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Athol Fugard: The playwright as director of his own works

Creamer, Richard E., Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1990

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ATHOL FUGARD: THE PLAYWRIGHT AS DIRECTOR OF HIS OWN WORKS

by

RICHARD CREAMER

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy, The City University of New York.**

1990

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Date

Stanley Q. Warren
Chair of Examining Committee

3 / 26 / 90
Date

McCall
Executive Officer

Daniel Gerould
Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

Abstract

ATHOL FUGARD: THE PLAYWRIGHT AS DIRECTOR OF HIS OWN WORKS

by

Richard Creamer

Adviser: Dr. Stanley Waren

Athol Fugard is among the very few playwrights who are consistently successful in directing their own works. In investigating his methods, approach, and philosophy of directing, the author of this study has paid particular attention to Fugard's 1984 world premiere production of The Road to Mecca at the Yale Repertory Theatre. The author was allowed to attend many rehearsals, pre-rehearsals, working lunches, and note-giving sessions of this production; and was thus enabled to observe day to day efforts as the play was brought to fruition. Besides interviewing Mr. Fugard, the writer was fortunate to have the opportunity to interview the actors, designers, production crew, and the Dean of the Yale School of Drama, Lloyd Richards. Moreover, Fugard made himself available months after the Yale production for further interviewing, and shared both his positive reactions to the production as well as his considerable disappointments.

This thesis investigates the themes of The Road to Mecca, as well as all of Fugard's other stage works up to that time, with some consideration of the two subsequent works, including the New York production in December, 1989, of My Children! My Africa!

Philosophical influences, such as that of Albert Camus, Samuel Beckett, Jerzy Grotowski--and of other literary and practical theatre personalities--are investigated. The primary focus of the thesis centers on Fugard's autobiographical foundation in the relationships and themes of his plays; and the concomitant effect of his own personality, problems, and growth as a playwright on his directing. Beginning in the formative years of his theatrical career (when simultaneously directing and acting in his own works was made imperative by the physical and artistic deprivations of non-White South African theatre), this study traces Fugard's growth as playwright, director, actor, producer, and theatre theorist: in short, as a "Man of the Theatre." Although Mr. Fugard has worked in the film medium as writer and actor, he has never directed in that medium. Therefore, his contributions in that field are considered only peripherally for drawing comparisons to theatrical endeavors, or in relation to historical or biographical elements.

PREFACE

My first contact with the work of Athol Fugard came when I chose to direct People Are Living There, from many plays suggested by my adviser at Hunter College, for completion of my master's degree in 1981. I was not at that time familiar with Fugard's canon, but this work struck chords in me which led to further research into his career and, thus, to my choice of him as subject for this thesis. The reverberations of those chords continued to grow with my knowledge and exposure to this great artist's contributions to Theatre and the world. I like to think that the primal level upon which Fugard's works operate in me has to do with our many similarities: we are both of Dutch/Irish descent and I have also pursued a career in Theatre as actor, director, producer and now as playwright. My admiration for Fugard as artist and man was heightened by my personal contact with him as he directed The Road to Mecca in 1984. His generous sharing of his time and expertise, and the resultant sharing by his colleagues, made this study possible. The personal contact required for this study accounts for both the rather unusually prevalent use of the first person in the text and my undisguised admiration for this "Man of the Theatre."

Acknowledgements

I am grateful and indebted to many whose expertise, encouragement, patience and kindness were essential to the completion of my thesis: first, to my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Stanley Waren, whose guidance was both enlightening and indispensable, and to my second readers, Dr. Daniel Gerould and Professor Stanley Kauffmann for their kind responses; second, I am thankful to Dr. Marvin Seiger, of Hunter College for his confidence in me and in his encouraging me to pursue this degree; third, to John E. Booth, longtime friend and devotee of Theatre, whose intercession with Lloyd Richards, dean of the Yale School of Drama, opened the doors which led to my personal contact with Athol Fugard; to Lloyd Richards, himself, for sharing with me his time and his invaluable insights into Fugard and Theatre; and to his assistant Judith Ann Fish, for her kindness in helping me feel at home at Yale; to Pam Jordan of the Yale Library for her continuous assistance over the years; and to Russ Rosensweig, Mr. Fugard's personal assistant during the production of The Road to Mecca, for her thoughtfulness.

Special thanks is tendered here to those friends, colleagues, and associates of Fugard who gave hours of their personal time, often on the spur of the moment, to answer my many questions: Zakes Mokae, Tom Aldredge, Carmen Mathews, and Derek McLane.

I am deeply indebted to Russell Vandenbroucke, whom I have never met or contacted in any way, for the vital information and insights in both his dissertation on Fugard and his seminal publication, Truths the Hand Can Touch: The Theatre of Athol Fugard. We obviously share the same admiration for the object of our studies.

It is difficult to fully express my appreciation to Athol Fugard, himself. From the first day we met (when, through his openness and complete lack of pretention, we were immediately on a "first-name" basis), until today, he has been exceedingly generous with his time and knowledge, sharing his frustrations and his joys--in short, his passion--for Theatre with an easy camaraderie unexpected in a figure of such magnitude in world theatre. My contacts with him were, and remain, inspirational.

My deepest gratitude and appreciation to Larry Sullivan and "the Group" for their many years of understanding, insights and encouragement through some very difficult hours.

Finally, to my wife, Nadia, not only for her spiritual support and patience with my occasional bouts of temper, but also for her expert proofreading and suggestions, and especially for her cheerful (and entirely voluntary) efforts in assuming responsibility for much of the drudgery of correcting, setting formats, etc., essential to the completion of this thesis, my loving thanks.

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CHAPTER ONE

SOCIAL, LITERARY, AND PERSONAL INFLUENCES ON FUGARD'S CAREER

I began to understand how my country functioned.

Athol Fugard¹

... my argument is that South African racialism is a product of a historical tradition constantly reinforced by the social environment. In retrospect, the development of racism seems completely understandable, and, conversely, it becomes difficult to explain why not all Whites are prejudiced.

Pierre van den Berghe²

The first quotation above is remarkable in that Athol Fugard, artist and implacable enemy of South African apartheid, came to the realization of how his country functioned, not as some precocious youth, but as a fully grown man--well-traveled, well educated and at the age of twenty-six. Moreover, he came to this realization, not through some inspiration or mystical revelation, but by becoming a part of the system; working at a job in the Native Commissioner's Court in Johannesburg because--he needed a job. This was the Fugard who was in years well beyond the true incident which he would later dramatize in Master Harold ... and the Boys, when, as Hally, he spat in the face of his best friend and surrogate

father, Sam Semele. Taken in this context, Fugard stands as a powerful example, not merely of the socially conscious artist/rebel, but also of the insidious character of racism and apartheid, when practiced over long periods of time by a society. Van den Berghe's sense of wonder that "not all Whites are prejudiced," becomes our own in considering the country which "is at once his [Fugard's] prison and his reason for artistic being. . . ." ³

In dealing with the major influences on Fugard's career, it becomes apparent that, although he is now considered among the most outspoken and influential critics of apartheid in the world, this position is a secondary result of his artistic strivings. In the formative years, Fugard's movement did not seem to be in the direction of social critic, and indeed, this is a status which he still refutes to some degree. In a public interview conducted by Lloyd Richards at the 92nd Street YMHA, Fugard was asked to comment on the recent complaint of another South African writer (who was left nameless) that he did not concentrate on the social problems of his country as completely as he should. Fugard remarked simply that his first responsibility, and any artist's responsibility, was to his art.⁴ As we shall see in the following chapters, Fugard's approach

to his art is extremely personal. In dealing with his own deepest relationships in order to achieve a universality in his work, he uses the South African context as metaphor. This in no way lessens the impact of the social commentary inherent in his works and, quite possibly, enhances it; but social commentary is not his primary aim. Of his breakthrough play, The Blood Knot, Mel Gussow reports:

The inspiration for the play was his relationship with his brother, Royal. . . . Fugard says, 'In the crude categories of a very stupid educational system, I was regarded as bright and my brother was regarded as slow. . . . I passed my exams and he failed--and that created emotional complications. (Gussow, NYer,66)⁵

Fugard himself states, "South Africa afforded me the most perfect possible device for separating two lives."⁶ Although at the end of Blood Knot, Morrie and Zach will apparently continue to live together in hopelessness, their mutual goal of buying a farm is shattered, and their relationship has suffered an emotional shock from which it will never completely recover. In Fugard's best and most mature works, this "separation," at times a physical as well as emotional one, as in Hello and Goodbye, is a constant theme. In his 1978 dissertation on Fugard, Russell Vandenbroucke accepted Fugard's view that Blood Knot, Hello and Goodbye, and Boesman and

Lena constitute a trilogy, which Vandenbroucke has dubbed "The Family." There are many similarities in theme, relationships, and structure in these three, and certainly the ultimate devastating "separation" is inherent in all of them. It is not difficult to draw a further analogy with all of these (and his other mature works) with the South African society: it is perhaps impossible to find a society in the modern world which is so clearly divided in two, and yet whose dual parts are so interdependent. The duality of the apartheid society echoes the dualities of plot, theme and character of Fugard's work, and consideration must be given here to that society. I shall consider personal and literary influences on Fugard after an examination of the South African society.

To those familiar with the South African social conditions, it may seem arbitrary to divide the population into only two distinct parts. There are, according to Joseph Lelyveld, no fewer than eight distinct "castes and subcastes" inhabiting South Africa and answerable to the voluminous laws of that torn land. These laws specifically and in minute detail (so minute and complex as to be virtually indecipherable) allow for nearly unlimited freedom of interpretation by officials and divide the population in the following

manner:

... the whites, who are free to do anything except move into an area designated as nonwhite; the coloreds and Indians, who can move freely in the country but are barred from owning land in more than 95 percent of it; and the blacks, who are subdivided by law into six distinct impermeable or semipermeable categories. The broad distinction between urban and rural blacks is only the beginning of this process of alienation. The urban blacks come in two subcastes: the "insiders," as they are now sometimes called, and the "commuters."⁷

Lelyveld continues defining these distinctions in this arbitrarily divided caste system from the "insider" and "commuter" Blacks, who live relatively near their places of employment, through to those living progressively farther from cities; i.e., the "homeland" Blacks, who live their entire lives in Black rural areas. That it is acceptable to divide the population into only two parts is due to the fact that the Indians and Coloreds are, in the White mind, superior to the Blacks and may be allowed more participation in government; become allies, as it were. As far back as 1983, Prime Minister Botha planned to

... bend the political color bar by giving ... the coloreds and the Indians a subordinate role in the National Government To allay the fears of his own supporters, Mr. Botha had to stress the point that his vaunted "reform" made no provision, now or ever, for black participation in

the government. . . .⁸

One must keep in mind that these "homelands," or "Bantustans" as they are sometimes called, are located on approximately 13% of the total land area of the country; a figure which has not changed in 30 years. Moreover, this land's soil is, for the most part, exhausted and incapable of producing sufficient food for the inhabitants. In some rural areas, ". . . it appears that scarcely 50 percent of the children who are alive at birth survive past the age of five."⁹

Furthermore, these homelands are not considered to be a part of South Africa, but are autonomous nations. In giving the Blacks autonomy, the White Nationalist government has actually created a more controllable situation for itself. The White society cannot survive without the cheap labor provided by the majority Black populace and the Blacks cannot survive without the work provided by the White industries. Therefore, in creating separate homelands, the Nationalist government has made it possible to consider any Black a "foreigner," thus making his expulsion from "South Africa" easily accomplished should the government wish. This situation, coupled with the total financial dependence of the families in the homelands, renders the Black worker nearly

powerless, politically. He can be exiled with little effort. The inhabitants of the homelands depend, therefore, on the wages of migrant workers, their husbands, sons, and fathers, who in turn must live near their places of work in order to hold down a job. Therefore, they are necessarily separated from their families for extended periods of time and, if working in the mines, for example, must live in bachelor barracks provided by the companies. These barracks are dirty, without privacy, and are usually surrounded by a barbed-wire fence. In other words, they are actually concentration camps set up to house forced laborers.

The Nationalist government is usually thought of as the architect of apartheid, and indeed the very term "apartheid" was coined as a slogan by the Nationalists in their first political campaign in 1948. However, it is acknowledged that the Nationalists simply embellished a system that was already in existence for many decades prior to 1948. The very acts of parliament that stipulate separate residential areas for Whites and Blacks--the Native Land Act and the Native Trust and Land Act--were legislated in 1913 and 1936, respectively. Even so, these acts had precedence in the system of Native Reserves;

"... the first large-scale scheme for the physical segregation of the races ..." (van den Berghe, 31)¹⁰ created by a British administrator, Theophilus Shepstone, in the 1840s. The term "apartheid" eventually fell into disrepute, and the system is called "separate development."

In order to sustain "separate development" the government has had to institute a system of laws, ordinances, and regulations that are simply mind-boggling in their complexity. "... the basic corpus of South African racial law ... ran to more than 3,000 pages, and when all the regulations and circulars were added in its dead weight was ... well over ten pounds."¹¹

The most effective, most outrageous laws among the many, and those most hated by Blacks, are the Pass laws. For purposes of "influx control" every adult male African must carry with him at all times a "reference book." Making up this reference book is identification, designated work and homeland, and possibly other documents; i.e. tax receipts, etc. To be caught without this book or with a book that is questionable, is to be sentenced to various lengths of jail terms after a mockery of a hearing in a Native Commissioner's Court.

It was in one of these courts in Fordsburg, Johannesburg, that Fugard was a clerk—for about six months in 1958—and where he “began to understand how [his] country functioned.”

Pass laws were created in the nineteenth century, but as with most oppressive legislation, it was in the hands of the Nationalist government that these laws were brought to their extreme usage. However, the basic evil of these laws was established by pre-Nationalist governments:

In 1931, Jan H. Hofmeyr . . . described the aim of “constructive segregation” as “a white nation and a black nation dwelling side by side in the same land.” But, he was quick to add, “it is inconceivable that the white man should be able completely to dispense with the black man’s labor on his farms, in his mines, in his factories; it is just as inconceivable that there should be set aside for the black man’s occupation land sufficient to provide for all his need independent of the white man’s wages.”¹²

“The policies that have been described . . . seem calculated to serve two major purposes. The first is the continued political dominance of a white oligarchy that now constitutes about 17 percent of the total population. . . . The second objective . . . is the continued assurance of a supply of cheap and coercible African labor as a source of growth and prosperity for the white economy.”¹³

Most White South Africans do nothing in regard to the Black South African that serves any purpose other than maintaining the

status quo. The inherent injustice of that status quo is made clear by the following: "Out of a 1953-1954 Geographical National Income of £1,559,000,000, nearly three-fourths accrued to Whites who constituted one-fifth of the population." (van den Berghe, 1984)

There is no doubt that the Afrikaner has rationalized his behavior; he is, after all, a good Christian. But it is one of the ironies of this society, that these good Christians can even rationalize withholding the right of Black Christians to worship the same god they do, except in designated areas.

Following is an annotated list of various laws passed or amended by the Nationalist Party since their empowerment in 1948. It is given for two reasons: to further acquaint the reader with the offenses to human and civil rights by the South African government; and to lay ground for the following consideration of specific laws and their consequences, and their influence on the life and work of Athol Fugard.

The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act; 1949
forbids any marriage between a White and non-White

The Immorality Act; 1927
was made more and more stringent in its 1950 and 1957 amendments to the point where "immoral or indecent acts" between a White and non-White of opposite

sexes are punishable with whipping [emphasis mine]
and up to seven years of prison. . .

Separate Representation of Voter Act; 1951 and
High Court of Parliament Act; 1952
disenfranchised non-Whites; Cape Coloured eliminated
from the common roll in 1956.

Group Areas Act of 1950; amended 1952, 1955, and 1957
provides for the establishment of segregated residential
areas for each "race," and for the mass removal and
expropriation of members of the "wrong" skin colour in
any given area [emphasis mine]

Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953
circumvented [a] court decision by specifying that
segregated amenities could . . . be unequal.

Native Administration Amendment Act of 1956 and the
Natives (Urban Areas) Amendment Act of the same year
extend arbitrary powers of imprisonment and exile over
Africans

Population Registration Act of 1950, amended in 1956
. . . to prevent the passing of Coloureds for Whites . . .
provides for the issue of racial identity cards.

Extension of University Education Act of 1959
forbids all non-Europeans to attend English-speaking
universities . . . this act thus makes for complete racial
segregation at all levels of education.

To further emphasize the totalitarian aspects of White
rule, consider the following laws:

Two recent laws overshadow all previous ones
[T]he 1962 General Law Amendment Act . . . the "Sabotage
Act," further extends the already wide limits of arbitrary
government powers. It provides for a minimum sentence

of five years of prison and a maximum sentence of death for "sabotage," and places the burden of proof on the accused. The concept of "sabotage" includes any attempt to promote disturbance . . . to encourage any social or economic change. . . . also extends previous government powers to ban newspapers, organizations, and gatherings, and to imprison any person for any length of time without due process of law, and without having to declare a state of emergency. [all emphases mine]

On May 1, 1963, an even more draconian General Law Amendment Act was passed The act provides for repeated detention of persons for ninety days at a time, for questioning; refusal to allow anybody, including legal counsel, to see detained persons; total prohibition on the courts to interfere with this form of detention; indefinite imprisonment without trial for persons having completed ordinary gaol sentences; powers to hold letters, telegrams and parcels sent by post; death penalty, applicable also to juveniles for receiving training in the use of violence outside South Africa, or for achieving the objects of a banned organization; and fifteen years of prison for entering a "protected" area without consent. . . . The act has appropriately been nicknamed the "No Trial" Act. (van den Berghe 127-32)

Even the South African White who chooses to be non-supportive of the brutality of his/her regime, must suffer a sense of guilt. Whatever the stand one takes--political, moral, legal, or artistic--one is benefacted by the system, even if unwillingly. Even Zakes Mokae, whom Fugard has said is "a man I love more than any other man I know," (Gussow, NYer, 47) is acutely aware of the difference in privileges between himself and Fugard. In an interview for New York Magazine, Mokae is quoted as saying:

Athol never forgets I'm black. I never forget he's white. He fishes where he wants. I can't. He votes. I can't. . . . In Southern Africa, a white person is a white person. He is protected by law. They all benefit from what's going on. They all must countenance it. If they wanted the laws changed, they would take definite stands. . . . they know that whatever they do, whatever inhumanity they commit against us, the law only exists for them."¹⁴

Even the special relationship of Fugard and Mokaé serves to illustrate once again the "dualistic" conditions, the inescapable divisiveness of apartheid. How has this implacable situation affected Fugard's art? As mentioned above, nearly all of Fugard's plays deal with people in vital and close relationships who, in spite of their desperate attempts at "unification" or understanding, are ultimately driven further apart and end in a condition of heightened despair. In order to portray this division, Fugard (except in his early works) concentrates all of the action in the relationship of only two or three characters. (Often the third character, as we shall see later, is secondary to the major confrontation, serving as an essential catalyst and/or a kind of voyeur; a connective to draw in the audience or even, at times, to reinforce the audience's reactions to the main action. For example, in Master Harold, Willie's "primal scream," when Hally spits in Sam's face, besides

reinforcing the moment on a sensory level, may very well represent the feelings of members of the audience. Willie, then, is a kind of conduit for overt expression which the audience is denied, given the social circumstances. In this way, audience members are closer participants in the onstage action. One is reminded of the many references to Laurence Olivier's offstage scream as Oedipus.)

In regard to the influence of apartheid on Fugard's works, I believe we can dispense with extensive consideration of his first two works, Klaas and the Devil and The Cell. Neither is available for study since they have never been published. (Fugard claims to have destroyed them, but he revealed in an interview that they are in the possession of his wife, Sheila Meiring, and may come to light someday.) That Fugard hadn't found himself as a playwright in the late 50s is evident from what we know of these plays. Klaas was about Colored inhabitants of a fishing village on the South African coast and was a kind of Africanized Riders to the Sea. Other than the fact that Fugard despises it (as he does The Cell), we know only that it was written in blank verse and was a total failure when done at the Labia Theatre in 1956. Of the early plays, Klaas has no similarity to, nor is at all a predictor of, the later works. It is

not "Fugardian," but a poor attempt at copying another playwright; it is not based on a factual incident; and may not be at all relevant to the South African condition. The Cell, although also a failure, was based on a true incident about a Black woman who, after being arrested and placed in solitary confinement for a weekend, gave birth to a stillborn child. We may never know if any specific laws were dealt with in either of these plays, but one could surmise that the woman in The Cell, which was first performed on May 26, 1957, could have been in violation of any of the outrageous laws and amendments in effect before that time, many of which (the Group Areas Act, the Native Administration Amendment Act, the Natives [Urban Areas] Amendment Act) could have been used to incarcerate without trial or notification of friends or relatives.

No-Good Friday, Fugard's next play and one which brought him some recognition and, more importantly, encouragement from professionals to continue a career in theatre, is another of Fugard's least favorite attempts. Referring to the Oxford paperback book in which Friday is published, Dimetos and Two Early Plays, Fugard says: "I felt very much about those two plays the way I felt about Klass and the Devil and The Cell I didn't want them to appear in

print." (Int. Fugard 24 May)¹⁵ However, Friday deals with an ongoing problem of Blacks in the Townships; that is, the victimization of working Blacks by criminal Blacks. Although not clearly based on a specific incident, it presents a condition brought about by White minority rule, especially regarding the Group Areas Act. This is the law which designates segregated living areas for each "race." One of the results of this segregation is a serious lack of protection for the inhabitants of these areas. The White-controlled police do not feel very responsible for protecting non-Whites. Moreover there is a dual standard of justice in the courts. There is

more lenient punishment of Africans committing crimes against Africans, than of Whites against Whites. This seeming bias in favor of Africans does, in fact, mean that law-abiding Africans have no adequate protection against criminals. (van den Berghe, 134)

In No-Good Friday Tobias Masala, a rural Black, arrives in the township of Sophia Town on a Friday afternoon. Within two hours he will be dead, murdered by the henchmen of a Black thug called Shark. Shark runs a protection racket in the township; he collects payments from the law-abiding workers and in return guarantees that they will not be robbed on their way home. When

Tobias, in his ignorance, laughs at Shark's offer of protection, he is stabbed to death in front of all of the others as an example to them. (Fugard will explore the casual, almost gleeful murder of law-abiding Blacks by criminal Blacks in riveting detail in his only novel, Tsotsi.) This is a very contrived moment (why does Shark not simply "educate" Tobias and make another customer for himself?) and is, no doubt, one of the reasons Fugard is not proud of this particular work. However, the truthfulness of the situation is probably verifiable. This work was, as we shall see in a later chapter, the first time Fugard wrote in collaboration with his actors; and his actors were all Black township residents. (There is only one White character in the play, Father Higgins, who was played by Fugard himself.) So, although the play is quite contrived as to plot and character development, the verisimilitude of the situation is unquestionable. As a further example, in reporting the murder of two Whites by Blacks in a Johannesburg park, the New York Times adds that, "... there were 14 murders of blacks in Soweto."¹⁶ Soweto is a Black township. It is not out of place to assume, given the atrocious conditions of the townships--the poverty, mass unemployment, ignorance, and the alcoholism--that

such murder rates are relatively constant in all townships.

To return to No-Good Friday, Tobias is in the township because he cannot support his family in the Eastern Transvaal "homeland." The soil is exhausted and there is no work. This portrays another of the obstacles to health and family which is a direct result of the segregation of Blacks. Tobias must illegally go to the city for work, leaving his family for, perhaps, years; and where he is always vulnerable to arrest and prison since he would have no valid reference book. So, although (or perhaps because of) working in collaboration with his actors and dealing with factual material, Fugard's first play of note is little better than melodrama.

The influence of the play on Fugard's development as a Man of the Theatre is, however, of vital importance. Word got around Johannesburg that a rather large group of Blacks had gotten together and actually done a "straight" play; no singing, no dancing. This was unheard of in those times. One of the people who came and was impressed was a Flemish director named Tone Brulin. Brulin became both a great influence on Fugard's career and a good friend. It was Brulin who, upon seeing Friday, suggested that

Fugard get a paying job in theatre; and who, quite possibly, was instrumental in Fugard going to work for the White National Theatre Organization (NTO). Brulin, at that time, had been hired by the NTO as a director and it is probably through his influence that Fugard was hired as an assistant stage manager. Fugard speaks of this period with gratitude:

I very quickly moved on to the position of stage manager. And by the time I was doing Nongogo . . . these two were running in tandem . . . and I must say that my debt to that experience in the technical side of theatre . . . is a very, very positive thing. If ever you want to know about me going to school--that was when i went to school. There were some damn good actors involved in that White National Theatre company. Watching those actors go to work on their scripts, watching them on their roles, watching them do the good plays, really good plays, take them apart and put them together again . . . and have a performance! Ah! And then concomitant with that, the whole technical aspect of theatre which I had to take on this time, seriously, because now we were into well-equipped theatres. Very good lighting boards in some cases, the whole number: lighting designers, scene designers, costume designers. (Int. Fugard, 24 May)

Fugard's formal schooling, although extensive, had little practical effect on his theatrical career. After a brief period studying automobile mechanics at the Port Elizabeth Technical College, he was awarded a scholarship to the University of Cape Town,

"... where he majored in philosophy and social anthropology. At the university, he showed little interest in theatre. . . . Although he did well in his studies, he had no sense of direction, and he became increasingly unhappy whenever he thought about others' expectations of him. In September of 1953, several months short of writing his final examinations, Fugard made up his mind to quit the university. "If I'd got that degree--and in South Africa you can't do anything until you have a degree--I could have been trapped into doing things I didn't want to do," he has said. "I didn't want to teach. I just had a sense of horizons shrinking as I got nearer the end of university." (Gussow, NYer, 56)

However, Fugard's association with Tone Brulin certainly paved the way for Fugard's education as an actor. Until Friday, Fugard's entire experience as an actor was as the old shepherd in a professional production of Oedipus Rex, and in his own productions of Klaas and the Devil and The Cell. (Fugard and his wife did attend an acting workshop taught by one Pietro Nolte.) (Truths, 12)¹⁷

Brulin, although impressed with Friday, was not impressed with Fugard's acting in it. In 1960, Fugard and others organized the New Africa Group and created, under Brulin's direction, a production of A Kakamas Greek; an original play written by another member of the company, David Herbert. Brulin directed and through his contacts the play opened in Brussels on May 24, 1960. Of Fugard's acting, Brulin says, "Athol's acting in No-good Friday hadn't impressed me,

but for A Kakamas Greek the intensity and strength of his everyday personality carried over and grew on stage." (Truths, 27) This was, outside of his attempt as an amateur in Oedipus, the first time Fugard had been directed by a professional.

Fugard's next play was Nongogo, which means, "a woman for two-and-six" (25 cents), a prostitute. The main character in Nongogo is Queeny, a prostitute who was successful enough and attractive enough to be "managed" by an enterprising man, Sam, and so eventually, could afford to open a "shebeen," a quasi-legal drinking establishment, in the township. Again, Fugard does not deal with a specific situation, but a general and omnipresent one. This time, however, he does not collaborate with his actors in the writing, but creates it unilaterally. As we shall see in Chapter Two, this play is a major step in Fugard's evolution as a dramatist. Primarily, the advance is that he deals with development of character in far more depth than in Friday. One way he accomplishes this is by reducing the number of characters from the twelve in the previous work to five. Moreover, of these five characters, only two are of primary importance: Queeny and Johnny. The others, though essential to plot development, are rather

stereotypical and not well-drawn.

The social situation in this play which has had a devastating effect on both Queeny and Johnny are the conditions surrounding the working in mines. For Queeny, this is the best "market" for her wares, be it liquor or, in earlier years, herself. For Johnny, the devastation lies in the sexual abuse he suffered in the miners' barracks. In order to work in the mines, Johnny and all miners were forced by law to live close to their place of work. As mentioned above, it was illegal for Blacks to have homes close to the mines (which are in designated White areas), and they were forced by law to live in the concentration camp-like housing for men only, surrounded by barbed wire. Since the artificially imposed low salaries did not allow for short work periods, men are separated from their families--and wives--for many months. One result is a homosexual subculture in the compounds to which the young Johnny fell victim. Johnny is trying to recover his sense of dignity.

The major weakness in Nongogo is that there is no compelling reason for Queeny and Johnny to become deeply involved with each other. They will end by being separated, divided by

circumstances, but there is little justification for them interacting in the first place. These total strangers meet by accident, are attracted to each other, go into business together, and break apart in less than a day. Fugard will never make this error again. From The Blood Knot on, his characters will all have vital years-long or life-long commitments to each other, either by blood, marriage, deep friendship, or politics.

In neither play are the statutes or the "tribe" responsible for the creation and sustaining of the separation of races mentioned. Responsibility is implied. From the first, Fugard avoided direct propagandizing. The same holds true of The Blood Knot. Although Zach's "baas" is referred to and his "prejudice and inhumanity" in his treatment of Zach alluded to, he is not a clearly defined person—he remains symbolic of all Whites in relation to Blacks. Moreover, specific laws are not referred to, but also implied; in the living area, Korsten, a Black township next to a industrially polluted, dead, stinking lake; in Morrie's "passing" for White; in the poverty; in Zach's duty on the job (which we find out is to keep the Black kids out of the park); in the panic when the brothers find they have written to a White woman.

Later plays, particularly those created in collaboration with actors, dealt with specific laws and their devastating effects on human beings:

"... the Group Areas Act in Boesman and Lena, the Immorality Act in Statements after an Arrest under the Immorality Act, the pass laws in Sizwe Bansi Is Dead... and the Suppression of Communism Act in The Coat, The Island, and A Lesson from Aloes. (Truths, xxi)

Since Aloes, Fugard has written four plays: Master Harold ... and the Boys, The Road to Mecca, A Place with the Pigs, and My Children! My Africa! None of these, except perhaps Children, deals with specific statutes. (Pigs, moreover, is Fugard's first play which does not have a South African locale; it takes place in Russia. It is, however, based on a real person's experiences.)

Certainly no less influential than the socio-political circumstances, and perhaps providing a much deeper impetus on Fugard's work are his own persona and his wide-ranging literary and scientific studies. I shall now consider these vital influences.

Harold Athol Lannigan Fugard was born on June 11, 1932 in the small village of Middleburg in the Karoo; a near-desert in the Eastern Cape Province. After university and many years of world travel, Fugard bought a small house there which he visits regularly

as a haven and to write. (It was there that he found the house of Helen Niemand, who was the inspiration for his 1984 work, The Road To Mecca.) As we shall see, Fugard's works are very personal and also very well-balanced. He does not write melodrama and all characters, no matter what part they play in the basic conflicts in the play, are treated with equal sympathy. This may be a reflection of Fugard's immense effort to both justify his negative feelings about his father, while "glorifying," in a manner of speaking, his mother. It is clear that his mother was by far the strongest influence for Fugard's growth into a fine artist, while he has had extraordinary difficulty dealing with his father's presence. Fugard once said to me, "There is something of my mother in every woman I write." And in the introduction to Boesman and Lena he writes:

For six years my attempts to understand the possibility of affirmation in an essentially morbid society were dominated by and finally invested in three women: Mildred Constance Jenkins was the first, Hester Smit the second, and Lena the culmination.¹⁸

An even more extraordinary message is contained in the following:

In a long letter to his mother from Honolulu, dated February 6, 1954, Fugard acknowledged her offer of his

fare back home:

I might never be able to repay you, but in the end I hope what I offer will be greater. My writing is not a thing of the here and now--if I've the strength to fulfill my destiny it will live when I am no more--and through it--you. The silent dedication behind all my work is to you. In you I saw those virtues which today mean so much to me--courage, an indomitable will and faith. I might fail as a man but my art will triumph where you have

I've said goodbye to my immaturity and cowardice I feel within me a strength equal to the great issues of my land. I am burning with impatience to return. Your reward will come Mom! God grant me the strength

Give the staff my kindest regards, from someone who is no "master" or "baas," but their friend. (Truths, 9-10)

Setting aside the obvious immaturity (in style at the very least) in the above passage, we certainly are conscious of the depth of love and respect inherent in these lines. Fugard has said that his father was informed with many unthought-out prejudices but that his mother was "color-blind." We know that he has directly dealt with his love/hate relationship with his father in at least two of his major works: Hello and Goodbye and Master Harold . . . and the Boys. In the very opening of the earlier play, Hello and Goodbye, we find Johnnie (played by Fugard in the original production) fighting off a growing insanity precipitated by the death of his father. With the arrival of his sister, Hester, who is in search of money, Johnnie must "resurrect" his father as a method of driving Hester away. He pretends that the father is asleep and ill in the next room. As in

Master Harold, we never see or hear Hally's father, but his "presence" is a source of deep conflict for both Johnnie and Hally. They are both, as it were, haunted by father.

Hello and Goodbye and Master Harold were written nearly twenty years apart and yet Fugard returns once again to the personal difficulty he has in dealing with his father's memory. Ostensibly, Master Harold was written to deal with a particularly guilt-inducing moment in Fugard's youth when, as a teenager, he spat in the face of his best friend (and surrogate father), Sam Semele, a Black waiter in his mother's tearoom. This is, of course, the dramatic action of the play, but under the surface is the constant haunting presence of the real father. The spitting is a result of Hally's feeling toward his real father and Sam, as surrogate father, is the unfortunate recipient of Hally's anger. As Sam tells Hally, after relating the story of the shame an even younger Hally felt because of his father's public drunkenness:

You hadn't done anything wrong but you went around as if you owed the world an apology for being alive. I didn't like seeing that! That's not the way a boy grows up to be a man! . . . but the one person who should have been teaching you what that means, was the cause of your shame.¹⁹

A recurring theme in many of Fugard's works is the struggle to cope with shame and guilt; not necessarily the guilt which is a result of one's own actions, but the actions of significant others. In this, Fugard echoes the influence of the existentialist views of Beckett and Camus; of the problems inherent in simply having been born, which I will discuss in more detail below.

As stated above, Fugard's "attempt to understand the possibility of affirmation in an essentially morbid society were dominated by and invested in three women," and I have noted that there is something of his mother in every woman he writes. It would seem, therefore, that the young Fugard was torn between his need for a male role model and the obviously very strong influence of his mother. "Interestingly, if one parent has a good self-concept and the other a poor self-concept, the child is most likely to choose the parent with the more positive self-concept as a model."²⁰ That Fugard's most positive, enduring characters are usually the women is likely a direct result of his choice of the more positive role model, his mother. His father's influence appeared to be on the negative side; Fugard is an alcoholic (recovered), and "... refers to himself as an 'addictive' personality." (Gussow, NYer, 51) Moreover,

it is apparent that Fugard is dealing with inner doubts concerning his sense of personal fortitude. In conjunction with the passage from the letter to his mother (quoted above), in which in a juvenile bravado he declares that, "I've said goodbye to my immaturity and cowardice," consider the following statement, while intoxicated, to Mel Gussow:

"Oh, Christ, do you know the pain that continues to exist, the pain of exposure? In a week, I'll have to live through that in terms of the play I've written. To be a novelist and to write a story that needs no completion in terms of performance!

... The failure of courage. This is where you survive with decency or die with dignity. I can't stand cowardice." He added a snakelike sibilance to the end of the last word. Then he breathed deeply, and a suspiring sound emerged--"Suss, suss' like an exhalation from the heart. (Gussow, NYer, 80)

The above statement was made during the rehearsal period for the Broadway production of A Lesson from Aloes. Drinking has been a major influence on Fugard's work, especially his work as a director, and will be discussed in some detail below. Prior to writing, and directing the premiere production of, The Road to Mecca, Fugard had given up drinking entirely. (He had actually attended one meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous in New York but does not attend any more.) However, his struggle with "exposure"

remains a torment. He is intense as a director, and it is an intensity born of terror. At a pre-opening celebration in the green room of the Yale Repertory Theatre, Fugard was surprisingly reticent to participate fully. He was there and responded to people openly and kindly, but it was obvious that he was "in a world of his own." He was a man experiencing deep emotions and one sensed, that although it was his play about to open and that he had a deep personal contact with all concerned, he would rather have been somewhere else--and alone. When I managed to contact him, approximately a week after the opening, he confessed to purposefully making himself unavailable. He was "recovering" from the opening. "It's such an exposure, Richard."

One of Fugard's favorite words, and one which he uses constantly and in a positive manner is "challenge." Certainly he meets many challenges and, moreover, creates situations in which he is heavily challenged. He submits himself to "exposure" on many levels: as writer, producer, director and leading actor of most of his works. Add to that his flying in the face of the oppressive South African regime by flaunting their laws and exposing himself to possible jail sentences on a regular basis. One could possibly make

a psychological case study of Fugard as a compulsive hero: one who must continually test himself in order to reassure himself of his courage; thereby proving, of course, his doubts. (His favorite sport is spear-fishing with an elastic-fired speargun; in the ocean and alone.) But that does not pertain to this study.

What may pertain is the opposite influence of Fugard's father and mother in his development as dramatist. Fugard himself has paraphrased Frantz Fanon in writing of the "schizoid condition of an oppressed people." (Notebooks, 164)²¹ Can it not be said that, in South Africa, a White artist of conscience is also oppressed? And therefore, possibly "schizoid?" Robert Heilman, in Tragedy and Melodrama: Versions of Experience, defines the difference between characters in drama who qualify as tragic heroes and those who do not, by the terms "divided" and "undivided" respectively.²² The divided character is dealing with an internal struggle, a flaw within himself, and eventually recognizes it; the whole character deals with external problems. In a review of Sizwe Banzi is Dead and The Island a critic states, "Fugard is the sole dramatist now writing in English whose plays contain the necessary dualisms of true tragedy."²³ There are "divided" characters in Fugard's works;

someone in nearly every play achieves personal recognition. What may, in analysis, disqualify his works as true tragedy is that those characters take no specific action to "compensate" for their flaw. (For the most part, the society in which they live prevents this--which may be even more tragic. Oedipus has a course of action, after all, terrible as it may be; Fugard's people do not!) Fugard is generally recognized as a unique playwright. Perhaps his uniqueness is this: that he creates characters of tragic stature, couched in universally recognizable terms within the social conditions of South Africa today, making possible the catharsis; i.e., evoking the "pity and terror," which is the very essence of true tragedy. Within a much more limited milieu--limited by time and place and number of audience involved (due to limited communications)--this is exactly what the great Greek dramatists strove for and achieved in their best works. And it is precisely Fugard's "ruthless" personal sharing of his "divided" self--his empathy--which makes possible his creating of "divided" characters inhabiting a "divided" world (a gloriously metaphoric world; divided, tragically, artificially by fiat).

In considering the major influences on Fugard's playwriting,

it becomes obvious that most of his works, those in particular not created in collaboration, are extremely personal investigations into his own closest relationships. It began with Blood Knot and ended, perhaps, with The Road to Mecca (although A Place with the Pigs is subtitled, "A Personal Parable").

As we have seen in Blood Knot, Fugard was dealing with some deeply rooted guilt feelings toward his older brother, Royal. Continuing chronologically, Hello and Goodbye investigates the feelings of two other siblings, Johnny and Hester, and their unresolved feelings towards their father. In the play, Hester returns to the family home in quest of her share of a "compensation" which she supposes was paid to the father when he lost a leg while working on the railroad. The father is dead, but Johnny pretends he's alive so as to encourage Hester to leave. In this work Fugard is dealing with his unresolved feelings toward his own father; an odyssey he will continue again nearly 20 years later in Master Harold ... and the Boys. The latter play is considered by many to be Fugard's masterpiece, and it should be pointed out that in it he recreates an actual incident in his own life, whereas in the former and lesser play, the event is purely fictitious. Continuing to

consider only the "non-collaborative" works and those not based on specific statutes, we find that between these two fall People Are Living There (based on a real situation, but not a personal one), Dimetos (commissioned by the Edinburgh Festival and Fugard's most aberrant work; although perhaps not so "impersonal" as it might appear at first glance). I will leave discussing Dimetos for another chapter.

The two remaining non-collaborative works are Boesman and Lena and A Lesson from Aloes. Of Boesman and Lena, Mel Gussow writes:

To the outsider, Fugard's plays may seem unrelated to his personal life, but each of them has a specific root in his life--even a work as apparently remote as "Boesman and Lena. . . ." The inspiration for the play was the relationship between Fugard and his wife, the former Sheila Meiring, both of whom are educated white South Africans. Symbolically, from Fugard's point of view, he has held his wife--a poet and a novelist--"hostage" in South Africa. She would consider leaving; he must stay. (Gussow, NYer, 48)

Taken on this level, Boesman and Lena is notable for a variety of reasons: first, it is primarily Lena's play. Lena is the catalyst for all of the action, while Boesman comes closer to being an out-and-out villain than any other character Fugard has written

since his apprentice attempts in Friday and Nongogo. Right from the beginning of the play, in the first stage directions, we are given this picture of Boesman: "Boesman looks up slowly as Lena appears. He watches her with a hard, cruel objectivity."²⁴

Boesman begins immediately to harass and vilify Lena and there is no let up throughout the play. We are given character justification, but at no time does Boesman soften toward Lena or an old African (the only other character in the play, who speaks only in the Xhosa tongue) whom Lena invites to share the camp. Lena has to bribe Boesman with her last bottle of wine to let the old man stay. Boesman accepts the wine, but out of jealousy continues to vilify Lena and forces her and the old man to stay out in the cold. We see nothing in Boesman but anger and fear and the need for an underdog; to put others down in order to build himself up. If Fugard wrote Boesman as a surrogate for himself, he was merciless to the point of being unfair. All of the sympathy is for Lena. It is Lena who cares for both Boesman and the old African; who strives to comprehend her life; who sacrifices; who shares food and water; who rises to a nobility of spirit in final defiance of Boesman.

In writing this personal investigation into his closest

relationship, Fugard stripped the production, the physical requirements of the play, to bare essentials. Boesman and Lena could conceivably be done in an empty space, nearly devoid of scenery and with minimal lighting, costuming, and very few props. (Where Fugard comes closest to failure in all of his striving for "economy" and "pure theatre," is in the area of properties. In Boesman and Lena he achieves a degree of independence from hand and set props which he has never achieved before or since.) In achieving this simplicity, Fugard succeeds in creating a "realistic" drama, which also has the qualities of the more avant-garde dramas. One is reminded of the stark simplicity of Waiting for Godot, whose entire set description is: "A country road. A tree. Evening."²⁵ The set description for Boesman and Lena is, "An empty stage."²⁶

Fugard's admiration for Beckett and his works is very deep. He never hesitates to sing the praises of Beckett, and apparently Beckett has great confidence in Fugard as a theatre artist. In 1984 Alan Schneider, who was in London to direct a new Beckett play for the Edinburgh festival, was hit and killed by a motorcyclist. The Festival people contacted Beckett and asked if he would approve of Fugard as director. Fugard recalls: . . . "and Beckett said, 'Delighted.'

... It was better than any Tony I've ever received. ... Honestly, that was the biggest compliment I've ever had; very special to me."²⁷

Fugard is, however, not enthralled to the point of being uncritical:

FUGARD: Did you ever see Beckett's Rockabye?

CREAMER: I've got it on tape now; it was on television.

FUGARD: I watched it on television last night. ... You know, when it came on in New York, I didn't get around to seeing it; don't remember why. I think Beckett's Godot and Krapp's Last Tape (gesture of immense admiration), but I had the sense that with Rockabye, I was going to find myself in a place that I had already been in relationship to Beckett as a writer; that he wasn't going to surprise me, take me somewhere new. So, I watched last night's documentary, you know, the rehearsals. I know Alan Schneider quite well. ... and I had my sense totally confirmed; I was kind of disappointed. ... I wasn't surprised. I had been there. I had been there more tellingly and in a more forceful way with other things that he's written.

CREAMER: Well, he tossed it off in a couple of months, they said.

FUGARD: Just don't feel it's gone anywhere. Sam hasn't traveled. The absurdity was there, but--he presents laughter with the absurdity. (At this point Fugard crumpled onto the table and uttered a sudden sigh as if a great weight were suddenly on him.) Rockabye was like that! His work was without any leavening; it was very disappointing.²⁸ [emphasis mine]

Another profound influence on Fugard was Jerzy Grotowski.

However, Vandenbroucke points out (Truths, 108) that Fugard's passion for a "pure theatre experience" precedes any knowledge he had of Grotowski's work or writings. From 1967 to 1971, the South African government refused Fugard a passport. The only way he would be allowed to leave the country would be on an "Exit Permit." This meant that he would not be allowed to return. It would be exile. He has on many occasions specifically stated that his country is his source of inspiration and that he could not possibly write anywhere else. (No doubt this is the reason behind his "confining" his wife in South Africa, as mentioned above regarding Boesman and Lena.) It was not until 1970, while he was still a virtual prisoner in his own country that friends (Mary Benson and Barney Simon) sent him a copy of Grotowski's Towards a Poor Theatre and notes on Grotowski's American lectures. Fugard was thunderstruck.

