and according to socio-economic factors.

Because of the very nature of South African theatre, the semiotic approach seems to offer the best theoretical framework for studying the symbolism embodied in the song, mime and visual props used by the actors in the play, as well as the plurality of meaning in the dialogue.
used by the characters. My first chapter, therefore, sets out the theoretical basis from which the plays are analysed.

However, because semiotics and the concept of ideology are so closely related, it is necessary to include a chapter on ideology. Signs are understood within a certain framework of reference constituted by ideology and preconceived projections. How the writer formulates and phrases his play depends not only on his ideology, but what he perceives his aim to be. I will therefore investigate what motivates a playwright to take up his pen and write a play. This will form the body of my second chapter.

I will then analyse two plays, Woza Albert! and A Place with the Pigs in the subsequent two chapters in an attempt to show that although these plays can be considered "committed" plays, they attain "universality" not only through the uplifting element of laughter, but also by exploring man's search for identity in a society inculcating anonymity, and by investigating how man overcomes his own fears in his striving for freedom. What must be stated clearly, is that the analysis of these plays is inevitably influenced by a Euro-centric ideology and will of necessity differ from an interpretation based on an ideology which is Afro-centred.

Although the problems explored by the playwrights are factual and frighteningly real, Woza Albert! and A Place with the Pigs are interpretations and hence representations of reality. The possible worlds of both plays are removed from the actual world, as the creative, representing element distinguishes the dramatic text from the non-fiction text. Drama does not simply reflect reality mimetically, it is an illusion of reality. This argument brings me to the title of this dissertation.
Perhaps it would be a good idea to explain why I have chosen the title - Through the shattered looking-glass of the committed South African writer.

1.1 REPRESENTING - CRAFTING - TRANSMUTING - TRANSCENDING

Kleinschmidt (1978:5) has said that art is "essentially concerned with finding images of reality". This might imply that art is simply a reflection of reality, a representation of life. However, this statement oversimplifies the whole question of interpretation and reception. A dramatic text is not simply and merely "an image of reality".

Some ideas from past and present which bear pertinently on the issue will be considered.

The mirror image is as old as Plato who said that reality can be divided roughly into three categories. The first category comprises eternal and unchanging Ideas. The second category reflects the first category and is the "world of sense, natural or artificial" (Abrams, 1953:8). The third category in turn reflects the second category and includes "shadows, images in water and mirrors, and the fine arts" (Abrams, 1953:8). Since art is, therefore, twice removed from reality, it is not only untrue, but also without value.
Aristotle studies literature as the reference of a work of art to the subject matter which it imitates. Plato’s first category of Ideas is disregarded and the reflection image is seen as "obscure and ineffective" in his Rhetoric. Aristotle, therefore, emphasises the production processes involved in creating a work of art. Cicero’s mistaken opinion that literature is "imitatio vitae, speculum consuetudinis, imaginem veritatis" meaning "a copy of life, a mirror of custom, an image of truth" (Wimsatt, 1978:130) serves to illustrate the common assumption that the mirror image was serviceable for describing accuracy in representation. The classical period, therefore, takes the structure and characteristics of the artefact and represents it in the art form.

The sixteenth century was a period when representation could be posited as a form of endless and essentially closed repetition. "The semantic web of resemblance" (Foucault, 1973:19) during this time was perceived as being extremely rich. I will, however, only mention the four most important devices for revealing resemblances in nature suggested by Foucault in his Order of Things, viz. convenientia, aemulatio, analogy and the play of sympathies. Convenientia presupposes all things that are conveniently close to one another to be in juxtaposition. It is in this juxtaposition that a resemblance appears. Convenientia is "a resemblance connected with space in the form of a graduated scale of proximity" (Foucault, 1973:18). By this linking of resemblance through space, the world is linked together like a chain. This is made possible through "this 'convenience' that brings like things together and makes adjacent things similar" (Foucault, 1973:19). Each place where one link makes contact with the previous link, is the beginning of one resemblance and the end of another, thereby keeping the extremes apart, yet bringing them all together.
Aemulatio is a sort of 'convenience' "that has been freed from the law of place, and is able to function, without motion, from a distance ... (and) it is the means whereby things scattered through the universe can answer one another, eg. man's intellect is an imperfect reflection of God's wisdom" (Foucault, 1973:19). Emulation enables resemblance without connection or proximity. "By duplicating itself in a mirror, the world abolishes the distance proper to it; in this way it overcomes the place allotted to each thing ... emulation is therefore posited in the first place in the form of a mere reflection, furtive and distant ... the links of emulation do not form a chain but rather a series of concentric circles, reflecting and rivalling one another" (Foucault, 1973:21).

Analogy entails the superimposition of both convenientia and aemulatio. While it "makes possible the marvellous confrontation of resemblances across space .. it also speaks ... of adjacencies, of bonds and joints" (Foucault, 1973:21). All that is needed is the slightest resemblance of relations. The possibilities, therefore, become endless. Through analogy "all the figures in the whole universe can be drawn together" (Foucault, 1973:22). The point where all is drawn together is man. "He is the great fulcrum of proportions, the centre upon which relations are concentrated and from which they are once again reflected" (Foucault, 1973:23).

Finally, the play of sympathies constitutes an important role in the concept of representation. "Here no path has been determined in advance, no distance laid down, no links prescribed. It is a principle of mobility which is not content to spring from a single contact and speed through space; (but) it excites the things of the world to movement and can draw even the most distant of them together" (Foucault, 1973:23). The exterior movement of objects drawn together gives rise to a hidden
interior movement which entails a displacement of qualities that are taken over from one another in a series of relays. Sympathy is "an instance of the Same so strong and so insistent that it will not rest content to be merely one of the forms of likeness; it has the power of assimilating, of rendering things identical to one another, of mingling them, of causing their individuality to disappear" (Foucault, 1973:23). What counterbalances sympathy is antipathy which prevents assimilation from reducing all to a homogeneous mass. Antipathy isolates all things so that they can maintain their own identity. "The identity of things, the fact that they can resemble others and be drawn to them, though without being swallowed up or losing their singularity - this is what is assured by the constant counterbalancing of sympathy and antipathy" (Foucault, 1973:24-25).

Resemblance in the sixteenth century is, therefore, "the most universal thing there is: at the same time that which is most clearly visible, (is) something that one must nevertheless search for, since it is also the most hidden" (Foucault, 1973:29). The nature of things, "their coexistence, the way in which they are linked together and communicate is nothing other than their resemblance" (Foucault, 1973:29). This resemblance is visible only in the "network of signs that crosses the world from one end to the other. Resemblance never remains stable within itself" (Foucault, 1973:30), it can only be fixed if it refers back to another similitude, which in turn refers to other similitudes. Each resemblance, therefore, only has value from the accumulation of all similitudes. It is these similitudes which reflect the nature of reality and which are, in turn, reflected in a work of art. While this view of representation may be somewhat simplified when one thinks in terms of the complex and densely
nuanced movement from Renaissance through baroque, it is a useful outline.

In the eighteenth century, while the concept of mimesis remains important, a shift occurs in the concept of representation. Wit is seen as an elaboration of nature, and style, while not changing anything, should aim to improve or refine nature. Nature, therefore, remains the source and norm for literature. However, it is unavoidable that some form of selection should take place. Nature is then portrayed as it should be, and not what it is. Only the best is represented. "Poetry imitates not the actual, but selected matters, qualities, tendencies, or forms, which are within or behind the actual ... nature is improved, heightened, refined" (Abrams, 1953:35).

These thoughts laid the foundations for Romanticism. There is now a definite change in style from imitation to expression, imitatio to creatio. Art no longer copies, but creates new worlds. Creative imagination is the most important characteristic of this period. ""The poetry is not the object itself', but 'in the state of mind' in which it is contemplated" (Abrams, 1953:24). The objects signified by a poem are no more than "a projected equivalent - an extended and articulated symbol - for the poet's inner state of mind" (Abrams, 1953:24-25).

Romanticism gave way to realism and idealism. Realism constitutes literature as a copy of reality. However, it is impossible to make an exact copy of reality as the observer does not receive stimuli passively, but actively. Reality cannot, furthermore, be copied directly. Literature comes to us "via the arbitrary, formal conventions of language" (Nuttall, 1983:52). Language implies choices such as selection and emphasis.
Followers of idealism maintain that reality does not exist objectively, but is reconstructed by the observer or thinker. Literature is, therefore, a question of self-expression and is not a copy of reality. Objectivity is denied and the danger of idealism is that the author gets caught up in his own ideas and constructions. This implies that not only is a private world created, but a private language also evolves to such an extent that communication ultimately becomes impossible.

Not only is literature conveyed to us through language, an artefact is seen through what Zola calls "a temperament" which not only includes the personality of the artist, but also the style and period of the artist. Gombrich states that perception is "conditioned by our expectations and adapted to situations" (Combrink et al, 1987:64). The style in which the artist writes, sets up "a horizon of expectations, a mental set, which registers deviations and modifications with exaggerated sensitivity" (Combrink et al, 1987:65). All art originates in the human mind "in our reactions to the world rather than in the visible world itself" (Combrink et al, 1987:65).

The advent of Formalism as a style of literary criticism which set works of literature up as monuments complete in themselves, each an entity, had important implications for the concept of artistic representations. A work of art is now seen as autonomous and perfect in and of itself. All that should be studied is in the work itself, not in the reality surrounding it.

The Structuralists, while agreeing that literature is not a copy of reality, maintain that it is a world that has certain referents to reality. Literature is not a copy of reality, but an attempt to understand it. The way
the author recreates/reconstructs the world is important. The technical aspect behind the work of art is the essence of every creation. Literature is there to emphasise the functions of the world and the method the artist employs gives the work value. Literature is simply a form of the world and will change as the perceived form of reality changes. In the text we find binary oppositions manifested in the gaps or sentences in a text. Literature, therefore, focuses not on the material, but on the intelligible, not on the ideological, but on the aesthetic.

Derrida and deconstruction present the opposite pole from mimesis. Unlike a mimetic text which has a beginning and an end, literature for deconstructionists has no beginning, no end and no origin. Everything is a text, everything is caught up in a structure. Writing is not a representation of anything but differance, everything is one text. Representation is therefore impossible as reality cannot be represented. Reality is equal to the text, which is nothing but an illusion.

Lacan uses the mirror image as a metaphor of distance and alienation. He illustrates the image by describing a child looking at his reflection in the looking-glass. The child perceives his image and it alienates and distances him from the picture he sees. He does not see himself as a unity - he differentiates between I - the one who does the perceiving - and I - the one who is perceived. The same applies to literature. Literature at the same time distances and alienates us from reality so that we can view reality more objectively and makes us sit up and take note of what is happening around us. This is what Brecht hoped to achieve with the alienation effect he introduced into his plays, and what Mtwa and Ngema hope to achieve with their play Woza Albert!. 

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Modernism, therefore, makes a complete break with tradition. Texts can be read differently and interpretation depends on various factors. Fokkema (1984:8) distinguishes between five codes which in turn are incorporated into a socio-code. The five codes include the following: the linguistic code demands that the reader read the text as an English text; the literary code prescribes that the text should be read as a literary text; the generic code creates certain expectations in the mind of the reader, depending on the genre; the period code conveys information of the period or the semiotic society; and the idiolect of the author is distinguished on the basis of recurrent features. These five codes constitute the socio-code through which a literary text is interpreted and understood.

The socio-code can, therefore, be defined as "the code designed by a group of writers often belonging to a particular generation, literary movement or current and acknowledged by their contemporary and later readers. Together, these writers and their readers form a semiotic community in the sense that the latter understand the texts produced by the former" (Fokkema, 1984:11). This code is arbitrary and dependent on the reader's reaction. As literary tastes change, so do the meanings attached to the signs in the text.

Modernist texts, therefore, do not attempt to represent reality objectively. The reality presented is the representation of impressions of reality, not the representation of the physical object itself. Modernists are explicitly concerned with the processes of reception and interpretation. This perception is determined both culturally and individually.
"For the artist representation is always founded on perception and is a formal or structural arrangement that reflects the world absorbed and modified by the individual who is part of it. Since perception is transformed into representation, the cognitive content of art refers not only to the ability of an art work to offer historical, actual or possible truths, but rather to convey, in its themes and structure, the modes of individual and cultural perception" (Friedling, 1973:2).

The reader's perception and reception of the text are influenced by personal, historical, cultural and social circumstances. Interpretation, therefore, is the result of the reader's reception of the semantic meaning and syntactic patterns of the words in the text.

Modernists approach reality by being both distant, yet intensely involved. They are freed from conventions to experience reality directly, openly and as freely as possible. This is why the concepts of relativity, change and development are central to modernism. Reality is seen as a temporary and existential process and not as an established fact.

"Of particular importance to representation in fiction are ideas about the nature of consciousness, perspective, the relationship between subject and object, truth, chance and choice - ideas that reflect shifting assumptions about the categories of substance, causality, time and space" (Friedling, 1973:34).

The conscious use of language is an important aspect of modernism. In a modernist text, we are confronted by the (re)-presentation of a specific individually and culturally determined perception of the world, and where the medium of representation (language) is as complex, problematic and
as relative as the world and the perception thereof. "Modernism is 'not
the way things are, but the way things appear to us because its
metaphors and vocabulary prevail, hence constituting an ideology of
experience" (Brodkey, 1987:399).

Literature, therefore, transcends the confines of reality through language
which becomes relative, metaphorical and attains connotative and
associative meanings. The difference between the signifier and the
signified, and the emphasis placed on the arbitrary nature of these two
components of the sign, questions the linear and simplistic approach to
interpretation. The structuralist study of signification and the
conventional nature thereof, makes the meaning of "meaning" even more
arbitrary. Literature is no longer a univocal, but a multivocal
representation of reality.

Du Plooy quotes Felperin as saying that "the impossible power of language
to keep on signifying beyond any particular significance, to work
overtime as it were, producing an overplus of signification that cannot
be brought to rest in any definitive act of interpretation, either positive
and humanist, or negative and deconstructive" (1989:53), constitutes an
approach to literature which maintains "a claim to truth while defying a
direct comparison with reality" (Fokkema & Kunne-lbsch, 1978:22).

Belsey has said that literature is plausible not because it reflects the
world, but because it is constructed out of what is familiar (1980:47).
"Die mens bestaan; en die wereld bestaan. En die skrywer is genee
met die verhouding tussen hulle. Die literatuur is die uiting van daardie
bemoeienis en die ontginning van daardie verhouding" (Brink, 1980:16).
According to Brink (1980:26), therefore, the text that ultimately becomes
known and accepted as "literature", is temporarily withdrawn from the world. This allows the author to become totally involved in the text and gives him time for idiosyncratic aesthetic contemplation before it is once again returned to the world to be evaluated as "literary text". This whole process is incorporated in Small's words: "Ek is geen spieël ... ek haal vanuit die stryd die binnebeeld ... die waarheid uit die werklikheid" (in Brink, 1980:33).

On the basis of this withdrawal from and replacement into "the world" of selected material which is turned into "text", no text can be understood in isolation - it has to be regarded as emanating from and existing within a certain socio-political and historical context. Nor can a literary work only focus on one aspect of society, completely ignoring the context. This can only lead to a one-dimensional text that can have no lasting appeal. It is the text that has a plurality of meaning and addresses the human condition that will probably be the one that is not rigidly bound to a certain temporal and spatial context.

This is what Woza Albert! and a Place with the Pigs achieve. These plays are more than reflections of reality, they are reflections on reality. The looking-glass of the committed writer is a shattered one, looking beyond the obvious, studying all aspects of human existence. He explores human nature with the use of symbols and with plurality of meaning, and this brings me to my second chapter on the plurality of meaning, or semiotics.
Literature reflects the social and aesthetic norms of society, and represents the cultural and temporal contexts of a particular community. The dramatic text (and the performance text) is inevitably linked to its social context and is "a formal articulation and an esthetic practice since the literary/artistic production has as its referent the social ... There is a dialectical relation between literary production and social context inasmuch as the latter is present in the former in various components disseminated throughout the text" (De Toro, 1988:39). The text serves as an expression of society, it is a production or reproduction of a dominant ideology and language is a way of articulating this experience. Dramatic discourse, therefore, of necessity participates in ideology. Ideology exists for and in signs, as well as being manifested in form. "It becomes communicable as it is turned into a code. It therefore becomes material, revealing itself through a manifold system of signs" (Campos, 1979:977). Language is also a system of signs and the text, therefore, is the carrier of multiple signs or structures, be they social, ideological, institutional or esthetic. The study of the system of signs is known as semiotics.
2.1 DEFINING SEMIOTICS

The approach to drama and literary criticism described as semiotics differs from traditional literary criticism in that it analyses a dramatic text in a non-linear way. Traditionalist critics believe that the dramatic text is fulfilled through performance, while semioticians believe that performance fills out the text. Elam defines drama as the "mode of fiction designed for stage representation and constructed according to particular dramatic conventions" (1980:2). Theatre is defined as a matter of "complex phenomena associated with the performer-audience transaction: the production and the communication of meaning in performance itself and the systems underlying it" (1980:2).

Semiotics can then be defined as the "science dedicated to the study of the production of meaning in society". It is also concerned with the "processes of signification and those of communication, i.e. the means whereby meanings are both generated and exchanged" (Elam, 1980:1). Rendon understands semiotics as the "quest for meaning in its multiple forms, the conscious study of unconscious sign systems" (1979:991). He sees semiotics as the metalanguage which accounts for the language used by the author, the structure of the writer's consciousness, and that which explains the basic themes found in the text. Scholes explains the semiotic process as "the ability to generate and communicate meaning - which is an indispensable aspect of human existence" (1978:249-250).
The foundation of semiotics is the sign. Elam defines the sign as a "two-faced entity linking the signifier (the material vehicle) with the signified (the mental concept)" (1980:6). Performance (and the dramatic text) is not merely a single sign, but consists of a network of signs belonging to different systems thereby forming an intricably intertwined unity. The dramatic text (DT) or performance text (PT), therefore, while constituting a whole is, however, not "reducible to the sum of its parts" (in Hendricks, 1988:109).

Language is a system of signs: the signifier being the sound image or written shape, and the signified, the concept behind the shape or sound. The sign is variously considered to be arbitrary. Post-Saussurean linguists believe that language is "not a nomenclature (a way of renaming things which already exist), but a system of differences with no positive terms" (Belsey, 1980:38). Signs are defined by their differences from each other in the network of signs. Signs function not through their "intrinsic value, but through their relative position" (De Saussure, 1974:118).

Language is a matter of convention. A particular society "agrees" on the meaning of a specific sign, while the same sign could have quite a different meaning for another community, eg. the colour white suggests purity or sterility for the Western world, while the same colour represents death for Eastern countries. Examples of this kind are numerous. However, each community needs a specific sign system to function properly. This means that while the individual sign can be arbitrary,
the signifying system as a whole is not. The signifying system must of necessity be public and conventional as it is socially determined.

Language is a social product, it is a social fact, and only a social group can generate signs accessible to the members of society. Signs, therefore, differ from culture to culture, from epoch to epoch, from time to time.

Signs function not only through denotation, but also through connotation. This means that beyond the obvious sign lies secondary meanings which are related to the social, moral and ideological views held by a specific community, eg. the symbol of the crown could represent majesty or power. This does not mean that a sign can have only one secondary meaning. It can carry n-number of meanings. The symbol must be included when connotation is discussed, for the symbol is the "relationship between signifier and signified (and) is conventional and unmotivated. It is a sign which refers to the object it denotes by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas, eg. the linguistic sign" (Elam, 1980:22).

When studying the performance text and dramatic text, therefore, careful attention should be paid to the following three levels of language:

1. The lexical level where the choice of words, word combinations and the way words are used are studied. What is behind the most explicit lexical level has to be investigated. This level is "charged with history, permeated by society and the dominant ideology of social formation" (De Toro, 1988:39). It is not only how something is said that is important, but what (of social significance) is said.
2. The semantic level is that level which deals with the positioning of the lexeme. A study of the lexeme and its positioning often indicates not only the overt and explicit first meaning, but also the connotation of the word. Here "collective interests make their way into the langue which is not a static system but a compound of historical structures whose transformations are closely related to social interests and struggles" (De Toro, 1988:39).

