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STRUCTURE AND EXPERIENCE IN THE MAKING OF APARTHEID

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TOWARDS POPULAR THEATRE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Ian Steadman

THEATRE AND POPULAR PERFORMANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

During the 1980s South African scholars focused increasingly upon the political significance of theatre in a rapidly changing society. Much of their work produced insights into the strategies of theatre practitioners who were attempting to define new identities in South African cultural life, and their critical interrogation of the work of these practitioners often illuminated the political determinants of specific plays and performances. (1) I want to argue here the relevance of broad themes and ideological issues which arise from such specific interrogations. I am specifically interested in the ways in which race and class, as they determine (and are determined in) the work of theatre practitioners, have produced contradictions in the creation of popular "oppositional" performance. I take my cue from Tom Lodge's assertion (2) that while his own work on black politics in South Africa elucidates one terrain of resistance, there are other domains of social life which will yield to scholarship equivalent terrain. The theatre is one such domain.

Central to this investigation is the relationship between an oppositional cultural aesthetic and popular performance. There have been assumptions that performance opposed to the dominant received tradition of theatre in South Africa - a tradition informed by apartheid culture - is necessarily popular, while performance located within the dominant tradition simply exhibits the elitest concerns of a marginalised minority. Specifically, the term "popular" has been used to refer to the ways in which members of a majority oppressed group use literature and performance to conscientise audiences in relation to a broad vision of structural change in society. (3) This usage of the term has come to ignore the notion of box-office appeal (which, it is argued, is inextricably tied to marketing strategies based on access to media and capital), and is aligned with experiments in Latin America and elsewhere in which popular performance was produced by the intervention of radical intellectuals. This argument has also been extended to provide a critique of how "people's" entertainment, despite enjoying box-office success, frequently shows people contributing to their own oppression. It is suggested by supporters of this view that there is a necessary distinction to be made between "popular" and "people's" culture, the latter being produced by and addressed to the oppressed people in any society, often domesticating them in a conservative way, and precluding any real interrogation of the structural

causes of their oppression.

Part of the project of this paper is to expose some of the contradictions of these notions. I prefer to describe developments in oppositional work as part of an "adversary tradition" (4) which has seldom achieved popular status. Conversely, work which has achieved popular status, while it has only seldom articulated a genuinely oppositional aesthetic, often opens "a window onto popular consciousness". (5) I am interested particularly in those writers and theatre practitioners who have the notion of structural change in society in mind, but whose work exhibits the contradictions referred to here. Their attempts to reach a popular audience have failed for various reasons, some of which I touch upon in this paper.

No study of these issues can ignore Karin Barber's excellent overview of the field of popular arts in Africa. (6) Barber's model - adapting a conventional Western tripartite classification of the arts as (a) folk/traditional, (b) popular or (c) elite, but incorporating important aspects of syncretism, urbanisation and rapid social change - is appropriate for my purposes. This is despite the fact that there are some aspects of the model which, while perhaps appropriate to much of African arts, are of only limited applicability in the South African context. One major aspect of her study is relevant in the present context, and that is her discussion of popular art not in relation to its origins but in relation to the interests it serves. Although Barber discusses many other aspects of popular arts, it is this aspect alone which informs this paper, because inextricably linked to it is the notion of an adversarial theatre which purports to serve the needs of the majority of "the people" in South Africa.

It is instructive to analyse the growth and development of an adversary idea of South African theatre against a background of repressive legislation and hegemonic co-option. While access to media and capital ensured that for decades a dominant tradition of theatre was established, the activities of theatre practitioners creating work in opposition went largely unrecorded. Analysis of examples of this work - with a focus upon the features of <u>performance</u> which they embrace - provides useful insights into the ways in which performance is inscribed with value systems which might not immediately be apparent to the textual scholar. (7) The study of performance is the study of a complex, multi-dimensional cultural practice. Frequently, the focus of an analysis is a printed text, but that text is merely the residue of an event, the edited version of creative processes. Any analysis of such a text must be sensitive to the complexities of performance which are inscribed therein, complexities in which surplus meanings are produced and often subvert the meanings intended for the reader of the printed text.

There has been no more articulate theoretician of this problem than Raymond Williams, and much of the theoretical framework of what I have to say is attributable to his unrivalled achievement in going beyond contemporary preconceptions and habits of thought in two major ways. Firstly, he has theorised the nature of dramatic action in ways which have distinguished the study of performance from the study of dramatic literature. (8) Secondly, he has demonstrated how the lessons to be learnt from such theorisation are of value not only to the scholar in the arts and humanities, but equally to the social scientist. (9) In the second of these two achievements, Williams' work demonstrates his concern with not only the qualities of a work of art which define its irreducible individuality, but also

> "...the continuity of experience from a particular work, through its particular form, to its recognition as a general form, and then the relation of this general form to a period." (10)

This continuity of experience he calls a "structure of feeling".

Williams' notion of a structure of feeling is not without difficulty. Crude expression of it might give rise to a simplistic reflection theory, and there are problems in merely importing his ideas into the southern African context. (11) Nevertheless, it is significant that numerous commentators on popular arts use analogous expressions in talking about the ways in which popular artists "touch a chord" or articulate "something" which is related to the "needs" or "aspirations" or "feelings" of their audiences. (12) Furthermore, in a study of theatre in South Africa there is a useful insight to be gained by referring to Williams' expression. The failure of writers and theatre practitioners of the adversary tradition to articulate a structure of feeling in their work commensurate with the needs and aspirations of their audiences has frequently marginalised them. Conversely practitioners who have succeeded in such articulation have created works which have enjoyed great popularity, even when their themes have been, in the opinion of radical intellectuals, politically conservative. This essay argues the general case that until the 1970s the quintessential factor determining attempts by dramatists of the adversarial tradition to establish connections between the structure of feeling in the creative work and the structure of feeling in the envisaged audience was their concern with race, while the quintessential factor inhibiting these attempts was their class and ideological location; and that the failure by artists of the adversary tradition to take cognisance of the relations between race and class explained why their theatre was marginalised in cultural struggle and never found a popular audience. I further suggest that the inhibiting factors become less prominent in the 1970s, leading to the emergence of forms of performance conceived not merely as ends in the struggle for social and political freedom, but - through their role in cultural struggle - as means. This change in conception becomes, in the 1970s, the

defining characteristic of a theatre both adversarial and popular.