Vandenbroucke quotes Fugard: "Grotowski caused me enormous inner tension and distrust of my worth" (Truths, 108) And yet, as Vandenbroucke goes on to point out, Fugard's considerations as to "pure theatre" predate his exposure to Grotowski by nine years as evidenced by Fugard's statements in an article in the South African journal, Contrast:

Let me therefore define what I mean by "the pure theatre experience." This experience belongs to the audience. . . . The ingredients of this experience are . . . very simple. . . : They are the actor and the stage, the actor on the stage. Around him is space, to be filled with meaning, using words and sounds, and at moments when all else fail him, including my words, the silence itself. . . . The cathartic possibility in theatre needs nothing more than the actor and the stage. For the miracle to happen it must come from within the actor. A good play will plant the seeds there. Externals will profit the play nothing, if the actor has no soul. (Truths, 108-09)

In the nearly three decades since that statement was published, Fugard's basic belief in the communication between actor and audience as the one true essential element in theatre has not changed, although he may allow himself to be "seduced" at times to his regret. We discussed the very complicated set of Yale Repertory Theatre's 1984 premier of The Road to Mecca. Besides the many candles which had to be lighted and extinguished in the course of the action, the upstage wall had an enormous window in it through which were visible replicas of large sculptures which were seemingly vital to the play. I asked Fugard about his feelings concerning the complications inherent in this set:

FUGARD: It'll be fascinating to see what comes out of the set in terms of the South African production, because I think I'm going to go in a completely different direction. I

don't think I'll have any statues at all. I've got the feeling that was one of my mistakes. I think those statues and the whole world should have been seen through the characters and not independent of the two actresses. I just think it split the focus of concentration. The next time with Mecca, I'm going to be very . . . I want more space--going to use more space and, as I say, no more statues. . . . We got hijacked. I mean Betsy (Elizabeth Doyle, set designer) did succeed in a certain measure of liberating herself, but there was too much of a documentary set and not an interpretation. You had nowhere to go from the start of the play. . . . It was remarkable, really, that the play was seen and appreciated by people for what it was. I really did make so many mistakes.

CREAMER: Why do you think you made mistakes?

FUGARD: I think I must say that the focus on what my directing has always been about in the past which, for some reason, I didn't focus on as ruthlessly and as brutally this time as I have in the past. In the past, my investment as a director is going to be as near to 100% as I can make it in terms of telling the story in performance; and that I will add in performance what is needed. A discipline which comes out of my circumstances in terms of working in South Africa--the circumstances being those of a poor theatre. I just never invested in big, extravagant set numbers. I think I got hijacked by all of these facilities that Yale put at my disposal. In South Africa when I come to terms with Bryceland in the role of Helen, this young South African actress and whoever's going to play Marius, I'll just go to that again--performance and the story line. Do it with one mirror and one candle. We're going to provide something the audience can use their imagination on. That's what Theatre's about. [all emphases mine]
(Int. Fugard, 24 May)

I mentioned to Elizabeth Doyle in passing one day that I liked her set very much. She said, "It's really Athol's set."

What is Fugard's debt to Grotowski? Or, perhaps more to the point, what does Fugard feel is his debt to Grotowski? As we have seen, Fugard was, philosophically, traveling in rather the same direction as Grotowski long before being exposed to Towards a Poor Theatre. (A poor theatre was Fugard's not by choice, but necessity; that's all he had!)

CREAMER: You were doing things like Grotowski was doing before you ever heard of him, right?

FUGARD: Well, I was trying to forge . . . I mean I was trying to tap a creative potential in the actors. . . . I've always thought of actors as being inordinately creative instruments, not simply interpretative, and I was trying to get that creativity . . . make them creative as well as interpretative, that led me in stumbling and fumbling around in the dark, because I'm not equipped by way of voice. . . . I'm not equipped, I know nothing about movement, so I didn't have that expertise on my side, so it was really a question of stumbling, fumbling around in the dark to try and turn the actor on. I eventually ended up doing things with actors in the way that Grotowski did. I mean, his is an experiment of the first order and simply because, as I say, I didn't have the expertise he has, the knowledge he has in certain directions, there was a limit as to how far I could take it. (Int. Fugard, 24 May)

Though acknowledging his respect and indebtedness to Grotowski, in ways which will be made clear in my analysis of Orestes, Sizwe Banzi is Dead, The Island and Statements after an Arrest Under the Immorality Act, Fugard ultimately became

disillusioned with Grotowski's methods and final results.

FUGARD: I'll tell you what I was able to do that Grotowski wasn't. Grotowski was not able to relate those experiments and adventures and explorations of his by way of tapping the actor's creative potential with . . . related to an input from a writer. And one of the results is that none of the Grotowski experiences live as scripts--for other actors to take on the challenge. Akropolis you can't do; Sizwe Banzi and The Island are at this moment being performed in Russia. In that respect, I have the edge on Grotowski.

CREAMER: I found Grotowski really fascinating, but I think it's also incredibly limited . . . limited to just what he was doing.

FUGARD: Well, look where he's got himself now.

CREAMER: Teaching . . .

FUGARD: Well, not only that, he takes people up to the top of the mountain, you know . . . on those picnics of his.
(Int. Fugard, 24 May)

Although Grotowski, philosophically, was dedicated to the actor/audience relationship--to the actor as "holy"--the resultant productions are virtually a one-time phenomenon; beyond repeating, and therefore extremely limited. Fugard creates theatre that can be shared. Perhaps Jonathon Miller is correct in stating that it would be "meddlesome" for anyone besides Fugard to direct his own plays; the fact remains that they are produced, directed, and

performed by many others and will continue to be for many years to come.

Nonetheless, reading Grotowski led Fugard to an experiment which he considers "... one of the most important experiences I have had in Theatre and I will be living with it, and using it, for as long as I continue to work. I can think of no aspect of my work, either as writer or director, that it has not influenced." 29 The experiment was Orestes; an "exposure" (as Fugard calls it), which was, according to a long-time friend and professional associate, Yvonne Bryceland, the most important turning point in his career.

Note that he does not claim it as an influence on his acting. Although he did "perform" in a peripheral way during the "exposures," he served as a kind of conduit between audience and performers:

CREAMER: But you didn't perform in it?

FUGARD: Just sat and watched.

CREAMER: Sat and watched?

FUGARD: It was absolutely essential to the experience that I was one of the forty or fifty people. My role was to teach the audience how to watch. I was a fourth character.

CREAMER: A fourth character?

FUGARD: See, it was impossible to detect the moment even when the action started. That was my job. It was only at that point at which Wilson--Wilson Dunster--. I'd be playing with my matchbox, and he made his commitment to performance. It started. Just by way of a tension on my side. We were just sitting around the room. Just by way of my concentration on what he was doing, as a kind of suggestion, will help the person next to me and on this side of me to look at that as well. (Int. Fugard, 24 May)

This experiment may have led to the occasional use of character as "conduit." Often the third character, even in a play as well-balanced as A Lesson from Aloes, serves to carry the emotions of the audience on to the stage. Gladys Bezuidenhout, although a catalyst in the final breaking of the bond of friendship between her husband Piet and Steve Daniels, is also a helpless observer of what the tensions of apartheid do to relationships. A victim herself, she ends in a kind of existentialist depression: helpless in the face of the world and quietly struggling for her sanity. One is reminded of Thoreau's belief that the "mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." It's possible that we identify more with Gladys than with the indomitable Piet and Steve.

Writing in his Notebooks, in November of 1977 Fugard reveals his sudden discovery of Gladys's importance:

Suddenly and inexplicably the story of Piet, Gladys and Steve . . . has come back to me. The complex of images and desperation which provide the energy for the piece, are intact. Those early attempts aborted because then I saw Piet at the centre of my story. Now I see that it is Gladys's play. Piet's monolithic goodness, the enormous assault made on it by him having been sent to Coventry by the comrades; the further assault of his having witnessed his wife's breakdown: then the yet further assault on his important friendship with Steve--despite all those assaults--it is not enough to sustain a piece. There are no ambiguities in Piet's experience. (Notebooks, 229)

Piet, in Heilman's terms, is not a divided character; Gladys is. Gladys may very well be, although a character in a Realistic drama, Fugard's most definitive existential hero(ine). She is a victim; a victim of and in an absurd world. Moreover, she is aware; more aware than the men, and this awareness leads to despair. Nonetheless, in the last moments of the play, Gladys displays the "courageous pessimism" which is the hallmark of the existentialist, in deciding on her own that she must return to the mental hospital. It is what she needs, at that moment, for her future well-being.

GLADYS: . . . I've got to go back, Peter.

PIET: Are you sure?

GLADYS: Yes. Aren't you? (She opens a drawer and starts to take out bottles of pills and toilet articles)

PIET: If you take some pills now, do you think we'll be all right until the morning?

GLADYS: Yes. Will you stay awake?

PIET: Yes.

GLADYS: And pack a suitcase for me?

PIET: Yes.

GLADYS: I'll go quietly this time.

PIET: Do you want to go to bed now? (She nods) Just call me if you want anything.

(He leaves the bedroom. Gladys sits at her dressing table quietly sorting out bottles of pills and a few personal possessions, which she will take with her. Piet, in the backyard, sits with the unidentified *aloe*.)

Curtain³⁰

In Chapter Two, I shall touch on Fugard's personal identification with the female characters in his major works. For now, consider the following May, 1977 entry in his Notebooks, which immediately precedes the November entry quoted above:

These past months I have been trying to live through one of the most intensely experienced crises of my life. If Sheila and Lisa [Fugard's wife and daughter] were to read that sentence they would stare at me in amazement, so effective has been the disguise of my inner agony, my death in life. As I write this I still see no light. But maybe tomorrow Who knows. The 'crisis' is, quite simply, the total extinction of my creativity. Without it I find living a pain I can only describe as intolerable. I have feared for my sanity. (Notebooks, 229) [emphasis mine]

In the introduction to A Lesson from Aloes, Fugard states

that completing a work depends on "... a relevance between the external specifics of the play ... and my sense of myself at the time."³¹ [emphasis mine]

The most telling use of this "character as conduit" is Willie in Master Harold ... and the Boys. The moment of highest tension in the play, the major climax, is when Hally spits in the face of Sam, his best friend and surrogate father. It is, undoubtedly, a moment of intense dramatic impact and is by itself a traumatic moment for the audience. But Fugard is not content to let that moment stand alone.

The text reads thus:

HALLY: (quietly) Sam ... (Sam stops and looks expectantly at the boy.

HALLY spits in his face. (A long and heartfelt groan from WILLIE.) For a few seconds SAM doesn't move.)³²

[emphasis mine]

Willie then, besides being a helpless observer to the action, expresses in a kind of "primal scream" the feelings of the audience members. They are also helpless; and, moreover, cannot even express their despair aloud, due to the social situation. Willie's groan makes a connection with the audience on another and more primal sensory level, and adds greater impetus toward the catharsis.

Catharsis may be a good term to describe Fugard's own

experience in the Orestes experiment, which he describes in the following way:

FUGARD: Well, it was . . . it amounted to a nervous breakdown. It was an artistic nervous breakdown.

CREAMER: For you, too.

FUGARD: Yes. Oh, I'm talking about myself. It was an artistic nervous breakdown! Because there was no question about there being a degree of . . . the appropriate word would be "madness?" Boy, you either went for that experience . . . if you approached it with any of the conventional demands in terms of what we consider communication, you've got nothing. (Int. Fugard, 24 May)

Orestes, like Akropolis, cannot be done again; certainly not in the same manner as the originals. But while Grotowski continued in the direction of "poor theatre," and the "holy actor," Fugard completed an artistic "resurrection" with Orestes. As Vandenbroucke points out, "Orestes is the bridge between the small-scale improvisational works such as The Coat and the more ambitious Sizwe Banzi and The Island." (Truths, 111) As has been stated above, the latter two were being performed in Russia in 1984, and are performed regularly around the world. After his "nervous breakdown," Fugard once again became "accessible" to audiences. The experiment was not an end in itself, but a

steppingstone to future work. The "madness," and what Lloyd Richards described as Fugard's "ruthlessness," will be considered in depth in a later chapter.

Grotowski's influence was very important, particularly in Fugard's development as a writer/director; that is, as a pragmatic man of the theatre. However, the strongest influence on his writing and philosophy of life was Albert Camus.

Camus, like Fugard, was African-born of European stock. Each was raised in relative poverty. Each attained fame at a relatively early age: Fugard in theatre; Camus in theatre and literature with his essays. Each was a journalist. Each led an adventurous life as a youth: Fugard as a merchant seaman; Camus as part of the French resistance in World War II. Each was strongly haunted by unresolved problems with parental relationships: Fugard's confused feelings for both mother and father, as explained above, parallel Camus' feelings; especially his ambiguous feelings toward his illiterate mother.

It will be a long time before he [Camus] is relieved of certain secrets, projecting onto Jacques Cormery, hero of The First Man, for example, "the shame and the shame of being ashamed" that Camus himself had felt when, accepted at the Lycée Bugeaud, he was about to write

"domestic" on his identity card, next to the heading "parent's occupation."³³

For both men, however, the mother was the strongest positive influence. Camus' father was killed in World War I and does not seem to have been a major influence on his work, but Fugard's father is a omniscient haunting presence. As Sam tells Hally (the young Fugard) in Master Harold, referring to the time they together had to carry Hally's drunken father home: "You went around as if you owed the world an apology for being alive. . . . That's not the way a boy grows up to be a man! . . . but the one person who should have been teaching you what that means, was the cause of your shame."³⁴ Each man suffered the "shame of being ashamed."

There are other parallels, the most important of which for both men was the feeling that they were destined to "bear witness" to the human dilemma. Each begins writing of the "particular:" Camus in his reports of the miseries of the Kabyle tribes and his contributions to the underground newspaper Combat in occupied France; Fugard in his early "documentary" dramas about the townships: The Cell, No-Good Friday, Nongogo. Each develops to writing "personal" confessional works in order to further investigate the human condition. Writing of Camus, Viallaneix

states: "Camus . . . will . . . in The First Man, permit himself the consolation of full confession."³⁵ I have already discussed the deeply personal theme of Master Harold, and shall investigate Fugard's even more intensely personal themes in The Road To Mecca in a later chapter.

I have noted above that, although Fugard gives credit to Grotowski for inspiring the experimental phase of his development, he was already working in a similar manner and Grotowski's influence was primarily a boost in a direction already taken. The influence of Camus may have a far more direct bearing on Fugard's work (particularly the non-collaborative works), but his "leap" into the forefront of twentieth century playwrights with The Blood Knot, a non-collaborative work, precedes his fascination with Camus by a full two years. (He had had brief exposure to Camus, Sartre and other existentialist philosophers in college.) Moreover, Fugard's philosophical views are already well-developed, though perhaps not entirely clear even to himself. Like Grotowski, Camus becomes a source of "verification" and support for ideas already formed in Fugard's mind. Fugard writing in his Notebooks in August, 1963 states:

Resumed reading Camus's Carnets. I would be happy to spend the next ten years deepening my understanding and appreciation of this man--and rereading and again rereading everything he has written.

Camus sounds out and charts the very oceans of experience, feeling and thought, on which I find myself sailing at this moment. His importance to me is monumental. Reading Camus is like finding, and for the first time, a man speaking my own language. (Notebooks, 94) [emphasis mine]

In December of that year, we find the following consecutive entries:

Finished Sisyphus. Impossible to describe the excitement, the total sympathy that exists for me with Camus's thinking. In the harsh but lucid world of his writing I seem to have found, for the first time, my true climate.

Thinking continuously about the Valley play--Hester and Boetie Smit. (Notebooks, 107)

Hester and Boetie Smit are the brother and sister in Fugard's next produced play, Hello and Goodbye. In reference to this play, Robert J. Green writes of Fugard's "need to give verbal definition to a 'full and complete expression' of Hester's sense of the absurd."³⁶ Note he refers only to Hester's sense of the absurd, not Boetie's (Johnnie). It is only Hester who attains Recognition; one of the essential elements of the tragic hero--and she will endure. Johnnie slips deeper into madness. A few months later, in December of

1963, Fugard writes of Morrie and Zach, the brothers in The Blood Knot: "If there is anything on that stage before the curtain drops it is lucid knowledge, consciousness. In effect, Morrie says: 'Now we know.' " Notebooks, 106) But I am not convinced that Zach knows. Zach is lacking another essential characteristic of the tragic hero: intelligence. Both will endure, but Morrie's knowledge makes of him the more agonized; the "carrier" of the pity and terror. In some future works, this "pattern" will persist. The "divided" personalities—those attaining "lucid knowledge"— will be Lena and Gladys. But they, unlike Morrie, Zach, or Johnnie, will move from the absurd to the position of "man in revolt." They will be aware of the choices available; will make a choice, and will endure.

Camus' thought evolved from the absurd to the philosophy of revolt and then with the character of Clamence in The Fall, was taken one step further. As Rhein states referring to Clamence: "This almost totally pessimistic portrayal of man as a creature of both good and evil . . . seemingly introduces an entirely new concept into Camus' thought. . . . The problem posed here is an intensely personal one."³⁷ One is reminded immediately of Master Harold, one of Fugard's most intensely personal plays, in which Hally (Fugard as a

young boy) destroys his closest relationship with Sam, the Black waiter and his surrogate father.

It is highly unlikely that Fugard is consciously paralleling Camus' evolution of thought in the writing of his plays, and as we shall see in a later chapter, he returns, in The Road to Mecca, to a more absurdist view of mankind. (Although Mecca is, again, a highly personal play, Helen [Fugard's surrogate] will represent the individual in conflict with an oppressive world.)

Beckett, Grotowski, and Camus may be the most powerful influences on Fugard's life and work, but of course they are not the only ones. On a pragmatic side, he recognizes the inspiration of Tone Brulin (mentioned above), John Berry, director of the 1964 American premiere of The Blood Knot, who was after Brulin, "... the next major external event in my life." (Int. Fugard, 24 May)

When asked for other influences, he names Malraux, Faulkner, American and Russian poets; particularly Robert Lowell, and Yeats (as a poet, not a playwright). (Int. Fugard, 24 May)

Fugard's own intellectual pursuits are wide-ranging and all are influential on his work. When a student at the University of Cape Town, Fugard majored in Philosophy and Social Anthropology

and his interest in the nature of man has never flagged. He is fond of quoting Charles Lyell's view of the earth in his Principals of Geology: "No vestige of a beginning; no prospect of an end." This very line is said and repeated by Philander in Statements after an Arrest Under the Immorality Act,³⁸ and Fugard states that that play, "left me with a doctorate in evolution." (Int. Fugard, 24 May)

The philosophical foundation of Camus' influence, together with the example of Faulkner as regional writer, Beckett's inspiring poetry of the theatre, the encouragement of Grotowski's experimentation, and his own need to bear witness while at the same time remaining true to his artistic inclinations, are the bases of Fugard's works. The resultant development from the early "melodramas" to the later mature plays will be considered in detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER II

THE NON-COLLABORATIVE PLAYS

I already knew that words on paper was what it was going to be about, but what sort of words on paper I wasn't quite certain of yet.

Athol Fugard¹

I believe that the above quotation accurately represents Fugard's conviction that his writing is the core, the very foundation, of his theatrical endeavors. Whatever else his accomplishments in world theatre, and they are manifold, all are tied to and mainly dependent on his playwriting. And, although he is multi-talented: an accomplished actor; an established director; a producer and theorist; and a voice for justice in his own country, he will be most remembered for his plays, a unique and powerful contribution to twentieth century Theatre. Fugard's impact on the world of theatre in his own time can easily be demonstrated by the following evidence supplied by the Theatre Communications Group: Shakespeare, Shaw and Fugard were the three most often-produced foreign-born playwrights in the 1983-84 and 1984-85 seasons at TCG constituent theatres.²

What accounts for this popularity? Why does the work of a

South African playwright whose plays (until very recently with the Spring, 1987 production of A Place With the Pigs at Yale University) all have a South African locale, have such an appeal in the United States and around the world?

Although a "regional" writer like Faulkner, for example, Fugard achieves universality by exhaustive study of relationships; by creating three dimensional characters, and not succumbing to the temptation to create "stereotypes" in order to advocate a cause. His work, deeply rooted in South African culture, goes far beyond mere propaganda. In the preface to his 1978 dissertation at Yale University, Russell Vandenbroucke states, "Because [Fugard's] plays are concretely rooted in his homeland, many critics have confused their context with their subject."³ Fugard has also been the target of criticism from fellow South African artists for his lack of direct politicizing in his works, but defends himself on the grounds that his first responsibility is to his art.⁴ Further criticism seems unworthy since Fugard's plays have added to the world's awareness of the inherent injustice of the South African system of apartheid, whether he deals directly with its strictures or not. Although only indirectly concerned with apartheid, audiences are brought to an

understanding of the horrors of apartheid through a personal and intense emotional involvement.

Frank Rich writes:

At the end of Athol Fugard's new play, two black men fox-trot to old-time jukebox music, gliding about a deserted South African restaurant, Astaire-Rogers style. The audience, meanwhile, is in emotional ruins. While some theatergoers struggle to stand and cheer, others cringe in their seats, their heads in their hands, so devastated that they can't even look at the stage.⁵

Master Harold . . . and the Boys, Fugard's 18th play and the first to be premiered outside of South Africa earned the above accolade among others and is considered by many to be his masterpiece. But that remains a moot point since many of Fugard's plays have a similar devastating impact and, moreover, Mr. Fugard is still writing; The Road to Mecca and A Place With the Pigs are later plays which premiered in 1984 and 1987, respectively (also at Yale University).

The purpose of this chapter will be to investigate the influences and dramatic structure, i.e.; plot, language, character development, and themes of Fugard's canon, but more importantly the evolution of his plays from the earliest efforts to the penultimate Road to Mecca. One must remember that Fugard,

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although influenced indirectly by such authors and theatrical personalities as Camus and Grotowski, was isolated in South Africa during his "apprenticeship" and is virtually self-taught. His first attempt at literature was a novel, based on his mother (a strong influence on his career) and written aboard ship when he was an able-bodied seaman on freighters roaming the world. He threw it overboard.

His early attempts at playwriting began with his involvement with and subsequent marriage to Sheila Meiring, who had studied theatre arts at the University of Cape Town, where Fugard studied Philosophy and Anthropology. There is some confusion in the records about which of his first two plays was the earlier, Mel Gussow reporting that The Cell was the first, followed by Klaas and the Devil and Vandenbroucke writing that it was the other way around. Also, both plays (which Fugard claimed to have destroyed, but which are in the hands of his wife) were possibly written in blank verse. The Cell most certainly was, but Vandenbroucke writes that Klaas was "Written in prose. . . ." (Truths, 12)⁶

When I spoke with Fugard, I assumed that both early plays were in verse and he did not correct me.

CREAMER: You destroyed "The Cell," and "Klaas and the Devil," but there was a note in your Notebooks about something called "A Place with the Pigs."

FUGARD: Destroyed.

CREAMER: If you ever come across them lying around anywhere, I'd really love to see them. That [Pigs] never got put on, did it? You wrote that in England, right? What I'd like to know is why you tried blank verse first.

FUGARD: Affectation. I just didn't know what Theatre was about. Christopher Fry. I didn't know what was in favor (emphasis mine). Christopher Fry and that sort of thing. Rather interesting. I just didn't know what . . . I thought Christopher Fry and T.S. Eliot were playwrights.⁷

With The Cell, whether it was first or second, Fugard attempted something at which he later became a master: the writing of a play based on an actual incident. His most successful plays are those which are taken from life. Although The Blood Knot, the work which first established his international reputation, is usually interpreted on one level as a metaphor for the South African problems inherent in apartheid, Fugard also relates it to his own older brother, Royal:

"The dominant element (emphasis mine) in my consciousness as I wrote the play was that it gave me an opportunity to deal with a very complicated emotional relationship with my brother," Fugard says. "In the crude categories of a very stupid educational system, I was

regarded as bright and my brother was regarded as slow. He was three years older, but I caught up with him in school and then went on to leave him behind. I passed my exams and he failed--and that created emotional complications.⁸

The Blood Knot, Master Harold . . . and the Boys, A Lesson from Aloes, Statements After an Arrest Under the Immorality Act, and even film scripts, The Guest, and Mille Miglia are all based in fact as are some of his scripts developed in collaboration with his theatre groups, i.e., The Coat, The Island, and Orestes. A later work, the above mentioned A Place With the Pigs, is based on the true story of Pavel Navrotsky, a deserter from the Russian Army in World War II, "... who spent 41 years hiding in a pigsty in his village, with only his wife for company."⁹ (The original play of this title, written in the late '50s and submitted to Joan Littlewood, was on the subject of the Immorality Act [as is Statements], and was destroyed by Fugard.)

As stated above, the texts of Fugard's first two plays are , by his own desire, not available for examination, so that any study of the development of his plays must necessarily begin with his third, which happens to be a full-length play, No-Good Friday.

The suggestion of religiosity in the title appears to be a very conscious choice. Apart from the practical fact that all of the

characters in the play are intimidated by the villainous character Shark and his gang of thugs who collect protection money each payday (Friday), the protagonist, Willie, ultimately sacrifices his life willingly as a matter of personal integrity. That his sacrifice is for his own sake and actually, rather than inspiring his "followers," alienates them is, moreover, the obverse of the Good Friday sacrifice of Christ. Also (and this is probably attributable to Fugard's inexperience as a playwright) this sacrifice is difficult to justify in dramatic terms. Willie's choice to submit to being murdered by Shark will apparently do no one any good now or in the future, but seems to be merely a sentimental attempt at presenting a larger-than-life romantic hero. Willie's sacrifice is not justifiable in terms of either character or situation.

Another possible reason for the rather shaky dramatic ground on which the play stands is that, although Fugard claims the play as his own, Zakes Mokae states that there was considerable collaboration between Fugard and the actors (a working method which Fugard would consciously expand upon in his future experimental works):

Since Athol was going to direct the thing, it made sense

that he also write it, though he had to do so as we went along There was a lot of exchange between Athol and the actors, but basically he was our pen man. If something didn't work, we'd throw it out and come up with something else. You had the stuff written, you had an idea, and if it didn't work you changed it around. (Truths, 16)

Fugard had evidently not quite found himself as a playwright at this time. The structure of his mature works display a penchant for "minimalism:" a nearly strict adherence to the Climactic form; few characters; one simple set; a single action; and a limited time frame. In No-good Friday there are twelve characters (the most he will ever have in one play); two rather complicated sets--the backyard surrounded by "a few rusty corrugated-iron shacks," and Willie's room--indoor and outdoor settings and changes from day to night which call for a complicated lighting design; and the action takes a week. The action is, however, simple and unobscured by sub plots. Willie's relationships with Guy and Rebecca, Tobias's attempts at a new life, and Willie's correspondence school studies are not dealt with in depth and are all peripheral and supportive of the single action of Willie's discovery of self.

The plot of No-good Friday is linear and uncomplicated: Tobias Masala, a country Black looking for work, is brought by

Father Higgins, a White priest, into the neighborhood and lives of some Sophiatown Black workers: Willie Seopolo, who is seeking to improve his life through correspondence courses for a bachelor's degree; Rebecca, Willie's woman; and Guy, Willie's best friend and a musician; and other township characters. In this Black township everyone pays protection money each Friday to Shark, a Black criminal. Tobias, in ignorance, scoffs at this offer of protection and is brutally slain by Shark's thugs. This incident, compounded by Father Higgins's request to Willie that he write a letter to Tobias's wife, triggers a crisis of conscience in Willie, and he reports Shark to the police. Since the police are White and paid off by Shark, this is an act tantamount to suicide. Rebecca, who has sensed Willie's growing estrangement over some period of time anyway, leaves him. Guy, after fruitless attempts to change Willie's course of action, leaves to pursue his big chance at a musical career. Willie waits for the inevitable end in fear, but with "peace of mind" and "peace of heart," at the play's conclusion.

Although this work is marred by contrivances, poor scene delineation, self-conscious writing and mostly stereotyped characters, the playwright's future style and power are evident if

one examines the character of Willie. No-good Friday is, as all of Fugard's plays, vitally connected to the South African milieu, but his work is lifted above the political or propagandistic level by his searching into character to the extent that he comes close to writing truly tragic heroes. Willie, though sentimentalized as a kind of Christ figure, is one who is transformed through Recognition, as exemplified in this tirade to his best friend, Guy:

WILLIE: . . . Is there nothing you can do except be booted around by life until it looks like your skin was black from the bruises and from nothing else. . . ? The world I live in is the way it is not in spite of me but because of me. You think we're just poor suffering come-to-Jesus-at-the-end-of-it-all black men and that the world's all wrong and against us so what the hell. Well I'm not so sure of that any more. I'm not so sure because I think we helped to make it, the way it is. . . . There's no excuse like saying the world's a big place and I'm just a small little Man. My world is as big as I am If I can't believe that, there's no point in living. (Dimetos, 160-61)¹⁰

Guy leaves and Willie awaits his inevitable end with the blind Moses, who promises to let Willie know when he hears "them" coming.

The passage above is not truly indicative of the more poetic writing to come and is a rather heavy-handed pointing up of the author's message. (If that message is that the intolerable situation

in South Africa is partly the responsibility of the Blacks, I suspect that storms of protest could very well meet a modern production of this play.) Moreover, there is really nothing in the play to justify Willie's sudden growth to a transcendental, Christ-like, Gandhian figure; and, as stated earlier, Willie's is a sacrifice which will convert no one. It seems, rather, Fugard's uncomfortable combination of the philosophic teachings of Christian martyrdom with the absurdist considerations of Camus. Is Willie's preference of death merely selfish? Nihilistic? Noble? Worthwhile? We do not know. Nor, possibly, did the novice playwright and his actor-collaborators. Hence, the sentimentality.

But Willie, in his recognition of the intolerable situation and his rebellion against it, towers above the other characters in the play and he is not portrayed as a crusader or martyr. It appears to be a novice's experiment in character. In future works, characters attaining some kind of recognition of the hopelessness of their condition will not escape through death; that's too easy. They will, as in reality (most particularly South African reality), continue living in a Sisyphian acceptance of a bad lot.

Willie is the only character who attains a state of

recognition. All others, no matter how close to Willie, continue on with their lives: Rebecca leaves, sadder, but no wiser; Guy accepts, but does not comprehend Willie's decision; Father Higgins and the other minor characters undergo no change. These characters, besides being Willie's emotional contacts, provide sounding boards for Willie's beliefs. Perhaps their primary function is to provide a method of getting Willie's thoughts in the open--and Willie's thoughts are Fugard's. Willie is a spokesman for the youthful, romantic Fugard.

Though Willie's "resurrection" is the dominant theme in the play, other themes which will reappear in later plays present themselves: the all-pervasive apartheid system; poverty, ignorance, victims victimizing victims; despair; the omnipresent, though never seen (except in Statements) police officials. In none of Fugard's works are the architects and minions of apartheid ever seen! They are merely alluded to; dealt with peripherally like evil spirits who are in total control. But, except in the collaborative works, he does not deal with them directly--there is no attempt at pointed propaganda. In dealing in depth with the human cost, the evil becomes clear to us.

Nongogo, Fugard's next full-length play represents a major step in his development as a playwright. It is a kind of middle ground, a stepping stone in the evolution of his style; it lies squarely between the excesses of Friday and the more theatrically frugal, though still evolving, Blood Knot. Nongogo is not a mature work, but the play reveals the direction in which Fugard was traveling. Fugard's move toward a poor (or in his vernacular "pure" theatre) is obvious on two important levels: simplification of set design and number of characters. Nongogo, however, calls for only a single indoor set which, though busy with set props, changes little and negates the need for drastic lighting changes. Moreover, in Nongogo, the number of characters is reduced to five. Fugard's writing also undergoes considerable change, which, like other aspects of his rapid development, came about out of a sheer, unavoidable necessity to meet the challenges of a "poor/pure" theatre.

The history and plot of Nongogo are as follows: the play was produced within ten months of Friday (June 1959) and was written in haste. As Fugard himself states, "There was none of the diligence and minute attempts to rewrite and reexamine a speech or page of

dialogue. This started when I wrote The Blood Knot. . . ." (Truths, 25)
 (That the original production of Blood Knot – current published text notwithstanding – ran more than four hours without intermission leads one to suspect the absolute verisimilitude of that statement.)
 Fugard was still concentrating on the problems of Blacks as affected by the apartheid society, but the actual connection between the problems and the society are still more or less "suggested," rather than dealt with directly. The characters of Queeny and Johnny, however, are totally justified as inevitable results of the oppressive system: Queeny is an ex-prostitute who now runs a "shebeen;" Johnny is trying to pick up the pieces of his life after a year spent in sexual humiliation in the all male mining compounds. (Dimetos, 109)

The plot of Nongogo is exceptionally simple and linear. Johnny, a young man in business for himself selling table cloths comes into Queeny's shebeen in "one of the townships around Johannesburg." After a brief confrontation, Queeny develops a liking for Johnny (a development very difficult to justify in terms of Queeny's character and background), agrees to go into business with him and with complete faith gives him ten pounds for materials.

Sam, Queeny's ex-pimp and friend doesn't want her to close down the shebeen and leave, so he contrives a scene with a shebeen customer to "accidentally" let Johnny know of Queeny's past. Johnny is shocked, confronts Queeny with his suspicions and upon learning the truth, from her, leaves. Queeny, hardened again, reopens the shebeen.

As mentioned above, the important developments in Fugard's craft as exemplified in Nongogo have to do primarily with the merely technical aspects of set design and limited number of characters. From the very beginning our suspension of disbelief is challenged by Queeny's sudden attraction toward Johnny. This comes out of nowhere and is not justified either by character or situation. How can we believe that a hardened prostitute/shebeen owner can become so suddenly enamored of an apparently average, naive young man? How can we believe, moreover, given Johnny's background as mine worker and victim of continual sexual assaults in the compounds, in his naiveté? Who would not, in this place and this time, recognize Queeny's type and be at least somewhat suspicious of her background? Why do either of these characters so completely accept the other at face value?

The entire action of the play is based on this completely unbelievable premise: that these two are, in one case, easily manipulated, and in the other, naive to the point of oblivion. One may be able to justify Johnny's attraction to Queeny, but Queeny's to Johnny? In the briefest of meetings, Queeny's interest in Johnny is piqued in the first two pages of dialogue. Moreover, her changes are instantaneous and, at times simply indicated in stage directions:

[Queeny has been watching him carefully. She starts smiling and at the end of his little sales talk bursts into laughter. Her personality changes (emphasis mine) . . . the moody aggressive person is gone.];

while Johnny's attitude is far too aggressive, considering the time and place and his background:

QUEENY. You mean has anybody got any money? [Johnny nods.] Nobody's got any money over here.

JOHNNY. Except you . . . and you got it all.

QUEENY. Look . . .

JOHNNY. It's true, isn't it?

QUEENY. Better watch your tongue if you want to stay out of trouble.

JOHNNY. I'm always getting that advice . . . and quite often the trouble But then maybe Like your laugh. Maybe other people never seen that.

QUEENY. [turning away] Maybe not. [Pause.] No, not many people have seen that.

JOHNNY. You should show it off. It's good. [Queeny turns and looks at Johnny. It is a split second of embarrassment (sic). Johnny picks up his suitcase.] Anyway . . .

QUEENY. Look, maybe I like the way you speak. Have a drink on the house. (Dimetos, 109)

Perhaps with two very expert and appealing actors this scene could be made believable, but it is a considerable challenge. As with Will Seopolo in Friday, some character credibility is sacrificed to the need to tell a sentimental tale. A major difference here, however, signaling Fugard's philosophical development as related to the South African milieu, is that both main characters lose everything and must return to their unhappy lives. Willie Seopolo will die (i.e., escape). Queeny and Johnny must continue living. The shadow of Sisyphus takes shape here and will materialize more clearly in Fugard's first internationally acknowledged work, the stunningly successful The Blood Knot.

The Blood Knot represents a quantum leap in Fugard's evolution as a playwright, and possibly as actor, producer and director. Again, this work was written with all of the meager conditions of theatre in which Fugard was forced to work in mind

and he responds with a one set, two character play, reducing the number of characters to the bare minimum for dialogue. Perhaps the one major new element in this work, which will reflect itself in much of Fugard's subsequent best work, is the "autobiographical" foundation. (Fugard himself has said that No-good Friday and Nongogo are "inflated verse [sic] dramas by a liberally informed white." (Truths, 25) As noted above, both were written with particular companies of actors in mind and Friday, at least, was written in quasi-collaboration with the company. Blood Knot, however, was conceived and written by Fugard alone. The first indication of the setting, themes and characters of the play are in his Notebooks, 1960-1977.) (Notebooks, 9-10)¹¹

On one level, The Blood Knot can be interpreted (and very often is) as an analogue for the South African society with Morrie, the light-skinned brother, representing the privileged class and the dark-skinned Zach, the downtrodden. One theme then is that, although one class has advantages over the other, each is effectively trapped in the artificially created class structure: victimizers also victims of their own victimization. However, as Fugard himself has stated, the play was written in order to deal

with guilt feelings he had concerning his older brother, Royal, who "In the crude categories of a very stupid educational system. . . , was regarded as slow. . . . I passed my exams and he failed--and that created emotional complications." ¹² (In regard to the later development of Fugard as an artist, it is interesting to note the following exchange:

CREAMER: Blood Knot's really about Black person/White person I mean, even though they're both from the same parents, right?

FUGARD: Quite frankly, I don't know what the Blood Knot's about anymore.

CREAMER: You don't . . . ?

FUGARD: I don't know.

CREAMER: You'd better find out; you're acting in it next year.

FUGARD: Well, that's what . . . that's most probably what will happen.

CREAMER: You can explore it.

FUGARD: Yes. Zakes and I will rediscover it. ¹³

On a personal level then, Morrie's (Fugard's) last line in the play takes on another meaning, implicit in which is the desire to cut the knot: " . . . You see, we're tied together, Zach. It's what they call

the blood knot . . . the bond between brothers." (B & L, 97)¹⁴ Morrie is trapped in this divided house; Fugard is not.

I think it is safe to say that, unless the playwright had acknowledged the personal inspiration for his work, it would always be taken as an allegory for the South African dilemma; but it should be pointed out that nearly all of Fugard's non-collaborative works are of a very personal nature; and, indeed, as his career progresses, he, himself, occasionally becomes the protagonist in his plays--only somewhat disguised--and, as in Master Harold . . . and the Boys, barely disguised at all.

In reading Fugard's notes for Blood Knot as published in his Notebooks - 1960-1977, one sees that even at this stage the "romantic" Fugard was alive and well, at least in the planning stages. In these notes, the woman was to be an integral part in the plot, whom Morris actually meets and falls in love with, threatening the brothers' already tenuous relationship. (If Fugard had followed this tack, Blood Knot might have become a well-written melodrama involving a kind of love triangle. Fortunately, he dropped the woman's role, limiting her presence to a few letters.)

The situation--the imprisonment in a blood tie--cannot

continue after the appearance of Ethel: things have been brought to the surface--Zach's hate and envy, Morris's crippling sense of responsibility. To continue would mean death--spiritual or physical. The guillotine must fall--cutting off something.

Morris is the better equipped mentally for this last fight--also, weakened by thought and sympathy. Zach has the physical strength and impetus of hate. Zach wins. (Notebooks, 10)

A number of intriguing elements are present in the above excerpt. As mentioned, Fugard's romanticism; moreover there is still a hint of a violent end to the frustrations of life in an intolerable situation (Zach wins); taken as an analogue for apartheid, a prediction that the Blacks will win; and (again on a personal level) a hint of Morris's (Fugard's) "crippling sense of responsibility." (In choosing the word "crippling," Fugard gives a foreshadowing of his next play, Hello and Goodbye.)

Even in a much later work, The Road to Mecca, Fugard considers his own fears of the loss of his creative powers as thematic. Consider this exchange regarding the lead character of Helen in Mecca:

CREAMER: I made a connection between Helen and the notes you made in your Notebooks about that period you went through where you said you were fearing for your sanity . . . going through a period of not being able to create.

FUGARD: In retrospect I realize now that that experience . . . I think I was a little . . . dealing with that while I was writing it. . . . Writing that aspect of Helen, when she talks about what it means when . . . it wasn't at the start . . . halfway through, or possibly after I'd dealt with Helen that I realized that I was writing about something that I had lived through myself. . . . That was when I realized, in fact, that with Helen, I had written an essay on the little I understand about my own creativity. That in Helen, I've actually written an essay on aspects of my own creativity as I understand and experience it. I don't know where it comes from and then when it doesn't come all you can do is wait. Waiting is, of course, no guarantee. You can't force it to come, and that there . . . could come a time . . . when it just doesn't come. When you have exhausted your vision. I've seen it happen to a lot of writers, who went on writing into a period where their vision was exhausted and they had . . . nothing . . . more. . . to say. There's no more adventure To know when to stop. To know when, like Helen . . . that is the challenge I've presented myself in that play; to try, myself, to recognize the moment when I say, "This is as far as I can go!" [emphasis mine] Richard, you're quite right, is that finally--and it wasn't intentional--but as it has turned out to be, Helen is a disguised essay on the little understanding I have of my own creative energy.¹⁵

(One could further speculate that, since much of Fugard's inspiration for his female characters is inspired by his mother ["There's something of my mother in all the women I write"] and, since his first sustained effort at writing was the novel based on his mother which he wrote and then threw overboard into a Fiji lagoon while a merchant seaman in 1953 and, since Helen is a

disguised essay on himself, he has achieved a kind of confluence; a merging of sensitivities which is as nearly Oedipal as narcissistic.)

The plot of Blood Knot is simply this: Two brothers, one dark (Zachariah) and the other light-skinned (Morris) live together in a shack in a "Korsten location." Zach works and Morris keeps house, encouraging Zach to save his salary so they can buy a farm someday. One of the many sacrifices this entails is that Zach must give up his already modest recreations, including drinking and women. To relieve the growing tension in the shack, Morris hits upon the idea of Zach getting a female "pen-pal" through the newspaper. Morris must write the letters since Zach is illiterate. Both brothers are excited by the project. Zach brings home a newspaper and a letter is sent. There is a response, and in the second letter the woman sends a photograph. To Morrie's horror, she turns out to be a White woman.

Zach insists on maintaining the communication anyway, but when the pen-pal writes that she is going to visit Korsten to meet Zach in person, the tension mounts. Zach insists that Morrie, who can "pass" for White, meet her pretending to be Zach and to that end all of the savings for the farm are used to buy Morrie a suit of

clothes. The pen-pal writes again saying that she is engaged to be married and must break off writing, much to Morrie's relief. Enticed by Zach, Morrie dresses in the new clothes and the brothers play a game; Morrie pretending to be a White man, Zach "playing" the Black. Morrie intimidates Zach, but the tables are turned as the game progresses and leads to a near violent confrontation, which is only avoided when the omnipresent alarm clock rings, bringing the brothers back to reality. They recognize that they are destined to live out their lives "... without a future." (B & L, 96) "Saved by the bell," as it were, the brothers absorb what has happened and the play ends with the following lines:

ZACHARIAH. What is it, Morrie? The two of us ... you know ... in here?

MORRIS. Home.

ZACHARIAH. Is there no other way?

MORRIS. No. You see, we're tied together, Zach. It's what they call the blood knot ... the bond between brothers.

[As Morris moves to his bed ...]

CURTAIN (B & L, 97)

This moment, the end of the play, is simply loaded with the broadest, deepest meaning. It "sums up" in a few sentences all that

has passed before, whether as analogue or reality. One feels, therefore, that this discovery should be pointed up--emphasized. And yet, in the 25th anniversary revival on Broadway in 1985, Fugard, recreating his original role of Morrie (with Zakes Mokae recreating the role of Zach), spoke this line very matter-of-factly, almost prosaically. Keeping in mind that Fugard also directed both the original and this revival, and that he is self-taught and unique theatre artist, we sense a genius at work here. Although Morrie and Zach come to some kind of understanding of their situation, it is not with any sense of triumph or victory. Always, with the understanding, comes the accompanying intuitive knowledge that this situation cannot be changed. Perhaps herein lies the true tragedy of South Africa. Oedipus, for all his agony, recognizes the truth and can take some kind of compensating action; he can wander as a symbol for all to see of what happens to a man with too much pride who challenges the Fates. For Morrie and Zach, recognition of the truth will lead to only more of the same futile, anonymous existence. There is no sense of achievement or (what is worse) justice. Why should there be any kind of grand dramatic finale? (Many in the revival audience were actually surprised that the play

ended with that "low key" exchange and Fugard and Mokae, after the fadeout and restoration of lights, moved downstage for curtain calls towards a silent house.)

Again, this discovery without hope echoes both the Absurdist considerations of Camus and the seeming hopelessness of the South African apartheid society. Moreover, it shows the tenacity of the human spirit. As Benedict Nightingale wrote in the New Statesman:

What may have distracted some critics is that Fugard's interests go beyond politics. . . . Fugard's real subject is the spirit's resilience. . . .¹⁶ [emphasis mine]

Fugard has written, "Economy. To write the line which, coupled with the actor's gesture, will say the 'whole' and not one jot more . . . or better still the line which needs the actor's gesture to complete it." (B & L, xxiv)

Besides a newfound economy, Fugard's use of language for both character delineation and advancement of plot is further developed. Whereas in Nongogo and No-Good Friday the dialogue served primarily the practical purpose of moving the story along with character response sometimes, as mentioned above (p. 72), indicated in the stage directions, the dialogue of

The Blood Knot establishes and allows for the natural development and justification of both plot and character in realistic and acceptable ways. The key example is the use of Zach's slowness of mind, his inability to read, and his poor retention. In using this device (a very believable device, considering the social conditions), Fugard at once gave himself the options to : a) develop both characters; b) establish the ground for much humor; c) justify reading of newspapers and letters aloud (informing the audience of plot); d) set varieties of tempo, mood and rhythm; e) allow for a less awkward development of the plot line; and f) create a less contrived exposition.

There are still, however, some weaknesses and assumptions which tax one's suspension of disbelief. Can we believe that, in one year, Zach could have forgotten "woman" to such an extraordinary degree that he must see donkeys copulating outside his window to rekindle his memory of sex?

