

TAMPEREEN YLIOPISTO

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From Pre-apartheid to Post-apartheid Black South African Theatre: A contextual analyses
of selected plays

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This dissertation explores the place of black theatre in a post-apartheid South Africa. It focuses on the theatre as a tool in fighting the evils of the apartheid regime, and informs on the prevailing realities in a new South Africa. It aims at analyzing the historical development of black drama, the politics, the aesthetics, and its continuing efflorescence, especially in identity politics in South Africa. This is implicated on how the play text is read and constituted, as it strives for local and universal attention within the canon formation, especially within the ambience of the post-colonial. This invariably raises the question: What-and-when is the post-colonial in post-apartheid South Africa, taking into cognizance the promises and pitfalls of nation building vis-à-vis cultural production of the ‘rainbow’ nation? This further problematizes the notion of African theatre within the universal concept of theatre. It infers that the misgivings (whether African theatre could be defined as theatre) is based on literary paradigm: an attempt at distilling theatre along the lines of Western model, rather than the theatrical (i.e. the performative or embodied), since identity have become generally construed in ‘performative’ terms. It considers a more appropriate perspective in order to accommodate the vigorous and prolific expressions in the output of contemporary South African theatre. The thesis suggests, for instance, that a better perspective is possible, if the object of investigation is *theatre* rather than literary *drama*. Here the act of avant-garde, and Schechner’s definition of performance as “what people do in the activity of their doing it” (i.e. performer and audience) furthers the discourse, giving African theatre its legitimacy and organizing principle. A central trope the thesis deploys in reading and critiquing post-apartheid cultural production, especially the theatre.

Keywords: Text, Race, Theatre, Aesthetics, Apartheid, Rainbow nation.

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1.0 TRACING HISTORY

1.1 SHADOWING ETHNICITIES: BLACK, WHITE, COLOURED

Introduction

This study is an exploration on black theatre, and the political process in apartheid South Africa. It aims at investigating the nature and context of South African theatre, especially the notion of *role theory* within the context of apartheid plays. The plays according to Heike Frank (2004:9; see also Mead, 1967:156), could be seen as comments on the effects of apartheid, on the social behavior of the people, since individuals' identities are constructed by the social roles people play within the society.

With the official end of apartheid on May 1994, and the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as the first black President of the republic of South Africa (RSA), a new twist was opened up in that country, leaving us with a poser: what happens to black theatre after the end of apartheid? The thesis takes on the former, by investigating the place of black theatre in apartheid South Africa, as a way of coming in terms with the present predicament

Rogers Beck (2000:136), defines apartheid as "apartness" or "separateness", which refers to a system of racial and 'white' (political) domination, adopted by the National party in South Africa, from 1948 to 1994, after the dismantling of apartheid. Descriptively Giliomee (1995; Frank 2004:15), maintains that apartheid "was both a creed and a set of policies". It was an ideological project that allowed Afrikaners to establish a Christian-nationalist identity based on the so-called sacred mandate of exclusive *volk* or 'elect people' over other ethnicities, as it were. In fact, the Afrikaners defined each racial group's scope of action and interaction with the other. For example, in apartheid ideology 'white' equals 'good, human and civilized' and, 'non-white' equals 'bad, inhuman and savage, Marx (1998:4; see also Frank 2004:15-18). This was entrenched by enactment of (apartheid) laws, which defined identity according to racial biology; dividing the population into racial hierarchies. 'White' belonged to the superior race, 'Indians (or 'Asians') were considered superior to 'coloureds' who were of course defined as superior to 'Africans' (or 'Natives,') (Frank

2004:16)

In the foregoing, Frank(2004:43; see also Krappmann 1982: 31, 126), quoting Lothar Krappmann compares apartheid South African to a totalitarian state; an absolute system of power comparable to George Orwell's dystopia *Nineteen Eight-Four*. In a totalitarian state(such as South Africa), it is impossible to develop and maintain a personal identity because everyone was forced to follow the same norms and interpretations. For example, people living under repressive social circumstances are subjected to a given definition and interpretation of social norms by threat of severe sanctions. Dennis Walder writing in the same vein, emphasizes the close relationship between the 'events on the stage' and 'the social and political reality on the streets'. To this end, apartheid theatre are construed as "expressions of social behavior"- not only in Schechner's sense as working with, in and around society's rules but more in Turner's sense of social reflection and influence on the society. The plays' direct statements and action as well as their omissions and silences are regarded as reflection of the 'do's and don'ts of the society in which they are set, (Frank 2004: 55). On the other hand, Han-Peter Dreitzel(1980), asserts that characters in apartheid drama 'suffer' from and in the social roles they are expected to play in a society that prevents people from constructing healthy identity roles. In this way, the characters play roles as "how they are perceived and judged by racist apartheid society". Or as George Herbert puts it the "generalized other"; and develops an identity based on the social expectations of the environment, (Hauptfleisch 1967:156). Thus, characters contribute to role behavior, maintain role distance and successfully execute resistance to prescribed rules and expectations in the society. In effect, apartheid can further be defined as a system in which the group in power structured the relationship between the state and its subjects on the basis of race, introducing norms and defining social and political identities. This in turn defined behavioural expectations in the society: for whites and blacks South Africans (Hauptfleisch 1997;see also Frank 2004:11) . The individual becomes a carrier of socially constructed attributes and patterns of behaviour, which mediates between him and the society. This cuts across gender, class and age etc.

Furthermore, an examination on the relationship between performance and society, reveals that social expression in performance art and theatre's contribute to social

analysis and change. This nevertheless highlights once again the idea that plays give expression to social behavior by mirroring, critiquing, developing and inspiring it, (Frank 2004:47). Through this, we can infer the similarity between social crisis situations('social dramas') and conflicts presented on stage('stage drama') and then examine how these two domains affect each other, especially in the case of apartheid South Africa theatre.

1.2 ABORIGENES AND INVADERS: JOURNEYING TOWARDS A NATION

According to Marquard (1968:17-20), the San and Khoikhoi (called Hottentots and Bushmen by the Europeans), were the original inhabitants of South Africa. This was before the coming of the Europeans of the (Dutch and British) descents in (1652 and 1765), respectively to South Africa. They were found mainly in the arid, desolate regions of the Kalahari desert in Botswana and Namibia. The San and Khoikhoi were farmers and hunters, and for thousands of years moved across and lived within the Central and South Africa, including the Kalahari. They have very light skin pigmentation, compared with the Bantu speaking people, the later African migrants (who arrived south of Limpopo river around the third or fourth century), to settle in South Africa. They were often referred to as Khoisan, because of the homogeneity of their culture. The Khoisan were not Caucasians, as once thought, but negroid as (Beck 2000:11-17) argues, therefore Africans just like the Bantu speaking people that inhabit South Africa today. A common held view was that the San and the Khoikhoi were not "Africans". African in the language of apartheid meant Bantu speaking agri-pastoralists. A view that was embedded in the racist ideology of the apartheid regime, to privilege the notion, that, the Bantu-speaking people (like the Dutch and the British), might have arrived South Africa (precisely Transvaal), about the same time, the first Dutch ships sailed into Table Bay in 1652. With this logic, South Africa would be regarded as an "empty space" open for grabbing by more powerful force(s). But this view has long been debunked and discredited, since it was an official tenet of the white supremacist rule in South Africa. However, it is now possible, (though particulars are sketchy), to paint a broader picture, of Bantu migration into South Africa in the past two thousand years. Much of what is known about the Bantu people originated from archaeology and oral tradition, (i.e. language patterns). It seemed

that, their ancestors originated in the region of modern day Cameroon, north of the equatorial rain forest. By 500 B.E, these Bantu-speakers had occupied settlements-far south of present day Kwazulu-Natal. Although, they were called Bantu speakers, there was no way of knowing which language(s), these people spoke in earlier time. The term simply acknowledges that societies through out Central and Southern Africa belong to a related language group, just like the Romance or Germanic language families of Europe. The apartheid government used "Bantu" as a label for all Africans. They were described as clans or tribes rather than human beings, as if tribes are not made up of individual men and women. In the contemporary time, Bantu is considered a racist term. The process of migration of the Bantu speaking people to South Africa (Leach 1986:23-24), appeared to have occurred gradually. This was, when a small group expanded into new areas as a result of Agri-pastoral practices. It could be said that no single mass migration of Bantu speakers ever occurred. They spoke 200 to 300 related languages, which is referred as Bantu, a derivation of 'abaNtu' which means 'people'. The Bantu speakers belonged to four main language groups: the Nguni, the Sotho, the Tsonga and the Venda. It is uncertain which group arrived first and which route they took, but by far the most important are the Nguni and Sotho. The Ngunis account for 66 per cent of the black population, comprising the Zulus, the Xhosa, the Swazi and the Ndebele. The Sotho includes the North and South, while the Tswana account for most of the rest. The Nguni language (especially Xhosa), are punctuated by strange clicking noise produced by placing the tongue, at various points inside the wall of the mouth.

When the Europeans first came in contact with the 'blacks', as Marquard (1968:22) informs, the people had a well developed political and social institutions. This was based on clearly defined clans and tribes; Chiefs and elders ruled in the time of peace and war, and administered customary laws that had their roots in the past. Chieftainship was normally hereditary, and Chiefs were treated with respect given to those who are not only natural leaders, but who are believed to embody the traditions of their people. However, the European earlier contact (with the Khoisan), and subsequently with the Bantu speaking population, caused the landscape known as South Africa today to lose its independence and identity.

Bartholomew Diaz expedition to the Cape of Good Hope in 1488; followed ten

years later by Vasco da Gama, according to Worden (1994:7-8; see also Monteath 2001:31-75; Leach 1986:21; Beck 2000:25-26), opened up the route to India, and later to South Africa. South Africa's strategic importance (as the guardian of the Cape sea routes, and a halfway-house to East India), was established in the process. This resulted to the first encounter, between the whites and blacks in South Africa. However, by 1600s, other countries, notably the English, the Dutch and the French, had set up their contacts, through their chartered companies to explore the East India. The bay beneath Table Mountain became an important stop (for provisions and medical facilities), for vessels en route to the India. One company which used the station was the Dutch East Indian Company. Their directors - the Council of the seventeen, later decided that a more established settlement should be founded to service the company's vessels. On the Christmas eve of 1651, Jan van Riebeeck, a young director of the company and his wife arrived South Africa, aboard a ship. As a half-way route between Europe and East India, coupled with its temperate climate and absence of tropical diseases, Cape proved a perfect location. Initially, only a few of the company's servants manned the tiny outpost at the foot of Table Mountain since the company had no plans for a permanent colony at the Cape. However, it became apparent that employing work force to produce food for passing ships was neither cost effective nor efficient. In April 1657, the company released nine employees from their contracts, exempted them from land taxes for twelve years, and gave them farms in the present day Radiosonde, as "Free burghers", or citizens. In exchange they supply the company's needs, by raising wheat for bread, furnishing fresh meat and serving in a burgher militia. Thus, the burghers population increased slowly, but steadily. With time, Dutch and other Europeans (the French), took their retirement at the Cape, thereby increasing the white population. The Burghers later called themselves "Afrikaner" (Dutch for "African"), different from the company's officials and servants who were Europeans. The next century saw them venturing into the interior, establishing their homesteads under trees, and the lower slopes of the mountain. By this time, they were proud to be called the 'Boers' (farmers), having firmly identified themselves with the country that had become their new home. These first Afrikaners spoke Dutch, but Cape Dutch gradually evolved into a variety-of some sort. The term "Dutch" is sometimes used interchangeably with "Afrikaner", though the British tended to use 'Boer' in mocking

them at times.

Unexpectedly, two events were to change the migration tide and alter the composition of the white population in South Africa. With the outbreak of the Napoleonic wars in Europe, the British expeditionary force seized the Cape of Good Hope in 1795, Leach (1986:21-23; see also Beck 2000:40-46). Britain held the colony on behalf of the Prince of Orange, who became an exile in England, when the Netherlands came under the influence of the revolutionary France. Britain later, handed back the Cape under the terms of the 'Peace of Amien' in 1803. During the war (three years later), the British returned to Cape, resulting to a temporary reoccupation, to secure the sea routes to India. At the European Convention at the end of the war, Cape was ceded formally to Britain. The temporary occupation had given way to a permanent one, and Britain acquired the place, and established her authority. The British government was later to grant funds for large scale emigration of her nationals to the Cape in 1820. The first arrivals (made up of 4000 people-over half males), largely drawn from London, Bristol, Liverpool, Portsmouth and Cork landed at Algoa Bay, in April of that year. The place was later renamed Port Elizabeth. The arrival of the settlers signalled the beginnings of the English speaking population in South Africa. That also marked the existence of two language groups in the Cape. English settler towns sprang up in Port Elizabeth and Graham town.

Giliomee (2003:194-200; see also Leach 1986: 31-32; Wilson and Thompson 1975:289-291), asserts that, the coming of the British challenged the monopoly, once enjoyed by the Afrikaans. Though, there was no specific goal(s) for the British, but there was a desire to make Cape "English", as it were. Later, policies of the 1810 and 1822, resulted to a full blown Anglicization of the bureaucracy and the educational sector. Students were given incentives for using English language, which alienated many Afrikaners. This continued throughout 19th century, as government institutions - legal, social and the economy, took on a more distinctive English character. Many Afrikaans, especially those in the interior districts, deeply resented the English domineering influence. This later resulted to demand - for a more democratic form of administration, within the polity.

Race Question: "English- Afrikaner Relationship" 1910-1935

One might think that a "race question" in South Africa, would only refer to relationship between blacks and whites, but in this case, it was not so. The two 'white' communities

(Dutch/British) were at daggers-drawn with each other, over who controls the socio-economic sphere, and its attendant power relations. This resulted to "some kind of supremacy war" between them. The Dutch had been pressed into British hegemony, and wanted their independence from such overwhelming influence. Afrikaner were to fight for the preservation of their identity (through business and cultural fronts), mega phoned by "De Burgher", the Dutch newspaper for their survival Beck (2000:88; see also Marquard 1968:220-222; Worden 1994:89).

Instrumental to that survival was the protection and promotion of the Afrikaans language, the only Germanic based tongue to have originated in Africa. Much of their history, their struggle for survival and affinity with the land are expressed through the language. When the first Dutch settlers arrived at the Cape in 1652, they spoke high Dutch and were determined to preserve their language. This was vigorously pursued through Afrikaner's "civil religion" - Dutch Reformed Church, which had strong connection to the ethnic National Party. Dutch Reformed Church did not only reinforce the ideology of the National Party (90 per cent of Afrikaners were adherents), but was also built on a racist belief. I quote from Dutch Reformed Church liturgy in reinforcing this:

every nation and race will be able to perform the greatest service to God and the world if it keeps its own attributes, received from God's own hand, pure without honour and gratitude. God divided humanity into races, languages and nations. Differences are not only willed by God, but are perpetuated by Him. Far from the word of God, that he encouraged equality; It is an established scriptural principle that in every community ordination, there is a fixed relationship between authorities. Those who are culturally and spiritually advanced have a mission to leadership and protection of the less advanced. The Natives must be led and formed towards independence so that eventually they will be equal to the Europeans, but each on his own territory and each serving God in his own fatherland (Leach 1986:34)

Although religion and idea of a unique people were vital elements in Afrikaners nationalism, economic considerations played also great roles. Giliommee (2003:45; see also Beck 2000:110-112), recounts how Ventures like SANTAM and SANLAM, which had its seed money from voluntary contributions, served as models for other business interests, such as banks and financial houses-chains owned by the Afrikaans. By promoting Afrikaan by recalling Afrikaners history, by resurrecting Afrikaners art,

literature, songs and culture, Afrikaners leaders made the nation more appealing.

In 1870s, according to Wilson and Thompson (1975: 294-296; see also Beck 2000:86), Britain attempted turning South Africa into a confederation, just like it did in Canada in 1867. First, they have to find answers to four contentious issues (1) Whether to have a unitary or federal system of government.(2)Who should have the franchise.(3) How to draw electoral divisions, and (4) the status of English and Dutch languages in the run of things, i.e. officialdom. This led to many delegate meetings and finally the drafting of a constitution. The constitution provided a strong central government, with the former colonies reduced to provinces possessing local powers only. Executive power fell on the governor-general representing the British crown and a cabinet of ten ministers, accountable to the 'racist' Parliament' through many parliamentary/diplomatic rigmaroles, what followed was a 'birth' of a "Union", which embraced the two Afrikaner republics and the two British colonies. Thus South Africa became a self governing dominion, though under the British Empire. But whether South Africa should remain within the British Empire, in concert with resolving the race issue at large was to become the contentious issue within the intervening years.

White 'union': preparing for Apartheid, 1910-1948

Act of Union was an attempt at solving the problems and kick starting the 1910The f creating aproblem o“single nation” ,Politically .between the Afrikaans and the British , who were ,the right to vote and to hold public offices was strictly reserved for the whites the ,Indians :as against other ethnic nationalities ,percent of the entire population 13just .Coloureds and the Blacks According to Beck (2000:103-109), the 1910 Act Union created a 'single nation' with a population of 1,275,000 whites, 150,000, Indians, 500,000, Colored, and four million black South Africans. Only white South Africans were citizens in the true sense of the word. In the next forty years, successive white governments passed laws, which firmly created a segregated society, thus preparing the way for a harsher apartheid system, that was to follow.

Following from this, apartheid system was however constructed on four basic principles. First, the whites were regarded as the only "civilized" race and therefore exercised absolute political power over other racial groups. Second, white interests always dominated over other interests, especially the black interests. Third, all whites,

no matter their European origins were simply considered white, while the government refused to recognize the common Bantu-speaking origin of most Africans, and classified them into nine separate African subgroups: Xhosa, Tswana, Zulu, North Sotho, South Sotho, Venda, Swazi, Tsonga and Ndebele.

With its electoral victory of 1948, by the National Party, South Africa's apartheid system became the "national institution of racism" (Tiffin and Lawson). Through this, it was able to pursue its aims of consolidating state control in the hands of Afrikaner nationalism. According to Leach (1986:33; see also Wilson and Thompson 1975: 337; Beck 2000:126-136), by promoting Afrikaner interests, the state implemented racial segregation and 'separate development' as a means of consolidating its hold on power through the enactment of apartheid laws. The first phase was the classical, or *baaskap* (white supremacy) period. This was the high point of apartheid and Afrikaner nationalism. During this phase, anti-apartheid organizations, like Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU), Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), Pan African Congress (PAC), Federation of South African Women (FSAW) etc., adopted violent means, as a way of freeing themselves from the clutches of apartheid (Frank 2004:19-20). The third phase witnessed a shift away from complete racial segregation: relaxing of the colour bar, and granting of limited (political) rights to other ethnic nationalities, which the blacks were the most pronounced.

With the former, two brands of apartheid were to emerge: the petty and grand apartheid. Petty apartheid deals with the law(s), the black people encountered on daily basis; grand apartheid on the other hand, was actually to entrench and institutionalize apartheid by taking away, as it were, all the 'political' rights of black South Africans. In fact their humanity. In general, apartheid was not static as Worden (1995) informs, each decade was marked by different events, in terms of content and implementation of apartheid policies. Entourage of laws were passed in the 1950s, which firmly entrenched apartheid within the polity. While 87 percent of South African land was reserved for whites, under the 1913 Land Act, the remaining territory was transformed into 'Bantustans' or 'Homelands', where the large majority of black South Africans were forcefully resettled. Bantu Authorities Act reinforced traditional African tribal structures, as a way of creating African Homelands as an "independent or semi-autonomous"

settlements. This meant that poverty-stricken former African reserves became Homelands where the Bantu peoples, who the state considered essentially unlike Europeans, would 'develop separately'. The African population was grouped into various Bantustans by tribal origins; the regime's measure was to break down African alliances. At first, self government was given to the homelands. Later they received nominal independence, a process by which the citizens of the homelands lost their South African nationality and became 'foreigners' (Frank 2004:19; Barber 1999:173-78; see also Worden 1994:11). Poverty in the Bantustans was increased by the infertility of the soil and the state's exploitative tax system

With time, according to (Barber1999:141), it became evident that the economic interdependence between whites and blacks(Blacks were supplying whites with cheap labour) made apartheid's concept of separation difficult to realised. Most blacks moved into 'white' areas to work. Later, 'Influx control' act, was introduced to control labour migrations into 'white' areas. The blacks were required to carry passes that gave information on their residency and work status. The Pass Law and the Native (Urban Area) Act of 1923 (with subsequent amendments) controlled African movement to all urban areas. This had a 'vagrancy clause', which allowed local officials to remove "idle or undesirable blacks" from the urban. The infamous "section Ten" of the Urban Areas Act, prohibited Africans from remaining in any urban area, not longer than 72 hours without appropriate permission stamped on their Pass book. The Pass book contained photograph, finger prints, personal history, employment record and documentation of residency. All blacks were meant to carry the Pass as they may be required to produce it on demand, or face criminal charge or deportation . Police arrested more than 100,000 Africans each year (more than 350,000 yearly in the riotous mid-1970) under these oppressive Pass Laws. Through this the government propagated the idea of separate African or 'Bantu' nation as well as separate coloured and Indian national groupings.