3. The syntactical level deals closely with intertexts. This level shows how a dramatic or performance text is organised, "leading if not linking these texts to certain ideological practices" (De Toro, 1988:40). Not only is the form of the text ideological and textualized, the very textualization of the ideology is considered.

2.3 SYSTEMS, CODES AND SUBCODES

Understanding the text is made possible by a code which is known to both the sender and the receiver who assign a certain meaning to the code. The code is one of the basic principles of semiotics, and Eco points out that it is the code that makes signification possible which in turn is necessary for successful communication (Gillaerts, 1979:835).
"A repertory of signs or signals and the internal syntactic rules governing their selection and combination" is known as a system (Elam, 1980:49). This may be understood as a network of signs that are in mutual opposition and that have an autonomous syntax, e.g. the colour of traffic lights. This means that a language structure can be analysed syntactically without regard to its semantic meaning.

Elam defines a code as that "which allows a unit from the semantic system to be attached to a unit from the syntactic system" (Elam, 1980:50). We must keep in mind that there are rules governing the formation of sign-relationships. Gillaerts believes that the code is a "cultural system based on contingent convention. It is rooted in the polysystemic cultural and dynamic organisation of society and the world" (1979:837). Gillaerts differentiates three types of codes: the linguistic code, the aesthetic code and socio-cultural codes.
The linguistic code is that code in the model of communication through which the sender sends out information to the receiver. The aesthetic code is the code through which the message is interpreted and understood. The socio-cultural codes together with the linguistic codes constitute a hierarchy of connotative meanings. These codes together are a manifestation of culture. However, when we work with a dramatic or performance text, we also come into contact with other codes. Theatrical codes are codes that have to do with performance, while dramatic codes are those codes concerned with the dramatic text and which includes stylistic, semantic, structural and generic rules.

Subcodes are produced by the process of overcoding: "on the basis of one rule, or set of rules, a secondary set of rules arises to regulate a particular application of the base rules" (Elam, 1980:53). These subcodes are generally unstable as they are bound to the whims of fashion. The work of some playwrights, at first unpopular and misinterpreted, are later read avidly and with enthusiasm. Overcoding occurs when new emerging patterns are recognised by audiences who are able to identify them. Undercoding is "the process whereby barely recognised rules emerge. This is the formation of rough and approximate norms in order to characterise a phenomenon which is not fully understood or which is only vaguely differentiated for us" (Elam, 1980:55).

Cultural codes have a direct influence on dramatic codes as well as theatrical codes. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, I will only concentrate on those codes that play a significant role in understanding dramatic subcodes.
When we analyse a text, all these codes, subcodes and our whole frame of reference must be taken into account together with our cultural, ideological and ethical principles. This multiplicity of codes is typical of a literary text.

2.4 SPEECH ACTS

The speech event is the chief form of interaction in the drama. This form of exchange directly constitutes dramatic action as the strength of the discourse determines the impact of the play.

There may be as many as three types of speech acts in one utterance: a locutionary act which involves producing a meaningful utterance in accordance with the rules of the language, eg. phonological and syntactical rules; an illocutionary act where "the act (is) performed in saying something, eg. asking something; and a perlocutionary act "performed by means of saying something", eg. persuading someone to do something. This last act depends upon the effect which the utterance has on the listener (Elam, 1980:158). Elam stresses the fact that these three classes of acts are not alternatives, but levels of the pragmatic make-up of the utterance. It is what the playwright can do with words which is dominant in drama.

For a speech act to be perfect, Searle suggests three principal kinds of conditions that must be met: Preparatory conditions - the speaker must
be authorised to perform the speech act; sincerity conditions - the speaker must mean what he says; essential conditions - he is obliged to undertake the action indicated. The utterance counts as a kind of social commitment or undertaking (1969:60). However, much of drama is based on the abuse of these conditions which are known to the audience, but not to the characters in the drama. This is how suspense works, for the audience knows more than the victim does. Suspense builds up as the audience helplessly watches the victim move in directions that could prove to be fatal.

Much is "meant" by the speaker that is not explicitly said. This implies interpretive reading or "reading between the lines". For a speech act to be successful, the characters engaged in a dialogic interaction must share a common language, and must have an agreed end in mind.

Grice states certain maxims to regulate the coherence and continuity of the speech act. Among others, he suggests that the speech act should be as informative as is required, but should not say more than is needed. The speaker should also not say what he knows to be false or for which he has no evidence. Whatever the character says should be relevant and he should avoid ambiguity and obscurity. However, these maxims are not always applicable, and as Elam has acknowledged, the very breaking of these maxims make the most interesting speech acts (1967:45). Implications or hidden meanings may be produced successfully by deliberately exploiting any of the abovementioned maxims.

Implications include rhetorical figures such as irony and litotes which imply knowledge of the referent in order to contradict its faithful description. Metalogisms are context-bound devices to the extent that
they depend on the audience's ability to measure the gap between reference and referent. These figures include paradox, antithesis and hyperbole. These figures have a central place in the rhetoric of drama. Language frequently "rearranges sets of different materials through a displacement from their original context or setting. The effect obtained associates recognition and surprise, the familiar and unfamiliar, redundancy and information" (Campos, 1979:977). Language must be effective to create an impact and arouse interest.

2.5 THE DISCOURSE LEVEL OF DRAMA

The discourse level of drama involves the characters of the play as they are directly involved as the speakers and listeners in the dramatic and communicative context. Elam defines the dramatic context as "the situation in which the exchange takes place" (1980:137). The communicative context can then be defined as "the relationship between speaker, listener and discourse in the immediate here-and-now" (Elam, 1980:138). The dramatic and communicative contexts can never be separated from each other as dramatic discourse is always tied to speaker, listener and its immediacy in time and place. Drama, therefore, consists of an "I" addressing a "you", here and now. What really distinguishes drama from the novel, however, is deixis.

Deixis "is what allows language an active and dialogic function rather than a descriptive and choric role. It is the necessary condition of a non-
narrative form of world-creating discourse" (Elam, 1980:139). This is what makes the world of the drama "actual" and dynamic, letting us experience this world as here-and-now.

The dramatic text can be analysed as having two modes or levels of utterance: histoire - the "objective mode" dedicated to the narration of events which happened in the past. This mode excludes the "you" and "I" and forms the context: and discours - the level that is geared to the present through the "I and you". These are utterances within a given context (Elam, 1980:144).

Erika Fischer-Lichte understands dialogue as a "special meaning-creating system" (1984:137). She distinguishes four types of dramatic dialogue under the following headings:

A. The literary dramatic dialogue

1. The literary/literary dramatic dialogue consists of predominantly linguistic features which are uncommon in everyday language, eg. a special vocabulary. These linguistic signs are used by dramatis personae and are the only ones that function as, and form, a meaning-creating system.

2. The literary/oral dialogue signifies direct communication. This dramatic dialogue tries to imitate spoken language by "extracting and elaborating some ... characteristic features which are commonly considered as typical for spoken language" (Fischer-Lichte, 1984:144). These features then automatically vary in dependence of the special historic and social conditions under which they are placed. The author
or playwright therefore tries to imitate a special dialect which gives the impression that this dialogue could have been spoken by real people in a real place. Often a dialogue implies a great deal without saying much, and the text has to be studied in two ways: what it says, and what it conceals using substitutes, eg. dashes indicate a "silence" which is often more significant than words could ever be.

B. The theatrical dramatic dialogue

This kind of dialogue always "stimulates a situation of direct communication insofar as it is performed by means of all sign-systems being employed in every conversation: linguistic, para-linguistic, mimical, gestic and proxemic signs" (Fischer-Lichte, 1984:148). The meaning of the dialogue (semiosis) is always constituted by an interrelationship between all the signs.

3. The oral/literary dialogue is the dialogue where language dominates the acting. Linguistic signs therefore function as the leading sign system. This type of dialogue is very similar to the first type of dialogue as "nonverbal signs used are supposed to lead the spectator to a better understanding of the meanings constituted by the linguistic signs" (Fischer-Lichte, 1984:154).

4. In the oral/oral dialogue, acting dominates the language as there is a predominance of nonverbal signs. Nonverbal signs, therefore, take over the function of the leading sign system.

According to Serpieri, the analysis of discourse consists of the following:
1. The basic unit is the individual 'deictic orientation' adopted by the speaker.

2. Each time the speaker changes indexical direction (addresses a new you), indicates a different object, enters into a different relationship with his situation or fellows, a new semiotic unit is set up" (Elam, 1980:145).

Characters and objects or places referred to in the play all make up the "universe of discourse". The universe of discourse is larger than the dramatic world as characters sometimes mention other characters and places which do not form part of the dramatic world, but are included in the universe of discourse. These other characters and places are necessary for referential information and are known as referents. These complete the dramatic world as they are created for points of reference in the dramatic dialogue.

It is through the interpretation and careful study of dramatic discourse that the reader can connect the text to its social context. It is through the language in the text that we can study the three levels of relations between text and social context: text and other texts (intertexts), text and ideology (ideotext), text and institutions (exterior texts).

In a dramatic text we find other texts in the text, i.e. intertexts. We do not only find a simple story line relating events from the beginning to the end. Other factors come into play that cannot be ignored or avoided. These other factors are manifested in the text as intertexts. When reading/watching a text/performance we inevitably become aware of certain political forces or economic pressures that influence events in
the text. These political or economic forces become intertexts as they tell a story of their own. It becomes, ultimately, a story within a story.

An ideotext is also an intertext but refers to the ideological processes which consciously or unconsciously are assimilated by the producer of the dramatic text. An ideology precedes the text in various ways, through language which includes social conventions and codes, and through form which implies that the text reveals specific structures which can in turn be related to certain ideologies. It is important to remember that any text is ideological because a writer works with set images, representations and language which are an integral part of ideology.

No text can function on its own and of necessity comes into contact with the exterior text which constitutes not only publishing houses and other institutions, but the question of evaluation. An institution is "an entity that sets the rules for literary production and ... decides about the emergence of certain types of texts by legitimising them and giving them a point of insertion in society ... These institutions play a central role in the distribution and consumption of literary and performance texts" (De Toro, 1988:44). The choices made by publishing houses are ideologically determined and these in turn influence canonisation as circulation and distribution play a significant role in this process.

The evaluation of a text is often avoided by semioticians in the process of reception or consumption. The very act of evaluation is permeated by prejudice and inevitably linked to an ideology. When we evaluate a play, we also unconsciously evaluate an ideology as a text is merely considered to be the textualization of an ideology. Therefore we can say
that "evaluation is an ideological product of the production of an ideology" (De Toro, 1988:48).

It is important to establish the class and ideological position of the writer of the text. If we can recognise the producer's relation to the intertexts and ideotexts he chooses as well as his relation to publishing houses, we can determine the class position of the writer to the text. We establish these relations by careful study of the objects of discourse which must always be coherent and consistent within a dramatic text. This guarantees the stability of the referents and ensures the semantic and pragmatic coherence of the dramatic dialogue.

Dramatic dialogue is one of the most important aspects of theatre as it is through dramatic dialogue that the characters can communicate with each other. This makes drama dynamic.

2.6 THE "POSSIBLE WORLDS" OF THE DRAMA

"Possible worlds" of the dramatic text can very loosely be defined as "the way things could have been" (Elam, 1980:100). Through decoding a text, the reader creates a "possible world" that is different from any other reader's "possible world". The "possible world" is largely determined culturally rather than logically. Bókay believes that an "intuitive understanding of the text world as a whole interpretation must always depend on its self-code", viz. the characteristics of its world compared
to the actual world (1979:770). He defines the "possible world" as "an intentional (the self-contained, closed feature) system of relations that defines individuals as its elements" (1979:770).

The "individuals" Bókay mentions in his definition are those objects that become elements of the world. They are then integrated into the system of relations, which is the essence of the world. These objects can be found in different worlds if they can enter that world's system of relations. Identification of individuals can take place in two ways: from the individuals - viz. identifying the same individuals in different worlds (these individuals will have physical similarities) or from the world - viz. the same place in the system of relations can have different individuals having identical positions (there are similar possibilities for different individuals). "Individuals" can also be termed "characters".

"Possible worlds" exist simply because the reader often "guesses" what will follow later on in the text. He already creates a "possible world". He is also sometimes startled when the plot does not unfold the way he expects it to. Drama is constructed on the basis of possibilities and conflicting forces. No drama can be understood if the reader cannot or does not form some kind of hypothetical world, even if he does abandon one for another in the course of the drama.

Although dramatic worlds are "hypothetical (as if) constructs, the audience recognises the events as counter-factual but experiences the action in the actual here and now" (Elam, 1980:102). Dramatic worlds are never completely stipulated or detailed, but the amount of information they carry can be very revealing about not only the author, but also the cultural histories. Since the world is never static, the world of drama
is always dynamic. However, there will of necessity be some overlap between the real and the "possible" world, as the "possible" world is based on the reader's experience of the real world. What we must remember is that a play is "not a pretended representation of a state of affairs, but the pretended state of affairs itself" (Elam, 1980:111). We can never hope to project ourselves into the counter-factual world of the drama for it involves a transformation of the physical "here" into a hypothetical "there". We can, therefore, never experience what the character feels unless our real world becomes the "possible world". What we do know about the "possible world" is revealed through the characters of the play for there are no descriptive passages as we find in the novel. The drama, therefore, provides a framework for the construction of "worlds" and is, according to Lotman "a secondary modelling system" based on the primary system whereby man models and organises his world, namely language" (Elam, 1980:133).

2.7 TOWARDS A SOCIO-SEMIOSIS OF THEATRE RECEPTION

The relations between text (dramatic or performance) and spectator are as important as the relations between text, reception and ideology as they function in a particular receptive context (De Toro, 1988:49).

In watching the unfolding of the performance text, the spectator perceives a structure and at the end of the process he has compiled a complete structure of the performance. However, the performance text
presupposes a structure which can be interpreted differently by various spectators according to social context, ideologies and ethics. However, "the performance text presupposes a central signified that is shared by all spectators. This signified is a product of directorial and spectatorial concretization" which can be interpreted in many different ways (De Toro, 1988:50).

The process of signification follows three stages: 1. fictionalisation of an aesthetic object or referent, 2. textualization of an ideology and 3. ideologization of the text. These three stages are "mediated and determined by the Social Context which is shared by both the director and the spectator" (De Toro, 1988:50).

What must be kept in mind is that the performance text is always dynamic and interpretation differs from spectator to spectator, from performance to performance. The variety of concretization results from the variability of the three components of the reception circuit, i.e. the Social Context which determines the literary tradition, the ideological and literary norms which change with time, and the signifier that changes in relation to the interpretation of the text.

At the structural level the Performance text imposes a signifier on the spectator. However, the manner of perception and interpretation of that structure may be very different from the one proposed by the performance text. Variation of concretization results from changes that take place in the signifier and in the Social Context.

2.7.1 The Process of Concretization
The spectator concretizes a performance in the following way: while the performance text (or signifier) is perceived from the Social Context of the spectator, out of the Social Context the spectator forms a signified which provides certain messages and the imaginary referent or the fiction of the performance text. These two practices together constitute the spectator's concretization.

The process of concretization follows three steps: fictionalisation of an esthetic object or referent, textualization of an ideology, and ideologization of the text.

2.7.1.1 The process of fictionalisation (from the social context to the signified):

The process of fictionalisation begins with the confrontation between the "possible world" of the dramatic or performance text and the spectator's real world. The fiction of the performance creates a referent, an imaginary world without real existence. This referent has to pass through the Social Context of the spectator to be completely understood. The signifier (the text) is structured by the spectator in a coherent manner from which "meaning emerges and the concretization is realized" (De Toro, 1988:52). The process of fictionalisation therefore involves the spectator's participation in structuration and concretization.

"The PT, by means of the fiction, creates an imaginary referent: characters, plot, scenography, dialogical discourse, etc. This imaginary referent, constituted mainly of an oral component (dialogue) and a visual one (space and theatrical object), produces a referential illusion that allows the fictionalisation process. The totality of this operation may be
expressed by the concept of secondary modelling system (SMS) ... (which) is a product of the horizon of expectations and the reading code of the reader/spectator in relation to the signifier of the DT/PT" (De Toro, 1988:52). This SMS consists of a second "language", eg. the language of the theatre which is built upon a natural language which constitutes the first system. The second system, however, is on its own a totality as it "incorporates the three stages of concretization, and is a significant structure (signifier/signified/social context) confronted with the imaginary referent or referential illusion of the DT/PT" (De Toro, 1988:53).

This process can be illustrated graphically:

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Performance Text
      ↘
     imaginary referent ────→ referential illusion

          ↘
          fictionalization

          ↘
(secondary modelling system)
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(De Toro, 1988:52).
The establishment of the fictionalisation (which involves structure and meaning) is done from the Social Context. The performance text is filtered through the social context, thereby establishing structure and meaning. "What allows the spectator to relate the possible world to the real world are those referents of the former that can be glued to the latter (De Toro, 1988:53). This process is mediated by the ideological, aesthetical and ethical components of the dramatic or performance text.

2.7.1.2 Ideologization of the text

Ideologization of the text implies identifying the ideology in a literary text. Ideological components are transmitted through the possible world or imaginary referent as it expresses a world vision or is a proposal of the real world. Any text is articulated in a certain structure to convey certain contents and this structure is determined ideologically. The ideologization is an act of the producer but also of the receiver of the message who ideologizes the text from places of indeterminacy (De Toro, 1988: 53), i.e. the receiver projects his ideology which is part of his social context into the text. "The producer of the text (author or director) performs semantization of the fiction which is in turn convergently or divergently re-semantized by the reader/spectator" (De Toro, 1988:53).

2.7.1.3 Textualization of the ideology (from the signifier to the social context):

The textualization of the ideology consists in inscribing the ideology of a text in its very form (signifier), i.e. the discourse and expression
will be ideologically marked. Therefore, "the textualization of the ideology is the structuration of the ideology as text" (De Toro, 1988:54). At this level, "the movement is from the text’s proposed/imposed signifier to the Social Context, where the spectator is situated. The double reception process (directorial/spectatorial) performed in the theatre" may be graphically illustrated as follows (De Toro, 1988:54):
(De Toro, 1988:55).
The process of reception is complex for it deals not only with the concretization of the dramatic or performance text, but also with the relations between stage and spectator. The communication process starts with the Sender (author/director/scriptor/combination of all three). The text is influenced by the Performance Context (PC) (which determines the codes and form of production to be used) as well as the Social Context (which determines ideological position, cultural environment, intertexts). The result is the DT which proposes both a signifier (Ser) and a signified (Sed). The director and his team then turn this DT into a "virtual performance text which materialises in a performance text proposing the final signifier/signified" (De Toro, 1988:54). This directorial concretization is also influenced by both the Performance and Social Contexts. The performance is then finally interpreted by the spectator from the discourse of the actors and concretized while being influenced by the Performance and Social Contexts.

This then, is semiotics. It involves not only coherent decoding of sign systems and plurality of meaning, but is closely interwoven with the social context of the producer of the text and spectator, ideologies and esthetic values. All these factors create unity in the text and add to the accumulation of meanings in the dramatic or performance text.

I have chosen semiotics as the theoretical basis for my study as it is a most accessible science for studying the dramatic text. While many scholars and critics openly question the validity of studying the semiotics of a text in isolation, Porath writes that "each text contains constant elements as well as culture-dependent elements. And inasmuch as the
constant elements are found in the deep structure of the human experience underlying a particular text, rather than in the surface structure, the imitation acquires the status of an original and independent work" (1979:734).
LITERATURE AND IDEOLOGY

3.1 WHAT IS IDEOLOGY?

Literature is always read in relation to society, and can only be understood within a larger framework of social reality. Literary criticism is a social process, a social product. It can be seen as an act of "reimagining the original in culture-dependent terms" (Porath, 1979:733). Literature is not a reflection of reality, it is an interpretation, a translation, of reality through a certain ideology in codes, leaving behind a faithful representation of reality. "Common sense" tells us about the world in general, about the period in which the text is written, and about the way the author sees and experiences his world. However, even this "common sense" view is coloured ideologically. "Common sense itself is ideologically and discursively constructed, rooted in a specific historical situation and operating in conjunction with a particular social formation" (Belsey, 1980:3).