RACE, CLASS AND BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS THEATRE

The notion of an adversary idea of the theatre derives from my sense of how theatrical performance in South Africa has expressed oppositions to hegemony in ways directly parallel to political developments. In opposition, however, to much of the scholarship on theatre in the 1980s, I do not locate these oppositions entirely within a perspective which sees class as the determining factor in describing different types of creative work. Following Chantal Mouffe, (13) I prefer to view the creative practitioners of South African theatre as being inscribed in a multiplicity of social relations ranging from relations of production to relations of race, sex, vicinity, language and religion. Unlike some commentators, I argue that the practitioners of theatre have many subject positions. The playwrights I study might well be inscribed in relations of production as workers or petit-bourgeois intellectuals, but they are also either male or female, white or black, Zulu or English. As Mouffe argues :

> "A person's subjectivity is not constructed only on the basis of his or her position in the relations of production. Furthermore, each social position, each subject position, is itself the locus of multiple possible constructions, according to the different discourses that can construct that position. Thus, the subjectivity of a given social agent is always precariously and provisionally fixed or, to use the Lacanian term, sutured at the intersection of various discourses." (14)

These observations are especially pertinent in studying the growth and development of what has been called "black theatre" in South Africa. (15)

The growth and development of the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa prompted many significant developments in the theatre. A study of developments in the theatre related to this phenomenon provides an interesting example of structures of feeling at work. It can be argued that black consciousness enabled the practitioners of black theatre to create a structure of feeling within their plays and performances commensurate with the larger mythology of blackness prevailing amongst audiences during the groundswell of consciousness-raising in the formative years of the Black Consciousness Movement. Prior to the articulation of black consciousness principles in the 1970s, on the other hand, it can be argued that the absence of such a mythology for theatre audiences meant that the notion of a structure of feeling as Williams envisaged it was seldom realised in the work of South African playwrights. Black consciousness, in short, gave black theatre an identity. In order to arrive at such an argument, however, it is necessary to trace some background.

The history and development of black theatre in South Africa has only comparatively recently been documented in any significant detail. (16) There is consensus regarding a number of milestones in that history. One of those milestones is the publication in 1936 of the first play in English by a black South African. Herbert Dhlomo's The girl who killed to save : Nongqause the Liberator has been described by numerous commentators as a play which demonstrates its author's "assimilation" (17) into middle-class European cultural norms.

The reasons for selecting this play for argument must be scrutinized. It is possibly the weakest of Dhlomo's plays. But as an example of mission literature, as the first play by a black South African in English, and as a play which exemplifies liberal middle-class black writing under a system of tutelage and co-option, it serves as a good example of the ways in which black middle-class dramatists were frustrated in their attempts to articulate progressive arguments in dramatic form. Dhlomo's own subsequent development shows that to characterise all of his writing by reference to this play is a distortion. Later plays and poems reveal a writer more mature than the one exhibited in this play, and Dhlomo can be shown to have been a writer far more politically and socially aware than this play reveals. His career shows a clear pattern of movement away from tutelage to a rejection of the patronising attitudes of liberal whites (a movement parallel to his own active involvement in ANC politics). Nevertheless, because this first play stands at the forefront of our adversary tradition, and because Dhlomo has been called "the pioneer of modern black drama in South Africa", (18) discussion is justified - if only to map the terrain for an argument about the obstacles to be overcome in the search for an adversarial theatre that would also be popular.

The plot of the play follows very closely the version of events reported historically in various letters from the Gaika Commissioner of the eastern Cape Province, Charles Brownlee, and his wife, leading up to the famous cattle-killing of 1857. (19) The action of the play begins in that year. The young Nongqause already commands the respect of Kreli, the paramount chief of the AmaXhosa, and thousands of her people. Prompted by her witchdoctor uncle, Mhlakaza, she claims to have talked to the spirits of the ancestors, who promise to return and help the AmaXhosa defeat the English settlers of the eastern Cape. They will only do this, however, if the AmaXhosa destroy their cattle and crops in sacrifice. After Nongqause's claims are publicised, the sacrifice is undertaken by many tribes. The first scene of the play shows Kreli visiting Nongqause, who pretends to have a dream in which the prophecy is repeated. Kreli is sufficiently convinced to send word to the recalcitrant tribes, telling them to obey the commands of the ancestors and to sacrifice their crops and cattle. Prompted by the superstitions of Mhlakaza, the craze soon spreads amongst the various tribes, and cattle and crops are destroyed. The characters of the Gaika Commissioner and

his wife are introduced to provide the playwright with the opportunity for descriptive exposition, and to allow Dhlomo to argue relations between tribal custom and modernization. The action then leaps forward a few months. In a Xhosa home, Christian missionaries help the starving Xhosa victims of the prophecy. Nongqause's dreams have been proven false : superstition and outdated tribal customs have led to the destruction of the nation.

The play has been severely criticised for its sentimentality and because it inscribes the values of Dhlomo's petit-bourgeois Christian missionary education, but there are other dimensions of the play which make it a little more sophisticated than this. Dhlomo has presented the action in such a way as to show that the tragic events have some positive end : although the nation has been virtually destroyed, the AmaXhosa will be able to reject their superstitious tribal customs and begin to modernize. He was not merely writing another historical drama, but dramatising an attitude which perfectly tied in with his essay "Native Policy in South Africa", written in 1930, in which he stated :

> "....the tribalism which so many people desire to protect and prolong, must be broken down at all costs and hazards. It is one of the most formidable foes to Bantu progress ..." (20)

Dhlomo's play is fundamentally a demonstration of these critical attitudes. Certainly, the style and language of the play demonstrate the idiom of its author's class and ideology, as Couzens has argued (21) - but what is more interesting for present purposes is the play's structure of feeling. For the play is not so much a conflict between benevolent missionaries and superstitious pagans, as between progressive modernism and retrogressive tribalism. But, as Williams suggests, there is always a discernible relation between a structure of feeling and its effective conventions, and in this play there is a disjunction in the relation between Dhlomo's search for an idea of African drama and the conventions he uses to dramatise his vision. The conventions are mechanically received from an imperfectly-remembered imported tradition. It is not simply a matter of Dhlomo "assimilating" a western model of middle-class drama, for the model of western drama that Dhlomo might have had in mind simply did not exist, except in his own dislocated impressions of lines, characters and situations from sentimental melodramas and school plays. Dhlomo only imperfectly understood the models of English middle-class drama as exemplified by writers like Granville-Barker, otherwise he might have turned them to good effect. (22) Similarly, he was unable fully to exploit, in his dramatic writing, the interest he so often professed in indigenous performance forms (about which he wrote critically). (23) There is, in the play, no organic relation between Dhlomo's social consciousness and the conventions which he selects to purvey that consciousness dramatically. Through the persistence of old habits, he is unable to create a "controlling

illuminating form", (24) to find techniques which would become the new conventions of a new kind of drama, a drama which expressed for a contemporary audience a view of African history and legend, and in dramatic discourse organically related to that view. The tensions between the form and vision of the play are apparent from a number of examples one could select from the text. To choose but one :

"MRS BROWNLEE : (Aside) When duty calls love is sacrificed.