While the Native Resettlement Act (1956) nullified existing property rights, Black areas that had been inhabited for decades and even centuries were zoned to the whites. The regime relocated few whites in the exercise, but forced millions of blacks from their homes. Indians who often operated business in the city centres and lived above their

shops, had to sell their property and moved to areas designated to them, (Marquard 1968:248-251; see also Leach1986:72-73, Beck 2000:113-128).

Another critical element in the apartheid system, according to (Frank 2004:17) was the control of education, which had a far reaching and long term effects of any apartheid legislation. Apartheid ideology stipulated that racial groups required different forms of education for their development. Until 1953, African schools, was under the department of education, but operated primarily by the church mission. The apartheid regime, didn't like the arrangement, since they felt that the schools were teaching "human and civil rights " equality to black children, thus Bantu Education Act (1953), was enacted. Under this arrangement, according to (Beck 2000:131-132), Dr. Hendrick Verwoerd, minister of native affairs and the "father" of apartheid system of Bantu education informs:

Africans should not be educated for jobs they would not be allowed to hold in white ruled South Africa

Bantu education was to come under the department of Native Affairs, with the government running the schools, selecting and training teachers, and designing curriculum that emphasized basic skills. Afrikaans and English were languages of instruction. This also extended to tertiary institutions (University Education Act (1959), which made it possible for separate universities to be established for "non white" students, with faculty members being Afrikaans, who believe in apartheid ideals of "white superiority and separate developments". Until 1980, eighty percent of all South Africans university students were whites.

Athol Fugard's plays *Blood Knot*, *Statement after an Arrest under the Immorality Act* and *A Lesson from Aloes* focus on the effects of some of these laws, So do for an example *Egoli* by Matsemela Manaka, *Sophiatown* by Junction Avenue Theatre Company and *Have You Seen Zandile?* by Gcina Mhlophe, (Frank 2004:17).

In the foregoing, Black South Africans living standard continued deteriorating as the 20th century progressed, while urbanization and industrialization put server strains on traditional (African) values and support system. Families fell apart as husbands laboured in the mines, as wives served as maids, and children lived with grandparents.

This was to set the tune of mass mobilizations according to (Leach 1986:66-67), that

were to follow, which came by way of strikes, and boycotts- in concerted and coordinated way across the country. This resulted to a network of organizations- social and cultural, stretching throughout South Africa, thereby providing the frame work for political actions that were to follow on a national level.

White Rule and Black Responses 1910-1939

Although the 1950s saw apartheid's legal implementation and consolidation, there was also strong and persistent public condemnations against these laws, by way of political protests. The African National Congress (ANC) initiated a series of defiance campaigns which criticized the segregation policies of the regime. The decades also witnessed the rise of protest by women of all races, especially African women against the implementation of these laws, a subject addressed in *You Strike the Woman, You Strike the Rock* by the *Vusisizwe Players*.

The government reacted to the protests by imposing a state of emergency, banning anti-apartheid political organizations and imprisoning their leaders (Chapman 1966:222; Frank 2004:18; Woden 1994:99-108).

Following (Beck 2000:137-142), the political environment (and the final attainment of independence) could be summarized thus:

The black population was bitterly disappointed at the regimes' actions and laws made so far. This precipitated protests, even from other ethnic nationalities, like the South African Indian congress, though many Coloureds were at home with the whites than Africans. They were suspicious of Africans, and remained fearful of majority rule.

In 1909, black leaders in coalition with other groups led a futile mission to London to protest racist Acts. In 1912, the first nationwide South African Native National Congress (later known as African National Congress, ANC) was formed. Most of the founders were educated at colleges in Europe and the United States of America. They were influenced by African American leaders, like W.E.B Dubois and Booker. T. Washington, and consistently campaigned for the removal of the colour bar. In 1949, ANC launched a defiant campaign, and further resisted the discriminatory legislation of the apartheid regime, with a proclamation: "that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim victory unless it is based on the will of the people, which is negotiated on "one person one vote" .

With the promulgation of the Prohibited Organization Act, 1960(Act 34 of 1960), the ANC and other coalitions were summarily declared illegal and banned. After its ban, the ANC started functioning underground, which means it became ideologically more radical. The non- violent option (which they maintained before now), was abandoned. In 1961, Nelson Mandela, Sisulu and others formed Umkhonto We Sizwe (Spear of the nation), as the military wing of the ANC. They started conducting clandestine operations inside South Africa, which also includes boycotts, strikes, mass action campaigns etc. As an underground guerrilla movement, it had military bases in other African countries like Tanzania, Mozambique etc (*ibid*). The general series of public protests countered by state repression culminated in the Sharpeville massacre of 1960, in which the police brutally broke up a non –violent demonstration against the pass laws. Sharpeville became a symbol for the struggle against apartheid (Barber 1999:146-48, 165).

In 1963, Nelson Mandela and a large number of ANC leaders were arrested and imprisoned. After this, the ANC regrouped abroad, as the organization activities gained momentum. ANC further issued a list of the basic rights and freedoms, gleaned from liberal ideals of advanced democracy such as the United States of America. This later became the famous 'Freedom charter' which still stands after the ANC came to power in 1994. The 1955 Freedom Charter began with words:

"We the People of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know:

that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people.

that our people have been robbed of their birth right to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality

that our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities.

that only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure to all their birth right without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief.

And, therefore, we the people of South Africa, black and white together-equals countrymen and brothers-adopt this Freedom charter. And we pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won. (Beck 2000:181)

Having marshalled out the principles upon which a democratic state should be established: the right of every man and woman to vote and the right to stand as candidate for all bodies which make laws; equal rights for all national groups; the people to share in the country's wealth; the land to be shared among those who work it; all to be equal before the law; all to enjoy equal human rights etc. They demanded a multi-racial South Africa, where every individual would have full democratic rights regardless of colour. A country where there should be no domination by one group over another. The blacks saw it as a framework for peace and a just South Africa, in which all races would live side-by-side in a spirit of friendship and goodwill.

The Final Year of White Domination 1973-1994

The rise of Pan African Movements, various pro-democracy declarations and the founding of the United Nation, prompted a revival of South African organizations, demanding for an end to apartheid. Another bright spot of the struggle, was the activities of the trade unions. For example, the Industrial and commercial workers Union (ICU), Dock Workers' Union, etc. The activities of the trade unions were further intensified by low wages, as many Africans lived in squalid and violent squatters. Strike actions intensified after 1973, as the demands for the relaxation of the apartheid laws increased. With time, South Africa became isolated, especially with countries in the Northern, Western and Eastern African States gaining independence. The social upheavals taking place around the world in the 1960s, especially the student unrest did not go unnoticed in South Africa. The most pronounced, according to (Beck 2000:155-158), was the Steve Biko's episode, followed by Soweto uprising of 1976, as a result of the death of the former. The activities of Steve Biko, and his eventual death, created a hot bed for black resistance, from which emerged a new movement called Black Consciousness Movement. BCM is an American civil rights (and black power movement), which offered leadership role and inspiration to 'blacks' (defined as those who faced white racial discriminations). Black Consciousness philosophy emphasized (black) self esteem, self assertion, and psychological emancipation from all white inspired oppressions. The philosophy focused on race, rather than class as the central issue in liberation struggle. It found support among black universities and intellectuals (Frank 2004:147-148 see also

Kavanagh 1985:157; Steadman 1984:11; Sole 1984)

Finally, South African deteriorating economic and social conditions forced the apartheid regime to seek a new controlling measures in dealing with the situation. First, the National party leaders did away with petty apartheid regulations, tinkered with grand apartheid structures within the impending years, though without really ending it. Political events in Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Namibia left South Africa with unfriendly neighbours. With a stretched military, as a result of guerrilla activities, coupled with embargoes by the United Nations. The country went into recession, as international investments dropped, and the standard of living fell, even among the whites. The general modifications of apartheid system, gradually followed. For example, petty apartheid laws were relaxed, as hotels, restaurants, movie theatres (venues for cultural events and other public places) became more integrated. There was also complete relaxation of the colour bar, both in business and industry. Then followed the third phase, which witnessed a shift from complete racial segregation, and the granting of limited political rights. After the mid-70s, anti apartheid groups (both inside and outside) South Africa, kept economic and political pressures on the apartheid government to democratize South Africa, on the basis of 'one person, one vote'. The visit of the Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) in 1986/87 and the published report that attended to it, made it clear that the ANC ought to play a role in any process of political negotiation in South Africa. The ANC was later unbanned by De Klerk regime, while election was conducted among all ethnic nationalities. Then the crowning glory: the election in 1994, and the swearing in of Nelson Mandela as the first black president of South Africa, marking the beginning of a new South Africa.

However, Worden (1994:78) provides a further data on the geography and population, of the 'Rainbow nation': South Africa. According to 1999 census, the population of South Africa stands at 40.5 million: 31.1 million Africans, One million Asians, 3.6 million Coloured (Mixed race), 4.4 million whites and 0.4 million others. It has eleven official languages, with Zulu speakers being the highest - 22.9 percent of the total population, followed by Xhosa (19.9%), Afrikaans (14.4%), English (8.6%). English is the official language.

With the end of apartheid, according to Ndebele (1991:17), theatre entered into an

exciting phase, in which cultural productions drastically reduced by apartheid began opening up again, away from 'writing back to one sentence' paradigm, to an encompassing narrative. Post-apartheid literature, therefore, could be defined as literature written on/by South African authors, after the repeal of the nation's apartheid laws. It could be works written across the colour line - black, white, Indian or coloured in the last decade of the 20th century and beyond.

2.1 TRACING/CONTEXTUALISING THEATRE AND LITERATURE

2.2 SEEKING RELEVANCE FOR AFRICAN THEATRE

This chapter reviews the literature of pre/post apartheid theatre, as a way of exploring the nuances of apartheid and the emergence of post-apartheid theatre.

To this end, the review takes on the cultural tensions inherent in those moments, by locating them within the events/theories that produced them. It highlights that the post-colonial societies are colonial constructs, susceptible to its control and hegemony. And goes further, to show how this is implicated on the discourse of race, identity, theatre(dramatic) traditions and the language situation in South Africa. It also explores how post-colonial (now includes apartheid) societies exercise their "difference", and construct their own 'identity' through the politics of their art. It reaffirms, following Dele Layiwola (1998), that the "text" (drama, novel, songs, television etc) are sites of "Significations". That all texts are ultimately politicized; they offer competing (ideological) significations of the way the wor(l)d is, in order to win readers to a particular way of seeing/reading texts. Theatre in this context, becomes a producer of culture, providing the medium for 'multi-accentual' engagement within a changing contemporary culture and its past. This is summarily captured under post-colonial theory, which remains the critical lens that African cultural aesthetics (i.e. literary production) from the post colony- (African) continent/diaspora acquire legitimacy as a subject of literary discourse (Loomba 1998:1).

Within the post modern condition of culture, as a result of globalization, the definition of (cultural) aesthetics and meaning associated with it has become increasingly indeterminate. Tatariewicz (2005: 5) defines aesthetics as a construction of forms, or an expression of experiences, which is capable of evoking delight or emotion or shock. This definition indicates intention of work of art, and its effect on the audience (or the recipients); which squares into the mode of South African (cultural) aesthetics, especially the black theatre as a carrier of black essence. After all, theatre is not a 'private' experience that occurs only in the domestic spaces, it is also communal, taking place in shabeens (bars) or other public spaces, as an identity building and forming mechanism.

However, Stuart Hall (1996:1-18), defines identity as something not innate, but

'imaginary'. Not always incomplete, always 'in processes and always 'being formed'. This means that the reason for search of identity, which knit together the different parts of our divided self, is to recapture the fantasized pleasure of fullness (plenitude) in the Freudian sense. In that connection, we are faced with many posers as Hall further argues: if identity-specific indices are indeterminate, because our world is always changing, how then do we conceptualize works which should reflect those identities? At what remove can we consider ourselves part of a particular race/ethnicity/nation? Are historical or geographical exigencies enough to reconstruct identities? Do such inchoate configurations as Pan-Africans, European Union, League of Nations, etc., mean anything specific? If they do, are they political or biologically constructed? (Hall 1992:26)

The most striking aspect of black theatre is its character as a movement of contestation, as David Copelan (1986) informs, beginning with the oral tradition, and later as part of a political movement, which confronted ill-representation of the black South Africans by the apartheid ideology. It could then be said, that, the basic thrust of the black theatre in contrast with the apartheid narratives, was negotiated around *difference, with race as the organizing category*. Ware Vron (1996:143), affirms that race is the issue which led to other forms of domination's in the continent, by extension South Africa. In the same way, it was argued elsewhere that race emerged in the middle of the 19th century, when the so-called need to "civilize" the African natives became part of the European project of "scramble –and-partition- of -Africa"; which was accentuated by Darwin theory of evolution, a pseudo-scientific construction, which privileged the 'white' race over the black race. While this lasted for a longer time elsewhere in the continent (for example Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, etc.) affecting all structures of power; in South Africa it developed into a systemic and legalized discrimination, shaping the economic, social and political structure of the whole country in a more pervasive way than anywhere.

However, biologists are yet to agree on the meaning of the term 'Race'. But while we may be confused with the biological exactness of race, it is quite impossible to ignore its historical and social meanings. Though race, nationality or ethnicity may indicate filiations which are biological, its most important meaning has to do with its historical and cultural affiliation, as Edward Said (1997:89), asserts. It is in this realm or connection

that theories of black aesthetics assume an incisive relevance for black writers/intellectuals, in search of some exclusively defining features for the black race. I quote David Hume in reinforcing the race relation:

David Hume in the his defence of the superiority of the white race posits further in his essay “Of National Characters” (second edition, 1753-1754):

There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white,
not even any individual eminent, either in action or speculations

However, Anthony Appiah (1997) believes that there is no Race. Appiah argues that, there is no scientifically proof of race. Rather he sees race as a term of difference, which is mistaken for ‘civilization’, without any social implications. A term he calls ‘biological fiction’. Joyce Joyce (though influence by Appiah) in the same vein, sees Race as “biologically unsound contrivance”(1986). In his essay "Race writing and culture", Todorov (1986), argues that the existence of racism does not require existence of race. Using the analogy of witchcraft, he argues that you don’t have to believe in witches to know that there is witchcraft. This leaves a discursive void, since he couldn’t make any difference between the two.

Much of the initial oppositional practice of black theatre was/is concerned with deconstructing the power relations, which puts black people in an unequal relationship to whites, and hence their subjugation. This extends to exposing the ways in which apartheid, as an institution encouraged the production and circulation of images that contradicted the dominant interests of the black South Africans. Thus, the practice of subverting received orthodoxies, challenging the political norms and ideologies of apartheid discourses, becomes a dominant project for most South African playwrights.

Ngaboh (1999) posits that apartheid created a semiotic ensemble, which while systematically erasing the "Other", was busy enthroning a white identity. Or what August W. Staub (1992) calls ‘disfiguration’ in case of the African American context. Thus, black theatre as a mode of intervention became an all-encompassing way of re-writing/subverting the hegemony of apartheid narrative, by re-inscribing black identity.

Tomaselli (1986) argues further that of all art forms theatre was the most popular and forceful medium through which the black establishment was able to articulate its ideology, expose the contradictions of apartheid and communicate a more accurate

portrayal of their actual conditions of existence to the world.

In summary, apartheid has one business: organizing and transforming South Africa into a fundamentally apartheid construct. Three complementary hypotheses emerge in actualizing this: the domination of physical space, the reformation of 'natives' minds, and the integration of local economic histories into the 'imperial' perspectives. This constituted what has been referred elsewhere, as "colonial structure", which embraces the physical, human and spiritual aspects of colonial experience. According to Harry Garuba (2002), colonialism as a regime of power was largely organized through spatial subjectivity- space to capture and subjects to control. To capture the land, it first had to be explored and mapped, literally and figuratively. To control the subject, she first had to be contained, not only in terms of physical containment within subject territories – colonies, protectorates, etc. but also contained in "tribes", territorially demarcated and defined and culturally described. Like colonialism, apartheid saw the entire territory of South Africa as a 'site' of contest, and organized it as a huge enclosure. This means that it was not only a physical containment, but also an epistemic one. Invariably creating a counter "text" (i.e black), which in turn challenges its authority.

Ngugi (1997) sees this scenario as a 'struggle' between the arts and the state. Some kind of "power of performance" and "performance of power". For the politics of the performance space is more than the physical, it touches on nearly all aspects of "power and being" in colonial and post-colonial societies. With the emergence of the modern state, the art and the state became not only rivals in articulating the laws that govern the society, but also rivals in determining how the society should be governed. He further buttresses this point, using Plato's dialogue: *The Law*. The Athenian describes how they, as the representatives of the state, must respond should the artist (poet) come to their city and ask for permission to perform:

Do not then suppose that we shall all in a moment allow you to erect your stage in the agora, or introduce the fair voices of your actors, speaking above our own, and permit you to harangue our women and children, and the common people, about our own institution, in language other than our own, and very often the opposite of our own. (Burgess: 1859)

In "The Artist as criminal", Gomez-Pena (1996), paints the same picture describing similar scenario:

It is one thing to carry out iconoclastic action in a theatre or museum before a public that is predisposed to tolerating radical behaviour, and quite another to bring the work into the street and introduce it into the mined terrain of unpredictable social and political forces.

Within this context, we see that the main ingredients of a text (whether performance or otherwise), are negotiated around: place, content, audience, and the goal to which it is intended; which could be used as a medium to instruct or pleasure or a combination of both. This may create some sort of reformative effect on the audience. It becomes intense, where the state/regime is imposed, as in the case of the military, monarchy, or apartheid rule as in South Africa, which is always constructed in a manner of conqueror- and- the conquered. The question of 'content' and who controls it, become very pertinent where the population is fragmented along racial and ethnic lines, and the regime is unsure of its grip on power, as it was the case with the apartheid regime. So, the 'text' becomes the site of interplay between the physical, social, and psychic forces of the society. It is the instinctive awareness of this that prompts the Athenian in Plato's *Law* never to permit a performing artist at the public sphere. Hence the politics of the "text" is integral to the struggle for democratic peace and social justice in any society. The control of 'text' may take various forms, of which the most dominant is censorship, as it was with South Africa during the apartheid era.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines censorship in four ways. The first refers to the original use of the term, to refer to the Roman magistrate who took the census of the citizens. This definition derives its premise from two meanings. A censor according to the first, is "one who exercises official or officious supervision over morals and conducts", and this include "an official in some countries whose duty it is to inspect all books, journals, dramatic pieces, etc, before publication, to secure that they contain nothing immoral, heretical, or offensive to the government. The other definition of a censor is "one who judges or criticizes, especially "one who censures or blames". The censurer and "censor" had the same meaning, which included-the non- pejorative sense of one who judges or evaluates. In the contemporary time, this definition of censorship would seems obsolete, since it sees a "Censor" as one who suppresses, while "censurer" become one who finds fault, blames or condemns. This definition deprived the word "censor" of its most salient characteristics, namely 'quality judgement', when we consider its etymology.