That Fugard was still struggling to express himself as a playwright is clear in the somewhat contrived use of monologues in some sections. As mentioned above, Zach's

soliloquy (Sc. 6) is justified and brilliantly written. The earlier monologues don't quite attain this stature, although the imagery--Fugard's blossoming "poetics," gains great strength. For example, Morrie's first monologue at the very end of Scene One gives us a deep insight into his past and his feelings regarding Zach, but is it justifiable to have this spoken aloud to his (conveniently) sleeping brother? Most of what is revealed will be recapped in later scenes anyway and more believably, so this affectation of the monologue is, again, evidence of the young playwright's self-consciousness. However, Morrie's character is believably developed in this soliloquy while he maintains a connection to reality and important objects. Consider the closing lines regarding Zach's coat. After two full pages of describing his journey back to Zach and home (two mundane and, again, self-conscious pages) Morrie ends the soliloquy with this moving and entirely believable passage:

You were wearing this coat. It's been a big help to me, this warm old coat ... then ... and in the days that followed. but specially then. It was all I saw at first And that night, in the dark, when you slept, I put it on ... because, I've got to get to know him again, I said, this brother of mine, all over again.(Morris puts on Zachariah's coat It is several sizes too large.) It was a big help. You get right

inside the man when you can wrap up in the smell of him, and imagine the sins of idle hands in empty pockets and see the sadness of snot smears on the sleeve, while having no lining and one button had a lot to say about what it's like to be him ... when it rains ... and cold winds. It helped a lot. It prepared me for your flesh, Zach. Because your flesh, you see, has an effect on me. The sight of it, the feel of it ... it ... it feels, you see. Pain, and all those dumb dreams throbbing under the raw skin, I feel, you see ... I saw you again after all those years ... and it hurt. (B & L, 20-21)

This, again, could be taken on more than one level. It can be accepted as a sibling trying, out of guilt, to reconnect with his brother; or as allegorical--as a plea to White South Africans to try to feel what it is like to be Black South Africans--a plea for empathy. Whichever way one chooses to read it, it is, in style and content, head and shoulders above anything in his prior works. (That there is still a struggle for expression is evident in that the coat referred to, within a few lines, moves from "...this warm old coat," to "...while having no lining and one button had a lot to say about what it's like to be him ... when it rains ... and cold winds."

With The Blood Knot Fugard established a hallmark of his style which is development of character through dialogue. Plots are of secondary importance in Fugard's plays and we come to know the characters more by what is said than by what is done. It is a delicate merging of the Aristotelian concepts of Language and

Character that will be one of the outstanding identifying traits of Fugard's structures.

Consider, for example, the development of the character of Zach, and the beauty of expression in the following:

ZACHARIAH. In a woman's name, man, there is

[Pause, and a gesture.]

When you call it out loud on a Friday night, you know, outside her door, it's like

[Pause, and a gesture.]

when you whisper it, man, in the grass, in the wet grass, when you start to fiddle and she makes her little cries, it's ... it's ...

[Pause, and a gesture.]

....The one that gave me the happiest heart was Hetty She was second hand. The whole world had fingered her. Connie was new, but Hetty was second-hand ... something old and a long time ago. It was my youth. You took your chance, you see. You went to her window and called her name and she came when the sound was right Old Sarah sent me to borrow a candle, because Joseph was dying and she needed the light. So I stood in the street, very shy, and called: Hetty ... Hetty! I only wanted a candle for old Sarah to see Joseph dying, but Hetty came to the window because she liked the sound. She took me and taught me. And you know something? It always worked if I did it that way. And not just Hetty. Sanne too, and Maria--... they always came if I spoke--like asking for candles. (B & L, 29)

The "natural" figurative speech: "She was second-hand," "I only wanted a candle for Sarah to see Joseph dying," "they always came if I spoke--like asking for candles" reveals a clever but very

sensitive quality in Zach; a kind of primal innocence which endears him to us even as we listen and are reminded of his rape of the young girl, Connie. Moreover, the facility with imagery is apparently the result of English not being Zach's first language. In such cases, people tend to paint pictures with words. (It is reminiscent, for example, of the more developed imagery of the Irish in Sean O'Casey's plays. In both instances, relatively uneducated people speak flowing and beautiful language and, in both instances, this is entirely justified by the cultural realities.)

As a further example, the image the bothers share of the mother is one of beauty and mystery, and their expression of these memories further reveals Fugard's growing facility to evoke tenderness and beauty within the dreary conditions.

MORRIS. . . . How it comes back, hey! and what about her, Zach? There's a memory for you. I tried it out the other day. Mother, I said, Mother! A sadness, I thought.

ZACHARIAH. Ja.

MORRIS. Just a touch of sadness.

ZACHARIAH. A soft touch with sadness.

MORRIS. And soapsuds on brown hands. (B & L, 19)

Scene six of the play is simply a brief soliloquy by Zach, speaking to the "presence" of his mother and contains some of Fugard's most beautiful and, at the same time, functional writing ever. It is at once literal and figurative, evoking the longing and despair of Zach; his relationships with both his mother and Morrie and (implied by his reference to mother's feet--in reality, his own feet--) his job; and yet it remains totally believable as words this character might be capable of speaking. It has the beauty of simplicity and is, finally, unstrained and unself-conscious.

The vital change then from Nongogo to Blood Knot is not in "exterior" qualities, i.e. set, number of characters, time frame, etc. Although the cast is reduced from five to two, the locus is still a one set, rather prop-crowded, dingy room which changes little through the play. Moreover, although the time frame of the play is probably less than two weeks, it is still a Climactic structure, the plot being singular, linear and simple. As will be noted, the "quantum leap" mentioned above is in the extraordinary detail in character development and relationships and the vastly improved use of language.

Zach's inability to read and the resultant reading aloud of

newspapers, letters, and the bible by Morrie also lend themselves to character development and much humor (which may not be evident in reading the play, but which springs out in performance).

In beginning the first letter from Zach to his pen-pal, Ethel, from the town of Oudtshoorn, we have this exchange:

MORRIS. To begin with, address her.

ZACHARIAH. What?

MORRIS. Address her.

ZACHARIAH. Oudtshoorn. (B & L, 31)

"Oudtshoorn," moreover, becomes a kind of running gag

Later, after the brothers have recaptured the feeling of their youth in the game of driving a car, the game they played as youngsters, they return to the present; the reality that Ethel is White and her brother is a policeman:

MORRIS.... I often wonder

ZACHARIAH: Same here.

MORRIS: I mean ... where do they go? The good times in a man's life?

ZACHARIAH: And the bad ones?

MORRIS: Yes. that's a thought. Where do they come from?

ZACHARIAH: Oudtshoorn. (B & L, 52)

And the scene ends.

The readings from the Bible are another instance of the playwright's struggle for expression. There are two readings: the first near the end of Scene One (shortly thereafter, Morris quotes from memory a line from the story of Cain and Abel, but does not read); and a second close to the end of Scene Two. Both seem rather contrived, but where the first results in rather subtle satire, the second is used to impel a crisis for Morris and is rather forced.

The first points up the rather absurd condition of people who have accepted the god of the conqueror. It is about a meat offering to be "baken in a pan" and which inspires the following exchange:

ZACHARIAH: Sounds nice.

MORRIS: Yes. But we haven't got a pan. (B & L, 18)

It is simple to read this last as "we haven't got a pot."

The second reading is, again, contrived. Morris chooses to read Matthew and the "begats," which is in and of itself very funny, but also leads naturally to Zach becoming suspicious of Morris's sexuality (or lack of sexuality).

ZACHARIAH. You ever had a woman, Morris? [Morris looks at Zachariah blankly, then pretends he hasn't heard] Have you?

MORRIS. What do you mean?

ZACHARIAH. You know what I mean.

MORRIS. Why?

ZACHARIAH. Have -- you -- ever -- had -- a -- woman?

MORRIS. When? (B & L, 33)

Besides being quite humorous, this questioning leads to a brief, defensive monologue by Morris which reveals more of his character. Note, not only Morrie's defensiveness, but the subtle revelation of character and relationships in what is now a less forced imagery than earlier speeches.

MORRIS. Listen. You think I don't know there's woman in this world, or that I haven't got two legs and trousers too? That I haven't longed for beauty? Well, I do. But that's not what you're talking about, is it...? That's two bloody donkeys on a road full of stones and Connie crying in the bushes. Well, you're right about that. I am not interested. I touched the other thing once, with my life and these hands, and there was no blood, or screaming, or pain. I just touched it and felt warmth and softness and wanted it like I've never wanted anything in my whole life. Ask me what's the matter with me for not taking it when I touched it. That's the question. Do you want to know what was the matter with me? Do you? Zach? [Pause, then softly.] Zach? (B & L, 34)

Zach has again conveniently fallen asleep during this speech, and the scene ends. But what is Morris's problem, if any, concerning sex? We will never know for certain. What we are given is an intimation of fear of sex as an analogue for the emotional emasculation resulting from being a Colored man in a White-supremacist society. Later, at the opening of scene five, Morrie will be thrown into a near panic when there is a knock on the door in the middle of the day and he assumes it is the pen-pal, Ethel.

Moreover, in this revelation the depth of Morrie's isolation from society and humanity is made clear and we become more aware of his desperate need for the farm. For him the farm is an escape from the world and his own sense of guilt concerning sex, his passing for White, his feeling of having deserted Zach many years before. In his "selling" of the dream to Zach, he produces a map of South Africa and points out his preferred spots:

MORRIS. . . . Now, I want you to take a look at this. . . . There . . . and there . . . and there . . . and down here . . . do you see it? Blank. Large, blank spaces. Not a town, not a road, not even those thin little red lines. And, notice, they're green. That means grass. (B & L, 10)

That no Africans by law may own or occupy land, and

Coloreds may only in a few designated areas gives evidence of the extent of Morrie's desperate self-delusion. If one is aware of the realities of the South African system, one is under no illusions as to chances of Morrie's dream being realized.

Thematically, with The Blood Knot, Fugard began to deal with the more insidious qualities of apartheid. Unlike in his previous works, in which the characters are aware of the pragmatic difficulties imposed by the system and either accept or reject it, in *Morris and Zach* we begin to see how being raised in South Africa leads to an acceptance of mores on a more subliminal level. In Scene Three when Morrie and Zach are reminiscing joyously about their childhood, Morrie will say, "And the trees! Me and you in the trees. Tarzan and his ape." (B & L, 51) There's no doubt as to who was Tarzan and who the ape. Later, when the brothers plot to have Morrie meet Ethel as Zach, Morrie speaks of the difference between the White man and themselves:

MORRIS. . . . The clothes will help, but only help. They don't maketh the white man. It's that white something inside you [T]his whiteness of theirs is not just in the skin. . . . Haven't you noticed it? They look at things differently without fear. They're born with that sort of courage. (B & L 73-74)

Fugard's ability to present the insidiousness of the South African situation will become refined as he continues to write and will reach a peak in Master Harold . . . and the Boys. Hally will on several occasions make off-handed remarks which are rife with prejudice, but he and Sam and Willy will not even be consciously aware of it. I will deal with this when analyzing Master Harold below.

Another theme which was touched on in the earlier plays, but which is brought to a more poignant extreme in Blood Knot is the "divisiveness" of the apartheid regime. In both No-Good Friday and Nongogo, the protagonists are separated from each other due to the pressures of living in this divided society, but the separation is both physical and emotional. It is complete and pragmatic. But in Blood Knot, for the first time, the division of the characters is, analogously, not physical. It is purely emotional. The characters will continue to live together; trapped, as it were, but their relationship will never be the same again. Too much has been learned. Sisyphus begins to push his boulder up the hill.

Another theme which was hinted at in the earlier works but which is clearer here is the essential "immaturity" of the

characters. It is not only Zach, with his lack of education, who is rather puerile, but also Morris, who attempts to escape into illusion. Neither can be entirely in touch with reality, and the South African system almost demands this of all of its citizens. Blacks and Coloreds receive inferior educations and are rarely allowed into jobs of any responsibility. "Disadvantaged" Whites are protected by the system; their jobs cannot be taken by members of an "inferior" race, and their pay scale is generally three to four times that of the Blacks and Coloreds for doing the same work. ¹⁷ Where is the need or opportunity to mature? More to the point, theatrically speaking, how do these characters express themselves?

This problem of expression led Fugard, unconsciously, to develop a favorite "device." It is a device which originates in The Blood Knot, and will be used in every other subsequent play. It is the device of having the characters play "games" and "role-play" in many of their exchanges with one another. Besides being indicative of character immaturity, this device lends itself to making the plays more dramatically interesting. But, it was unconscious:

CREAMER: No one's ever pointed this out, that I can remember. You have a device that you use in all of your plays. I'm sure you're aware you're doing it, where your

characters play out things. In almost every play the characters get involved in "acting out" something, you know; characters doing acting. Every play you have that in there.

FUGARD: A device? I was never aware that it was there with any consistency.

CREAMER: Oh, it is! Don does it in People Are Living There; the Climactic moment in Blood Knot happens while these two are playing a game; they're playing the "White man baas" game. You've got the suit, right; you start playing a game . . .

FUGARD: I suppose in a way . . . it certainly wasn't a conscious device. But what I think it comes from is . . . just reflects possibly . . . possibly a tendency in me as a dramatist towards dramatizing. Because that is what you're saying these characters do; rather dramatize the moment.

CREAMER: So it becomes bigger than life for a little while.

FUGARD: Yes, that's right. I think that's the character in the play being me; me writing the play, if you know what I mean.

CREAMER: I thought that was really a very conscious device.

FUGARD: No. Not at all. Oh I can see it now: I can see Boesman acting out the destruction of the pondoks, you know, being the bulldozer and all that.

CREAMER: Johnnie does it "ad nauseum" in Hello and Goodbye. Piet and Steve play. It's such a consistent thing, I thought it was a conscious device of yours.

FUGARD: No. No. 18

Interestingly, this exchange took place after the world

premiere of The Road To Mecca, which Fugard admits is a "disguised essay on the little understanding I have of my own creative energy."¹⁹

Another consistency in Fugard's creativity is his writing of plays based on actual and/or biographical events, and the next play I will consider, People Are Living There is Fugard's most direct expression of actual occurrences. It was written about the characters and events in a rooming house in which Fugard lived in 1958 with his wife and daughter and is made up of "literal transcriptions of his experiences there." (Truths, 79) Although not considered biographical by anyone I have encountered, there are several parallels between Fugard and the character of Don, which I will consider below.

It was at the time when Fugard worked in the Johannesburg Native Commissioner's Court (see Ch. I: 1), that he lived in "an old, double-storeyed house in Braamfontein, Johannesburg . . ." (B & L, 101), the exact locale of the play.

Although People has a first production date more than two years after that of Hello and Goodbye, it was the first one written, and I will consider it in that sequence. (Fugard thought that "the

primary obstacle to getting the play done at first was the eagerness of producers and the public for another Blood Knot. " (Truths, 87) People was finally produced, although outside of South Africa, at the Close Theatre in Glasgow on March 13, 1968.

The first mention of the seeds of People in the Notebooks is of an image: "One image--has generated an old complex of ideas - Milly's 'cri de coeur' when she finds she's been in her dressing gown all day." (Notebooks, 51) (Specific images, usually visual ones, have generated many of Fugard's works: the Korsten location for Blood Knot; a photograph of a man with a pipe in one hand and a cigarette in the other for Sizwe Banzi is Dead; a derelict White drunk for Hello and Goodbye; the many Lenas he has seen; newspaper photographs of a couple caught in the act of violating the Immorality Law for Statements; Helen Neimand's sculptures for Mecca.)

At first exposure, People may seem an aberrant work, but upon closer examination, it fits comfortably with Fugard's other (non-collaborative) works. Although not concerned with Blacks as directly as was Blood Knot, the characters in People are caught inexorably in the South African system--the "essentially morbid

society"--and are thus closely related to Morrie and Zach. In the course of the play, the two main characters, Milly and Don (though unrelated by blood) will play games, join in a plot against Milly's ex-lover, Ahlers, squabble, engage in vicious verbal battle, and return to the status quo of the beginning of the play, sadder but no wiser. This is a truly "absurdist" event, and as Fugard writes:

This thought occurs: Is it possibly my function precisely to accept--and within the framework of that acceptance to rejoice, as I said before, in the 'fight'--the sound and fury of it. That in essence is what lies at the core of People Are Living There. (Notebooks, 56)

Or, to quote another's words, "The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart."²⁰

The spectre of apartheid is, again, implied. Moreover, all of the characters are White. Surprisingly, however, this does not signal a thematic change since the problems faced by the protagonists are still those of "outsiders"; people who live on the periphery of society and who are not cared about by that society. One of the great fears of the primary characters is that they will be completely forgotten in their old age. Other similarities to earlier works are the use of the Climactic form--in this case nearly strict adherence to the classical unities: one set and one action which

takes place within a few hours. There even seems to be an exact correlation between playing time and actual time, but the element of time is intriguingly manipulated. The "device" used to accomplish this is the faulty, offstage Grandfather clock which occasionally chimes, but then has to be dealt a blow to chime the hour. In the opening scene, Milly, after hearing the four sets of chimes preceding the hour, exits and hits the clock which then chimes seven times. The running time of Act I which has no scene breaks is approximately one hour, but near the close of it the clock (after Shorty hits it) strikes ten. Has Fugard "telescoped" time? Are we to feel that the (foreshadowing) squabbling of Act One continued over a period of three hours? or should we assume that the clock itself is simply awry? Certainly this device supports the feeling of time running out, which is thematic in the play, especially in regard to Milly. When the party fails, Milly's desperation reaches its peak:

MILLY. . . . Is this all we get?

DON. Yes! It's all you get. And what's more you've had it. It's nearly twelve o'clock and then you're a year older. And there's not many more left where that one came from. You're in the home stretch, Milly!

MILLY. [summoning up all her control to ask the question for the last time]. You are telling me this is all I get?

DON. Yes.

MILLY [almost a cry]. Then somebody's a bloody liar. Because there were promises. The agreement was that it would be worth it. Well, it isn't. I've been cheated. The whole thing was just a trick to get me to go on. Otherwise who would? Who wants to get up tomorrow if this is it? If this is all? Fifty years! That's a lot of patience. Nobody's so well off that fifty years doesn't leave him hard up for what's left. I am. I'm broke. So I want what I'm owed. Pay up or be damned

[Pause. Shorty and Don stare at Milly. Her resolution has reached its climax and now begins to ebb.]

Why? That's it! That's all. I just want to know why. It's not a silly question. When you lie in the dark and ask, and listen, it sounds like sense, like there should be an answer. Why? Why me? Why this? (B & L, 156)

Milly, in bewailing the passage of her life, besides expressing her own desperation, echoes the existential dilemma: "The agreement was that it would be worth it. It isn't Why me? Why this?"

The set of People is rather prop-crowded; again antithetical to the "poor/pure" theories. (It will be ten years before Fugard returns to this sort of realistic set design with A Lesson from Aloes and on through Master Harold and The Road to Mecca.) Although the walls of the kitchen are described as being not too clearly visible, there are two practical doors and a practical

window, table, chairs, and a stove (possibly practical). There is also a practical overhead light required, a kettle, cups, spoons, coffee, and other everyday necessities. Except for Shorty's mailman's uniform, costumes are unnotable and easily available: Milly spends the entire play in her bathrobe. She carries on an old evening dress in Act Two, but it is never worn. In that act, the set is decorated for a birthday party, and there is a tablecloth, food and drink, plates and tumblers.

Although the cast numbers four, this is not a reversion to larger casts. There are only two primary characters, Shorty being secondary and Sissy, Shorty's wife, peripheral. However, in this play, Fugard introduces another "device"; one which will take on even more importance in later plays, most notably in Hello and Goodbye and Master Harold: the haunting presence of a personage whom we never see and yet who is the very *raison d'être* for the action of the play. Shades of Godot. (Although the mother figure in Blood Knot has significance for Morris and Zach, she is not so powerful a presence as to be the moving force behind the action, and Ethel, the pen-pal, is primarily a catalyst, bringing the terrors of the outside world into that little room.)

The haunting presence in this work is Ahlers, a middle-aged boarder and Milly's lover for the past ten years. Ahlers' influence will be made clear in the following plot synopsis.

At the opening of Act I, we find Milly, owner of the boarding house, just awakening and coming into her dark kitchen. She is obviously distraught and, needing someone to talk to, invites one of her boarders, Don, for coffee. The flinty relationship between these two is immediately established as each tries, unsuccessfully, to elicit understanding from the other. Shorty comes in and we find that he is recently married, but having problems with his young wife. Don and Milly air their suspicions (later validated) that his marriage is unconsummated. Milly rages about Ahlers and convinces a very reluctant Don and an easily manipulated Shorty to stage a birthday party for her in order to show Ahlers that she can have a good time without him. Act Two is the birthday party, which turns into a desperate free-for-all as Milly and Don first verbally attack Shorty, who retreats in pain, and then each other. In the course of the arguing we are made aware of Milly's problem, which is that Ahlers has left her upon learning that she was in menopause and therefore "... not a woman anymore." (B & L 157) The birthday party

ends, impressing no one. Everyone is right back where he/she began as the play concludes. It has been "sound and fury."

Once again, we have a single, linear plot, uncomplicated by subplots and the confluence, the interdependence of language/dialogue and character development which is characteristic of Fugard's style, is in evidence. However (and perhaps this is due to the "literal transcription" of actual events), the language rarely rises above the mundane. There is little "poetry" in this work, which may account for it not being very successful outside of South Africa, and some of the attempts at the figurative seem forced:

DON. They've been forgotten. It happens long before you are dead.

MILLY. What do you mean, forgotten?

DON. You lose your place in the mind of man. With a bit of luck once or twice in your life you have it. That warm nest in another mind where 'You' is all wrapped up in their thinking and feeling and worrying about 'You.' But even if you are one of the lucky ones, sooner or later you end up in the cold again. Nothing is for ever. They die, or you get divorced. One way or another they go, they forget, and you end up in your little room with your old age pension and a blind bitch for friendship. From then on it's just a matter of days. When they're good, the two of you crawl out to a bench in the sun where she can hate the pigeons and you can hate the people. When it gets dark, you crawl back to

the room. Until one day, one more sunny day with the pigeons flocking and the people passing, you're not there. But who misses you? Who's to know that inside a room, finally, forgotten by the world

MILLY. Rubbish. That's absolute rubbish. Morbid muck.

DON. Read the papers. There are cases every day.

MILLY. For God's sake, man! This is a civilized country. Nobody gets forgotten like that. . . . (B & L, 131-32)

Knowing that Don is really speaking his own fears reveals character to us, at least, and Milly's brief response reveals not only her character, but again illustrates the insidious effects of a divided society. Milly is probably not consciously aware of the irony of her words in referring to this "civilized" country which "forgets" literally millions of people as a matter of law and policy, but we are. In this regard, consider the following "innocent" remarks of Shorty discussing his hobby of boxing:

DON. Use that left next time.

SHORTY. Sledge-hammer, he says. If only I could get me a native for sparring partner it would be better. Specially Zulus. They is tough, man! You can't just knock them out, you know. Their heads are hard. That's what Towee! does. I asked Emily if she's got any brothers and she said she will look. . . . (B & L, 108)

Shorty is not an unsympathetic character. We will feel sympathy for him throughout the play, and so we are taken aback by

the casual prejudices he expresses which are without vindictiveness. Milly is certainly a sympathetic character, but Fugard reveals through her the conditioned blindness of the White South African to moral or ethical matters concerning race. If one accepts apartheid with equanimity, what is unacceptable? Milly speaking of Ahlers, the lover she's desperate to win back, says:

MILLY. He's a German.

SHORTY. No, Milly . . .

MILLY. I'm telling you he's a German. Look what they did to the Jews. (B & L, 136)

Ahlers remains, nevertheless, a more than acceptable candidate for a life partner.

There are few times when characters are given the opportunity to speak at length in a revelatory manner. Exchanges are brief, for the most part, and character is revealed through direct relationships; a constant state of verbal oneupsmanship. There is not, however, use of the Beckettian stichomythia which was used to such effect in The Blood Knot and will be again in Hello and Goodbye. Everything is functional. Milly's Climactic revelation is pragmatic, with little noteworthy imagery. Like the set, costumes, and props,

the dialogue is eminently practical.

As stated above, the character of Don bears some striking resemblances to Fugard, and indeed, Fugard played the role in the South African premiere. It's unlikely that Fugard himself became deeply involved in his landlady's problems, however. Don is White, intelligent, cynical, and obsessed with the mysteries of life. He, like Fugard, is a college dropout. He is about twenty years old. (When I questioned Fugard about his playing a college dropout at the age of thirty-seven, he chuckled and said: "I think I played him as the ultimate dropout.")

Don's character also is revealed through straightforward, pragmatic use of dialogue and throughout the play, the existentialist mind of the playwright is revealed:

DON. Purpose was dead in me. When I lay down at four o'clock there were a hundred reasons why I should have got up. When you saw me not one was left. I had systematically abandoned the lot. Sartre calls it Anguish. (B & L, 102)

Later:

DON: You saw yourself--an object called Milly in an object called chair--but knowing the names didn't help because everything went on being useless, including yourself.

MILLY. You've got it.

DON [excited] For God's sake, Milly, that's Anguish! (B & L, 129)

Compare this last excerpt with the following regarding a casual conversation with John Berry from Notebooks, 1960-1977 and note the paradox; the joy of the existentialist at discovering one's self or another in anguish.

"So then, one by one, the old questions--the whys, hows, whats, whos. We asked them quietly, almost tiredly. And then John suddenly: 'Christ, man! Do you know what this is--this is what Sartre calls anguish. We are in a state of anguish. I've never seen it so clearly.'" (Notebooks, 71)

Fugard dubbed People Are Living There, simply, "a play in two acts." It may be to Fugard as Ah, Wilderness is to Eugene O'Neill: his only comedy. Although personally debilitating, none of the characters has problems of mythic proportions; none dies nor even faces the prospect of death; none is "divided," nor does any attain a state of Recognition. All ends nearly as it began, but, most unusually, with an upbeat feeling. The closing stage directions read:

[Milly's amusement breaks into laughter. Repeating random images from the picture just drawn--kangaroo, boxing gloves, blue bums, etc., etc.--her laughter grows enormous. At its height, and with Don watching her . . .]

CURTAIN (B & L, 169)

As mentioned above, People seems at first glance an aberrant work, however there are themes similar to those in earlier plays: a sense of entrapment; insidious racism; characters outside the South African mainstream; imposed puerilism; and divisiveness. Entrapment is conveyed, not only by the claustrophobic set, but by the general dress and state of grooming of the major characters. Milly never changes from her robe, nor is there any indication of her making up or doing her hair. She talks vaguely of going out: "Get dressed in a mo. Maybe a walk. Brisk walk." (B & L, 104) But she never leaves the house. Don's act one costume, "... a nondescript gray suit, vaguely ill-fitting. ..." (B & L, 102) is never adjusted in any way. The only major character to both come from the outside world and return to it, temporarily, is Shorty and he is in a postman's uniform, another indication of conformity. The peripheral character of Sissy, Shorty's wife, escapes briefly into the outside world, but this proves a disappointing experience and she returns to her "half marriage" with Shorty near the end of the play. Even Ahlers, never seen, returns to the boarding house. There is an strong sense of stagnation --"anguish."

The inherent immaturity of nearly all characters in this and

other Fugard plays is evident in the grotesque lashing out at one another. It is displacement at its most obvious level. Unable to cope with their problems, even being unsure of what their problems are, Milly and Don attack each other mercilessly (after together bullying Shorty into an impotent rage), but at the end of the play return, as children might, to the uneasy, yet familiar relationship of friendly enemies. There is no sense of discovery of the other; no sense of progress toward understanding; no sense of empathy. Tomorrow will be more of the same. No character attains recognition; therefore People may be considered Fugard's one comedy. Despite Milly's realization of her present condition, there is no sense of the discovery of her inner self. All of her realizations are "surface." Don has accepted what he feels is his lot; ignominy. Shorty will fail once again to convince an unhappy Sissy that their marriage is legitimate and that they may have sex. Even the unseen Ahlers returns to his room alone and, apparently, angry.

The "imposed" puerility is most evident in the character of Shorty, but reflects a condition prevalent in a rigidly structured society which arbitrarily divides people by caste or race. This sets

up a situation where certain members of that society must be "cared for" and others, therefore, exploited. At the beginning of the verbal battle in act two, Milly pressures Don into revealing his feelings about Shorty:

MILLY. Well, he's waiting to hear it.

DON. I study you, Shorty. . . . It's in the interest of Science. . . . You see, you're what they mean by simple-minded.

MILLY. He once called you a perfect specimen of a retarded poor white.

DON. Overseas you'd be a labourer--digging up the streets in London.

MILLY. No you don't! You said he'd be emptying the dirtbins in Birmingham.

DON. Here we have Natives to do the dirty work. You're saved by your white skin. Because examine the facts. You can just about read and write. You can't carry out the simple duties of a postman. I don't think you could do anything complicated. You blunder on from day to day with a weak defence--yet you survive. You even have a wife. (B & L, 153-54) [emphasis mine.]

The sobering fact is that all that Don and Milly say is absolutely true. Shorty will survive, perhaps even prosper to some extent, (as they all may) simply because he is White in South Africa. Eugène Ionesco said:

In our theatre [Theatre of the Absurd], the characters seem to turn to nothing. In "The Chairs," the two old people are lost in a world without warmth, without transcendence Yes, people without any transcendental roots, in crypts perhaps of a foreign center, a focus perhaps beyond them.²¹

Fugard does not write in the Absurdist tradition, but it is easy to see why he admires that tradition so. His South African "reality" is absurd.

Fugard's next wrote Hello and Goodbye (whose first production date preceded that of People). In it he returns to the two-character format, and deals with the problems of blood-related characters in a conflict which is impelled and exacerbated by a haunting, never seen force. (These characters, although products of poverty like Zach and Morris, are White.) In this play, it will be the ghost of the father rather than the pervasive presence of the apartheid of Blood Knot, who will exercise such influence over the siblings, Johnnie and Hester. It is, again, autobiographical and Fugard's first attempt to deal with the emotional connection to his own dead father; a problem he will pursue in greater depth nearly 20 years later in Master Harold . . . and the Boys. (Although autobiographical, I can find no evidence that Fugard was dealing directly with his relationship with his younger sister, Glenda, in this work but that he was investigating both the brother's and sister's

relationship with the parents.)

Hello and Goodbye is the second play in an unplanned trilogy which Fugard dubbed, as an afterthought, "The Family." "... [H]is relationship with his brother informs The Blood Knot, that with his father influences Hello and Goodbye, and that with his wife bears upon Boesman and Lena." (Truths, 75) (This designation seems a bit arbitrary, especially in the light of the "post-dubbing" father play, Master Harold. One could as easily call Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman or All My Sons [father/son], The Prize [brothers] and After the Fall [husband/wife] his "family.")

The inspiration for Hello and Goodbye was, as usual, a visual image; that of a local derelict, but with a direct connection to Fugard's father.

I keep remembering from time to time, and still see occasionally, in the street, one remarkable face from my youth. It is that of a man who for as long as I can remember could be seen at night, standing motionless against the wall on the corner of Jetty and Main Streets. The face is remarkable--large, unsmiling eyes, heavy lids, harsh sceptical mouth, long face. I must have seen it a hundred times--but I have no recollection of any expression other than this one of morbid withdrawal. . . .

Yes, that must surely be what fascinated me about this man--his similarity to my father. I can remember my father standing propped up against a Main Street wall with equal clarity. (Notebooks, 82)

In Hello and Goodbye, Fugard will investigate this character as a young man, Johnnie, struggling against a developing madness brought on by the death of his father and ultimately losing. Johnnie will end hobbling around on his dead father's crutches: becoming his father, as it were. Fugard's father "retired from all remunerative activity and sank into a life of indolence and alcohol," ²² and Fugard is an acknowledged (recovered) alcoholic.

Hello and Goodbye was first produced at the Library Theatre in Johannesburg on October 26, 1965. Fugard himself played Johnnie, but was directed by an old friend, Barney Simon. Simon had acted as an assistant director on The Blood Knot, and one could speculate that, since this was Fugard's first attempt at a major role since then, he felt more secure as an actor having an outside "eye."

Perhaps Hello and Goodbye was staged before People Are Living There precisely because of its similarities to The Blood Knot, as Fugard feared. Whether or not this is so, it was greeted with superlative reviews and Fugard was hailed as "... the best playwright South Africa has," and as standing "... in virtual isolation as a native master of the medium."²³ It is astonishing that a "self-taught" man of the theatre should attain this stature,

even in a theatre-poor country, in such a brief apprenticeship.

In this work, Fugard moves to an even stricter Climactic form than in People. The place is one room of a run down cottage, but even this is only suggested in the set description: "A kitchen table and four chairs, lit by a solitary electric light hanging above. On the table is a bottle of fruit squash, a jug of water, and a glass." (B & L, 173) That is the entire set description. That Fugard intends this specific lack of walls, doors, etc. is clear in his directions for Hester's entrance into the scene: "[A woman appears upstage and walks slowly into the light . . .]" (B & L, 177) The boundaries of stage action are denoted strictly by lighting.

As to the unity of time, it is exactly the time required for the story to be told. Unlike People, where time was possibly telescoped, or at least confused due to the grandfather clock, time in Hello is exact. One could even assume that the intermission would be the exact time needed for Johnnie to bring in the boxes, suitcases and other parcels which are onstage at the opening of Act Two. As in nearly all of his previous works, the prop-crowded second act is rather antithetical to the "poor/pure" concept of theatre. (Excepting Boesman and Lena, this reliance on hand props

will remain a contradiction to Fugard's own strivings for simplicity.)

That Fugard was not dedicated to Realism or Naturalism is evident in both the set design and other "unnatural" aspects.

Consider the following exchange upon Hester's appearance out of the upstage darkness:

HESTER. Hello.

JOHNNIE. Hello.

HESTER. Didn't you hear me calling?

JOHNNIE. No.

HESTER. Well I did!

JOHNNIE. I'm not arguing.

HESTER. I thought nobody was home.

JOHNNIE. No. I've been sitting here, minding my own business

HESTER. Well then listen next time, for God's sake. First the taxi hooted. But he was in a hurry so I told him to drop me. I could see the light was on. (B & L, 178)

However, there is no indication in the stage directions of offstage calling or hooting of any kind. How must this affect an audience? It is apparently meant to bring the audience totally into

the insular world of Johnnie and, for a time, Hester. Except as these two discuss it, the outer world does not exist. Like the father, it is an important, oppressive presence; powerful though distant. The sense of isolation (or madness) which is implied in Johnnie's opening soliloquy (see below) is exacerbated rather than alleviated by Hester's entrance. Any realistic sound effects would have served to break the enigmatic mood of the piece, rather than enhance it.

I will deal with Language/Character in detail below.

However, note the immediate sense of tension --strongly implying an age-old sibling conflict--in the excerpt quoted above. There is an instantaneous challenge and defensiveness in Hester's words: "Didn't you hear me calling?" "Well I did!" Johnnie is instantly passive-aggressive: "I'm not arguing." "I've been sitting here, minding my own business" This meeting is one of Fugard's most brilliant creations. In the course of a few lines (and those in Beckettian stichomythia), Fugard has piqued our interest in a new character, established tension, hinted at a long-standing recognizable rivalry, and although injecting humor, has sustained a mood of mystery. It is Fugard's realization of his Holy Grail: Economy.

Before considering Johnnie's opening soliloquy as an initiation into Language/Character, I will deal briefly with the plot of Hello and Goodbye. Fugard is noted for simplicity (even unimportance) of plots, and as Vandenbroucke points out in reference to a September 16, 1963 entry in Fugard's Notebooks, "... this remains a concise summary of the plot, such as it is, with one exception. The father has died prior to the start of the play" (Truths, 49)

The essentials of that entry (the plot line) reads as follows:

One night--after a ten to fifteen year absence--his sister arrives unexpectedly at the run-down little house. . . . Her purpose is revealed: she believes the old man was paid 'hundreds of pounds' by the SAR--'compensation' for his accident. . . . She wants the money--wants to steal it and eventually is prepared to kill the old man to get it. Neither of these things happens. She leaves Johnnie and the old man together. (Notebooks, 63)

Note the hint of the "romantic" playwright alive and well in the melodramatic "is prepared to kill old man to get it." In the completed play, Fugard translates this into a wish subtly expressed twice by Hester which angers Johnnie, leading to this serio-comic exchange:

HESTER. Something is going to happen some day.

JOHNNIE. Such as what?

HESTER. Such as being dead when your time comes. That happens.

JOHNNIE. The second time.

HESTER. Well, you know what I mean.

JOHNNIE. That's the second time you've said it.

HESTER. You forced me.

JOHNNIE. You're wishing it.

HESTER. I'm not.

JOHNNIE. That's wicked.

HESTER. Dry up, for God's sake.

JOHNNIE. That's sin.

HESTER. It's not Sunday, Dominee.

JOHNNIE [loudly]. Wishing for him to die is the wickedest sin in the world!

HESTER. Who's making the noise now? (B & L, 198)

Note, again, the essential "childish" quality in these adults.

As I conjectured in my analysis of People Are Living There, Fugard often implies the emotional stunting of Whites as well as other races as one of the results of the South African society's structure.

The above excerpt is also an example of Fugard's

"trademark" confluence of language/ character. It is in Hello and Goodbye that Fugard's facility with this element of his unique style is further evolved. Recall that the original production of Blood Knot ran over four hours without intermission, although Fugard claimed it was not written in haste like Nongogo, and that the first hint of Blood Knot in the Notebooks may have been as early as one year prior to the production. Hello and Goodbye was a full two years between conception and production and is a far more carefully crafted work. "Without becoming wordy, its few long speeches effectively open the play to past events and places outside the claustrophobic cottage." (Truths, 56) The longer speeches also give insight into character without seeming to be arbitrarily imposed by the playwright, and are far more "economical" than those of Blood Knot and more figurative and "poetical" than those of People.

Johnnie's opening soliloquy is Fugard's only such extended opening. Blood Knot and People open with brief physical actions preceding the entrance of a second character and resultant dialogue. The same is true of the earlier plays. (In Boesman and Lena, Lena has a rather extended opening monologue, but it is directed to Boesman who has entered before her. Styles in Sizwe Banzi has an

exceptionally long opening monologue, but this is spoken directly to the audience.)

Johnnie's soliloquy is a brilliant excursion into a tormented mind fighting not to crack. It is rife with imagery, word play, time warps, and self-delusion; and all in self-defense. However, it is justified in a realistic sense in that a person might very well, under this stress, speak his scrambled thoughts aloud. From another standpoint, it also reaches the audience on a rather personal level. The "contorted syllogism" (Truths, 50) which Johnnie uses to prove his sanity to himself: "This is not madness. Those who are, don't know they're mad. Whereas I know . . . I'm mad" (B & L, 175) is a familiar one. Many have played this game in more or less seriousness; but, again, not usually in adulthood. And so we are given ground for identifying with Johnnie. However, we are again amused while being given insight into character. For Johnnie, it foreshadows a regression which will become far more severe at the play's end.

In this soliloquy, Johnnie's excursion into the memory of his father's body being taken away triggers a nearly total breakdown against which he defends by a break-neck recitation of near

nonsense, alliterative imagery, naming of bus stops, public signs, and memories--the image of himself standing in the square (the very image of the derelict upon whom Fugard based the play). It is a Beckett-inspired technique, reminiscent of Lucky's seemingly senseless tirade in Waiting for Godot; couched, however, in a more realistically justifiable situation.

The justifiable "adaptation" of Beckettian techniques is further evident in stichomythic passages:

HESTER. For God's sake, all right. Read your bloody comic. All I wanted was a word of welcome. Is that asking so much? Look, let's start again. Have a cigarette.

[They light cigarettes.]
I'm leaving it to you.

JOHNNIE. What?

HESTER. The questions.

JOHNNIE. What questions?

HESTER. Or news.

JOHNNIE. No news, good news.

HESTER. Who cares? Let's hear it.

JOHNNIE. What?

HESTER. Anything. Just talk!

JOHNNIE. Okay.

HESTER. Good.

JOHNNIE. Can I be frank?

HESTER. Go ahead.

JOHNNIE. What do you want?

HESTER. How the hell do you like that! (B & L, 179)

The use of stichomythia occurs several times in the play.

At this point, Johnnie has yet to recognize Hester. It will take approximately four and one-half pages of dialogue for Hester to fully convince Johnnie that she's his sister! This accomplished, it is Hester who really sees Johnnie, not the other way around; and this use of irony reveals character. After struggling for recognition, Hester softens momentarily toward Johnnie.

HESTER. . . . Well, don't just stand there. Take a good look and see it's me.

[Hester moves close to Johnnie --she sees him properly for the first time. . . .] [emphasis mine.]

Johnnie! It's been a long time, boetie.

[A small impulsive gesture of tenderness--hand to his cheek?--which she breaks off abruptly. She moves away.]

[Flat, matter of fact voice.]

Well, is it me?

JOHNNIE. [quiet certainty] Yes, it's you.

HESTER. You're sure?

JOHNNIE. I'm certain.

HESTER. Hester Smit.

JOHNNIE. I remember . . .

HESTER. My face hasn't changed?

JOHNNIE. . . . your hate! It hasn't changed. The sound of it. Always so sudden, so loud, so late at night. Nobody else could hate it the way you did. (B & L, 182)

Fugard once again, while developing character, achieves a remarkable level of "economy" in this brief passage: Johnnie's total insulation from tenderness is apparent; Hester's need and search for self is implied in her pressuring him for recognition ("You're sure?" "Hester Smit." "My face hasn't changed?"). This last question, moreover, is a direct foreshadowing of something Hester will soon pursue, making more evident her real purpose in being there.

HESTER. . . . I haven't asked my question yet! What do I look like? When you saw me, and you knew it was me, Hester, did you remember much?

JOHNNIE. Like what?

HESTER. Like I was. I mean, am I changed much?

JOHNNIE. [not looking at her]. Hard to say. . . .

HESTER. Have you had a good look at me yet?

JOHNNIE. It's the light in here. I feel it when I'm reading. Maybe I need glasses.

HESTER. Rubbish! Look at me. Come close! You're not looking properly! I can see it in your eyes.

JOHNNIE. I'm trying to.

HESTER. What's the matter with you?

JOHNNIE. It's rude to stare.

HESTER. I'm asking you to. Now come on!

JOHNNIE. All right, but don't stare at me. Look the other way.
[Pause. He looks at Hester.] Okay.

HESTER. Well?

JOHNNIE. What do you want me to say?

HESTER. What you saw.

JOHNNIE. You--my sister Hester--a few years older.
Satisfied?

HESTER. No! Am I also . . . were you shocked? At the changes?
My face?

[Mirror in her hand.]

What do I really look like now? I can't see myself. Mirrors
don't work. I can't watch . . . Me. When I look, I look back.
(B & L, 191)

Hester will find herself. It will not be a joyful discovery,
but she will not only accept it, she will reach out to help Johnnie; to
no avail. It is obvious from the above excerpt that Johnnie is so
disconnected that he cannot look another human being in the eye
without trepidation.

As in Blood Knot, there is extensive use of monologue, but

Fugard has learned to suggest character rather than "recite" it. Johnnie's longer speeches leap-frog rapidly from memory to desperate defense from memory. Hester's speeches evoke the feeling of a "search" for something, rather than stagnation. Although both evoke the past, their inability to communicate clearly results from their different purposes in evoking it. Johnnie is obsessed with alleviating his guilt, but this suggests a terrible bond which he cannot break. Hester, although using the compensation as an excuse for returning home, is searching for self. She is the "divided" character and like Morris will attain a state of recognition, accept reality, and endure. Johnnie will slip deeper into an "undivided" madness. Like the derelict upon whom the play is based, he will remain unresurrected. The near tragic quality is carried in the character of Hester. Johnnie's closing lines reflect the merely pathetic: "What's the word? Birth. Death. Both. Jesus did it in the Bible. [Pause] Resurrection. [Pause]." The play ends, and we know that Johnnie will never achieve resurrection; it is an illusion. Hester has abandoned her illusions.

Many previous themes are echoed in Hello and Goodbye: the effects of poverty and ignorance; peurilism; divisiveness; and

insidious racism, but there is one major thematic change in this work. Although the haunting image of the father is a primary moving force for both Johnnie and Hester, this image is mitigated (for Hester, at least) by a more positive emotional connection to the memories of the mother. Johnnie expresses no genuine connection to his mother. Hester is strongly connected and that is the source of her "salvation." Moreover, for the first time, Fugard presents to us a character who not only attains recognition but, apparently, escapes the debilitating confines of place and time and memory. That is, she not only physically leaves home (not entirely remarkable since she had done that before), but comes to terms with the ghosts of both mother and father and leaves home spiritually also. Fugard hints, moreover, that Hester will not return, permanently at least, to prostitution:

JOHNNIE. And you? Any plans?

HESTER. Back like I said. There's always jobs. And I got my room. That's me--a woman in a room. I'm used to it now. It's strange, you know. I can see it--see it happening. All of this. I'll walk out of that door, through the streets to the station, sit in the waiting-room. Then the train at ten and all the way back. It's hard. Things are too clear. This, there, Jo'burg tomorrow when I get there. The rooms--the dark rooms, the many faces--and one of them me, Hester Smit. I'm too far away from my

life. I want to get back to it, in it, be it, be me again the way it was when I walked in. It will come, I suppose. But at this moment--there she is waiting, here she is going, and somebody's watching all of it. But it isn't God. It's me. Goodbye, Johnnie. (B & L, 234) [emphases mine.]