When duty calls life is endangered...

BROWNLEE : Thank God I have the noble wife I have.

MRS BROWNLEE : (Tears in her eyes, and running into his open arms) Oh! Charles!

BROWNLEE : (Emotional) Darling! (They embrace. Silence long and profound.)

(Scene Three)

Dhlomo's mission education, the received conventions of literature which he embraced, and his very conception of drama as literature rather than theatrical action, lead to what has been described as "a somewhat narrow, and even elitest conception of literature as a particular kind of elevated utterance". (25) The criticisms of the play which have been made by numerous scholars can be recast by reference to the notion of a structure of feeling. Distanced from middle-class whites by racial discrimination and from working-class blacks by status discrimination, Dhlomo was - in this play - unable to articulate a dramatic discourse which would reach either. There is, throughout the play, a disparity between action and writing. Dhlomo had learned the accepted rules in dramatic writing, but those rules were the expression of a structure of feeling more attuned to Dhlomo's middle-class Christian mentors. The audience he wished to reach remained beyond reach because Dhlomo's dramaturgy remained circumscribed by his different class and ideological interests.

One way for the dramatist to solve the problem of this kind of disjunction is to work with a theatre company, but to make that possible one needs audiences - the theatre as a social institution in South Africa at the time did not make it possible for Dhlomo in any significant way to explore his vision collaboratively with audiences and practitioners in order to achieve the formal changes necessary, to achieve new relations between speech and action, relations which would be authentic responses to the changing structure of feeling which Dhlomo tried to articulate. It is also known that Dhlomo did not much care for such a collaborative approach. (26)

This was despite numerous attempts by Dhlomo to investigate

indigenous African dramatic forms and conventions in order to articulate contemporaneous attitudes about freedom and oppression. Commentators have illustrated Dhlomo's significant achievements in a number of areas, and have gone so far as to suggest that Dhlomo is a forerunner of a characteristic style of poetry which emerged in the 1970s in Soweto. (27) It is clear, in fact, that the Dhlomo of The Girl Who Killed to Save is a very different writer from the Dhlomo of the 1940s, when he did more than enough to contradict the accusation that he was a co-opted middle class African writer assimilated to the European model. It is also clear that by the 1940s Dhlomo was moving away from the ideological embrace of tutelage, inscribed in the idiosyncratic dramaturgy of the early play, and beginning to embrace an ideal of black nationalism more attuned to contemporary political developments. This brought him closer to creating in his work a structure of feeling consonant with the interests of a popular audience. The later plays of Dhlomo frequently demonstrate this, while nevertheless still demonstrating that he remained unable to open a window on popular consciousness in quite the same manner as the 1970s generation of writers and theatre practitioners would be able to. Later Dhlomo plays like The Pass demonstrate far more clearly a writer in touch with urban political realities, capable of dialogue stripped of literary self-consciousness, and rooted in a political vision more clearly defined. The trouble is that even this play preceded the political moment which might have given it a structure of feeling linked to a broader popular political consciousness. It was left to Gibson Kente, writing at that later political moment, to reproduce the last line of Dhlomo's play : "How long, O Lord, how long!" (28) and redefine it as the cornerstone of a structure of feeling which made theatre, in the formative period of Black Consciousness, a popular medium for the articulation of political aspirations.

Herbert Dhlomo's The Girl who killed to save was the first play by a black South African to be published in English. The Rhythm of Violence by Lewis Nkosi has been claimed as the second. (29) Both Dhlomo and Nkosi are important figures in the development of black South African drama, not merely because they wrote the first and second black plays to be published in English, but also because their respective plays reveal much about changes in black social consciousness prior to the emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement. More symbolically, what distinguishes Nkosi's play from Dhlomo's is the crisis of Sharpeville. If Sharpeville did indeed represent a turning point in African nationalism "when protest finally hardened into resistance", (30) Nkosi's play was a timely index of the process. (31)

The Rhythm of Violence appeared within four years of Sharpeville. The theme is made clear by the title and context : after the Sharpeville shootings, a rhythm of violence was to enter the political arena. The play anticipates in some respects what we know as black consciousness theatre, but with significant

differences. It deals with major issues in the political life of South Africans in the early 1960s. The plot can be simply outlined. The action occurs in Johannesburg in the early 1960s. Act One in three scenes shows Piet and Jan, two armed South African policemen, nervously watching an African political meeting just before sunset. They discuss their reactionary attitudes to black political activism and joke about the attempts of black people to bring about political change in South Africa. Act Two opens later that evening on "a dingy basement clubroom which serves as headquarters of a group of left-wing university students". Black and white students of the University of the Witwatersrand, dominated by Gama, a militant activist, are waiting for the midnight explosion of a bomb they have placed beneath the city hall. The bomb is timed to explode during a Nationalist Party political meeting. During the four scenes of this Act the group of students becomes increasingly nervous and drink flows easily as they talk about political change and inter-racial conflict in South Africa. Gama's brother Tula and a white Afrikaans girl by the name of Sarie (who does not yet know about the bomb) are drawn closer together, the playwright depicting them as innocent pawns in a political game. The climax of the Act is reached with the news, just minutes before midnight, that Sarie's father is attending the political meeting at the city hall in order to tender his resignation from the Nationalist Party, which he has come to reject. Tula, in an attempt to save the girl's father, rushes to the city hall. Act Three opens an hour later on "the charred ruins of what had been the city hall". Jan and Piet, the two policemen, discover Sarie weeping over the body of Tula. When they discover that he is the brother of Gama, who is well known to them as a political activist, they arrest her on suspicion of conspiracy.

More in touch with rising political militancy on the Witwatersrand than the Dhlomo of The Girl who killed to save, and arguably more in touch with the nuances of dramatic language rooted in a consciousness of proletarian politics, (32) Nkosi was able to create a structure of feeling in the play related to the racial issues of the time, although, as we shall see, in discourse laden with contradictions. Nkosi's play was effectively marginalised, not only by the censorship machinery of the State but also by a dramaturgical approach attributable to its author's class and ideological location. Like Dhlomo - though arguably less so - Nkosi was caught in a situation where the way in which theatre was institutionalised precluded a free collaborative process of playmaking which might have led to a genuinely popular performance before audiences whose aspirations were depicted in the play. (33) Such opportunities might have allowed for the creation of a dramatic form and discourse more relevant and appropriate - and more authentic - in the context of the political life of the Witwatersrand which is the fabric of the play. The text which Nkosi wrote, however, is something else.