Belsey defines ideology as "the condition of our experience of the world, unconscious precisely in that it is unquestioned, taken for granted... Ideology is inscribed in discourse in the sense that it is literally written or spoken in it; it is a way of thinking, speaking, experiencing" (1980:5). Eagleton explains ideology as the "ideas, values and feelings by which men experience their societies at various times" (1976:viii). It is the way people live, and the way they see and understand their world.
Literature is produced out of the system of differences of which the "world" exists, and the texts produced are interpreted differently by each reader according to his ideology. Ideology is necessary to outline the system of differences so that the text can be understood in a certain way by a certain group of people. This is the only way an ideology can be identified for what it is.

"The relationship between language and thought also explains the intensity of the resistance to new meanings and ways of analysing the world, just as it explains the difficulty of unfamiliar concepts (significeds) which cannot come into existence without new and unfamiliar discourses - new significeds and relations between signifiers" (Belsey, 1980:46). Significeds and signifiers attain meaning, not because they are direct reflections of reality, but because we recognise those signifying patterns which are familiar to us. These signifying patterns are determined ideologically.

Althusser explains that ideology is a "system of representations (discourses, images, myths) concerning the real relationships in which people live - ideology is both a real and an imaginary relation to the world - real in that it is the way in which people really live their relationship to the social relationships which govern their conditions of existence, but imaginary in that it discourages a full understanding of these conditions of existence and the ways in which people are socially constituted within them ... it exists in the behaviour of people acting according to their beliefs" (In Belsey, 1980:57). Ideology therefore would seem to limit semiotics unless the critic tries to take an objective point of view and be willing to see plurality of meaning. Ideology, therefore, plays a significant role in analysing a literary text. Meaning
is never determined within a text, but is constructed by a reader in the reader-text relationship. The reader "decides" what the text will mean for him, and the decision is an ideological one.

Why the playwright commits himself to paper, and what he ultimately writes is also ideologically determined. Through the ages, the reason why and what the playwright writes changes according to his environment and socio-historic milieu.

3.2 LITERATURE AND COMMITMENT

All literature can be seen as committed literature as writers have always possessed basic values and assumptions that underlie their work, shaping it in ways of which they may often be unaware. Sartre asserts that the writer is "inevitably committed because he cannot soar above history, whatever his pretensions to doing so. Willy-nilly, he is involved in his own time; impartiality is impossible" (Caute, 1978: ix). But for Sartre, commitment implies "a conscious affirmation of certain values and the writer's function as an agent of freedom. The writer is urged to try and embrace the human condition in its totality and, in exploring a situation, to unite the specific with the absolute" (Caute, 1978: x).

Commitment can, therefore, be defined as "arising out of a writer's or an intellectual's conscious questioning of his social role, and as involving his equally conscious decision to play an active part, either through his
literary activities or simply as an individual human being, in the shaping of social and political events" (Bartram, 1982:84).

Literature is very much bound up in society and politics, and one can even go so far as to say that all literature is political. The well-known novelist, George Orwell, has been reported as saying that literature has "a desire to push the world in a certain direction, to alter other people's idea of the kind of society that they should strive after ... no book is genuinely free from political bias, the attitude that art should have nothing to do with politics is itself a political attitude" (Stevens et al, 1987:68).

Literature, politics, society and ideology are, therefore, all inevitably linked. They are so closely interwoven that it is impossible to discuss one aspect without touching on the other. Christopher Caudwell has said: "Art is the product of society, as the pearl is of the oyster, and to stand outside art is to stand inside society" (Stevens et al, 1987:69). It is the artist's work to combine these aspects in such a manner that they create an illusion that should not easily be dismissed. This illusion must tell us about the world we live in, even though this illusion is admittedly personal and subjective. Literature must deal with aspects of reality, it must tell us something about ourselves and about others.

A genuine writer wishes to have a voice of his own, to revolt against society if need be, but his message should always contain some kernel of what society, or the establishment, would regard as truth, otherwise it can too easily be dismissed as irrelevant and then disregarded. It should attempt to widen the horizon of the reader by conveying some knowledge not hitherto perceived. "Imaginative writers seek to expose,
correct or change the cultural pattern which they find. Theirs is more often than not the voice of protest, or at least of dissent; even when they approve they express reservations. But to protest or even to assent the writer needs first to understand. To understand the culture in which one lives is a way of understanding oneself” (Reiss, 1978:9).

I will now discuss what a few critics consider the role of the playwright/novelist/artist to be in society. There has been a definite development in the line of thought from the time of Nietzsche (where art is a form of escapism), to present day South African playwrights (who, like Brecht, use art to confront the audience with reality), and I will attempt to only briefly discuss those who are applicable to this study.

3.2.1 FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE (1844 - 1900)

For Nietzsche, "art is semblance, not reality, but since life is not reality either, but semblance, art is, so to speak, at one further remove from reality, it is the semblance of a semblance" (Reiss, 1978:17).

The task of the writer is to make life bearable. Nietzsche sees life as ugly and frightening, but art saves us from truth. We need art to survive, to serve as a form of escapism. Art serves this purpose well, for it does not reflect reality. Art is, therefore, open to interpretation. Words cannot precisely denote relations, they are a fallacy of reason.
Because we are so often mislead by words, our thought is limited to what we read which can prove an obstacle to our recognising ourselves.

3.2.2 THOMAS MANN (1875 - 1955)

Mann believed that the artist's task is to represent the feelings and aspirations of the masses for whom he speaks. He can be said to be a spokesman who stands in the centre of society. However, he is not there only to moralise and educate, he is also there for entertainment and pleasure. This is then the difference between the teacher and the artist. The artist is allowed freedom of thought and uses his imagination freely which enables him to enjoy mental freedom from ordinary life.

Like Nietzsche, Mann sees art as an illusion which makes life more bearable. Art is fiction, not fact. However, the artist must always make his work credible for the reader, for it is his task to convince us of his point of view. He must be able to capture our attention and bring us not only to introspection, but make us aware of our culture and society. We ought to be made aware of politics in a social and personal setting to show us how political attitudes and individual experiences interact.

Tolstoy has said that "the main purpose of art is to tell the truth about the soul, to reveal and express all secrets which cannot be said with simple words. Art is a microscope which the artist focuses on the secret
of his soul and which reveals to men the secrets common to all of them" (Reiss, 1978:112).

3.2.3 FRANZ KAFKA (1883 - 1924)

Kafka sees the writer's task as one which "raises life to a higher plane... to drag the writer... out of the underworld and to give him peace" (Reiss, 1978:130). Kafka's whole attitude to life and art is basically tragic. He sees writing as an "assault" and a product of the self. The writer's whole personality plays an important role in the creation of a work of art. Misunderstandings occur when reality is not sketched realistically which can then create doubt in the reader's mind.

However, although words are often inadequate symbols for conveying intentions, art is sometimes ambiguous and elusive, and the fault often lies with the author.

3.2.4 NEW CRITICISM AND NORTHRUP FRYE

Texts are open to interpretation. Language provokes possibilities of meaning as language is not static, but undergoes a dynamic process of
Meanings in the text are, therefore, not fixed, but realised in the process of reading. It is the task of the literary critic to reveal plurality of meaning and to offer possible readings of the text.

Northrop Frye argued that literature should transcend history and ideology, thereby giving expression to the "timeless aspirations of an essentially unchanging human nature" (Belsey, 1980: 24). Assumptions about literature imply assumptions about language and meaning. Thought takes place "independently of language, in the mind, and meaning precedes its expression in words" (Belsey, 1980:25). However, it is only through language that the production of meaning is possible. Meaning is a matter of convention and familiarity rather than intuition. We understand a text because we are familiar with the concepts the playwright uses, and the world in which the action takes place must contain certain points of reference for identification purposes.

However, literature should not merely play a descriptive or escapist role in society, but should play an active role in provoking men to change the world, and by doing so, change themselves. Eagleton (1980:62) believes, moreover, that commitment is more than just a matter of presenting correct political and social ideas in a text, "it reveals itself in how far the artist reconstructs the artistic forms at his disposal, turning authors, readers and spectators into collaborators".
3.2.5 MARXISM

Ideology plays an important role in Marxist thinking about literature. Marxists define ideology as "the sense of a collective representation of ideas and experience as opposed to the material reality on which experience is based" (Forgacs, 1986:169). Literature is, therefore, situated within a larger ideological framework along with religion, philosophy, politics and legal systems. Marxists analyse literature in terms of historical conditions as these conditions produce literature. They are particularly aware of trying, through literature, to transform society. "What narrative Marxism has to deliver is the story of the struggles of men and women to free themselves from certain forms of exploitation and oppression" (Eagleton, 1976:vii).

Marxism concentrates largely on class-struggle - men are what they are because of material constraints - their economic position determines their class, viz. their position in society. Eagleton believes that ideology "signifies the way men live out their roles in class-society, the values, ideas and images which tie them to their social functions and to prevent them from a true knowledge of society as a whole" (1976:16-17). While Althusser argues that art cannot be reduced to ideology, I believe that art is a representation of the ideology held by the artist. Art and ideology are, therefore, inseparable. Trotsky, however, maintains that literary form has a high degree of autonomy and does not "merely bend to every ideological wind that blows" (Eagleton, 1976:26). Literary form is that "aesthetic shape given to a content, a shape manifested through technical features such as narrative time and the interrelationship of characters and situations in a work" (Forgacs, 1986:171). This means
that even if there are significant changes in ideology, literary form will not necessarily change. However, as a result of seeing social reality in new ways, the playwright could very well change his literary form which would influence the relationship between playwright and audience. What must be remembered is that whatever literary form the playwright chooses, it will also be ideologically determined.

Contrary to Northrop Frye, Marxists believe that "all art bears the imprint of its historical epoch, but that great art is that in which this imprint is most deeply marked" (Eagleton, 1976:3). Art is a way of seeing the world, and it sees the world through the ideology of an age. Art is historically determined by the kind of content it has to convey. There are, therefore, three forms of art: realism, naturalism and formalism. Naturalism and formalism, however, both have their origin in realism.

Realism is "a work that is rich in a complex set of relations between man, nature and history and these relations embody and unfold what is 'typical' about a particular phase of history" (Eagleton, 1976:28). Individuals represent certain aspects of a society, thereby revealing significant movements in history. Characters, therefore, remain individuals while being "typical" of the historical products of society.

For Engels, realism "implies, besides truth of detail, the truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical conditions. Therefore, overt political commitment in fiction is unnecessary because truly realist writing itself dramatises the significant forces of social life, breaking beyond both the photographically observable and the imposed rhetoric of a 'political solution'" (Eagleton, 1976:46-47). The realist writer looks
past accidental incidents to the essential changing forces of a community, selecting and combining them into a unity and producing it as a concrete experience.

By naturalism is meant "that distortion of realism which merely photographically reproduces the surface phenomena of society without penetrating to their significant essences" (Eagleton, 1976:30). Society is no longer under scrutiny, detail is merely observed. Characters no longer portray aspects of society, but are disconnected and alienated from their world. The writer is no longer an active participant in history, he becomes a clinical observer of man and his relations in society.

With formalism, "man is stripped of his history and has no reality beyond the self" (Eagleton, 1976:31). The characters are dissolved to mental chaos, they are gripped by despair and have no social relations with their world. These characters can be said to live in a void, where there is no objectivity and the unity between inner and outer worlds is destroyed. History then becomes pointless or cyclical.

For Marxist thinking, the literary text that will eventually have the most validity, is that literary text that closely approximates to the social class to which the writer belongs and that reflects that class's ideology. At the same time the text must be presented coherently and in a unified manner. However, ideology is not just presented descriptively, ideology is more often reflected in what the text does not say explicitly. Silences and dashes in the dialogue sometimes reveal more than the written text does. Because the text contains these silences or dashes, it implies that the text is never complete and therefore displays conflict and plurality.
of meaning. The significance of the work "lies in the difference between the meanings" (Eagleton, 1976:35).

The work is, therefore, "complete in its incompleteness. It is not the critic's task to fill the work in; it is to seek out the principle of its conflict of meanings and to show how this conflict is produced by the work's relation to ideology" (Eagleton, 1976:35).

However, although Marxism contains elements of truth, this kind of literary criticism is both limited and reductive. Marxist critics believe that literature should be judged according to the contribution it makes to the class struggle. They deal harshly with authors who do not take sides or fail to promote Marxist ideas and the necessity of revolution. Stevens (1987:70-71) writes that Marxism is especially limited in the sense that the critics claim to "have discovered the whole truth of human history and society ... they are not open to plurality for the truth is one and is known".

3.2.6 BRECHT

Brecht is a playwright well known for his revolutionary ideas in the world of the theatre. He followed many of the principles of Marxism and this influenced both his thoughts and his work as playwright and literary critic.
He is especially known for his work in epic theatre. Epic theatre differs from traditional theatre in that it makes the audience observe the action on stage, instead of involving them in the experiences of the characters. The actors of epic theatre are instructed to distance themselves from the audience, thereby emphasising the fact that they are actors in a theatre rather than individuals of real life. The audience is then confronted with an argument and impelled to a point of recognition. Epic theatre presents an image of the world, but it is a broken image as the playwright looks at the world through a special or fragmented looking-glass.

Brecht sees reality as "a changing, discontinuous process, produced by men and so transformable by them... the task of the theatre is not to 'reflect' a fixed reality, but to demonstrate how character and action are historically produced, and how they could have been, and still be, different .... it is less a reflection of, than a reflection on social reality" (Eagleton, 1976:65).

The Brechtian text is incomplete, and it is only completed in the audience's reception of it. The audience is expected to remain critically aloof from the play, measuring its shortcomings as the play offers alternatives that are implied but not spelled out explicitly.

Epic theatre deals only with anti-romantic subject matter, the plot of the drama being consistently undramatic and the dialogue unemotional. This is Brecht's alienation effect ("Verfremdungseffekt") which has its roots in the desire to change the course of history. The function of this alienation effect is to transpose the familiar into the new and unexpected, to shock and distance the audience, forcing them to view the world with new insight and recognition. What is familiar becomes strange and alien.
Brecht strips the character, event or object of its self-evident, familiar, obvious quality to create a sense of astonishment and curiosity.

Brecht uses the theatre as "a tool of social engineering, a laboratory of social change" (Esslin, 1973:109). Man is not only presented in terms of the way he is, but the way he can be. Society is not independent of the individual. While the individual is defined in terms of society, society is in turn defined by the individuals who compose it. By changing the attitudes of the people, Brecht hoped to bring about change in society. "It is not the consciousness of men that determine their being, but on the contrary their social being determines their consciousness" (Dickson, 1978:46).

A theatre is a theatre and not the world itself. It produces illustrations of historical or imaginary happenings among human beings. However, while theatre is theatre, there is no natural exposition of characters. The characters in a Brechtian play do not naturally establish their names and relationships through natural conversation, they introduce themselves directly to the audience. There is no attempt to create fixed, highly individualised characters, characters emerge from their social functions and develop within this framework if necessary. The play becomes, not a study of human nature, but a study of human relationships. The emphasis on the inner life of the characters shifts towards the way in which the characters react towards each other. Not the characters, but the story becomes the central concept of the play. There is, therefore, no attempt at illusion, and the play unfolds in a number of short completed situations.
Literature is, then, a "form of social action ... a secondary form of action, action by disclosure" (Caute, 1978:xii). Brecht, therefore, stresses the need for an audience to enjoy itself and to "respond with sensuousness and humour ... the audience must think above the action, refuse to accept it uncritically, but it is not to discard emotional response: 'One thinks feelings and one feels thoughtfully'"(Eagleton, 1976:67). The audience, however, must always keep in mind that they are sitting in a theatre, listening to an account of something that happened in the past at a certain place at a specific point in time. It is the task of the theatre to instruct and thereby alter the attitudes of the audience. The aim of "exposing 'objectively' the workings of society, the desire to alter the spectator's consciousness, and shared political convictions" (Subiotto, 1982:32), is designed to "arouse indignation, dissatisfaction, a realisation of contradictions" (Esslin, 1973:119). However, Brecht believed that while the theatre was a place to instruct and make people aware that they should change their way of thinking, he also believed that theatre-goers should enjoy theatre, for enjoyment can only enhance thinking, teaching and enquiring. This aesthetic dimension is an important aspect in theatre as it "exercises the imagination and breadth of perspective more readily than the circumscribed real event" (Subiotto, 1982:44).

"The theatre must continue to show figures who stand out as personalities in their own right, who are distinct and singular as human beings and are not merely representations or reflections of philosophical or sociological principles. The individual therefore becomes the indispensable counterpart of the collective, and the relationship between these two factors, one of which is crucial to the working of the theatre, the other to the understanding of our political and social realities, now
becomes the crucial issue for both the theorist and dramatist in Brecht” (Speidel, 1982:54).

Brecht, therefore, developed from a follower of solely didactic theatre, where the heroes are at the mercy of their instincts, are anti-social and a product of social forces, to a playwright who recognised the audience’s need to identify with the characters of a play. This still means that the character must be portrayed within his class and epoch, and placed within a framework of personal, historical, social, economic and political forces. However, the character must be an individual among the masses, as the individual gives life to the theatre, “for where is this person, full of life, unmistakably himself, he who is not quite the same as his peers?” (Speidel, 1982:54).

Although Brecht set out to destroy the traditional concept of dramatic art, he ultimately created strikingly individual dramatic figures, thereby going against his original convictions, and in so doing, created art as we know and understand it.

Many South African playwrights have not yet realised or given expression to the importance of the aesthetic dimension in a work of art. Many still hold on to didacticism as the only function of consequence in the theatre. This type of agit-prop theatre later loses its appeal in the maze of propaganda and discrimination, slogans and politics. ¹ A respected British critic is reported as having said after watching a long and tedious play written by a South African playwright that “it’s tough and it’s sincere, but it’s not theatre” (Daymond, Jacobs & Lenta, 1986:90).

¹
3.2.7 SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN PLAYWRIGHTS

Daymond, Jacobs and Lenta write that it is important for all students involved in literary criticism to keep in mind that “in responding to the contemporary situation, it is necessary to remember that our literature is affected by all our history” (1986:xiv). This ties in almost directly with Brecht’s theatre, where the individual is inevitably part of society and history, and where literature is affected by both these forces.

Daymond et al. have compiled an invaluable book on a number of well-known South African playwrights which emphasises the reasons why certain playwrights take up their pens and write a play. These playwrights include those committed to the Cause and those who write for pleasure and enjoyment. Various articles in the book also describe the playwrights’ attitude to the South African situation and illustrate how this attitude is reflected in the different plays.

South African poets and playwrights can, according to their admittedly Euro-centric approach, roughly be divided into two groups: those that sacrifice literature as a vehicle for sheer protest (most of the Committed Theatre written today and passed off as literature), and those who not only follow the norms of Western literary principles, but are concerned with man as a multi-dimensional individual, who does not merely function as a political figure.

Most South African critics trace the resurgence in South African theatre to 1976. This was the year Soweto rioted, the year television appeared on the scene, and the year the Market Theatre first raised its curtain.
All these factors contributed to the impetus of Black theatre. Today's Black theatre can be divided into three main groups: White-controlled organisations which specialise in the commercial exploitation of Black art, eg. Ipi Tombi; Black commercial theatre which is mainly Gibson Kente's field, featuring the simple township tale with agreeably caricatured stock-types of the township, eg. the shebeen queen, the tsotsis; and Committed theatre, which I will discuss more fully.