I have been dealing with Fugard as an extraordinarily personal writer. There is no doubt, since he admits it, that he is himself often the inspiration for his characters. This became most apparent with Master Harold . . . and the Boys which was based on a deeply guilt-inspiring incident from Fugard's youth. Which character in Hello and Goodbye, then, represents Fugard? (As stated above [p.111], there is no evidence that Fugard was dealing with any problems concerning his younger sister, Glenda, yet it is Hester who escapes and Johnnie who goes mad and remains trapped.) It is possible that unconsciously Fugard represented himself in both characters. Also, this is the first work in which a major character "escapes." Hester, the character most closely connected to the mother (as Fugard was in reality), escapes. Johnnie, most closely connected by guilt to the father, remains physically and emotionally confined, and it is that "personality" of Fugard who must deal with the ghost of the father again nearly 20 years later in Master Harold. (After writing Master Harold, Fugard stopped drinking. His next play, the first created in total sobriety, was The Road to Mecca.

which has as a protagonist an artist--definitely representative of Fugard--who struggles and "escapes" through her art, freeing herself from the constrictions of the rigid society in which she was raised.) In Fugard's next work, Boesman and Lena, he returns to the problems of people of color, for whom in South Africa escape of any kind is virtually impossible; but again, this is metaphorical.

Boesman and Lena is Fugard's exploration of the relationship between himself and his wife; particularly concerning his guilt feelings in "forcing" her to live in a country from which she would have, given her way, emigrated long since. In June, 1968 he wrote:

... a sudden realisation of how lacking I am in tolerance towards Sheila [M]ade me see Boesman and Lena being the story of Sheila and myself . . . a reality of my life as if Morrie and Zach were myself and Royal: Johnnie and his father, myself and mine. (Notebooks, 165)

Fugard, since his apprenticeship works No-good Friday and Nongogo, has never written stereotypes--less than three-dimensional characters. Yet, as I have stated elsewhere, in Boesman and Lena Fugard was unduly harsh with himself in that his surrogate, Boesman, is as near to a "villain" as he ever writes. The extent of Fugard's self-vilification becomes more obvious in considering the characters' names. Nowhere is there any mention of

a surname; we never know if Boesman and Lena are "legitimately" married. But more than this, while Lena is a diminutive and derivative of "Helen," or even "Magdalene"--names that carry images of Troy or a saved Biblical figure--Boesman translates as, simply, "bushman." So while the "heroine" is given near mythical status, the "villain" is, nominally, generic.

Again, the context, characters, location and themes are inspirational and metaphorical. As Vandenbroucke points out, Fugard recorded images in his notebooks "... as early as 1963, when, for instance, he mentions itinerants selling empty bottles." (Truths, 59) This image, especially of a destitute, wandering woman, is repeatedly present in his Notebooks, and it is an image which he will resurrect (as a haunting offstage presence) in The Road to Mecca fifteen years later.

With Boesman and Lena a pattern begins to emerge and perhaps an analogy with "life" can be made concerning Fugard's growth as a playwright. In No-Good Friday and Nongogo, the "child" Fugard told stories about surface problems of people outside his "home;" in The Blood Knot, Hello and Goodbye, and People Are Living There (especially the first two), a youthful Fugard probed deeply

into familial relationships; in Boesman and Lena, a maturing Fugard investigates the ordeal of an unrelated couple binding together ("marrying") for life. (Stanley Kauffmann writes of Boesman and Lena, "The play's epic quality derives from the wide and simple arch of its compass: shelter, food, fire, children, quarrels, dependence, ego needs, death, endless pilgrimage."²⁴ All are qualities or responsibilities of adults--providers.) Later, Fugard will deal with adultery and the very process and worth of evolution (Statements After an Arrest Under the Immorality Act), personal obsessive guilt versus the responsibility of the creative person to society (Dimetos), man's personal and political responsibilities toward friends (A Lesson from Aloes), and the essential personal freedom of the artist from those responsibilities (The Road To Mecca).

Aside from the apparent return to dealing with the ghost of the long-dead father in Master Harold, this progression of plays seems a nearly chronological expression of the maturing artist's consideration of his own odyssey through universally recognizable "rites of passage." Perhaps unconsciously in his canon, Fugard records the struggle for individual maturity inherent in all societies, but made nearly impossible by the artificially divided

society of South Africa. In the most rigid societies, the qualities in that "wide and simple arch" are made obvious because it is essentially those qualities which are denied to the oppressed (and, inevitably by attrition, to the oppressor). These qualities are made "conspicuous by their absence." It is the essence of Fugard's art that he can unify--identify--his own life with that of the oppressed people he has observed.

There is no single incident which inspired Boesman and Lena; only consistent and frequent images of the itinerant oppressed "Lenas." Thus, one of Fugard's most personal plays is also the most allegorical; that is to say, least connected to an historical event and much more imaginal.

It is also, at this point, the least plotted. The play opens as Boesman and then Lena enter onto "An empty stage." (B & L, 239) Both are heavily burdened with belongings. They stop, exhausted, to set up camp for the night. They argue, and in their arguments, reveal who they are, where they have come from, why they're here. An old Black man enters the scene and is befriended by Lena, who wants the companionship as a shield from Boesman's vilifications and indifference. Lena sacrifices her only bottle of wine to

Boesman and elects to stay outside the lean-to in order to keep the old man there, even though they don't speak the same language.

Boesman is very upset by this. There are more altercations, then the old man dies and Boesman and Lena gather their belongings and move on.

With this simplicity of plot, there emerges Fugard's best development of character (and location) through language to this date. Although Boesman is nearly just villainous in his brutality to Lena and the old man, his anger and cruelty are justified--and we are led to sympathize with him to a degree. His treatment at the hands of the Whites, coupled with Lena's inability to bear him a child (one died at six months and there were other stillborns), gives him a feeling of complete impotency which enrages him. That rage is targeted on Lena.

In Lena, Fugard created one of his most fulfilled, complex and tragic figures. Lena, the Colored, aging, alcoholic, poverty-stricken, brutalized woman, in searching for answers to her life, her reason for existence, becomes a towering figure of strength. The tragic resolution is that, although Lena becomes "aware," attains recognition, she nonetheless chooses to continue

her wanderings with Boesman; a closer approach now to the wandering Oedipus figure. Lena will stand as an example to those who can see.

Before dealing with character development, I will point out that, structurally, Fugard achieves his finest realization to date of his vision of "pure" theatre in this play. (Not until Statements, where even clothing is omitted, and perhaps Dimetos, will Fugard accomplish this simplicity.) As with Hello and Goodbye, the acting space is undifferentiated. We learn where the characters are through dialogue, very much as we do in Elizabethan drama. Consider the following, which in consideration of Fugard's philosophy of "Economy" is a triumph of revealing both locale and character, while being quite humorous:

LENA. Here?

[. . . For a few seconds she just rests, her head between her knees, breathing deeply. Then she stretches forward and works a finger between the toes of one of her feet. It comes away with a piece of mud. She looks at it, squashing it between her fingers.]
Mud! Swartkops! (B & L, 239)

and

LENA. . . . And now? Here we sit. . . . the world feels big when you sit like this. Not even a bush to make it your own size. Now's the time to laugh. This is also funny. Look at us! Boesman and Lena with the sky for a roof again. (B & L, 241)

Whereas in Hello and Goodbye it was required that there be numerous hand props--all the suitcases and boxes and their contents--and furniture, in this work there are just a very few possessions and some large pieces of junk to build a pondok (lean-to) with. Even costuming is minimal.

Returning to character development, this is truly an actors' play. It is a deep challenge for whoever plays Boesman and Lena, in that given only a bare stage, minimal props and costuming and perhaps some incidental lighting, the actors must create two very complex and three dimensional characters with dialogue which is spare and often "Chekhovian," in that it is richly sub-textual. Especially with Boesman, who doesn't easily reveal the source of his rage, the spoken word does not convey his true feelings. It is not until well into the second act that Boesman's fears, inadequacy, and disappointment at the lack of children, are revealed; and then under the influence of much alcohol.

The two confront each other continuously: about where they are; about who they are; about the past, future, present; about wine,

water, the old man--about everything but the essence of their relationship. The underlying causes of their conflictive relationship are only mentioned in passing, briefly, when drunk or in extremis. It is these that Lena unknowingly pursues--and captures. Lena attains recognition. She sees clearly who she and Boesman are to each other and to the world when she demands a witness to injustice. Boesman had beaten her that morning when they were bulldozed out of their pondok, for breaking three empty bottles they had collected for deposits. Lena had accepted this as her due in this relationship. But, in what plot there is, we are given a shocking twist; and one which opens Lena's eyes.

BOESMAN. I dropped the empties.

[Lena looks at him, she doesn't understand.]

This morning. When we had to clear out of the pondok. I carried the sack.

[It takes Lena a long time.]

I dropped it.

LENA. [She understands now. She speaks quietly.] You said I did.

BOESMAN. Yes.

LENA. You blamed me. You hit me.

BOESMAN. Yes.

LENA. [to the old man.] He wanted to count the bottles

before we left. Three were broken. He stopped hitting when the whiteman laughed. Took off his hat and smiled at them. 'Jus a ou meid, baas.' They laughed louder. [Pointing to her bruises.] Too dark to see them now. He's hit me everywhere. . . . For nothing then. Why do you tell me now?

[Pause He stares at her.]

You want to hurt me again. Why, Boesman? I've come through a day that God can take back. Even if it was my last one. Isn't that enough for you?

[Pause.]

No. Why must you hurt me so much? What have I really done? Why didn't you hit yourself this morning? You broke the bottles. Or the whiteman that kicked us out? Why did you hit me?

BOESMAN. Why do I hit you?

[He tries to work it out. He looks at his hands, clenches one, and smashes it into the palm of the other.] Why? (B & L, 281-82)

Boesman is incapable of working it out. He doesn't know what his life is, only that focuses on Lena. He has nothing else to "connect" with. But Lena begins to connect with the injustice and demand that someone bear witness:

LENA [now almost inarticulate with outrage].

Moer! Moer!

Outa hear all that? Hey! [She shakes him violently.] You can't sleep now! [Changing her tone, pleading.] Please, Outa. Just a little bit longer. I'll put the wood on the fire.

[She does so.]

Wake up. This is the truth now. Listen.

BOESMAN [watching her]. You have gone mad tonight.

LENA. He's got to listen!

BOESMAN. He doesn't know what you're saying. You must wake up! You've wasted your time with him. You've been talking to yourself tonight the way you've been talking to yourself your whole life. You're dumb. When you make a hole in your face the noise that comes out is as good as nothing, because nobody hears it.

LENA. Say it in the kaffertaal. 'You hit me for nothing.' Say it!

BOESMAN. No.

LENA. Then let him see it.

[She crawls to Boesman in an attitude of abject beggary.]

Hit me. Please, Boesman. For a favour. My last one, 'strue's God. Hit me now.

[To the old man.] I've shown you the bruises. Now watch.

[Pause . . . Boesman is staring at her with disgust.]

What you waiting for? You don't need reasons. Let him see it. Hit me! (B & L, 282-83)

Boesman responds to her with "withering disgust," but this disgust is soon turned on himself, and we see into his tortured soul. (Note that the following, true to the text, is printed in lines more akin to poetry than to prose; an effect which was required by the author, I'm sure. ["Sies!" is an exclamation of disgust: "Ugh!"])

BOESMAN. You think I haven't got secrets in my heart too? That's mine. Sies! Small little word, hey. Sies. But it fits.

[Parodying himself.] 'Ja, baas! Dankie, baas!'

Sies, Boesman!

And you? Don't ask me what you've done. Just look. You

say you can see yourself. Take a good look tonight! Crying for a bottle, begging for bruises. Sies, Lena! Boesman and Lena, sies!

We're not people any more. Freedom's not for us.

We stood there under the sky . . . two crooked Hotnots!

So they laughed.

Sies wêreld!

All there is to say. That's our word. After that our life is dumb. Like your moer. All that came out of it was

silence. There should have been noise. You pushed out silence. And Boesman buried it. Took the spade the next

morning and pushed our hope back into the dirt. Deep holes! When I filled them up I said it again: Sies.

One day your turn. One day mine. Two more holes somewhere. The earth will get naar when they push us in.

And then it's finished. The end of Boesman and Lena.

That's all it is, tonight or any other night. Two dead Hotnots living together.

And you want him to look? To see? He must close his eyes.

That's what I'll say for you in the kaffertaal.

Musa khangelal Don't look! That's what you must tell him.

Musa khangelal (B & L, 283-84)

And, indeed, the old man's eyes are closed, in death.

Boesman and Lena are both without witness as are, allegorically, the non-Whites of South Africa.

Although the major portion of our pity and terror is focused on Lena, Fugard has been careful to leaven the character of Boesman with references to the happier early days of the relationship. Lena tells the uncomprehending Outa of the all-night parties, of dancing, of jokes, of Boesman listening to her singing. Further, it is a mark of the subtlety and care in character development through dialogue

that Lena can say, almost in passing, that Boesman, "Never learnt any songs himself." (B & L, 264) And so, as Boesman's brutality is somewhat mitigated, the future (present) Boesman is foreshadowed in the same breath.

Fugard's beauty of expression which was only hinted at in The Blood Knot reaches new heights here, especially in Lena's soliloquies. Once again, the justifiably figurative speech of these characters is captured by the author. Consider Lena's description of her giving birth to the stillborn:

LENA. . . . One, Outa, that lived. for six months. The others were born dead

[Pause.]

That all? Ja. Only a few words I know, but a long story if you lived it.

[Murmuring from the old man.]

That's all. That's all.

Nee, God, Outa! What more must I say? What you asking me about? Pain? Yes! don't kaffers know what that means? One night it was longer than a small piece of candle and then as big as darkness. Somewhere else a donkey looked at it. I crawled under the cart and they looked. Boesman was too far away to call. Just the sound of his axe as he chopped wood. I didn't even have rags! You asked me and now I've told you. Pain is a candle entjie and a donkey's face. What's that mean to you? You weren't there. Nobody was. (B & L, 265)

Like Morrie and Zach, Boesman and Lena end irrevocably tied together by some instinctual feeling in a far less than satisfactory

relationship, which each accepts as inevitable. Unlike Morrie and Zach, both Boesman and Lena recognize the inevitability of their lot. In The Blood Knot, it is only Morrie who has the intelligence to understand. Boesman and Lena, perhaps like the inmates of Alcatraz who, it is said, comprehended Waiting for Godot with no effort while more sophisticated theatre-goers struggled with its meanings, instinctively grasp the existential dilemma. After Boesman recounts the confused and twisted course of travels which brought them to Swartkops, Lena asks:

LENA. Is that the way it was? How I got here?

BOESMAN. Yes.

LENA. Truly?

BOESMAN. Yes.

[Pause.]

LENA. It doesn't explain anything.

BOESMAN. I know. [emphases mine] (B & L, 292-93)

Boesman's "I know" signifies merely his loss of hope; it is a reiteration of his long held feelings towards life. But Lena moves to a higher plane of acceptance. Her last words to Boesman establish a definitive liberation from the past. She will tolerate

no more humiliation.

LENA. . . . I'm alive, Boesman. There's daylight left in me. You still got a chance. Don't lose it. Next time you want to kill me, do it. Really do it. When you hit, hit those lights out. Don't be too late. Do it yourself. Don't let the old bruises put the rope around your neck. Okay. But not so fast. It's dark. (B & L, 293)

Lena establishes a new relationship with Boesman. If he beats her again, it will be, one way or another, the last time. Lena is in control of the relationship and of her fate. But the ambivalence and the ominous nature of such relationships is accentuated in the final two words: "It's dark."

And this last is thematic; symbolic not only of personal relationships, but of societies. In both cases, the basically dominant/submissive relationship is necessarily unsatisfactory; beclouded. And it cannot sustain itself so.

This is not a new theme. As Camus wrote, "In opposition to the artist, it is pointed out that no philosopher ever created several systems. But that is true in so far, indeed, as no artist ever expressed more than one thing under different aspects."²⁵ It is not derogatory to say that Fugard is no exception. Themes which we have seen before are conspicuous again: the essential immaturity of

the characters--i.e., the resorting to violence or threats of violence to solve problems (scapegoating); divisiveness; insidious racism (even Lena, when disappointed in the old Black's responses, calls him "kaffer").

Favorite devices are again employed. For example, the tendency of the characters to "play games." Boesman parodies Lena's scuttling about as their pondok was destroyed and later imitates the bulldozer itself. Lena pretends that the old Black can understand her and responds to questions which he never utters. We begin to get, moreover, familiar phrases being repeated. Fugard has written:

For six years my attempts to understand the possibility of affirmation in an essentially morbid society were dominated by and finally invested in three women: Mildred Constance Jenkins was the first, Hester Smit the second, and Lena the culmination. (B & L, xi)

Note, in this regard, the following:

MILLY. [softly] Mildred Jenkins, you are still alive! (B & L, 158)

HESTER. . . . I'm too far away from my life. I want to get back to it (B & L, 234)

LENA. . . . I'm alive, Boesman. (B & L, 293)

Moreover, similar images begin to repeat: Don in People speaks of the precariousness in the simple act of walking; (B & L, 130) Johnnie, going on to his father's crutches in Hello and Goodbye says, "Let's face it--a man on his own two legs is a shaky proposition." (B & L, 234) Don also refers to an existential disorientation: "The fit. A feeling that things don't fit. Either life is sizes too big or you're too small," (B & L, 131) and Lena complains: "The world feels big when you sit like this. Not even a bush to make it your own size." (B & L, 241)

Recall that People was written before the other two works. And Milly, although achieving some understanding, does not appear about to change her condition. The one thematic change in Hello and Goodbye which is carried over to Boesman and Lena is the sense of liberation for the woman; an existential liberation in that they gain a feeling of their relative "size"--just where they "fit" in the world.

When Fugard returns to the solitude of blank paper and pen, his concentration is again on a man, Dimetos; a man who loses his "fit" in the world because he cannot cope with his passion for his

young niece, and the attendant guilt. When Dimetos opened in Edinburgh on Aug. 27, 1975, Fugard's daughter, Lisa, to whom the play is dedicated, was 14 years old. Although Fugard has alluded to incestuous feelings ("Our relationship isn't incestuous, but" [Truths, 150]), the Freudian implications stand more as metaphor than as plot. Dimetos is about conflicting, enervating obsessions; with love and guilt blunting and ultimately destroying purpose. Dimetos, on some levels, is Fugard's simplest play; there is little indication of set, costume, or lighting. The production is wide open to interpretation by whoever directs it. On the other hand, it may be his most complex play in that it represents a lone man's internal struggle for meaning in life both in personal and social aspects.

Unlike his other plays, Dimetos was not inspired by an image, but by a few sentences in Camus' Notebooks: 1935-1942. (That Freudian aspects are of secondary importance is proven in that Fugard was struck by these few sentences when Lisa was only a few months old.) The "few sentences" quoted below are not specific. Although telling a direct story, the "condition" alluded to is not clear, leaving (as does Fugard's play) much room for interpretation.

Dimetos had a guilty love for his niece, who hanged herself. One day, the little waves carried on to the fine sand of the beach the body of a marvelously beautiful young woman. Seeing her, Dimetos fell on his knees, stricken with love. But he was forced to watch the decay of this magnificent body, and went mad. This was his niece's vengeance, and the symbol of a condition we must try to define.²⁶

It was not until February of 1975, however, with a commission from the Edinburgh festival, that Fugard decided to pursue this "condition," and the play opened in Edinburgh in August of that year. In September, Fugard writes in his Notebooks, "Do not need well-meaning friends to tell me about the obvious flaws--the result of haste, panic and a lack of clarity in the 'vision.'" (Notebooks, 217) And again in February of 1976, "My attempts before to work creatively, as a writer, with the actors, was a bad mistake and resulted in my getting lost and losing all faith in my vision." (Notebooks, 219) Apparently, Fugard attempted a production in the "collaborative" method for Edinburgh, but abandoned this for the second production which starred Paul Scofield and opened on May 16, 1976 in London after a brief run in Nottingham. There is no record in his Notebooks of his feeling regarding the Scofield production. In June, he writes, simply, "So

Dimetos. Now Marais." (Eugène Marais; subject of Fugard's next project, filming The Guest.)

The plot of Dimetos is nearly as written in the few sentences by Camus, but the story, characters and their relationships are expanded. Dimetos is an engineer who has deserted the city supposedly for the calm of country living. He lives in a rural area, doing odd jobs. Living with him are his niece, Lydia, and Sophia, an older woman and long time servant, friend, and confidante who is secretly in love with Dimetos. A young city engineer, Danilo, comes searching for Dimetos to seek his aid in solving the city's water procurement problem. Under the guise of "thinking it over," Dimetos encourages Danilo to stay and tries to get him involved with Lydia, ostensibly to have her removed from his care, thus alleviating his own temptations. Danilo, while in a passionate embrace with Lydia, tears her dress and frightens her. When Lydia seeks solace from Sophia, she is rebuffed. Lydia, realizing that Dimetos set up the relationship and watched her struggle with Danilo but did nothing to stop it, hangs herself. In Act Two, Sophia and Dimetos are living by the sea, each trying to cope with guilt. Danilo returns and informs Dimetos about his

struggle with guilt until he realized that Dimetos was entirely responsible. After Danilo leaves, Sophia, unable to bear Dimetos's obsessive guilt, leaves him also. Dimetos, struggling to cope, hears Lydia's voice and goes mad.

Again, the plot is simple and there are few characters. However, all four characters are very important to the story. None is peripheral.

Dimetos is Fugard's most aberrant work on a number of levels: First, as mentioned above, it was inspired by a quotation rather than familiar people, events or images; second, there is no clear indication of country, locale, or era; third, as in Elizabethan theatre, place and characters in scenes are indicated by simple stage directions, i.e., "Beside a pool. Evening. Dimetos . . . and Lydia," or "Dimetos's house. A large table with tools. Sophia and Danilo." Moreover, there are numerous locations, rather than the usual single set, and the time of the play covers several years. Fourth, the language is highly formal and not realistic or naturalistic. Although Fugard ceased honoring the Unities, his use of language reflects the Greek classic style. Characters speak directly and there is little interrupting. There is a sense of

formality; everyone politely waits for the other to stop speaking before answering. This gives an air of the "intellectual" to the play. Although passions run high, they never seem to be expressed in any but the most reasonable manner. Even in the brief scene (Scene 11) which ends with Lydia hanging herself, she and Dimetos "take turns" speaking. Moreover all characters speak their minds very directly. Although there is subterfuge (on Dimetos's part), there is little that is "sub-textual." As in the classic Greek theatre, based as it was in the dithyrambs, what you hear is what you get! Character development through language, then, is very formal and precise. All characters reveal their feelings and thoughts directly in the lines and therefore, again as in the Classic Theatre, are rather two dimensional: Dimetos is Fugard's archetype, the "flawed" hero; Danilo is rather like a messenger bearing ill tidings; Sophia is the faithful servant; and Lydia the innocent victim. There is even a brief scene in Act Two in which Danilo apparently addresses the audience directly, much like a Chorus:

DANILO. And that is more or less how it was when I found him again. A sense of it all being over . . . all the adventures and misadventures finally parceled up and

packed away to gather dust . . . which of course was true for all of us. He was down on the beach, staring vacantly out to sea. There's a sense of retribution in the image, isn't there? Behind him land and a world of men he would never return to, who didn't want him anymore, had in fact finally forgotten him. And ahead of him the ocean, a world he could not enter . . . unless he was tempted to act out a fanciful metaphor for the last adventure of all. That didn't appear to be likely, however. To all intents and purposes he had come to terms with himself in the no-man's land between the tides, collecting his sea shells. If there was something more at work I saw no evidence of it. (Dimetos, 41)

This is the entire scene.

The directness of the dialogue is exemplified in Scene Six of Act One; the only scene in which all characters are present. In it relationships are clarified, opposing philosophies and conflicts presented, direct allusions to Greek mythical characters are made, and there are hints of the underlying passions of all. They speak of the City:

DANILO. . . . Progress has become a dirty word.

SOPHIA. I'm one of those who are (sic) suspicious of it.

DANILO. Why?

SOPHIA. The schemes get bigger and bigger, the people smaller. It's become so soulless, Danilo, like the masses of concrete it always entails

DANILO. . . . [Turning to Lydia.] Are you frightened of progress?

SOPHIA. I said I was 'suspicious'.

LYDIA. [uncertainly]. I don't know.

DANILO. It's only a word. It means to move forward . . . to try and live your life in the only direction it has got—tomorrow! How do you feel about tomorrow?

LYDIA. Good.

DANILO. Why?

LYDIA. I don't know . . . No, I do! Because today was good.

DANILO. And if it had been bad?

LYDIA. I'd try very hard to make tomorrow better.

DANILO. So one way or another, you want tomorrow.

LYDIA. Oh, yes!

DANILO. You believe in progress

LYDIA. But I also agree with Sophia. I don't like concrete. I prefer bricks.

DANILO. Then build with bricks. We use them as well. Get Dimetos to build you a house of real bricks down in the valley. Would you like that?

LYDIA. Yes. [She looks at Dimetos. He has been watching the exchange between her and Danilo, quietly. Sophia has been watching him. He speaks easily enough in reply to Lydia's look.] (Dimetos, 23-24) [emphasis mine.]

Note that the tension in the scene is hinted at in stage directions; rather as in Nongogo but more subtly. A rather

universal theme is introduced also; is the city, i.e., "progress" really progress? Immediately following the above exchange, Dimetos speaks of the ghosts for him in the city and dwells on a major symbol in the play, working hands. Fugard's fascination with hands is present in many of his plays. In an earlier collaborative work, Statements after an Arrest under the Immorality Act, Philander, a Colored man, having been caught and photographed in the act of love-making with a White woman, feels the loss of all semblance of manhood. His last few thoughts are:

MAN. . . . So I tell God I don't smoke and I don't drink and I know the price of bread. But he says it makes no difference and that he wants back what is left. And then I start to give him the other parts. I give him my feet and my legs, I give him my head and body, I give him my arms, until at last there is nothing left, just my hands, and they are empty. But he takes them back too. . . . (Statements, 107-08) ²⁷ [emphasis mine.]

In the final play of this study, The Road to Mecca, Fugard creates, as a surrogate for himself, a character based on the life and work of Helen Niemand, a lifetime resident of New Bethesda, South Africa. Niemand, a very religious and conservative White South African, deserted church, town and friends after the death of her husband, and spent the last years of her life compulsively

creating strange sculptures in her garden out of any material she could find. She was effectively ostracized by the town and eventually committed suicide. Her home and sculptures are now a museum. In the play, Helen (who has recently burned her hands rather badly) describes her work to Marius and Elsa:

HELEN: . . . I had to learn how to bend rusty wire into the right shape and mix sand into cement to make my Wise Men and their camels, how to grind down beer bottles in a coffee mill to put glitter on my walls. My hands will never let me forget. They'll keep me sane. (Mecca, 30)²⁸
[emphasis mine.]

Lydia, tying a knot Dimetos taught her, says, "I didn't even have to think. My hands will never forget how to tie it." (Dimetos, 27)

In his article in the December 20, 1982 edition of The New Yorker, Mel Gussow begins describing Fugard as a "self-styled carpenter-playwright [who] takes his tools . . . and carefully constructs his work. . . . [O]nce he has made his 'chair' he determines in rehearsal how well it can support his actors."²⁹ Fugard considers himself a craftsman.

Dimetos ends his journey laughing madly and moving his hands as if juggling. Earlier he has spoken eloquently of his

admiration for the hands of Jerome, a potter, and Daniel, a smith.

He concludes by telling of a nameless circus performer:

DIMETOS. ... The pair I think I'll remember longest though did not belong to a worker. They were also very accomplished in their business, as sure in their grasp as Daniel's and as effortless in their action as Jerome's. But they produced nothing, unless you can count the gasp of a throng of spectators as produce. A juggler! ... In explaining his trade to me he posed a paradox: 'Learn to give and take with the same action.' (Dimetos, 24-25) [emphasis mine.]

Referring once again to Fugard's developing style, note the "Economy" inherent in the above. In a few sentences, Fugard reveals character, clarifies an important symbol of the piece, foreshadows the end of the play, and poses a dual philosophical consideration:

1) Is that which brings forth no produce (a play, for example) worthwhile? 2) Can art be likened to an act of charity, wherein one should not let one's left hand know what his right is doing?

Immediately after the above excerpt is spoken, Danilo asks Dimetos how he feels about a beggar's hands, and Dimetos replies, "Beggars take, what do they give? I have no patience with that bloodless ethic that elevates beggary to a state of Grace."

(Dimetos, 25) This is Dimetos's hubris; his pride in his control, and he will pay in a tragic and ironic sense by becoming a spiritual

beggar himself. In his madness he creates dream worlds within dream worlds and ends with his empty hands held out.

DIMETOS. Once upon a time, there was . . . a man . . . who dreamt he was a horse. . . that night he dreamt his hooves turned into hands. . .

And because of this his torment was so great that that night he dreamt he was a man. . .

And because of this, his despair was so great that that night he dreamt his hands without himself. A voice was talking to them:

'All you ever wanted to do was possess. All you've ever made were tools and machines to help you do that. It is now time for the skills you scorned. Find something and hold it. Close that powerful hand on a thing. Yours. Hold it! The act of defiance man has made his creed. The mortal human hold! Now give it away. Don't be frightened. Only to your other hand. It will still be yours. That's right. Hold it. Tight. That was a terrible second when they were both empty. One still is. Find something. Quickly! Now comes the hard part . . . so listen carefully. Each must give what it has got to the other, at the same time. You must give and take with the same action.

Again . . . and again . . .

[Dimetos's hands juggle. He starts to laugh . . . and laughs and laughs.]

And now, because your gaiety is so great, the last skill of all.

Hold them out, and wait . . .

CURTAIN (Dimetos, 52-53)

The last skill, then, is to beg; to be able to ask of others. In his madness, Dimetos comes to a kind of Recognition; but again, as in most of Fugard's works, compensating action is impossible.

Thematically, Fugard moves through an advanced "rite of passage" (see p. 130 above) with Dimetos. For the first time, he will deal with man's (particularly man as artist) obligation to his fellow man. In all previous works, the society was a motivating force in character's lives, but their influence upon that society was nonexistent. With Dimetos, this is not true. Dimetos was a vital factor in the positive development of the city which he then abandoned. In moving to the country, he turns his back arrogantly on his fellow citizens and falls into a life of self-indulgent lassitude. The motivation for this abdication of responsibility is not entirely clear. On the surface, it appears to be Dimetos's disapproval of city men's objectives. Referring to Dimetos's past chiding of a beggar, Danilo says:

DANILO. It's a moment I don't want to forget, as you haven't forgotten yours. Those few words made me realize what it meant to be a man among men. A reciprocity, not of tears, but of sweat.

DIMETOS. A stirring vision.

DANILO. It is, isn't it? At times we come close to making it our reality.

DIMETOS. They were rare occasions when I was there. Most of what passed as 'vision' could be better summed up in the word profit. (Dimetos, 25)

We are, however, given the possibility of a more personal reason for Dimetos's "desertion," as he calls it. His "caring" has found a new focus:

DIMETOS. . . . There is nothing more beautiful than a man making something and making it well, than a pair of hands urgent and quick with a need and behind those a guiding intelligence. Do you know what bridges that mysterious distance between head and hands, bringing them so close together that they are almost one? Caring. . . . I don't care any more. . . . If I'd been myself this morning I might well have left that horse and those squabbling idiots to their predicament.

SOPHIA. Lydia.

DIMETOS. Yes. She was very upset when she saw the animal.

SOPHIA. Your caring hasn't stopped completely then.

DIMETOS. I don't 'care' about Lydia . . . [Sophia waits.] I love her as if she were my own child. (Dimetos, 17-18)

With this, Dimetos exits abruptly leaving Sophia in deep thought, and we get the feeling of someone who is running away from a frightening truth. Thematically, then, Fugard is examining the tragedy of obsession overcoming a man's dedication to his life's work. Appropriately, this is the first work in which the characters are "outcasts of society" by their own choice!

Familiar themes and devices from other works are recalled,

albeit in modified ways, consistent with the aberrant style. The theme of divisiveness is apparent; an echo of class distinction in that Dimetos is "superior" to the local people. Although not aristocratic by blood or birth, he is near legendary as an engineer; a true hero to the city. Moreover, he, Lydia, and Sophia are a kind of "royal family" in that they are removed and, unlike the locals, not laborers or farmers. This "nobility" is an essential Aristotelian element for Tragedy.

The device of game playing is again used, but it is now a word game between Sophia and Lydia and has none of the raucous physical playing of the earlier works. Again this is consistent with the style of the work.

Fugard has never since attempted to work in this style and is not yet happy with any production of the piece. He is however still pleased with the script and intends to direct it again.

I'm living quietly with the sense of having one more appointment with that play as a director. The right moment will come. It will take four actors with very very special qualities to get me back to it. (Truths, 159)

Ironically, although Dimetos is in style, mood and dialogue the closest to the classics that Fugard attempts, the protagonist is

not "tragic" or "divided" in that he ends in a state of madness.

Recognition requires a clear perception of the problem. In speaking of the ending of The Blood Knot, Fugard states: "If there is anything on that stage before the curtain drops it is lucid knowledge and consciousness." (Notebooks, 106) Earlier, I speculated that it is only Morris who attains to recognition, since Zach lacks the intelligence to understand. Dimetos obviously has the intelligence; but like Johnnie in Hello and Goodbye who retreats into madness, hobbling about on his dead father's crutches dreaming of some kind of "resurrection," Dimetos ends by listening to the voice of his dead niece while his hands juggle thin air.

In Fugard's next work, he explores madness of another kind in more detail. A Lesson from Aloes, perhaps his most propagandistic work to this time, examines a madness imposed from the outside; from the brutality of the police forces of the Nationalist South African government. It is based, as are many of his works, on a true incident: one which is recorded in detail in his notebooks early as February of 1961. Uncharacteristically, he does not use this incident as a metaphor to examine a personal concern, but moves to another plane in the "rites of passage," and becomes a

"political playwright." In Aloes, Fugard examines the devastating effect of police state measures on the relationships of friends, husbands and wives. This is not to say that Fugard was not personally affected by the police state. There are instances of "breakdowns" in his family; his grandmother spent her last days in the very institution (Fort England Mental Home) to which Gladys, the wife in Aloes, must return irregularly for treatment; and Vandenbroucke reports that Sheila Fugard once suffered a nervous breakdown.

During rehearsals for the South African premiere [of Aloes], Fugard explained that he had used his own experience of a Security Branch search . . . : "Four of them trooped in and went through the house. One of them sat down and was, in fact, the first person to read Sheila's poetry." (Truths, 177)

Although this incident is described almost exactly in the play as Gladys's and Piet's experience, it is only biographical on the surface. That is, it is not a metaphor for a long-standing, deep-seated personal problem of the playwright. Remember, however, that Fugard himself came perilously close to a breakdown as described in a May, 1977 entry in his notebooks. He feared the "total extinction" of his creativity. It was with the

return to writing Aloes, which he had shelved many times, that he recovered. (Between Dimetos and Aloes Fugard had worked primarily as an actor, filming his screenplay The Guest, which was completed in September of 1976. Between then and the May, 1977 entry he seems to have led a quiet, but relatively unproductive life; fishing, struggling with the concept which would result in another film, Marigolds in August, and directing a revival of Sizwe Bansi at the Royal Court Theatre in London--an activity which he likened to his life being "hijacked." "Just as I try to steady myself and return to what I think is the centre of my life, assaults from outside If I can't say 'No' now, I will never. And I need to." [Notebooks, 222])

For months, Fugard struggled with his own torments until deciding to return to Aloes. In the final entry of his published Notebooks, Fugard reveals much which relates directly to my thesis: his use of actual events as inspiration; his focus on the woman as central to the play; the indomitable courage of victims of oppression; and ambiguities. And so I include the entire entry below. (Although he does not mention the autobiographical inspiration, it is there; and one might almost think of Piet and

Gladys as representing middle-class, White Boesmans and Lenas [Athols and Sheilas]; the woman being the more innocent victim, the man being the source of the agonies, since it is Piet's political involvement which brings the police down on them.)

Suddenly and inexplicably the story of Piet, Gladys and Steve (who like others, suspects Piet of being an informer and who in fact if he is an informer, is his victim) has come back to me. The complex of images and desperation which provide the energy for the piece, are intact. Those early attempts aborted because then I saw Piet at the centre of my story. Now I see that it is Gladys's play. Piet's monolithic goodness, the enormous assault made on it by him having been sent to Coventry by the comrades; the further assault of his having witnessed his wife's breakdown: then the yet further assault on his important friendship with Steve--despite all those assaults--it is not enough to sustain a piece. There are no ambiguities in Piet's experience, none of the dark ambiguities which I think make an energising central image in a play in the sense that Boesman has enormous ambiguities--he is unquestionably at one level the villain, but at the end he exposes a sense of self-disgust when he spills out his experience of himself and their life. This creates a necessarily ambiguous image. Now I see that Gladys has those dark ambiguities--her whole relationship to South Africa. More pertinently and succinctly--Piet and Steve are victims of a system, of a social and political order which they have tried to resist, but they are victims of something man-made, whereas Gladys is God's victim. (Notebooks, 229-30) [emphases mine]

That Gladys is "God's victim" is, I believe, questionable; and I will explore that further below in analyzing themes.

The history of the creation of Aloes is a long and complicated one. As mentioned, the first indication of its images is in February of 1961. Throughout his Notebooks, spanning 1961 to 1977, images are recorded: some very brief, others in some depth. In September of 1966, for example, the words "Piet (informer)" are simply included in a list of five other images. However, from October to November of the same year, there are detailed notes on character, plot, images, etc. Except for the many recordings of the various Lenas, these images are the most repetitive over a long period of time. How influential this concept may have been on other works is hinted at in the realization that these images persisted throughout all of Fugard's writings and other theatrical endeavors from the time of The Blood Knot (1961) to the first production of Aloes (1978).

The characters and underlying events are based on fact, and even the characters' first names are the same as the real people involved. A politically active and banned teacher, Steve, illegally attended a gathering of friends. The Special Branch police raided the party and arrested him. All present suspected Piet of being the informer, and he was quietly ostracized by all. Steve was offered

and accepted the opportunity to leave the country on an Exit Permit, which means permanent exile. (Fugard himself was in this position between 1967-71 when the government withdrew his passport.

[Truths, 58]) Although based on these facts, Aloes presents a fictional meeting between Piet, Gladys, and Steve just before he leaves on his voyage into exile.

The plot of Aloes is as follows: Piet and Gladys Bezuidenhout are preparing a dinner party for Steve Daniels and his wife and children before they leave the country. They have not seen each other since Steve's arrest and imprisonment. As Piet and Gladys speak, they reveal that former comrades believe that Piet informed on Steve, and that Gladys has spent some time in a mental institution as a result of a raid by the Special Branch police during which they read and then confiscated her personal diaries. We find that she feels "raped" by this action and is living in a state of near mental collapse. By the end of Act One, the Daniels family has not arrived and Gladys has stunned Piet by asking if it were not true that he was the informer. He doesn't answer her. Act Two opens two hours later and there has been no sign of the Daniels family. As Piet begins to clear the picnic table, Steve arrives alone, saying

that one of the children has the flu and his wife is home taking care of her. After much camaraderie, Steve's suspicions become obvious and Gladys tells him that it was, indeed, Piet who informed. Piet is thunderstruck, but refuses to defend himself. Steve reveals the terrors of his arrest and his feeling that it will be easier to leave now that he knows about Piet. Gladys then reverses herself, giving no explanation, but revealing her agonies at the institution. Piet tells Steve that if he could have believed he was the informer, the friendship was over, anyway. Steve leaves. Gladys decides she must return to the mental clinic. Piet agrees to take her in the morning and returns to trying to identify a strange aloe in the back yard; and the play ends.

Although Aloes is structured in a Climactic form, Fugard takes some liberties with time. Act One is in three scenes but there is unspecified passage of time in both scene breaks. This is made evident by costume changes. Scene Two, which takes place in the bedroom, finds Piet wrapped in a towel, having just bathed; and between scenes two and three, Gladys changes clothes. Each change is significant and would seem to make for rather long scene breaks. There is a feeling of awkwardness in this element of structure, of

inefficiency. One gets the feeling that these scene shifts are unnecessary and arbitrary. This, and the rather complicated set and many hand props are, again, not in concurrence with Fugard's stated philosophy of "Economy."

Fugard has said, "... I've had recourse to dialogue in which the most important things being said on stage are not being said with words." (Truths, 174) However, such is not the case in Aloes. In dealing with a fictional event based on a reality, Fugard seems to have regressed somewhat to the style and structure of No-Good Friday. Aloes is perilously close to melodrama; even more than in Friday, important questions are answered. There is little sense of the existential; all questions are prosaic.

However, there are differences which are evidence of Fugard's maturity as a playwright: the small cast (three), allowing for relatively equal concentration on characters; the rhetorical restraint; the single set (note, however, that there are indoor and outdoor locales in the set, which are open to view simultaneously, much like the set of Friday). Moreover, Fugard powerfully portrays the insidious effects of official racism without the presence of a single Black person. And he does, again, dare to take the time to

develop character on stage with little physical action. In Aloes, however, he does not do this "sub-textually." Except for certain furtive physical actions by Gladys (hiding her diary under the mattress, for example) what you hear, as in Dimetos, is what you get. Even in the first meeting between Piet and Steve, underlying suspicions are simply avoided and dialogue is used to establish the closeness of the relationship. Otherwise, how can we be moved at the collapse of the friendship? Note, in the following excerpt, the "game-playing" device:

(. . . . STEVE appears out of the darkness.)

STEVE (Respectfully, but with an exaggerated degree of authority) Excuse me, sir! (He flashes some sort of identity card) Security Branch. I wonder if you could help me?

PIET (Playing along) Yes, my good man, What can I do for you?

STEVE I'm looking for a mad Afrikaner, who recites English poetry. He stays around here somewhere.

PIET (Pretending outrage) A what?

STEVE His name is Piet Bezuidenhout.

PIET Did I hear you right? An Afrikaner, reciting English poetry! And a Bezuidenhout at that!

STEVE I told you he was mad, sir.

PIET It's worse than that my good man. There's a name for his sort. Why do you think we lost the Boer War? And what do you think is making your people so cheeky these days?

STEVE (Whips off his hat; is suddenly servile) Sorry, sir.

PIET Subversive elements like him. English poetry! If I was you I would choose my company more carefully in future.

STEVE Is it all right if I visit you instead, then?

PIET Have you got a bottle? (STEVE produces a bottle of wine from the side pocket of his jacket and holds it up) Come inside. (Aloes, 47-48) ³⁰

After Steve explains his tardiness and why his wife and children aren't coming, he and Piet launch into another game; one that is less spontaneous and more familiar. Steve begins to recite Longfellow's The Slave's Dream, but cannot complete it. Piet begins to help out and they finish it together. The strength of the old bond between these two comrades is made evident.

The "melodrama" of the piece is also evident in earlier moments. In the very opening of Act One, Fugard establishes an enigmatic mood, but it is rather arbitrary. At curtain we find Piet trying to identify an aloe, reading descriptions aloud from a book. Gladys, "behind sunglasses, sits very still on a garden bench." Piet finishes reading and then:

(He closes the book, and takes off the spectacles. He gets up quietly, the aloe in his hands, and looks at GLADYS)

GLADYS (Without moving) I'm awake. (Aloes, 3)

This establishes a mood truly worthy of Agatha Christie; does Gladys have some extrasensory power? Is she playing a game? Spying? Is she far more aware of what's happening around her than she would like Piet--or anyone---to know? Vandenbroucke compares this opening to the first image in Endgame:

Sitting perfectly still in her sunglasses, Gladys resembles Hamm, who is also sedentary and in dark glasses. Her "I'm awake" suggests a readiness to interact with the man taking care of her that can be compared to Hamm's first line, "Me to play." (Truths, 230n.)

Because of the dissimilarity in the plays, I believe this comparison is rather arbitrary. Aloes simply doesn't compare in style or content with Endgame, and I doubt Fugard would think so. As further evidence of the melodramatic tone, consider at the very end of Act One Piet's response to Gladys's questioning about the possibility that he, in fact, is the informer:

PIET It's not as simple as that, Gladys. Obviously I wanted to avoid upsetting you. But even without that, could we have talked about it? (He speaks with deep emotion) Sat down and discussed over supper the fact that

I was considered a traitor? That's the correct word. Could you have made a simple entry to that effect in your diary? God! It's the ugliest thing that has ever happened to me. It make me feel more ashamed of . . . myself, my fellow men . . . of everything! . . . in a way I never thought possible. (Gladys has been watching him very carefully) What's the matter?

GLADYS I'm trying to see you as others do.

PIET And?

GLADYS It's not true, is it?

(PIET stares back at her for a long time before turning away)

PIET (Vacantly . . . looking at his wrist watch) They should be here any minute now. I'll . . . I'll light the candles. (Aloes, 42-43)

Why does Piet not defend himself further? Is he protecting Gladys? Perhaps. Himself? Perhaps. Or--would any further pursuit of the topic, as in any mystery at this point, spoil the revelations of Act Two? (Or all of the above?)