Nkosi was unable to establish in The Rhythm of Violence a

structure of feeling commensurate with the political vision expressed through the play. There remains a disjunction between the vision of the writer and the forms and conventions in which he tries to express that vision. These forms and conventions are interesting indices of Nkosi's attitudes towards race and politics in the South Africa of the 1960s.

The ways in which Nkosi promulgates a vision of black liberation are somewhat fettered by class and ideological constraints. These are manifested in the text through language usage, characterisation, and through such idiolectical signals as gender attitudes. A few very brief examples illustrate this. We read in one stage direction :

> "Tula advances from the confusion of the crowd; they come face to face with each other. Momentarily, their eyes meet and the girl's eyes fall to her feet. Tula puts out his hand. The girl takes it, and they hold on to each other a bit longer than is necessary, as if they've struck quick sympathy with each other.
> TULA : Hello!
>
> SARIE : Hello!
>
> TULA : May I get you anything to drink?
>
> SARIE : (shyly) If you have gin, I'll have a gin and tonic." (Act Two, Scene Two)

Tula, predictably, majors in fine arts. As Sarie inspects his work she says :

> "It's beautiful. It's very gentle. Now I understand a lot of things about you."

She is quickly drawn to him, and Nkosi places them with the noise of the party behind them :

> "...kneeling down, facing each other in the foreground of the stage.
> SARIE : You know what I like about you?
>
> TULA : No. What?
>
> SARIE : You seem to be very sincere about everything you're doing...You know something, too? You're very gentle! I mean, a woman can tell these things very quickly. When a man is gentle, a woman can feel it immediately."
> (Act Two, Scene Three)

Such dialogue is not merely the product of the characters' naivete, for it permeates the whole play, and there are numerous instances where women express these sentiments. Sarie says (Act Two, Scene Four) "I am a woman, so (sic) my optimism is boundless". Lili is slapped on the bottom by Gama, which action is enough to drive her to "pummel him with her fists" before he pulls her roughly to him and she then "seems to melt in his arms as he kisses her" (Act Two, Scene Three). Kitty, who elsewhere exhibits an air of independent maturity and aloofness, says that "Men are such beasts" (Act Two, Scene Two). All the women - members of the "Left Students Association" at the University of the Witwatersrand and therefore presumably at least slightly enlightened in such matters (!) - are represented as being grossly subservient to men and often downright silly. It is, of course, part of Nkosi's intention to characterise Gama as egotistical and chauvinistic, and to contrast him with Tula, but there is no mistaking the common factor in his characterisation of the women in the play. The dominant discourse in the play is a patriarchal one, and fairly typically a chauvinistic one. (34)

Throughout, the text reads as a self-consciously literary artefact by a writer with an eye on publication rather than performance. The most obvious feature of the dramaturgy of Nkosi's play is this self-conscious literariness. Nkosi has elsewhere (35) presented a critique of other writers in these very terms. An essay by him entitled "Toward a new African theatre" (36) is instructive in this regard. Here he criticises the model of African theatre which borrows from Europe "indiscriminately whatever forms come from our former colonial masters" (37) and elsewhere he says that permeating the "entire effort" of African art is "a European presence". (38) All of these observations are directly applicable to his own play.

It is instructive to focus briefly on some of the problems of race and class which Nkosi faced and about which he has written. Nkosi has attempted to explain the difficulties faced by the black writer by reference to the matrix of problems of race and class :

> "It is true that because of the obvious reasons, black South Africans did not produce an elite which was alienated from the black masses or even from the conditions of everyday life under which our people laboured. In South Africa we were saved from the emergence of a Black Bourgeoisie by the levelling effect of apartheid...the life of the educated class is as insecure as those (sic) of the illiterate and semi-literate masses of our people." (39)

In an obvious political sense imposed by the policy of apartheid, there is a germ of truth in what Nkosi says here. Clearly, however, the "levelling effect" does not work quite so simply. There most certainly was a Black Bourgeoisie at the time Nkosi wrote this. And he was firmly located within it in a way which

argues that racism is something which is perpetrated by the State

circumscribed his writing.

Nkosi often generalises black experience in this way. The Rhythm of Violence is fraught with the results of such generalisation. Elsewhere, he has endeavoured to articulate a position slightly more sophisticated. At a conference of African writers of English literature in Kampala in 1962, organised by the Mbari Writers' Club of Nigeria and the Congress for Cultural Freedom, (40) and attended by writers like Chinua Achebe, Alex la Guma, Bob Leshoai, Bloke Modisane, Es'kia Mphahlele and Wole Soyinka, Nkosi came to the realisation that :

> "...ultimately, what linked various African peoples on the continent was the nature and depth of colonial experience; and this was the final irony. Colonialism had not only delivered them unto themselves, but had delivered them unto each other, had provided them, so to speak, with a common language and an African consciousness; for out of rejection had come an affirmation." (41)

Nkosi began, he argues, to understand the real implications of being "black" :

> "I took my colour quite for granted. I discovered my Africanness the day I learned that I was not only black but non-white...
> In that small prefix put before the word white I saw the entire burden and consequence of European colonialism..." (42)

In his essay "Black Power or Souls of Black Writers" (43) Nkosi discovers and affirms a forceful consciousness not of African but of black power. Nkosi did not enjoy this revelation at a youthful age as would the practitioners of Black Consciousness theatre in the 1970s. His play is not imbued with the "coherent vision" which, he later argues, younger Africans were beginning to realise towards the end of the 1960s. The "New Africans", as he calls them, are not present in The Rhythm of Violence. His play preceded by half a decade the articulation of the black consciousness philosophy which would underpin plays of the 1970s.

This is not to say that there was always an absence of the kind of social and political consciousness that would characterise the Black Consciousness Movement of the 1970s. The ideological precedents for Black Consciousness existed not only in Negritude in Africa, in Black Power in the USA, and in black nationallism elsewhere in the Third World, but also in the historical roots of African Nationalism in South Africa - and Nkosi was certainly aware of the implications. (44) But the ideological concerns of The Rhythm of Violence are not those of black consciousness. The very notion of political liberation through "multi"-racialism which lies at the centre of the play illustrates this. The play argues that racism is something which is perpetrated by the State

and which can be overcome by personal relationships - but in the play this is only possible because the black students have been incorporated into white middle class culture and function in their relationships as equals. The very attitude that racism can be overcome on the individual level is fraught with problems (quite apart from the liberal-humanist rhetoric that such attitudes utilise). The play does not engage with the reality of racism and oppression at all levels of society. This problem of content is analogous to the problem of form. The structure of feeling of the play, provided by Nkosi's vision of political liberation, is articulated within the received formal categories of an imported tradition of dramatic writing.

BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS IN PERFORMANCE

It is instructive to turn now to the theatre of the 1970s, both to extend the critique of Nkosi's play and to continue the search for a theatre both popular and adversarial. I do not intend to undertake a detailed analysis of one of the 1970s black consciousness plays here. (45) Even a broad description of the plays and poetry of the Black Consciousness Movement shows that theatre practitioners, taking advantage of a broadly shared mythology of blackness provided by the Black Consciousness Movement, were able to create plays which were part of a consonance with popular consciousness - although there were still many problems.

Black Consciousness in the 1970s never enjoyed homogeneity. It embraced various strands of conflicting arguments. Nevertheless, the Black Consciousness Movement of the 1970s provided a context within which theatre practitioners could articulate their vision of political liberation, and do so by creating a structure of feeling in harmony with the growing political conscientisation of their audience. One of the first differences between their vision and that of Nkosi relates to the notion of multiracialism. The first precondition of a liberated society for the early advocates of Black Consciousness was a rejection of a role for whites in black liberation, and the severing of links with the multiracial accommodationist option represented by the students who feature in Nkosi's play. The Black Consciousness Movement was often ahistorical, often blind to a class analysis of society, and it often romanticised the past in attempting to recover it from colonisation. Nevertheless it presented an important challenge to dominant ideological constructions, it engaged in rapid consciousness-raising and politicisation of black people, and it did more to Africanise theatre in South Africa than Dhlomo or Nkosi. This influence is still being felt in many ways today. There were limitations in Black Consciousness theatre, but it did articulate a direction for many theatre practitioners, and it did so by offering a view of transcendence based on a shared mythology of blackness, however circumscribed.

For practitioners of this theatre, it was not the specific argument about black liberation that was important - that was

often flawed - but the process of developing the argument. Through a shared structure of feeling concerned with black solidarity, with resistance, and with political liberation, many arguments, however defective, were able to be articulated on the basis of a commonality of discourse with audiences. The rhetoric was agreed upon. So was the common enemy.

What such activities managed to accomplish was a rejection of the liberal-humanist rhetoric of Nkosi and Dhlomo in favour of more militant, more clearly defined political arguments. Theatre practitioners located their arguments within the political aspirations of their audiences in ways that Nkosi could never manage. Black theatre became a consciously articulated cultural counterpart of the movement towards political liberation. The theatre was given an identity. One spokesman (46) talked about a "new approach in theatre" emerging in Soweto which was given an "identity basis" through Black Consciousness. He described black theatre in terms of a "black sub-culture (which) will act as a counter-culture", leading eventually to an authentic national culture. Such grandiose notions were only possible in the context of a growing political and cultural movement which shared the rhetoric.

What was most important was the way in which these ideas were implemented. The practical creation of theatrical performance during this period was something which enabled theatre practitioners to overcome many of the obstacles not overcome by Dhlomo or Nkosi. In groups like TECON (Theatre Council of Natal) and PET (People' Experimental Theatre), plays were created in workshop. Scripts were reshaped and recreated collaboratively and were seldom the products of the individual artist at his or her desk. With the conscious intention of breaking received norms and conventions in order to shape a radical political message, theatre practitioners created highly polemical works. Scene three of PET's workshopped Shanti, a typical black consciousness play originally scripted by Mthuli Shezi, (47) demonstrates the conscious didacticism intended by the creators of the play. Stage directions have one of the central characters, Koos, boldly standing centre stage facing the audience during this scene, saying :

> "I am Black.
>
> Black like my mother.
>
> Black like the sufferers.
>
> Black like the continent."

Shouting slogans and issuing proclamations, the characters in the play frequently address the audience in this way. Shanti might well be subject to charges of the same class and ideological disjunctions as those exhibited by the plays of Dhlomo and Nkosi, in that the governing consciousness of the play is one of an

educated sector of the black bourgeoisie, but it differs from the earlier plays in that it was conceived in performance terms as a dynamic representation of Black Consciousness principles in presentational (48) didactic form. Unconcerned with literary finesse, but rather with slogans of political resistance underpinned by theatrical performance, it communicated simply, directly, and dynamically.

Nkosi's play might well have flourished in this different context. (49) To illustrate the role that theatre played at this time, one only has to note that of the five organisations which were charged in the notorious Treason Trial of 1975, two - People's Experimental Theatre and the Theatre Council of Natal - were theatre groups. A perusal of the texts might surprise the reader in this regard, because they are frequently quite trite. But the ways in which they functioned in performance were clearly of some concern to the State, which alleged that they were subversive.

There are many details of formal construction which reveal important distinctions between the plays of the 1970s and those of an earlier generation. Nkosi imported American rhythms into his play, and his play is very reminiscent of a particular American genre of the time. (50) The Black Consciousness theatre practitioners were also influenced by such factors, but the collaborative process of workshop theatre served to ensure that such influences were at least assimilated in a practice of rehearsal based on a search for new forms. Mothobi Mutloatse articulates the position thus :

> "We are involved in and consumed by an exciting experimental art form that I can only call, to coin a phrase, 'proemdra' : Prose, Poem and Drama in one!...We are going to pee, spit and shit on literary convention before we are through; we are going to kick and pull and push and drag literature into the form we prefer. We are going to experiment and probe and not give a damn what the critics have to say. Because we are in search of our true selves - undergoing self-discovery as a people." (51)

Nkosi's imported formal conventions and his multiracialism were thus overtaken by different attitudes to form and content. I am not arguing that use of traditional forms and local music necessarily makes a play more popular than one which draws on other borrowed conventions. Syncretism is an essential element in the definition of popular theatre in South Africa. What I am proposing is that an important element in communicating through popular performance is the use of the audience's own forms and conventions, however syncretised through contact with imported and urbanised forms and conventions, in order to give authenticity to that communication and thereby play a role in both expressing and constituting popular consciousness. In a different context, David Coplan comments :

"When the cast of King Kong had their professional dreams

> shattered in London by criticism that asked 'Why don't you do something African, something of your <u>own</u>?', the shock was felt deeply in different ways throughout Johannesburg's African community...a struggle began to regain control of African performing arts for the urban community : to promote self-awareness, cooperative unity, and the positive self-identity of 'Black Consciousness'." (52)

The extraordinary popularity of Gibson Kente's "township musicals" in the 1970s, the popularly-supported and critically acclaimed collaborative work of Athol Fugard, John Kani and Winston Ntshona from 1970 to 1976, and the growing popular interest in the experimental workshop theatre of Workshop '71, were primarily attributable to their success in creating syncretic performance which drew on many different influences but which were crystallised in the processes of rehearsal. Building upon this, the 1970s produced a crop of theatre practitioners who dedicated their energies to articulating a local identity in rapidly evolving local formal conventions.