Ian Steadman defines Black Theatre as "a movement or a posture based on ethnicity. The label expresses more important notions of identification with a set of values. These values fall under the rubric of the Black Consciousness movement, and they define an attitude to the nature and function of performance in Southern African society. Most Black theatre, as the term is understood by its practitioners in South Africa, is really proletarian theatre which dedicates itself to the depiction of life lived as a black man, and in South Africa, that has to do with politics and ideology" (1981:2).

Committed theatre especially, is committed to the use of theatre for affecting social change. This theatre is the result of the "Black Consciousness Movement", where Black Pride is heralded and the government is viciously attacked. However, while the subject matter is extremely politically orientated, Committed Theatre is also dedicated to experiments with language, improvisation, movement, song and dance, in the hope of forging an original South African Theatre. This, however, remains an ideal, for the crusaders of Committed Theatre are philosophically against white participation, which makes the creation of a completely original South African theatre, which would be representative of all races and cultures in this country, impossible.
Moreover, Black theatre offers little other than politics and propaganda, and few audiences can listen only to political sloganizing indefinitely. True theatre demands more than what pure agit-prop theatre can offer. South African playwrights are slowly realising this and there is now a definite move towards a more "universal" kind of theatre.

Ahmed Essop is a dedicated poet who is passionately committed to social and political change and who "abandons the formal aspects that control creative literary performance" (Essop, 1986:19). However, the majority of playwrights agree that there simply must be more than protest in a play to make it universally acceptable.

Cullinan writes that while he believes that writers should be encouraged to demonstrate their loathing of racism, of imprisonment without trial and apartheid, he warns that protest literature can all too easily fall into facile slogans that become self-defeating. Although playwrights must persevere in their struggle against injustice, they should strive to be "accurate" and "true" in their use of words. Only this kind of literature will have effect and survive (Cullinan, 1986:14-15). Ebersohn also warns against a one-dimensional approach to literature. Although commitment has its worth and is necessary in the face of so much injustice, the writer should take care that his commitment to change does not grow larger than his commitment to writing, for such a writer can only be pitied.

A single-minded devotion to one aspect of life cannot offer a comprehensive statement. Life itself is complex and has multiple dimensions. "Those who see to reduce us to one-dimensional beings will ultimately fail" (Essop, 1986:20). It is impossible to try and divorce literature and society, therefore, one South African theme will always be
that of social conflict. Haresnape agrees that literature "must feed upon the day-to-day realities of social life", but also says that literature cannot be "pressed easily into the service of pragmatic purposes" (Haresnape, 1986:57). Literature should transcend the realm of sheer protest literature and strive towards universality. "Protest must not be allowed to destroy the art of the writer. Art and protest should be happily married" (Paton, 1986:89).

"It is an exaggerated claim for literature that it can spark a revolution ... People expect to be incited by a language of the kind that make imaginative literature. By the time a writer has done composing a play, a poem, a story as a vehicle of political agitation, the revolution is under way. Literature may record, replay, inspire an on-going process. As an act of language that renews, revitalises, it is a vehicle of thought and feeling that should increase by reliving experiences. Literature is forever stirring us up. This is its own kind of revolution" (Mphahlele, 1986:85).

The very nature of existence in South Africa, for all cultures, is political. The fact that we are a multi-coloured, multi-lingual society means that we have to develop a vibrant theatre that reflects that reality. "We have to try and create that vitality, that excitement in our dramas which reflects our particular, peculiar socio-political circumstances" (Sichel, 1984:8). However, it is not the playwright's duty only to reflect our physical surroundings, present stock types in society or spout politics, it is his responsibility to make us aware of the individual caught in a system, to focus our attention on not only his frailty, but his right to dignity.
NOTE

1. This type of Euro-centred criticism is often considered inappropriate to the works produced by South African playwrights, but it is an inescapable fact that critical consensus at present holds that these works fall crucially short of general acceptance.
4 THE THEME OF PROTEST AND COMMITMENT IN SOUTH AFRICAN DRAMA

MAN'S SEARCH FOR FREEDOM

The development of South African drama has followed an almost predictable path as theatre and socio-political forces have always gone hand-in-hand. As has been mentioned before, literature is an interpretation of reality through an ideology in codes and few aspects of reality have inspired playwrights more than the fascinating aspect of political incidents or influences in South Africa. One can hardly avoid the political aspect given the current situation, and this is evident in almost every play that is produced in theatres across the country. Few plays have evoked as much interest or criticism as the South African drama that deals with the theme of protest and commitment in man's search for freedom.

4.1 WHITE PLAYWRIGHTS OF 1704 - 1930

Tracing the development of protest and commitment in South African drama is no easy nor trivial task, and much still remains to be done in this largely unexplored field in the history of drama. However, the earliest written play reflecting the difference in, and exploitation of,
cultures I could find with the help of Stephen Gray (1978:15), was a play written by a Cape Malay slave, Majiet, who called his play Galiema (1704). It was a play performed behind locked doors late at night, for the subject matter was how the virtuous Galiema resisted the nocturnal advances of her Dutch master. Of course, the situation would have been somewhat different, although delicate, if the heroine had been Dutch as well. (Consider the success of Henry Fielding's novel Pamela where we have much the same situation.)

Not all plays written during this era were overtly political. In 1838, Andrew Geddes Baines produced Kaatje Kekkelbek, a play which is still prescribed for scholars in Afrikaans medium schools today. Boniface wrote Kockincoz in 1843, an unsuccessful satire of the dishonesty of certain lawyers which was the result of a personal vendetta against a lawyer named De Kock. (Woodrow, 1970:394). Leinad's tragedy, The Struggle for Freedom: The Rebellion of Slagters Nek, was not received well by Cape Town audiences as the Elizabethan form and style of speech imposed on eighteenth-century Cape characters (Woodrow, 1970:394) was artificial and grated on the ear. The reason for this phenomenon is obvious, for it was a time when most English South Africans still considered England as "home", and tried to force the cultured and traditional Elizabethan style of English playwrights onto the raw and harsh lifestyle that South Africa offered, which was ideologically inappropriate, and could be considered an unsuccessful marriage of style and content. The nineteenth century, therefore, was an era that did not encourage prolific writing, and South African drama only gained impetus in the twentieth century with the emergence of the Pieter-Dirk Uys of the early 1900's - Stephen Black.
Stephen Black is "the first playwright to use the real language of his time effectively, to convey his theme; he has noticed the variety of accents at his disposal and has used them to enrich his comedy" (Woodrow, 1970:403). He was one of the first playwrights to realise that indigenous drama needed indigenous language, and herein lay some of his success. Black not only wrote comedies, he was also a very shrewd satirist of society. While being totally involved, he manages to distance himself from the matter of class and colour as there is no sign of malice in his work. Instead we find balance, insight and maturity. "Black's scalpel does not slit deep beneath the flesh, and he does not pretend to have a panacea for all the pains of class and colour" (Woodrow, 1970:403). He can be said to have a fundamental sympathy with man in general.

Love and the Hyphen (1908), Black's first play, was an immediate box-office hit which continued to run successfully for a number of years. Then Helena's Hope Ltd followed in 1910 with a quick succession of other plays. They all played to full houses over the next few years and dominated the theatre world with their wit and humour. His plays satirised a society that was largely pretentious, a society in which rivalry between the different cultures was prevalent, and Black used this to beautifully colour his plays with jocularity and farce.

The years 1920 to 1930 saw Bernard Friedman's Love and Hunger: A Symbolical Play in Three Acts (1923), Maude Bidwell's Breath of the Veld: A Story or a Play (1923), Stephen Black's A Backveld Boer (1924), Cecil Lewis's Willem Adriaan van der Stel and the Burghers and Lady Anne Barnard and her Friends (1924), and David Dainow's Holding Aloof in 1927. The next thirty years delivered little in the line of exciting or thought-provoking drama, and it was only in the 1950's that drama once
again gained momentum with renewed political activities in the country as the National Party came into power and passed the bill of apartheid.

4.2 BLACK PLAYWRIGHTS FROM 1704 - 1950

Little is known about the playwrighting activities of the Black people early in the twentieth century. Oral literature was the dominant form of literature, and little, if anything was ever recorded on paper. It is interesting to note that black drama has always laid more emphasis on the visual image, rather than on the spoken or written word. This remains true till today. However, in 1919 we find records of a certain Father Bernard Huss who translated English plays into Zulu for his converts. Mletwa's Lucky Stars, a theatrical group, was founded in approximately 1927 and these dedicated players mainly presented scenes from traditional life. It is important to remember that this group performed before both white and black audiences, a process that was completely natural and which, if continued, might have helped to diminish cultural prejudice and ignorance. However, this was not to be, as the bill of apartheid was passed which segregated all cultural activities in the 1960s.

The first prominent black playwright of significance was H.I.E. Dhlomo who wrote and produced his first play Nongqause (The Girl Who Killed To Save) in 1935. Dhlomo and a few other drama enthusiasts founded the Bantu Dramatic Society in 1932 and Dhlomo continued his career as
playwright, poet, novelist and producer throughout the 1950's. A number of his plays have continued to receive considerable attention including Cetshwayo (1937), Moshesh (1937), Mfolozi (1937) and Dingane (1937) (Couzens, 1985:125-126). The African National Theatre was founded with the help of Routh in 1939 and they performed Routh's Patriot's Pie and The Word and The Act to relative acclaim.

4.3 PLAYWRIGHTING FROM 1950 - 1980'S

From the 1950's onwards, an abundant output of black playwrighting characterised the dramatic scene in South Africa. The Bantu Theatre Company of C.T. was founded in 1952, and performed Ben Masinga's Chief Above and Chief Below. The bareti Players dominated the theatrical scene from 1953 to 1955, but the group disintegrated soon afterwards. In 1954, James Ambrose Brown, still a well-known playwright of especially Children's theatre, wrote his widely acclaimed and still performed play, Circus Adventure.

The Union Artists was founded in Dorkay House in 1955. Their ideal was to provide a non-commercial, artistically free outlet for talent, creative exchange between races and to develop a South African urban performance culture (Coplan, 1985:205). They performed before both white and black audiences with considerable success. Township Jazz was performed in 1956, the same year that Fugard staged his Klaas and the Devil. In 1957, Fugard appeared on the Johannesburg theatrical scene,
a still largely unknown playwright from Port Elizabeth. His No Good Friday, written in 1958, drew upon Union Artists for its cast and attracted large audiences in Johannesburg. However, black audiences were not yet ready for plays with Western theatrical standards and while Fugard's following works were about blacks, he no longer performed for them as his plays were not accepted by black audiences. These plays include Nongogo, (1959), Boesman and Lena (1960), The Blood Knot (1961), People Are Living There (1963) and Hello and Goodbye (1965).

In the meantime, Union Artists continued with the box-office hit King Kong which took South Africa by storm, but which was regarded as poor South African material overseas as it did not make a strong political statement against the apartheid bill in this country. Many critics regard King Kong as the first successful black musical drama produced and the play which laid the foundation for commercial theatre as we know it today. However, although Union Artists were extremely popular in the late fifties and early sixties, their appeal started waning in the 1960's for they no longer catered for mass demand which was slowly but surely moving into different directions. They inevitably fell into the gap between the cultural expectations of white and black audiences. One of the better-known playwrights who split from Union Artists was Ben Masinga who wrote Back in your own backyard, the same playwright who wrote the successful Chief Above and Chief Below with the Bareti Players in 1952. He was one of the many playwrights who became more conscious of the black audiences' demands, and recognised that Union Artists no longer satisfied their taste for theatre which started leaning more on Black Awareness. Other notable black plays of this period include Jolobe's Amathunzi Obomi (1958), and Sentso's Washerwoman (1959) and
Frustrated Black Boy (1961) which were explicit plays of political exploitation and cultural manipulation.

Out of Union Artists, therefore, two lines of development can be traced, namely the Theatre of Self-Realization and the commercial theatre of Gibson Kente (Coplan, 1985:208). Kente was, and still is, a widely acclaimed Black playwright who bases his plays on the successful formula of King Kong which contains, among others, elements such as the stereotyped shebeen queen, policeman, tsotsis and preacher. Manana, The Jazz Prophet (1963) was Kente's first successful musical which was written while he was still associated with Union Artists. This play launched Kente into a promising and very successful career spanning at least twenty years.

In the same year that Gibson Kente's successful Manaka, The Jazz Prophet was performed, Lewis Nkosi wrote Rhythm of Violence which was a natural product of time and space and can be considered to be an important part of the tradition of political black theatre. 1964 was an important year in South African theatre as apartheid reared its ugly head yet once again with new laws that severely restricted all theatre activities. Apartheid now effectively barred interracial cooperation as separate amenities were instigated and separate community development was installed. This resulted in the banning of multi-racial performance companies and permits were now necessary for black performers to perform in white areas and whites to attend performances in the townships (Coplan, 1985:209). These new legislations had a direct and horrifying effect on the theatrical scene and the drama following showed the effects. Since there was no longer cooperation between white and black, theatre
was the poorer and the chances and ideals for a unique and typical South African Theatre slipped still further out of reach.

White playwrights continued to perform only in front of white audiences and it was during this time that Fugard wrote *Hello and Goodbye* (1965), and Hutchinson *The Rain Killers* (1968). On the black front, theatre developed in two strains, that of show business or commercial theatre, and the Theatre of Self-Realization. The Theatre of Self-Realization tried to avoid wider political issues and concentrate on personal morality and social responsibility. Its aim was to faithfully represent the African experience which, unfortunately is impossible, simply because no situation, where people are so subjectively involved, can be faithfully portrayed. An example of this is Lewis Nkosi’s *Rhythm of Violence* (1964) which was, and still is banned in South Africa. Commercial theatre, however, still enjoyed support and Gibson Kente’s following only increased with the production of *Sikalo* (1966) which is largely remembered for its “artistic dynamism and authenticity” (Coplan, 1985: 209) rather than for its political shortcomings. It was at this point in his career that he distanced himself from Dorkay House and continued to produce *Lifa* independently and successfully in 1968 and *Zwi* in 1970. Sam Mhangwane’s *Unfaithful Woman* (1964) enjoyed tremendous success and is still performed periodically after being performed constantly for twelve years. Both Mhangwane and Kente have led the way in commercial theatre for the past three decades and show every sign of continuing to do so.

The early seventies showed a development in black theatre in three performance areas: township theatre, town theatre and Black Consciousness theatre (Coplan, 1985:210). While township theatre (which
promises entertainment, music and dance) flourished under the careful guidance of Gibson Kente who produced plays like How Long (1974), I Believe (1975) and Too Late (1976), committed theatre developed out of the Theatre of Self-Realization, started making headway and gained rapid support from intellectuals and the broader populace.

Town theatre (Coplan, 1985:210) is theatre created by both white and black experimental groups and their subject material is highly political. A variety of theatre groups were founded and experimental workshops were initiated by interested parties. Such examples are the MDALI Theatre Group which was founded in 1972, the PET Theatre Group, Workshop '71 and the Phoenix Players. Work of white playwrights once again began to be performed in front of black audiences and Fugard's Sizwe Bansi is Dead (1972) was the first of his plays to be successfully performed and appreciated by black audiences, who felt for the first time that Fugard directly addressed their problems of migrant labour and the pass laws. Alex la Guma was also one of the first white South African playwrights to produce and perform a play, Man in the Tree (1971) for black audiences. Plays with a strong political flavour were performed regularly and often banned by the government as constituting criticism of the regime. Plays that were strongly committed to the Cause include plays like Shezi's Shanti (1973), Mqina's Give Us This Day (1974), Maponya's The Cry (1975), Mshengu and M'hoba's uHlanga (1975), and Mqhayisa's Confused Mhlaba (1975).

White playwrights, on the other hand, also slowly started producing plays with a stronger political stance. Fugard's Sizwe Bansi is Dead (1972), Statements Issued After an Arrest Under the Immorality Act (1972) and The Island (1973) took South Africa by storm, and while some patrons
of the theatre strongly criticised Fugard for his overtly political and biased theatre, others cheered and praised him for opening the eyes of white South Africans. However, while political plays were ever on the increase, plays not rigidly political in substance were still being produced and performed, for example James Lodge's Have a Heart, Mrs Dove! The first heart transplant play ever written (1970), Aron's Bar and Ger and even Fugard's Dimetos (1975). Pieter-Dirk Uys also started stealing some of the limelight and drew attention with his play God's Forgotten (1974), Pity About People (1975) and in the same year Selle Ou Storie (1975). Other playwrights who still need attention and are worthy of further study include Winifred Dashwood who wrote Sword of the Wilderness (1971) and Jill Fletcher who wrote The Act, The Long Slide and Miss Nelly in 1974.

16 June 1976 was Soweto Day, a day which has fulfilled its promise of having a long and lasting influence on especially Black Committed theatre. 1976 proved to be a watershed year for South African theatre, not only because of the Soweto uprisings, but it was the year television arrived to disrupt and rule the lives of many families throughout South Africa, and the year the Market Theatre raised its curtain for the first time. Late in 1977, the ban on multi-racial performance companies was lifted and performances once again reached audiences across the colour bar.

The Market Theatre has played an instrumental role in bringing many black and hitherto unseen plays to white audiences. It has also had the function of exposing blacks to white theatre and cooperation between the cultures and races once again flourished. The last decade has seen an enormous output of playwrighting and plays varying in style and
function, from the almost poetic style of Aron to the more violent and
vicious style of Ngema.

Experimental and workshopped theatre has not stood still given the
ingenious guidance and help of especially Barney Simon who has produced
a number of plays together with playwrights such as Mbongeni Ngema
and Percy Mtwa. These plays have enjoyed acclaim not only in South
Africa, but further afield in Europe and America. International successes
include plays like Woza Albert! which was first performed in 1981, but
has continued playing before full houses for a number of years.
however, are plays that contain little other than political sloganizing and
have become dated beyond doubt. Their significant successes overseas
can largely be attributed to popular demand for a 'typical South African'
play. Plays that do not carry a political message, or convey a political
stance, or are not political enough, do not reach the overseas market.
These plays are condemned for not contributing to the Struggle, and
as they do not fall in with the image the overseas market would like to
project of South Africa, they are shrugged off as irrelevant. However,
it would seem as if there is a new awareness among playwrights that
propaganda and sloganizing no longer satisfy the audience locally, and
there is a definite shift towards a more "universal" type of theatre. This
will be discussed at a later stage.

However, while workshopped theatre thrived in the early eighties, plays
were still being written by ardent supporters of the Committed Cause.
The late seventies and eighties saw a number of plays written with
varying degrees of success. Fatima Dike is one playwright who has
achieved recognition with her successful and controversial play The First
South African (1977). She has also written two other plays, The Sacrifice of Kreli and Glass House, the first dealing with the history of the Xhosa people in an attempt to give the black man in South Africa a history, a past he can be proud of, and the latter play being about two women of different cultures and races who inherit a house and the complex problems that automatically go with it.

Zakes Mda is another playwright who is dedicated to the Struggle as his works We Shall Sing For The Fatherland (1979), The Hill (1979), Moroesi(1981), 'Dark Voices Ring (1984) and Dead End (1984) testify. Maishe Maponya needs no introduction as his plays The Hungry Earth (1980), the double bill Dirty Work and Gangsters (1984), Return of the Drum (1986) and Jika (1988) are well-known. These playwrights, together with others such as Matsemela Manaka, Modibane, Mothlabane, Kessie and Ronnie Govender are all playwrights who have as their main aim and function the need for bringing Black Pride and Consciousness back to the black people of South Africa.

On the other side of this widely divergent spectrum, we have Geraldine Aron who has written a number of plays including Mr McConkey's Suitcase (1977), The Shrinking of Alby Chapman (1977), Mickey Kannis Caught My Eye (1978), A Galway Girl) (1979), Joggers (1979), The Spare Room (1981), and Spider (1985). Her plays are not written for political reasons, and if politics does manage to creep in, it is merely because it is unavoidable. It is ironic that her very decision not to write political theatre is a political one. In an interview compiled by Prof. A. Combrink (1986), Aron emphatically denies having any overt political involvement in terms of her writing. She says that "I often feel that my work is frivolous and irrelevant in the light of the situation in SA". Her main
aim for writing is "to entertain, to move the audience and give them something to take home" (Aron, 1986:3). She is, therefore, not a typically South African playwright as her work borders on the universal, but she remains a playwright who demands attention.