After the deep excursions into character and the intricacies of the tragic since The Blood Knot, Aloes is a rather disappointing effort. It does not, however, lack power. Although melodramatic and rather predictable, and although character is developed through obvious and rather mundane dialogue, it is still far better than many propaganda plays in that the characters are

three-dimensional. Although each character represents, on one level, a major ethnic group (Gladys is English; Piet, Afrikaner; and Steve, Colored), they are not simply stereotypes used to purvey a message. They are human beings.

This humanity is conveyed directly through dialogue. We know who these people are, not by what they keep hidden, but by what they say. I have said above that the dialogue in Aloes is mundane, but that the play is not lacking in power. This is because, like Arthur Miller, for example, Fugard is capable of imbuing the mundane with power. In using the language of the common man, Fugard and Miller allow for ease of identification on the part of the audience and, although the lines seem very "natural," they are well-wrought and efficient. All that must be said is said clearly and concisely, but with far more "art" than the common man is capable of in emotionally charged situations. There is an exquisite artificiality in both Miller's and Fugard's dialogue, but this is more obvious in Fugard's lesser efforts. Compare the excerpt from Piet's first act monologue below with Willie's speech on page 65 of this chapter. Describing what inspired him to join the anti-apartheid movement, Piet recalls the bus boycott:

The bus company won in the end. They got that penny from the people. I thought we had failed, but not Steve. He said he'd expected it. The really important thing was that those two weeks of boycott had raised the political consciousness of the people. They had acted politically, some of them maybe for the first time in their lives. My first lesson from Steve, and the most important one. An evil system isn't a natural disaster. There's nothing you can do to stop a drought, but bad laws and social injustice are man-made and can be unmade by men. It's as simple as that. We can make this a better world to live in. (Aloes, 35) [emphasis mine.]

The sense of personal responsibility is the same, as is a kind of naive faith.

In presenting, once again in propaganda form, a sense of naive faith, Fugard returns to a theme which has not been present in the more "universal" works, and that theme is presented bluntly as the above excerpt indicates. Other themes, particularly that of insidious racism, are presented once again, but more subtly. Gladys is not openly racist, but she does not share Piet's dedication to the cause and she innocently makes remarks which smack of racism. Speaking of a bad case of sunburn she got as a little girl, she says:

GLADYS Yes. A holiday somewhere with my mother and father. On the very first day I picked up too much sun on the beach and that was the end of it. My mother dabbed me all over with calamine lotion to soothe the pain. I can remember looking at myself in the mirror . . . a frightened little white ghost. Mommy was terrified that I was going to end up with a brown skin. But she needn't have worried.

It all peeled away and there I was, the same as before. . . . I think it was Cape Town. Not that it made any difference where I was. All I remember of the outside world was standing at a window and watching the dogs in the street go beserk when the dirtboys came to empty the bins. Heavens! What a terrible commotion that was. A big gray lorry with its mountain of rubbish, the black men banging on its side shouting, the dogs going for them savagely . . . (Aloes, 6-7) [emphases mine]

Gladys, an average White lady, is without sympathy for the Blacks and Coloreds. Later she will complain to Piet:

GLADYS We've already had droughts, prickly pears and despair. I suppose we'll be into politics next and the black man's misery. I'm not exaggerating, Peter. That is what a conversation with you has become--a catalogue of South African disasters. And you never stop! You seem to have a perverse need to dwell on what is cruel and ugly about this country. Is there nothing gentle in your world? (Aloes, 16)

Later, she will say to Steve, ". . . Politics and black skin don't make the only victims in this country." (Aloes, 74)

In this way, Gladys is reminiscent of Shorty in People Are Living There. She is an entirely sympathetic character and we will feel pity for her, as for Shorty. Yet neither is capable of empathy or even sympathy with the oppressed majority of their country. It is to Fugard's credit that he can present characters like these with such understanding, that he can make the insidious quality of oppression clear to his audience.

If Gladys had come to this realization, she would have attained a state of recognition, but she does not. She exhibits an improved ability to cope with her own problems of survival: "... I've got to go back, Peter . . . I'll go quietly this time," (Aloes, 78, 79) but cannot empathize with Steve. So, the elements of classical tragedy are missing in this work, and though we may be able to identify at some level with Gladys, at the most we are moved to pity; not terror. Gladys is, like Piet and Steve, South Africa's victim; not God's.

The theme of survival, which is after all the lesson from aloes, is common to most of Fugard's other works, but is dealt with much more directly in this propaganda piece. Whereas Hester, Lena, and Milly talk about living, Gladys speaks of the cost of mere survival:

GLADYS Is that the price of survival in this country?
Thorns and bitterness.

PIET For the aloe it is. Maybe there's some sort of
lesson for us there.

GLADYS What do you mean?

PIET We need survival mechanisms as well.

GLADYS Speak for yourself, Peter. I'm a human being not

a . . . prickly pear. . . . (Aloes, 15)

Perhaps the humanity of the characters is what made Aloes the success that it was in the United States. Again, it is the ability of Fugard to examine the political situation of his country in intensely personal terms which brings to foreign audiences the shattering emotional involvement in his plays. Aloes opened at the Yale Repertory Theatre on March 28, 1980 to positive reviews and, with Zakes Mokae replacing James Earl Jones as Steve, opened at the Playhouse Theatre in New York City, also to favorable reviews.

It was through Jones's expressed desire to perform as Steve that Lloyd Richards chose to do Aloes in his first year as artistic director of the Yale Repertory Theatre. The combination of circumstances which led to Yale's production of the play and Fugard's subsequent position as "playwright in residence" at Yale were fortuitous, as I discovered in conversation with Richards:

CREAMER: When did you first meet Athol?

RICHARDS: A Lesson From Aloes.

CREAMER: That's the first time met him, actually?

RICHARDS: Oh, yes.

CREAMER: You were familiar with his work, though?

RICHARDS: Oh, yes. And I was very familiar with his work, knew his work, and loved it, and I knew of him. But I had never met him, and James Earl Jones, who had committed to work with me here that first year and do Timon of Athens, called me--and this was before I started that first season--and he said, "I read a new play by Athol Fugard that I would love to do." Well, someone surreptitiously got me a copy of the script and I also wanted to do it. But the script was held by the National Theatre . . .

CREAMER: In England?

RICHARDS: In England, and so was not available. Then I got a call from someone that said, you know, there was a strike on at the National Theatre, and they had to drop the option, and I called Athol in South Africa and evidently he knew of me and he knew Yale and he said, "Yes." And that was the beginning of our relationship.³¹

The good fortune of the National Theatre strike paved the way for the now long-standing relationship between Yale and Fugard, and the success of the production probably encouraged Fugard, for the first time since Dimetos, to premiere a new work outside of South Africa. Mel Gussow had written, "'A Lesson From Aloes' honors the theater and, by itself, validates Richards's first year at Yale."³² The premiere of Master Harold . . . and the Boys, on March 9, 1982 would unquestioningly reinforce that opinion. For the second time in two tries, a Fugard work presented at Yale would inspire widespread positive criticism and result in another, even more successful, Broadway production. Master Harold would

also, although being another powerful indictment of the South African regime, mark Fugard's return to the examination of intensely personal problems; exactly as were The Blood Knot, Hello and Goodbye, and Boesman and Lena: The Family.

As I speculated above (p. 128), Master Harold is Fugard's second attempt to deal with the ghost of his father, the first being Hello and Goodbye; and it is, if possible, even more personal. In Hello and Goodbye, Johnnie suffers because he was unable to save his father; in Master Harold, Hally will (through a surrogate, Sam) kill his father. Unlike the Greek Classic Theatre, this "murder" will take place on stage, which may account for the immense power of the play. To draw a comparison once again with Arthur Miller: in Death of a Salesman and All My Sons, both extremely effective works, a son (whether justifiably or not) drives his father to suicide. In none of these three works is possession of the mother--with respect to Oedipus --motivational; but the social stigma attached to patricide is powerful because virtually instinctual, and reaches audience members on a "gut-level." We are, once again, challenged with the "universal" rather than the "specifics" of Aloes.

Master Harold was inspired, once again, by an image. This image, however, was a memory of an actual event in which Fugard himself was a participant:

Can't remember now what precipitated it, but one day there was a rare quarrel between Sam and myself. In a truculent silence we closed the café, Sam set off home to New Brighton on foot and I followed a few minutes later on my bike. I saw him walking ahead of me and, coming out of a spasm of acute loneliness, as I rode up behind him I called his name, he turned in mid-stride to look back and, as I cycled past, I spat in his face. Don't suppose I will ever deal with the shame that overwhelmed me the second after I had done that. (Notebooks, 26)

The above was written in March of 1961: six months before Fugard's successful first production of The Blood Knot. Master Harold is Fugard's attempt to "deal with the shame."

"Shame" is a key word in this play, but it does not relate directly to the spitting incident so much as to young Hally's feelings about his real father. An eminent family therapist, John Bradshaw, has differentiated shame from guilt. Feeling guilt is tantamount to saying, "I did something bad," whereas feeling shame is equivalent to "I am bad."³³ There is a deep difference, in that guilt is far more easily alleviated. Shame can often become a personality trait. After the spitting incident in Master Harold, Sam reminds Hally of

when the two of them had to carry Hally's passed-out father home through the streets:

SAM: . . . It would have been so simple if you could have just despised him for being a weak man. But he's your father. You love him and you're ashamed of him. You're ashamed of so much You hadn't done anything wrong but you went around as if you owed the world an apology for being alive. . . . that's not the way a boy grows up to be a man! . . . but the one person who should have been teaching you what that means, was the cause of your shame. (MH, 25)³⁴ [emphases mine.]

Shame, like alcoholism, can be generational; passed on from father to son. Within a year of the production of Master Harold, Fugard had stopped drinking. Unlike with Hello and Goodbye, this time Fugard exorcises his father's ghost, perhaps forever.

And so the inspirational image, spitting in Sam Semela's face, is again metaphorical and perhaps allegorical; Sam, the Black man, is the scapegoat. As Willie Seopolo says in No-Good Friday, "Everybody wants a backside to kick in this country." (Dimetos, 131) Sam's backside will be a prominent focus in this work.

The plot of Master Harold is relatively simple, as are most of Fugard's plots: On a rainy afternoon in the St. George's Park Tea Room in Port Elizabeth, two Black waiters (Sam and Willie) speculate about their upcoming dance competition. Hally, the

young son of the owners of the Tea Room enters, and we find that there is a close relationship between the three, especially between Hally and Sam. Through conversation and phone calls, we discover that Hally's alcoholic and crippled father is in the hospital and his mother has been called there. Sam believes that Hally's father is coming home, but Hally refuses to believe it. Hally's life is far easier when his father is in the hospital. When Hally's mother calls and Hally finds that his father is at home, he goes into a rage. When Sam tries to keep Hally (for his own well-being) from ridiculing his father, Hally turns on Sam, insulting him, demanding servant/master obeisance and ultimately spitting in Sam's face. Sam, after an initial struggle with his own rage, tries to re-establish the bonds of friendship. Hally cannot respond positively to this attempt, and leaves in a very confused and depressed state. Sam and Willie dance. The play ends.

Structurally, the play is in the classic Climactic form. The action of the play is simple and linear; it occurs in exactly the time it takes to play it and in one location. There is no act break; the play is an extended one-act play. The choice of props and set do not sustain Fugard's stated poor/pure philosophy of theatre. There are

many hand props and the set is rather crowded with furniture; primarily the chairs and tables of the tea room. There is also an old fashioned, large coin operated jukebox.

Moreover, the aura of the near tragic is minimal. For what is the action of the play, after all? In nearly all of Fugard's other works, those that approach the tragic, at least one character comes to a discovery of "self." At the end of Master Harold, Hally has, if anything, lost a part of himself; Sam was always cognizant.

SAM: ... Hally ... I've got no right to tell you what being a man means if I don't behave like one myself, and I'm not doing so well at that this afternoon. Should we try again Hally?

HALLY: Try what?

SAM: Fly another kite I suppose. It worked once, and this time I need it as much as you do.

HALLY: It's still raining Sam. You can't fly kites on rainy days remember.

SAM: So what do we do? Hope for better weather tomorrow?

HALLY (helpless gesture) I don't know. I don't know anything anymore. (MH, 25-26)

Although Sam tries once more (in a brief passage unfortunately pithy with propaganda), Hally, without answering,

leaves. The two Black men dance to Sarah Vaughn's "Little Man, You've Had a Busy Day," and the audience is left in despair. Gussow reports that, "In real life, Sam and Hally were friends again the next day, and they remained close through his adolescence."³⁵ Had Fugard made this evident in the play, it could not possibly have the emotional impact that it does. It would be "de-fused." Therefore, although one of Fugard's most lyrical and humorous pieces, it is like Dimetos, without hope. No one comes to self-knowledge, and any mitigation can only be realized by knowledge of who Hally eventually became: Athol Fugard. But as he himself said, "If the play is valid it is as a piece of theater, not a personal history."³⁶ The reality of the image is considerably removed from the artistic event.

Master Harold has been lauded by many critics for combining lyricism and humor with the "tragic." It is precisely the careful mingling of these which keeps an audience off balance and is the essence of "tragi-comedy," or "dark comedy." But it is not Fugard's first attempt at this genre. I was surprised and perplexed, on seeing the anniversary Broadway production of The Blood Knot, by the many moments of laughter in the evening. I had

felt, in reading the play, that it was a very depressing work: morbid and heavy. I was further concerned that the American audience, since much of the laughter was directly connected to Zach's slowness of mind, was responding as to a Stepin Fetchit character. After the performance, I spoke with Fugard and was surprised to find that he was not at all surprised or concerned with the laughter. This combination of levity and the serious was not a new form for him.

Like Blood Knot, much of what we learn of character is through the humor in the dialogue; the difference is that for Sam, Hally and (to a lesser degree) Willie, the humor is purposeful. Sam is adept at harmless teasing and both his wit and his relationship with Willie is established in the very opening moments of the play. Willie has been complaining that Hilda, his partner for the ballroom dance contest, is not showing up for practice and he must practice with his pillow. (It's revealed that he had given her a "hiding" four days earlier; yet, as with Shorty in People Are Living There, we are not at all moved to dislike Willie for this abuse. We accept and laugh at it. Early on our own unconscious acceptance of certain kinds of abuse is, subliminally, piqued.)

SAM: (teasing him gently) How's your pillow with the quickstep?

WILLIE: (ignoring the tease) Good! And why? Because it got no legs. That's her trouble. She can't move them quick enough Boet Sam. I start the record and before halfway Count Basey [sic] is already winning. Only time we catch-up with him is when the gramophone runs down. (Sam laughs) Haaikona Boet Sam, is not funny.

SAM: (snapping his fingers) I got it! Give her a handicap.

WILLIE: What's that?

SAM: Give her a ten second head start and then let Count Basey go. Then I put my money on her. Hot favourite in the Ballroom Stakes: Hilda Samuels ridden by Willie Malopo.

WILLIE: (turning away) I'm not talking to you no more. (MH, 7-8)

Within a few seconds, all is forgiven and Sam is teaching Willie the quickstep, whereupon Hally enters. Note the immediate difference, clearly indicated in the dialogue, between Sam's and Willie's relationship to Hally:

HALLY: Bravo! No question about it. First place goes to Mr. Sam Semela.

WILLIE: (in total agreement) You was gliding with style Boet Sam.

HALLY: (cheerfully) How's it, chaps?

SAM: Okay Hally.

WILLIE: (springing to attention like a soldier and

saluting.) At your service Master Harold! (MH, 8)

Although this is done as a kind of game, Willie addresses Hally only as Master Harold or Master Hally throughout the play, and when the final confrontation is building, Hally will say to Sam, "To begin with, why don't you start calling me Master Harold like Willie." (MH, 24)

Master Harold, like Aloes, contains some of the most subtle nuances that Fugard has yet achieved in development of character through dialogue. Hints of Hally's incipient racism are most naturally and casually included within lines which are warm and friendly. Sam and Hally discuss "men of magnitude":

HALLY: . . . Anyway that's my man of magnitude. Charles Darwin! Who's yours?

SAM: (without hesitation) Abraham Lincoln.

HALLY: I might have guessed as much. Don't get sentimental Sam. You've never been a slave you know, and anyway we freed your ancestors here in South Africa long before the Americans . . . But if you want to thank somebody on their behalf do it to Mr. William Wilberforce. Come on. Try again. I want a real genius. (now enjoying himself and so is Sam. . .) (MH, 12) [emphasis mine]

Hally's casual mention of slavery in and of itself is not shocking, however he goes on to identify himself with the slavers--"we" freed your ancestors--and even more telling, more

evident of the insidiousness of racism--is Sam's calm acceptance of the statement. Even Sam does not recognize anything "unnatural" in this division. Shortly thereafter Hally will say to Sam, "Tolstoy may have educated his peasants, but I've educated you." Sam's reply will be simply, "Standard four to standard nine." (MH, 13)

Throughout the text, without preaching, without pointed statements of prejudice or bigotry, Fugard insinuates the fundamental divisions which will lead to the total breakdown of the relationship. Even in the warmest moments between the two, these casual insinuations appear. When reminiscing about Sam making him a kite, Hally says, "The sheer audacity of it took my breath away. I mean seriously, what the hell does a black man know about flying a kite?" (MH, 15)

Soon after, in one of the more forced revelations of racism, Hally's conditioned attitudes become even clearer:

HALLY: (He studies SAM. Their memories have made him conscious of the man's presence in his life.) How old are you Sam?

SAM: One score and nineteen. Two score and three.

HALLY: Strange isn't it?

SAM: What?

HALLY: Me and you.

SAM: What's strange about it?

HALLY: Little white boy in short trousers and a black man old enough to be his father flying a kite. It's not every day you see that.

SAM: But why strange? Because the one is white and the other black?

HALLY: I don't know. Would have been just as strange I suppose if it had been me and my Dad . . . cripple man and a little boy! Nope! There's no chance of me flying a kite without it being strange (MH, 15-16)

There is nothing in the script to indicate Sam's reaction to Hally innocently equating his blackness with being a cripple.

When Hally's mother calls and he finds his father has indeed been brought home from the hospital, he vents his rage on his surrogate father, Sam. This takes the easiest and most obvious form for the White boy: the form of racial slandering. All of the heretofore incipient ("innocent") racism surfaces in a vicious verbal assault, and Sam must now respond. Hally attempts to establish a master/servant relationship with Sam, who tries to lead Hally in another direction. When Hally insists that his father is Sam's boss, Sam rebels slightly, denying it; it's Hally's mother who pays him, after all. Hally states, "He's a whiteman and that's good enough for

you." Even at this, Sam tries to mollify Hally: "I'll try to forget you said that." and "Let's stop before it's too late." (MH, 24) Hally is beyond reason now and goes on to tell a racist joke which he and his father share: a pun on the word "fair." "He [Hally's father] gives out with a big groan you see and says: It's not fair is it Hally. Then I have to ask: what Chum? And then he says: A kaffir's Arse . . . and we both have a good laugh." (MH, 24) (In American productions of Fugard's plays, "kaffir" is usually replaced with "nigger.") It is at this point that Sam presents his "backside" to Hally to confirm the "unfairness" of it. Hally is moved to the ultimate insult, spitting in Sam's face. From that moment on, although Sam will recover and once again be conciliatory, we know it is too late. The relationship can never be the same. Moreover, Hally is incapable of reconciliation. He has passed a point of no return.

Master Harold begins with a dance and ends with a dance; and dance is the prevailing metaphor in the play. The work is "framed" so to speak with a dance. In his review of the premiere at Yale, Frank Rich wrote, "'--'Master Harold' needs some tightening and spells out its metaphors a few too many times. . . ." ³⁷; and indeed this is true. It is a mark of the excellence of the play that the

emotional power transcends the touches of didacticism which occasionally surface. As Hally and Sam work on Hally's essay about the ballroom dance competition, Hally asks about collisions on the dance floor. Sam, shocked, explains:

SAM: There's no collisions out there Hally. Nobody trips or stumbles or bumps into anybody else. That's what that moment is all about. To be one of those finalists on that dance floor is like . . . like being in a dream about a world in which accidents don't happen.

HALLY: (genuinely moved by Sam's image) Jeasus Sam! That's beautiful!

WILLIE: (can endure waiting no longer) I'm starting!
(WILLIE dances while SAM talks)

SAM: Of course it is. That's what I've been trying to say to you all afternoon. And it's beautiful because that is what we want life to be like. But instead, like you said Hally, we're bumping into each other all the time. Look at the three of us this afternoon: I've bumped into Willie, the two of us have bumped into you, you've bumped into your mother, she's bumping into your dad . . . None of us knows the steps and there's no music playing. And it doesn't stop with us. The whole world is doing it all the time. Open a newspaper and what do you read? America has bumped into Russia, England is bumping into India, richman bumps into poorman. People get hurt in all that bumping, and we're sick and tired of it now. It's been going on for too long. Are we never going to get it right? Learn to dance like champions instead of always being just a bunch of beginners at it? (MH, 20)

Sam and Hally pursue the metaphor, speaking of "the

dream," of Gandhi, the pope and General Smuts trying to teach people the right steps, of the United Nations being a "dancing school for politicians." At this positive point, Hally's mother calls; his father's at home and comes on the phone for a chat. Hally is plunged into despair and Sam comments, "That sounded like a bad bump Hally." (MH, 21) Hally, in his rage, continues using the dance metaphor, but now in a negative sense, speaking of the "cripples" on the dance floor, "... out there dancing ... like a bunch of broken spiders." (MH, 22) It is Sam's trying to protect Hally from himself that leads to the final confrontation.

It is justifiable that Sam's long passage, above, could well have been spoken by that character, and throughout the play Sam's use of English is nearly impeccable (especially compared to Willie's, for example); but it does fairly scream "author's message."

One of Hally's fondest memories is of the kite that Sam made for him, and of being left alone on a park bench to fly it. Both the kite and the bench take on deep symbolic meaning: the kite being a unifying element, and the bench representing apartheid. Sam explains that he had left Hally alone flying the kite, because the bench was a "whites only" bench, so he could not sit there.

Sam's last words to Hally, before Hally wordlessly leaves, are, again, justifiable in regard to situation and character, but are also about as close to propaganda as Fugard ever comes:

HALLY: (helpless gesture) I don't know. I don't know anything anymore.

SAM: Your sure of that Hally? Because it would be pretty hopeless if that was true. It would mean nothing has been learnt in here this afternoon, and there was a hell of a lot of teaching going on . . . one way or the other. But anyway, I don't believe you. I reckon there's one thing you know. You don't have to sit up there by yourself. You know what that bench means now, and you can leave it anytime you choose. All you've got to do is stand up, and walk away from it. (MH, 26)

Although Fugard has built many of his plays around specific statutes (see Chapter One, page 24), and although apartheid is a foundation for nearly all of his works, Master Harold is the first and, thus far, the only play in which there is a direct confrontation on stage between a Black and a White! (Whatever shade their skin pigmentation may be, Morrie and Zach, Boesman and Lena, Errol Philander, and Steve Daniels all are, in the official South African racial divisions, classified as "Colored." Except for the police sergeant in Statements, who does not interact directly with the other characters, only Blacks or Coloreds appear on stage in the

collaborative works.) It is astonishing that Fugard has managed to enlighten so many in the world about the human cost of apartheid, without using this obvious device. But perhaps it also accounts for the leaning toward propaganda, which is less obvious in his earlier pieces.

Master Harold is so well-unified, so tightly woven, that in dealing with character development through language, I have exposed most of the thematic elements of the piece. Again, they are essentially the same themes as in Fugard's other works: insidious racism and the resultant divisiveness; scapegoating. Puerility is again present, but in Hally's case this is a quality of his actual youth. The "conditioned" puerility is evident in the character of Willie, who has not mastered English, gets angry and throws things when teased, and is petulant when ignored or treated unjustly. When Sam teases Willie about his recalcitrant dancing partner, Willie throws his slop rag, which misses Sam and strikes Hally. Later Sam once again teases him about dancing with his pillow and Willie loses all control:

SAM: There's the answer to your problem! Judges announcement in two weeks time: Ladies and Gentlemen, the winner in the open section . . . Mr. Willie Malopo and

his pillow!

(This is too much for a now really angry WILLIE. He goes for SAM but the latter is too quick for him and puts HALLY's table between the two of them.)

HALLY: (exploding) For Christ's sake you two!

WILLIE: (still trying to get at SAM) I donner you Sam! Struesgod!

SAM: (still laughing) Scrry Willie . . . Sorry.

HALLY: Sam! Willie! (grabs his ruler and gives WILLIE a vicious whack on the bum) How the hell am I supposed to concentrate with the two of you behaving like bloody children!

WILLIE: Hit him too!

HALLY: Shut-up Willie

WILLIE: He started jokes again. (MH, 18)

Recall also Willie's lack of gratification delay while Sam and Hally philosophized about the dance. "WILLIE: (can endure waiting no longer) I'm starting! (WILLIE dances while SAM talks)" (MH, 20)

Sam is the only mature character in the play. Perhaps this is a combination of his age and experience and the fact that, through Hally's efforts, he has been better educated than most Blacks. (A subtle indication of Sam's "humanity," however, is apparent in his condescending manner to the less intelligent,

immature Willie.)

The ever-present poverty, of the Blacks especially, is indicated very simply in the fact that neither Willie nor Sam can afford to play a tune on the jukebox. Both have only their busfare home. It is indicative of the depths to which Hally sinks that he will threaten Sam with the loss of his job if Sam refuses to call him Master Harold. That this is of vital importance to Sam is obvious in his response to the threat: "(quietly and carefully) If you make me say it once, I'll never call you anything else again."

(MH, 24)

The "game playing" device of which Fugard is so fond is evident in Sam's teasing, but even more so in the acting out, by Sam and Willie, of the ballroom dancing competitions.

SAM: (onto a chair to act out the M.C.) Ladies and gentlemen, we now come to the great moment you have all been waiting for this evening The finals of the 1950 Eastern Province Open ballroom Dancing Championships. But first let me introduce the finalists! Mr. and Mrs. Welcome Tchabalala from Kingwilliamstown . . .

WILLIE: (he applauds after every name) Is when the people clap their hands and whistle and make a lot of noise Master Hally.

SAM: Mr. Mulligan Njikelane and Miss Nomhle Nkonyeni of Grahamstown; Mr. and Mrs. Norman Nchinga from Port

Alfred; Mr. Fats Bokolane and Miss Dina Plaatjies from East London; Mr. Sipho Dugu and Mrs. Mable Magada from Peddie; and from New Brighton our vey own Mr. Willie Malopo and Miss Hilda Samuels. (WILLIE can't believe his ears. He abandons his role as spectator and scrambles into position as a finalist.) (MH, 20)

And the game goes on until the consideration of "collisions" discussed above.

I have mentioned earlier the "romantic" Fugard; and if sentimentality is an indication of this, then Fugard is still a romantic. Many of the names Sam calls out are those of some of Fugard's (and Zakes Mokae's) old friends. It was through Norman Ntshinga's appeal that the Serpent Players came into existence. Its second production was Antigone. "The cast included Nomhle Nkonyeni in the title role, [and] Mabel Magada as Eurydice" (Truths, 100) Tshabalala was the name given to the crippled beggar in Fugard's only novel, Isotsi. And, in what must be an "inside joke," Hally refers to the two prostitutes at the old Jubilee Boarding House which his mother ran before opening the tea room as Micky Nash and Maud Meiring. Meiring is Fugard's wife's maiden name.

These sentimental touches seem to coincide with Fugard's gradual move to dealing in ever more detail with himself. Fugard, in his next work, deals with his most intimate relationship: that of

himself and his own creativity. Having exhausted examining his ties with those people closest to him, he moves to an inner examination. The Road To Mecca deals with the artist's inherent loneliness in his (or her) "obligation" to answer to the muse. In this work, Fugard examines another plane of personal growth, and studies the need of the artist for "freedom."

Fugard has written: . . . I am conscious of one thing: the completion of a work has always depended on a correspondence, a relevance, between the external specifics of the play--the "story" as such--and my sense of myself at the time. (Aloes, Introduction, xiii)

The inspirational images for Mecca and the actual writing of the play are very close in time. The images for the earlier works were drawn from many years in the past; Aloes and Master Harold images are mentioned in Notebooks as early as February and March, respectively, of 1961. Fugard's first awareness of Helen Niemand and her sculptures was probably around 1980, only four years before the premiere of Mecca.

At a personal level, I began to realize, the challenge had been thrown to me; no, not a challenge, a provocation had been thrown to me four years previously by an actress who was doing A Lesson From Aloes in Amsterdam. . . . In the course of a conversation at the Rijksmuseum she said, "Those are marvelous roles you have created for women."

I'm very grateful to you for that, but, looking back at your work, I can't help being struck by the fact that you never had two women together. ³⁸ [emphasis mine]

I have stated [pp. 75-76] that Fugard's personal inspiration was the difficulty he had understanding his own creative powers, and although he is quoted as saying, "Unlike Master Harold, with Mecca I'm not dealing with an intensely personal statement,"³⁹ the following from a May, 1977 entry in his Notebooks seriously contradicts this:

These past months I have been trying to live through one of the most intensely experienced crises of my life. If Sheila and Lisa were to read that sentence they would stare at me in amazement, so effective has been the disguise of my inner agony, my death in life. As I write this I still see no light. But maybe tomorrow . . . Who knows.

The 'crisis' is, quite simply, the total extinction of my creativity. Without it I find living a pain I can only describe as intolerable. I have feared for my sanity. (Notebooks, 229) [emphasis mine]

In the life and work of Helen Niemand, then, Fugard found the perfect metaphor for examining himself as creative artist. However, there was one extraordinary change in Fugard's life which would impact on his writing and especially on his direction of Mecca; this would be his first major creative endeavor totally without the "support" of alcohol. Fugard was extremely disappointed in the world premiere at Yale, and considered it

primarily his own fault. Both Lloyd Richards and Fugard himself used the term "ruthless" (in a very positive sense) in describing Fugard's writing and directing; in fact, his total involvement in his plays. Fugard's own rationale for the "failure" of the premiere of Mecca was his lack of ruthlessness as director, a consideration which I will pursue in greater depth in Chapter 4. Suffice to say at this point, that his ruthlessness was completely tied to his drinking. In an interview, I asked him why he felt that he had made so many mistakes in the Yale production of Mecca. The following is in direct reference to the original Helen, Carmen Mathews, refusing to wear an unattractive wig:

FUGARD: I think . . . coming out of the fact that it was the first time I was trying to get my number together as a director since I've stopped drinking, I was massively informed with insecurities and I think that that is one reason I wasn't really ruthless.

CREAMER: But do you think that the drinking helped you to be ruthless?

FUGARD: Yes. I should have risked the production. I should have said to Carmen Mathews, "You do it or walk out. You walk out if you can't do it." And to hell with the consequences.

CREAMER: And you would have done that if you'd been drinking?

FUGARD: Oh, yal ⁴⁰

As to the writing of the play, it is difficult to say what effect sobriety had on that. Structurally, it is quite similar to most of his other works: only three characters, a simple plot, a single set, and the playing time is almost exactly the time in the play--a definitively Climactic structure. The two obvious differences are the rather complex set design and the relatively upbeat, positive ending: the kind of ending he hadn't written since People Are Living There. Moreover, in subsequent productions, the set design was made considerably less complicated, although still busy with set and hand props--Fugard's persistent flaw.

The plot of Mecca is, as indicated, quite simple: linear and uncomplicated by sub-plots. The widowed Helen, a recluse and sculptor living in New Bethesda in the Karoo desert region of South Africa, is paid a surprise visit by her young friend, Elsa, from far-off Cape Town. As we discover, Elsa is nearly Helen's only friend, since the simple folk of the town can't understand her sculpture nor why she has stopped attending church. Elsa has come upon receipt of a letter from Helen which seems to threaten suicide, and finds that the local minister, Marius (Helen's only other friend), is trying to convince Helen to move into an old age

home. Helen convinces Elsa that she can take care of herself and enlists Elsa's aid in overcoming the minister's enticements. Elsa encourages Helen to resist. We also find, in the course of conversation, how Elsa and Helen became friends, and that Elsa has recently broken off an affair with a married man. At the very end of Act One, Marius arrives and is surprised to find Elsa there.

Act Two begins only minutes after the end of Act One. (It appears to be a very arbitrary act break, perhaps thought necessary because of the length of the play.) Marius presents the application form for the home to Helen, who appeals to Elsa for help, since she's on the verge of signing. Elsa and Marius get into a verbal battle over Helen's life, in the course of which it is revealed that Helen had recently stood idly by while her house nearly went up in flames. Elsa, enraged on discovering that Helen lied to her about this, deserts Helen who then must fight for herself. Helen finally, desperately, explains her need to remain where she is to create her sculptures--although she herself doesn't understand the "logic" of them. Marius, who obviously loves Helen, is defeated and leaves. Helen and Elsa reconcile and the play ends.

Mecca's structure is very similar to that of Aloes: there are

only three characters and the "catalyst" character is not present until the second act. It is the appearance of the third character in each play, bringing the outside world into the space, which precipitates the march to the major climax. In both plays, however, all characters are equally well-drawn and equally important to the development of the story line. After the nearly speechless presence of Outa in Boesman and Lena, Fugard beautifully balances his works. All characters have their day in the sun and all are, again, three dimensional and sympathetic. There are no villains.

Again, there is little physical action and characters are developed through dialogue. Mecca may be the best example of Fugard's verisimilitude in writing: all characters are vitally alive in the present even as they reveal to each other and to us their most important past experiences and fears for the future. Moreover, information which characters withhold is later divulged, either purposefully or accidentally, with complete believability. There are no "contrivances." Note, in the following extensive excerpt, the revealing of both characters, the palimpsest, the "game-playing," as Helen and Elsa relive their first meeting--and

all believably inspired by a most normal and prosaic event, the lighting of candles as it grows dark. (Lighting candles, or perhaps more accurately, defeating darkness, is a major metaphor in the play.) In these few dozen lines, Fugard achieves a remarkable fusion of elements. It is a striking example of his "Economy" in writing.

(Light has now faded. HELEN fetches a box of matches and lights the candles on the table. The room floats-up gently out of the gloom, the mirrors and glitter on the walls reflecting the candle-light. ELSA picks up one of the candles and walks around the room with it and we see something of the magic to come.)

ELSA: Still works Miss Helen. In the car driving up I was wondering if the novelty would have worn-off a little. But here it is again. You're a little wizard you know. You make magic with your mirrors and glitter. 'Never light a candle carelessly, and be sure you know what you're doing when you blow one out.' Remember saying that?

HELEN: To myself, yes. Many times.

ELSA: And to me . . . after you had stopped laughing at the expression on my face when you lit them for the first time. 'Light is a miracle Miss Barlow which even the most ordinary human being can make happen.' We had just had our first pot of tea together. Maybe I do take it all just a little for granted now. But that first time . . . I wish I could make you realize what it's like to be walking down a dusty, deserted little street in a Godforsaken village in the middle of the Karoo, bored to death by heat and flies and silence, and then to be stopped in your tracks . . . and I mean stopped! . . . by all of that out there. And then, having

barely recovered from that, to come inside and find this! Believe me Helen, when I saw your 'Mecca' for the first time, I just stood there and gaped. 'What in God's name am I looking at? Camels and pyramids? Not three, but dozens of Wise Men? Owls with old motorcar headlights for eyes? Peacocks with more colour and glitter than the real birds? Heat stroke? Am I hallucinating?' And then you! Standing next to a mosque made out of beer bottles and staring back at me like one of your owls! (A good laugh at the memory.) She's mad. No question about it. Everything they've told me about her is true. A genuine Karoo nutcase. (Walking carefully around MISS HELEN in a mock attitude of wary suspicious examination.) Doesn't look dangerous though. Wait . . . she's smiling! Be careful Barlow! Could be a trick. They didn't say she was violent though. Just mad. Mad as a hatter. Go on. Take a chance. Say Hello and see what happens. 'Hello!' (Both women laugh.) (Mecca, 14-15)

The two women speak further about the first meeting and then Helen recalls its effect on her. (The following is somewhat abridged.)

HELEN: . . . I was prouder of myself that day than I had ever been in my life. Nobody before you, or since, had done that to me. I was tingling all over with excitement as we walked around the yard looking at the statues. All those years of working on my Mecca had at last been vindicated. . . . I suddenly realized I was beginning to feel shy, more shy than I had ever been with Stefanus on my wedding night. . . . You see, when I lit the candles you were finally going to see all of me. . . . I mean the real me, because that is what this room is . . . and I desperately, oh so desperately, wanted you to like what you saw. By the time we met I had got used to the rude eyes staring at me and my work, dismissing both of them as ugly. I'd lived with those eyes for fifteen years and they didn't bother me anymore. Yours were different. In just the little time we had already been together I had ended up feeling . . . No.

More than that . . . I knew I could trust them. There's our big word again Elsie! I was so nervous I didn't know what we were talking about anymore while I sat here trying to find enough courage to get a box of matches and light the candles. But eventually I did and you . . . you looked around the room and laughed with delight! You liked what you saw! This is the best of me Elsa. This is what I really am. . . . And I had delighted you! Dear God. If you only knew what you did for my life that day. . . . When you walked into my life that afternoon I hadn't been able to work or make anything for nearly a year The only reason I've got for being alive is my Mecca You revived my life. I didn't sleep that night after you left. My Mecca was along way from being finished! All the things I still had to do, all the statues I still had to make came crowding in on me when I went to bed. I thought my head was going to burst! I've never been so impatient with darkness all my life. I sat up in bed all night waiting for the dawn to come so that I could start working again and then just go on working and working.

ELSA: And you certainly did that Miss Helen. On my next trip you proudly introduced me to a very stern Buddha, remember. The cement was still wet.

HELEN: That's quite right. That was my next one.

ELSA: Then came the Easter Island head . . . the one with the top-knot.

HELEN: Correct.

ELSA: And you still haven't explained to me what it's doing in Mecca . . . and for that matter wise old owls and mermaids as well.

HELEN: My Mecca has got its own logic Elsa. Even I don't understand it. (Mecca, 15)

Besides Helen voicing Fugard's own experience with the

fear of loss of creativity, in a single sentence she foreshadows the ultimate explanation of that fear: "I've never been so impatient with darkness all my life." (Mecca, 15) Later, in response to Elsa's pragmatism, Helen will make clear the fundamental and vital difference between the needs of the layman and those of the artist. Elsa reads Helen's last letter to her and we find that Helen had felt she was losing everything, including her house, and that she "... would rather do away with [herself] than carry on like this. (17) Finding that the Church Council (and Marius) are trying to get Helen into a home, based on their belief that she was incapable of taking care of herself, Elsa "makes plans" to save Helen. She questions her officiously and demands certain behavior: "... You haven't been going around talking about doing away with yourself to anyone, have you?" "... So no more of that. Okay? Do you hear me Helen?" "And just to make quite sure he [Marius] gets the message you can also mention your trip into Graaff-Reinet next week to see a Doctor and an Optician." She goes on to pressure Helen about keeping her house cleaner and pursues her concerning personal hygiene until Helen rebels:

HELEN: I can't listen to you anymore Elsa. (She makes a

move to leave the room.)

ELSA: Don't do that to me Helen! If you leave this room I'm getting into my car and driving back to Cape Town. You wrote that letter. I haven't made it up. All I'm trying to do is deal with it.

HELEN: No you're not.

ELSA: Then I give up. What in God's name have we been talking about?

HELEN: A pair of spectacles and medicine for my arthritis and Katrina dusting the house . . .

ELSA: Do you want me to read it again?

HELEN: (ignoring the interruption) You're treating that letter like a shopping list. That isn't what I was writing about.

ELSA: Then what were you?

HELEN: Darkness Elsa! Yes. Darkness! (She speaks with an emotional intensity and authority which forces Elsa to listen in silence.) The Darkness that nearly smothered my life in here one night fifteen years ago. The same Darkness that used to come pouring down the chimney and into the room at night when I was a little girl and frighten me. If you still don't know what I'm talking about blow out the candle! But those were easy Darknesses to deal with. The one I'm talking about is much worse. It's inside me Elsa . . . It's got inside me at last and I can't light candles there (Mecca, 19-20)

(Helen Niemand eventually committed suicide by drinking lye; putting the fire inside, so to speak.)

As certain sections of the published script of Statements

After an Arrest Under the Immorality Act are printed in the form of poetry, so the word "darkness" in Mecca is generally capitalized. Fugard has personified Darkness. And the unfortunate symbol of that personification is the pastor, Marius Byleveld. Continuing with the revelation of her terrors, Helen says:

... and the candles don't help anymore. That is what I was trying to tell you. I'm frightened. And Marius can see it. He's no fool Elsa. He knows that his moment has finally come.

ELSA: What moment?

HELEN: He's been waiting a long time for me to reach the end of my Mecca. I thought I had cheated him out of it, that that moment would never come [B]ecause I had a secret he would never understand. (Pause) It's his turn to laugh now. But he won't of course. He's not that sort of man. He'll be very gentle again If my Mecca is finished Elsa, then so is my life. (Mecca, 20)

In this brief passage Fugard's mastery of language and exposition is manifested. We are at once made aware of the threat that Marius personifies and that he is, after all, a good man. I mentioned earlier that Mecca is a very well balanced work, and that is most evident in the character of Marius. Although the only male in the play and an obviously conservative, rigid theist, Fugard clearly presents the truly sympathetic, self-sacrificing and even

sometimes playful side of Marius so well that he never becomes a villain. Helen's regaining control of her life is equaled by Marius's loss; he is, finally, a very sympathetic character. After Helen refuses the application to the old age home, explaining the vital need she has for her Mecca, Marius prepares to leave, defeated, and compares his present feeling with those he suffered on losing his first wife, twenty-one years earlier:

HELEN: . . . I know I've disappointed you . . . most probably bitterly so . . . but whatever you do, please believe me that it wasn't intentional. I had as little choice over all that has happened as I did over the day I was born.

MARIUS: I do believe you Helen . . . which only makes it all the harder to accept. All these years it always felt as if I could reach you. It seemed so inevitable that I would . . . so right! that we should find each other again and be together for what time was left to us in the same world. It seems wrong . . . terribly wrong . . . that we won't. Aletta's death was wrong in the same way. (Pause)
(Mecca, 30)

The depth of Marius's feelings is not clear in the text and should be clarified here. In both the Yale and the Broadway productions (in the first Tom Aldredge played Marius; in the second Fugard played the role--both productions were directed by Fugard), Marius's notebook and pen are dropped from his shaking hands onto the table and he grasps table and chair to steady himself. We see a

man on the very edge of fainting. Helen asks him what is the matter and Marius's next line is spoken in what could be described as a confined "primal scream." It is impossible not to sympathize with him. Moreover, as he goes, in spite of his loss, he leaves Helen with a wonderfully encouraging remark:

MARIUS: I am trying to go. It's not easy . . . trying to find the first moment of a life that must be lived out in the shadow of something that is terribly wrong.

HELEN: We're trying to say Goodbye to each other aren't we Marius?

MARIUS: Yes, I suppose it has come to that. I never thought that was going to happen tonight but I suppose there is nothing else left to say. (MARIUS starts to go. He sees ELSA, hesitates for a few seconds, but there is nothing to say to her either.) Be sure all the candles are out when you go to bed Helen. (He pauses at the door.) I've never seen you as happy as that! There was more light in you than in all your candles put together. (HE leaves.) (A silence follows his departure. ELSA eventually makes a move to start blowing out the candles.) (Mecca, 30)

Marius is a strong example of Fugard's ability to "instruct" without presenting out and out villains. Marius, although rigidly religious, is intelligent and kindly and not without humor. When he and Helen are left alone for a few minutes, he jokes with her:

MARIUS: I won't stay long. I must put down a few thoughts for tomorrow's sermon. And thanks to you I know

what I want to say

HELEN: Me?

MARIUS: Yes, you. (Teasing her) You are responsible.

HELEN: Oh dear!

MARIUS: (A little laugh) Relax Helen. I only said thanks to you because it came to me this afternoon while I was digging up your vegetables. (Mecca, 21-22)

In the single brief speech following this teasing, Fugard reveals the essential historical background of Marius, establishes his innate goodness: his love of nature; his genuine religiosity; his humility; his caring for Helen; and his gift for moving speech. And this is accomplished with complete believability and 'Economy.' It is one of Fugard's finest passages; pensive, with justifiably "homely" imagery, and not the least bit didactic. (It continues directly from the above excerpt.)

MARIUS: I spent a lot of time while I was out in the garden doing that, just leaning on my spade. My back is giving me a bit of trouble again and to tell you the truth, I also felt lazy. I wasn't thinking about anything in particular . . . just looking you know, the way an old man does, looking around recognizing once again and saying the names. Spitskop in the distance! Aasvoelkrans down at the other end of the valley. The poplars with their autumn foliage standing around as yellow and still as that candle flame! And a lot of remembering. As you know Helen, I had deep and very painful wounds in my soul when I first came here. Wounds I thought would never heal. This was going

to be where I finally escaped from life, turned my back on it and justified what was left of my existence by ministering to you people's simple needs. I was very wrong. I didn't escape life here, I discovered it, what it really means, the fullness and goodness of it. It's a deep and lasting regret that Aletta wasn't alive to share that discovery with me. Anyway, all of this was going on in my head when I realized I was hearing a small little voice, and the small little voice was saying 'thank you'. With every spade-full of earth that I turned, when I went down on my knees to lift the potatoes out of the soil, there it was: Thank you. It was mine! I was muttering away to myself the way we old folks are inclined to do when nobody is around. It was me saying 'thank you'. That is what I want to do tomorrow, Helen. Give thanks, but in a way that I've never done before. I know I've stood there in the pulpit many times telling all of you to do exactly that, but oh Dear Mel, the cleverness and conceit in the soul of Marius Byleveld when he was doing that. I had an actor's vanity up there Helen. I'm not saying I was a total hypocrite, but believe me in those thanksgivings I was listening to my Dominee's voice and its hoped for eloquence every bit as much as to the truly little voice inside my heart . . . the voice I heard so clearly this afternoon. That's the voice that must speak tomorrow! And to do that I must find words as simple as the sky I was standing under this afternoon or the earth I was turning over with my spade. They have got no vanities and conceits. They are just 'there'. If the Almighty takes pity on us, then He gives us rain so that the other can in turn . . . give us this day our daily potato. (A smile at this gentle little joke.) Am I making sense Helen? Answer me truthfully.