The Latin word is *Censere*, meaning to assess, estimate, judge-which in turn has led to the confusion, regarding what the practices are, and are not-as covered by the word. When this is situated within a theoretical frame, we find that the first definition, which suggests that "censorship is government suppression" is a product of Enlightenment period. For Enlightenment thinkers like Bacon, Voltaire, Franklin etc. believed that the society's crucial problem could be solved and reliable norms established through the use of reason. And reason could only be freely exercised when people are liberated from the tyranny of authoritarian institutions, such as the church and the state, which regulate the expression of reason, through censorship. Because the Enlightenment project was so concerned with the emancipation of reason through the liberation of the right of the individual, the Enlightenment model of censorship came to be the institutional- primarily governmental-control of expression.

What this means is that as long as government suppression is absent in the society, members of the society will be able to express and exchange ideas freely; which also gestures to the fact, that, there is no censorship inherent in a marketplace of ideas. But what this argument fails to describe accurately, as Cohen (2001: 21) asserts, is the relationship between power and control of discourse in a society. It is constructed on the notion, that with the Enlightenment project gradually realized in the West and with the decline of the power of the church and the replacement of authoritarian regimes with democratic practices, censorship would be eliminated in liberal democracies. But the truth is that the market place of ideas, left to function on its own without government censorship, has not resulted in the open and free expression of ideas among people. The "Enlightenment" inspired the definition of censorship, i.e. government suppression, which has become the traditional way of thinking/applying censorship, especially among oppressive regimes. While censorship (whether moral, military, corporate, political etc.) is justifiable in certain context (as a way of blocking off offensive material, that may be considered immoral or obscene, heretical or blasphemous, seditious or treasonable). That of South Africa comes across as a means of suppressing political opinions that were critical to the apartheid government. However, following Braam and Geerlings (1986: 170-181), there is another dimension to censorship, which borders on "cultural boycotts", as it applied to South Africa. Within this context, (cultural) bodies, through their

equity unions, 'prevent' (i.e. censor) their members from performing in certain places. This is achieved through threats, blacklisting, penalties, prohibition and coercions. For example, in 1957, the British Musician Union prevented their members, from performing before segregated audience in South Africa. This was accentuated by the United Nations General Assembly (through resolution 2396), asking all member states and organization to cut off cultural, education and sporting ties with South African apartheid government.

However, locating the (African) art form, especially the theatre properly, and its place within the dramatic tradition, Henry Louis Gates (1976:xix) in his book "*The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism*", rightly asserts that "each literary tradition, at least implicitly, contains within it an argument for how it can be read". This is true of African performance tradition, especially black South African theatre. After all, Nkosi (1985:16) has developed the idea of 'cross border reader' to show how South African theatre is shaped by the necessity to address dispersed, divided and fragmented audiences. The nature of South African literature is (characterized by fractured and multiple audiences), as both the condition and subject of the literature, produces writing which addresses 'virtual publics', as it were. This is evidenced by frequent recourse to epistolary forms (such as letters, journals or diaries etc), which makes visible, the act of writing for a fictionalized audience. The production of South African literature have also been constituted from the outside in, shaped by the (international) audiences upon which it also ministers to, and depends upon in its narrativization. As a result of the need to negotiate 'multiple spaces' and different political sites, South African literature were produced through series of translations. This process can be understood with reference to the notion of 'reading formation', due to differences in locations (engenders by geography), which is important in shaping the interpretation and reading of the texts. For example, the same text(s) 'travel' as it were, from one context to the other- made up of alternative - political, and aesthetic dictates.

This could be understood as a set of "material and discursive practices" which connect texts and readers in specific relations to one another. i.e constituting readers as reading subjects of particular type and texts- 'as objects-to-be-read in particular ways'. For example, J. M. Coetzee, a South African writer- novels have been constructed in different ways by different publics, and have been subjected to different political

readings and evaluations. This is made possible by the fact that, the history of South Africa has been dominated by variegated population(with different languages and cultures) who as a matter of fact must adapt themselves to the difficult situations created by clash of cultures and history(Marquard (1968:266).

However, like any other dramatic tradition in the continent, South African theatre, according to Copelan (1997), possesses dramatic traditions of storytelling (Xhosa: *intsomi*, Soth: *tsono*), praise poetry (*izibongo*; *dithoko*) in their repertoire.

But the question that continues to worry scholars of African dramatic tradition is whether these dramatic traditions could pass for theatre. Andrew Horn (1981:181; see also Owomoyela 1985) inform that African performance tradition suffers from what he calls "an unnecessary impression of nomenclature". Horn has in mind the ongoing polemics, on whether theatre existed in Africa before the emergency of colonialism. Or whether "African "theatre" (as it is constituted), could be defined as "theatre" in the real sense of the word. Scholars have argued that before colonialism Africans did not have "theatre" in the Western or Oriental sense. That nobody built structures specially designated as "playhouses" which served the purposes of entertainment or dramatic instruction. Though there were arenas for performances, they were not constructed in the strict geometric dimension, like those of the proscenium stage. Most African cultures do not even have a word for drama, although they do have words for play, music, performance etc. So how then can we talk of theatre, or for that matter of a dramatic tradition in Africa? However, when one watches an African performance, one is immediately struck by the fact that one has been exposed to a dramatic experience. The question that has to be settled, therefore, is whether these experiences are merely one of dramatic elements or particles in the performance? Or whether the sum total of the experiences constitute a drama in whatever sense of the word.

To this end, Oyin Ogunba (1997:67) argues that African theatre has its base in the traditional resources, which manifests through traditional festivals. In this vein, he clarified the notion of "traditional festival", to avoid the misconception that African festival is either an orgy of merriment or a string of weird, primitive sacrifices and dances. Contrary to popular understanding, the festival is not about religion. Besides, it is always difficult to determine what is a "religious occasion" in a traditional African

context. Such a categorization of “religious” and “secular”, seem alien to the spirit and nature of the traditional African. Though, every traditional festival is attached to a supernatural being or a defied ancestor and to that extent may be said to be religious at base and inspiration. But in its realization, as Bakhtin (1976), informs, is too often and too easily superseded, thereby making a festival a veritable carnival. It is in this sense that the festival is the prime artistic institution in Africa. The festival is the only institution, which has the framework to coordinate virtually all the art forms of a community. Each traditional festival tends to have a story or myth to perform, and each makes use of its own peculiar style in the dramatic realization of the story. In the process, the arts of dance, songs, words (dialogue), music and movement form "an indissoluble whole". Or what Kirby (1975) calls "Multimedia art form". It is this total presentation that is referred to as "Total theatre", which is utilized in a manner totally dissimilar from the western dramatic tradition. This misconception has led to defining ‘African theatre’ in some quarters as “Pre-drama”, which is a form of art intermediate between religion and drama. Almost in the same manner that Ruth Finnegan (1970:10) claims that, though there are elements of drama in (African) ritual performances, but they are "not developed". She believes that what Africans have are "certain dramatic and quasi-dramatic phenomena". Two schools of thought have emerged in furthering this argument. Yemi Ogunbiyi in the introduction to his book *"Drama and Theatre in Nigeria"* (1981:1-3) traced the origin of drama in Africa into two camps-the Evolutionary camp and the Relativist camp. The term evolutionary arises from the fact that people in this group believe that drama evolves from rituals to myth and then to drama. The relativist, on the other hand, claim that drama is a relative term dependent on the environment and social construct from which it emanates, and its function in that environment, i.e. locating and defining drama within a specific context.

Michael Echeruo (1981:135-148), a member of the evolutionary camp, sees Igbo ritual to be Sumerian rather than Grecian. He writes:

There is thus, no lack of event, even of dramatic event, in the Sumerian Festival. But unlike the Greek Festival, the enactment, for example, of the arrival of Marduck is embodied in the Festival itself as a ritual incident. That is to say, the drama is absorbed in ritual action and the mythos is subsumed in ritual. Hence, though the Festival has a great deal of dialogue, action, music,

dance, and décor, it does not crystallize in drama. The Igbo Festival, it seems to me, is at present structured on Sumerian rather than Greek lines. If this is so, then the emergence of Igbo drama based on our indigenous traditions will depend on how effectively it can be moved beyond the rich but ritual character of the festivals themselves.

Ossie Enekwe (1981:63-149), from a relativist perspective, argued against this position by pointing out that "drama does not have to evolve from myth and that if it contains elements of myth the myth is not used for itself but rather for social restructuring. He further asserts:

In Greece and elsewhere myth remains a malleable material in the hands of the artists. In making of literature, myth in its broadest sense provides material, and perhaps structure, but it plays a very subordinate role in the theatre- where impersonation and interactive activity are of the essence. As for the origin of Greek tragedy, there is no convincing proof that it evolved from myth extracted from ritual.

Interrogating Echeruo's position, Enekwe believes that drama in traditional African performance (for example, the Igbo ones) appears subsumed in the ritual, but has not been weaned from it, in the same manner that Greek drama did. He maintained that it will be difficult, if not a pointless task for anyone to try to prove that African festivals are drama in a Sophoclean or Shakespearean sense. The argument, rather should be whether the element of drama in these performances is such as to warrant their classification as a kind of drama, rather than the imprecise and sometimes misleading term "ritual". A discussion on ritual as drama inevitably drifts towards the Aristotelian model. The Aristotelian concept of drama is construed as the "representation of an action", not the action itself. For example, it is usually argued that a situation in which a king or priest performs a set of dances at a festival cannot constitute a drama because the king or priest in real life situation is still king or priest-the essential role change has not taken place.

Following the evolutionary argument, Rotimi (1981:89) accepts *ferekete*, which means a mock-duel scene that preceded the Edi festival of Ile-Ife Nigeria, as drama because it contains elements of conflict and suspense. But dismissed 'abebe', the dance procession that highlights the seven-day long Edi festival as non-drama even after describing it as exciting. He further accepted the Gelede masquerades dance as drama because it portrays the make-believe externals of drama: rhythmic dance, grand costume

etc. He further concluded that the word drama when used for traditional displays should imply suspense and/or conflict within the body of the approved action.

He further asserts:

The standard acceptance of the term drama, implies an imitation of an action, or of a person or persons in action'. The ultimate object of which is to edify or to entertain. Ritual displays that reveal in their style of presentation, in their purpose, and value, evidence of imitation, enlightenment or entertainment can be said to be drama.

It is obvious that Rotimi's polemic derives its force from the notion that drama is to be seen as impersonation, role playing or imitation of human action, which returns us to the notion of "Western drama". The deduction that one makes from this, is that "African theatre" includes "every performed experience". This means that African theatre is both participatory and celebratory. It is also total, because it combines many art forms, music, poetry, dance, acting, miming, mask, painting, singing, dialogue etc.

Disagreeing with the former, Leonard Pronko (1974:12) reinforces his argument:

The traveller who has feasted on theatre of Japan, China and Bali cannot repress the feeling, when he returns to the west, that the actors are exceedingly loquacious and singularly incapable of doing anything other than talking. Our hypertrophied rational faculties have led us in the past three hundred years, and particularly since the industrial revolution and the late nineteenth-century age of science, to a theatre that requires careful listening and intelligent understanding. We sit in plush seats, fatigued after two or three hours of dialogue interspersed with a bit of movement, then disperse to discuss the "issue" of the play, if it was drama of any "significance". Our serious theatre is so sociology-psychology-philosophy centered that it begins to acquire (as Lonesco claims Brecht might wish) all the charm of a night-school course. Instead of a feast for all senses and for the mind as well, we are given the intellectual scraps from the top of the table of theatrical history.

In the same vein, Soyinka (1976:6) furthers the dissatisfaction of Western drama over African drama:

The anguish over what is ritual, and what is not, has indeed been rendered even more abstract by the recent reversion of European and American progressive theatres to ritualism in its "purest" attainable form. This is especially true of the black theatre in America but is also true of the current white avant-garde in Europe and America. However, except as a groping

towards the ritual experience (alas, only too often comically misguided) could describe the theatrical manifestations of the so-called 'Liquid Theatre' or the more consciously anthropological 'Environment Theatre' in America? Or the intense exploration of Grotowski into the human psyche? What more concise expression could capture the spirit of the spectacle mounted by the French director Mnouchkine in her 1789 other than a 'ritual of revolution'? Peter Brook's experiments which took his company to Persepolis for a production of *Org hast*, a play in a wholly invented non- language are propelled by this same need to re-discover the origin, the root experience of what the western Europe man later reduced to specialist terminologies through his chronic habit of compartmentalization.

According to Okoye (2007), theatre has become such a shifting domain that its boundaries have collapsed. In the Western notion, theatre is a dramatic performance involving spectators collected in a conventionally determined environment. Its theatre prescription mandates that performers represent characters in a performance context, rather than themselves in everyday life (i.e. encounters). Since the later half of the 20th century this illusionist theatre has become so vigorously troubled that many scholars think it inadvisable to attempt any enduring definition more committed than that it is a kind of symbolic behaviour involving physically present human beings distinguishable at certain moments into performer/s and audience. In concert with the postmodern framework which now contests previous interest in the construction of stable, essentialist, disciplinary fields, notable theatre scholars and practitioners, such as Jerzy Grotowski and Richard Foreman, contest conventional theatre's textuality and elitist disengagement with physical reality. They criticise theatre for becoming too literary and rational instead of relying on what Antonin Artaud refers to as "spatial language – the visual language of things, of movements, attitudes, gestures – the language of sounds, cries, of lights and onomatopoeia"

The consequence has been pushing theatre, out of the normative limits to tolerate 'other theatres' that do not see theatre as dominantly textual. This has made the conception of theatre (and performance) to become contentious by these non-Western forms. With this (territorial) instability, and general shift in Western notion of theatre in the late of the century (20th-century), performance emerged as either an alternative to, or new form of theatre, or an entirely unique expressive category accommodating theatre as

well as other genres, such as music, sports, dance, and ritual. Influenced by the works of anthropologists, sociologists, ethnologists and theatre scholars, especially those, like Peter Turner, Clifford Geertz, Erving Goffman, and Richard Schechner, whose research interests embraced traditional or marginal cultures outside the canonical West; performance art has opened up theatre studies to embrace more embodied popular and marginal cultural practices. As Marvin Carlson (2001:23) notes,

Although theatre studies itself, through the 1970s and 1980s, gradually had been giving more attention to the hitherto largely neglected works of 'popular' and 'folk' theatre that were outside the accepted literary canon, performance studies carried this interest much further, looking beyond popular forms of theatre to all sorts of popular and folk entertainments and activities which fell entirely outside the normal domain of theatre studies: rituals, sporting events, parades, and every manner of public event and ceremony.

The broadening of the theatre domain makes it possible to engage South African theatre tradition from the context of theatre and performance.

Schechner (2002:1-10) defines Performance as "actions", a dialectic 'flow' that is spontaneous; a "reflexivity", in which the meanings, values and goals of a culture are seen "in action", as they shape and explain behaviour. For example, it includes cultural performances, such as personal narrative or folk and fairy tales, or communal ceremony.

The term performance incorporates a whole field of human activity. It embraces verbal act in everyday life. As a performance art (involving symbolic forms and live bodies), it provides a way of constituting meaning and affirming of individual and cultural values. In performance, questions of embodiment, action, behaviour, and agency are dealt with -inter culturally. This is premised on the fact that cultures are always interacting, that there is no totally isolated group. The differences among cultures are so profound that no theory of performance is universal: one size does not fit all. Nor are the playing fields where cultures interact level. This is also true of the post-apartheid South African situation, when located properly within the context of post-colonialism.

2.3 LOCATING THE 'POST': IS THE 'POST' IN POST-COLONIAL, THE SAME 'POST' IN POST-APARTHEID?

This section interrogates the peculiar problem of locating South Africa within the grid of post-colonialism. The reasons are clear: double colonization seen from the context of Dutch and British imperialism, which created a special identity for the nation. This double invasion, according to Kruger (1991), created a situation, which made the issue of cultural integration and linguistic coherence a major defining features of the South African theatre. Elsewhere, scholars maintain that the post-apartheid situation is analogous to post-colonial condition. This further raises the question, what is a nation, especially in South African context? During the apartheid era, the term 'South Africa' invoked a strong political and ideological connotations; thereby, legitimating the point that 'black' action to apartheid, was simply a reaction to white (apartheid) policies, (Frank 2004:25; See also Marx 1998:18). This is pronounced in its 'writing back' to the 'centre' approach through post-apartheid literature, as it were. Such a distinction has also been made in the context of the 'colonial' (as the historical stage of British imperialism), and 'post-colonial' which is analogous to the pair 'modern'/'post'-modern' often construed in a cause-and-effect relationship. In a sense post-colonialism "addresses reactions to colonialism in a context that is not necessarily determined by temporal constraints". Its political agenda is to "dismantle the hegemonic boundaries and the determinants that create unequal relations of power, based on binary opposition" such as 'first world and third world', or white and black", Gilbert et al (1996:2).

To this end, Ashcroft et al (1989:2, 83) defines all cultures influenced by imperial powers as 'post-colonial'. As a result, they describe apartheid South Africa as post-colonial whose political development began far before the country's independence. For them South Africa is a society "caught between two phases", manifesting the dynamic of colonial domination, but with cultural productions that continues to engage the processes of abrogation and appropriation of the nations narratives. On the other hand, Pechey (1994:153) sees the 'post-apartheid' situation as analogous to post-colonial condition and gives the following reading of the 'apartheid'/'post-apartheid' complex:

“Post-apartheid is similarly open to different uses. South Africa’s ruling party today would regard the post-apartheid condition as something already empirically in place, on the ground that segregationist ideology had been officially discarded and that some of the forms of legal exclusion and separation legitimated by it were being ‘dismantled’. Against this banality of usage, the sense of ‘post-apartheid’ I am invoking here defines a condition that has contradictorily always existed and yet is impossible of full realisation: always existed, because apartheid as a politics of permanent and institutionalised crises has from the beginning been shadowed by its own transgression or supersession; impossible of realisation, because the proliferating binaries of apartheid discourse will long outlive any merely political winning of freedom.”

However, post-colonial nations and those in the ex-settler colonies of the once-British Commonwealth have seized the post-colonial idea as a ‘cultural weapon’ against cultural imperialism. It is argued in some quarters that, within the present context, there is a history of anti-colonial struggle which is punctuated by ambiguously post-colonial moments (1910,1948,1961 ... 1994); that with the present-day pressures of the post-political, global capital and metropolitan mass market culture(just as in other post-colonial societies) constitute another form of neo-colonialism. Within this context, it has been further argued by many scholars alike that, it is difficult to embrace the idea of post-colonialism as promoted by the West, especially when we know that the continent is not in the same footing, and cannot accept the same ‘difference’ on equal terms. It could then be said that South Africa is a work-in-progress and does not deserve the prefix ‘Post’. Ndebele (1991:7-11) moves the argument further, by maintaining that, cultural productions, as presently constituted in South Africa, is still a ‘work-in-progress’, and cannot warrant it being called a post-colonial nation. This is tied to the fact, that in South Africa, where the process of neo colonialism, and decolonization operate, as it were, in different and asynchronous time zones, it is difficult to accept the term ‘post-colonial’. This is coupled to the fact that South Africa is a country, where the “the warring spectres of history continues to haunt the conflicts of the present; the celebration of the ‘pastness of colonialism’ is at best premature, at worst a denial of history in the present.”

According to Ashcroft et al. (1989: 11, 2), the idea of post-colonialism emerges from the inability of the ‘universal’ theory, to account for the cultural differences

associated with post-colonial writing. Theories of style and genre, language, epistemological and value system are what post-colonial writing has to contend with.

It has been argued, that the idea of post-colonialism, which is ascribable to cultures affected by imperial powers (as it exists in white settler/post-colonies), cannot not be ascribed to the South African context. They assert that the term post-colonial is used to distinguish between periods before and after independence ('colonial/post-colonial period), especially in the area of constructing national literary histories, or comparing stages in those histories. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupation, through out the historical process initiated by colonialism. Within this context, the literature of African countries, are referred as post-colonial literature; even that of 'white settler' colonies like the USA, Australia and New Zealand should also be labelled as such. But the thread running through these literatures (beyond their special and regional differences) emerged in their present form, from that engagement of colonial experience. It is by asserting their differences from the "Centre" that they make themselves distinctively post-colonial.