Damon Galgut is a young playwright and novelist who has only recently appeared on the scene with his successfully performed No 1 Utopia Lane (1981), Echoes of Anger (1983), Alive and Kicking (1984) and A Party for Mother (1985). He is one of the new generation of playwrights who write because they are inspired to write. "I really don't think I would write at all if I had any personal choice. But I don't. Because when something becomes important enough to me I have to write about it" (Norton, 1984). When he writes, it is a case of emotional compulsion rather than intellectual reasoning. He writes about intense personal experiences or impressions, feelings that any audience could relate to regardless of culture or colour.

Another playwright/actor who has been making a name for himself on the theatrical scene is Paul Slabolepszy who is well-known for his Saturday Night at the Palace (1984) which was also made into a film and won international acclaim, the double bill Under the Oaks, Over the Hill (1985), Making Like America (1986), Boo to the Moon (1986), and his two latest plays Travelling Shots (1988) and Smallholding (1989). While Slabolepszy is not a politically committed playwright, he is committed to conveying the perceptions and attitudes of young South Africans, making a sharp break in his treatment of racism from the theatre of guilt. He has insight into people and portrays them hilariously through his clever exploitation of idiom and other linguistic idiosyncrasies.
Satire has also flourished unavoidably, given the current South African situation with the sharp wit and insight of Uys and Robert Kirby. Uys is better-known for his revues, _Adapt or Dye_ (1981), _Total Onslaught_ (1984), _Beyond the Rubicon (The Emergency Edition)_ (1986), _Rearranging the Deckchairs on the S.A. Bothatanic_ (1987) which was performed at the Grahamstown Arts Festival, and his two latest plays _Just like Home_ (1989) and _Scorched Earth_ (1989). Uys's full-length plays are not that well known and deserve the serious study Bedford has undertaken in her dissertation on Uys titled _The presence of the past in selected works by Pieter-Dirk Uys_ (1988). Plays analysed include _Karnavaal, God’s Forgotten and Panorama_ (1987).

Kirby is not only known for his revues such as _How Now, Sacred Cow?, and Quodlibet, _but also for his biting and often hilarious plays, _It’s A Boy!_ (1982), _The Wrong Time of Year_ (1985), and _The Bijers Sunbird_ (1986). Since 1985, however, Kirby has claimed to be a serious playwright and is no longer "merely" a satirist. The reason: "The subjects he satirised for years have ceased to be funny; his former ironic amusement at such things has been replaced by depression and frustration" (Jackman, 1985:25). However, he still comes dangerously close to the truth each time with each new play, causing most South Africans to squirm in their seats while laughing at their own typical, often invidious, South African behaviour.

We can, therefore, safely say that not all current South African theatre is purely political or agit-prop theatre, playwrights still write plays with universal themes and messages. We now find that theatre has developed into four different main streams, those of universal theatre, township theatre, town theatre and committed theatre, each representing a point
on the continuum between the different poles. However, it is impossible to pin-point a place on the continuum which accurately places the "ideal South African play", for as yet, we do not have one. Each type of play has its own specific niche in the South African scenario at the moment although it would seem as though Committed and experimental theatre is fast fulfilling its original function and moving towards a more universal approach.

The two plays analysed, Woza Albert! and A Place with the Pigs, beautifully illustrate this tendency towards "universalilty", each crossing boundaries in its own unique manner. Although these plays are inevitably bound by their respective ideologies, they are plays that address the human condition, whether it is social as in Woza Albert!, or individual as in A Place with the Pigs.
WOZA ALBERT!

FREEDOM FROM THE OUTSIDE

Woza Albert is a typically workshopped South African play. It is a play that abounds in mime, energy, song, intelligence, timing and wit. While it is effective political theatre, it manages to escape being blatant propaganda by its very originality, black humour, satire and irony. It is the humour, joy, touching and vibrant energy of life that temper the harshness of South African politics. While it harshly condemns the South African situation explicitly, it celebrates the black man’s resilience, not only to survive, but to laugh in spite of apartheid. “It is a cry of hope in a wilderness of black poverty and despair” (Makhaya, 1983:7).

5.1 DECOR AND COSTUME

The decor on stage is not detailed and is reminiscent of Jerry Grotowski’s poor theatre. This is semiotically suggestive and ideologically determined - a deliberate choice to represent and stress prevalence of poverty.

The set consists of two up-ended tea-chests side by side about centre stage. Further upstage an old wooden plank, about ten feet long, is suspended horizontally on old ropes. From nails in the
plank hang the ragged clothes that the actors will use for their transformations (Mtwa, 1983:1).

Mood and scene changes are effected by the discriminate use of lighting. This also serves to enhance and preserve atmosphere.

The actors’ costumes consist of the barest essentials:

The actors wear grey track-suit bottoms and running shoes. They are bare-chested. Around each actor’s neck is a piece of elastic, tied to which is half a squash ball painted pink - a clown’s nose, to be placed over his own nose when he plays a white man (Mtwa, 1983:1).

It is significant that the actors only wear grey track-suit bottoms and running shoes. These clothes are specifically chosen for their undefined quality, for their conferring anonymity upon the wearers, signifying that this story is a tale of the majority of black South Africans. The grey colour of their clothes contributes to the feeling of anonymity as it is a nondescript colour that fades into the background. This is symbolic of a situation that faces most black South Africans who lose their identity as individuals to become merely numbers in a pass-book. It is also significant that not only did black South Africans have to carry pass-books and were known by numbers, few white employers knew their employees names and called them simply Bobbejaan (baboon) or Zuluboy (according to his race). The pink squash ball - a clown’s nose - symbolises the contempt many black South Africans feel for their white ”masters”. The pink ball looks absurd, thereby ridiculing not only the white man, but the entire white system of oppressive government. The actors go bare-chested, symbolising the openness with which they approach their tale. It is a ”baring” of the soul, and a tale which they want to impart to all South Africans, black and white.
5.2 STRUCTURE OF THE PLAY

The play cannot be analysed in the conventional Western way. It is a workshopped play which does not adhere to the standardised Western theatrical principles. There is no development of character as the play is a series of sketches which portray a wide variety of characters in different surroundings. These sketches are loosely interlinked around a central theme. The theme of this play revolves around the two questions asked in this play: Will Christ come to South Africa (and the various responses by world leaders), and if He does, what will happen to Him (given the current political situation in South Africa)?

There are altogether twenty-six scenes in the play, indicated by minimal costume changes on stage and various lighting effects. This play is a play-within-a-play and can be seen as having been structured as follows:

REALITY
Scene 1: Policeman asks for Mbongeni’s pass-book
Scene 2: In prison - body inspection
Scene 3: Religion is introduced
Scene 4: In prison - supper time
Scene 5: Train journey - What will happen if Morena comes to S.A?

FANTASY
Scene 6: Announcement of Morena coming to S.A.
Scene 7: Reaction of Fidel Castro
Scene 8: Reaction on Black TV
Scene 9: Reaction of meat-vendor
Scene 10: Reaction of Auntie Dudu
Scene 11: Reaction of barber
Scene 12: Reaction of coal-vendors
Scene 13: Reaction of toothless old man
Scene 14: Morena arrives
Scene 15: Looking for Morena
Scene 16: See Morena on Albert Street - throw away pass-book
REALITY
Scene 17: Train journey - what will happen to Morena?
FANTASY
Scene 18: Coronation brickyard
Scene 19: Morena arrested but escapes
REALITY
Scene 20: Train journey - what will happen to Morena then?
FANTASY
Scene 21: Morena recaptured - sent to Robben Island
Scene 22: Morena in solitary confinement
Scene 23: Morena escapes
Scene 24: Morena killed
Scene 25: News announcement
Scene 26: Morena resurrected and resurrects South African martyrs.

Each sketch illustrates one moment in time in somebody's life. The actors cover every aspect of South African life and people from all walks of life. However, the play only concentrates on depicting the life of black South Africans in an attempt to bring their living conditions to the attention of the white community and the rest of the world. The hypothesis of what will happen to Morena should he come to South Africa, is approached from the black man's socio-political context. The play is "a true reflection of the anxiety, scepticism and understanding of life seen
through the black experience" (Thema, 1981:4). A micro-cosmos, therefore, is vividly created through a kaleidoscope of action and detail.

The play revolves around two friends who, after being released from prison, meet again during a train journey. While travelling, they fantasise about what would happen if Morena should come again and the effect it would have on not only the people in the black community, but the effect it would have on the government. As the government’s policies "are the result, they say, of their Christian Nationalist principles" (Mtwa, 1983:introduction), this play investigates how the government justifies its politics in terms of Christianity. Being confronted by the very founder of Christianity puts them in a quandary and places them in an embarrassing situation to which they then react in a manner only too appallingly true to form.

5.3 RELIGION AND THE THEME OF FREEDOM

In this play, religion is politicised. "The two dynamic stars of Woza Albert proclaim that Jesus Christ was not crucified for religious purposes but because he was a political leader" (Thema, 1982: 5). Because Mtwa and Ngema are not practising Christians, a lot of research had to be done. "People used to laugh at us when they saw us carrying a Bible. They did not know that we wanted to be factual if we were to depict Christ in any way. It was for this reason that we took seven months researching the life of Christ and what we discovered, is that the Romans
crucified him because he was a revolutionary and not because he was holy" (Thema, 1982:5).

Christianity, therefore, is considered the religion of the oppressor, but becomes the religion of the oppressed when Morena criticises the "Christian Nationalist principles" of the government. This is why, at the beginning of the play, Morena is regarded almost with scorn by the black people of South Africa, but is eagerly followed as redeemer at the end. Ultimately, the Black people see Morena as their Saviour from oppression, and the one who will establish political freedom from the tyrannical rule of white Calvinists.

Religion is introduced in scene three by Percy singing in his sleep:

Morena walks with me all the way
Watching over me all the day
When the night time comes he's there with me
Watching over, loving me (Mtwa, 1983:7).

Percy portrays the role of a Christian while Mbongeni plays the part of the total cynic. When Percy assures Mbongeni that Morena is watching over him, the only response he gets from Mbongeni is a brutal "BULLSHIT!" (Mtwa, 1983:8). Mbongeni is aggressive towards Christianity, which he sees as a tool of the government, and he displays anger towards Percy whom he sees as a puppet of the white man's religion:

Pray! Mr. Bullshit, I'm getting out of here tomorrow. Pray to your Morena, tell him thanks for me. I'll never listen to your voice again (Mtwa, 1983:10).
However, this is not to be. Mbongeni meets Percy on a train journey where Percy is reading out of his Bible:

Blessed are those that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile ye and persecute ye and shall send all manner of evil against ye falsely, for thy sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad for great is the reward of heaven. For so persecuted they - (Mtwa, 1983:12).

The passage Percy is reading is significant, for it aptly describes the realities of the black man's existence in South Africa. It is this passage that plants the seed for the following fantasy. It is a fantasy of being freed from a system which demands more than it gives and which fails to recognise basic human dignity. Percy and Mbongeni are only two who have suffered the humiliation of being put behind bars for the "crime" of not having their pass-books updated.

When Percy and Mbongeni fantasise that Morena will land at Jan Smuts airport, they enact their visualisation of the white man's reaction to Morena's arrival. It is typical of the white man in South Africa to be so over-confident and pompous in his assumption that

South Africa has got him! I hope that the free world will sit up and notice whose bread is buttered and where! Let them keep their boycotts, their boxers, rugby players and tennis racketeers. Stay home Larry Holmes! Stay home John McEnroe! We have got Morena! But there is already vicious rumours going around that this is not the real Morena, but some cheap impostor. And to those that spread such vicious rumours I can only say, 'Tough luck friends! He chose us!' (Raises his hands in V-signs, laughs) (Mtwa, 1983:13).

The implication is that Morena has made a political choice in choosing to come to South Africa and that he condones all the activities in the
country. It is important to remember this speech, as later in the play the white man is quick to change his tune and accuse Morena of being a cheap impostor and agitator when He does not dance to their tune or support their political principles. This is typical of the way religion is practiced in this country, for religion is often interpreted the way it best suits government policy and ideology.

Mtwa and Ngema have taken the story of Christ’s life on earth and allegorically placed it in a modern South African context. The tale, as it unfolds, follows the traditional Biblical pattern, only deviating where it suits Mtwa’s purpose. Even before Morena’s arrival, the news of his impending visit evokes various responses from people.

Our comrade, Fidel Castro, laughingly jokes “Who’s playing the part? Ronald Reagan?” (Mtwa, 1983:13) and on Black TV the crude response is “Aay, fok off man!” (Mtwa, 1983:16). All the people in the street want is a simple existence and the privileges the white South Africans enjoy and take for granted. A young meat-vendor only wants to sell all his meat so that he can go to Sub-A, and Auntie Dudu wants to find more food in the dustbins. The barber wants a barbershop "in a very big shopping centre in Johannesburg city, with white tiles, mirrors all over the walls, and customers with big hair" (Mtwa, 1983:22).

However, it is the toothless old man trying to thread a needle who accurately predicts what will happen to Morena should He come to South Africa. He draws parallels to Dingane who killed Piet Retief after welcoming him with a smile: “That is what will happen to Morena here in South Africa. Morena here? (Disgusted.) Eei! Sukal (Mtwa, 1983:26).
When Morena finally does come to South Africa, he arrives in anonymity. Television crews and photographers all rush to welcome him at the airport, but they miss him completely and interview a Mr. Patrick Alexander Smith before realising their mistake. It is one of the most touching moments in the play when Mbongeni calls disconsolately for Morena, searching, but not finding. It is ironic that it is Mbongeni who first starts calling Morena, as he was the one who called Percy "Brother Bullshit". Percy has begun to lose his faith in Morena, for when Mbongeni says "(indicating the audience): Morena ..." it is Percy's turn to answer "Aaay, fok off!" (Mtwa, 1983:33).

Yet when they eventually find Morena and he tells them to throw away their pass-books to follow him, they walk with Morena as one. Morena gives them back their individuality and thereby their freedom as they are no longer caught in an anonymous system of numbers: "We are not pieces of paper, man! We are men! ... Ja! Let them know our faces as Morena knows our faces!" (Mtwa, 1983:35).

However, Percy and Mbongeni cannot escape reality, and this wonderful vision only serves to bring them back brutally to face the facts. The scene once again reverts to the train journey. They know that although the people "will sing and dance ... and be left in peace ... and we will all go to Morena for our blessings" (Mtwa, 1983:36) there will not, and cannot, be peace indefinitely:

the government will begin to take courage again ... The police and the army will assemble from all parts of the country ... And one night, police dogs will move in as they have done before. There will be shouts at night and bangings on the door ... There will be sounds of police vans and the crying of women and their babies ...
They'll start surrounding our homes at night. And some of our friends will be caught by stray bullets. There will be road-blocks at every entrance to Soweto, and Regina Mundi Church will be full of tear-gas smoke! Then life will go on as before (Mtwa, 1983:36-37).

For the black man in South Africa there is no talk or possibility of freedom, emotionally or physically. However, this does not prevent Mbongeni or Percy from dreaming, as there is still freedom of thought, even if there is not freedom of speech as the next scene shows. Baas Kom warns Zuluboy that "We don't like Morena anymore. And everyone who's waiting for Morena is getting fired" (Mtwa, 1983:48). The trouble is that Morena shows the white man his faults and criticises the system, and because he does not support the white man's way of doing things, he is called a terrorist and an agitator. He is a man who fights for the freedom of the oppressed, and this is not acceptable to the oppressor who lives in the security of his insecure power. This is a complete turn-about from the scene where the white man flaunts Morena's visit to South Africa.

This man is a communist, jong! Ek het van jou nonsens gehoor. Die hele land praat van jou (Mtwa, 1983:51).

and

He's a terrorist ... It's not Morena (Mtwa, 1983:51).

As the Bible story unfolds and Jesus is betrayed by Judas, so Morena is betrayed by Bobbejaan for ten rand:

Now listen here. Listen carefully. I'm writing down this message. You take this message to the police station and I'm going to give you a very nice present. A ten rand increase, okay? ... Ja, go
straight to the police station and don't tell Zuluboy ... Go to the police station and you get the ten rand increase! (Mtwa, 1983:51). However, Zuluboy knows what Bobbejaan is about to do, and although Morena tells him to forgive Bobbejaan, Zuluboy points out that "This is South Africa" (Mtwa, 1983:52) where you do not forget or forgive and where you have to fight for your freedom. Like Peter, Zuluboy wants to hide and protect Morena because for him it is not a question of "they do not know what they are doing? Aikhona, Morena! They know! They know!" (Mtwa, 1983:54).

In the next scene, "the lights come up on the actors wearing military hats and pink noses. Percy has a bloody bandage under his hat" (Mtwa, 1983:54). The reason for the bandage soon becomes apparent as the play follows the Biblical story of Peter who cuts off a soldier's ear in an attempt to protect Christ. In the play, however, it is "a mad zulu" (Mtwa, 1983:54) who strikes the soldier with a knobkerrie. Despite Mbongeni's efforts, Morena is taken prisoner and locked away on the tenth floor of John Vorster Square Prison. However, it is impossible to secure Morena and he escapes with the "help" of the Angel Gabriel.

The scene once again shifts to the train journey where Percy and Mbongeni discuss what would happen after Morena's escape from John Vorster Square. The reaction of the government would be typical of people faced with a situation they cannot control:

I'm telling you the government will be real nervous. And they won't start nonsense with him for a long time. In fact they will try very hard to please Morena. He will be taken to all the nice places in the country ... (Mtwa, 1983:57).
Yet Morena will be crying, for all the glitter of lights of Sun City and the panoramic view of Johannesburg will not be enough to hide the underlying corruption that forms the basic foundation of South African society. Morena will look past the facade the government tries so hard to uphold, and notice the differences between the lifestyles of the white and black communities:

I pass people who sit in dust and beg for work that will buy them bread. And on the other side I see people who are living in gold and glass and whose rubbish bins are loaded with food for a thousand mouths (Mtwa, 1983:60).

It is ironic that Percy should say "Hey! That's not your business. There are security police, man" (Mtwa, 1983:60). The security police only offer security for the white man and pose a threat to blacks. What kind of security can the police offer to "families torn apart ... mothers without sons, children without fathers, and wives who have no men! Where are the men?" (Mtwa, 1983:60). A nation without its menfolk is immediately weakened and therefore easily suppressed. It creates an unbalanced society and an unhealthy community. Not only are families broken up, but men are packed "into hostels like men with no names, men with no lives!" (Mtwa, 1983:60). This is a community with no freedom of speech, no choice of work opportunities nor the freedom to stay where they wish. It is essentially a community with no identity and no future vision. It is against this situation that Morena rebels:

to me, you who are divided from your families. Let us go to the cities where your husbands work. We will find houses where you can live together and we will talk to those who you fear! What country is this? (Spits on the ground.) (Mtwa, 1983:60).
It is inevitable that Morena will once again be apprehended and that the Prime Minister will deliver the following message:

My people, as your Prime Minister I must warn you that we stand alone in the face of total onslaught. Our enemies will stop at nothing, even to the extent of sending a cheap communist magician to pose as the Morena, and undermine the security of our nation. But let me assure you that this cheap impostor is safely behind bars, from which he cannot fly. Peace and security have returned to our lovely land” (Mtwa, 1983:62).

In the first place, the Prime Minister can hardly talk about "my people" as he is only the representative of white South Africans. It is also the whites who face a "total onslaught" on the power they wield so precariously. Morena’s status is reduced to that of a "cheap communist magician" and his works are not seen as uplifting, but as undermining the security of the nation. The "peace and security" that the government offer, is simply a continuation of suppression in "our lovely land".