HELEN: Yes, you are Marius. And if all you do tomorrow is say what you have just said to me, it will be very moving and beautiful. (Mecca, 22)

And Helen's response reflects our own. Although we have been made aware of Marius as a threat to Helen's future, we cannot

dislike him.

In my analysis of Hello and Goodbye, I speculated that both Hester and Johnnie were surrogates for Fugard himself. In his review of Mecca, Jack Kroll expands on this possibility.

Most of his plays are probings of his own divided nature, which sees his country both as a moral desert and as the wellspring of his humanity. In "The Road to Mecca" Fugard subjects himself to merciless triple fission: he is the balked rebel Elsa, the iconoclastic artist Helen and the Calvinist Marius. Fugard, quite possibly the most powerful living dramatist after Samuel Beckett (his own hero), has succeeded in turning his own inner conflict into a drama that's both particular and universal. ⁴¹ [emphasis mine]

It is difficult to conceive of the rebellious playwright as Marius, but the accuracy of these speculations is supported in Fugard's own words: "Realized that here on the Ashram a 'work or sin' morality has been slowly taking over my life. My Calvinism! It is with great difficulty that I hand myself over to simple sensual pleasure." (Notebooks, 222) It becomes clearer why Fugard is so adept at creating "divided" characters, and why these characters are so personal to him.

The "game-playing" device which Fugard used extensively in earlier works is again present, primarily in the Helen/Elsa scenes of Act One; only this time the characters are well aware of the

games as methods of strengthening their relationship. Elsa arrives unexpectedly and, exhausted and short-tempered, snaps at the surprised Helen, who responds with excessively apologetic behavior. After a mutual apology, Helen suggests starting again to the scantily clad Elsa.

HELEN: (Sly, tongue-in-cheek humour we will come to recognize as characteristic of the relaxed MISS HELEN) Well, if you really mean it, I think the best thing is for you to get back into your car, drive around the block and arrive again. And this time, I want you please to hoot three times the way you usually do so that I don't think a ghost has walked in through the front door when you appear.

ELSA: (Calling MISS HELEN's bluff) Right. there are the car keys. (finds them and heads for the front door).

HELEN: Where are you going?

ELSA: Do what you said. Drive around the block and arrive again.

HELEN: Like that?

ELSA: Why, what's wrong?

HELEN: Elsie! Sterling Retief will have a heart attack if he sees you like that.

ELSA: But I wear less than this when I go to the beach.

HELEN: Elsie. (ELSA jumps into the other room, revs up her motorcar, grinds through all its gears and 'arrives.' Three blasts on the horn. The two women play the 'arrival game' . . . specifics to be determined in rehearsal. At the end of it they

come together in a good laugh.) (Mecca, 9)

Later, in a less physical game, but a game nonetheless, Elsa will respond to Helen's asking for personal news.

ELSA: Good and bad news?

HELEN: I said everything . . . but try to make the good a little bit more than the bad.

ELSA: Right. The Elsa Barlow Advertiser! Hot off the presses! What do you want to start with? Financial, crime, or sports page?

HELEN: The front page headline.

ELSA: How's this: 'Barlow to appear before School board for possible disciplinary action.'

HELEN: Not again!

ELSA: Yep.

HELEN: Oh dear! What was it this time?

ELSA: Wait for the story. 'Elsa Barlow, a twenty-eight year old English language teacher, is to appear before a Board of Enquiry of the Cape Town School Board. She faces the possibility of strict disciplinary action. The inquiry follows a number of complaints from the parents of pupils in Miss Barlow's Standard Nine class. It is alleged that in April this year Miss Barlow asked the class, as a homework exercise, to write a five hundred word letter to the State President on the subject of racial inequality. Miss Barlow teaches at a Coloured School.' (Mecca, 12)

In the same manner, Elsa goes on to tell of her breakup with her lover, David, and to confess to Helen that he had been married

all along and that the breakup had been emotionally devastating for both of them. Here Fugard introduces a major consideration in the play: the distinction between "love" and "trust."

ELSA: (taut) I'm alright now. (Pause) Do you know what the really big word is Helen? I had it all wrong. Like most people I used to think it was 'Love'. That's a big one alright, and it's quite an event when it comes along. But there's an even bigger one. 'Trust.' And more dangerous! Because that's when you drop your defenses, lay yourself wide-open and if you've made a mistake you're in big, big trouble (Mecca, 14)

This will prove an important distinction for the two women, but is not thematic. Thematically, Fugard returns to a consideration of freedom. This time, not freedom for the people of color in South Africa, but freedom for the artist living in a rigidly closed, therefore necessarily conformist, society. In his review of Boesman and Lena, Stanley Kauffmann wrote: "The language sometimes verges on the literary. For instance, I wish the word 'freedom' had never been used--the concept was implicit"42 In Mecca, Fugard again invokes the word, but uses it this time, not as the cynical Boesman does, on a political level, but to compare and contrast the artist with the repressive elements of the society. Elsa has told Marius that he and the townspeople are frightened by

Helen's free spirit expressed in her sculptures, but she realizes that they are stricken on an even deeper level:

ELSA: Helen, listen to me . . . listen to me carefully . . . because if you understand what I'm going to say, I think everything will be alright. They're not only frightened of you Helen, they're also jealous. It's not just the statues that frighten them. They were throwing stones at something much bigger than that . . . you. Your life, your beautiful light-filled glittering life. And they can't leave it alone Helen, because they are so, so jealous of it.(Mecca, 28-29)

On a psychological level, then, it is the envy of the oppressor, who must suppress his own urgings for personal expression or "sensual pleasure," being displaced onto the oppressed. Calvinism.

Racism is not a theme in Mecca. It is referred to almost in passing. Although of importance, it is primarily to evoke character and character conflict, as when Elsa asks Marius if the Colored people in New Bethesda have as much reason to be grateful as the Whites; or when Elsa compares herself to the poor Colored woman with a child on her back, to whom she had given a lift that day. There are other references: to Katrina and her alcoholic, abusive husband, Koos; to Elsa's having her Colored students write to the President--but none of this is thematic. In Katrina and Koos, the

poverty of the Colored people is evoked, but again this is not thematic. Most of the themes which Fugard had used in the past are, indeed, conspicuous by their absence. In dealing with the very personal "essay on the little understanding I have of my own creativity," Fugard has reduced his thematic content to a minimum: the essential divisiveness of an artificially sundered and rigid society (this time not due to race); and, more universally, the often abrasive relationship between the artist and any society.

On a strictly personal level, though, he was struggling with the possibility that the time was fast approaching when his creative powers would cease to be. Compare the following:

FUGARD: I've actually written an essay on the aspects of my own creativity as I understand and experience it. I don't know where it comes from and then when it doesn't come all you can do is wait. Waiting is, of course, no guarantee. You can't force it to come; and that there could come a time when it just doesn't come. When you have exhausted your vision. I've seen it happen to a lot of writers, who went on writing into a period where their vision was exhausted and they had... nothing... more... to say. There's no more adventure... To know when to stop. To know when, like Helen... that is the challenge I've presented myself... the way I've challenged myself in that play... to try to recognize the moment when I say, "This is as far as I can go." [emphasis mine]⁴³

HELEN: ... I can't say that I'm not frightened anymore. But at the same time I think I can say that I understand

something now. The road to my Mecca was the one I had to travel alone. It was a journey on which no one could keep me company and because of that, now that it is over, there is only me there at the end of it. It couldn't have been any other way. You see, I meant what I said to Marius. This is as far as I can go. My Mecca is finished and with it . . . (Pause) I must try to say it mustn't !! . . . the only real purpose my life has ever had. I was wrong to think I could banish darkness Elsa. Just as I taught myself how to light them [her candles], and what that means, I must teach myself now how to blow them out . . . and what that means. (attempting a brave smile) The last phase of my apprenticeship . . . and if I can get through it, I'll be a Master! (Mecca, 32)

That Fugard is himself a master playwright is beyond question. And, since Mecca, Fugard has written and directed A Place With the Pigs, which premiered at Yale in 1987 and featured the author in the lead role, and My Children! My Africal which premiered at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg in August, 1989. Neither of these will be considered in this study. However, it is apparent that Fugard has not felt the time has come to blow out his candles.

Pigs is subtitled, "A personal parable," and yet is based on "... the true story of Pavel Navrotsky, a deserter from the Soviet army in the Second World War, who spent forty-one years hiding in a pigsty."⁴⁴ Perhaps in Pigs, the playwright deals with the omnipresent feeling common to South African liberals and artists

that they simply have not given enough of their lives to the cause. Certainly Fugard has received criticism on this very point. (See p. 57.) Again, the play is based in factual material which the playwright uses metaphorically.

If one accepts at face value the following review, Children is, apparently, a work of propaganda deeply rooted in present day South African unrest.

"The plan [to get a scholarship for Thami, a promising black student] is thwarted by the onset of the 1984 townships' rebellion and the attendant schools boycott. Thami identifies with the "comrades," turns (hesitantly) on his old teacher who "informs" to the police and the play moves to an awful climax as an un-comradely lynch mob performs an "unrest-related incident." ⁴⁵

Given Fugard's history, personal and artistic, it would not be surprising to find that, after the public mea culpa of Pigs, he next contributed to the overt "liberation literature" of South Africa. His past contributions in that regard were notable, but were primarily the result of his collaboration with performers, wherein he also learned much of what would later become his method of directing. I shall consider both in the following chapters on Fugard as director.

CHAPTER THREE

COLLABORATIVE PLAYWRITING/DIRECTING EXPERIMENTS

It's a method. It's his, or any individual's,
adjustment to the patterns of function he has been
exposed to. So, he's got one. It's just that nobody's
codified it; nobody's written it down.

Lloyd Richards¹

There's no method.

Zakes Mokae²

These contradictory statements from two eminent theatre persons, both of whom have been intimately involved in Fugard's work for many years, are indicative of the ephemeral quality of Fugard's career as director. As stated in a previous chapter, he is generally recognized as the foremost director of his own plays, however, and Jonathan Miller states categorically that "It would be meddlesome for someone else to direct them."³

In searching for some hint of method in Fugard's work, I concentrated on that element of Fugard common to all of his theatrical endeavors: his fascination with and love for actors. Whether directing his own plays or others', whether working in collaboration or in the privacy of his study, whether improvising a play or bringing a completed script into a rehearsal hall, Fugard's

primary concern is with the actors; even to the extent of sometimes sacrificing the text of his own plays. As we shall see, this "unselfish" surrender to the needs of the performers was, again, a direct result of the conditions in which he was forced to work in the early years in South Africa. It was also a result of his growing dissatisfaction with his own work, coupled with his introduction to the theories of Jerzy Grotowski.

Although this chapter is devoted to Fugard's directing, I shall also analyze the structure of three of Fugard's major collaborative works: Sizwe Bansi Is Dead, The Island and Statements After an Arrest Under the Immorality Act in order to compare not only the considerable differences from Fugard's privately written works, but also the consistencies with them.

The consistencies which bear directly on the consideration of method are: his play structure--his penchant for minimalism and the unimportance of set design; the early "amateur" productions and the concurrent limited space; his own "apprenticeship."

Fugard states that his apprenticeship ended with the production of The Blood Knot in September of 1961:

FUGARD: But the apprenticeship years were . . . and by

apprenticeship I think I can be even more accurate, is that in every respect, aspect in theatre the end of apprenticeship was with Blood Knot. I think I stumbled on, found . . . I don't know what the correct word would be--when I talk about myself as a writer--my own voice. When I talk about my overall contribution to the theatre, my style--what started it, what started to develop it.

CREAMER: You're not exactly sure how that happened? In your head?

FUGARD: No.⁴

(Note, again, Fugard's inability to understand his own creativity; the theme of The Road to Mecca.)

This development is remarkable, from the directorial standpoint, since Fugard's first attempt at directing came only three years prior to Blood Knot. It is even more remarkable considering his introduction to the art of directing. This was with the Circle Players: a theatre group founded by Fugard and his wife, Sheila Meiring, and a group of friends.

FUGARD: Then I was acting in Klaas and the Devil, which Sheila also directed.

CREAMER: Now Sheila had had some training, right?

FUGARD: Studied.

CREAMER: Did she study directing?

FUGARD: Oh, I don't know. In those days it was kind of a mish-mash of everything.

CREAMER: Thrown together.

FUGARD: Ya.

CREAMER: Okay. Now, since I'm trying to deal with you as a director, this is a key point: was there anything of any value that you learned from working with your wife? Did you learn anything about directing from her, just picking things up?

FUGARD: I learnt (laughing) what I thought was the basic thing in theatre. I thought once . . . which doesn't appear in my life anymore . . . is that you've got to sit down by yourself before you get together with the actors and decide exactly where they move. On what line . . . when they turn around and face each other and when they do this and when they do that. You have to have all this marked in very strange little diagrams on the script.

CREAMER: Like a football play?

FUGARD: (laughing) Yes, that's right. In other words, this for me was what it was all about. It was doing those little drawings and deciding who moves where.
(Int. Fugard, 24 May)

Although Fugard's two earliest plays, The Cell and Klaas and the Devil were done in the relatively well-equipped Labia Theatre, a 250 seat proscenium house with a light board and other basic equipment, Fugard did not direct there. His first experience was in what he calls "indescribable physical circumstances." (Int. Fugard, 24 May)

FUGARD: . . . and then we really came up against making

theatre in circumstances which provided nothing except four walls and a roof.

CREAMER: Was that the Rehearsal Room?

FUGARD: . . . even prior to the Rehearsal Room--the period when we were doing No-Good Friday and Nongogo. You see, those predate the Rehearsal Room.

CREAMER: The Rehearsal Room, Zakes told me, was a tiny little space.

FUGARD: A tiny little space, but there were a lot of well-meaning liberals used to come around there, so that, you know, if you needed anything . . . God, we could never lay on a lighting board or anything like that, but by and large, we had the patronage of well-meaning Johannesburg, rich White people: Nadine Gordimer's husband, for example, and Nadine herself. They were always chipping in if anything was needed. No, there was a much rougher period than that time in which Zakes was involved as well, when we just used to, for rehearsal space, go to local churches, ask them for the use of a hall at night or an hour's use when the choir wasn't practicing. Venues of performance just became a hall; couldn't by any stretch of the imagination call them theatres. Halls with absolutely nothing; no equipment or anything useful at all, and we'd scrounge or borrow a few lights from the professional light companies in Johannesburg and travel with these.

CREAMER: No dimmer boards?

FUGARD: Oh, Christ, forget about dimmer boards; we just put the lights on and put the lights off. (Ibid.)

Fugard had been forced into directing No-Good Friday when Sheila, who had been doing much of the directing, decided to become company manager upon being faced with ten semi-literate

actors. But this led directly to Fugard's next level in his apprenticeship. Through the auspices of Tone Brulin, a Flemish director who was working with South Africa's National Theatre Organisation (NTO), a professional White company (the first subsidized theatre in the British Commonwealth!), Fugard got a job as an assistant stage manager. Fugard then began to learn not only the technical aspects of professional theatre, but he also had the opportunity to observe professional directors and actors working on established plays. "If you want to know about me going to school, that was when I went to school." (Ibid.) At this same time, Fugard was writing and directing Nongogo for the still active Circle Players. Moreover, as stated in the previous chapter, Mokae claims collaborative directing was the norm in this company. Further, the amount of collaboration may have been rather extensive. Note in the following, however, Fugard's concern for the actors:

MOKAE: And so his directing and playwriting will go hand in hand, but like I say, because he's a writer and then also directing his piece, and also allowing the actors to deal with his piece, and also he's open to making the changes, you say, "Well, I don't think this works here. Why don't we take this and throw it into the first act." He's not going to say, "Well, you can't do that." He's going to say, "Okay, let's see." And then, that's how you deal with that.

CREAMER: So a lot of the early plays were developed by working that way, right? They weren't written down first?

MOKAE: Well, for most of the earlier plays he had a script, but then it was rough. So, as rehearsals go, he'd be making all the changes, just like any other person would be doing. But he had a script. There was a script for No-Good Friday; there was a script for Nongogo. (Int. Mokae)

After little more than a year, during which he moved from assistant stage manager to stage manager and "captained" a touring company, Fugard left NTO and with his wife emigrated briefly to London hoping to find work in theatre, if only as a stagehand. He could not find theatre work and the Fugards supported themselves with menial labor: he cleaning homes and she as a typist. While there he submitted to Joan Littlewood a script on the Immorality Act called A Place with the Pigs. She refused it and he tore it up. More auspiciously, he created, along with Tone Brulin and other friends, a theatre company called the New Africa Group. They developed a new work called A Kakamas Greek by company member David Herbert, and through Brulin's connections presented it at the Festival of Avant-Garde Theatre in Brussels on May 24, 1960. This was important to Fugard on two levels; he seems to have improved as an actor and it led to his directing a play by Brulin in Amsterdam the following November. Brulin states, "Athol's acting in No-Good

Friday hadn't impressed me, but for A Kakamas Greek the intensity and strength of his everyday personality carried over and grew on stage." (Truths, 27)⁵ Brulin had written a play about the South African experience, De Honden (The Dogs), but was unable to direct it himself due to other commitments, so he asked Fugard to direct. "It was the first time I'd directed another writer's play, but I did a pretty good job. It was well received and ran about four weeks." (Ibid.)

I asked Fugard to explain his method when directing others' works:

FUGARD: I think the preparation for that has more or less always been the same, which is a very, very intensive period with the script alone by myself, prior to the event, reading, reading, re-reading, reading, reading, thinking, reading, Jesus! Until I almost arrive at an illusion that I wrote the play and I think I know what it means. Of trying to get to a point of "secret familiarity" with it . . . on a par with the relationship I have with my own plays; with my own text. I've been most successful in that exercise with the writing of Beckett.

CREAMER: So it's just read, read until you feel you've written it yourself. Do you make notes? Do you say, "Well, the prevailing metaphor of this play is . . . ?"

FUGARD: No.

CREAMER: So, it's still, in a manner of speaking, instinctual?

FUGARD: Ya.

CREAMER: So you can compare that with your acting--don't over-investigate intellectually and go with the instinct?

FUGARD: Correct. (Int. Fugard, 24 May)

Again, it was the prevailing conditions and the practical necessities which accounted for Fugard's methods, whether it be in acting, directing, writing or producing. I spoke with Zakes Mokae about methods:

MOKAE: There's no method, you know. It was interesting because you talk about Stanislavsky . . . you mention a bit of Woza Albert and the other guys . . . but you see, we just go up there and work! I mean, when I studied acting and working with Athol, just as he didn't have a method for directing or writing, I didn't have a method for acting.

CREAMER: Now, that has to have changed.

MOKAE: I don't know, I don't know. I would say that I am still basically a gut actor. I might know a little bit about Stanislavsky or Uta Hagen, but (Int. Mokae)

And Fugard states:

FUGARD: Didn't learn to act. Just got up there. Had a . . . I think I've got a certain intuitive feel for it. For that. I mean, that astonishing actress who I worked with for so many years, Yvonne Bryceland, she was never schooled. But there are enough actors around who never studied it.

CREAMER: Yes. I was talking to Zakes . . . he went to RADA (Royal Academy of Dramatic Art) for a while.

FUGARD: Yes, but he was already an actor. (Int. Fugard 24, May)

So, whether acting, directing, producing or even building sets, they learned it as they went along. Fugard's commitment is, simply, "... as near as a one hundred percent investment in telling the story by way of performance." (Int. Fugard, 24, July)⁶
[emphasis mine]

The next major influence on Fugard as director was John Berry. Berry is an American director who was chosen to direct the London production of Blood Knot. Leon Gluckman, whom Fugard describes as "a man of great courage," had produced the South African tour of Blood Knot with Fugard and Mokae playing the roles they had originated. Gluckman did not insist on any changes and retained Fugard's direction. However, when the London producers (the Boulting brothers), through the influence of Gluckman, decided to stage the work, they felt it would have more chance of success with a star and an established director. Fugard, who went to London for the rehearsals, was replaced by Ian Bannen in the role of Morris, and the direction was by John Berry. Mokae was retained in the role of Zach. There were several productions; but this, at the Arts Theatre Club, was "... the one Tynan didn't like and which

didn't last long." Berry became:

FUGARD: ... a really major relationship; very definitive, very important.

CREAMER: To your development?

FUGARD: I mean, he wasn't just a good director working with other directors, he was a highly gifted director and would do numbers on actors in order to get the performance. Kind of stalking. I mean, the way he would challenge an actor; the way he challenged Zakes, for example, in aspects of his performance. He'd already defined the performance and took it further. John was the next major external event in my life.

CREAMER: What, specifically, could you say you learned from him?

FUGARD: He introduced me to the possibility of discovering a completely new vocabulary for challenging actors. ... Up until then except by way of reading ... my reading had allowed me to access the American theatre by way of the printed page: O'Neill, Williams, Miller. I had no experience of the American theatre. My actual experience of theatre was South Africa's pale imitation of the English event--which can get very close to being a non-event at times. And it's certainly not an event noted for it's emotional power; it's upfront emotional quality. John was an American and he is archetypal, being an American, and he wasn't afraid of emotion. He knew how to deal with it. And he would go for the jugular in terms of the moments when emotion could really explode on that stage. And this was a whole new ball game. I mean, instinctively, Zakes and I had been groping our way to that point. Because something I've realized is that Americans ... American theatre, actors, audiences by and large, if you're going to generalize, deal with emotion in a way that I do. It's the preparedness for it; to be upfront, to take it on. You can't

say that about English Theatre. Yes, suddenly with John I discovered a new potential. I was reinforced in the instinctive direction that my own life was taking, in terms of the event on stage. I think that's a better way of talking about it, rather than speaking about acting. Certainly it wasn't a major influence to me as a writer . . . but in terms of the event on stage, the event that you share with an audience, John was crucial--absolutely pivotal. (Int. Fugard, 24 May) [emphasis mine]

The production directed by Berry which opened at the Cricket Theatre in New York on March 2, 1964 had an even greater impact on Fugard. Although he didn't see the production until it was in its ninth month, it was his first encounter with American theatre: the American stage "event," directed by an American; and, very importantly, played by American actors.

FUGARD: John got a production together in New York and it was a minor little triumph. It had James Earl Jones and J.D. Cannon . . . this was the Off-Broadway production. Well, after it had been running for nine months, I got my opportunity to see it for the first time. I wasn't really involved in sitting in on rehearsals--and that was my very first encounter with American theatre--was to see two actors on the threshold of their careers, and with all the weapons and the ammunition they needed taking on those two roles. John had obviously been dealing with two American actors, so the whole event had come together in a very special way and it was incredible for me to see what happened as opposed to the English experience. (Int. Fugard 24, May)

Besides the depth of Fugard's creations, the style of the works makes them "accessible" to foreign audiences, and the

further development of that style was enhanced by Fugard's experiences with American directors and actors. This may also account for Fugard's considerable popularity in America.

Fugard had not been happy with Ian Bannen's portrayal of Morris in the first London production of Blood Knot, but felt this was Bannen's fault, not Berry's. After seeing the Cricket Theatre performance, Fugard's respect and fascination with the actor as creative artist was strengthened; and upon his return to South Africa he developed, in a collaborative manner, The Coat. This "exercise" was a creation of the Serpent Players, a Black theatre group which Fugard had helped found in Port Elizabeth. Norman Ntshinga, whose name is mentioned in Master Harold . . . and the Boys (see Chapter Two, page 193), was the first to contact Fugard with a request to help him and some friends start a theatre company. This was in May of 1963. Fugard agreed and considerable work was done in the next few years. However, in the beginning, the company and Fugard opted to do published works, many of which were adapted to the company's home township, New Brighton. (Fugard's own writings at this time, Hello and Goodbye and People Are Living There, opened in Johannesburg and Glasgow,

respectively. Fugard was, at this exact time, still working with the Market Theatre in Johannesburg: a connection he has to this day. In August of 1989 his My Children! My Africa! premiered there.) Until 1966, with the production of The Coat, Fugard acted primarily as dramaturg, choosing the plays, and as director. From the inception of the group until its eventual fading away, the group produced such works as an adaptation of Machiavelli's Mandragola (retitled "The Cure"), Woyzeck (also adapted), and The Caucasian Chalk Circle. Many of the Black company members were arrested over a period of time, and prior to the production of Antigone (which would provide a major element of The Island), Ntshinga himself was arrested. The Coat, which Fugard would develop in a collaborative manner in late 1966, was again based in a strong visual image connected with Ntshinga's arrest and prosecution.

After his [Ntshinga's] trial, an incident occurred that would figure in a later Serpent Players work: An elderly man convicted of charges similar to Ntshinga's took off his old coat, gave it to Ntshinga's wife, and charged her to find his family and tell them to use the coat." (Truths, 100)

Although The Coat was developed in an improvisatory manner, it was not, as Sizwe Bansi and The Island would be, relatively realistic. It was performed in a quasi-Brechtian manner,

with the actors breaking out of character upon occasion and addressing the audience directly. This was done in an effort to present a real-life problem to a White audience while maintaining objectivity. This proved impossible. Although based in the image of one man's coat, the content of the work was personal to all the actors, and the performance itself was an act of defiance.

When a Port Elizabeth theatre appreciation group asked to see the work of Serpent Players, the company agreed to present a reading of Brother Jero. However, the actors needed a permit to appear before whites, and the terms turned out to be so insulting that it seemed inappropriate to them to continue. Before canceling the reading, however, one of the actors suggested that they present The Coat, which could pointedly use the humiliating circumstances. . . . The Coat: An Acting Exercise from Serpent Players of New Brighton was presented to an audience of 150 at Dunne Hall of Port Elizabeth's Hill Presbyterian Church on November 28, 1966. To protect their identities from the Special Branch, the actors adopted the names of their best roles from previous Serpent Players productions. . . . (Truths, 101) [emphasis mine]

Note that it is when he works in collaboration that Fugard's plays are overtly political. The Coat relates directly to the fate of men arrested and convicted on petty charges: most of these charges related to belonging to banned organizations, attending meetings or distributing pamphlets. After The Coat, two

other improvisatory works (neither of which has ever been published) were created by the group: Friday's Bread on Monday, which dealt with those living in abject poverty; and The Last Bus, which focused on Africans trying to "pass" for Coloreds. However political the works may have been, Fugard had ulterior motives for collaboration. He was moving, albeit rather vaguely, towards a major experiment connected to actors!

CREAMER: You were doing things similar to Grotowski before you ever heard of him, right?

FUGARD: Well, I was trying to forge . . . tap a creative potential in the actors which I felt . . . I've always thought of actors as being inordinately creative instruments, not simply interpretative, and I was trying to get that creativity. Make them creative as well as interpretative. That led me in stumbling and fumbling around in the dark, because I'm not equipped by way of voice--I'm not equipped--I know nothing about movement. So, I didn't have that expertise on my side, so it was really a question of stumbling, fumbling around in the dark to try and "turn the actor on. . . ." I sort of ended up doing things with actors in the way that Grotowski did. I mean, his is an experiment of the first order. And simply because, as I say, I didn't have the expertise he has, the knowledge he has in certain directions, there was a limit as to how far I could take it. I'll tell you what I was able to do that Grotowski wasn't. Grotowski was not able to relate those experiments and adventures and explorations of his by way of tapping the actor's creative potential related to an input from a writer. And one of the results is that none of the Grotowski experiences live as scripts; for other actors to take on the challenge.

CREAMER: Yes.

FUGARD: Akropolis you can't do. Sizwe Bansi and The Island are at this moment being performed in Russia. And that is something . . . in that respect, I have the edge on Grotowski. (Int. Fugard, 24 May)

Ever the practical man of the theatre, Fugard finds Grotowski's experiments noble, inspiring and profoundly limited.

However, the inspiration was immediate. In 1970, while Fugard's passport was being withheld by the Nationalist government, making it impossible for him to leave the country except on an "Exit Permit" (which means permanent exile), two friends, Mary Benson and Barney Simon, sent him Grotowski's Towards a Poor Theatre. By March of 1971, Fugard had developed a performance piece (which he dubbed an "exposure") called Orestes. This work is interesting on a number of levels: it, like Grotowski's productions, is based on "classical" pieces and yet it irreverently manipulated established scripts; although based on an actual incident in contemporary South Africa, it superimposed on that incident mythological characters and relationships; it elevated the actor's input above the merely interpretative; it allowed Fugard to test to the limits not only the actor's potential, but also the director's and playwright's; it was to all intents and purposes

"unscripted;" there was a "conduit" character, whom director/writer Fugard himself played; and, although it was developed improvisationally, performances were tightly controlled. It was a major breakthrough for Fugard on many levels:

CREAMER: I think it was Yvonne Bryceland who said that this was the greatest turning point in your career.

FUGARD: Well, it was. It amounted to a nervous breakdown; it was an artistic nervous breakdown.

CREAMER: For you, too.

FUGARD: Yes. Oh, I'm talking about myself! It was an artistic nervous breakdown. Because there was no question about there being a degree of . . . what would be the appropriate word? "Madness?" I mean it was a fearsomely . . . Boy, you either went for that experience . . . if you approached it with any of the conventional demands in terms of what we consider communication, you've got nothing! You'd have seen a series with very few words spoken; of strange somnambulistic movements, actions.

CREAMER: But you did not perform in it?

FUGARD: Just sat and watched.

CREAMER: Sat and watched.

FUGARD: It was absolutely essential to the experience that I was one of the forty or fifty people. My role was to teach the audience how to watch! I was a fourth character.

CREAMER: You were a fourth character; you didn't do anything but watch?

FUGARD: See, it was impossible to detect the moment even when the action started. That was my job. It was only at the point at which Wilson . . . Wilson Dunster sort of . . . I'd be playing with my matchbox and made his commitment to performance. It started. Just by way of a tension on my side. It was like this; we were just sitting around the room--just by way of my concentration on what he was doing, as a kind of suggestion, will help the person next to me and on this side of me to look at that as well.

CREAMER: Yvonne also went through some hell with Orestes, right?

FUGARD: Oh, she was unbelievable. She was . . . just . . . (he has no words) That was courage of an order that was a privilege to be associated with. I suppose only on a couple of other occasions in my work with actors . . . Ben Kingsley brought that sort of courage to his work on Statements. John Kani and Winston Ntshona had that sort of courage at their best in our early days with Sizwe Bansi and The Island. Yes, she was extraordinary.

CREAMER: But she had to be in control!

FUGARD: Oh, it was an experience as disciplined as this event at the Yale Rep stage is every night. [referring to The Road to Mecca.] I mean before a . . . we used to call them "exposures," not performances . . . we had options all the time, and we would choose our set of options for that particular exposure. And then it was ruthlessly observed. That way there was a script; it wasn't just a splurge of emotion.

CREAMER: But, she had to do some physical things that were grueling; like breaking the chair. That was smashing the chair up, right?

FUGARD: Destroying it . . . so that not even God could have put the pieces together afterwards.

CREAMER: Real chairs?

FUGARD: Yes, and they were chairs she'd never seen before until she walked into the room . . . into performance. The chair was called "Agamemnon." (Int. Fugard, 24 May)

Like Grotowski's works, Orestes does not "live as a script for other actors to take on the challenge." It exists only as a "very long letter to Bruce Davidson, an American photographer who's a very good friend of mine, describing the event." (Int. Fugard, 24 May) Actually, that letter was published as "Orestes Reconstructed: A Letter to an American Friend," in Theatre Quarterly, 8, No. 32 (1979), 3-6. (Truths, 111n.) Fugard has stated that he is going to try to find some way of putting it down on paper, "even if I just have to go through the process of detailing it in the sequence of challenges I presented these remarkable actors." (Int. Fugard, 24 May) But elsewhere, Fugard has written, "It has defied translation onto paper in any conventional sense. I have tried." (Statements, Introduction, n.p.)⁷ However, the possibility of another company effectively recapturing the original production values is as remote as accurately restaging Grotowski's Akropolis.

After this "artistic nervous breakdown," Fugard took what he had learned and adapted it to works which were, and still are, more available to the public and other companies. He explains his

methods:

The basic device has been that of Challenge and Response. As writer-director I have challenged, and the actors have responded, not intellectually or merely verbally but with a totality of Being that at the risk of sounding pretentious I can only liken to a form of Zen spontaneity. As with the more obvious pitfalls of pretense and deception, so too any element of calculation or premeditation in response has proved fatal. When, however, the response seemed meaningful in terms of the overall mandate provided by the writer, or to put it another way, when we thought it was of value and significance in terms of our intentions, we then applied ourselves to disciplining and structuring it so that the gesture, work, or event was capable of controlled repetition. I must stress this point. Spontaneous response and improvisation basically ended in the rehearsal room. Once the actor had created his text in the privacy of rehearsals, we then concerned ourselves with its performance in exactly the same way that we would have done with an independent text. (Ibid.)

His first effort was the impassioned and (to him) surprisingly successful Sizwe Bansi is Dead.

Statements After an Arrest Under the Immorality Act was conceived on paper in private and produced within a year of Orestes and before Sizwe Bansi. However, Fugard considered the premiere production at The Space in 1972 a total failure and nearly abandoned the play. It was not until the Royal Court production in January of 1974, which was developed in a collaborative and

improvisatory method, that Statements truly was born. "Fugard claims full authorship, but admits that the Royal Court production and the text that developed from it were totally dependent on the methods he had evolved during Orestes." (Truths, 133-34) Both Sizwe Bansi and The Island were conceived and executed between the two attempts to bring Statements to fruition.

John Kani and Winston Ntshona are "co-authors" of both Sizwe Bansi and The Island. Unusually for Fugard, these works were founded on a commitment to the actors themselves. Fugard had worked with both men throughout the history of the Serpent Players. (Actually Kani and Ntshona had performed together in high school and knew each other well. [Truths, 116])

After several weeks of doubts, I have committed myself to a total involvement with Winston and Johnny in their first 'professional' venture. First feeling was that the best way to launch the undertaking was to find an already written play suitable for the two of them--either a two-hander or something that could be adapted. While trying to find this I also outlined for them an idea which I felt could be developed along the lines of The Coat or Friday's Bread on Monday, but soon realised if something meaningful was to come out of working with them it was only going to happen if I turned the idea into a mandate and worked along the lines of Orestes. (Notebooks, 201)⁸

Fugard goes on to describe the image he chose for the

original work, which bears no resemblance whatsoever to the finished play; but, intriguingly, seems to foreshadow Master Harold!

The image I presented to Johnny and Winston was three or four tables and chairs representing the lounge of a local hotel, crowded with a type of arrogant and self-satisfied white student being served by two black waiters. Time--Saturday night; structure--the two of them, waiters, in the lounge before the arrival of the first customer; then the crescendo of activity and tensions to the climax of 'last orders please'; and finally, the two of them alone again, as they tidy up and come to terms with another day in their lives. (Notebooks, 201-02)

Except for specifying Saturday night and the "crowded" lounge, this is the precise structure of Master Harold.

The Sizwe Bansi which eventually emerged from a "Socratic dialogue" is, like many of Fugard's other works, based on an image. Fugard had seen a photograph in the window of an African photographer's shop: the picture of a smiling man holding a cigarette in one hand and a pipe in the other. From that image the three developed a play which is an unusual mixture of Brecht, Fugard, and realism; and which, unlike most of Fugard's works, has a rather positive outcome. Moreover, it deals directly with the Passbook laws, a subject closer to the hearts of Kani and Ntshona than of Fugard.

The plot is relatively complicated, compared with most of Fugard's other works. A man, identifying himself as Robert Zwelinzima, enters Styles's photography shop in order to have his picture taken. Before he enters, Styles, in an extended comic monologue, speaks directly to the audience about his past as a factory worker for Ford Motor Company and his successful struggle for independence with his own shop. After posing Robert, he takes the picture; and (using a device which will be expanded upon in Statements) we are carried into another time by the camera flash. Styles disappears; Robert freezes in the attitude of the photograph; he then comes to life and begins dictating a letter to his wife. He relates that "... Sizwe Bansi, in a manner of speaking, is dead!" (Statements, 22); that he had been caught by the police with an invalid passbook; that he was given three days to leave Port Elizabeth; and that he went to one Buntu for help. The scene shifts here to Buntu's house in New Brighton. Buntu, who is a very resourceful man, was played by Kani, who also played the resourceful Styles. Buntu and the man we know as Robert Zwelinzima meet:

[Buntu's house in New Brighton. Table and two chairs.

Robert, in a direct continuation of the preceding scene, is already there. Styles, as Buntu, jacket slung over his shoulder, walks in. Holds out his hand to Robert.]

BUNTU. Hi. Buntu.
[They shake hands.]

MAN. Sizwe Bansi. (Statements, 22-23)

So we find that (possibly) the Sizwe Bansi who is dead is the same man as Robert Zwelinzima. Buntu and the other then play out the facts. Buntu had taken Sizwe Bansi out for drinks to Sky's place. (Sky's place will also figure in The Island, and is, with little doubt, an actual shebeen.) As they head for home Buntu goes into the dark to urinate. He comes back in a panic, having stumbled upon a dead body. The provincial Sizwe feels they should report it to the police. Buntu has a better idea. He decides to take the dead man's passbook and switch it with Sizwe's. Sizwe will then become Robert Zwelinzima and have a passbook and be able to work and support his family. After much persuasion, Sizwe agrees, accepts the book and "is dead." The play ends back in Styles's studio:

[Exit Buntu, Sizwe picks up the passbook, looks at it for a time, then puts it in his back pocket. He finds his walking-stick, newspaper, and pipe and moves downstage into a solitary light. He finishes the letter to his wife.]

MAN. So Nowetu, for the time being my troubles are over. Christmas I come home. In the mean time Buntu is working

on a plan to get me a Lodger's Permit. If I get it, you and the children can come here and spend some days with me in Port Elizabeth. So spend the money I am sending you carefully. If all goes well I will send some more each week. I do not forget you, my dear wife.

Your loving husband,

Sizwe Bansi.

[As he finishes the letter, Sizwe returns to the pose of the photo. Styles Photographic Studio. Styles is behind the camera.]

STYLES. Hold it, Robert. Hold it just like that. Just one more. Now smile, Robert Smile Smile
[Camera flash and blackout.] (Statements, 44)

The quasi-Brechtian technique is apparent in the very opening monologue, in which Styles, speaking directly to the audience, paints a serio-comic picture of the lot of the workers in the Ford Motor plant. (Kani, himself, worked at Ford for seven years and this opening is referred to by Fugard as "Kani's autobiography.") The monologue serves to keep the audience "alienated" from the emotional qualities, which at this point are merely hinted at, while giving an accurate view of the workers' lot. Later this technique will be employed conversely by Ntshona as Sizwe; he will speak directly to the audience, not to alienate them, but to draw them more personally into the play. In a passage which hints strongly of Philander's final poetic monologue in Statements, Sizwe (MAN)

challenges Buntu and the audience:

MAN. Buntu!

BUNTU [half-way back to the alleyway]. What?

MAN. Would you do that to me, friend? If the Tsotsis had stabbed Sizwe, and left him lying there, would you walk away from him as well?

[The accusation stops Buntu.]

Would you leave me lying there, wet with your piss? I wish I was dead. I wish I was dead because I don't care a damn about anything any more.

[Turning away from Buntu to the audience.]

What's happening in this world, good people? Who cares for who in this world? Who wants who? Who wants me, friend? What's wrong with me? I'm a man. I've got eyes to see. I've got ears to listen when people talk. I've got a head to think good things. What's wrong with me?

[Starts to tear off his clothes.]

Look at me! I'm a man. I've got legs. I can run with a wheelbarrow full of cement! I'm strong! I'm a man. Look! I've got a wife. I've got four children. How many has he made, lady? [The man sitting next to her.] Is he a man? What has he got that I haven't . . . ? (Statements, 34-35)

Excepting possibly The Coat, which was an "acting exercise," Sizwe Bansi is the most propagandistic work by Fugard to this point. Remember, though, it was also equally (at least) created by Kani and Ntshona. Although the opening may serve to keep the audience "entertained" and objective, the play gradually draws them into the reality of apartheid and endeavors to engage them on a deeply emotional level. It was successful to such a great

degree as a play and as an acting vehicle that, to the surprise of its creators, it traveled and lived in many foreign lands, among them England, the United States, and Russia. In 1975, Kani and Ntshona shared the Tony Award for their Broadway performances.

Although many of the Fugardian touches are present--the small number of characters; limited set; undifferentiated playing space; and minimal props--the development of character through dialogue is not so well defined as usual. Perhaps because the play was conceived in collaboration, none of the three characters is truly three-dimensional; they are rather generic. Moreover, they do not have years-long relationships, nor are they related by blood, and the formation of a close tie between Buntu and Sizwe is very quick and arbitrary. (This is not, however, without justification since Buntu and Sizwe take on the characteristics of comrades involved in a guerrilla war; rifling bodies and forging documents.)

Vandenbroucke states that "Bansi undergoes significant external as well as internal change." (Truths, 122) Significant? Yes. Profound? No. Bansi becomes Zwelinzima (externally) and sacrifices, temporarily, his pride in order to earn a living for his wife and family. He has not, however, a tragic flaw and does not

attain a state of Recognition; there is no hint of the tragic. Sizwe, Buntu, and Styles are representatives of the mass of Black workers in South Africa, and thus are two-dimensional surrogates; undifferentiated to the extent that Styles and Buntu are played by the same actor. This is more befitting a work of propaganda. Hence, the language in the play, although moving and at times very funny, is prosaic; it lacks poetical power and is basically functional. Note the Climactic scene in which Buntu rationalizes why Sizwe is better off having decided to be "dead."

MAN. [After a pause]. I'll try it , Buntu.

BUNTU. Of course you must, if you want to stay alive.

MAN. Yes, but Sizwe Bansi is dead.

BUNTU. What about Robert Zwelinzima then? That poor bastard I pissed on out there in the dark. So he's alive again. Bloody miracle, man. Look, if someone was to offer me the things I wanted most in my life, the things that would make me, my wife and my child happy, in exchange for the name Buntu . . . you think I wouldn't swop?

MAN. Are you sure, Buntu?

BUNTU. [examining the question seriously.] If there was just me . . . I mean, if I was alone, if I didn't have anyone to worry about or look after except myself . . . maybe then I'd be prepared to pay some sort of price for a little pride. But if I had a wife and four children wasting away their one and only life in the dust and poverty of Ciskeian

Independence . . . if I had four children waiting for me,
their father, to do something about their lives . . . ag, no,
Sizwe

MAN. Robert, Buntu. (Statements, 42-43)

So, following the extraordinary experiment of Orestes,
Fugard used what he had learned from the "challenge-response"
techniques to help two friends to professionalism as performers;
and, perhaps because of this motivation and his close personal
relationship to his partners, "co-authored" and directed a work of
propaganda, however moving, long-lived and travel-worthy. His
next effort in this manner was another very moving, short work
(usually done as a companion piece to Sizwe Bansi), The Island.

Besides being a deeply moving piece of theatre and one
which, like Sizwe Bansi, is liberally laced with humor, The Island
has so many other similarities to the earlier work that I shall deal
with it only briefly. It began, again with Fugard, Kani, and Ntshona
deciding to go into a rehearsal room and begin working with an
image. This was the very general image of Robben Island, the
infamous prison island.