All of these influential practitioners - even Fugard, for a short period before abandoning the workshop process in favour of the convention of the writer producing drama at his desk - were influential in prompting Black Consciousness practitioners to experiment and innovate in the rehearsal process in an attempt to create syncretic performance. More significantly, despite the fact that Gibson Kente's popular township musicals were frequently criticised by Black Consciousness student leaders as being vacuous escapist entertainment out of step with growing black political awareness, Kente continued to attract ever-growing numbers of supporters and this introduced an important debate about the notion of popular political theatre. Kente certainly responded to criticism by making his plays of the early 1970s more directly political in orientation. Conversely, however, his critics receded in the face of his enormous popularity. Terence Ranger, in a different context, offers reasons why this might be so :

> "...we have to look at the informal, the festive, the apparently escapist, in order to see evidence of real experience and real response." (53)

The dismissal of Kente by radical intellectuals who accuse him of perpetrating false consciousness, reinforcing stereotypes, and being frivolous, points to a major contradiction in interpretations of popular culture. Not only should we remember Barber's important point that :

> "Through popular art, expression is given to what people may not have known they had in common". (54)

Also important is the fact that whatever radical intellectuals might think of Kente's moderate political stance, his audiences, in a climate of oppression and growing resistance, responded favourably to his work. Instead of imposing one's own response, we need to understand their responses. These were to both the syncretic entertainment value and those elements in his plays - however sugar-coated - that related directly to their own lives.

For Kente, in creating sentimental musical entertainment about life in the township, could not help rooting his plays in the problems of unemployment, alcoholism, alienation, and all the other consequences of political oppression. If Kente's intended themes were somewhat moderate in their politics, his audiences perceived from the substance of the plays a structure of feeling consonant with the rising tide of political resistance. Kente opened a window on popular consciousness through the medium of spectacular dance, acting and singing.

It was, in short, performance which broke the mould that had contained writers like Dhlomo and Nkosi. For no matter how bourgeois in conception many of the 1970s plays were, the ways in which they functioned in performance to a large extent helped the practitioners overcome the problem of elitest discourse. This is clear from the texts of not only Black Consciousness plays, but poetry as well. At political meetings, rallies and cultural functions, artists presented "performance poetry". Not only was this one way of avoiding censorship (it being more difficult to ban an ephemeral performance than a text), but the dynamism of the communication ensured that the text was merely the residue of often quite different and spectacular meanings. The artists were less concerned with the literary nuances of their work, than with the opportunities provided by theatrical performance to explore new forms and techniques. Literature in performance broke down the rules and constraints imposed by publishing conventions. Instead, there emerged a concern with a communal approach to creativity. The lived experience of literature in performance was a far richer one than that captured in textual form, because of the added dimensions of participation from audiences in the form of chanted responses to signals from the stage, emotive music, unison speaking, a metonymical rather than metaphorical construction, and language which worked as utterance rather than statement. This sense of performance means that there was a different dynamism in the performance of Black Consciousness theatre, a dynamism which was in many ways still operative in South African theatre at the end of the 1980s.

One commentator has observed of poetry, and the comments may be seen as directly applicable to the theatre :

> "...the characteristics of oral transmission would seem to suit the requirements of political poetry. For example, the 'covert' qualities of poetry may be brought to the fore by the nature of the performance, by the stress on words and phrases, by the tone of voice, and by gestures." (55)

In the poems and plays of the Black Consciousness movement it is important to distinguish between the texts and performances in this way. The petty-bourgeois radical intellectuals who spearheaded the literary and dramatic movement could not help reproducing in their literary works the ideological distance between themselves and the "black mass" which they so often claimed to represent. (56) But an analysis of the texts in performance indicates something entirely different. Performance

of these pieces brings them into more accessible relationships with audiences, transforming mere intellectual statement into dynamic utterance. These pieces were, furthermore, performed quite presentationally in an effort to establish the didactic relationship with the audience. The representational approach of Nkosi and Dhlomo signals quite different performance values. In their different approach the Black Consciousness theatre practitioners were further entrenching the link with the audience. As utterance, the words are no longer self-conscious literary expressions, but performed images of black anger and resistance. The words have a robust materiality - they don't just communicate meanings, they embody them. Phrases and exclamations like "Arise!", "stand up!", "now is the time!" - are all dynamically supported in performance by the gestures and movements which had entered the popular vocabulary of communication about liberation. Not the text, but the signifying actions accompanying the text, create the desired effects.

The workshop techniques of Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, of the Black Consciousness theatre groups, of groups like Workshop 71, The Company, and Junction Avenue Theatre Workshop Company, enabled them to create performances which rapidly captured the imaginations of audiences and identified their work as uniquely South African. Characterising all the new work were formal innovations like episodic structures, quick shifts of scene and tempo, oral narrative, music and street rhythms, jazz, and factory work-rhythms. These were the results of collaborative creativity. Identification occurred not just at the level of content but also at the level of form. There is obvious resonance in the words of Raymond Williams :

> "Here, undoubtedly, is the point of growth of any drama of our century : to go where reality is being formed, at work, in the streets, in assemblies, and to engage at those points with the human needs to which the actions relate." (57)

Despite the fact that much of this work was created in the struggle with state repression, with a lack of capital and with little or no access to media and marketing facilities, it signalled the maturation of the adversary tradition into popular South African performance. This tradition, by the 1970s, stood in sharp contrast to the activities of state-subsidised theatre, evidenced in the opulent palaces which were erected from the late 1970s into the 1980s as monuments to marginalised white culture.

CONCLUSION : THE CONTRADICTIONS OF POPULAR THEATRE

Clearly, in a survey article of this nature the problem of historical elision is paramount. Nevertheless, without projecting the foregoing arguments further than mere background for close readings of the texts referred to, it is possible to argue a generalisation that in the decades preceding the emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement, black dramatists were disadvantaged in two ways. Firstly they were intellectuals and writers without

access to significant audiences for whom they could create a recognizable structure of feeling. Secondly, and related to this, they constructed plays at their desks rather than in the rehearsal room. Even on those rare occasions when they were involved in the processes of theatrical production - as both Dhlomo and Nkosi were (58) - the involvement was minimal and without access to the theatrical possibilities which were to prevail from the 1970s. Furthermore, they had to work virtually in isolation, with a few colleagues, whereas the practitioners of the 1970s were able to relate their work to the concerns of a movement which saw culture as a means of resistance. For a popular performance to emerge it was essential that the individual intellectual writer at his desk leave the study for rehearsal-room encounters with actors. This process has extended into the 1980s : the preponderance of plays made through the collaborative processes of "workshop" theatre can be seen as analogous to the emergence of progressive action based on a mass-democratic movement in South African politics.