Hall (1996:242) makes a case on what should be included and excluded within the post-colonial framework. He draws a line between the post-colonial and the "Other" (Colonialism, third world, imperialism), in relation to whose "termination it ceaselessly, but without final suppression, marks itself". The main purpose of Hall's thesis is to differentiate between the term 'post-colonial' and the notion of "post-colonial time". And he asks the following questions: If post-colonial time is the moment after colonialism, and colonialism is defined in relation to the binary division between the colonizers and the colonized, why is post-colonial time also a time of 'difference? What are the implications of this sort of 'difference' in the politics of subject formation in the era of globalization? These questions contest the 'space' in which the concept of the 'post-colonialism' operates, and cannot be satisfactorily resolved until we have better handle on the concept.

Shohat (1992) criticizes the 'post-colonial' for its theoretical and political ambiguity-"its 'dizzying multiplicity of positionalities, it's 'a- historical and universalizing displacement' and its 'depoliticizing implications". The post-colonial, she argues, is politically ambivalent because it blurs the distinction between colonizers and the

colonized, hitherto associated with the paradigms of 'colonialism', 'neo-colonialism' and 'Third Worldism' which it aims to subvert. She believes that post-colonialism dissolves the politics of resistance, since it does not have any alternative, or 'posits' any clear domination with other 'Posts' with which it tends to align/contest with. Shohat argues further that post-colonialism collapses boundaries of different histories, immoralities and racial formations into the same universalizing category. The same view is shared by Anne McClintock (1992), who criticizes the concept for its linearity and its 'entranced suspension of history'. For both critics, the concept is used to mark the final closure of a historical epoch, as if colonialism and its effects are definitely over. 'Post' for Shohat means past: 'definitively terminated closed'. A closer reading of Shohat's position shows levels of ambiguity, since she does not make a clear distinction, whether the period is intended to be epistemological or chronological. Neither does it answer the question, whether 'post-colonialism' marks the rupture point between two epistemes, nor does it refer to 'the strict chronologies of history tout court. Dirlik (1994:328-356) does not only cite Shohat and McClintock with approval - he too finds the concept 'celebratory' of the so called "end of colonialism". He asserts that post-colonialism is a post- structuralist, post -foundationist discourse, deployed mainly by displaced Third World intellectuals as a catch phrase, while hiding in 'Ivy League' American universities. He further argues, that, by asserting 'post-colonialism' they grossly under play 'capitalism's structuring of the modern world. He believes that the concept 'post-colonialism' has been confusingly universalised, which has resulted to some-kind of homogenization, and inappropriately applied. Accepting Dirlik's position negates some fundamental issues, and weakens the conceptual value of the term-post-colonialism. This ultimately leads to the question: Is the US a 'post-colonial nation?' Should the term-post-colonial be applied to Australia, Canada and New Zealand, which are white settler colonies? Later, Mani and Frankenberg (1994) remind us that it does not follow that all societies are 'post-colonial' in the same way and that in any case the 'post-colonial' does not operate on its own but 'is in effect a construct internally differentiated by its intersections with other unfolding relation'. Within this context, a careful discrimination is needed, to ascertain the post-coloniality (white settler/African post-colonies), especially at the realm of the social and racial formations. But this does not mean, they are not 'post-colonial' in any way, in terms of

their relationship to the imperial centre .Or the way C.L.R James put it, in context of the Caribbean, they are 'in but not of the West'. They were plainly designated as such-'post-colonial', though the manner of timing and conditions of their colonization and independence varied greatly.

Tompkins (2007:77), agrees that the historical background of white settler colonies (South Africa included), often provokes debates about their inclusion and exclusion within the post-colonial frame. That these former settler colonies, being predominantly white and industrialized, restricts interpretations of post-colonialism to a black/white, poor/rich frame. She however brings a new dimension to the discourse, by bringing some aspects of the American society as 'post-colonial' outside the American nationalist context, though the United States has 'traditionally been discounted' as a post-colonial nation because of its political and economic hegemony. To this end, 'Harlem Duet' provides an example about the (postcolonial) history of descendants of slaves transported from Africa to North America. South Africa's postcolonial status is also complicated by the overt racial tendencies of apartheid. Like decolonization, the lengthy process of dismantling apartheid, shows the limitations of 'colonial' and 'post-colonial' as distinct, rather than intermingled conditions which vary according to the historical and cultural specifics of the place. However, to dismiss settler colonies from postcolonial discourse is a confirmation of power(s) ostensibly invested in "whiteness" rather than dismantling its authority. Tompkins argues further, following Richard Dyer that race (including whiteness) "is not a factor, never, not in play". She maintains, that, while racial identity may well be implicated, and acknowledged to be a complex construction, "whiteness" is still often exempt from analysis. The complexity of "whiteness" is evident in the historiography of ex-settler colonies whose status of "not quite/not white" status vis-a-vis Europeans seen as authentically "white". The ambivalence of a subject position (in terms of the settler colonialist) is exacerbated by historicizing 'whiteness' i.e. 'whitewashing of history' as it were, since settler colonies were established by unsettling-dispossession of the indigenous populations. The third factor is the issue of forced migration, which is the displacement of people from one nation to the other. This has profoundly altered the history/demography of these settler nations, as it was the case with South Africa. Such countries are no longer homogeneously "white". The ongoing change

in population composition, calls for a re- evaluation of national identity. Scholars of right wing politics believe that this may lead to the "nationals" in context, "losing their place in such society or even being disenfranchised", a scenario that is referred elsewhere as "uncanny", in which "ours" may also be "theirs" and vice-versa, as Ken Gelder and Jane M. Jacobs would put it. Resulting to a situation in which "difference" and "reconciliation" may become uneasy neighbours (Tompkins 2007:77)

However, the term-post-colonial could be mismanaged, when used indiscriminately- applying it exclusively for non-western colonies, while denying it to white settler colonies. Hall (1991:242-259) refers to such a position as "confusing a descriptive category with an evaluative one". Post-colonialism accounts for the shift in global relations, which marks the transition "from the age of Empires to the post-independence moment". He believes that the concept, " helps us (though here its value is more gestural) to identify what the 'new relations and dispositions' are in the emerging conjuncture". But as Peter Hulme (1995) argues:

If 'post-colonial' is a useful word, then it refers to a process of disengagement from the whole colonial syndrome which takes many forms and is probably inescapable for all those whose worlds have been marked by that phenomena. 'Post-colonial' is (or should be) a descriptive not an evaluative term.(It is not some kind of badge of merit.

This also helps us to identify, not only the level at which careful distinctions have to be made, but also the level at which 'post-colonial' is properly 'universalizing'(i.e a concept which is referring to a high level of abstraction).It refers to a general process of decolonization, which like colonization itself, has marked the colonizing societies as powerfully as it has the colonized(of course in different ways).Hence the subverting of the old colonizing/colonized binary in the new conjuncture. Indeed, one of the principal values of the term 'post-colonial' has been to direct our attention to the many ways in which colonization was never simply external to the societies of the imperial metropolis was always inscribed deeply within them-as it became indelibly inscribed in the culture of the colonized. This was a process whose negative effects provided the foundation of anti-colonial political mobilization, and provoked the attempt to recover an alternative set of cultural origins not contaminated by the colonizing experience. The differences of course between colonizing and colonial cultures remain profound. It follows that the term

post-colonial is not merely descriptive of 'this' society, rather than 'that' or of 'then' and 'now'. Indeed, post-colonial discourse, re-articulates 'colonization' as part of transnational and transcultural 'global' process; it produces a decentred, diasporic or 'global' rewriting of earlier, nation centred imperial grand narratives. Its theoretical advantage lies in its refusal to discountenance 'here' and 'there' 'then' and 'now' 'home' and 'abroad' perspective. 'Global' here does not mean universal, and not nation/ or society-specific either. It is about the lateral and transverse cross-relations of what Gilroy(1993:79) calls the 'diasporic'.

One of the major features of post-colonial literature according to Ashcroft et al (1989:8) is the concern with "place and displacement", which is implicated in South African context. This gives credence that South Africa cannot escape from the lenses of post-colonialism, especially its emerging literature. Scholars have made it the high point, if not the defining model of post-colonialism. The crisis of identity, which the process of displacement occasions is a common factor in post-colonial societies, especially in the case of South Africa where English and Afrikaans languages have been in the saddle for centuries- as language of instruction and bureaucracy. Within this context, the new emerging literature in black South Africa may have problem-of language to adequately describe their "new experiences", as it happened elsewhere in the continent. This will result to a case of linguistic alienation and crisis of identity, which can only be surmounted by replacing or appropriating the language of the 'centre'. Writers from post-colonial societies, has ever campaigned for this position; although these writers from the post-colonies write from their own place and have not been geographically dislocated, they have to overcome an imposed gap resulting from linguistic displacement of the pre-colonial language, by adopting this method. Such alienation is shared by those whose possession of English is disputably 'native' (in the sense of being used from birth), but begin to feel alienated within its practice once its vocabulary, categories and codes are felt to be inadequate or inappropriate to describe their environment.

In conclusion, the domain of language has offered an even more subtle edge in the fight against apartheid. There is a sense in which the ideology of apartheid penetrated the language's domain, as a carrier of multiple signs and discourses as Gunner (2000) argued. Hall (1986) puts this profoundly:

Language in its widest sense is the vehicle of practical reasoning, calculation and consciousness, because of the ways in which certain meanings and references have been historically secured. But its cogency depends on the 'logics' which connect one proposition to another in a chain of connected meanings; where the social connotations and historical meanings are condensed and reverberate off one another ...these chains are never permanently secured, either in their internal systems or in terms of the social classes and groups to which they belong.

The 'multi-accentual' nature of language, as Voloshinov (1973:23) puts it, meant that multiple field of meaning could be played out in cultural production, particularly in a genre like the drama, which work in multiple levels of significations. Within this context, Gallagher (1991) notes, that apartheid regime employed language to veil many of its heinous activities; practicing some kind of "double speak" in which words meant something other than their surface structure i.e literal meaning. On the other hand, the impact of the plays of this period is derived from the ways the playwrights exploited the resources of language as a narrative tool. But more compelling evidence is the plays texts themselves, many of which show how the urban slang blend with English, Afrikaans, Setswana, isiZulu, as well as isiXhosa and Tsotsitaal, and other languages. Many of the playwrights render the urban slang raw. There are embedded glosses, parenthesised in the text as if to suggest different per formative possibilities, but most of the translations of the non-English expressions take place in the composite glossary at the end of the book which heightens the commonality of the emerging linguistic pool. There is no pandering to an international audience as such. A point which the plays seem make:"this is a new South Africa - distinctive linguistically and stylistically, and confident in what it is".

In the foregoing, language as one of the markers of group identity is of enormous importance, especially in multi-racial and multi-linguistic nation, like South Africa. The extent to which language is related to cultural frameworks has being the subject of a wide ranging debate between the so-called linguistic nationalism and instrumental universalism. While linguistic nationalists maintain that language(s) embody cultural knowledge system, instrumental universalist contend that pragmatic considerations should dictate the choice of language, because all languages share the most important function of communication and are sufficiently malleable to encompass specific

experiences. The position in this thesis is that language is more than a means of communication, but also a carrier of culture. And it can become an important factor in cultural politics of post-colonial societies, especially in case of South Africa. However, this does not ignore the fact that the adoption of English (which is also the language of currency among the writers) as a *lingua franca* in South Africa, does not have pragmatic advantages. Nevertheless, it is maintained that the empowerment of indigenous languages serves as a validation of their cultural identities. This is so, because, in South Africa, indigenous languages like Xhosa, Zulu etc, have been thoroughly repressed during the apartheid era. The protests surrounding the scaling down of Afrikaans on the public level, give credence to this point, since the language dispensation has changed quite radically with the advent of democracy in South Africa. The new constitution (agreed upon in 1996) accorded equal official status to all eleven languages at the national level. Probably, it will be on that note that the righting of the past wrongs of the decades could start from the re-structuring of language of instruction, especially of the theatre in the making of a new South Africa.

The emergence of English and Afrikaans in South Africa as a social/academic language has always been a political and cultural phenomenon, a practice in which language and literature have both been called into the service of a profound and embracing nationalism. Gauri Viswanathan (1987) in writing about English language in India argues that the 'institutionalization and subsequent valorisation of English literary study, shaped the ideological content in India, where:

British colonial administrators, provoked by missionaries on the one hand and fears of native insubordination on the other, discovered an ally in English literature to support them in maintaining control of the natives under the guise of a liberal education.

British colonial administrators, according to Ashcroft et al (1989:2-4), maintained hold on the colonies under the guise of education, using English literature. It can then be argued that the study of English and the growth of the empire (as English and Afrikaans) are politically mediated-the development of one goes with the other.

At a more general level of power relation, a 'privileging norm' was entrenched (through English studies), which acted as a medium/ template for the marginalization of the 'Other' i.e. the 'peripheral', the 'marginal', the 'un-canonized'. English was made

central to cultural productions, just like the political ideology that produced it. So "when elements of the periphery and margin threatened the exclusive claim of the centre they were rapidly incorporated". This was a process, in Edward Said's term of conscious affiliation proceeding under the guise of filiations, or what Ashcroft et al (1989:4) calls "...mimicry of the centre proceeding from a desire not only to be accepted but to be to be adopted and absorbed. It caused those from the periphery to immerse themselves in the imported culture, especially the elites who took power from the colonialists".

The imperial education system installs a 'standard' version of the metropolitan language as the norm, and marginalizes all "variants' as impurities". Within this context, language becomes the site through which hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated and conception of 'truth' 'order' and 'reality' are constituted and perpetuated; apartheid manifested these sensitivities. However, foregoing, it takes little to know that apartheid as an ideology was both powerful and possessive. It was both a sign and symbol of a cultural model. The more carefully we study the history of South Africa, the more difficult it becomes, not to identify it with cultural propaganda, which trivialized African mode of life and its spiritual framework. This is achieved via formal education, press and audio-visual etc. To this end, the choice of language and the use to which it is put is central to a people's definition of themselves.

At a general level, linguistic imperialism started earnestly in Africa with the Berlin Conference of 1884 to 1885, which saw Africa divided among European powers. Under that influence, Africa came to define herself in terms of the language of the imperial powers: English-speaking (Anglophone), French-speaking (Francophone) or Portuguese-speaking (Lusophone) (African) countries, as against their indigenous languages. This became more intense with the industrial revolution in Europe, and the emergence of transatlantic slave trade. The debate on whether to use the indigenous language, or the language of imperialism have divided African scholars/artists alike into different camps. And in a post-colonial South African theatre, the argument will be the same.

The proponents of anti-imperial language argue that to write in the language of the coloniser amounts to writing within 'death' itself, since it looks like a betrayal to the cause of motherland-Africa.

Frantz Fanon, writing much earlier, anticipated this paradox. He believed that the

colonised are doomed because they will end up being a reflection of their 'master', especially by using their language. He argues for the jettisoning of the primacy and the status given to colonial language(s), as a way of challenging the grand march of western imperialism, with its dazzling entourage of binarism: self/other, metropolitan/colony, centre/periphery. He believes that colonial languages undermine the integrity of the African world, which ultimately inscribes itself into the body/soul of Africans.

Achebe (1975:91-103), explains that the symbolic use of language is the result of a necessary distinction between national literature and ethnic ones.

A national literature is one that takes the whole nation for its province and has a realized or potential audience throughout its territory, in other words, a literature that is written in the national language. An ethnic literature is one which is available only to one ethnic group within a nation. If you take Nigeria as an example, the national literature, as I see it, is the literature written in English; and the ethnic literatures are in Hausa, Ibo, Yoruba, Efik, Edo, Ijaw, etc.

With this position, he makes case for the use of the colonial language, instead of the indigenous language(s)

Ngugi wa Thiongo (1996:9), believes that the use of colonial(English language) is not to the interest of the African. He argues further:

If Berlin event was executed with sword and bullets, that of education was rather subtle. The night of the sword and bullets was followed by a morning of chalk and blackboard, i.e. the physical violence of the battle field was followed by the psychological violence of the classroom and language was the tool through which that power fascinated and held (Africa) soul prisoner. In African orality, (or orature), language is not a mere string of words, it has suggestive power well beyond immediate and the lexical meaning. For example, the use of words and images and inflexion of voice could be used to achieve a specific meaning. The power of language could be reinforced through: games, riddles and proverbs, transposition of syllables or through nonsensical but musically arranged words, especially in moonlight plays. The language through images and symbols gives us a view of the word with its beauty. In this context, the language of home, the language of our immediate and wider community and the language of the farm are one. But colonial education broke this harmony because the language of

education is different from the language of culture. Thus, English language became the language of education to which other languages aped and bow in deference.

Achebe (1976:91-103), argues otherwise in preference for colonial language.

One final point remains for me to make. The real question is not whether Africans could write in English but whether they ought to. Is it right that a man should abandon his mother tongue for someone else's? It looks like a dreadful betrayal and produces a guilty feeling. But for me, there is no other choice. I have been given this language and I intend to use it...

To which Obi Wali (1963) counters:

Until these writers and their western midwives accept the fact that any true African literature must be written in African languages, they would be merely pursuing a dead end, which can only lead to sterility, uncreativity and frustration.

Writing much later, James Baldwin,(2004) avers:

My quarrel with the English language has been that the language reflected none of my experience. But now I began to see the matter another way. Perhaps the language was not my own because I had never attempted to use it, had only learned to imitate it. If this were so, then it might be made to bear the burden of my experience if I could find the stamina to challenge it, and me, to such a test...

But for Achebe (1975: 91-103):

I recognise of course, that Baldwin's problem is not exactly mine, but I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with his ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surrounding...

This certainly approximates to Ashcroft et al, very important book: *The Empire Writes Back*(1989). The book highlights how the "empires" have been able to domesticate English language to curry and carry their experiences, as a way of rewriting their history and affirming their identity. Against this background, African scholars have called for the use of 'Pidgin' English as language of instruction and literature in Africa. Pidgin is the name given to any language created, usually spontaneously, out of a mixture of other languages as a means of communication between speakers of different tongues. It

flourished in areas of trade contact, and were particularly common in the East and West Indies, Africa etc., based on English, French, Spanish and Portuguese as a result of colonial exploration Elugbe (1997:23)

In South Africa it is called *Fanagalo*, while in Nigeria-it is "Pidgin English" spoken by a large number of the population. It does not yet have an official orthography. Ola Rotimi in his inaugural lecture entitled: "*To be or not to be... language question in Nigeria*" stops short at recommending Pidgin English as language of instruction and literature, drawing heavily from the repertoire of his plays, which is written in pidgin English. Ola Rotimi's position, does not blend well with the position of this dissertation, but we take cognizance of his contribution. We rather adopt Adelugba's(1989) position, which at the present time, is the most comprehensive in language use in Africa literature. In his paper entitled, "*Language Use in African Theatre*", he maintains that over time, the use of language in African aesthetics has become an admixture of pidginised, creolised affair with indigenous languages and English, resulting to a kind of hybrid of unusual linguistic blend: *Yorubanglish, Engligbo*, etc. Dapo Adelugba quoting Foucault, reinstates that language as a system of meaning could communicate through the use of images. In this way, language is not verbal but unvoiced yet communicating, which is one of peculiarities of African text. ver language among the African This polemic debate o .cinema ,has its repercussions also on the visual medium ,writers

In summary, it is germane to ask whether apartheid was consistent with development in South Africa, since economic undercurrent was actually what sustained the development of apartheid. Hobson(1968), maintains that colonialism, as well as its cause, imperialism, did not obey logic. It was "non-rational and irrational purely instinctual inclinations toward war and conquest: that guided "objectless tendencies toward forcible expansion, without definite, utilitarian limits. Colonialism was not only economically irrational but also ruinous for the colonial powers. The Marxist position could be summed up, following neo Marxist thinkers like S. Amin, Paul Baran, etc., which argued that if colonialism was consistent with economic development, it was at least (since its inception) quite consistent with its own economic interest and objectives. Accordingly, colonialism produced a body of knowledge on the means of exploiting the colonies. And that is exactly the case with South Africa, which collapsed into economic

difficulties after the end of apartheid.