Initially, Kani says, "We were intellectualizing. We were
not honest. We were not commanded by truth. And thus
Athol came up with the idea that there is a place we never
talk about, no one can write about, the press cannot talk

about, not even white South Africans, free as they are, can talk about. It is the nightmare of every member of Parliament. What will happen to it in the end? That is Robben Island." (Truths, 126)

The Island was created as the three waited for passports to do the London production of Sizwe Bansi. "... never certain they would be given permission to leave South Africa--or rather to return if they did." (Truths, 126) [emphasis mine] The Island was completed in about two weeks, which can probably be attributed to the trio's growing familiarity with one another and also to the use of many images with which they were all familiar. As stated above, Norman Ntshinga and many other members of the Serpent Players had been arrested and sentenced to Robben Island. Recall that it was at Ntshinga's trial that the incident occurred which led directly to the creation of The Coat. The stories of humiliation and courage which those members returned with make up many of the incidents in the play, some more important than others. The Climactic incident, the playing of Antigone by two prisoners, may or may not have actually occurred; but that play forms a perfect metaphor for the "lifers" on the island, and was the fourth production of Serpent Players. "The cast included . . . John Kani as Haemon. Kani was promoted from a mute soldier to his first

speaking-role when Simon Hanabe was arrested shortly before the opening." (Truths, 100)

The many other images and incidents are detailed in

Fugard's Notebooks. Following are abridged excerpts:

Welcome, released about a week ago [T]he thought of Sharkie, Norman and Simon still there and the new spate of trials May and the trip to Robben Island. She goes down to see Norman once a year, and is allowed one visit of half-an-hour. . . . Sat down in a chair and faced a blank wall, in which was a small little window (about one foot square) and through this saw Norman's face. He was in a similar cubicle on the other side. Two policemen came in and stood behind each of them while the thirty minutes ticked away. . . . Welcome described the prisoners' transport to the Island. They travel down from P.E. to Cape Town in large vans. The prisoners are chained together in two's by their outer legs as they stand side-by-side--in other words they have almost got to skip when they want to move. Inside the truck there's a bucket for urinating and another of drinking-water. Two overnight stops in which they are locked in police cells at George and Swellendam. The chains are only taken off as they board the tug for the Island. In other words, when you want to urinate or shit during those three days, the other man goes with you. (Notebooks, 145)

An evening with Norman, who was released ten days ago, after two years in gaol--most of the time on Robben Island. . . . One time his 'span' was being chased back to the cells by warders, being beaten badly as they ran; a number of them lost their shoes in their frantic hurry to get back to the safety of their cells. Once inside--collapsed on the floors, out of breath, bleeding--they looked around and saw each other's cuts and bruises. As Norman then tells it, a man, oblivious to his own injuries, would put his

hands tenderly on those of his neighbors, wiping away the blood, trying to clean the wounds, but in turn another man would see to his, and yet another to that man's. Chain of sympathy. Always some men present who tried to raise their spirits. In this case a man stood up and, wiping away his blood, snot and tears, gave the 'weather forecast and news bulletin': 'It will be warm from Mngandi Street To Walmer. Kwazakele will be cold. . . 'Bulletin! Black Domination was chased by White Domination and beaten. Black Domination lost their shoes and will go barefoot to the quarries tomorrow.'

Norman says that in the end their laughter had them helplessly rolling round on the floor and hurt them more than the beating they'd received. . . . The long hours in the cells at night and over weekends were passed with stories in the form of 'improvised bioscope'. . . . One of the 'stories' he remembers most clearly from the nights in the cell was 'The fastest gun alive'. The story-teller had a friend in the cell who had also seen the film, and together they acted out the more dramatic moments. Good man and bad man

Norman developed a very close relationship with a young boy in the same cell. He was fifteen years old when he first arrived on the Island, seventeen when Norman left, and he faced another two years. . . . When the time came for Norman's departure, the cell decided to give him a 'salad supper' as a farewell. . . . When the time came for a speech the men backed out one by one. . . . the boy appealed to each of them to say something. When they all refused, he stood up: 'All right, Boet Norman, I'll say it. . . It's been a long time, we have learnt to love you.' And: 'When you leave here you'll forget us. Yes, you will (Notebooks, 152-53)

The chasing and beating is mimed as the very opening of the play; the lines "Black Domination was chased by White Domination" are spoken as a news report by John; they discuss Winston's playing of "The Fastest Gun Alive" the previous evening; and when John

finds he will be released in three months time, Winston says, like the young boy, "... Forget me ... because I'm going to forget you." (Statements, 72) They reminisce about the trip in the van; the two buckets--one for drinking, the other for urinating--but they were packed so tight they couldn't get to them; they fell asleep standing up because it was impossible to fall down; seasickness on the boat to the island.

All of these factual images are used to tell a very simple story. John and Winston are cellmates who are planning to play The Trial and Punishment of Antigone at a prison concert. When John finds he is to be released, Winston becomes angry and jealous. They quarrel. Winston relents, accepts his fate, and "forgives" John. When they do the play in concert, Winston, who is playing Antigone, breaks:

WINSTON [to the audience]. Brothers and Sisters of the Land! I go now on my last journey. I must leave the light of day forever, for the Island, strange and cold, to be lost between life and death. So, to my grave, my everlasting prison, condemned alive to solitary death.

[Tearing off his wig and confronting the audience as Winston, not Antigone.]

Gods of our Fathers! My Land! My Home!

Time waits no longer. I go now to my living death, because I honoured those things to which honour belongs.

(Statements, 77)

The play then ends with John and Winston miming running in chains and handcuffs.

There is nothing to indicate that Fugard's experience in working on either Sizwe Bansi or The Island led him to any new discoveries regarding directing. In both plays, Fugard's style is evident in structure and devices used, for example the game- and role-playing; but The Island's language--the elevated rhetoric and poetic passages as in the above example--indicate that Fugard, the playwright, took a stronger hand here. Perhaps that stronger hand was due to Fugard's returning confidence as a writer.

Vandenbroucke quotes Fugard as saying that Sizwe Bansi and The Island were "an enormously liberating experience: It got me past a very severe block I experienced immediately after Boesman and Lena" (Truths, 132) After the London production of Sizwe Bansi and The Island, he returned to, revised and produced Statements After an Arrest Under the Immorality Act. This was the Royal Court production in January of 1974 with the "courageous" Yvonne Bryceland and Ben Kingsley, with whom Fugard developed the play in an almost improvisational manner. Statements appears to be a rather hybrid and unique effort. As with the very early

No-good Friday and Nongogo, the company began with a script and Fugard "continued revising the script throughout rehearsals. . . . [B]ut . . . the Royal Court production and the text that developed from it were totally dependent on the methods he had evolved during Orestes. (Truths, 133-34)

Following this production, there is nothing to suggest that Fugard ever returned to these methods in depth in future works. Nor in my experience watching him direct Mecca did he appear to involve the actors in this kind of development. After Statements Fugard would return to the privacy of pen and paper and enter rehearsals with a script which, more than many playwrights, would be essentially complete. Although sensitive to the individual actor's needs, Fugard is not open to extensive rewriting. I spoke with Tom Aldredge, who originated the role of Marius Byleveld in Mecca:

CREAMER: There wasn't a lot of rewriting, was there?

ALDREDGE: Oh, no. Not much at all.

CREAMER: That's amazing, too.

ALDREDGE: Sure it is. But he's a gifted playwright; he's an experienced, gifted playwright. The more they write, the less they have to rewrite. You see, what I found out is he's

so secure in his material he doesn't have to defend that any more. He doesn't have to defend that--what he's written is good. Maybe a line here or a line there needs to be changed, and he knows it before we do, you know?

CREAMER: Well, that's really unusual, because I don't know anybody who's that sure about their written work. Who knows what's going to be good?

ALDREDGE: Well, he doesn't know it's going to be accepted, but he's satisfied that it's good; it's right and it's true. Whether it's accepted or not I don't think is a primary concern for him. . . . What I mean by accepted--I mean critically accepted. Of course he wants to reach the audience. (Int. Aldredge)⁹

After Statements, the major theatrical works are Dimetos, Aloes, Master Harold, Mecca, A Place with the Pigs, and My Children! My Africa!, all of which (with the exception of Dimetos) are "Realistic" dramas produced and directed from a script which was completed in privacy. If Orestes was a "major turning point" in Fugard's development, Statements is the "re-turning" point. It is a balance between a finished script and the improvisatory "Challenge/response" methods. Fugard still considers his job as director is to challenge his actors; he brings his experience in collaborative/improvisatory theatre into every rehearsal, but he is now firmly entrenched in the creation of plays in private with pen and paper.

The initial inspiration for Statements was once again an

image. Fugard had seen "six police photographs of a White Woman and a Coloured man caught in the act of love-making." (Statements, Introduction, n.p.) Vandenbroucke reports further that the photographs were actually published in "... an Afrikaans newspaper.... Because they were first offenders, both were given suspended sentences of six months. The man later committed suicide." (Truths, 132) And, as we shall see, Fugard will once again create a woman of great fortitude; but, as in reality, the man will be destroyed.

Although developed partly with the actors and although based on a specific law (to the extent that that law is named in the title of the play), Statements moves away from the more obvious propaganda of Sizwe Bansi and The Island; and, in doing so, becomes more "Fugardian" on three important levels: the use of language, both in its imagery and as used for character development, is superior to the others--Joubert and Philander, in a relatively short play, are three-dimensional persons, not generic; it does not end on the hopeful note as the others do; and most significantly, Fugard once again uses the South African context as metaphor. In dealing with two unfortunate lovers, a Colored man and a White woman,

caught and photographed in the act of love-making, Fugard examines his own feelings and beliefs regarding man's mortality without hope of an afterlife. It is a return to Camus's Sisyphus and the philosophy of "courageous pessimism." That this does not make it any less powerful an indictment of an unjust law is more evidence of the "hybrid" character of this piece; and the very structure of the play echoes this duality, as I shall investigate in considering the plot.

Fugard returns to the very simple plot line here: Errol Philander, a Colored schoolteacher, had approached Frieda Joubert, the librarian of a White library, in order to get books to study for his correspondence course degree. He needed a book but "couldn't be a subscriber." (Statements, 100) She helped him, which was illegal; and soon they became lovers, using the library after hours as a trysting place. A neighbor became suspicious and contacted the police, who caught and photographed the couple in the act of love-making. Both lovers break under the pressure (although the woman regains her dignity) and the relationship is destroyed.

Although there is considerable play left after the police break-in, the plot ends there. The remainder of the play consists of

the "statements" of Philander, Joubert, and du Preez, the policeman who arrested them.

The hybrid quality of the play is supported by the hybrid structure. The first half of the work is strictly realistic, consisting of no more than the conversation of the man and woman on a blanket on the library floor apparently immediately after love-making. In the course of this conversation, and in a finely detailed and logical exposition, we learn much about the lovers: we learn that they have been lovers for about a year; that he is married and a teacher taking correspondence courses; that he feels shame because, due to his color, he has to sneak around to cover their relationship; that he has discovered a new world of belief in his studies of evolution and geology; and that she is a spinster, a professional librarian, extremely shy and rather ashamed of her body, but tender and in touch with nature. They are as intellectually entwined as physically. In the course of the conversation they quarrel under the pressure of what they are doing; of his family obligations; of her devotion to him. We are made aware of the danger and threat of exposure under which they love. As Errol is speaking of his love for her and his shame at

sometimes hurting her:

[A sudden noise startles them. They scramble apart, the woman grabbing the blanket and covering herself.] Sssh!!
[Pause.] Sure you locked it?

WOMAN. [Nodding] Back door?

MAN. Yes. [Tense, motionless pause as they listen in silence for a few seconds longer. The man moves to his clothes on the floor.] Hot tonight, hey.

WOMAN. Do you want the towel?

MAN. Ja, okay. I'm sweating. [The woman finds a towel, takes it to him.] There's no water left in Bontrug.

WOMAN. We're going to have prayers for rain next week. Wednesday.

MAN. The location dam is empty. Little mud left for the goats. They're going to start bringing in for us on Monday. Got to be ready with our buckets at twelve. Two for each house.

WOMAN. Then why won't you let me send you some of mine? The borehole is still very strong. Please! It would be so easy.

MAN. Thanks, but I'll go along with Bontrug.

WOMAN. Don't thank me for something you won't take.

MAN. For the thought then.

WOMAN. To hell with the thought! I'm not trying to be kind. It's only water, and you need it.

MAN. We all do.

WOMAN. Exactly! So your family must suffer because of your pride.

MAN. [disbelief]. Pride?

WOMAN. It sounds like it.

MAN. Pride doesn't use back doors!

WOMAN. Sssh, please!

MAN. Or wait until it's dark. You don't walk the way I do between the location and town with pride.

WOMAN. Please don't let's argue tonight. (Statements, 89-90)

Besides indicating the pressures on these two, the above relatively brief passage is an excellent example of Fugard's considerable "gifts and experience" as a playwright. The man's sweating indicates not only the pressure of fear, but also the desert heat, and leads with utter logic on both levels to the topic of water. The fear leads to misunderstanding; a simple offer of water in a drought is misinterpreted as condescension. We are given a hint of the woman's religiosity, and of her resentment at having her offer of water rejected. We are given Philander's sense of shame. Moreover, he raises his voice and she cautions him to be quiet; a direct though subtle foreshadowing of the break-in. In fact, du Preez will state in his report: "... we could clearly hear

voices whispering inside." (Statements, 96) This is an excellent example of Fugard's ability to load the dialogue with plot development and mood, and with character relationship and development, in a perfectly logical and believable way. The impact of Statements is due in part to its compactness, much like Master Harold.

The duality in structure is severe. We are given one extended statement by du Preez, setting up the impending break-in. This is inserted in such a way as to call into question the utter Realism of the structure, without actually breaking completely away from it; it is a kind of bridge to the genre change which will soon follow. Philander has likened himself and Frieda to a jackal he'd been told of which had chewed off its own foot in order to escape from a trap. He had "waited for the story of the dogs that had caught and killed a jackal with only three legs. . . ."

(Statements, 93)

MAN. . . . That's what we're doing . . . chewing away, chewing away. And if we're frightened enough . . . we'll escape . . . but [Pause] What's the time?

WOMAN. Too dark. I can't see the clock. Or you.

MAN. I'm here.

WOMAN. What are you doing?

MAN. Nothing. And you?

WOMAN. Waiting....

[Pause]

MAN. For what?

WOMAN. I don't know. I suppose the dogs.

MAN. Frieda. [Holding out a hand in the dark.] Frieda!

[A moment's hesitation and then they impulsively come together and embrace. Against this image of the two lovers, a plain-clothes policeman, Detective Sergeant J. du Preez, walks on. He carries a police dossier and notebook. His statement is dictated to the audience.] (Statements, 94)

Du Preez's sudden appearance as the lovers freeze in the background brings the foreshadowed threat to life; but his "dictation" is a cold, official, and rather detailed history of the events leading to the report by the neighbor of possible violations of law, the subsequent discovery of the lovers and the break-in. Du Preez's officious quality in his direct addressing of the audience, rather than resulting in a Brechtian alienation of the audience from the intensity of the moment, exacerbates it by contrast. He is merely "doing his duty." It is, once again, an example of Shaw's observation that "The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is

not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them; that's the essence of inhumanity."¹⁰ Du Preez's appearance also suddenly "warps" time as we are taken from what we thought was the present into the past. As du Preez finishes his statement, we are once again wrenched back in time; but moreover, we are thrown into a surreal world:

[A blackout, during which the policeman exits. A sequence of camera flashes in the darkness exposes the man and the woman tearing apart from their embrace; the man then scrambling for his trousers, finding them, and trying to put them on; the woman, naked, crawling around on the floor, looking for the man. As she finds him, and tries to hide behind his back, the flashes stop and torches are shone on them. The woman scrambles away, finds the blanket, and covers herself. The torches are relentless, but we never see anything of the men behind them. These 'flash-sequences' are nightmare excursions into the split second of exposure and must be approached as 'sub-text' rather than 'reality'.] (Statements, 96)

The alternating use of the devices of camera flashes and torches will continue to separate the "statements" of all three characters for the remainder of the play. After the initial terror of being caught, we will watch the woman regain strength and dignity while the man gradually deteriorates. Du Preez will remain, throughout, officious and unfeeling. He is, in contrast to the others and in keeping with the hybrid quality of the play, a

two-dimensional, generic character representing the government. In his entire canon, this is Fugard's only representation of any government figure on stage.

The woman's courage is hinted at almost immediately after the initial exposure. Although so terrified that "Her first words are an almost incoherent babble," her impulse is to shield the man with the blanket upon which they had been lying. Her incoherent babble becomes a desperate explanation of how the two of them got involved. When it becomes too intimate, the man's desperation forces him to speak and he "role-plays" an innocent version of himself for the police. He speaks compulsively of the need for water in Bontrug, the Colored township. His compulsiveness drives the woman to further desperation:

MAN. Miss Frieda Joubert. There's no water left in . . .

WOMAN. Why are you . . . ?

MAN. There's no water left in Bontrug!

WOMAN. What are you doing?

[Her bewilderment now edged by anxiety. Equivalently his performance degenerates more and more.]

MAN. Please Listen, Miss Frieda! There's no water left in Bontrug, man. Dam's empty. Little mud left. for the goats. They're going to start bringing in for us . . .

WOMAN. [Her desperation mounting]. You've already said that!

MAN. Miss Frieda . . . they going to start bring for us

WOMAN [hanging on to herself]. And I said . . . I said I'd send ;you some of mine and you

MAN. I got to be ready with my buckets at twelve.

WOMAN. You got angry!

MAN. Two buckets, lady. Got to be ready with my buckets at twelve. 'Cause they sending to us . . . me and my buckets . . . two for each

[The woman now starts to lose control. The man's 'performance' has now degenerated into a grotesque parody of the servile, cringing 'Coloured'.] (Statements, 99)

The desperation grows until there are more camera flashes and torches and the man and woman, almost prosaically now, explain in detail their first illicit meeting. There are more camera flashes, and torches discover the woman naked and alone; but now she is unaware of the lights.

The following monologue is intriguing in that, although mostly question and answer, we are not aware of whether the policeman is asking the questions, or if the woman is "interrogating" herself. There is no indication in the text of another character speaking. This hints at the development of this

sequence in a collaborative manner:

WOMAN. Ugly feet. The soles have got hard patches. My legs are bandy. Good calf muscles . . . probably got them riding to school on my bicycle up a very steep hill each day. Skin around my knees is just starting to get a little slack. I enjoy making the muscles in my thighs move. Hair is very mousy . . . very sparse I think the area around my waist is quite nice. Few soft and feminine contours around my hips. My breasts are slacker than I would like them to be. My neck is unattractive. My face is quite interesting but can be very plain sometimes. Lines around my mouth are starting to worry me. Hair causes me concern. I think it's going off. Ashamed of my hands. Nail-polish has come off in patches. Skin looks very old. I think there is a lot of me in my hands somehow. My favourite colour is blue My favourite flower is

You say you have no previous experience of men. That you were a virgin, and yet you took the initiative. What would you have done if Philander had rejected you?

Hated him.

Would the fact that a coloured man had rejected you have humiliated you more than if a white man had done so?

By the time it happened his colour did not mean anything to me any more.

Did you encourage Philander?

Yes.

Why?

I wanted him. (Statements, 101-02)

This goes on as though it were a courtroom testimony until she confesses to making love with the man. There is another series of flashes; the policeman reports the arrest (apparently to the court); the woman and man are separated. "The woman is totally isolated in her last speech, as will also be the case with the man." (Statements, 105)

The woman's last brief speech is of her pain at the loss of the man; the man's is of his loss of himself.

Fugard's use of language is poetically crafted in Statements. Compare the "framing" of the play by the woman's first "realistic" speech and the man's last "surreal" speech.

WOMAN [shyly]. I dried it in the sun. Just sat there, on a chair in the backyard, feeling the warmth of it on my head. Every strand felt separate and my head very light . . . the texture of the hair changes as it dries. And then the smell of it when it falls over my face . . . the smell of clean hair and shampoo. The warmer it gets the more you smell it. And if there's a breeze, even a small one, the way it lifts and floats. Also . . . the colour of the strands, specially when they hang close to your eyes . . . The colour seems to pulse. [Pause.] There's no sense of time. Everything very still. Just the sounds of a warm afternoon . . . warm sounds, warm smells . . . specially the fig tree. A lot of the fruit has fallen now and burst, rotting on the ground . . . almost like wine! The leaves also have a very strong smell when it's hot. [Pause.] What else? . . . doves . . . a locust flying suddenly . . . bees . . . Just sat there . . . Quiet Saturday afternoon . . . hearing and smelling it all quietly,

being very lazy and thinking all sorts of things.

[Turning to the man.]

And you? (Statements, 81)

Fugard seldom deals at such length with sensual imagery.

It somewhat foreshadows the image game which Sophia and Lydia will play in Dimetos. In contrast, the following is excerpted from the man's speech which ends the play after the relationship is destroyed:

MAN. Frieda! [He discovers himself alone . . . with his clothes.]

Now I must understand it.

If they take away your eyes you can't see.
 If they take away your tongue you can't taste.
 If they take away your hands you can't feel.
 If they take away your nose you can't smell.
 If they take away your ears you can't hear.
 I can see.
 I can taste.
 I can feel.
 I can smell.
 I can hear.
 I can't love.

I must understand it.
 If they take away your legs you can't walk.
 If they take away your arms you can't work.
 If they take away your head you can't think.
 I can walk.
 I can work.
 I can think.
 I can't love.

I must understand it.

When you are hungry you eat.
 When you are thirsty you drink.
 When you are tired you sleep.
 I will eat.
 I will drink.
 I will sleep.
 I won't love.

I must understand it again.
 If they take away your soul, you can't go to Heaven
 I can go to Heaven.
 I can't love. (Statements, 105-06)

Further on, the man echoes the woman's self-interrogation:

... and she asks me, 'What do you want?'
 I don't know
 Yes, you do.
 Everything.
 You can't have it. Choose.
 I can't.
 You're a coward.
 I know.
 You realize it's useless.
 Yes.
 What will you do if they find out about us?
 I don't know. So she tells me.
 Nothing. You do nothing. They do it all.
 They find you.
 They put on the light.
 They take the picture.
 They take your name.
 And then they take you.
 And then they take your belt and your tie and your
 shoelaces.
 They lock the door.
 They will ask the questions.
 They will try you.
 And then at the end as at the beginning, they will find you
 again.

Guilty. (Statements, 106-07)

Then, once again, unlike the more collaborative Sizwe Bansi and The Island, the play ends on a hopeless note:

So I tell God I don't smoke and I don't drink and I know the price of bread. But he says it makes no difference and that he wants back what is left. And then I start to give him the other parts. I give him my feet and my legs, I give him my head and body, I give him my arms, until at last there is nothing left, just my hands, and they are empty. But he takes them back too. And then there is only the emptiness left. But he doesn't want that. Because it's me. It's all that is left of me.

They arrest it all the same.

Now I'm here.

There is nothing here.

They can't interfere with God any more.

(Statements, 107-08)

The play ends here. And with this play, Fugard's intense experiment in collaborative playwriting/directing ended also, and he returned to the "normal" rehearsal room techniques which he had practiced with such success previously. I shall investigate Fugard's practical methods of directing in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DIRECTING PRACTICES

The theatre begins not from the moment you make-up or from the moment of your entrance on stage. The theatre begins from the minute you awaken in the morning. You must ask yourself what you should do this day to earn the right to come to the theatre, to rehearse, to perform, or to take a lesson with a clear conscience.

You are in the theatre when you greet the doorman on the way to your dressing-room, when you ask Fyodor for a pass, and when you put your rubbers in the hall stand. You are in the theatre when you talk about it to your acquaintances, to the clerk in a bookshop, to a friend, to another actor, or to the barber who cuts your hair. From now on, the theatre is your life, totally dedicated to one goal: the creation of great works of art which ennoble and elevate the soul of a human being, works which develop in man the great ideas of freedom, justice, love for the people, and love of country. . . .

Constantin Stanislavsky¹

Who the hell is Stanislavsky? Who the hell knows Stanislavsky living in New Brighton?

Zakes Mokae²

Athol is a ruthless person; a ruthless human being. Ruthless most of all with himself and his own life.

Lloyd Richards³

Stanislavsky's dedication to the art of Theatre and Fugard's ruthlessness are one and the same concept; and Fugard's dedication came, like Stanislavsky's, through the personal integrity of the

consummate artist. The hallmark of both men is personal and artistic ruthlessness. In dealing with Fugard as director, I shall draw comparisons with Stanislavsky and an American "disciple" of his, Harold Clurman. The major comparison will be, ostensibly, between men of strong dedication to method, and one who apparently has little noticeable method. I say "ostensibly" and "apparently" because neither extreme represents the "Truth."

Harold Clurman was influenced by Stanislavsky on all levels of theatrical endeavor, but like Lee Strasberg and the myriad other directors, actors, and teachers--especially in the United States--he adapted Stanislavsky's "techniques" to his own ends. And, as with most systems, the "true believers" who ascribe to them often are blinded by the light.

The outstanding artistic feature of the summer was the influence of Stella Adler's report on her work with Stanislavsky. To put it bluntly, she had discovered that our use of the Stanislavsky system had been incorrect. An undue emphasis on the "exercises" of affective memory had warped our work with the actor. Strasberg's first reaction to this declaration was the charge that Stanislavsky had gone back on himself. Later, however, he decided to take advantage of the suggestions furnished by Stella's report, and to use what he could of the "innovations" in Stanislavsky's method.⁴

Stanislavsky, Clurman, Strasberg and Adler were all

pioneers, as Fugard is today; and as pioneers they were all susceptible to failed experiments. But they are all spiritual, if not practical, blood brothers. The Stanislavsky-influenced Americans accepted, adapted, and revised systems and ended with extensive theories, charts, essays and other techniques (many on paper) for acting, directing and producing. And in their fervent dedication, they created a movement in theatre the impact of which is still felt in private and public institutions of learning and, effectually, in professional theatre. The influences on Fugard were the practical and political deprivations of South African theatre and society, his fascination with Mankind, the work of the existentialists, and his own prodigious talents. Fugard, like Stanislavsky and unlike the others, is a disciple of no one. He is greatly influenced by other artists, as was Stanislavsky, but is not dedicated to imitation.

However, it is unlikely that Fugard's methods will have the impact, will "travel" to the extent that Stanislavsky's have, probably because Fugard does not really recognize his work as being particularly systematic. Because of this he may never develop his theories in writing. Moreover, Stanislavsky worked on a system

which would lend itself to plays of many genres, many eras, and many styles. Fugard, even when directing the works of playwrights of other nations, usually adapted them to fit the South African context with which he is so familiar; either that, or he directed works of spiritual blood brothers like Beckett.

FUGARD: . . . I've been most successful in that exercise with the writing of Beckett.

CREAMER: Which Beckett did you do?

FUGARD: I've done two Becketts. I think one of the best jobs I've ever done as a director outside of my own work, with other people's work, was Waiting For Godot with a Black cast. . . . And Krapp's Last Tape. (Int. Fugard, 24 May)⁵

Another commonalty shared by Stanislavsky and Fugard is that of being actors, and both rooted their professional lives in concentration on the actor as creative artist. Both men, noted for their directing genius, founded their directing on the actor.

Gorchakov writes of Stanislavsky:

As director-ideologist, he always maintained that the most important thing for the director and actor is to understand the meaning of the play: what is its purpose and what is the idea behind it. . . . When working on a play, Stanislavsky the director was always striving to discover its central social, ideological, and philosophical problem. He demanded from the actor and director a thorough

knowledge of the play's material--of its historic, philosophic, and political character.⁶

One thing they did not have in common is that Stanislavsky was not a playwright. The treatment of "central social, ideological, and philosophical problems" of Fugard's plays are of his own creation. This may account for the penchant for "systematizing" which characterizes the Stanislavsky movements, and for the apparent lack of system of Fugard's efforts. And again, Fugard's works are limited in contextual scope. He is, however, an intense student of his world. Tom Aldredge states: "He's an extraordinary man, he really is. Beyond this playwriting and drama, interests so wide and varied. We talk about many things: theology, archaeology, paleontology . . ." (Int. Aldredge)⁷ Fugard, who at university majored in sociology and anthropology, spoke to me of his interests in connection with his work:

FUGARD: Most of my other provocations, the things that I've read that have been major provocations to me and have spilled over into my writing--that have informed my writing, have not been theatre books as such. The writings of Camus; poets that I've read.

CREAMER: Which poets?

FUGARD: American poets.

CREAMER: Lowell?

FUGARD: (enthusiastically) Oh, yes! American and Russian. It's been sort of eclectic; it's a bit from here, and a bit from there. It's a bit from natural history. . . . It's bits and pieces from all over. And, in a way, the writing of a play dictates for a period what your life is going to be about. I mean the real doctorates I've got have come by way of my plays. I've got a doctorate in rubbish, because I wrote Boesman and Lena; I've got a doctorate in aloes--and now a life-long passion--I had it before that play and reinforced it. I've got a doctorate in lighting candles, thanks to Mecca. . . . Every play leads you God, I had such a marvelous time, for example with Statements. Left me with a doctorate in evolution. It was a fascination. (Int. Fugard, 24 May)

And for the most part, Fugard directs only his own works.

Vandenbroucke writes:

With a few exceptions, Fugard has directed only his own plays or productions by the black theatre groups with which he has been connected. . . . He claims to have "no interest in directing other people's plays. I don't think I do a bad job with them, but I'm in no sense a special director when it comes to work other than my own." In fact, Fugard has vowed from time to time never again to direct even his own plays. (Truths, 27)⁸ [emphasis mine]

But directing his plays remains to this day an essential element in his completing the project. As recently as June 1989, he directed his newest work, My Children! My Africa! in its premiere at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg, and in its New York City opening at the Perry Street Theatre on December 18.

As I stated earlier in Chapter One (page 2) Fugard's "writing

is the core, the very foundation, of his theatrical endeavors." No one, of course, is more familiar with the depths and subtleties of his work and characters than Fugard the playwright, and so the extensive "on paper" preparation which characterizes the Stanislavsky/American movement is not necessary. It has been done in the writing of the play. Hence the difficulty of determining Fugard's methods, while the others' methods lean heavily toward the pedagogical. Clurman himself recognized his own didacticism as early as 1931:

Waldo Frank arrived for a brief visit. I invited him to give one or two talks. Mary Morris, being somewhat older than the rest of us, confided a certain uneasiness to Waldo. She was worried, she said, about the directors' arrogance, especially Strasberg's and mine. We spoke with violent self-assurance that took little account of the possibility of error or the simple fact that many of the things we proclaimed with such heat were commonplaces familiar to most adults.⁹

Clurman's book, On Directing, is a fine example of the Stanislavsky method adapted for the director. It is finely detailed and concise. Every action, motivation, and attitude of the characters is on paper, plus notes on production values. It is extremely pedagogical in the best sense of that word. Fully 110 pages of the total of 299 consists of "Director's Notes" for ten of

Clurman's best known productions, and samples of the "director's work scripts" for two of these: Anouilh's The Waltz of the Toreadors and Giradoux's Tiger at the Gates. (Ten other pages are reprints of letters to Boris Aronson regarding Anouilh's Mlle. Colombe and Arthur Miller's The Creation of the World and Other Business.)

The "director's notes" are chronological by date of production and range from the November 24, 1938 production by the Group Theatre of Odets's Rocket to the Moon to the Mark Taper Forum production of Uncle Vanya which opened on August 13, 1969. Over that thirty-one year period, Clurman's "method" remained the same. For each production, Clurman begins with "impressions" of the play as a whole; from there he moves to the consideration of the "spine of the play"; and then to a detailed consideration of the "spine" of each character in the play, and their relationships to each other and their place in the play itself. "Spine" is defined as the "play's main action" and the "chief motivating action for each character." Clurman then developed his "score." After admonishing his readers that "[n]ot all directors . . . commit their thoughts to a notebook, or not to the extent that I do or to the much greater

extent that Max Reinhardt did," Clurman goes on to describe developing his "score:"

The director's working script is his score. It follows the play scene by scene, line by line. I arrange it in the following way: I insert a blank sheet of paper facing each of the pages in the play's text. I divide the clean sheet into three more or less equal columns.

The first and most important column notes the particular action of the moment. It states what each character--in silence or through speech--is doing, or more precisely, what he wants or intends to do. These actions, too, are always designated by active verbs: to warn, to plead, to threaten, to reprove, to punish, to heal, to flatter and so on as the case may be. . . . Stanislavsky described the first step in embodying love on the stage as "to pay attention" He decried the use of phrases which describe behavior in terms of abstract sentiment: to love, to hate, to be kind, etc. . . .

This leads to the second column of the director's notations in which he sets down the manner in which the basic action is to be carried out. The first column states what is to be done, the second how it is to be done. . . . [T]he third column. This is the column in which the director indicates the overt physical activity which manifest both . . . action and adjustment. . . .

To reiterate in strict order: the three columns are (1) the basic action, (2) the attitude or adjustment which colors the aforesaid action in the circumstances of the scene and (3) the overt physical activity which accompanies the action.¹⁰

I had the opportunity to study directing with both Lloyd Richards and Harold Clurman at Hunter College of The City University of New York. Clurman had taken over the graduate

directing classes when Richards left to become Dean of Drama at Yale University in 1980. Rumor had it that Clurman phoned Richards to ask what text he used in teaching the class, and Richards replied, "Your book." When I interviewed Richards in 1984, he verified that this was essentially true. However, Richards did not require student directors to create a director's work script. Clurman did. And so the essentially Stanislavskian techniques continue to be passed down, diluted and modified, but relatively intact. There are two points I wish to make here: first, that these techniques are a valuable tool for the teaching of directing in that they form a foundation from which individual growth may begin; and second, Fugard was mostly self-taught.

Moreover, Fugard has not written theoretically on directing and feels that, as with acting, he is essentially intuitive. Only once did he attempt keeping a log of a production:

When I took the fellowship at Yale [spring term 1980], I thought that for once I'd try and keep an absolutely accurate log of a production. I started and the notes came out very nicely, for instance my assessments of the actors. But then I had to make a cast change and ended up throwing out all those pages. (Truths, 106)

Therefore, in examining Fugard as director, one must, like

Fugard himself, deal with "bits and pieces from all over."

Besides making himself available for extended personal interviews, Fugard allowed me to observe rehearsals, and often sit in on note-giving sessions, of the world premiere at Yale of The Road To Mecca. This was important in a number of ways: besides having the opportunity to interview Fugard himself extensively, I was also able to speak at length with his leading actors Carmen Mathews and Tom Aldredge, with Lloyd Richards, Zakes Mokae, and the costume designer Derek McLane--who also furnished some information on set design. Perhaps most fortunate for me, if not for Fugard, was the fact that he was extremely unhappy with the Yale production and so was open to talk at length upon his failures as a director. This presupposed talking in detail about his various responsibilities, and with study those details point toward something resembling "Method." It is not, as Stanislavsky/Clurman's, an "on paper" method. It is, as everything else he does, not likely to be passed on to aspiring directors as a foundation for growth. As stated above, the primary concern which Fugard has as a director is, like Stanislavsky's, the actors.

Furthermore, there are some elements of production to

which Fugard, as director, admittedly gives less attention than is warranted in the creation of the total work of art, and I would like to consider those before dealing in depth with his areas of stronger focus.

Costumes and make-up have never been an area of special concern to Fugard. This is because none of the characters he has written require a unique look. With the possible exception of Dimetos, for whose characters there is no costume description in the printed text, all require only easily attainable contemporary clothing. (Paul Scofield, in the 1976 production at the Nottingham Playhouse, is pictured wearing a checked flannel shirt and a half-length modern jacket. Lydia's clothing is simply "a dress.") In Hello and Goodbye, there is no costume description for Johnnie; and Hester is described, on her entrance, as simply "wearing a coat." In Sizwe Bansi and The Island, both collaborative works, there is somewhat more detail given on costuming in that Sizwe, as Robert Zwelinzima having his picture taken, wears "an ill-fitting new double breasted suit." The suit in Blood Knot is not described; in the 1985 Broadway production it was gray and comically ill-fitting. In The Island, the prisoners Winston and John

"... wear the prison uniform of khaki shirt and short trousers" and Antigone's costume is simply a "wig and false breasts."¹¹

The only evidence of specific attention to unusual costume and make-up was in The Cell and this attempt was disastrous.

Grütter can only remember that for Fugard's play he made some masks, "which the actors wore on a stage dark with significance. . . ." The cast consisted of the woman, another black prisoner in an adjoining cell, and a chorus of three, dressed in sheets, that commented upon the action of the play. Fugard and Grütter were in the chorus. [Sheila] Meiring recalls, "Athol got bad reviews. They said nobody could hear because of the white masks, which I had baked in our oven. I remember sitting in the back of the theatre when a black man who looked after the building made the brilliant suggestion that I make the holes in the masks bigger. That's how sophisticated we were." (Truths, 13) [emphasis mine]

Nearly thirty years later, an actor's attitude toward wearing a wig would cause Fugard some serious aggravation. In the 1984 premiere of The Road to Mecca, Carmen Mathews in the role of Helen, the reclusive sculptor of the Karoo desert, refused to wear a wig designed to make her look rather dirty and unkempt. I spoke with both Fugard and Derek McLane concerning this:

McLANE: One of my regrets in the way we handled it was that because her dress . . . it just didn't exist until pretty late in the process. She didn't get pieces early on, the way Marius and Elsa did, and I think that sort of

reflected . . . I mean, there are all sorts of problems with Helen.

CREAMER: Still?

McLANE: No, I think there are some performance problems mainly, but I'm not totally satisfied with her appearance.

CREAMER: Performance problems?

McLANE: Some acting problems.

CREAMER: You think so?

McLANE: I think so.

CREAMER: That has nothing to do with costume, though.

McLANE: No, but I think they're related to her problems with costume.

CREAMER: Can you say how? That's really interesting.

McLANE: Well, I think that she won't let go of a certain amount of care in her personal appearance, that . . . you know, we had a wig done for her which she declined to wear. She's not wearing a wig. I think it's a problem. I don't think most of the audience is conscious of it, but I have heard that the random audience member who has nothing to do with--has no particular interest in design or anything--mention that her hair looks like that of a suburban housewife. It doesn't look damaged, and it should be really kind of damaged. I mean, the picture of the original Helen, I thought her hair was extraordinary; sort of matted down. It was really severely damaged. She looks like a bag lady in that picture. Her hair should have concrete dust in it and it should look really split and there should be grease in it--a mixture of grease and dirt; and her skin should be really dirty, it should be gray and if you rub it, little bits of dirt would ball up on

her forearms. Her arms look like she has a maid.
(McLane)¹²

Fugard was far more passionate in his criticism on this point, but much of that criticism was aimed at himself. The following excerpt will touch briefly upon Fugard's drinking--once a major element in his directing and acting--and upon his resultant "ruthlessness" with actors, both of which I will consider in more detail below.

FUGARD: I've got to realize that I've got to make compensation for the fact that when I was drinking, I used to take into the rehearsal room with me a certain madness; a certain creative, provocative, fertile madness. There's not much doubt in my mind about the connection between that madness and my drinking. I'll never be able to be mad like that again when I'm sober. I've got to in some way compensate for that. What form that compensation will take, I don't know, but that's another issue. A completely separate issue was this lack of nerve, this lack of ruthlessness which was the case here. When Carmen refused to wear the wig, I should have said, "You wear it, or else!"

CREAMER: Or else?

FUGARD: Blow the performance! Blow the production!

CREAMER: That's hard.

FUGARD: No, I should have! Should have! (Int. Fugard, 24 July)¹³

Mel Gussow writes of one such incident of creative

madness in rehearsals for the premiere of Master Harold:

... [I]t was soon clear that the actors--Mokae, Zeljko Ivanek as Hally, and Danny Glover as Willie--were tip-toeing around the play's darkest edges. In response to the boy's racial taunts, Mokae was required to drop his pants onstage and reveal his bare backside. Some time later, the boy, betrayed by his guilt, had to spit squarely in Mokae's face. Whenever these pivotal points were reached, both actors retreated nervously. Finally, Fugard decided to take matters into his own hands. At the point where Mokae was supposed to drop his pants but would not, Fugard quickly undid his own belt, dropped his pants, shoved his bare backside in Mokae's face, and said, "I'll show you a fair arse!" When it came time for the boy to spit, and he didn't, Fugard again took action. He moved Ivanek aside, place his hands squarely on either side of Mokae's head, held it, and spat repeatedly in his face--a shower of spittle in the face of Mokae, who, Fugard says, is "a man I love more than any other man I know." The actors were stunned, and after a few moments of silence they and the playwright burst into tears. The action was liberating--an emotional release--and from then on the cast completely lost its inhibitions.¹⁴

Carmen Mathews was troublesome in another technical area: make-up. Fugard did not seem so concerned with this, but McLane saw it as further evidence of Mathews's egotism and Fugard's lapse.

McLANE: And then she likes to wear lipstick and eye makeup. And she says it's just so her face doesn't totally wash out on stage. And she puts it on and Elsa doesn't put it on because she has to wash her face on stage, and so the contrast between them ... even though it doesn't

necessarily read like lipstick, does look--she looks a little too healthy.

CREAMER: Have you told Athol about that?

McLANE: Oh, yes.

CREAMER: What did he say?

McLANE: That's something he didn't want to push. He didn't want to upset her, and he didn't want me to upset her.

CREAMER: And so he pulled back?

McLANE: He pulled back. I mean, that's not a critical problem, but to me that reflects. Those problems with her physical appearance reflect the problems she has as an actress with that role.

CREAMER: She should open up more.

McLANE: Yes. There's too much sort of false . . . too many mannerisms that are sort of cheerful. (McLane) [emphasis mine]

If people tend to favor one sense over another, then Fugard favors the aural over the visual; and this is evident in considering his rather weak focus on set design. Besides being sensitive to rhythms and balances in his own work, much of his reading is in poetry. Moreover, he becomes captivated with particular pieces of music when creating a new work. "During the period between the first and second productions of Statements, he 'drove my family

mad' listening to the requiems of Mozart and Brahms." (Truths, 134) And:

For Dimetos the music would be Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D Minor. Fugard says, "once you get past the fugue into the toccata you can actually see a cathedral being built, you are actually inside the head of an engineer." A Bach cello concerto is used in The Guest, the first time since No-Good Friday nineteen years previously that Fugard calls for music in a script. For Master Harold . . . and the Boys, Fugard found himself incessantly listening to Mozart's Great Mass in C Minor. (Truths, 227n.)

Master Harold ends with the two Black waiters dancing to Sarah Vaughn's "Little Man, You've Had a Busy Day" being played on the jukebox. Furthermore, and for the first time, Fugard used incidental music prior to the curtain of The Road To Mecca--J. S. Bach's "The Goldberg Variations." (Int. Fugard, 24 May)

Carmen Mathews spoke also of Fugard's concern with sound in regard to casting the play.

CREAMER: How many times did you audition?

MATHEWS: Twice, I came in.

CREAMER: Did he just talk to you for a while first?

MATHEWS: Yes, he talked. And then the whole purpose is to read, to see how a balance of sound goes, and also to see what your own possible intention could be towards the role. . . . Athol, of course, was so totally knowledgeable

about exactly the ideas in the play . . . as a matter of fact, sometimes he treats it musically. He'll say the first motif and then a leitmotif and then reinstituting the major motif again. And so it was fascinating to see the way he built up those acts and finally arrived from the beginning, the middle to the end.

CREAMER: Actually, he and I were talking the other day at Kavanaugh's and I was remarking that everyone in the cast has a very distinctive voice, and I wondered if he took that into consideration; and he said, "Yes, very much. The sound of the voices, and the sound of the voices, and the sound of the voices . . ."

MATHEWS: Yes and that's the way, I think, one has to on occasion--and especially if you don't know another person or their work--hear an audition in order to hear their sounds; because very often you need the melody, the meshing, the balance. (Mathews)¹⁵

But with regard to set design, as I pointed out in Chapter Two, Fugard moved increasingly from the early realistic box sets of No-Good Friday and Nongogo during the "apprenticeship years," to the ultimate total lack of sets in Boesman and Lena and Statements. With A Lesson from Aloes, he began a gradual move back toward the box sets which are the formal designs for both Master Harold and Mecca; but while the set for Aloes is divided into two playing areas, the backyard and bedroom of the Bezuidenhout home, neither is described in much detail. But, since both areas are in view at all times, complete realism in design would be extremely difficult. In contrast, the sets for Master Harold and

Mecca are not only completely realistic, but are surprisingly similar in design. The former was designed by Jane Clark and the latter by Elizabeth Doyle, but their similarity aroused questions in my mind. I spoke to Derek McLane regarding this, since Ms. Doyle was not available for interview.

CREAMER: The last time I talked to Betsy [Ms. Doyle] I said I really liked her set, and she said, "It's Athol's set." And I don't know how true that is; how much input she had into it.

McLANE: But I wouldn't agree with her on that. She designed it. I mean, Athol didn't design it.

CREAMER: Do you know how precise Athol was in describing the set?

McLANE: No. I mean he wasn't. But it all comes out of conversation. There was a lot of conversation about that.

CREAMER: Because he's been to that house. I wondered how close it was...

McLANE: But there's a point when they let go of that house and they say, "We've got a play to do here."

CREAMER: Betsy had far more input into it, then, than she had said to me?

McLANE: I think she's modest. It's definitely her set. Athol never definitely took pencil to paper. He reacted to it as all directors do; maybe thought about it more than some directors do, but there are directors who are more fussy about sets than Athol is. Much more. (Int. McLane) [emphasis mine]

I later asked Fugard if the inside of Helen Niemand's house had actually been like the set and he said that it had. Furthermore, Fugard states that with Mecca, "Betsy did succeed in a certain measure of liberating herself, but there was too much of a documentary set and not an interpretation." And later, "The set, as in all my other plays, has such a subordinate role." (Int. Fugard, 24 July) [emphasis mine]

The overall designs of these two works are so strikingly similar that one is hard put to think they came out of two completely different minds. Perhaps the "rectangular" shape is as popular a form for building in South Africa as for the proscenium stage? Certainly Fugard's input must have been considerable since he was the only person connected with the productions to have actually been in both places. And, since set is subordinate in Fugard's mind, he would be more concerned with functionality than with aesthetics.

The similarities are many and obvious: each set represents a low-ceilinged rectangular single room; there is an entry from the outdoors on stage right and an exit to another room (in both cases a cooking area) on stage left; downstage of this exit is a "separate"

playing area—a bedroom alcove in Mecca and the tea shop's counter area in Master Harold. In both works there is a small table downstage center around which much of the action of the plays occurs. Most distinctively, much of the upstage wall of each set is taken up by an enormous picture window through which the audience can see something of the outside world. In Master Harold, this window is eminently justifiable since we are in a city tea shop and the window looks out onto a park. (Although it is raining very heavily throughout the play and the park is not clear, there is some greenery and we can see Hally arrive and leave on his bicycle.) In Mecca (that is, in the Yale Repertory Theatre production) there is no rain and the window looked out on Helen's "grotesque" sculptures, which were relatively faithful reproductions of the originals and were clearly visible whether lit by sun or moon. Logically, of course, windows like this would not be wise in a desert region. The last thing needed there is passive solar heat.