The adversary tradition became established as the dominant face of South African theatre in the 1980s, and was immediately marketed abroad. Not a year has passed in the 1980s without South African theatre featuring prominently in some international festival of theatre. The corollary of this is that theatre practitioners in South Africa, when creating new works, have one eye on the international scene. Oppositional theatre seems increasingly to seek an international rather than a local audience. One strategy of the South African government in an era of so-called "reform", is being seen to allow oppositional theatre to tour abroad. This creates an impression of freedom of expression which has surprised foreign audiences. (59) It also points to contradictions in the notion of a popular theatre which claims to be oppositional. For if Gibson Kente's popular township musicals are criticised for being escapist and insufficiently politicised, it might be argued that at least he represents a theatre which is made out of the struggles of the people and consumed by the people. Theatre for the export market, however, is made out of the struggles of the people but not consumed by the people. Such theatre might be viewed as an instrument of ruling class hegemony exactly as perceived by Gramsci. Furthermore, such theatre determines idiosyncrasies in the work itself. For the image of South African culture prepared for outsiders is highly selective and often reinforces the very stereotypes that it seeks to undermine. (60)

By the end of the 1980s a new adversary theatre has emerged (in trade union and community theatre, in cabaret, and in various forms of dance theatre). Perhaps these will be the focal points of popular theatre in the 1990s. At present, the image of South African theatre, as it has been marketed abroad with enormous critical and commercial success, and as it is purveyed in local theatres, is an image rooted in the adversary tradition as crystallised by Black Consciousness theatre and refined by non-racial progressive groups in the 1970s. Plays like Woza

Albert, Bopha, Asinamali, and Sarafina have marketed political struggle and resistance abroad in the current images of South African politics : the freedom song, the toyi-toyi dance and the burning-tyre "necklace".

The major difficulty facing the new theatre practitioners, however, is that oppositional theatre in a changing society needs also to be constantly changing. There is an ever-present danger that the adversarial work will become trapped within once dynamic but soon static formulae - especially if the work is made for an export market, where such formulae have been the basis of spectacular success amongst foreign audiences. Once adversarial theatre becomes popular, it needs constantly to re-examine and redefine itself and its relationship to popular consciousness as that popular consciousness changes. If it fails to do so, it becomes established as part of the dominant order which it once opposed.

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NOTES

1) See especially Coplan, D. In Township Tonight : South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre, Johannesburg : Ravan Press, 1985; Kavanagh, R. Theatre and Cultural Struggle in South Africa, London : Zed Books, 1985; Sole, K. Black Literature and Performance : Some notes on Class and Populism, in South African Labour Bulletin vol. 9 no. 8, 1984, pp. 54-76; Steadman, I. Drama and Social Consciousness : Themes in Black Theatre on the Witwatersrand until 1984, unpublished PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1985; von Kotze, A. Organise & Act : The Natal Workers Theatre Movement 1983-1987, Durban : Culture and Working Life Publications, University of Natal, 1988; Tomaselli, K. The Semiotics of Alternative Theatre in South Africa, Critical Arts vol. 2 no. 1, 1981, pp. 14-33; amongst numerous others.

2) Lodge, T. Black Politics in South Africa since 1945, Johannesburg : Ravan Press, 1983, p. ix .

3) See Kidd, R. Folk Media, Popular Theatre, and Conflicting Strategies for Social Change in the Third World, pp. 280-301, in Kidd, R. & Colletta, N. (eds.), Tradition for Development : Indigenous Structures and Folk Media in non-formal Education, Bonn : German Foundation for International Development, and International Council for Adult Education, 1981, especially p. 281. See also, for a critique of this notion of "popular", Barber, K. Radical Conservatism in Yoruba Popular Plays, in Breitinger, E. & Sander, R. (eds.), Bayreuth African Studies Series 7, 1986, pp. 5-32.

4) "Adversary tradition" is a phrase used by Susan Sontag in her essay on Artaud in Antonin Artaud : Selected Writings, New

York : Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1976, P. xliii.

5) Barber, K. op. cit. p. 6.

6) Barber, K. Popular Arts in Africa, in African Studies Review, 30 (3), September 1987, pp. 1-78.

7) See, as examples, various essays in the special issue of Critical Arts, 4 (3), entitled "Black Performance Revisited".

8) Williams, R. Drama in Performance, Harmondsworth : Pelican Books. 1972.

9) Williams, R. Drama from Ibsen to Brecht, Harmondsworth : Pelican Books. 1976.

10) Williams, R. 1976, p. 9.

11) See, for example, Said, E.W. The World, the Text, and the Critic, London : Faber & Faber, 1984, esp. pp. 226-247, for a discussion of what he calls "Travel(l)ing Theory".

12) See, for example, Barber's comment (1987, P. 39) that "(the new form) should appeal to the audience by corresponding to something in their own experience or desires" - which seems perfectly analogous to the whole notion of a structure of feeling in a work of art corresponding with a structure of feeling in an audience.

13) Mouffe, C. Hegemony and New Political Subjects : Toward a New Concept of Democracy, trans. S. Gray, pp. : 89-101, in Nelson, C. & Grossberg. L. (eds.), Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture. London : MacMillan Education, 1988. Mouffe argues on pp. 89-90 that she opposes classical Marxism's "class reductionism" and affirms instead
"multiple subject positions corresponding both to the different social relations in which the individual is inserted and to the discourses that constitute these relations. There is no reason to privilege, a priori, a 'class' position as the origin of the articulation of subjectivity."

14) Mouffe, op. cit. p. 91.

15) The term "black theatre" has obvious difficulties, and it is interesting to note that most commentators on oppositional theatre have experienced other problems of nomenclature related to issues of race and class. See, for example, the debate about "working class culture" in South African Labour Bulletin vols. 9 (1984) and 10 (1985), and about "black" theatre in Critical Arts vol. 4 no. 3, 1988.

16) Apart from studies already cited, Critical Arts : A Journal for Cultural Studies, Durban : Centre for Contemporary

Cultural Studies of the University of Natal, has produced two issues on the subject : vol. 2 (1) 1981 and vol. 4 (3) 1988.

17) Graham-White, A. The Drama of Black Africa, New York : Samuel French, 1974, p. 17, says that the play "seems to be one of the most thorough examples of the assimilation of the occupier's culture". Graham-White is referring here to Frantz Fanon's suggestion, in Fanon, F. The Wretched of the Earth, Harmondsworth, 1967, p. 179, that before the colonised writer reaches a stage of creating truly indigenous literature, an initial period of assimilation has to be undergone. See also Coplan 1985, op. cit. for the same kind of comment on Dhlomo.