3.1 MAPPING THE TERRAIN

3.2 NEGOTIATING BLACKNESS

This chapter deals with the evolution and dramatic tradition of Black South African theatre, inveighing the whole constellations of (theatre) history: the experimental methods (including production companies) that constituted the pre-apartheid plays. This serves as a back ground to the experimental methods that, informed the composition of the plays of the two periods: the pre and post -apartheid. It attempts at showing how various experimental methods are implicated in the play texts, while examining the political uses they were/are put into; as a way of finding the interface in the shifting trend of the dramatic history-of South African theatre.

The origin of South African theatre, as already highlighted, is based on the resources of the oral tradition of the indigenous people of South Africa . It was later influenced (just like other African countries before it) by the European missionary activities of the 20th century. This event led to the transposition of the indigenous oral form, to the written forms, which led to the emergence of ‘formal’ theatre, as it were.

Following Nardine Gordimer (1976), it could be said that, the birth of (black) South African theatre, was an “unrecorded political act”. “When the first tribal praise-poem was put down on paper, it was a political act”, she emphasized. Black theatre, emerged from that tradition and provided the medium for the mobilization and conscientization of black South Africans, during the apartheid period. Put another way, the evolution of theatrical/performance genres are mobilized in relation to the political development in South Africa(since culture, including theatre, was considered to be an important element in the political struggle against apartheid), Hauptfleisch (see also Frank 2004).

Faced with some limitations, for example different cultural background and languages of black South Africans; the missionaries resulted to the use of drama for the vivification of their message. Drama in this context, according to Bhekizizwe (1990; Steadman 1990) proved more accessible than other forms of significations, like writing. Visser (1977), acknowledged as much in his article entitled: “Education Through the Drama”:

Learning by doing is one of the wisest educational maxims we have. It

is founded on the right psychology because when we make use of the eye and tongue and hand, these several activities make our understanding of the thing better. It is for this reason that we have action songs for infants and practical work in science. Agriculture or woodwork for older students.

The plays made use of different dramatic styles and content. The main plays of the period were - morality plays, European comedies and Zulu oral epics. The earliest recorded performance(s) was at St Francis in 1904, by African students; it was on Joseph in Egypt. The choice of drama was necessitated by the fact that, it was amenable to the gospel; while preaching the gospel, it was also easy for them to pass on Christian ideals and values of Europeans to the natives. The stock- themes was those of repentance, character training, diligence, thrift and obedience.

In Witwatersrand province, drama was seen by both white and African elite community as 'morally' uplifting, unlike the ball room dances of that period. Theatre was to become an important cultural arm of African elites (as manifested in Bantu Dramatic Society, founded in 1932), a black organization which metamorphosed out of that ferment. Bantu Dramatic Society promoted a lot of cultural activities. The group main focus in the beginning, was production of European plays; encourage Bantu playwrights in the process, while targeting the development of African dramatic tradition. Their first production was Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* in 1933, which adopted European dramatic tradition, as a performance style. This is another way of explaining-their European middle- class background since majority of the members were products of European missionary education. Their activities were later characterized by a lot of tensions and social problems. For example, they contended with the problem of performance venues, finance and rehearsal time because of the need for members to be in full-time job, as Miss Elsie Solomon realized(while working with Africans) during her stint as the director of the Society's production of, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, she intones:

"One of the main difficulties has been that of rehearsing ... our greatest trouble has been the curfew. Rehearsals have usually begun at about 8 pm, but all the actors had to leave at 9.30 pm and what can one do in one-and-a-half hours? For the three performances we have arranged for all the actors to be given special passes".

Bantu Dramatic Society later operated, under very restrictive circumstances, due to segregationist policies of the apartheid regime. This later accounts for their adoption of nationalistic themes, especially Dhlomo's historical plays. This shows a paradigm shift in ideology and aesthetics, which was a clear departure from the patronizing attitudes of the Christian and liberal white ideals; a movement parallel to their later active involvement in oppositional politics. Other plays like *Dingane, Cetshwayo and Moshoeshoe*, by the same author show a complete movement towards militant nationalism- articulating the need for self-awareness and self-determination. The position of the Bantu Dramatic Society, according to Couzens(1985) is perfectly summarised in an essay: 'Native Policy in South Africa', written in 1930 by Dhlomo, a member of the society.

However, the parliamentary victory of the National Party in 1948, according to Bhekizizwe(1990), further exacerbated the political and economic exploitations of the blacks, which in turn changed the complexion of black cultural practices into a more radically engaged theme. To this end, a conference was held on the 'promotion of arts in South Africa' in 1960. Delegates included Mr. B.J. Vorster, the then Deputy Minister of Education, Arts and Science, and later Prime Minister. The outcome of the conference included the centralization of cultural practices at the national level, which was coordinated by the Department of National Education. The cabinet approved a five year art-funding plan, and a setting up of four regional arts councils. With time, the intercourse between art and the State became a concern for the apartheid regime. Thus, the government was bordered by the role of the art in the State, since it tends to contest its hegemony. More importantly, the regime was concerned with how the 'creative arts' could be used as a 'vehicle-of support to its national policies. The government later came out with legislation on how art should be practiced, which was short of regulating the industry. For example, a range of institutions (formal and informal), were set up and linked with the local, regional and central administrative structures. Patronage of the arts became the barometer, a 'civilizing' way of measuring the State social responsibility, as it were.

However, the incursion of the state in cultural matters worked against the development of black drama. In fact, the regime's intension (through various Acts),

was to emasculate 'black art' from its social vision. For example, there were at least 49 national theatres. All of them were located in places, which could be designated as 'white' areas. The theatres were under white managements, although some, like the Market Theatre, have blacks as administrators and patrons. The majority of the theatres were built by provincial councils, as a signifying landmark to South African history. For example, the Johannesburg Civic Theatre was a reminder of 50 years of the Union - between the Dutch and British. Windybrow Theatre in Hillbrow is a product of Johannesburg's centenary celebrations, while the renovation of Johannesburg Art Gallery and the Market Theatre was exactly for the same purpose. On the other hand, there was no single theatre in any of the township in South Africa.

The history foregrounding these venues represents one-sided view of the South African history, one 'that diarises the triumphs of apartheid regime'. A theatre complex was supposed to have been built in Jabulani, Soweto, in 1969, but it never materialized, although there was a ministerial approval to that effect. In fact, the theatre was to be named the Will Carr Theatre, after a Mr W.J.P. Carr, in recognition of his contributions to the development of African townships as the manager of the Johannesburg non-European Affairs Department. Plans were even afoot to stage some productions by some private production companies; while (ballet, opera, and musicals) were to feature profoundly in marking the occasion. There were only two theatres under black control in the Witwatersrand area, the Dhlomo Theatre (closed in 1983 by the authorities as a 'fire hazard') and the Funda Centre Experimental Space. Cultural productions took place in church halls and cinemas spaces in the town ships. These were literally empty spaces, or all-purpose venues, bereft of stage facilities, like lighting and other facilities. Access to city-based theatres was controlled through the application of the Group Areas Act.

However, due to the multicultural nature of South African theatre, Zakes Mda(1996:197), argues that South African theatre is not homogenous. "There has never been any one theatre tradition in the country", as Hauptfleisch's and Ian Steadman would later emphasise. They identified many traditions which is characterised by binary oppositions: African/Western, Afrikaans/English, indigenous/imported, Black/White, literary/theatre and popular/political theatre". Hauptfleisch identifies a development in South African theatre, which is more integrative; which later led to

the emergence of a “hybrid” (art) form (mixture of different cultures), or what Copelan calls “syncretic”. In the end, what emerged is an art form “not quite African, not quite Western, but somewhere in the middle”, (Hauptfleisch 1987:176; 1997: 49; Copelan 1985:23).

There is a sense in which South African theatre could be referred to as ‘popular’ since it ministered to the majority of the population. Influenced by the radical thinking of the 1970s, a political “anti-establishment” theatre emerged, designated by the name: ‘multi-racial theatre’, because of its diverse compositions of people from different ethnicities (White, Black, Coloured etc.), coupled with democratic approach to rehearsal process. The main aim of the multi-racial casts, was geared towards transcending and breaking down of the ‘colour bar’. The group focus was exploring the race issue, and seeking possibilities for multi-racial co-existence within apartheid. This was partially achieved by playing to black and white audience, with equally Black and White cast. The play *Sophia town* by Junction Avenue Theatre Company; plays by Matsemela Ngema and Percy Mtwana are examples of this type of theatre. Market theatre in Johannesburg, and the space Theatre in Cape Town are examples of production companies (Frank 2004:12; Hauptfleisch 1987:177).

Being rooted in orality and improvisations, black theatre according to Copelan (1986) was not capital intensive, or tied to any institutionally controlled (technological) media. This made it easier to engage apartheid conflict, through entourage of experimental methods that were to follow. Artistically, the acting is physical and melodramatic, as a way of drawing emotion from the audience. The plays have a quality of having-been-lived, while the performance has the quality of living now. A summary of what Richard Schechner (1977: 73) calls “actual”. Actual is simply the idea of art as an event: something consequential happens for both actors and spectators 'here and now' leading to change of consciousness for the participants. For example, the actors address the audience not as a collection of money-paying strangers or forced participants in a show of solidarity, but as a community, even as congregation in order to create a sense of collective participation and transformation. Through this performance style, the plays make their political points with minimal (financial) outlay, which may not have been possible during the apartheid era. By involving the audience, the play vividly

appropriate images of their existence in ‘staging’ their own story, rather more realistically. This is predicated on the belief that the positioning of black identity also entails a corresponding deployment of black aesthetic devices. A strategy, Neal (1989) argues, involves radical re-ordering of cultural aesthetics, by way of reconstituting its myths, icons and even critique. Thus, by adopting the actors/audience method, as a narrative technique, the play ostensibly eliminates the traditional barrier of stage and auditorium in Western dramatic sense. This transgression, which does not valorize stage/audience separation, is called African performance style (i.e African theatre). Most plays within the pre/post apartheid periods are composed using this expressive method . This attracted large audience, especially in townships since the people could easily relate to the plot-narratives. Though the play themes differ (since they address different issues and events), most playwrights of that period used this experimental method.

However, this finally gave birth to an experimental theatre, called ‘Workshop 71’, by Robert Mshengu Kavanagh, Witwatersrand university drama teacher in the 1970s. ‘Workshop 71’ was founded at the Institute of Race Relations of South Africa, with the aim of conducting experimental workshops and performances as a way of establishing multi-racial contacts . It brought together white and black actors and drama teachers. It was some kind of non-racial training ground, where artists from various ethnicities could meet to share techniques and discuss each other’s work(i.e creating a broadly South African theatre “out of a composite of cultures”) (McLaren 1996:28, 4; Frank 2004:215-220; See also Mshengu 1997/78:63). Themba Ntinga, a member of the group confirms this

“our aims and objects are to experiment by examining existing theatre and evolving new theatre methods and techniques. We also provide opportunities for people of different cultures to become familiar with their difference, and create original theatre which depend on artistic co-operation and contact” (1973:46)

‘Workshop 71’ project used a mixture of “Township English” Bantu language and tsotsitaal (Afrikaans-based township slang), spoken by majority of urban South Africans in everyday discourse, (Kavanagh 1985: 214).

Athol Fugard, a South African playwright was to become a prominent figure of this movement; other playwrights followed suite, as they began creating new plays out of

a blend of township drama and Western improvisational “Workshop ” technique. Through this techniques (with wide ranging functions), social roles, history of ethnic group and behaviours were relived. His works (like other playwrights), was characterized by sparse scenery and limited props, a method he called ‘a very light agile, pure striking force’. In his plays Athol Fugard critiques life under apartheid. He thematizes the effects of apartheid’s brutality and degradation of black people in South Africa. He foregrounds suffering, humiliation and despair that pervades the lives and controls the destiny of black people in South Africa. Influenced by performance style of Brecht, Peter Brook and Grotowski, Fugard believes in the actuality of performance and relies on the power of live actors to move life audience. He does not give audience in the theatre the role of passive viewers, but makes them become part of the production style (Frank 2004:53).

The oral and kinaesthetic nature of the (African) dramatic tradition, accounts for the visibility of these plays . By "tradition", I mean expressive principles and processes, not products. The use of this performance style in black theatre was effective (and meaningful), because it emanated from the reality they know, and could relate to easily. Over the period, Fugard developed the “Workshop” method- integrating African improvisational technique and imagery into Western mode of theatre. His plays introduced to Western audiences, not only the “social and psychological horrors” of apartheid, but also the vitality and richness of African performance culture” (Copeland1986). Through this technique, Fugard focuses on apartheid, and the effect on the people. He does not only reveal the injustices, but also highlights the dictum that ‘acting’ is a necessary weapon for black struggle i.e the theatre becomes a domain where black South Africans are able to escape apartheid-imposed definition of identity in terms of mere existence or functionality. Instead, they exist not only through the gaze of others but also in the gaze of others (Frank 2004:98).

However, this gaze is never neutral and uninvolved, but as Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins would emphasise, it is “implicated in that action of watching theatre, as an authoritarian gaze of watching over others” (See Hauptfleisch 1996:70). *Sizwe Bansi Dead and The Island* resist and subvert traditional definition of the gaze in the theatre, by destabilizing the concept of surveillance. The authoritarian gaze exercised in the defined

and delimited location of the theatre strongly resembles the imperial gaze of the colonizers over the colonized. As Homi Bhabha asserts in his essay “The other Question”, (see Hauptfleisch 1994:70). Thus the colonized produced as “a social reality which is at once an ‘other’ and yet entirely knowable and visible”. Imperialism’s strategy of surveillance and representation constructs the other as an object of both knowledge and power. This appears to fix the colonized in a position of paralysis.

In addition, Fugard also kept diary- records of many public and private encounters with members of the public, from different ethnic groups. Writing on this, Biodun Jeyifo maintains that Fugard “presents audience with situations in which the social background goes beyond the “usually ‘setting’ of the drama. “Instead, the social background is the very stuff and texture of the dramaturgy, a kind of background-as-structure- content” This transaction between the society and art is what Schechner and Turner termed the “dynamic interplay of ‘theatre in society and society in the theatre” (Biodun 1995:100)

With time, the Black Conscious Movement, further inspired black dramatists to adopt the experimental mode as a way of “invigorating their performances, and telling their story” (Mshengu 1976:47; see also Etherton 1982:58), Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) came into prominence in South Africa in the 1970s. It was considered to be the first “black” movement with a ‘specific manifesto’ as to “what blacks should approve and condemn; what they should support or resist” It developed into a nationalist tradition of black struggle in South Africa. Their emphasis was on racial/cultural factors which was of common interest to all blacks, i.e black Africans, ‘Colours’ and ‘Indians’ (Kananagh 1985:146) It had a “two-pronged” approach to fighting apartheid. On one hand, it appropriated the Third World philosophies(adopted in the fight against colonialism), and on the other Afro-centric quest for black identity, with Africa as the organizing principle(1998:60).In fact, it was a direct reaction to White liberalism in (South Africa in the 1960s) and a total rejection of white supremacy(Gwala 1984:40; Frank 2004:147-149).

The ideas of Black Theology, negotiated around the notion of ‘rediscovery’ of God, and identifying with the oppressed (through the agency of Christ suffering) was an inspiration and a success in South Africa(Fatton 1986:107-19). Writings of black

leaders like Malcolm X James Baldwin etc., shaped their ideology and language narrative. BCM's aim was geared towards the conscientization of the black population, defined by Paulo Freire as "learning to perceive social, political and economic contradiction, and to make action against the oppressive elements of society"(Kavanagh 1985:157).

Being an oral society, plays of this period were first improvised, before they were staged and later written. According to Hanna Suutela, improvisation could be defined as an interactive relationship between the performer and the audience. In improvisation, five characteristics prevail: (1) An emphasis on creative process, rather than on creative product (2) An emphasis on creative processes that are problem-finding rather than problem-solving (3) The comparison of art to everyday language use (4) The importance of collaboration, with fellow artists and with audience (5) The role of cliché in art, because those who study the art have historically tended to focus on art products, rather than the processes that generated them. There is no script that guides rehearsal processes. For example, an ensemble of actors creates a scene on stage, without any pre-arranged dialogue, with no character assignments, and no plot outline. Everything about the performance is created collectively by the actors on the stage. The purpose is not to generate a product, the performance is the product. In contrast, in product creativity the artist has unlimited period of time to contemplate, edit and revise the work. This creative process, which may be largely invisible to the public, results in a creative product, when displayed to the audience.

According to Jackson (2001), in improvisational performance, the creative process is the product: the audience is watching the creative process as it occurred or happens. However, in other disciplines that use improvisational techniques, such as psychology and philosophy, the focus is on product creativity: activities that result in objective and ostensible products. Product creativity generally involves a long period of creative work, leading to the creative product.

Writing on improvisation in African American vernacular dancing, Brenda (1996) asserts that improvisation allows for freedom of individual expression. This characteristic makes for flexibility, aids the evolution and diffusion of other characteristics. The improvisatory nature of South African theatre complements Houston Baker's (1984) view

that the material conditions of slavery made improvisational performance unavoidable. The same thing is true of black South African theatre, as Copelan (1985) asserts that:

South African theatre has always been subversive and improvisatory, by force of circumstance.

For example, Xhosa oral poetry is composed in response to specific events and situations. Thus, South African theatre could be described as a continuum of evolving improvisational aesthetic endeavour. In the contemporary time, as in the past, oral poetry, according to Scheckner (1977:73), endows "history with the cultural symbolism of the imaginative tradition". Performers employ forms, and improvised verses in fresh combinations, and no two recitations are precisely the same. This improvised mode of expression is fundamental to performance culture and its continuing social vitality. The quality on which this vitality is based may be summarized as "efficacy". Efficacy in ritual performance represents the covenant between human and supernatural powers; in dramatic performance it means going beyond simple diversion into representations, that effect audience consciousness and will to action.

According to (Copelan 1986), performance not only reflects, but also formulates and augments experience as "part of the complicated feedback process that brings about change". Most of the plays use the traditional principles of African theatricality, which attracted large black audiences to the theatre. This tends to confirm the notion that black theatre prospered in the face of apartheid.

This goes to prove the point, as Lestrade (1937:299) points out that the traditional forms are not archaic, or frozen, or a thing of the past, as Western anthropologists would want us believe. White (1982) has shown how praise (oral) poetry has served to record shifting power relation in Zulu society over the past centuries, changing in style, imagery and theme in response to historical factors. For example, Sotho miners have not only used praise poetry, but also invented Sefela, a new genre of oral poetry, that aesthetically encode their life experience as migrant workers (Copelan 1985:17-21). This shows that black theatre is efficacious, in the sense that performances are linked to their social meaning, i.e. entirely continuous with experience itself. Thus, representation has the effect of action, and must therefore conform to the logic of reality as the audience experiences it.

3.3 WHITHER SOUTH AFRICAN THEATRE?: NEGOTIATING AN INTERFACE BETWEEN PRE- AND POST-APARTHEID DRAMA.

Medalie David (1999), argues that South African theatre has produced a large body of literature, one that might be called “Judgmental texts”. These are texts that are both critical and creative; ethically sufficient in the condemnation of apartheid and its agents. Within this context, according to Frank (2004:49), anti-apartheid protest culture can be said to exist in a luminal position. It represents the “subjective mood” of culture, the desire for the dismantling of apartheid. It aims at interrogating social conflicts situations of the apartheid, be they on a political, economic, cultural or psychological level. By representing these conflicts on stage, playwrights and actors aim to initiate the audience’s self-reflexivity which, ideally leads to the spectators’ heightened consciousness. They are united in what Schechner calls “*communitas*,” recognition of their common plight, Frank (2004:52).