It is ironic that they send Morena to Robben Island Prison as it is the prison for political prisoners. There he is placed in solitary confinement as Christ was isolated in the Garden of Getsemane. He also undergoes tremendous mental anguish and the questions of his fellow prisoner remain unanswered:

So what do you want here? What does your father know? What does he say? Come on Morena, man! ... You’ve got all the power! How can you let these things happen? How can you just sit there like that, Morena? Okay, okay, I know you don’t like miracles, but these are bladdy hard times, Morena (Mtwa, 1983:63).
However, despite Anti-Angel missiles and regardless of being heavily guarded, Morena "walks" out of Robben Island Penitentiary and starts crossing the sea to Cape Town. The reaction of the guards is comical:

Yes, we've got him. Yeah, what? Torpedo? Oh no, have a heart! He's not even disturbing the waves! Ja, I wish you could see him, he looks amazing! ... What? Bomb Morena? Haven't you heard what they say? You start with Morena and it's worse that an atom bomb!"

(Mtwa, 1983:67).

This is a direct reference to the many unnatural events that occurred at the time of Christ's death. In the process of destroying Morena, Cape Town and Table Mountain are completely destroyed. It is significant that Table Mountain is destroyed as it is a well-known landmark of South Africa. It is also ironic that Cape Town is levelled as it is South Africa's mother city. This indicates that although events have followed the same pattern since Jan van Riebeeck landed in the Cape, the eradication of these South African symbols has irrevocably placed South Africa on a new path. Nothing can ever be the same again.

In the last scene, Zuluboy awakens Morena in the graveyard. At first Zuluboy does not recognise Morena or believe that he has come back from the dead until Morena reminds him: "Have you forgotten? I will always come back after three days, bombs or no bombs" (Mtwa, 1983:73). Morena has come to raise those the people need to rebuild a nation. It is to this scene that the play's title refers, for "Woza" means "rise" and the first person to be resurrected is Albert Luthuli, thus the name "Woza Albert!" meaning "Rise Albert!". Morena asks Zuluboy whom he should raise and Zuluboy calls out the names: Albert Luthuli - "Father of our Nation", Robert Sobukwe - teacher of Black Power, Lilian Ngoyi - who "taught our mothers about freedom", Steve Biko - hero of our children,
Bram Fischer, Ruth First, Griffith Mxenge and Hector Peterson (Mtwa, 1983:73-79). These figures all posed a threat to the power of the South African government and were therefore condemned as fighters for freedom.

5.4 LANGUAGE AND SYMBOLISM

G. Verdal, of the Argus newspaper writes that "the vibrancy of the language and the evocative, multi-dimensional dynamism of the performances make Woza Albert an electrifying theatrical treat" (1981:13). Humour, satire and the unavoidable irony are elements that feature prominently in the play. It is especially the profound humour of the play that is most praised by critics: "Indeed, the very fact that most of the sketches are designed to cause laughter shows their sensitivity and tolerance for the intolerable" (MacLiam, 1981:3).

Laughter is their method of communication and a way of uplifting the unbearable. There are many instances of humour in the play. Humour is not only manifested in the language of the play, but physically with the aid of props. An excellent example is the use of the pink squash ball to indicate a white man. Not only does it signify a white man speaking, it ridicules him as well. It is significant that there are only Afrikaans-speaking white men in the play. The nose is a clown’s nose thereby indicating the speaker’s attitude towards the signified. It is a significant prop, for a clown is not known for his wisdom, but for the
childishness of his pranks and naivete. He makes foolish mistakes, often deliberately without thought of the consequences and is vastly surprised when actions boomerang with force and sometimes with vengeance. The image of the clown is a very visual one, and one cannot look past the irony of the symbol.

Pure, unadulterated laughter is also found often in the play. There are many examples, but three will suffice. The scene is the barber’s shop:

PERCY: Ehh, French cut? German cut? Cheese cut?
MBONGENI: Cheese cut.
PERCY: Cheese cut - all off!
MBONGENI: That’s nice ... How much is a cheese cut?
PERCY: Seventy-five cents.
MBONGENI: Aaay! Last week my cousin was here and it was fifty cents.
PERCY: Hey, you’ve got very big hair my friend (Mtwa, 1983:20).

The scene is Jan Smuts airport. Mbongeni is interviewing Morena (or so he thinks):

MBONGENI: Would you not say that a jumbo jet is faster than a donkey, sir?
PERCY: Eh, yes.
MBONGENI: Aaahh. Now tell me, sir, where have you been all this time?
PERCY: Around and about.
MBONGENI: And how is it up there in the heavens?
PERCY: Oh, it’s very cool.
...
MBONGENI: ... why did you come here, sir?
PERCY: To visit my Great-aunt Mathilda.

... 

MBONGENI: Your name, sir?

PERCY: Patrick Alexander Smith (Mtwa, 1983:27-29)

and finally

PERCY: I saw your picture in the paper, Morena, I could not believe you’re coming. I thought you’re coming back by the clouds. (He sits on the floor.)

MBONGENI: The clouds are too hot now. It's summer. He flies air-conditioned... (Mtwa, 1983:49).

When Percy sits on the floor, it indicates his child-like mentality. Like a child he sits on the floor to hear a story which he believes with utter conviction, much like the naivete with which the white man listens to the government.

Although laughter is one of the play's redeeming qualities, the play does not only entertain, but specifically exposes the realities of life. Not only are "audio-visual slices of the black man's life" (Verdal, 1981:13) portrayed with photograph clarity, socio-political messages form a large body of the play. Racial prejudice, unbending laws and injustice in the private sector all fall under the harsh spotlight. "The rough language and crudity of the production enhances the severity of the situation and creates an authentic feeling" (Tammy, 1985:8).

The use of language clearly shows Mbongeni's submission to the patronising white policeman. When the policeman asks for Mbongeni's pass-book, he plays for time, knowing that his pass-book is not updated. Like everyone else, he tries to use flattery to avoid almost certain
imprisonment: my boss becomes my constable, my lieutenant, my Captain, my Colonel, my Brigadier, my General, my President (Mtwa, 1983:3-5). Note also that from Captain onwards, the words are spelt with capital letters.

The language itself represents the typical lifestyle of the characters. The language is as crude as life itself and these words appear throughout the play: "For this shit? Thank you Morena for this shit?" (Mtwa, 1983:10), and "Aay, fok off man!" (Mtwa, 1983:16). We find in the play that languages are mixed as freely as they are in reality. The songs, ribald remarks and odd exclamations such as "Eei! Suka!" (Mtwa, 1983:26) are normally spoken in Zulu. The rest of the text is in English except for the occasional Afrikaans when a white man is addressed or speaks: "This man is a communist, jong! Ek het van jou nonsense gehoor. Die hele land praat van jou" (Mtwa, 1983:51).

The play implies that Morena is black by the way he is addressed and treated. "Morena" means sir, mister, lord. Preachers are also called Morena which is the most probable explanation given the context in which it is used. Morena also has the freedom to move in and out of Soweto which is something a white person cannot do. If Morena is black, it also explains the treatment he receives at the hands of the government. The following exchange that takes place between Baas Kom and Mbongeni is significant:

MBONGENI: Excuse. He cannot understand Afrikaans.
PERCY: What? Cannot understand Afrikaans?
MBONGENI: Right.
PERCY: Cannot understand Afrikaans? Stay where you are! ... I'm calling the police. Fuckin' agitator!
What is meant is not that Morena cannot understand the language, but that Morena cannot understand the way the Afrikaner not only rules the country but treats his fellowmen. Morena and Baas Kom will never be able to communicate as they follow two very different schools of thought. Even if Morena could speak Afrikaans in the play, it would hardly matter as it would change nothing. The communication block would still exist.

Because communication is completely unsuccessful between Morena and the white South African, we have a complex situation where two parties are fighting for very different causes, but ultimately, they both lose as no solution to the problem is offered.

Lack of communication and the theme of waiting is central in the play. This theme is also the main theme in Waiting for Godot. On the surface, Woza Albert! and Waiting for Godot have certain similarities: in both plays we have two actors waiting for liberation. We can safely say that they are waiting for God, although in Waiting for Godot the actors are not sure who or what they are waiting for. Both groups/sets find themselves in bleak circumstances from which they want to escape, but they do not know how.

Although both plays deal in a gripping way with a quest for the unattainable, they diverge on the basis of one (Godot) being steeped in the "universal" ideology of European existentialism, while Woza Albert! is explicitly located in the ideology of the here and now, the liberation struggle in South Africa. The differences in the plays make each play unique and individual. The main difference between the two plays is the very fact that in Waiting for Godot, nobody/nothing comes to save the actors from their dreary existence, for they do not live, they simply
exist. In Woza Albert!, Morena comes to liberate them from the restrictions the white ruler has placed on them. For them there is hope for the future, while in Waiting for Godot the future stretches endlessly with no end in sight. While Waiting for Godot is a play that drips of lethargy and apathy, Woza Albert! is a vital, dynamic play that captures and demands attention. Although both plays can be said to have elements of religion, this is only implied in Waiting for Godot. Religion in Woza Albert! is explicit as we find a number of Biblical parallels and allusions in the play, as well as a fairly coherent, at times ironical, exploitation of an allegorical parallel.

The deliberate use of these parallels and allusions is surprisingly original. Although the play does not follow the Biblical story faithfully step for step, certain incidents are taken directly out of the Bible, modernised and placed in a South African context.

The time when Jesus came to earth was a period in history when the Jews were persecuted and Israel was ruled by the Romans. The period in South African history is one where Blacks enjoy no freedom and where human dignity is never considered. The black South Africans need a saviour now as much as the Jews needed a saviour then.

The play has the following events in common with the Biblical story: Just as Christ was born into an ordinary household, so Morena arrives in South Africa anonymously. Like Christ, Morena tells his "disciples" to leave what they are doing (to throw away their pass-books) and to follow him (Mtwa, 1983:35). In the play, many references are made to the miracles of Christ:
MBONGENI: Hau - Bobbejaan, at the wedding, long ago - ten thousand years ago - he take a bucket of water, he make wine.

PERCY: (smugly): Ja, everybody knows that!

MBONGENI: He take one fish, he make fish for everybody! Fried fish!

PERCY: Hau!

MBONGENI: He take one loaf of brown bread, he make the whole bakery! (Mtwa, 1983:40)

However, like a true pharisee of old, the white man in South Africa calls Morena a communist and accuses him of being a political agitator: "Ja! Now listen here. There's a terrorist here who's making trouble with my kaffirs" (Mtwa, 1983:51). Judas Iscariot, betrayer of Christ, is re-incarnated in the figure of Bobbejaan who sells Morena to the police for ten rand: "Bobbejaan, you betray Morena, Bobbejaan! You Judas, Bobbejaan" (Mtwa, 1983:52). Mbongeni portrays the figure of Peter as he tries to protect Morena from the police when they come to fetch him: "They're calling the police to arrest you now! Okay, come. Let me hide you there by the trees - Quickly" (Mtwa, 1983:52-54), and

MBONGENI: And now, what's happened to your head, Sergeant?

PERCY: A mad Zulu, sir.

MBONGENI: A mad Zulu?

PERCY: Yes sir. He struck me with the branch of a tree, sir (Mtwa, 1983:54).

This passage has direct bearing on Peter's attempt to protect Christ against the Roman soldiers when he cut off the one soldier's ear. In line with the Biblical story, Morena is killed (not crucified) and many unnatural events occur at the moment of death. Where the temple curtain was torn through and the earth darkened, Cape Town and Table Mountain
are destroyed by what seems like a nuclear explosion. True to the tale, Morena is resurrected three days after his death to lead his people once again.

However, while the tale follows the Biblical story, it still deviates to suit the story-line of the play. In the first place, Christ was never thrown into prison only to escape with the help of the Angel Gabriel. According to the Bible, it was Peter who was imprisoned and who escaped. Christ also never once performed a miracle for His own benefit or for relief of discomfort. When Christ was taken captive, he was crucified soon afterwards without attempting to save Himself despite taunts of the Roman soldiers. Mtwa, Ngema and Simon have chosen to change the sequence of the events and make Morena walk on the sea in an attempt to escape from Robben Island. They have also chosen to take Christ's words from the cross and place them in the scene before Morena is imprisoned in John Vorster Square: "Huh? Forgive them, they do not know what they are doing" (Mtwa, 1983:54). Christ's resurrection of Lazarus (Morena's resurrection of Albert Luthuli "our 'L'"") (Mtwa, 1983:73) is placed at the end of the play after Morena has been resurrected. Morena raises the people's heroes from the dead, after Zuluboy has told him whom to raise and whom to leave in their graves. This is against all Biblical teachings which say that all will be raised and judged according to their deeds, to be found worthy or unworthy of eternal life. Christ does not need someone to tell Him whom to raise, as Morena so obviously does:

MBONGENI: But why didn't you ask me?

PERCY: How would I know?

MBONGENI: I know exactly who my people would want! Come let us look at these tombstones (Mtwa, 1983:73).
Where Christ chose His disciples to go out into the world to spread the Gospel, peace and goodwill among all the nations, Morena raises those who will in all probability destroy the peace and spread revolution in South Africa. The ultimate aim in Christianity is to promote peace without the use of violence. However, the play implies that peace will only be brought about with blood-shed and uprisings:

Our Lord is calling.
He's calling for the bones of the dead to join together.
He's raising up the black heroes.
He calls to them (Mtwa, 1983:79).

The playwrights of this effective and entertaining piece use the Biblical story of Christ both to shock and alienate us from the play. This serves to distance us from the familiarity of both the South African context and the Biblical story, thereby enabling us to watch the play more objectively. At the same time, it is used as a tool for bringing us closer to the situation for it is a tale that is familiar to most people and one we can identify with. Shock and alienation is a Brechtian concept which aims at distancing the audience from that which is familiar to them. By taking a familiar story and placing it in a familiar context, but by shocking the audience with the very audacity and unconventionality of the treatment of Christ's story, Mtwa succeeds in bringing the harshness of South African life closer to the man who calls himself a Christian in South Africa. Too many white South Africans live in ignorance of the life led by their fellow black South Africans and are then astounded by the scenes revealing South African life in all its facets. By confronting us with the very same actions we condemn in the Romans and Jewish pharisees, Mtwa slams the message home with a force which makes most whites squirm in their seats.
What saves the play from becoming blatant propaganda, is the fine treatment and discriminate use of humour in the play. The inclusion of Christ's life (which is essentially Western) in a story of black existence (which is in essence African) gives the play a hybrid quality as it crosses the borders of different cultures. The universality of the play is established with the theme of freedom with which most people can identify. With the establishment of identity, freedom is achieved, both physically and emotionally. This is also the theme of Fugard's play, A Place with the Pigs which will be discussed. This is the theatre of hope, a theatre with a future vision, and the kind of theatre that South Africa needs, now.
FREEDOM FROM WITHIN

Athol Fugard's thirty-year career has been characterised by socio-political involvement, innovative workshop productions, controversial themes and challenging topics. Now Fugard seems to be retreating from the heat of the battle to a more introverted drama. Although socio-political issues are still implicit, they are just that - implicit. A more symbolical drama has replaced muted outrage against an immoral system. A more personal drama has evolved.

Fugard's latest play, A Place with the Pigs transcends the local South African situation and becomes a universal, yet intensely personal parable. It is a play loaded with hidden meanings and symbolic possibilities, a play which could be interpreted as being not only symbolic of the emotionally guilt-ridden and self-indulgent conflict of South African liberals, but also modern man's struggle against time and transience.

This play is much more answerable to analysis along conventional "Western" lines, therefore a scene-by-scene analysis with the main characters who serve as focal points. In this play, the inner development of the character is more important, therefore the other elements, such as symbolism, etc. will be subservient to the discussion of character, but will be dealt with at the conclusion of the chapter.
A Place with the Pigs studies man's baser characteristics such as cowardliness, fear and the ever-persistent focus on the all-important "I". "The 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" (Thamm, 1987:10). There are a number of sub-issues latent in the play - "self-imposed exile, guilt, expiation, the lies of society that beget other lies, the nature of patriotism, ideology versus instinct, self-knowledge and deceit. The list is endless..." (Brooks, 1987:9). Although Fugard deals very lucidly with abstracts, he roots them "in a marvellously real world of squealing pigs, cabbage soup and dumplings" (Ronge, 1987:20).

The play was inspired by the true story of Pavel "a deserter from the Soviet army in the Second World War, who spent forty-one years in hiding in a pigsty" (Fugard, 1988:i). Although the story is a true one, Fugard turns it into a personal parable, and elevates it beyond the confines of Russia to the universal world occupied by all men. However, while he embraces universality, he still sees the basic humanity and frailty of man which transcend all borders and all cultures.

The play's structure will only be outlined briefly: It is set in a small village in Russia. Pavel, Praskovyia's husband, has deserted from the Russian army and has been hiding in a pigsty ever since he returned home. He dreams of his day of liberation from the pigsty, but lets every opportunity to make this dream a reality slip through his fingers because he is too afraid of man and of himself.
He regresses mentally until he has as little self-esteem as the pigs in the sty. Time no longer has meaning for him, and he becomes increasingly morbid and depressed, giving up all hope for freedom. Not only does he become physically bound to the pigsty, but also mentally tied to fears of his own creation. Scene two and three, therefore, trace his steady regression from self-pity to the level of bestiality.

It is Praskovya who lifts him up out of the mire of his existence and sets him on the road to mental and physical freedom. This is the catalyst for the development in scene four in which Pavel liberates the pigs (which are symbolic of man's own fears), and in doing so, liberates himself and Praskovya from a living hell of fear and insecurity. He is liberated from within and goes out into the world to face the consequences of his actions.

I will now go on to a discussion of the characters in terms of the modus operandi outlined above.

6.1 PAVEL

This is the story of the fears and needs of a Russian soldier who is forced to fight for his fatherland but deserts from the army, and who cannot face and shoulder the consequences of his actions. He becomes a prisoner, not only physically, but also spiritually. He becomes a prisoner of fear, caught in an existence which has no meaning. It is a situation
from which he desperately wants to escape, yet he doesn’t know how and
he lacks the courage to do what he knows he must do. The pigsty slowly
drives him to the very verge of insanity and escape becomes an
obsession. He becomes neurotic about freedom as he is a man cut off
from the world, making his own rules, laws and morality. He talks a lot
about changing things, but never does, “and in his isolation he becomes
cruel, vicious and less than human, all because he is too afraid” (Ronge,

He vents his anger and frustrations on the pigs, beating them mercilessly
with his stick and cursing them in helpless fury

He grabs his stick and brutalises the pigs, striking and prodding
them viciously. The exercise affords him considerable satisfaction.
An exhausted and happy Pavel retires to his living area (Fugard,
1988:8).

The pigs become symbolic of basically anything one might want them to
be, "anything a man is too frightened to face about his life. They could
be liquor or drugs, anything" (Thamm, 1987:10). Asked if the character
Pavel has any relation to himself, Fugard answers that "in a sense yes.
I began to realise the pretentiousness of my grand personal dramas. I
wrote Pavel by instinct. He is always in some state of crisis. There is
a lot of me in that ... The character, Pavel, is a fool. A pompous,

Pavel relentlessly pursues a vision, a vision of freedom where he will
be accepted and forgiven for his desertion. The play opens with the
speech he is rehearsing for the ceremony in which a monument will be
unveiled for the soldiers who died for their country. It is a speech in which he begs the forgiveness and understanding of the villagers:

I also beg you to believe that it is a deeply repentant man who speaks these words to you and who acknowledges the error of his ways (making a correction) acknowledges in full his guilt. I, Pavel Ivanovitch Navrotsky, ask only that in your judgment of me ... (another correction) ask only that in deciding on my punishment, for I have already judged myself and found myself guilty, I ask only that you temper that punishment with mercy (Fugard, 1988:1-2).