18) Visser, N. & Couzens, T. (eds.) H.I.E. Dhlomo : Collected Works, Johannesburg : Ravan Press, 1985, p xv. They also inform us (p. xii) that he wrote 24 plays and that 9 survived. Those 9 are published in their collection.

19) The letters are reproduced in Chalmers, J. Tiyo Soga : A Page of South African Mission Work, Grahamstown : James Kay, 1877, pp. 108-129)

20) The essay is reprinted in Visser, N. ed., Literary Theory and Criticism of H.I.E. Dhlomo, published as a separate issue of English in Africa, vol 4. no. 2, 1977.

21) Couzens has written extensively on Dhlomo. His major work is Couzens, T. The New African : A Study of the Life and Work of H.I.E. Dhlomo, Johannesburg : Ravan Press, 1985.

22) *A point for which I am indebted to Liz Gunner.*

23) In an essay entitled "Why Study Tribal Dramatic Forms?", written in 1939 (and reprinted in Visser, N. ed. op. cit.), Dhlomo argues that a search for "archaical art forms" must be based on an attempt to write about contemporary matters.

24) Williams, R. 1976, p. 395.

25) Visser and Couzens, op. cit. p. xiii. They go on to argue that his work reflects "an apparent need to prove his credentials, as it were, to an English-speaking audience", and describe the plays generally by saying that many of them move "towards a novelising mode with long set pieces".

26) Visser and Couzens op. cit. p. xiii quote Dhlomo's own pronouncements on the subject : he "...wrote repeatedly that African playwrights should attempt to write 'literary drama' rather than 'acting plays'..."

27) Chapman, M. Soweto Poetry : Socio-literary phenomenon of the 1970s, in Malan, C. (ed.) Race and Literature, Pinetown : Owen Burgess, 1987, p. 178.

28) Kente, G. Too Late, in South African People's Plays ed. Kavanagh, R. London : Heinemann, 1981.

29) Zell, H. & Silver, H. A Reader's Guide to African Literature, London : Heinemann, 1972, p. 162.

30) Lodge, T. op. cit. 1983, p. 225.

31) Nkosi has commented in Nkosi, L. Home and Exile, London : Longman Group, 1965, p. 8 :
"The fifties were important to us as a decade because finally they spelled out the end of one kind of South Africa and foreshadowed the beginning of another. Sharpeville was the culmination of a political turmoil during a decade in which it was still possible in South Africa to pretend to the viability of extra-parliamentary opposition."

32) Nkosi was actively involved in the intellectual life of the Witwatersrand in 1960. On the eve of the Sharpeville shootings in March 1960, he lectured prophetically to students of the university of the Witwatersrand :
"I believe that the first crisis will be political and it is going to occur within the next few weeks - possibly on Monday - and the people who may be creating the first crisis for 1960 are members of the Pan Africanist Congress...whether the campaign they are going to launch will be successful or not doesn't matter. Some action is going to be taken and this will bring us all closer to a crisis." (Nkosi, L. op. cit. 1965, pp. 8-9.)

33) This is not to suggest that Nkosi was never involved in such a collaborative process, but rather that the involvement was minimal compared to the ways in which theatre was created in the 1970s. Nkosi's collaboration on Fugard's No-Good Friday is well known, but any interrogation of that text will show that the collaborative processes did not extend far enough to break down the literariness of this early work of Fugard, about which both Fugard and Nkosi have been critical. See Kavanagh, op. cit. for a discussion of the language of this play.

34) This is a feature of much of black theatre even in the 1980s.

35) Nkosi, L. 1965, op. cit.

36) Ibid. pp. 108-114.

37) Ibid. p. 110.

38) Ibid. p. 47.

39) Ibid. p. 45.

40) See Manganyi, N. Exiles and Homecomings : A Biography of Es'kia Mphahlele, Johannesburg : Ravan Press, 1983, pp. 211-213.

41) Nkosi, L. op. cit. p. 117.

42) Ibid. pp. 44-45.

43) Ibid. pp. 91-107.

44) He once reviewed the beginning of these precedents with reference to Pixley ka Izaka Seme's notion of a 'level of consciousness'. (Ibid. p. 98.)

45) See both Kavanagh and Steadman, op. cit. for analyses of Black Consciousness theatre of the 1970s.

46) Pascal Gwala in South African Outlook, August 1973, p. 131-133.

47) The play is published in Kavangh, R. (ed.) South African People's Plays, London : Heinemann, 1981.

48) See Barber, 1987, pp. 45-7, for a discussion of the presentational style of Yoruba popular theatre.

49) The sheer volume of work in theatre might have ensured this. The journal Black Review carried frequent discussions of the extraordinary level of energy which was being created in theatre at the time :

> "Like a powerful subversive organisation this spontaneous outburst of real Black creativity is slowly seething through the entire Black community. Perhaps it will be posterity that will recapture the growing spirit of Black determination and Black creativity." (Black Review 1973 p. 111.)

50) The play in many ways emulates Dutchman by Leroi Jones, utilising an American Black Power discourse even in its stage directions.

51) Mutloatse, M. Forced Landing, Johannesburg : Ravan Press, 1980, p. 5.

52) Coplan, op. cit. p. 210.

53) Ranger, T. Dance and Society in Eastern Africa 1890-1970, London : Heinemann, p. 3.

54) Barber, K. 1987 p. 48.

55) Emmett, A. Oral, Political and Communal Aspects of Township

Poetry in the Mid-Seventies, English in Africa 6 (1), 1979, pp. 72-81. P. 74.

56) Maishe Maponya, in his play The Hungry Earth (1981) frequently invokes the notion of "the people" of Africa as a seamless, unified group. This is typical of other playwrights as well. See, for example, the plays of Matsemela Manaka.

57) Williams, op. cit. 1972, p. 184.

58) Dhlomo was a founder member of the Bantu Dramatic Society in the 1930s, but for a discussion of the Eurocentric nature of this group see Steadman, op. cit. Nkosi was also involved in collaborative rehearsal work with Fugard and other intellectuals in Sophiatown, but these never extended into his own playwrighting efforts.

59) See Steadman, I. The Other Face, Index on Censorship 14 (1), 1985. London. pp. 26-28.

60) See Vandenbroucke, R. South African Blacksploitation, Yale/Theatre 8 (1), 1976, pp. 78-81 for an analysis of how South African theatre marketed abroad entrenches the racial stereotype.