The insertion of the indigenous performance art into Western mode of theatre, led to the proliferation of performances in black townships. With the emergence of a full-blown apartheid, theatrical productions became restricted; major writers were banned, thereby leading to the politicizations of the stage/theatre, as it were. Black cultural practice (whether drama, novel, films etc,) became to some measure, the defining force of the struggle. In the course of this, vibrant (black) theatre movements began to evolve to confront the apartheid system head on, while controversial local works found their sites in various spaces at the universities. Within this context, cultural productions became a carrier of "black essence," through the collaboration of black and white playwrights, Bhekizizwe (1990).

The use of theatre in South Africa, has continued to engage the attention and energies of South African writers and critics-alike, especially in a post-apartheid period. Writing further on this, (Hauptfleisch; see also Frank 2004:), states that critics of South African theatre have introduced various sets of terms to designate types of theatre that developed during the apartheid period . While Hauptfleisch’s model, (as already mentioned), is based on formal (stylistic) criteria, by contrast these sets of terms are more eclectic. The terms vary (though they emphasise aspects as different as the play’s intentions, aims or methods, the groups’ political opinions and/or ‘racial’ composition or

the target audience in 'racial' or social/class terms) from 'protest theatre' 'resistance' and 'Black Consciousness theatre', 'workshop theatre' and 'theatre by women'. These terms may appear methodologically eclectic, but it is effective since it can be used to describe and reflect on the relationship between theatre and politics/society through out the apartheid era, not just during specific phases of this time. They follow neither formal nor thematic criteria but highlight intensions and aims (protest, resistance, Black Consciousness) or racial conscience and group composition (Black Consciousness, workshop, women). It emphasizes the intensions of the playwrights and actors, captures the mood of the plays and the message conveyed to the audience (Mda 1998:257) 'Protest theatre' refers to the groups of anti-apartheid performers who first emerged in the 1960s and 70s. Its aim was to protest against apartheid by voicing "disapproval or disagreement" (ibid). These plays are primarily addressed to the state, and in turn appeal to their conscience. They were created by both black and white; mostly performed in townships. For example, Fugard's *Blood knots*, and *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* belong to this category. In the same vein, 1970 witnessed a new form of theatre, which developed along side black resistance politics by name of Black Consciousness Movement. It was based on the ideology of Black Consciousness and was called the 'theatre of Black Consciousness' (Brink 1997:168, Kavanagh 1981:xiv; see also Frank 2004:148). It was also aimed at mobilizing the black populace against the status quo. As an agitprop theatre, it was created in workshop fashion, and performed in political rallies; from church halls in the townships to multi-racial theatre venues in the cities (Mda 1996:210; 1998:258). *Bopha!* by Percy Mtwa, came out of that endeavor.

The general view, especially by cultural activists is that, the place of theatre, in the struggle for a just society (in the context of apartheid South Africa), must be indispensable and inevitable. Almost in the same manner, that Stephen Watson (1990:472), argues that writers are "expected to be as much lovers of the word as politicians of the word" in the struggle against apartheid. Andre Brink, writing on South African theatre during apartheid, contends that, African theatre, though often allied to spectacles of dance and music and poetry, is/was one of the great focal points of popular conscientization against apartheid. He recalls the obnoxious laws that, for long time subjected black South Africans to inhuman treatment, and how theatre mobilized

against it. Gwala(1984:36-53), on the other hand, contends (a position which this thesis shares), that the “overwhelming determination of politics of social consciousness in apartheid South Africa through discriminatory laws meant that speech and written forms of language had to be highly politicized”. It is within this context, we locate the bulk of works of Athol Fugard, Ezekiel Mphahlele, Nadine Gordimer, Andre Brink and J.M Coetzee in the fight against apartheid. This led to dominance of a uniform theme, or what has been referred to as “writing-back-to-one sentence paradigm”, which became a recurring political theme, framing both the literary and critical discourse. This has given birth to what could otherwise be called ‘protest literature’. For example, in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (devised by Athol Fugard, John Kani, and Winston Ntshona in 1972), highlights the exploitation of black workers, and the dangerous conditions in which they earn their living. The intractable bureaucratic set up created to frustrate black initiatives and freedom: these are all specifically presented as constituting the grim condition of apartheid. The play, moreover, focuses on the controversial pass laws that, unarguably epitomizes the black condition of imprisonment, a central trope of most apartheid plays, such as Dholomo’s *The Pass* and Mtwa, Ngema and Simon’s *Woza Albert*. Sizwe’s anguished lamentation on the pass book evokes a general black situation:

That bloody book...! People, do you know? No! Wherever you go...it’s that bloody book. You go to school, it goes too. Go to work, it goes too. Go to church and pray and sing lovely hymns, it sits there with you. Go to hospital to die, it lies there too!

He is invariably doomed by the colour of his skin:

A black man stay out of trouble? Impossible. Our skin is trouble.

Sizwe Bansi, is a demonstration-piece of apartheid’s cynical dehumanization of the black Other. The play, set in Styles’ photographic studio, follows Sizwe’s quest for survival in Port Elizabeth of sixties, early seventies. He has been caught with out a work permit, and must return to King Williams Town to his poverty stricken family or take a chance that could force him to abandon his given name and identity. He is forced to rethink: he drops his own name, and takes a dead person’s name by taking his work permit to survive, in order not to be deported to the black township.

This scenario is summarized in Kafkaesque terms by the narrator, Buntu:

You talk to the white man, you see, and ask him to write a letter saying he's got a job for you. You take that letter from the white man and go back to King William's Town, where

you show it to the Native Commissioner there. The Native Commissioner in King William's Town reads that letter from the white man in Port Elizabeth who is ready to give you the job. He then writes a letter back to the Native Commissioner in Port Elizabeth. So you come back here with the two letters. Then the Native Commissioner in Port Elizabeth reads the letter from the Native Commissioner in King William's Town together with the first letter from the white man who is prepared to give you a job, and he says when he reads the letters: Ah yes, this man Sizwe Bansi can get a job. So the Native Commissioner in Port Elizabeth then writes a letter which you take with the letters from the Native Commissioner in King William's Town and the white man in Port Elizabeth, to the Senior Officer at the Labour Bureau, who reads all the letters. Then he will put the right stamp in your book and give you another letter from himself which together with the letters from the white man and the two Native Affairs Commissioners, you take to the Administrative Office here in New Brighton and make an application for a Residence Permit, so that you don't fall victim of raids again.

Sizwe Bansi is an ultimate " indictment of the depravity and inhumanity of the apartheid" system, which is doubly mediated by race. It puts emphasis on the issue of identity and survival, which today still remains relevant in contemporary South Africa, as it was during apartheid period.

Athol Fugard, further reinforces the apartheid situation in *Boesman and Lena*(1980). The play province is the forceful evictions of non-whites from designated 'white' areas. In this context, Fugard's indictment of apartheid is portrayed in the main characters of – Boesman and Lena, as they slouch unto the stage: In rags, weighed down by their worthless belongings, at the mercy of the elements. The dehumanized forms of Boesman and Lena reveal an inhuman social structure of apartheid. The stage direction notes that they have been rendered ageless by poverty and hardship, remarking that Lena was "Wearing one of those sad dresses that reduce the body to an angular, gaunt cipher of poverty". The evicting bulldozer in the play is symbolic of apartheid monstrosity; it is equally emblematic of its apparent invincibility. Boesman and Lena are condemned to modes adjustment that invariably reify the apartheid power structure.

Anthony Akerman's *Somewhere on the Border*(1993) extends the above insight, by further exploring the trope of violence, through the indoctrination of white youths by compulsory military training, of the apartheid regime. Through brainwashing, peer group influence(coupled with, estrangement from normal civilised life), and ideological

conscientization, the young white conscripts end up as nervous wrecks, and invariably regress into savagery. At the close of the action, it is Campbell (initially opposed to the conscription and its consequent indoctrination, and apparently endowed with humane values and compassion for the humiliated black actor) that pulls the trigger at him (using the latter's rifle). Akerman's black character is appropriately designated "Black actor", inscrutable, assuming different names and undergoing several transformations in the course of the play, culminating in his role as freedom fighter. With his construction as a "black actor" taking several black roles, his complexity is decreased.

Though, one may depend on the apartheid background, to fully apprehend the black actor's relationship with the white conscripts. Akerman's theme is the very habituation to violence that excludes comprehension between the races, and the sharp contrasts between the savagery of apartheid-sanctioned atrocities and the heroic chronicles of its historiographers. If the above plays show the brutality of the apartheid government, *Woza Albert!*, a collaborative work by (Percy Mtwa, Mbongeni Ngema and Barney Simon), balances the race relations, by bridging the different political solutions. *Woza Albert!* developed from a concept which Ngema and Mtwa had while they were touring as actors in Kente's *Mama and the Load*. Its narrative thrust comes by way of a question: what would happen if Morena, Jesus, in his second coming decides to land in South Africa of the Eighties? How would the racially polarised communities view his responses to South Africa's political and socio-economic contradictions? The narrative plot is divided into two main parts: first, a series of vignettes in the form of radio and television interviews with blacks. They are asked how they would respond to Morena's possible visit to South Africa and what they would expect him to do with regard to their welfare and that of blacks in general. The second part ensues when the improbable occurs and Morena arrives in South Africa and sides with the poor and oppressed masses. He is consequently arrested, escapes twice - on a cloud and by walking on the waters of Robben Island - and is killed by a torpedo during the latter escape. He again resurrects - the third coming? - this time together with the symbolic heroes of the liberation struggle, Albert Luthuli, Robert Sobukwe, Lilian Ngoye, Ruth First, Braam Fischer and Steve Biko. They are joined in a victory dance, the play's finale, by Zulu boy who stands as a symbol for the masses. Apart from exploring the human suffering that confronts Africans

as a result of apartheid, *Woza Albert!* also considers the resistance options open to Africans. *Woza Albert!* covertly translates this motif into a conflict between good and evil, Morena and his followers against the evils of apartheid. Equally important in the play's narrative is the consideration of the kind of Christianity that is relevant in South Africa. This is indicated in the play's rhetorical inversion of the prophecy of the second coming and the depiction of Christ as being concerned with the socio-political and spiritual well-being of people. The enunciation of Christianity is similar to that advanced by the adherents of radical theology and black theology. Both were influential social currents in the Seventies, especially within the Black Consciousness movement.

However, a close look at some of other plays of the (apartheid) period, especially (the earlier period), according to Kavanagh (1981:125-172), show they were less in political vibes, as they were more on the seamy side of life. They seek changes through revolution, without directly indicting the apartheid system; sometimes composed on myth (or what has been referred elsewhere as magical realism) in their narrative-plots. I will take few examples to buttress my point, but will dwell more on Fatima Dike's play in this context. The first is '*King Kong*', a multiracial musical production in 1959, by a group called United Artists. It is based on the rise and fall of flamboyant black South African heavy weight boxing champion, Ezekiel "King Kong". *King Kong* embodies the faith of both black and white liberals, and re-inforced the fact that social and political progress could be made through creative multiracial collaboration. The play is not political, but about glamour, as well as the entertainment side of African township life, which was inspired by a passionate desire to transcend the enforced limitations of apartheid.

The director of the play, Leon Gluckman, was forthcoming on this:

Any white person who has seen this show will think twice before he pushes
an African out of the way on the street corner (Star 7, August 1959)

The most profound of the period is the *Sacrifice of Krela*, (based on original research by producer Rob Amato), but written by Fatima Dike in 1977. Dike is an Xhosa playwright who was born in Cape town in 1948. She was the first African woman to publish a play in South Africa. *Sacrifice of Krela* recounts the efforts of the Gcaleka Xhosa Chief Krela, after their final defeat by Cape colonial forces in 1878. Beset with defeatism and threat of

desertion from his men, Kreli sends his personal diviner to the world of the ancestors, to know what he should do. Kreli uses his diviners' miraculous return from the land of the dead to rally his people to return to their traditions, reclaim their children from the foster care of the neighbouring Bomvana and renew their resistance to dispossession and national disintegration. The story of *Kreli* is a commentary on the nature and challenges of African leadership, which is relevant to contemporary efforts at national regeneration and governance. It was performed in Xhosa in the Cape, where the language is dominant, and later presented in a mixture of English and Xhosa for audiences elsewhere.

However, Peck(1992:67-84) citing Conor Cruise O'Brien notes that, myth offers no revolutionary message but rather a space for the joy of being alive in the presence of death. Peck's conclusion shows the political limits of the myth: "Those who adopt this approach are tempted to lump existing social and political structures together, no matter how just and contingent they might be, with the universal and ineluctable absurdity of the human condition"

Closely related to the magical realist plays, were the musical drama. There were varieties of troupes from the townships, especially in Cape and Johannesburg. These ensembles include Vassatile 7, Erie Lads, Gay Mrowas etc. They performed songs, dances and dramatic sketches for the urban black folks. Like their compatriots from the mines, these groups satirized not only their fellow blacks, but also whites as well. The humorous depiction of the black "city slickers" exploiting white stereotypes of "simple" Africans to outwit pompous white authority figures were a specialty.

In addition to plays about black city life, "Workshop" project also took up the concern of advancing African culture. It was in this spirit that, in 1973 Credo Mutwa wrote *uNosilimela*, an African romance, modelled after Zulu folk narrative. The protagonist is a young Princess, which was doomed by magic and spiritual fate. She wanders through time, reliving the tragic history of her people, Etherton (1982:53-55). *Utlanga* (The Reed 1975) is also a workshop play, which is a review of African history. The protagonist's life is presented in the form of an improvised folk narrative composed of episodes and discontinuous in time. The thrust of the play is the restoration of respect for traditional value among urban Africans, through the protagonist sufferings.

There were also plays which emanated from the labour unions, especially of

industrial workers and urban squatters. For example, a play like *Imfoduso* dramatizes police brutality in the urban; the attempts at deporting some residents to their 'Homeland', and the women successful resistance to it. In *Langa Le So Phonela Abase Benzi* (The sun shall arise for the workers), another play from that effort, discusses how fifty- five Zulus foundry men were arrested for striking . For the purpose of their defence, their lawyer had them act out the events of the strikes, an exercise that later led to the elaboration of these roles into a full scale play in 1980(Tomaselli 1981:14-33). *Dikhits hineny* (In the Kitchen) is a play about domestic servants, performed for audiences of maid and their employers in suburban church hall (Van Kotze1984:99) Another play in this genre is Matsemela Manaka's *Egoli* in 1983, which evokes the daily degradations suffered by Johannesburg's migrant mine workers and the quality of their resistance. Like any traditional African drama, *Egoli* is composed of discontinuous, improvisational narrative episodes, but also employs flash backs, dream sequences, and other non-naturalistic techniques in order to break down the physical barriers between actors and audience (Larlam 1981:173). This approach derives from the "workshop 71" project, (and like others), won the attention of the popular township audience. *Egoli* has been performed to racially mixed audience across the world.

However, these plays were a movement away from the entertaining stories of Drum, a gossip magazine; the producers were more concerned with 'soft' news rather than politics), so that readers would enjoy themselves as much as possible. According to Copelan (1986), critics of these plays often argue that aesthetics and political goals are mutually exclusive, since most of them are bereft of political commitment. They further argue that the relevance and effectiveness of the theatre depends on whether it serves the concern and aspirations of the environment which it emanates.

In the foregoing, what I have tried to establish is that black theatre (from its pre-historic formation), provided an arena where issues could be debated and problematized on. This means that, the theatre provided a 'free space' in a sense- outside the contingencies of daily life: a strategy that, makes use of the best of the two worlds- the urban and the indigenous. This invariably means searching for new kind of cultural expressions, which contends with the present, while beckoning to the past. Thus, drama becomes a site where the complexities and (ambivalences) of 'tradition' and

'modernity' could be resolved. This thesis argues that, the need to construct trans-historical continuities through the novelistic and dramatic discourses is informed by the search, especially among playwrights not only to counter Eurocentric reading of South African history, but also to right the wrongs of apartheid regime for the psychological and social liberation of black people in South Africa. This seems to agree with Steve Biko (South African Black Consciousness leader) position, that apartheid South African-official history was a distorted version of "reality" created to validate the ideology. He intones:

Colonialism is never satisfied with having the native in its grip but, by some strange logic, it must turn to his past and disfigure and distort it. Hence the history of the black man in this country is mostly disappointing to read. It is presented merely as a long succession of defeats. The Xhosas were thieves who went to war for stolen property; the Boers never provoked the Xhosas but merely went on "punitive expeditions" to teach the thieves a lesson...Not only is there no objectivity in the history taught us but there is frequently an appalling misrepresentation of facts. (Gallagher 1991: 28)

On the other hand, Andre Brink, prominent anti-apartheid Afrikaner writer, drew attention to the striving of the apartheid establishment to conceal the political exigencies that created it. Brink (1983:22), insists that in the light of the new order, writers should revisit narratives of the past because, as he puts it, "History provides one of the most fertile silences to be revisited by South African writers: not because no voices have traversed it before, but because the dominant discourse of white historiography (as well as temptations to replace it by a new dominant discourse of black historiography) has inevitably silenced, for too long, so many other possibilities" "If stories are retold and re-imagined," he argues, "the re- is of decisive importance: each new invention happens in the margin of the already-written, or against the background of the already-written".

It is in trying to confront this that, black theatre in its post-apartheid condition has taken it as a mandate to explore and interrogate the prevailing socio-economic realities of the post-apartheid moment. The presencing of the past in post-apartheid period, and the resultant call for a better Society by the mass of the people in a 'new' South Africa could even be fathomed from earlier apartheid plays, which its theme has become even more relevant in the post-apartheid period. For example, Zakes Mda's ex-soldier Janabari, in *We Shall Sing for the Fatherland*, confirms this:

"Serge, I have been trying to tell you that our wars were not merely to replace a white face with a black one, but to change a system which exploits us, to replace it with one which gives us a share in the wealth of this country"

The last play was exclusively made by women. *You Strike the Woman, You Strike the Rock* (1986) by *Vusisizwe Players*. It was the first published play to focus on the involvement of black South African women in the struggle against apartheid. It is about the lives of migrant Xhosa women who were driven from homelands to the city by economic necessity.

The characters-Mampompo, Mambhele and Sdula sell chickens, orange and vetkoeks(deep-fried cakes) at the market in Crossroads. The three women compete for customers in the poverty-stricken township. They adopt various strategies to make their sales, such as selling on credits or flirting with men who come to buy from them. They tease, taunt and criticise each other's sales strategies, as a way of showing-off their business acumen and moral superiority. They are always on the look out for small kids who steal their goods. Another problem is that they work illegally as they didn't have licence to trade, so they constantly try to protect themselves against police raids. But despite their squabbles and competitiveness it is regular police raid that force them to unite against a common enemy and share their experiences of oppression and exploitation.

It was inspired by attempt of apartheid regime to introduce Passes for women in the 1950s; which was met with large demonstrations and protest by African women. Women who participated in that demonstration decided to establish a non-racial women's organisation which will not only work to end apartheid rule, but also to advance women's rights (Frank 2004:267-269; Lapchick 1985:236). It was out of that experience, and coalition that the Federation of South African women (FSAW) was formed in 1954. The women chapter drew attention to discrimination against women while encouraging women to participate in the struggle for national liberation. They later organised many protest, but the most pronounced one was in 1956 which culminated in the singing of the protest song "Srydom", you have tempered with women, you have struck a rock. The slogan later begot "*You Strike the Woman, You Strike the Rock*". But the project did not contribute to any improvement in the lives of women in South Africa.

However, it has been argued that, most plays of the apartheid period employed polarization of 'black' versus 'white' in the deconstruction of the apartheid role set, and

denunciation of apartheid ideology. Nevertheless, they avoided reflecting on the historical differences between the various black political formations in a general and all-comprising reversal of the 'good versus bad' dichotomy. Working with this fixed opposition, they rarely attempt to depict hybrid developments that Homi Bhabha detects in the colonial encounter (1994, ; Frank 2004:21). Many of the texts reveal the humanity of the black population at the expense of the inhumanity of whites. Thus they work within the same (but reversed) discursive strategy as apartheid ideology and reproduce 'race' in what Gayatri Spivak called "strategic essentialism".