It is significant that Pavel firstly uses the word "error" and then changes it to "guilt", and that "in your judgment of me" changes to "in deciding on my punishment". Pavel condemns himself by not accepting his very natural cowardice nor his own weaknesses. He does not seem to realise the almost pompous nature of his self-pitying statements. His speech is littered with words depicting his worthless as man

Comrades! Standing before you is a miserable wretch of a man, a despicable, weak creature worthy of nothing but your contempt (Fugard, 1988:2).

His life in the pigsty has revolved around nothing more than the passing of time and terrorising the pigs.

You must understand, Praskovya, life in here has involved dealing with two realities, two profound philosophic realities which have dominated my entire existence, permeated every corner of my being ... Pig shit and Time ... leaden-footed little seconds, sluggish minutes, reluctant hours, tedious days, monotonous months and then, only then, the years crawling past like old tortoises" (Fugard, 1988:3).
While Pavel desperately wants to escape from the pigsty, he is even more afraid of reality. He rehearses his speech a thousand times, makes Praskovya repeat the procedures of the ceremony in detail and plans his move to the very last detail. He gets so caught up in his almost naive idealism that he loses sight of the true and very harsh nature of human beings, for we agreed that the ceremony and the music and 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 ... (Fugard, 1988:6).

It is Praskovya who is the one to point reality out 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 that she's got a picture of Hitler somewhere in her house which she spits on every morning when she wakes up (Fugard, 1988:6-7).

This wrenching return to reality is almost enough to persuade Pavel to give up his venture, but his excuse comes when he realise that Praskovya has used his uniform for cleaning the floors and that "the mice and the moths made a meal of what was left" (Fugard, 1988:9). This unexpected development gives Pavel the excuse he has unconsciously been looking for, for now he can once again hide behind Praskovya and evade exposing himself as the coward he is at heart.

Stupid! Stupid! Stupid! I've been here so long, I've forgotten what human nature is really like. Compassion and forgiveness? I stand as much chance of getting that from the mob out there as I do from these pigs ... It's no good, Praskovya ... I just can't. I won't get a fair trial. They won't even give me a hearing. The
moment I appear they'll throw themselves on me and tear me apart like a pack of Siberian wolves (Fugard, 1988:10-11).

The result is that Pavel stays at home, secure in his pigsty. Yet he wallows in self-pity when Praskovya relates the glory of the ceremony in detail:

Like the pigs, all I do in here is eat, sleep and defecate, yet the burden of my guilt grows heavier, and heavier. 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. Has it finally come to that, Praskovya? Is my soul now nothing more than a pigsty? (Fugard, 1988:15).

Praskovya, however, refuses to be drawn into an argument with him, and leaves him in his pigsty to continue with her chores in the house. It unfortunately remains an unavoidable fact that "Life goes on, Pavel" (Fugard, 1988:16).

The second scene clearly illustrates Pavel's degeneration. Some time has passed, and Pavel has regressed to the stage where he no longer keeps track of time, but keeps a tally of the flies he has managed to swat. Even his cherished slipper is caked with dirt and mud. He still torments the pigs, but even this former entertaining activity becomes mindless and apathetic.

The whole pattern of his existence is changed when a butterfly somehow finds its way into the pigsty. It symbolises "an almost forgotten world of sunlight and flowers, a world he hasn't seen for many, many years" (Fugard, 1988:17). It brings back the magic of his childhood, "back to the meadows where I used to romp and play, with flowers and birdsong
all around me, a blue wind-swept sky overhead..." (Fugard, 1988:19).

His world of fantasy collapses when the butterfly settles on a pig's snout and the animal eats it. He "goes berserk with rage" (Fugard, 1988:18) and stabs the pig with wild and terrible abandon.

He reaches the very limits of his endurance, realising that the situation he is in, is of his own making.

I at last know this place for what it really is. Hell! The realm of the damned. This is my punishment. Praskovya... to watch brutes devour Beauty and then fart... to watch them gobble down Innocence and turn it into shit... And it is more than I can endure. I'm reaching the end, Praskovya. Those few seconds of innocent laughter might well have been the death rattle of my soul (Fugard, 1988:20).

Scene three reveals Pavel's utter physical and spiritual regression. He no longer keeps a tally of the flies on the wall, but draws obscenities and rude pictures of pigs. His whole existence has dropped to the level of bestiality and he is little better than the pigs he lives with.

It is in this last scene that Pavel is finally forced to face the fact of his cowardice and to come to terms with his own weaknesses.

I'm a coward, Praskovya!... It is true, Praskovya. Where other men are motivated by patriotism, or ambition... I have been driven by fear... As I grew up I refined the art of hiding away. I ended up being able to do it even when I was in the middle of a crowd of people!... And how does it all end? In a pigsty! And guess what Pavel Navrotsky is doing in the pigsty? (Fugard, 1988:24-25).

Pavel eventually persuades Praskovya to venture outside for a breath of fresh air, and she agrees, disguising him as a woman. It is ironic that
even though no-one else will be awake at that time of night, Pavel feels it necessary to go disguised. He does not have the courage to go out as Pavel Navrotsky, but he has the courage to go as Praskovya's cousin, Dunyasha. It is also while he is still disguised as Dunyasha that Pavel refuses to go back to the pigsty as the disguise gives him a false sense of security.

Yes, that's right ... the unmentionable ... the unthinkable ... Escape! What's the matter with you, Praskovya! Have you been so brainwashed that you've forgotten what the word means? (Fugard, 1988:28-29).

For all his newly-found courage, Pavel still does not have the confidence to face the future without Praskovya. He tries to persuade her to stay outside with him a little longer, prepared to settle for second best: "Tell you what ... I'll strike a bargain. If you wait here with me for the sunrise, I'll go back with you ... That's all I ask" (Fugard, 1988:30). However, Praskovya refuses to remain with him and waits for him in the pigsty, sure of his imminent return. Her patience is rewarded as "Pavel bursts in ... a dishevelled, desperate figure. He has been running and it takes him a few seconds to get his breath back" (Fugard, 1988:31). He once again places the blame of his pitiful situation squarely on Praskovya's shoulders: "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 ... Your betrayal is the last straw" (Fugard, 1988:31-32).

In one final act of desperation, Pavel denies his very being: "I abandon my humanity! From now on, Praskovya, feed me at the trough with the others. (He tears off his clothes and throws himself naked into one of the pens with the pigs ...) (Fugard, 1988:32). Praskovya, up to this
moment, has been a pillar of strength and has supported Pavel every way she can. However, every good woman and wife has her limits. Praskovya is a very practical woman and deeply religious. Pavel's attitude is not only an insult to her, but an insult 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" (Fugard, 1988:32). She does the only sensible thing a provoked woman can do - she thrashes some sense into Pavel. However, she does realise that the only thing she can do is to get Pavel to react to her blows, but the only person who can really help Pavel, is Pavel himself: "You're on your two legs again, Pavel, and talking. That's as much as I can do for you. Now help yourself ...” (Fugard, 1988:33). She leaves Pavel wet, shaken, dirty and alone in the pigsty, knowing that the final battle still has to be won. 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 of fear.

A long monologue follows in which Pavel critically analyses his feelings and argues with himself. He delves deep into his childhood, looking for the origins of his cowardice, and it is while he is busy with this catharsis that the solution to all his problems emerges with great lucidity:

Those animals have endured enough abuse from you, Pavel. Why don't you just let them go now? Just like that? Just ... That's right. Just open the pens and let them go. ... 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! (Fugard, 1988:36).

This is exactly what Praskovya has been praying for, for she is well aware that no human being can continue with such a meaningless existence.
forever and still remain completely sane. When she hears the commotion of the pigs being freed, she does not panic even though she knows that their whole future depends on the pigs. She is merely vastly relieved that Pavel has regained his senses and has overcome his fear of mankind and has come to accept himself:

I think there's something wrong with me. You've just chased our livelihood out into the night ... our only source of income ... our one and only security ... we sit here on the brink of ruin and all I want to do is laugh (Fugard, 1988:38).

She realises that it is not only financial matters that count. What is more important is that Pavel is once again a whole man, a man that she can be proud of. By the very act of freeing himself, he has freed them both.

The play ends with tongue-in-the-cheek humour, as Pavel, even though he is freed of his neurosis, remains a man - pompous and self-important. When Praskovya dares to mention that there are "all sorts of loonies around these days and nobody pays them any attention except the police" (Fugard, 1988:40), Pavel hastens to assure her that "I'm not just a common criminal, Praskovya. As I remember it, the Military Manual listed desertion as one of the most serious offences a soldier could commit. I'll hand myself over at the military barracks" (Fugard, 1988:40).
Praskovya is the perfect foil for Pavel. She is a caring, gentle and stable person whereas Pavel is selfish, aggressive and emotionally frustrated. She is his long-suffering wife, dedicated and supportive to his whims and whines. She is a considerate person who gives Pavel all the time she possibly can:

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. If you’re interested in the truth, Pavel, I’m feeding the pigs an hour earlier than usual so that I will be free to give you all the attention and help I can (Fugard, 1988:2).

Praskovya is the practical one who constantly has to bring Pavel down to earth and force him to face reality. This is clear in the scene when she and Pavel are discussing the coming ceremony. When Pavel insists on wearing his soldiers tunic, she is forced to bring out the few remaining rags:

That’s it. 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 ... (Fugard, 1988:8-9).

Praskovya does not let Pavel weigh her down as she continues with her life regardless of his complaints. Twice in the play she walks away when Pavel is facing one of his personal crises. She knows that Pavel simply
wants a sounding board for his frustrations and mental anguish and that he does not really want to do anything constructive about his situation:

PAVEL: Where are you going?
PRASKOVYA: Get changed and then back to work. Celebrations are over. There are chores waiting for me in the house.
PAVEL: (Staring at her, dumbfounded) Just like that?
PRASKOVYA: Just like what?
PAVEL: You are going to walk away from me, leave me in here ... just like that.
PRASKOVYA: Life goes on, Pavel (Fugard, 1988:16).

Praskovya, like Pavel, is a prisoner in her own home. She cannot go anywhere and also lives in constant fear that someone will find out her terrible secret. They are caught in a situation that they both want to escape from, but neither of them knows how. This is so typical of countless people who are caught up in situations that they are unable to handle. Too many then follow the same pattern as Pavel and Praskovya and hide in the shadow of their own anonymity.

Fugard sketches Praskovya with touching, child-like simplicity. She is above all a practical woman who does not recognise, nor has the ability to understand Pavel's distraught philosophising:

PAVEL: My soul, Praskovya ... it's my soul that bleeds.
PRASKOVYA: Well then, there is something else in here bleeding in the old-fashioned way (Fugard, 1988:18).

and

PRASKOVYA: 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 ... and now you've just killed a full-grown pig with your bare hands. That does not sound like a dying man to me.

PAVEL: I meant it spiritually! Inside! Didn't you hear me? I was talking about my soul.

PRASKOVYA: Oh, I see ... (Fugard, 1988:20-21).

However, Praskovya does not really "see".

She is not only a down-to-earth woman, she is deeply religious and her faith is child-like. It is her religion that sustains her throughout this ordeal. The path she follows is straight and narrow and she does not know or accept any deviation from it. She accepts what has been taught to her without question and avoids religious problems which she feels unqualified to answer:

PRASKOVYA: 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 ...

and

PRASKOVYA: ... You can't have it both ways.

PAVEL: What do you mean?

PRASKOVYA: You can't be both dying and in hell.

PAVEL: Why not?

PRASKOVYA: Because any little child will tell you that hell is where you go after you're dead.

PAVEL: (Nearly speechless with outrage) You are going to split hairs with me at a time like this?

PRASKOVYA: Just thought you might be interested in the truth, Pavel.
PAVEL: Well, I’m not! Because what you call "The Truth" invariably involves the reduction of profound philosophic and moral issues to the level of your domestic triviality (Fugard, 1988:20).

Like a child, Praskovya also distinguishes between big sins and little sins:

PRASKOVYA: You want me to go out there ... front of all those people ... and pretend you're dead.

PAVEL: Isn't that what you've been doing for the past ten years?

PRASKOVYA: Yes, that's true ... but not on such a grand scale, Pavel. Widow's weeds and flowers, with a brass band playing! ... But I'm telling you, Pavel, this feels like a big, bad sin. Hiding you was one thing ... (Fugard, 1988:11).

Praskovya has obviously been taught that a man is head of the house and that he must be obeyed at all times without question, but when Pavel reduces himself to the level of bestiality, she realises that it is time to step in and pull him up out of the mire. She goes down on her knees in the pigsty, and earnestly prays:

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. Amen (Fugard, 1988:32).

She thrashes Pavel till he scrambles to his feet and then empties a bucket of water over him. It is significant that she should throw water over him. It is an attempt not only to clean and revive him physically, but also emotionally and spiritually. However, it is all she can do. The rest is up to him.
Praskovya is basically 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" (Fugard, 1988:40). These words are essentially optimistic as Fugard underlines the fact that it is never too late to change or to come to terms with your own weaknesses and frailty.

Everyone has "a time with the pigs, and it is how they handle personal weaknesses that will determine their destiny ... The play emphasises the fact that man is simply an animal who can adapt to the most demeaning, spirit-breaking circumstances, but ultimately, despite the most profound degeneration, he has it within his power to resurrect himself from filth" (MacLiam, 1987:8).

6.3 THE THEME OF FREEDOM

Fugard "has gained some distance on this work, and with it has come a quality of controlled ironic wit which has enriched his writing ... Fugard has fashioned an allegory about the impulse to freedom and the exacting demands it makes on the human spirit" (Ronge, 1987:20).
The concept of freedom is so easily dismissed and too easily taken for granted. It is only when freedom is denied, that we realise how vitally important it is for not only physical, but also spiritual and emotional well-being. How we react to the loss of freedom differs from person to person, from culture to culture. Yet freedom remains an important ingredient in the make-up of any basically healthy society. The concept of freedom is not universally defined or limited, nor is it practised the same way by everyone, nor do we react to it the same way. Freedom becomes an intensely personal affair and is manifested in different ways through different objects.

The theme of freedom is interwoven throughout the play with the subtle use of images and symbols.

6.3.1 Pavel's Slippers and the Butterfly

The first words Pavel utters when he returns home after deserting the army are the request for his slippers. When Praskovya gives them to him, he breaks down, clutches them to his breast and collapses in the pigsty. It is significant that Pavel collapses in the pigsty with his slippers, as it symbolises his emotional escape from the harsh world of the adult, to the warmth and security of his youth. Pavel is still a child trapped in the figure of an adult. He is not mature enough to face the adult world of responsibility nor can he accept his own frailty or
weaknesses. He is a man driven by fear, and in a futile attempt to run away from this fear, he hides in the pigsty - a world of his own making.

The slippers symbolise a world of innocence, a world of freedom with "little flowers and birds" (Fugard, 1988:5).

Sitting there huddled in the trench, an image of them would come floating into my deranged mind ... and with them, smells and sounds ... of pine logs cracking and hissing away in the stove ... crusty warm bread and freshly churned butter ... (Fugard, 1988:13).

It is the thought of his slippers amidst violence, bloodshed and brutality that finally shatters his already wavering loyalty: "Go home, Pavel Ivanovich, your slippers are waiting for you. Go home!" (Fugard, 1988:13). Pavel just wants to escape from reality for a moment, but when he finally comes to his senses, a month has already passed, and it has become too late to return either emotionally or physically. Time becomes relative, for "one day, one week, one month ...! It would have all come to the same thing in the end ... one bullet in the back of the head" (Fugard, 1988:13). It would have meant not only the end of his "freedom", but the end of his very existence.

Pavel refuses to wear his slippers for while he is not a free man, he cannot wear them: "That would be sacrilege. No, my conscience will not allow me to wear these until the day when I am once again a free man. That is my most solemn vow!" (Fugard, 1988:5). Pavel will not wear his slippers for they cannot "carry" him to freedom yet. It is a psychological crutch he depends on as he sees them as his passport to independence and freedom from guilt. The slippers are treated with reverence for Pavel goes to great pains to keep them wrapped to protect
them from the filth of the pigsty. This is symbolic of his attempt to prevent his innocence from being corrupted by the ugliness of the world. The slippers are part of this little world which encompasses safety and security. Even though Praskovya tries to warn him that he cannot keep his slippers forever - "One day the rats are going to find them" (Fugard, 1988:5) - that corruption is inevitable and that he cannot hide indefinitely, he refuses to listen to her and continues to guard his slippers obsessively.

Pavel's emotional and spiritual regression goes hand-in-hand with the physical disintegration of his slippers. Since Pavel no longer counts the passing days, he now counts the number of flies he can swat with what "looks suspiciously like the last remnant of one of his cherished slippers. The other is on one of his feet" (Fugard, 1988:17). Pavel no longer treasures his slippers as the epitome of innocence and his vision of freedom has been corrupted. He no longer looks forward to his day of salvation with enthusiasm and he has forgotten his "most solemn vow". He is a frustrated man with no vision for the future as his little world of security and cheer has slowly crumpled as he becomes a mindless victim of his own fears.

However, the minute Pavel sees the butterfly in the sty, he undergoes a complete transformation. Once again the butterfly brings back cherished memories of his youth, something the slippers have long since lost the power to do. Yet it is ironic that he tries to capture the butterfly with his slipper. He is trying to capture innocence and freedom with what once symbolised innocence and freedom. It is a renewal of a futile cyclic chase after something which he can never achieve while he remains in the pigsty. His search for the butterfly is intense: "a few
seconds of panic when he can’t find it ... ecstatic relief and laughter when he does. He stalks it like a hunter, clambering in and out of pens, but it keeps eluding him” (Fugard, 1988:17). It is ironic that the butterfly should continue eluding him and that the chase should become an exercise in futility. It is symbolic of his chase after an innocence that no longer exists, and will evade him forever unless he can come to terms with his own humanity.

Little fluttering friend, where are you? Please ... oh, dear God! ... please don’t die in here. Let me give you back to the day outside, to the flowers and the summer breeze ... and then in return take, oh I beg you! ... take just one little whisper of my soul with you into the sunlight. Be my redemption! (Fugard, 1988:17-18).

The harder he searches for the impossible, the more desperate he becomes. When the pig eats the butterfly, Pavel loses all control and savagely kills the pig. It is a symbolic attempt to kill his fear and avenge his loss of innocence. As the pig eats the butterfly, so Pavel’s last image of childhood is destroyed.

This is my punishment, Praskovya ... to watch brutes devour Beauty and then fart... to watch them gobble down Innocence and turn it into shit... (Fugard, 1988:20).

The loss of the butterfly once again focuses his attention on his tattered slipper.

Do you recognise this? Can you detect any trace of its former delicacy and beauty under the crust of filth that now covers it? My mother’s slippers! These were my most cherished possessions. Look at them now. (Hurls his slippers into one of the pens.) There ... let’s make a thorough job of it ... turn them into shit as well.
A life with nothing sacred left in it is a soulless existence, Praskovya. It is not a life worth living (Fugard, 1988:22).

With the final loss of his slippers, Pavel loses complete grip on reality and on himself.

6.3.2 TIME

The concept of time plays an important role in the play, as time not only binds Pavel, but also promises ultimate freedom.

The decor of the play vividly brings the passage of time under the spectator's attention:

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 (Fugard, 1988:1).

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 realise is that it really is too late for Praskovya, or anyone for that matter, to help him. He can only help himself. It is
also ironic that although Pavel lives so completely for the future, he always hides in the past.

At the beginning of the play, Pavel keeps meticulous track of the time:

Yes ... ten years, two months and six days to be precise. There it is! (Stepping back with pride as an artist would from his canvas) Nobody can argue with that, can they? (Fugard, 1988:3).

The relativity of time is beautifully illustrated by Pavel's following words:

I've had days when it felt as if I'd been here a hundred years. Two hundred! I've already lived through centuries of it (Fugard, 1988:3).

The truth of the matter is that Pavel has never escaped from the feeling of guilt or from 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 and always has. Now that he is confined to the pigsty, his very existence revolves around

Pig shit and Time. Just as my body and every one of its senses has had to deal with pig shit ... smelling it, feeling it, tasting it ... just so my soul has had to reckon with Time ... leaden-footed little seconds, sluggish minutes, reluctant hours, tedious days, monotonous months and then, only then, the years crawling past like old tortoises (Fugard, 1988:3).