3.4 RE-NEGOTIATING THE IMPASSE: STAGES OF RESISTANCE

With the end of apartheid, South African theatrescape could be said to have entered into a new phase of cultural production, exploding in all directions: through music, dance, cabaret to West End and Broadway hits, and of course drama. This is accentuated by proliferations of theatre venues, ranging from the monolith homes of the former state-supported performing councils to purpose built theatres. The once conservative performing Arts Council Of South Africa, has re-invented and transformed its activities to include developing talents in all fields of performance (Olaogun 2001), while reviewing "*Drama For a New South Africa: seven plays*" argues that, apartheid themes and styles are "likely to occupy South African cultural landscape for years to come" He contends: "In between this cultural ferment, hybridization or (mongrelism) of art forms is taking place". This provides a point of entry into what Homi Barber calls the 'shifting, mobile, elusive space of the popular', which is continuous with 'tradition' and the 'modern' categories (Gunner 2000). This means that, with extravagant social engineering of apartheid, drama has been forced to be a creature of multiple identities – at moments gesturing to the popular and at other moments relating to an emergent novelistic tradition closer to the 'high' than the 'popular' culture. Of course, these two categories are themselves by no means mutually exclusive and the boundaries between them are shifting, especially in the new dispensation of a post- apartheid South Africa. He further, argues that, "the main purpose of ideal art is that, it should not be elitist or exclusive, but should be intimately connected to the people; that its purpose should not only be to portray their plight, but also to articulate their 'hopes and aspirations', and

encourage their commitment as a way of promoting national culture of an emerging nation". Oloogun persistently maintains that, most of pre-apartheid plays were limited to a naturalism that, did not reflect South Africa's varied theatrical and dramatic practices; which is another way of recognizing the hybridity and diversity of post-apartheid plays which has become a springboard for its renewal(See also Trump 1990:x-xiii) . But that is not to belittle the plays of the pre-apartheid period. In fact, there is no doubting the fact that, works of the pre-apartheid period, say classics like *Woza Albert!* still enjoy the same charm of hilarity and recognition among people who would have no personal memory of its frame of reference.

In the foregoing, the multifaceted character of post-apartheid plays, in terms of its varied themes, fits into the politics of "recovery of the past" and social problems in contemporary South Africa. The privileging of the plays' performative power, artistry and social relevance, certainly opens up South African cultural space, beyond its immediate horizon in contending with its many problems. This yields great insights, at a comparative level, with other post-colonial African states (and countries in transition) on the place of theatre in nation building.

According to Okoye (ND), apart from the differences in colonial presence and narratives of decolonization, Modern African theatre has variously engaged in war of cultural identity, in the continent. And at diverse historical moments and to a differing degree(s), this 'war' has engendered distinct formal and thematic theatrical categories. Within this context, two phases seem to have emerged elsewhere in the continent, producing its own playwrights, as it were. The first phase was characterized by a nationalist concern to challenge dominant unflattering image of African identity; while the second phase is evidenced by today's 'nervous' generation of socially conscious, self-reflexive playwrights who want to counter, address and redress the severe, deplorable and brutal conditions on which majority of African population exists. It is more than a diagnosis of the culpability of colonialism; it is combative. Thus, it is a theatre produced under contemporary conditions of poverty, corruption and personalizing of national resources by many African rogue leaders. From all intents and purpose, the shifting trend in South Africa theatre seem to have skipped the first phase, and settled for the second phase. This is due to indeterminate reasons, most of which have already been

highlighted.

Following from this, I will quickly add, that the politics of *difference*, in the contemporary South African (cultural) production should not necessarily be “in praise of African cultural world” ; rather, it is that of moving beyond solidarity, which requires as Gunn(2001:95) argues; a willingness “to determine what difference *difference* makes in a world increasingly defined by globalization. Thus, the interrogation of difference, according to him is not a denial of difference, nor is it a replacement of one politics of difference with another. It is an attempt at reconstructing difference as a productive, progressive, and accommodating trans-cultural experience”.

This is a trope which the play texts play on and problematizes. The plays address issues of uncertainty, dislocation and misery, associated with living in post-apartheid South Africa. Put together, the play texts give us the dream, hope and fears of a people caught in throes of transition. They tell typical South African stories, which the audience could relate to; portraying typical stereotypes i.e. character(s), the audience could see and identify on the streets, especially on the prevailing realities .

3.5 FILING THE CASE: CONTEXTUAL ANALYSES OF PLAY TEXTS

This section deals with the case study of the thesis. In actualising this, I will analyze three plays of the post-apartheid period. I will show how various theories (as already highlighted, whether post-colonial, gender or popular culture) is implicated in the play texts - as a way of interrogating the ‘new’ realities of post-apartheid South Africa.

Generally, the plays tell stories of people living on the edges of the society, whether it is poverty, violence, or rape in a post-apartheid South Africa. This seems a potent way to show how new themes, style(s) and challenges have been handled, interpreted and represented by post-apartheid playwrights. A position, Darynl Accone, book review editor of the *Mail and Guardian* newspaper also affirms in his piece: “Examining the state of writing in South Africa” [http:// book.co.za](http://book.co.za).

The three plays to be analyzed are: (1)*The Ultimate Disaster* (2006) by Tsakani Oupa Mongwe (2) *The Best Man* (2006) by Mpho Ramaano (3)*Twilight in the Face of Doom*(2006) by Tsakani Oupa Mongwe. By way of biographical sketch, the three

playwrights are all-South Africans, and protagonist playwrights of the post-apartheid period. I have chosen the play texts not only because they dwell on contemporary issues, but also because they are 'voices from the fringe' (i.e new playwrights) who also need to be heard and studied. If I have laid the background of this thesis, on the impact of known writers like Athol Fugard, Ezekiel Mphahlele , Nadine Gordimer etc.; It is also in the same manner, I am concentrating on the younger playwrights, to show how the works of new playwrights have continued to offer fresh insights in dealing with the prevailing realities in post-apartheid South Africa. Finally, my selection was made on the basis of the texts social mood and artistic features. Put another way, the play texts emphasise their own theatricality and make abundant use of overt role. The play texts are in English, without any selection from other ten languages that make up South African linguist repertoire.

The plays under study are written in the structure of modern plays. Modern play according to Pickering (1988:3) is defined as plays written after 1877, which marked the era of "Modern drama". These are plays written in everyday language of the people, dealing with socio-political issues. Unlike Shakespearean plays (which are written in act), modern plays are obviously written in scenes. The plays under study are written in that order i.e series of scenes. The 'Time and Setting' of the plays are in the Present: the universe of South Africa, without any underlying meaning(s) attached to locations (i.e. setting), as was mostly the practice with the plays of the apartheid era. I will approach the analysis of the plays in a random manner(taking all the constitutive element that make up the play) in the light of African concept of drama. I will adequately approach each play giving information about its subject matter and production history; the playwright's biography and political disposition, if need be. When there are excerpts from the play texts (in pursuance of the theme), I will not cite the page(s) or scene it occurred. This will help to deal with the analyses in a straight forward manner, with out breaking the flow. My analyses will follow each play text by way of contextual analysis. This will help to deepen the thematic thrust, while linking the play to the entire thesis, with the aim of focusing on the prevailing realities in post-apartheid South Africa. But I will quickly add that, though the prevailing realities in post-apartheid South Africa could be traced to its pre- historic formation, some times the events of the present time

stand on their own (without any bearing to apartheid era), due to exceptional experiences of the post-apartheid society. For example, the current violence as experienced -both at the private and public spheres is partly necessitated by the realities of the new dispensation. The increase in violence, especially in the inner cities is attributable to the lost of power base of the Homeland leaders, which was as a result of the change of the power base- from 'Homeland' to a more organized federal structure. This was an issue that was never thought at the negotiating table. But this does not mean that, these problems are not in one way or the other linked to the past, but in most cases they have their own character which is deeply located in the present. This thesis does not agree (like many scholars of South Africa theatre), that to any thesis of apartheid, there must be a doubling, by way of anti-thesis in post -apartheid formation.

In the foregoing, the new playwrights have refused to toe the line of 'writing- back-to-one sentence' paradigm, which earlier defined South African fiction. They seem to challenge the binary opposition of "black/white" narrative in their work. Though, cases like corruption, violence and family were familiar sites in apartheid South Africa, but they were never 'news' worthy, for the playwrights of that period. However, there is an emergent new writing going on in the post-apartheid South Africa at the moment, of which the major corpus are still very raw, angry and ragged. Encompassing themes like: poverty, violence (including sexual violence i.e. rape), family etc., These are themes that would have been considered unthinkable and irrelevant in the apartheid period since theatre was only seen as a medium for agitprop. To this end, the demise of apartheid in South Africa has produced many surprises, engendering many frustrations as well. It has been argued that these problems existed before now, that the post-apartheid era only brought them to the fore: that they were legacies of apartheid. Others argue that such problems are consistent with countries under transition, like South Africa. The plays reach out, to engage more of the social problems, by further investing their narratives with issues of identity, belongings and nationhood, tropes which are beginning to frame postcolonial discourse, as never before. It is within this context we locate the analysis of the play texts as already highlighted.

3.5.1 *The Best Man*

The Best Man, written by Mpho Ramaano was (first performed in 2003) during the African Heritage Week-of the Arts and Cultural Festival celebration at the Great Tiro Hall, University of the North. It was directed by Tsakani Oupa Mongwe. *The Best Man* explores the festering hurt between two brothers: Alfred and Tony, who end up dating the same woman-Lebo. First, Alfred is married to Gloria for thirteen years; later divorces her because she cannot bear him a child. He gets engaged to Lebo, who had earlier dated Tony, his younger brother. She ditched him because of infidelity, and turns to marry Alfred. Alfred does not know of this, though Tony is supposed to be the best man in his wedding to Lebo. Tony is still interested in Lebo (even in Alfred's house), but does not want Alfred to know since he still depends on him for financial support. Lebo is already pregnant for Tony (though she claims its Alfred's pregnancy) but the two brothers don't know. Lebo knows the owner of the pregnancy, but decides to keep it as a secret; partly as a bargaining power when the situation demands. By the time the play ends, Gloria is already pregnant, but that is in her second marriage. By the time Alfred knew the true situation of things: that Lebo's pregnancy is after all not his, the cat had been led out of the bag-he is the 'sterile' one not Gloria.

The play is built around a love triangle in which the need to be a wife and bear children is the prime factor - just in any African family.

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

The central trope in this domestic drama is centred around the place of women within the African cosmogony, thereby raising the issue of gender in the continent. Within the character narratives of the play, are cultural traits which tends to promote patriarchy in the domestic space. Within this context, tradition is called into service in the mediation between the sexes. Thus, women invariably live their lives around the active expression of men and the community. A situation which re-echo Carol Boyce Davies (1985: 89) notion that, women are "objects of quest rather than subjects in their own right". The dialogue between Alfred and Gloria attests to this, especially as it has to do with the issue of childlessness in marriage; tradition favors the men gender than the women. Though in some cases, the man may be the cause of the infertility making the

woman live her life in the shadow of her husband, as it is the case here :

Gloria: (Half crying) Alfred please! Lets give it another chance

Alfred: No Gloria, I have given it thirteen years of chances. But nothing ever happens. I am tired of it.

Gloria: At least one more month.

Alfred: One month is too long. I want a child Gloria...thirteen years was long enough to fill this house with children. It's all clear, I have married a useless she-man.

Gloria: I did not choose to be barren, Alfred. You should think twice before you end this marriage....

Alfred: But you cannot give me children. And that is what matters most in a woman... I am done with you Gloria (Showing her the door). Now, out you go (She turns, takes her bags and makes for the exit crying bitterly

At a larger picture (though within the detects of patriarchy); with the unbanning of the ANC and other pro-democracy organizations in 1990, debates about women and politics in South Africa took a new dimension. For example, looking at the relationship between both sexes in the organization of the ANC during the apartheid; both men and women played active political roles (though experienced apartheid in different ways). But women did not have the same access to decision-making like men. Coupled with lack of direct link with wider social networks, and centralized decision-making within organizations. An excerpts from the play foregrounds this, Alfred and Gloria have been married for thirteen years, yet Alfred sends her packing from the house, they both struggled to build over the years, thereby further establishing the issue of men domination. The play scenario brings it to the fore:

Gloria: ...I love you Alfred. But you destroyed me. You tortured me, ridiculed me, tarnished my image, and questioned my femininity. You had forgotten all I have done for you. You were not as rich as you are. You were not the business you are now Alfred. I supported you through thick and thin. And how did you repay me? You kicked me out of our house like a dog.

It has been argued that political action during apartheid was essentially masculinist, rather than challenging patriarchal domination. The macho nature of South African politics (during apartheid and after) is exemplified in emerging group identity. For example, there is an assumption that the construction of amaqabane (comrades) in South African politicalscape are male, with the metaphor of young lions "who roar in anger", characterized in the mould of warriors. Similarly, Inkatha's impis, the

amabutho, are personified in “ spears, wearing lion skins, and taking their identities from Shaka the Zulu” . Outside of the oppositional discourse, examples can be gleaned of the ways in which 'manhood and politics' are interwined Shanley and Pateman (1991:3). Opposition politics during the apartheid, especially in the 1980s was dominated by organizations, whose focus was on the mobilization of women, for national liberation struggle as opposed to ‘women palavar’.

Organizationally, women activists have always been tied to national political and union structures, especially during the apartheid. Their agendas have been determined by national priorities rather than the priorities of their constituency. Even in those instances when women confronted male domain directly, they did so with attitude which tilt to men’s control, Frank (2004: see also Maboreke, 1990). Women organization like Black Sash (an organisation of Black and white women concerned with human rights); Rape Crisis and the ANC Women's League are encouraged to operate as mechanism of the ruling party by extending state policies to women constituency; not as a separate pressure group, but appendages of the ANC (Moore, 1989:148;Frank 2004:). On the other hand, Black women who have been politically active have tended to get involved in broader campaigns against apartheid, or in the trade unions, rather than take up women's issues *per se*. This has marginalised issues which are central to women. For example, issues such as reproductive rights, right to own their bodies. However, family domain have been regarded as non-political, or just 'soft' political issues; construed primarily within the moral domain, than the political. The discussion about the sufferings of black women under apartheid, even up to the late 1980s, focused only on the breakdown of the traditional African household and the additional strain that this placed on the black women(Seidman 1993:256; see Frank 2004:267). In the mid-80s, when leaders in nationalist organizations began to realize that black working-class women encountered very specific problems, their calls were for equal wages or day-care facilities and did not address the issue of patriarchy. Elsewhere, it has been argued that a discourse in which motherhood is the ultimate symbol of women's political heroism is in fact disempowering for women (Hassim, 1990). In BCM the image of the woman as mother occupies a central position. Seidman remarks that anti-apartheid organizations employed the term ‘woman’ interchangeable with ‘mother’ up to the 1980s.

However, attempts to analyze gender and family relationships from a political perspective in Africa, has been regarded as derived from 'bourgeoise' or 'Western' feminism and were thus rejected (1993:297; Frank 2004:270). In the foregoing, feminist emphasis on the relations between the private and public spheres provide the basis for the notion of *gendered* subjects. As argued elsewhere, (Hassim, 1991), assert that appeal to 'tradition' has given a special place in the 'invention' of tradition, one which reinforces women subordination- socially and politically. The discourse that emerges out of that conception, shows that gender is an integral part of politics. Put another way, most political issues have a gender dimension and therefore engenders different impacts on men and women. This makes gender essential and legitimate in political construction. This potentially opens up more than one brand of feminism, as women would discover through such action that not all women have similar political interests. This is better expressed by an ANC spokeswoman at the Nairobi Women's conference in 1986: "It would be suicide for us to adopt feminist ideas. Our enemy is the system and we cannot exhaust our energies on women issues" (Seidman 1993:297).

It has become possible to extend the debate beyond whether feminism has any relevance to South African women, to what the shape of an indigenous feminism might be. This will depend on the understanding of whether a feminist movement can successfully emerge out of the transition. A successful movement, of course, is one which is able to garner a mass support and followership, rather than one limited to a few intellectuals. This invariably opens the debate whether Western feminism is amenable to South African (or better) African reality.

The fact that gender identities are constructed in the context of race and ethnicity further complicates the issue. Within the context of the 'rainbow nation' there is an inherent tension between women (black and white) to define themselves on the basis of their ethnicities. Now, we are faced with entourage of posers: Does focusing on gender identity obfuscate differences between women? Letlaka- Rennert argues that 'no matter how remote, white women are part of the oppression of black women' Letlaka-Rennert, (1991:6). For example, women in South Africa do not suffer the same kinds of oppression; not all women are equally exploited. It is only black women that can represent their experiences, but should that form the basis of exclusion of white

women? How much of class is involved in this transaction? Do black middle class women have more in common with white women of the same class? Does racial identity always override class identity? It becomes apparent from the former, that acknowledgement of *difference* becomes a way of strengthening, rather than undermining women's liberation.

In confronting *difference*, Daymond (1996:xix), asserts that question of “how knowledge of other is produced, who produces it and who owns the understanding of relations of power” have become central to feminist discourse. In the light of this, Western feminism should be “examined for their appropriateness and effectiveness before they are adopted” Cecily Locket argues. Writing on this later, Gayatri Spivak maintains that Western feminists, should not impose their notion of feminism on Third World women but suggests that they should speak to and listen to black women (Locket 1990:15). This notion is further problematized by Kishwar (2005). Kishwar charges at the parodies of Western feminism (a position which this thesis sees as representative of all post-colonial societies, including South Africa), in inventing itself in (women) postcolonial space. i.e. an attempt at interpreting third world women (social) realities on its own terms, rather than responding relevantly to the changing circumstances. For example, Western feminism as an outgrowth of the post enlightenment period, is rooted in the culture of individualism and liberalism, thus culture specific. For example, the state plays the crucial role of protecting the individual rights and privileges of the people. The people only differ to the state (not their kinship group) when those rights are violated, making the state the sole custodian of all human rights. But within the context of the third world women, it is difficult to tune to the extreme individualism since most women are unwilling to assert their rights in a manner that estranges them, not just from their family but also from their larger kinship group and community. i.e. prefers to avoid asserting their rights in a manner that isolates them from those they consider their own. For many postcolonial women, life is meaningless if their ‘freedom’ is expressed outside the group context.

This could explain while the importance of marriage (even unhappy ones, as in the play), family structure, child birth and rhetoric’s of family holds sway and binding. This may be interpreted by Western feminists as a ‘sign’ of mental slavery to social opinion”;

or even as “a product of lower self-esteem” even when a woman is not facing problems or oppression as consequences of such beliefs”, she argues. Within this context, what one can glean from her position (which this thesis completely agrees to) is that, she is not only necessarily concerned with politics of women equality, but also with a whole range of socio-political issues as it relate to the protection of human rights, while having a special emphasis on women’s right.

However, it was not until the emergence of ‘alternative’ theatre in the 1970s that women began to enter the theatre scene-as directors, actresses and playwrights in South Africa. The emergence of women onto the scene signified their participation –both in anti-apartheid struggle and women’s lives. To this end, it could be regarded that women should be seen as “distinct as a pressure-group from the powers that be in the theatre”(1990:86). This implies that theatre by women in South Africa can be seen as feminist theatre to the extent that it is theatre produced by women who automatically constitute a ‘distinct group’. This is one way of defining ‘feminist theatre, though. One idea that seem to be agreed by critics is that not every play, independent of the gender of the playwright, director or actors can be examined from the point of feminist point of view(Ojo-Ade, 1996; Sher, 1987).

This position remains a general one because the term ‘women’ is not a homogenous category, and the idea about woman hood vary according to area and cultural backgrounds. In her introduction to South African Feminisms, Margret Daymond argues that Cultural feminism in South Africa does not form a single, coherent movement. After the simplistic (and ultimately exclusionary) assumptions of sisterhood that were made in the early days of a revived feminist movement there in the 1970s, the present need to accommodate social diversity has largely been matched by an acceptance of a plurality of theoretical positions(1996:xivf) Within this context, there is an assumption that we cannot speak of homogenous feminism. Within the apartheid context, the discussion evolved around the ways in which race also determine women’s power. “What is now replacing feminism is necessarily complex: a challenge to its universalism and its hidden power relations has to be pursued simultaneously with efforts to establish a community of purpose within the notion of ‘difference.’

In summary, the fact that women form the hub of post-apartheid narratives, should

of course attract feminist attention, since patriarchy has been oversimplified in many masculinity discourses. But the above scenario throws up the interesting issue of “Third-Wording” Western feminism, a process which will domesticate it i.e making it plural and unstable, rather than the present moribund proselytizing mission, that it is Oha (2009:193-194)

3.5.2 The Ultimate Disaster

The Ultimate Disaster written by Oupa Mongwe, was (first performed in 2002). The thrust of the play lies in the criminal dilly-dally world of Bra Sol and the protagonist - Shantel. The former, a sixteen year old girl sets out from her home village, to rejoin with her absentee finance - Ben in the city. Ben is a domestic servant to Bra Sol, a criminal and a drug dealer. She tries to secure a job that will enable her pay for her mother's medical bill in the village, and save enough to further her education to the university, though that seems remote as well. Against her fiancé's advice, Shantel takes a job with Bra Sol. Sol gives her money to take care of her mother's health; she reciprocates this magnanimity with a child's innocence; but it is just a bait to get sexual favours from her, as Bra Sol had done to other girls before her. At first, she puts up a spirited defense to ward off Bra Sol's daily amorous advances, as she tries to negotiate a new set of values to survive the city. But the pressure of city life dogs her every step, amidst pressure from Bra Sol. She eventually succumbs - even before the presence of her fiancé - Ben. Bra Sol gradually introduces her to the drug trade, and later she becomes a consumer herself, and ends up as an addict. She is driven into the world of prostitution - servicing Bra Sol and his numerous customers as it were. Finally, she sheds her rural innocence, as she agrees dressing in micro mini-skirt bra (showing off her skin and panties), as the job demands. With constant flow of alcohol and drugs, she comes down proper inhabiting the new space: whetting Bra Sol's ever-demanding sexual appetite. This signals the beginning of an end. But by the time she discovers who her biological father is: Bra Sol - it was too late; she ends in suicide. That's after Ben has been fed to the crocodiles by Bra Sol himself in this macabre drama. The play tries to make sense of the prevailing realities (manifesting in form of poverty, violence and unemployment etc) in a post-apartheid South Africa. The protagonist- Shantel establishes the point of

joblessness on the first day of meeting with Ben:

Ben: (Showing her the sofa) You can sit down. (Takes her plastic bag to his room; while leaving) How are the people at home?

Shantel: Life is difficult Ben. Very difficult. More especially for me. My mum is sick. She will die if she does not get medical help. The problem is, I don't have a job. So I can't help her.

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

This social drama attests to the gradual failure of post-apartheid South Africa, which could be firmly located (though traceable to apartheid regime). The failure of the initial development projects embarked by earlier administrations (For example Mandela administration), tagged "Reconstruction and Development program" which promised poverty alleviation, housing and job creation, never successfully materialised. The dire need of job is further problematised by Shantel taking a shabby job from Bra Sol, a situation which Ben doesn't favor since it will lead to Bra Sol taking advantage of her.

Ben: Don't take that job

Shantel: Where will I find a job? You are the one who just told me that I might spend the whole year before I could find a job, and I don't have that time Ben. I don't have that time. If that man is so dangerous, why are you working for him.

Ben: I have no way out. I don't want you to be trapped just like I am.

The above scenario magnifies the situation within the larger South African society; creating some kind of rat race for survival among the citizenry. Shantel's discussion with Bra Sol confirms this:

Bra Sol: Don't be stupid. We are talking bucks here, a get rich quick campaign. Don't you need money?

Shantel: But!

Bra Sol: But what? For the past four weeks I have been nothing but kind to you. I gave you everything you needed. I gave you clothes, I gave you food, shelter...where is your appreciation? Do you want to see yourself without a job? Do you want to find yourself roaming around in the street with no clothes, no food, no place to stay, if you continue behaving this way. (Pause) I am in need of a house-keeper. Some one young and beautiful. Someone who can cook good food. I guess you can cook good food?

Shantel: Yes, I can cook. Are you offering me a job sir?

Discussion between Ben and Shantel further shows the helplessness of the situation,

especially how the strong can take advantage of the weak:

Shantel(Crying)I'm sorry Ben. I'm sorry. I have to do this.

Ben: No Shantel, you don't have to. What about our love

Shantel: I love you Ben. I love you very much. But I have no choice! I must save my mother's life I wish I had some alternative, but I don't.

Moreover, neoliberal policies of past and present regimes, according to Nowalk(2002), is further contributing to the erosion of the economic sector, while failing to stimulate economic growth, thereby resulting to proliferation of violence and corruption within the polity. Writing on corruption in Africa, Chabal and Daloz (1999:95-101) maintain that, there is a great deal of corruption (attendant with violence) in post-colonial Africa. For example, report from UNODC/ROSA, an anti-corruption project of the United Nation, cites corruption (and nepotism) as one of the major problems facing post-apartheid South Africa. At the high and low cadres of the civil service in South Africa, the report reveals massive corruption which comes by way of bribery, favouritism and personalization of State resources. For example, those at the bottom end of the ladder (i.e the lowly civil servants), use their power base as a means of survival, while at the top, extortions is the order of the day and a major avenue for enrichment. It has been argued that, many South African government posts are held by people who took their jobs with the sole aim of stealing, thereby criminalizing the entire system. In fact, Bro Sol character typifies this. His discussion with an anonymous drug dealer on the phone (in concert with- now disheveled Shantel) reinforces this:

Bra Sol:....what? Bizza stole my money. Nobody does that to Bra Sol and lives! I'll be right back (He puts down the phone. He takes the bag and the stuff on the table. He goes to his room and returns with a gun)

Bro Sol: Mmm....Mr Robert, I thought as much. What do you want? Look here man, too much talking does not add money to my pocket. Have you got the cash? What do you take me for? Of course I have got the stuff, the real stuff man. Now, have you got the cash? Good! Lets meet as planned. I hate to be crossed (He angrily goes out. Shantel sits crying. She then goes to pour herself a full glass of wine and drinks it all at once. She pours another one. As she is about to drink it, Ben takes the glass from her)

Ben: You can't do that to yourself.

Shantel:(Angrily) Bring that here. Bring it back!

Ben: I can't let you destroy your life.

Shantel: What life? I don't have any life! My life is nothing but a mess.

Ben: You still have a life, Shantel.

Shantel: Do you call this life? Do you call prostitution life? Do you call doing drugs life?...I wanted to get an education and a decent job.

Within this context, ethnicity, race and nationalism become more contested sites than ever before, and violence reign supreme. Ben's attempt at getting rid of Bra Sol by reporting him to the police gets boomerang, as Bra Sol gets to know through Shantel after over feeding her with drugs. Ben is fed to the crocodile in the pit. Shantel is torn apart through this macabre drama. She cannot be controlled:

Shantel: Where is Ben? Ben!(She calls for Ben. Goes and checks his room)Where are you Ben ?(As goes out, Bra Sol enters)

Bra Sol: In hell. Your voice is not loud enough Shantel. He will never hear you. Never again.

Shantel: What do you mean?"

Bra Sol: I got rid of him, for good.

Chabal and Daloz(1999:77-87) define violence as arbitrary use-or threat of the use-of physical force in order to achieve compliance. There is essentially two types of violence involved in this context: physical (i.e. violence of everyday life), and sexual violence, especially in the urban. And South Africa is urbanizing at a frightening rate, as it gradually slide into violence. The violence ranges from petty crime to harassment; extortion to rape etc., causing both physical and psychological problem.

3.5.3 Twilight on the Face of Doom

Twilight on the Face of Doom problematizes the theme of rape, through the ordeal of a black South African girl: Sonnet. The protagonist - Sonnet seeks permission from her father to attend her friend's birthday party at which she is billed to give a speech. Because the party is in the evening, Petrius, Sonnet's father refuses to allow her attend the party, especially for reasons of security. But without the knowledge of Petrius, the mother Vickey allows Sonnet to attend the party with the understanding that she will come back before her father returns to the house. In order to keep the promise she made to her

mother, Sonnet accepts a lift from a group of three men who were also at the same party. To her utter amazement, they turn around to gang-rape her, dumping her at a nearby bus stop.

When the father learns of her ordeal, he is unsympathetic. “What befell her”, according to him is her fault, because she did not heed to his instruction. This leads to her committing suicide, thereby treating us with more ‘rainbow’ images of brutality.

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

The play deals with the theme of conflict between conservatism and metropolitanism (i.e. ‘old and new order’) in contemporary South Africa. In essence, it portrays a close and tense family situation, against the background of sexual violence in South Africa. It illustrates this continuing friction (i.e. changing practices) to highlight the throes of a country caught in transition with rape as an organizing principle. Rape has proliferated in South Africa after apartheid; with statistics showing that, one in every four women in South Africa is raped on daily bases. The dialogue between Sonnet and Petrius, her father(when the former is asking for his permission) to attend the party situates this:

Petrius:When is the party?

Sonnet: Six o'clock!

Petrius: Six o'clock is late and it's not safe out there, especially for a girl your age.

Sonnet: I will take care of myself, dad.

Petrius: No. You are the one who told me that a certain girl who is your classmate was shot dead near Mamelodi station on Wednesday night.

Although research on sexual violence in South Africa remains limited, but there has been a long-standing and serious problem of sexual violence across different races and classes in the society. This is accentuated by attempt at concealing it socially and politically; an attitude that started in the apartheid era. The attitude of Petrius, when he hears his daughter- Sonnet is raped gives bite to this:

Petrius(Sighting her daughter, accost her): What? You don't think we are stupid, do you?

Sonnet: I am telling you the truth, dad. I have been raped.

Petrius: You don't even feel ashamed to say it? You don't feel ashamed to tell your father, that you are no longer a virgin.

Vickey:... who did this to you? How did it happen? We must get you to the police station. You must report the case.

Petrius: No one is going to report the case.

Vickey: We must do it. Those bastards must pay for what they did. We can't let them go free.

Petrius: I said no one is going to report the case! I am a respected person in our church and community. I can't allow anyone to ruin my reputation! I can't allow Sonnet to humiliate me in the public...

Vickey: She couldn't have possibly wanted this to happen to her! She is a victim!

With the notion of black sexuality (constructed along colonial stereotypes) which was based on lust for black men and women; state institutions were not particularly interested in the problem of sexual violence within the township. For example, law enforcement agents were not interested in acting on reports of sexual violence, especially when it had to do with the blacks. Thus, the rapist was simply a faceless, predatory stranger—without personality or motives other than an inchoate sexual menace. The dialogue between 'father' and 'daughter'

Moreover, the idea that sexual violence was rampant made it easier for the issue to be ignored. Sexual violence was also the site of the other, more culturally specific. For example, in African communities, as (Delius and Glaser 2002: 30) confirm, there is an awkward inter-generational silence on sexuality. The secrecy attached to sexual violence was based on cultural logic, that "if people know a girl was raped, no-one will marry her. And others will because of that, would want to rape her again because she has been raped before. She will never be safe". Minus sexual gratifications, the escalation of rape in South Africa has been blamed on many factors, with myth about sex being the most pronounced. For example, it is assumed by the rapists that, having sex with a virgin can cleanse them from HIV/AIDS; while in "corrective" or "curative" rape, it is believed that if homosexuals, especially lesbians are forced into heterosexual sex, it will correct their sexual disorder. As a result of this, the lesbians are facing rough and hard times in the society, since they are seen as perverts.

The social and political marginalization of sexual violence, is traceable to its legal definition in the pre-apartheid era. Rape was legally defined as the imposition of unwanted vaginal sex by an adult man upon an adult woman (Ross 1993: 8). This excluded homosexual rape from the scope of the law, as well as sexual violence within marriage. Invariably, constructed as a problem at the fringes of social order, a sign of

social and moral deviance rather than a more fundamental problem, seeking for an attention and solution. This has strong imprint of 'moral panic' as conceptualized by Stanley Cohen. Thus, modern sexuality is often constituted as a political phenomenon: entangled in power relations, and fashioned in manner which bears the mark of other vectors of inequality and difference, such as race, class etc.,. In most cases, the regulation of sexuality is usually politicized, in context of intense controversy and confrontation. "Such incidents of rampant unease", writes Rose, "may be best understood as episodes in a relatively continuous public discourse about sexuality" (Rose 1998: 1198); but their intensity and drama illuminate in unusually vivid way. The articulation between sexual violence and the idea of the nation state, could well be located on the distinction between the politics of violence and the politicization of sexuality. Here I draw from the proposition as developed by Michel Foucault (1979), that the regulation of sexuality has been factored in the making of the modern state, from its colonial permutations. For example, in post-apartheid South Africa, the problem is located very much within the black townships - just it was in the apartheid era.

In conclusion, the status of South African President as a polygamist and a known womanizer is promoting hyper masculinity rehetorics, which make people seem to say "If the President Zuma is doing it, why not me? ".

In summary, nowadays the townships produce hundreds of plays depicting the problems bedevilling post-apartheid South Africa, which continues to have enormous impact on the citizenry. However, Copeland (1986), has decried the sloppy aesthetics and hastiness in which most of these post-apartheid plays, by young playwrights are cobbled. Most of the story lines are loose, with plots that are not only simple but ineffective, which sometimes does not lead to the theme. The grandeur associated with African theatre: dance, song and music (referred earlier as "Total theatre") are grossly lacking. Concurring with Copeland, it is also pertinent to make a general observation on the language situation among the new playwrights (since it is a general weakness that pervades all the play texts under study); unlike their predecessors who wrote with such 'common sense' of African theatre, the younger playwrights are miles apart from the mark. This becomes important, especially when we consider the oral nature of the South African society; and the notion that black theatre emerged from that tradition to

become part of the political movement. The play texts fail woefully in this regard, by not incorporating the properties of the indigenous languages (whether Xhosa or Zulu), or Fanagalo, a brand of South African pidgin, which its use has spread to all the socio-economic groupings of South Africa.

Finally, contradictory the story lines of these plays may be, they never-the-less exemplify the popular imagination. Like characters within their plays, post-apartheid playwrights have continued to fish for solutions to immediate problems through cultural mediation, like their predecessors; a situation in which the new playwrights construct their narrative universe out of a diverse- sometimes antagonistic element; holding on to the conservatism of tradition even as they explore South African post-colonial condition. Often, the contradictions are not clearly formulated as such, Karin Barber (1987) asserts that the syncretism of the popular arts is not self-conscious. It is this that give them the edge and usefulness over their predecessors i.e pre-apartheid playwrights.

However urban, the rhetoric's of the playwrights may be, they have address problems that are local and also tolerate mode of signifying that are recognized by the local audience, while appropriating and absorbing indigenous and foreign elements.

The playwrights, being the post-1994 generation, have evoked and platform the intolerant conditions that exist in contemporary South Africa as it were; what remains is to change it, so that the rainbow nation doesn't slide into a failed state, like other nation State in Africa.

4.0 BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME: SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION

In conclusion, South African transition to democracy marked an important moment in global history; so also is the history of literary production in post-apartheid South Africa. For many South Africans: it was a "deliberative consensus" since it portends a re-engineering of the social and cultural sphere of South Africans. There need to be a greater interest in marking the difference operative within the sphere of culture. With the massive change being experienced in contemporary South Africa, especially the theatre, the question that is now most upper most in the mind of the people is: how can we deal with the new? This seems a potent way to engage South African cultural practices since there is a presencing of the 'old' in the 'new'. This thesis has tried to negotiate this in a manner that will make it a continuing project. Areas such as the political, economic and the literary have been fused, and the way this interpolate (and to whose end?) has been the primary concern of this thesis. Tracing the narratives from the history of the aborigines i.e. indigenous people of South Africa, through the Dutch/British settlers (who have become natives), and the role of black theatre in the entire project; the abiding question would be how do we achieve 'newness' in South Africa? How should it be read and interpreted within the 'rainbow' cultures of South Africa. Answering the former, will be a way of pondering on the signifying differences associated with South Africa. This means we can begin to interrogate 'those arrangements that foreground and background' South African theatre-that gives black theatre its distinctive character.

This presents a true picture of production of literature in South Africa, while contending with the question: what happens to South African literary production after apartheid? How does this totalize in cultural practices, especially theatre (referred elsewhere as 'testimony theatre'), and how is it going to contribute to the encoding narratives of a coherent 'rainbow nation'? By this, I mean, what role is black theatre going to play as a social interventionist tool in the making of a new South Africa? How does this integrate into the narratives of race, gender and other social realities that now exist in South Africa?

The entrenchment of apartheid ideology following the electoral victory of Afrikaner Nationalist party in 1948 fostered cultural activities that led to the denigration of African

culture. Cultural productions that were to follow by way of programming in South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), and the activities of White National Theater organization (NTO, 1947-1962) were harnessed towards the production of white supremacy. Colonial education, in the manner in which it was understood in Africa, especially South Africa, implied 'black' absorption into 'white' culture. Among black South Africans, the notion of culture has never been free from the notion of black 'backwardness' which was part of the apartheid rhetorics through Bantu educational system.

As a socio-political phenomenon, apartheid alienated the black people from the resources of their history (denied them the artistic space for 'staging' their story), thereby severing the connections between them and their ethnic heritage. One way by which black South Africa theatre could be relevant in the post-apartheid period is by working towards a displacement of the 'other' as an active, dominant player in the imagination of the people. It is within this context that, I call for a revival of South African (black) cultural practices.

To correct the evils of apartheid, playwrights like Ngugi Wa Thiongo believes (while running Kamiriithu community education and cultural centre) that it is mandatory that we have a theatre that is directly under the control of the people. A theatre that defines its own 'space', in terms of physical location and language. A theatre that is a "carrier" of the peoples essence(i.e historical experience), in order to enter into a conversation with them. In the midst of these contending echoes, the idea of homogenization of cultures, which globalization promotes needs to be interrogated further, especially in the context of South Africa with a divided past. There is need to develop a national culture which is free from any ethnicity or race. It is clear from the above that if South African theatre were to thrive, it should have to find and define its own space.

Here, there is need to make a distinction between "cultural difference" and "cultural diversity" in case of South Africa that already has the tag of a 'rainbow' nation(with 'coat' of many cultures). And how this is managed could impart negatively or positively on the multiculturalism of South Africa. Most scholars believe that the adoption of "Cultural difference" instead of "Cultural diversity" should be favoured, since dominant

culture(s) always try to subsume other cultures, i.e locating them within its own grid. Or what Mahmoud Mandani called "politicization of culture". This is what is referred elsewhere by the creation of "cultural diversity" and a containment of "cultural difference", thereby denying the former its identity . The other problem is that in societies, where multiculturalism is encouraged, racism manifests in various forms. This is because the "universalism that paradoxically permits 'cultural diversity' masks ethnocentric norms, values and interests". After all, what we understand as the 'national population' is amalgam of interests, cultural histories, post-colonial lineages, and sexual orientations, as different scholars have postulated. The changing nature of the public sphere, calls for a brand of politics "which is based on unequal, uneven, multiple and potentially antagonistic political identities". In essence, multiculturalism is an attempt at controlling the dynamic process of the cultural difference, administering a consensus based on a norm that propagates cultural diversity. The preference for 'cultural difference', rather than 'cultural diversity' is to acknowledge the fact, that cultural diversity is inadequate in itself and doesn't generally recognize "the universalism and normative stance from which it construct its cultural and political judgment". This means that the differences in culture cannot be accommodated within a framework. And this balance should be maintained, and highlighted

There should be need to develop black South African theatre, by reinvigorating the art council, an Art Council that should be people-oriented. That will encourage new writers with grants. Commission older writers on some specific projects, as a way of building up the art industry. There is also need to create new literary prizes, as a way of discovering new talents. A well endowed literary prize, will bring black South African writing to the attention of wider audiences. It will further enrich the world through contact with Africa, and enrich Africa through great contact with South Africa, through her culture.

For example, issues such as sponsorship, fostering relationship between theatre practitioners and stakeholders are just some of the considerations that call for sharper delineation. To this end, there should be a virile Art Council (giving funding and promoting art festivals) which will act as a space for hunting and grooming of talents.

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