"Pig shit and Time" are experienced similarly. Time has as little spiritual meaning for him as pig manure has for him physically. The passing of the seconds, minutes, hours and days are all described with very negative adjectives. This not only emphasises his attitude towards time, but also stresses how slowly time passes for him. It is quite understandable, for he has nothing better to pass the time with other than torture senseless beasts.
Pavel has been hidden away from society for so long that he no longer recognises basic human behaviour: "I've been here for so long, I've forgotten what human nature is really like. Compassion and forgiveness? I stand as much chance of getting that from the mob out there as I do from these pigs" (Fugard, 1988:10). Pavel is perceptive enough to realise that his moment of weakness ten years ago will remind the citizens of 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 that 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 and time continues passing.

The decor in scene two no longer sports a calendar of days, but a tally of dead flies. Days no longer have meaning for him. The future no longer looks promising as he has nothing to look forward to:

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 earth are passing, while I sit in mindless imbecility at that table swatting flies. ... Do you know what his (Pavel's) ambition is? A hundred thousand squashed flies (Fugard, 1988:21).

Scene three relates Pavel's midnight walk. Now time cannot pass quickly enough for him to get outside:

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. It won't be safe until they are all out. Be patient. ... Just hang on a few minutes more (Fugard, 1988:23).
Time becomes vitally important to him once he is outside in the fresh air. Now time passes too quickly and Pavel has no inclination to return to his pigsty.

PAVEL: Let's keep walking.
PRASKOVYA: And I say no! This is as far as we go. We haven't got enough time left, Pavel ...

PAVEL: No no no no do you don't understand. I'm not talking about adding just a few miserable minutes to this stolen little outing. I'm saying: Let's follow that road into the Future! (Fugard, 1988:28).

However, Praskovya, practical as always, refuses to go. Pavel tries to leave without her, but abandons his freedom to come running home.

Pavel's hour of liberation occurs with the pigs' liberation from the sty. A whole man, he can now walk out of the sty with confidence and meet "the sunrise you missed yesterday" (Fugard, 1988:40). It is symbolic that he should be in time for the sunrise, as the sunrise epitomises the beginning of a new day and the beginning of a new life for Pavel Navrotsky.

6.3.3 FREEDOM

Freedom is as relative a concept as time. For each of the characters, freedom has a different meaning. While Praskovya enjoys a physical freedom, she is as much an emotional prisoner as Pavel. Although she
can move about freely, she is also a prisoner of fear and guilt. The theme of freedom, both emotional, spiritual and physical, can be traced throughout the play.

Pavel has never been free from fears, anxiety or guilt. When he thinks back to his childhood, memories of carefree, happy innocence are erased by memories of fear:

- do you know what were the only memories were that came to me? Frightened little Pavel hiding away from trouble! From big bullies looking for a fight, or my angry father with his belt in his hand...
- I had a secret little book in which I kept a list of all the places I had found to hide. I believed that if I could find a hundred small, dark little places into which I could crawl and lie very still and where no one would find me, then I would be safe all my life. I only got as far as sixty-seven (Fugard, 1988:24).

Even as a child, whose past should be filled with images of laughter, sunshine and play, Pavel has been haunted by images of violence and punishment. Where Pavel could hide away physically from the bullies when he was small, he could only hide away emotionally as he grew up:

- As I grew up I refined the art of hiding away. I ended up being able to do it even when I was in the middle of a crowd of people! Like our wedding. I've got a terrible confession to make, Praskovya, you married my black suit. I was hiding away inside it at the time. ... And how does it all end? In a pigsty! And guess what Pavel Navrotsky is doing in the pigsty? This is number sixty-eight (Fugard, 1988:24-25).

Since Pavel deserted from the army he has experienced intense "mental anguish" and "spiritual torment" (Fugard, 1988:2). For ten years "he
has been imprisoned by his own conscience in circumstances which would make the most hardened among you wince" (Fugard, 1988:2). He has banished himself from the human race physically, but has been an emotional prisoner for far longer.

The day of the ceremony is the day Pavel has scheduled for his freedom. However, due to the fact that his uniform is no longer serviceable, Pavel cringes away from appearing in public. His soldier’s tunic would have given him the courage he so desperately needs. He would have been able to hide away inside his tunic, but now the whole situation needs to be carefully reappraised. This is the excuse Pavel has been looking for to postpone his “freedom”:

PAVEL: (Very small and very frightened) I can’t. It’s no good, Praskovya ... I just can’t. I won’t get a fair trial. They won’t even give me a hearing ...

PRASKOVYA: So this is the end of it, then.

PAVEL: For me it is. You are the one who must give the performance now (Fugard, 1988:10-11).

The one place Pavel has forgotten to list as a hiding place, is behind Praskovya’s skirts. Everything Pavel is unable to do, everything that does not work out for Pavel, lands squarely on Praskovya’s shoulders. Although Praskovya is as frightened as Pavel, she is still firmly in control of her life and does not let her fear rule her actions. She does what she has to do:

If you want me to go out there, Pavel, I’ll do it. But I want you to know that I’m as frightened of going out there as you are. You don’t seem to realise 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 (Fugard, 1988:11).

Praskovya goes to the ceremony as commanded, and comes back to pin a medal on his chest. It is ironic that she should repeat Comrade Secretary Chomski's words to Pavel:

The world we live in is safe, Pavel, thanks to the likes of you (my emphasis) ... our children ... will grow up in a world of plenty for all, thanks to the likes of you ... (Fugard, 1988:14).

Indeed, it is hardly "thanks to the likes" of Pavel that the world we live in is a safe place. These words only serve to underline Pavel's terrible weaknesses and cowardice. It is unfortunate that the soldiers lie in unmarked graves, for were they marked, Pavel would not have been in the situation he finds himself in. As it is, it is ironic that although Pavel's comrades lie in unmarked graves, Pavel also has his "grave" which is infinitely worse, the pigsty:

(Pavel rehearsing his speech for the ceremony) Remorse was the bitter bread of my soul in its cold, grey and foul-smelling entombment (Fugard, 1988:7).

Pavel's opportunity to regain his lost freedom has come and gone with the passing of the ceremony. As Praskovya so astutely remarks:

every single one of them had the chance for a really good cry thanks to you. There would have been a lot of disappointed people out there if you had cut short that grief with an unexpected appearance.

Our souls will surely roast in hell for what we have done today. And if our comrades ever find out, we'll be in for a double dose of it. We have lied to them, Pavel ... publicly! We have made fools
of them and a mockery of the anniversary celebrations. Now they will never forgive us (Fugard, 1988:14-15).

Praskovya, therefore, foresees no immediate end to their self-imposed banishment, and sees no reason for not carrying on with her daily household chores.

The butterfly gives Pavel an almost forgotten taste of freedom. It makes him emotionally aware once again, something he hasn't been for a very long time:

while I was chasing it, it was as if something inside me, something that had been dead for a long, long time, slowly came back to life again. All sorts of strange feelings began to stir inside me ... and the next thing I knew I was laughing! (Fugard, 1988:19).

That little taste is enough to drive him insane when it is denied him as he kills a fully grown pig with his bare hands. He rages against his helplessness, yet is powerless to free himself. Even "God has no jurisdiction in here. And do you know why? Because this is hell! Yes! I know where I am now. I at last know this place for what it really is. Hell! The realm of the damned" (Fugard, 1988:20). There is no freedom in this "realm of the damned".

Pavel gets his second chance for freedom when he and Praskovya take their midnight walk. Pavel is safely disguised in Praskovya's dress. It is ironic that he should take some pride in his appearance, in borrowed robes as it were. He straightens up when he studies his appearance in the mirror and even asks for "a little brooch or something ...?" (Fugard, 1988:25). Anticipation for freedom heightens his physical awareness and he adjusts his outfit for a better fit. This passage is just slightly reminiscent of Macbeth's borrowed robes.
Once outside, Pavel's senses are assaulted by "this star-studded, rose-scented magnificence!" (Fugard, 1988:27). Freedom makes him light-headed and it is almost more than he can cope with. He tears through the night "as if a man was after you" (Fugard, 1988:27) despite Praskovya's pleas for silence and restraint. Pavel likens this freedom to Adam who was thrown out of Eden: "My sins have made me an outcast ... trying to sneak back past the Guardian Angel for one last little taste of Paradise" (Fugard, 1988:27).

To Praskovya's alarm, Pavel refuses to go back to the pigsty. The temptation to freedom is too much for him:

PRASKOVYA: What are you suggesting, Pavel?
PAVEL: Escape.
PRASKOVYA: You mean...?
PAVEL: Yes, that's right ... the unmentionable ... the unthinkable ... Escape! What's the matter with you, Praskovya! Have you been so brainwashed that you've forgotten what the word means? (Fugard, 1988:29).

Praskovya has lived for so long without thought of the possibility of escape that she does not know how to handle Pavel's insane suggestion. However, even though Pavel desperately wants to escape from his pigsty, emotionally and physically, he is not yet mature enough to face the world or the consequences of his actions. This is, then, exactly what happens. Pavel comes running back to his secure hiding place he loathes so much.

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. Like Shakespeare’s King Lear, Pavel has to be utterly stripped, physically and emotionally, for a complete catharsis of fear and guilt. It is only when he has reached rock bottom that he can begin to gather the threads of his life again. It is only now that freedom becomes a very real possibility. A freedom that is acceptable for everyone. This freedom is symbolised in the freeing of the pigs: “Wake up! Wake up! ... Come on! It’s all over. Your hour of liberation has come” (Fugard, 1988:36-37). What makes Pavel’s courage so real is the fact that he is terrified of his bravery. Pavel’s selfless act has not only freed himself, but Praskovya as well, and the relief is intense. When Pavel goes out now, he will go as a man. “I won’t hide away in your dress this time. I’m going out there as myself” (Fugard, 1988:39).

It is ironic that

"fate ... ties up a man’s freedom and his surrender in the same bundle, but I’ve got no choice. ... It’s been a long loneliness in here. I’ve forgotten what it means, what it feels like to look into another man’s eyes ... or to be looked at by them. I’m still frightened ... but there is something else now as well and it’s bigger than my fear (Fugard, 1988:39).

Pavel realises that physical punishment is infinitely better than emotional and spiritual regression. He has reached a level of maturity where he can find freedom in his faults, and accept himself regardless of imperfection.

Like The Road to Mecca, this play does not conform to the familiar Fugard formula. It is not a typical play stylistically or thematically, although it does share with the earlier plays a basic concern for the human
condition. Fugard does not cash in on the painful political South African situation. It is play about turning your back on the past for it is no use lamenting the past or the present. This play is carefully plotted, a finely balanced act of the dark side of life that allows introspection with the brighter one that turns raw material into finished product.
South African and Black Committed theatre, or otherwise better known as "theatre of the dispossessed", has been placed under the spotlight in recent years and the motivation of playwrights has been carefully analysed and assessed. What has come to light has placed a large and serious question mark against the literary value of committed South African literature.

In an article written for the Weekly Mail, Ian Steadman says that theatre in the seventies and early eighties "was considered good insofar as it locked into the relevant social problems of the time: defective theatre was excused if it said the right things, innovative explorations were marginalised if they were not saying the right things. As the 1980s draw to a close it appears that theatre-goers are less tolerant of the correct thing said defectively. ... Younger playwrights, directors and actors seem to be turning away from the more obvious political statement. ... Theatre is making tentative strides towards the discovery of an identity beyond apartheid and the obvious political context" (1988:10).

However, it must be kept in mind that analysing and evaluating South African drama is fraught with difficulties due to the complex situation in South Africa. Ideological disputes and cultural differences all play an inescapable and inevitable role when a drama is interpreted, and therefore no ultimate consensus can easily be reached considering the very nature of this controversial issue.
As theatre and socio-political forces have always gone hand-in-hand, committed theatre inevitably developed as a natural product of time and space - the South Africa of the 1950's. It was a period in the history of South African politics and in the history of theatre that encouraged prolific writing as profound changes in the country were occurring at an alarming and disturbing rate. What must be kept in mind is that apartheid and "the ideological and political structures of South African institutions were not created in the 1948 election: both official policy and social attitude were already in existence" (Steadman, 1984:140). However, laws and legislation passed in the 1950s had far-reaching effects on the everyday lives of people. Out of the debris of this confusion and resentment against both government and apartheid rose committed theatre.

Although cooperation between cultures and races has since flourished due to the lifting of the ban on cross-cultural activities, for example the very successful partnership of Simon, Ngema and Mtwa, Black committed writers have become even more vitriolic than ever before. The Black Consciousness Movement has taken the world by storm. Black Pride is heralded and the government is attacked unremittingly. Subject matter is extremely politically orientated and white participation is condemned. This theatre relies heavily on visual impact, and song and dance are characteristic of these plays. Little or no heed is taken of Western literary principles or standards. The argument is that the African product cannot be evaluated by European standards and that new, unique norms need to be provided by the indigenous community.

While this is an admirable ideal, conflicting cultures within this indigenous community show no signs of reaching some consensus. Indeed, it is a
very ticklish matter that causes any academic to shudder. As South Africa owes its heritage to a conglomeration of Europeans, Asians, Coloureds and Blacks, divergent norms cannot be ignored as tradition plays an important role in any society, and this becomes more marked to the extent that a group perceives itself to be under siege. European literature places stress on both form and content, while Black drama places more emphasis on content, displaying little consideration for form in the traditional sense of the word. A native theatre would have to evolve from all cultures. This is an ideal that as yet seems almost impossible considering the incompatibility of ideologies.

At the moment, many Black Committed writers still believe that anything goes as long as the message is slammed home. Black theatre often offers little other than politics and propaganda, as opportunists clamber onto the bandwagon while the demand for this kind of theatre lasts, but few audiences can listen to an exclusive brand of political sloganizing indefinitely. Theatre is used as a vehicle for sheer protest, and these playwrights do not hesitate to sacrifice literature in their attempt to spread propaganda.

Black Consciousness is a movement that thrives on international acclaim, as it has recently outstayed its welcome on the South African stage. There is little doubt that Committed theatre conveniently suits overseas politicians who survive on a diet of stones they can throw at South Africa. Plays that do not carry blatant political didacticisms, that do not convey some radically political stance or are "not political enough", stand little chance of ever seeing the bright lights of London or New York.
Playwrights of the committed Cause have, because of the strongly ideologically motivated component of the "binnebeeld" (Brink, 1980:33) neglected to pay adequate attention to the (Western conventional/traditional) demands of aestheticism to balance the didacticism which is a concomitant of their approach. In this way they have denied their work the luminosity of the transcendence possible in the exploitation of reality at the point where it meets the creative imagination of the writer, and where ideology becomes one component of an intricately woven web of sensibility. Considering the normal composition of local audiences, this has important implications.

This leads one to the practical truth that while art becomes a spokesman for society, to moralise and educate, it is also there to entertain and amuse. Unlike Frye's school of thought which believes that art transcends history and ideology, art is regarded as being inevitably intertwined with politics, history, ideology and socio-economic factors in this dissertation. It is these factors that provide the intertexts in the original text and provide the social context from which the play is written. It is these factors which determine the playwright's ideology and his position in relation to the text.

The literature of South Africa, with some notable exceptions, is mainly concerned with the theme of struggle and conflict. It involves man's search for lost identity and his reaching out for freedom. However, this theme of conflict has been moderated as strident political theatre seems to have run its course and fulfilled its function. Theatre-goers no longer want to listen to endless bouts of propaganda and senseless accusations, but theatre that addresses individuals and speaks of the human condition. It cannot be denied, therefore, that there are committed plays that do
have merit. An excellent example is Woza Albert! which has not only attracted large audiences in South Africa, but which has been praised for "its theatrical demystification of the realities of black experience in the 1980s" (Steadman, 1984: 145).

The two plays studied, Woza Albert! and A Place with the Pigs, are plays that beautifully illustrate this movement away from agit-prop to plays that offer us glimpses into lives we do not know. Although these plays are very different stylistically and structurally, they are both concerned with man's constant search for identity and for freedom, whether release from suppression comes from within, as is the case with A Place with the Pigs, or from outside, as in Woza Albert!

Fugard's A Place with the Pigs, while being political, is more than a political statement, doing more than scratching the surface by delving into the very foundations of human behaviour. Politics and ideology inevitably play a role in his plays as man is irrevocably tied to time and place, but his work is basically and ultimately a study of human nature.

It emerges inevitably from studying the plays that the playwrights come from two very different social contexts and write from completely different ideological stances. These elements are manifested in the plays in various ways. Although the plays are thematically similar, the themes are textualized very differently. The possible worlds in the plays are reflections on, and not of, diverse social realities. While Woza Albert! is most definitely set in South Africa within a black South African's milieu, A Place with the Pigs is set in Russia, but has strong South African implications. Both these plays, however, attain universality as they appeal to that basic need in each person - the need for freedom, whether
it is physical or emotional, whether it is caused by an external system, such as a government, or whether it is caused by self-created bonds.

Woza Albert! is a play workshopped by one white and two black South Africans. The implications of this are far-reaching. Woza Albert! clearly flows from the black literary tradition where music, song, dance and mime contribute to the dynamism and power of the play. It is a play which does not follow Western theatrical principles as there is no real story line, only a series of sketches, and no character development at all. The play is reminiscent of the early Brechtian plays, where the actors do not portray characters, but retain their own identities. This serves to shatter the illusion of fantasy in order to distance and alienate the audience from the familiar, thereby forcing them to face the world with new insight and recognition. However, while the play distances the audience, it is entertaining to ensure emotional response, for enjoyment enhances thinking.

A Place with the Pigs is a play written in the European idiom and is easily understood by white audiences in South Africa. It is structurally and stylistically familiar and there is definite character development. The characters are easy to identify with and the audience becomes more involved with the action on stage. The play is said to be a personal parable, but it is a parable familiar to each South African and easily apprehended. There is a definite story line as the play unfolds and develops with each scene.

The use of religion in Woza Albert! also reveals the collaborators' ideology. The way in which God is treated in the plays can be traced to the social context from which each play emerges. Woza Albert!
politicises religion, as Morena is seen as a political figure, a revolutionary who will lead his people to freedom. In A Place with the Pigs, God plays a supporting role. He is the one Praskovya turns to in her need and in her endless battles with Pavel. She is a pious woman who takes her religion very seriously as it forms an integral part of her culture and tradition. Mbongeni is a total cynic who considers Christianity a tool of the government, but who comes to different insights when Morena returns to earth. Praskovya has a blind, child-like faith in God, whereas Mbongeni only believes when he sees God has returned physically.

While Woza Albert!'s dialogue is vivid and thematically significant, the symbolism of the play is mainly manifested in visual props, like the clown's nose which symbolises the white Afrikaner. Although A Place with the Pigs uses visual props, like the wall covered by scribbles marking the passage of time, symbolism is more prominent in the dialogue of the characters. A Place with the Pigs also lacks the sheer theatrical force Woza Albert! has in abundance. However, the plays cannot really be compared, for they differ completely in form and content. Where Woza Albert! is a play crafted with bodies and sounds, A Place with the Pigs is carried by its words. These are two very different plays, each unique, each individual, but which definitely both deserve a place in the South African theatrical repertoire, and which both would seem to have staying power because of certain intrinsic qualities.

It is because of these intrinsic qualities that plays like Woza Albert! and A Place with the Pigs transcend the limiting confines of a mimetic representation of reality. These images of reality are transmuted as the author withdraws them from the world to rework them and to give them back to us as a literary text. The mirror of reality is, therefore, a
shattered one - unlimited and one that reaches out to a level of unrestricted universality.

The final words belong to Hemingway who has said that from "things that have happened and from things as they exist and from all things that you know and all those you cannot know, you make something through your invention that is not a representation but a whole new thing truer than anything true and alive, and you make it alive, and if you make it well enough, you give it immortality" (in Brink, 1985:19-20).
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