Fugard considered this set another serious mistake on his part and in discussing it revealed some attitudes towards sets, characters, and audiences.

FUGARD: It'll be fascinating to see what comes out of the

set in terms of the South African production, because I think I'm going to go in a completely different direction. I don't think I'll have any statues at all.

CREAMER: Really? Just refer to them? Why? It isn't economy.

FUGARD: I have got a feeling that that was one of my mistakes. I think those statues and the whole world should have been seen through the characters and not independent of the two actresses. I just think it split the focus of concentration. The next time I'm with Mecca . . . I want more space; going to use space, and as I say, no more statues.

CREAMER: Why do you think you made mistakes?

FUGARD: I think I must say that the focus on what my directing has always been about in the past which, for some reason, I didn't focus on as ruthlessly and/or as brutally this time as I have in the past. In the past, my investment as a director was to be as near 100% as I can make it in terms of telling the story in performance. And that I will add in performance what is needed. A discipline which comes out of my circumstances in terms of working in South Africa--the circumstances being those of a poor theatre. I just never invested in big, extravagant set numbers. I sort of got hijacked by all of these facilities that Yale put at my disposal. In South Africa, now, when I come to terms with Bryceland in the role of Helen, this young South African actress and whoever's going to play Marius, I'll just go to that again: performance. And the story line. Do it with one mirror and one candle.

CREAMER: Really? One candle? Hard to get away with. There are all the references to the glitter . . .

FUGARD: Yes, well, we're going to provide something for audiences to . . . the audience can use their imagination. That's what Theatre's about!

CREAMER: That's going towards a poor theatre again.

FUGARD: I'm going back to my roots. Returning to my roots And I will take with me, from London, a designer; the only designer I've ever used in London, a man called Douglas Heap. He knows how to do nothing!

CREAMER: Heap?

FUGARD: H-e-a-p. He knows how to do nothing. (Int. Fugard, 24 July) [emphases mine]

Fugard's connection to the audience is paramount. I told him of my master's thesis production of People Are Living There. I had produced and directed it in my own small studio with only Black Duvtyl for walls; begged, borrowed and improvised set pieces and props; three baby fresnels and one practical overhead light; and a small tape deck for offstage sounds. I spoke of how an audience readily accepts all of these conventions as long as there is a kind of integrity in the production. He responded, "That's it. That's the way to do it. Makes them into partners." (Int. Fugard, 24 July)

Until Mecca, Fugard's investment in lighting, with the exception of Statements, had also been limited to the functional. Again, we have no evidence of any special lighting for Dimetos, but the requirements of the play--the many different locales, of which there are no detailed descriptions in the text--would lend

themselves to mood as well as function.

Beginning with Hello and Goodbye, lighting was used to delineate the acting space. Sets per se ceased to be required. The privately written plays as well as the collaborative were staged in this manner. The plays created after Hello and Goodbye--i.e., Boesman and Lena, Orestes, Statements, Sizwe Bansi, and The Island--all had acting areas defined strictly by lighting.

The most extravagant use of lighting techniques preceding Mecca was in Statements. Camera flashes and the shining of torches on the naked couple established not only the terror of exposure, but also divided the play into well-defined "scenes." (See Chapter Three.)

In Mecca, the action of the play calls for Helen and Elsa to light numerous candles, which are then increasingly reflected from the many mirrors and the glitter-painted walls, in order to show Helen's "Mecca" to Marius. This is done so that he will understand why she cannot leave it. It calls for very complicated and precise lighting changes. After Marius leaves, Helen puts out the candles and the complex process is reversed. The lighting and extinction of the candles in this case are integral parts of the action. "(From

this point on MISS HELEN goes around the room putting out the candles—a quiet but deliberate and grave punctuation to what follows) -16

Again, this is the only complicated lighting Fugard has used to date; but this had been, of course, required by the playwright! Fugard does have the ability to "separate" from himself as playwright (and as actor) when directing his work. This is a conscious division and one which Fugard developed out of necessity due to both theatrical and political conditions in South Africa.

CREAMER: Somewhere along the line you developed this ability to separate.

FUGARD: Ya.

CREAMER: This is what you do, as you said, as a playwright and director. Once the play is written, you're no longer the playwright. The playwright is dead or he's in Paris, one or the other, and that's a remarkable way to "divorce" yourself. I think most people couldn't do it. When did you find out you could do that?

FUGARD: Necessity! When Zakes and I got together and I had this play The Blood Knot, nobody wanted to direct it. Nobody was interested in it. You know, Jesus! A play about a White man and a Black man; a South African story about Coloreds! If Zakes and I didn't get our number together . . .

CREAMER: Then it wouldn't have gotten together?

FUGARD Then it wouldn't have happened, it wouldn't have happened. It would have happened five years later; ten years later. (Int. Fugard, 24 May)

Fugard then spoke of casting, and his ambivalent feelings regarding his own habitual playing of the major male roles in his work.

FUGARD: Coming out of the totally essential . . . a decision dictated by necessity. And I haven't pushed it. I mean, if it hadn't been for an error in casting on my side with A Lesson From Aloes in South Africa which forced me to go on, I wouldn't have done it. (Int. Fugard, 24 May)

When the play is completed, the first major step in Fugard's directorial method is casting. "It's . . . it's awesome how much of your event--the final event--is brought into the casting." (Int. Fugard, 24 May) As director, Fugard adapted post-Yale productions of Mecca, correcting what he felt were his major mistakes in New Haven. Casting was, perhaps, the major regret. I have already mentioned his disappointment in himself regarding the set, but his harshest self-criticism concerned his casting. Normally, Fugard pretty much hand-picks his cast; and it should be pointed out in his defense that he and Lloyd Richards made an enormous effort to get Actors' Equity to approve Yvonne Bryceland for the Yale premiere, but to no avail. Equity did not consider

Bryceland of star status. (Bryceland later won the Laurence Olivier award for her performance of Helen at London's National Theatre and was subsequently allowed to perform the role in the United States.)

As Frank Rich wrote, "There are no failures of spirit or imagination in 'Mecca,' only mundane lapses of overwriting and miscasting."¹⁷ The extent of Fugard's "confusion" in this case is made clear in the following exchange:

CREAMER: How many did you audition?

FUGARD: For Helen I met with people like Irene Worth; we don't have to audition Irene Worth. I'd a look at Jessica Tandy--you don't audition a Jessica Tandy or a Maureen Stapleton. If you count the people I could audition, I saw seven. I saw, you know, Julie Harris. And I realized that my confusion was the result of knowing where my Helen was and not being able to see it in any of these other people. Maybe for some other director, but not the Helen that I wanted to direct. I was limited in this way and so I thought, "Look, I'm going to try to look out for one thing on that stage, which is the honesty about age. I'm going to find an actress Helen's age to do the role." I think I've learnt a lesson. (Int. Fugard, 24 July)

Fugard continues to work with actors he is familiar with; whose work he knows and who are likely to be old friends. His newest play, My Children! My Africa!--which opened in August, 1989--stars John Kani. When casting Sam in Master Harold Fugard

went directly to Zakes Mokaë:

CREAMER: I read in the Yale Theatre magazine that between doing Blood Knot and Master Harold you hadn't worked with Athol for about twenty-one years. Is that right?

MOKAE: Yes.

CREAMER: Athol came to you because he wanted you to do Sam, right? Did you have anything to say about casting?

MOKAE: No.

CREAMER: He handles it all?

MOKAE: Yeah. If I want to, I might suggest some people. You know, Master Harold was so personal to him that I think he would prefer to deal with it himself. He had written to me, I think just after he had finished it, and he said he had this play and he was going to do it in Alaska or somewhere he wasn't known, and that was about it. So, when he came I was on the road with Lesson from Aloes--we had just finished in New York, so he came down to St. Louis. "I have this play." So we just talked about a couple of things and he gave me the script, and we talked about it the following day.

CREAMER: When did he contact you?

MOKAE: Well, he didn't. I just saw it in the papers.

CREAMER: You didn't know you were doing it?

MOKAE: No. I just saw it in this section--Carol something--you know, there's this section in the Times. . . Carol something. (Int. Mokaë)

In keeping with this aspect of method, Fugard hand-picked

Tom Aldredge to originate the role of the preacher, Marius Byleveld, in Mecca. For the role of Elsa, he saw only a few actresses before settling on Marianne Owen. Fugard was disappointed in the performances at Yale and blamed himself for his lack of ruthlessness as a director, a lapse he connects directly to his abstinence from alcohol. I have written above concerning Carmen Mathews's refusal to wear a wig; and Fugard felt that it was Mathews vanity and his own timidity which were the causes of the failure.

FUGARD: I think, coming out of the fact that it was the first time I was trying to get my number together as a director since I've stopped drinking. I was massively informed with insecurities and I think that that is one reason . . .

CREAMER: I'm speculating again. . . I never met you when you were drinking . . . you talk about the ruthlessness. As a matter of fact it's a word that Lloyd Richards used.

FUGARD: I wasn't really ruthless.

CREAMER: But do you think that the drinking helped you be ruthless?

FUGARD: Oh, ya.

CREAMER: Well, I guess that kind of ruthlessness pays sometimes. There's a better word for it than ruthlessness--it's a positive thing.

FUGARD: Well, see, to be ruthless . . . this I must submit as slightly in mitigation of my lack of it at Yale . . . to be ruthless in a significant and creative way . . . given a trusting relationship. I can be ruthless if I'm directing you, if I know that you can trust me, then I can walk in and say "Fuck it, Richard, not good enough." And know you're hearing me. I never succeeded in establishing a really rock-bottom trust between Carmen and myself. She, as matter of fact . . . and I realize in retrospect . . . came in --day one--with her performance.

CREAMER: With her performance.

FUGARD: Ya. I didn't know that. I wasted time asking her to open. She never opened.

CREAMER: She had her own set idea?

FUGARD: Ya. Walked in day one Marianne had nowhere to go. Tom Aldredge had nowhere to go.

CREAMER: She was the key then?

FUGARD: Of course. I mean, if I put Yvonne Bryceland opposite Marianne . . . Jesus! Yvonne would have challenged Marianne out of her stupor--out of her fucking stupor. Yvonne will spend, if she thinks that's what the role's about, she will do a whole performance with her back to the audience. She's not "publiotropic" in the way that Carmen was. I mean in the way that so undermines American acting. You know, Grotowski came up with the word "publiotropic" . . . you know, heliotropic, the plant turns to the sun? Publiotropic you give the audience your face because that's the source of warmth. Marianne would have . . . I mean, I can accept what people say about Carmen . . . about my directing . . . I always get a little defensive when people talk about Marianne. Of course I'm interested about Tom as well, but Marianne particularly, because Marianne really was not given the opportunity. . . You see, there again my ruthlessness was not operating; knowing that Carmen was locked into her stupid portrayal by virtue

of her vanity. I should have said to Marianne, "Now listen, we're up against a son-of-a-bitch here, but otherwise I'm going to help you. We've got to be subversive here--go outside and find our way around her, because she's standing between you and your line of travel. We'll have to be subversive. (Int. Fugard, 24 July)

The director as guerrilla.

As I stated earlier, Fugard is a recovered alcoholic.

Alcoholism is, in and of itself, problematic, of course; but in his case, it appears that drinking had a profound influence on his directing, acting and collaborative creations. As with many creative alcoholics, the drinking became, to a great extent, ritualized; a necessary concomitant to the completion of the event; an endemic part of the "method." This is not so in regard to his writing, which apparently was a more disciplined process.

The use of alcohol as stimulant and celebrant was ritualized in the earliest days of theatrical endeavor. After the audience ovation at the premiere of Blood Knot, Mokae says, "we drank ourselves into oblivion." (Truths, 47) Gussow reports, moreover, that as Mokae and Fugard toured the production, they "had to keep segregated company, traveling in different train cars; at stops, they would meet and surreptitiously share a bottle of whiskey."¹⁸ And Mokae states again:

On the trains during the tour, Athol would be in the first class and I'd be in second. At the stops he'd buy alcohol, run back to my compartment and give me some. I tried to make him feel rotten, but I'd take it. (Truths, 47)

When working with the Serpent Players, "... they met only once or twice each week, 'always with a couple of jugs of Tassenberg red wine,' Fugard says. 'My name is synonymous with it in Port Elizabeth.'" (Truths, 98)

(The drinking inevitably affected his personal life also. "And drinking myself every evening into a wild, maudlin, emotional stupor so as to fool myself that I really feel The rubbish I talk! And then peeved because Sheila shows her impatience with the drive! I mouth!")¹⁹

The next step in Fugard's method, after casting, is the establishment of a kind of "family" atmosphere within the company. This comes out of his experience in the close-knit working conditions he had in South Africa; he was always in an intimate relationship with his actors; and when beginning work with any new company he insists on personal close ties. These ties were supported by comradely drinking bouts up until Mecca, which is his first play since he quit. He attempts to establish these ties in

what Carmen Mathews dubbed the "pre-rehearsal period." Mathews was particularly enamored of this aspect of method.

MATHEWS: Well, I think the wonderful part about the way he conducted rehearsals is the pre-rehearsal period. In other words, he insisted on all of the family getting together, both in New York and sometimes on my farm in Connecticut, in order for us not only to meet, but also to share being people together--just without being actors together. And so that gave a kind of lovely, fluid sort of ease so that we began rehearsals being quite easy and happy with each other.

CREAMER: So even before rehearsals . . .

MATHEWS: We all had met each other several times.
(Int. Mathews)

Tom Aldredge had met with Fugard personally to discuss background material, but he only attended one "pre-rehearsal" get-together at the Mathews farm. "I went to Carmen's farm once. The play wasn't even discussed. We sat around and had wine and cheese and dinner and just got acquainted, that's all." (Int. Aldredge) Aldredge was impressed by Fugard in the private meetings, because he felt that Fugard wasn't pressing character on him.

CREAMER: When did he start talking to you about character? Before rehearsals, or . . . ?

ALDREDGE: One of the reasons he's a good director . . . he didn't talk to the actor. He talked to me about South Africa, and he answered my questions about that village; what kind of village it was, you know, the Calvinist roots of it and all. He didn't talk to me about Marius, and indeed I wouldn't have asked him about Marius and I wouldn't have listened to him. I wouldn't have welcomed a lengthy discussion of the character of Marius at that point, because there wasn't anything to deal with. (Int. Aldredge)

At their first meeting in New York, Fugard gave Aldredge, who was to play Pastor Byleveld, a gift: "He gave me a photograph of the church in that town." (Int. Aldredge) Aldredge went on to speak of his own approach to character and his firm belief that Fugard "would deal with other actors as they wanted to be dealt with." Fugard deals with actors on a very personal level, sensing their problems and needs and adjusting to them. Note in the following the hint of disapproval from Aldredge regarding the other actors; a suggestion that the "family" was not altogether loving--a condition Fugard would later verify.

CREAMER: You know what I'm beginning to think? It's just him. He doesn't have a particular method. He works with his actors, you know?

ALDREDGE: I'm sure his method varies with the actors he gets. In fact, I know that.

CREAMER: How do you know that?

ALDREDGE: I'm not going to tell you.

CREAMER: Well. I'll find out from somebody else.

ALDREDGE: Right. Right.

CREAMER: Can you give me a hint?

ALDREDGE: No. He definitely works with the material at hand and tries to adjust and to get what he wants through their capacity; through their inclinations; through their talent. (Int. Aldredge)

Working with the material at hand, in his formative years in South Africa, whether that material was people or physical circumstances, laid the foundation for his "family" method. Speaking of The Cell, Wilhelm Grütter states that Circle Players "rehearsed . . . at the Fugards' Bantry Bay apartment, where the sets were also built." (Truths, 13) For Blood Knot

[t]hey began rehearsing at Braes O'Berea, the name of the apartment block in the Hillbrow section of Johannesburg, where the Fugards lived. Because of their worries about neighbors and fear of the police, Mokae sometimes had to sneak in and out of the apartment. It was illegal for him to stay overnight, but he did so anyway. (Truths, 46)

In developing Sizwe Bansi and The Island, John Kani and Winston Ntshona, whose passbooks listed them as Fugard's "servants," worked in Fugard's garage. Again, note the element of political subversion in these rehearsals; the comradeship. Kani recalls:

We joined our hands, closed the garage door and after two weeks, fourteen days, we were on stage in Cape Town
 "Again it was one day with Fugard, six days with us because we can't exceed a certain number of hours visiting a white man. We had an eighty percent contribution. In Sizwe Bansi, he was the overseer. The Island is where we worked directly with him in the creation of the play."
 Fugard says they worked together every day. (Truths, 126)

With Mecca, Fugard was very disappointed with the "family relationships." The "comradeship" was not established.

CREAMER: I was talking to your actors and they talked about the "pre-rehearsal period," which they really liked. Everybody gets together and . . . one big happy family. I imagine that came out of your South African experiences, too, because it was always like a family group?

FUGARD: Ya. And you see, I realized that I'd seen very disparate . . . three people from different worlds. More different worlds is kind of hard to imagine. I mean, Marianne . . . first there was the age difference: Marianne is 30. Tom is . . . and the worlds they come from . . . totally different. Ya, it was an attempt to create something of a little family which was . . . well, significantly successful. Didn't significantly pay off.

CREAMER: Do you normally do this with your casts?

FUGARD: Yes.

CREAMER: You do? This is an old habit?

FUGARD: Yes. You see, I knew that, for example, with these three people . . . something of that developed between Marianne and myself that we may appear in Kavanaugh's having a drink after rehearsal; but then I

knew Tom and Carmen weren't going to be at that table. Now, I had that with A Lesson from Aloes with Jimmy and Harris and Maria [James Earl Jones, Harris Yulin, Maria Tucci]. I had that with Zakes and Danny and Zeljko [Zakes Mokae, Danny Glover, Zeljko Ivanek of Master Harold]. I knew I wasn't going to be able to forge a family here in Kavanaugh's , so I kind of . . . you know, just to get ease. Never paid off in the way I was hoping it would. I mean, I think that they remained three actors . . . ah . . . (long thoughtful pause) centered in their own performances. (Int. Fugard, 24 May)

For Fugard, rehearsals did not end with the day's work in the rehearsal hall. "I always try to drink with the actors, and, in fact, some of the best directing I do takes place outside the theatre."²⁰

As much as, or perhaps more than, the "ease" for the actors, the pre-rehearsal period is a definite need for Fugard himself. It grows directly out of the practical and political conditions of his country. From the earliest times, before and during the period of the Rehearsal Room through his collaborations with the Serpent Players, Fugard nurtured and was nurtured in a close familial atmosphere. It was more than familial at times; it took on the aspect of comrades-in-arms. Recall that many of his closest colleagues and friends were arrested and jailed during these years and he himself, and his immediate family, were in constant jeopardy. It was the closeness and trust that enabled him and the

others to function. Lloyd Richards provided some vital insights into these needs of Fugard as director; needs which also connect directly with Fugard as playwright:

CREAMER: You know, one of the first things I said to Athol was, "If I were to ask you what your method was . . . do you have a method?" And he said, "No."

RICHARDS: Well, method. That means you have codified it. But the fact is, they may not be able to articulate it, but that doesn't mean that someone doesn't work in a particular way. Athol works in a particular way, as he writes in a particular way. So, when you are talking with him as director, you have to keep in mind his own statement, or his own way of working, which is, that as a writer, he has not completed a play until he has completed it as a director. So that's an aspect of method. Is it a writer's method, or is it a director's method? It's an aspect of his pattern of work. Which is why he has been able to function here, and do a play here for the first time, before doing it in South Africa--which has to do with the kind of conditions he needs in which to work. And when you think that all his previous work was done with a company which were very close people, then that provided him with the kind of environment in which he could do what he needed to do, in order to achieve. That, too, is method. That's part of the way one works; and what we've been able to provide for him here is a very reasonable facsimile of that--and extended it in some respects, certainly in terms of the numbers of actors or talents available to him, and the nature of the talents that are available to him technically and otherwise. But it still has to coalesce into a certain kind of environment that makes it possible for him to work. Well, I understand that. It isn't anything one has to say, one finds those things out. And it is an aspect of his own function; his own necessity. It's a method. (Int. Richards) [emphases mine]

Fugard verified this aspect of "completing" the play at a question and answer session for numerous critics and other interested parties after the May 23rd performance of Mecca. He was asked if any other director had been considered for the production. He said, and Richards agreed, that no thought was given to that possibility. Fugard then went on to say that until he directed his work, he did not consider it completed. Just writing the play was not completing the project.

After hand-picking the cast and attempting to establish a "family," what, if any, aspect of method does Fugard bring to the rehearsals, themselves?

Lloyd Richards spoke of the influence of Fugard, the playwright, on Fugard, the director.

RICHARDS: When Athol starts being a director, he doesn't stop being a writer. He doesn't stop being the person who created the piece. He doesn't behave as a writer, he behaves as a director, but he's still the person who created the piece, so he has embodied in him all the little impulses of which the piece came. Athol is a ruthless person; a ruthless human being; ruthless most of all with himself and his own life. And he was described by one critic who I was talking to --I don't know if he ever wrote it--but he said, "You see the bone all the time." So he's willing as a playwright to lay himself bare to the public. Expose. Whatever the truth is, he goes for it. If he mistakes it, he mistakes it, but he's going for it. It isn't the easy

answers. He's not going for easy answers, but the truth. And he carries that into the rehearsal hall with him, so you have here a man who has already gone that distance and who is ready to look at that distance, and it becomes a very compelling thing to reach out to it; to attempt to go that distance oneself, and that is, I think, a special element which doesn't always exist in a person like that. Where you go the distance, and the director is attempting to get you to go the distance like he has already been the distance, and is there. And that has its own effect. He is sensitive to that and compels it, and needs it to fulfill what his vision was, because his vision was total. It's one of the things I feel about him is special; in anyone who is capable of taking that particular thing into rehearsal situations. It's more than just total involvement, it's a total experience. It's . . . he drains himself. He is drained. He is stimulated by being drained. (Int. Richards)
[emphasis mine]

The sensual, even sexual, imagery in the above is evident: "to go that distance," "the director is attempting to get you to go the distance," "he drains himself," "he is stimulated by being drained." The psychologist Abraham Maslow writes of the "peak experience" in the creative attitude:

One main characteristic of the peak experience is just this total fascination with the matter-in-hand, this getting lost in the present, this detachment from time and place. . . . This amounts to a kind of "innocence" of perceiving and behaving. Something of the sort has often been attributed to highly creative people. They are variously described as being naked in the situation, guileless, without a priori expectations, without "shoulds" or "oughts," without fashions, fads, dogmas, habits, or other pictures-in-the-head of what is proper, normal, "right", as being ready to receive whatever happens to be the case

without surprise, shock, indignation, or denial.²¹

To observe Fugard in rehearsal is to witness just this kind of compelling intensity of concentration. He rarely sits still. Although he has established a "base" in the orchestra seats with note pads, pencils, cigarettes, pipes and tobacco, he is almost constantly on the move--pacing from one side of the house to the other, checking sightlines, listening intently.

This total involvement in rehearsal and beyond opening night is not without its personal consequences. I was not able to reach Fugard at his hotel for approximately a week after the opening of Mecca. I had left messages on his answering machine, but the calls were not returned. When I finally reached him he said he had been "recuperating" from the opening. "It's *such* an exposure, Richard."

Actual rehearsals began approximately four weeks before the May opening, but Derek McLane recalls meeting with Fugard and Elizabeth Doyle as early as November of the previous year; it wasn't until February that they "started meeting often; several times a week." (Int. McLane) McLane states the Fugard brought photographs of the real Helen Niemand and talked to them about her and her world, but not about the play. He was still writing it. "Marius was

pretty sketchy at that point. Sure enough, he had one handwritten draft. He didn't show that to us." (Int. McLane)

The meetings were mostly Fugard, Doyle and McLane; and concentrated primarily on set design which I have discussed above. It was decided to leave costuming until rehearsals began, and then just try things on the actors to see how they worked. McLane showed me some sketches, but said the were not really representative of the finished costuming.

McLANE: The way it worked was, we just decided we'd look at something on someone and decide whether we liked it, rather than trying to decide theoretically ahead of time what we liked. And the way it seemed to end up working--and Athol was pretty happy with this--was to try one piece on a person at a time and just sort of gradually build the costume as they were building the character. So, it started with giving Marius a jacket, and giving all the characters some shoes, and then a few days later bringing in a sweater . . .

CREAMER: See how they feel in it?

McLANE: Yeah, see how they look; see if we like it. A lot of times I'd bring something in and it would look fine on the rack, and we'd put it on them and it would look silly, and so we'd discard it.

CREAMER: Had you already done sketches, or were you just playing with things?

McLANE: Well, this was all after the sketching. The sketching was really just so that Athol and I knew that we

were talking about the same people. [sic]

CREAMER: Was this mainly Athol's idea: let's try it a piece here, a piece there . . . ?

McLANE: I think it was mainly my idea and I suggested it to Athol and he seemed happy with it. I don't think either of us had any interest in committing ourselves to anything on paper. The stuff on paper was good because, you know, it sort of promoted a dialogue about the people. When he would look at something--when something wasn't right, he wouldn't really react to it. But when something was on the mark, he'd look at it and go "Yes."

CREAMER: So, really, he knows what he wants when he sees it. (Int. McLane)

This is another example of how little interest Fugard has in keeping records of productions. As McLane said, the costume sketches did not really represent the actual costuming. Also, it indicates Fugard's minimal interest in costuming and his willingness to accommodate the designers as to method in much the way he relates personally to individual actors' methods.

What were the actual rehearsals like? Where and when did they begin? What preparations were made ahead of time? In essence, was there anything "special" in the rehearsal process that was very different from any other director's process? The answer is simply, "No."

Rehearsals began approximately four weeks before opening

and took place in a rehearsal hall on Crown Street in New Haven not far from the theatre. I asked Carmen Mathews about the initial rehearsals:

CREAMER: When you finally got into actual rehearsals, did he have a set all mapped out for you basically; right from the start?

MATHEWS: Oh, my goodness, yes. The set designer already brought, at the first rehearsal, the set design in miniature, so we knew And it was all marked out so that we knew what we were doing. . .

CREAMER: Tape on the floor, is that it?

MATHEWS: Oh, yes.

CREAMER: Actual size?

MATHEWS: Oh, yes. We did sit around a table and just read the play several times before we got on our feet. But, oh my goodness, yes, it was all exquisitely and thoroughly planned before we started rehearsing. As a matter of fact, the costume designer was there that first day and we began even talking about that. (Int. Mathews)

Tom Aldredge remembers "putting it on its feet" on the second or third day. I asked him about blocking:

CREAMER: So then, you read it for a couple of days--and then, what happened when you put it on its feet? Was this blocking?

ALDREDGE: Blocking, that's right.

CREAMER: Did he allow the actors to find their own moves, more or less?

ALDREDGE: Oh, sure. Oh, sure.

CREAMER: Oh, listen. believe it or not, that wasn't the way I was trained.

ALDREDGE: Oh, I know that; me either. My degree's in directing too, from Goodman. Oh, no. You came in with a thesis play, you had to come in with everything blocked; down to every move, every turn and move. (Int. Aldredge)

What of other methods in rehearsal? Note-giving and areas of concentration, for example. Here again, Fugard is not unique:

CREAMER: You're into rehearsal, you finally get it on its feet, he allows you to do your own blocking, more or less, as long as it's functional--this is what most good directors do. Okay. Say in the early days . . . when does he start giving notes?

ALDREDGE: Oh, he gave notes fairly early on. But he never gave voluminous notes. Never gave voluminous notes. Some directors come with page after page after page of notes which means they haven't been paying attention; all they've been doing is writing notes.

CREAMER: Right. But, when he started giving notes, what did he concentrate on, in the early days? Just getting the thing blocked and on its feet and moving so you were comfortable?

ALDREDGE: Well, that's sort of automatic . . .

CREAMER: Anything about relationships?

ALDREDGE: Mostly about relationships. It was clear he didn't want any --I'm just thinking about Marius and Helen

--he didn't want any devious turns of things going on. Everything that Marius says, and Helen, is up front. It's not concealing anything, or hiding anything. They're honest people. Helen's got a first act that she's coming from where she's under the burden of saying no to this man, and she doesn't think she can do it. And Marius comes from the assumption that it's logical that she would want to leave this place. She can't handle it. Her hands have been burned badly, and it's not well-kept, and there's dirt and dust all over the place . . .

CREAMER: Were these the kind of notes that were given then at the early . . . ?

ALDREDGE: Yes.

CREAMER: Just to establish the truth of the situation.

ALDREDGE: Exactly. But don't try to read something into it that's not there. (Int. Aldredge)

In the days that I was privileged to watch rehearsals, this remained the pattern. Fugard pacing around the orchestra, and then going up on stage and giving notes. He asked that I not tape-record the note giving sessions as he feared he would get self-conscious, but I was allowed to scribble away during the sessions with no censorship. Fugard allowed me total freedom to watch, make notes and interview whomever I pleased. He was most accommodating.

The records I have of the note-giving sessions show a concern with many of the technical aspects of the production. It was production week (Mecca opened on May 4 and I arrived in New

Haven on April 25), and many of the technical problems were still to be ironed out. April 25 was the company's first day in the theatre on the set; and, in fact, this was a technical rehearsal. There was a run-through of the first act, and notes dealt primarily with crosses and placement of props. It was pretty much stop-and-go with little opportunity for acting the piece. Some acting notes were given, but of a general order. Marianne Owen (Elsa) was asked to check the dust on the table and to "find spurts of energy." After a break, Fugard called for a cue run-through on the candle lighting in Act Two.

On the evening of April 26, there was a full Tech/Dress rehearsal, and again, many of the notes were either of a technical nature or pertained to slight adjustments in blocking. There was a general discussion with everyone regarding blocking and relationships. An extensive discussion on "candle snuffing" took place. The candle lighting and candle snuffing sequences (recall that these were written into the play as integral parts of the action) were re-run. Both Marianne Owen and Carmen Mathews, during the low-energy re-run, "went up" on lines. Fugard was not upset.

At this point in the production, relationships had already been solidified and most notes were on polishing. Fugard first discussed some lighting problems with William Warfel, the lighting designer, and then he conferred with Carmen Mathews. He was extremely solicitous, asking how she felt. He spoke of Helen's "three peaks in her journey," and how the routes to those peaks had to be interesting. Mathews asked him how her hair looked--did it have the appearance of Karoo dust in it--and he responded that he was interested in her performance, not a wig. I did not realize at the time that he was simply avoiding upsetting her.

He asked for different attitudes and feelings on specific lines. For example, he asked Marianne Owen to make the first reference to trust "tenderer." When Tom Aldredge questioned the value of speaking a certain line at all, Fugard responded in one of his aforementioned favorite ways: "I'll call Paris where the writer's living at the moment." At no time did there seem to be any deep anxiety on anyone's part. The atmosphere was one of quietly intense cooperation.

During the note-giving on the evening of April 27, Fugard asked if there were any unhappiness with the afternoon notes.

There was none. He then announced that "This session ends when you have nothing to say! I call this 'waiting for the play.'" There was a feeling that they had prepared themselves adequately for the visit of an honored guest--the play--and now they could go over their preparations a few more times and hope for the best. Fugard offered them the option of rehearsing the play once or twice the next day and Carmen Mathews opted for twice, "providing it was not 'full-out' in the first." Fugard replied, "You can walk the circuit in the afternoon."

This consideration continued through the final dress rehearsal note session. Then Fugard said, "Last question. Anything the three of you want to do tomorrow? Now?" Mathews said, "Run lines. Tomorrow." Owen said, "Be together." Aldredge said, "Four o'clock." There was a clear sense of professionals cooperating; but not of the desired comradeship. Fugard scheduled a line run-through. To all appearances, this was a close hard-working family of professionals. And Mecca--although it did not, as Fugard, Lloyd Richards and Frank Rich agreed, achieve the author's full vision in this production--was well-received by audiences and by many critics. The depth of Fugard's disappointment, as related

above, did not surface immediately.

I spoke to him regarding the performances. Fugard and I had sat in the Yale theatre green room one evening listening to the performance on the intercom. Marianne Owen's delivery could best be described as acerbic.

CREAMER: I was talking to someone about this the other day—I think it was my acting class at the College of Staten Island, and I told them my feeling was that Carmen and Tom were acting their roles all by themselves; and that Marianne . . . I think Marianne grew. Now, last night's . . .

FUGARD: Was quite jarring.

CREAMER: Ya. I couldn't . . . that wasn't Marianne's way, you know. She wasn't going in that direction. Marianne was the one that was communicating and the others were sort of locked into doing this character; the body, the gestures and everything, but they weren't really talking and listening to each other, you know?

FUGARD: Well, you're absolutely right, Richard.

CREAMER: Maybe Marianne . . .

FUGARD: That's the bitter disappointment to this experience for me. You see, Marianne suffered a lot out there and I've always got to make that qualification in thinking about her performance; thinking about her in relationship to the future of the play is that . . . had she had up there with her an actress who would have addressed herself I mean the one rule I've always had as an actor, whenever I've been up on a stage, was to find my performance in the other actor.

CREAMER: Right.

FUGARD: That's where it is. That's where I'm going to get it.

CREAMER: Right. That communication.

FUGARD: You're going to tell me what my Boesman is. If you're Lena, just by dealing with you as Lena, I'm going to arrive at my Boesman. Let me deal with you as Lena, and I'll find Boesman; Boesman will look after himself. Deal with the other person! Carmen and Tom are the exact reversal of that; never look after Helen, never look after Marius. (Int. Fugard, 24 May)

Fugard's involvement in acting is every bit as personal and intense as his involvement in playwriting and directing. Moreover, besides being "his own best director," he is one of his own best actors and he rarely has been directed by others. I shall consider Fugard as his own actor below.

Fugard continued to give notes during the run at Yale; but, as Aldredge states, they were minor notes. But on opening night and for some days afterwards, Fugard avoided being at the theatre. Aldredge felt that in this respect, Fugard was like many other directors:

CREAMER: He leaves the theatre on opening night. He's not there, they tell me. He just walks out.

ALDREDGE: Yes. That's also the function of the feelings of any director. When opening night comes, the actors

suddenly take the play away from him.

CREAMER: Well, do you think it's the director walking out, or the playwright, or both?

ALDREDGE: Well, all I know is any director feels that way. He's not different in that from any other director. Certainly would feel very alone. It's all out of their hands. (Int. Aldredge)

I have stated earlier that the foundation of Fugard's life work is his writing and that remains true. In an interview for *Playbill* during the off-Broadway run of *Mecca* he was asked which of his three accomplishments--acting, directing or playwriting--he preferred:

"My vanity and conceit would miss acting. If I lost the opportunity to direct, I would miss the camaraderie of the theatre experience. But if you took my writing away from me, I would be like Miss Helen without her art. That would be the end of me. Writing is my soul. Pen, pencil and paper are what I am ultimately about." 22

This echoes an earlier statement: "My involvement with the theatre is, I like to think, a total one, as a director, actor, writer." (Truths, 95) But Fugard had seriously considered giving up acting long before he was forced to take over the role of Steve in *A Lesson From Aloes* in November of 1978. "(Only a few months earlier he had said, 'I think my days of acting are over now. I do not have the discipline to act seriously.)" (Truths, 173) He had not acted in

public since playing Dimetos in Edinburgh in August of 1975, and the lack of discipline was, he told me, directly connected again to drinking. As we spoke of his ability to "separate" writer from director, which was forced on him by the circumstances of South African theatre when he created The Blood Knot, he digressed to the topic of acting:

FUGARD: Then it wouldn't have happened; it wouldn't have happened. It would have happened five years later, ten years later.

CREAMER: So, that's how you developed this ability . . . ?

FUGARD: Coming out of the totally essential . . . a decision dictated by necessity, and I haven't pushed it. I mean, you know, if it hadn't been for an error in casting on my side with A Lesson From Aloes in South Africa which forced me to go on, I wouldn't have done it. I wouldn't have done it there. I mean, I don't push my luck. Now, when I come to doing Mecca in South Africa, it'll be an enormous temptation to think of myself in the role of Marius. But there are a couple of damn good actors there who could deal with that. That is what I will do: go with somebody else.

CREAMER: Well, you know, the first time I saw a rehearsal of Mecca I said, "I think Athol wrote this role for himself."

FUGARD: I did. And now, you know, it's a little bit frustrating. I'd love to get up there and just play that role straight.

CREAMER: You said a long time ago you weren't going to act anymore, and now . . .

FUGARD: Because I was drinking.

CREAMER: Oh, really? That was the reason . . . ?

FUGARD: That's a very important difference.

CREAMER: There's been a big change?

FUGARD: Oh, yeah. I didn't . . . when I did Steve Daniels in Aloes in South Africa, I didn't let the show down. Never! I was impeccable on words. But, I mean, by Jesus, I needed a fearsome quantity of booze!

CREAMER: To go on?

FUGARD: To go on! And I think if I'd have had to stay with the role, something would have gone to hell.

CREAMER: Now, that's one thing . . . I don't mind hoisting a few myself sometimes, but I could never do that. I could never drink and go on stage.

FUGARD: Well, it was the only way . . . the only way I could go out on stage.

CREAMER: Not way back? You're not talking about the early days, really? Have you always needed to drink a little bit, at least, to go on? I was terrified of it. I didn't dare to.

FUGARD: Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

REAMER: Dutch courage, is that what it's called?

FUGARD: Yes! Dutch courage! No, I think that even back in the old days of Zakes and myself in The Blood Knot it was starting to happen. By the time I was doing Boesman and Lena with Bryceland it was kind of well-established. There was a bottle of wine in my dressing room. And this return to do Blood Knot with Zakes--which is possible

because I've stopped drinking--doesn't mean a return to acting. This is a very personal number between Zakes and myself. (Int. Fugard, 24 May) [emphasis mine]

And so, alcohol, which Fugard believes allowed him "a certain creative, provocative, fertile madness" as a director--and which he thinks was an essential element in his directing--became a crutch for him as an actor. In The Guest, a film which he wrote and starred in, Fugard played the role of the morphine-addicted South African poet/zoologist Eugene Marais. Again, the work was personal and metaphorical.

"That is absolutely one of the things that fascinated me, and still fascinates me, about Marais," Mr. Fugard said in a recent conversation in New York. "This man's poetry, his incredible work as a naturalist--and then this dark side, this dark parallel to me. There is this addictive nature in my personality. I'm not known for my self-control; I have virtually none. I've never got to the point of sticking a needle in my arm, but I did reach the point where I had to stand up at an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting in New York and say 'My name is Athol Fugard and I am an alcoholic.' . . . I realized that more appalling than a life without drink was a life in which I did damage to whatever creative gifts I have."²³

"... [s]ince January 1, 1983, he has given up alcohol."

(Truths, 168)

Ultimately, Fugard did play the role of Marius (opposite Yvonne Bryceland's Helen, first at the Spoleto Festival and then

off-Broadway), but not until the play had been performed in South Africa and in London's National Theatre. Since then Fugard has acted in A Place with the Pigs, a two character "personal parable", which he also wrote and directed and which premiered at Yale in 1987.

We spoke of People Are Living There and I asked him to explain his method of work when directing and carrying a major role. Again, it rather smacks of a "non-method," a condition which Fugard found amusing:

CREAMER: Then you did Don, the university dropout, in People Are Living There.

FUGARD: With Bryceland.

CREAMER: Now, you were not university age when you did that. You were closing on forty years old, right? Thirty-seven or something like that?

FUGARD: (laughing) I had no thought of a pledge to that role. I can't tell you that I justified... I tried to... I just got up there on the stage and had a good time with Bryceland. I suppose if anything... I suppose what my Don must have looked like was the ultimate dropout. Somebody who has fled university at the age of thirty. I think that's most probably what it looked like. But I never took it on as a really conceived challenge. I was more concerned with looking after, in the very first instance, Bryceland's Millie. And Shorty and little Sissy.

CREAMER: Who directed that?

FUGARD: I did.

CREAMER: You did direct it, too. That's a little difficult. Don is not a small part. All right, then, that's good. What do you do when you're directing a play in which you have one of the major roles? Do you have somebody stand in for you sometimes so you can see what the picture's looking like, as other directors do, especially in films they do that a lot. Or do you get up there on the stage and do it all?

FUGARD: I do two things. I don't know if this is the right way to do it, but it's what I've done in the past and I suppose in a way, this is what I'll do with Zakes this time around with Blood Knot . . . I say, "This rehearsal's for you. I'll be up there watching, and I'll be being Morrie, but actually I'm not going to . . . this one's for you." And very unselfishly give, in that way, the other actor or actors . . . kind of like three-quarters of the time that I'm in rehearsal. And just occasionally I'll say, "This one's for me." I don't know, it sounds like a very inadequate number, but that is all I have been able to formulate. That's the nearest I can come to a formulation of what I have done in a rehearsal room when I have both directed and acted. Ya. I know it sounds grossly inadequate, but . . . (Int. Fugard, 24 May)

People had been given an earlier production than the one Fugard directed. " . . . Robin Midgley had directed it at Glasgow's Close Theatre, where it opened on March 13, 1968." (Truths, 87)

And before assaying the role of Marius in Mecca, Fugard had directed Tom Aldredge at Yale and Louis van Niekerk in South Africa. Directing others first and being directed (Hello and Goodbye) must have given some advantage to Fugard as actor; but

for the most part--and necessitated by the South African situation--he directed himself while originating major roles he had written: Morrie, Boesman, Philander, Dimetos, Steve Daniels, and Pavel.

To sum up: neither as playwright nor director does Fugard place emphasis on sets, costumes or make-up. He feels, like Grotowski, that extravagant technical devices hamper the audience from becoming, as they should be, "partners." He keeps no records or logs of productions, nor does he do in-depth analyses of the plays (a la Stanislavsky/Curman) on paper. His depth of understanding comes, of course, from writing the piece. Given the luxury of assistants, designers, and other help, he will use them as any other director does. Moreover, his running of rehearsals and subsequent note-giving is in no way unique.

The most unique elements of "method" are his penchant for hand-picking actors with whom he has worked in the past (an element not altogether foreign to many directors); and, most importantly, his insistence on establishing a "family feeling" among the cast. As Lloyd Richards stated, this is more a need of Fugard's than of the cast members. Fugard needs the closeness, the

"cameraderie" of a theatrical family, in order to function fully. As we have seen, with A Road To Mecca he could not accomplish this. In all areas of endeavor, drinking played a major role. It no longer does.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

My involvement with the theatre is, I like to think, a total one, as a director, actor, writer.

Athol Fugard¹

The thrust of this study has been mainly on Fugard as director; but as has been shown, I believe, this function is as inseparable from Fugard's writing and other accomplishments in theatre as his profession is from his life. It would be difficult to name many whose art and personality are so completely integrated. He now directs only his own works, which in turn are metaphors for his own life's progression--his "rites of passage"--and which therefore attain a universality of meaning, although on the surface they are centered in a contemporary, rigid socio-political context of which he is a strong critic. His plays--many of which are investigations into self--are simultaneously condemnatory of a racist regime and are the epitome of subtle propaganda.

A more completely integrated theatre artist does not exist. Certainly there are and have been other contemporary playwrights who have directed their own works with moderate success--Arthur

Miller and Edward Albee, for example—but neither has attained the stunning success rate of Fugard, and neither is an actor.

It is precisely this "seamlessness" in Fugard's life and work which makes it difficult to treat any individual aspect of his career with definitive clarity. I have indicated in the preceding chapters the integration of work and life which has already been pointed out by many other writers on Fugard, most prominently Mel Gussow and Russell Vandenbroucke. But it becomes apparent that, more than Fugard's being a writer using the South African context as metaphor to examine his own life's progression, there is a converse integration: the investigation of his "divided self" as a metaphor for the South African experience. It is an echo of the "unanswerable" conundrum, "Which came first? The chicken or the egg?" Is it Yin or Yan? If Fugard ties his own life experiences completely to the socio-political experience of his country, who is to say which takes precedence over the other? Although most of Fugard's plays begin with an external visual image reflecting South Africa, that image is most often integrated into a personal statement. Is this not a kind of at-one-ment? A total merging of place and man? Mel Gussow wrote in 1982:

Fugard's consciousness as well as his creativity is irrevocably linked with his homeland. For all his rage about the injustices of South Africa, the country is his life support. He returns home for replenishment and sustenance. (Gussow, NYer, 51)²

David Beresford, reviewing My Children! My Africal in 1989,

adds:

A South African morning newspaper last week reported proudly that Athol Fugard had been hailed by Time magazine as "the greatest active playwright in English." A few pages further on a small item recorded that a township mob had lynched a man they believed had murdered a local schoolteacher. A footnote to the story reported, chillingly, that a man was under arrest for the murder of the teacher.

The tribute and the news item were a reminder that South Africa is both blessed and cursed by a prodigious talent and by ongoing tragedy upon which the talent feeds.³ (Beresford) [emphasis mine]

Here we have more evidence of Fugard's divided self. How does a man of conscience feel whose "prodigious talent" is at once diametrically opposed to and heavily dependent on an unfair political system? Except for Dimetos, whose locale is undefined, and A Place with the Pigs, whose small village pigsty is "somewhere in the author's imagination," though certainly in Russia, none of Fugard's plays--collaborative or non-collaborative--have anything but a South African locale.

This attachment to his homeland is echoed in the love-hate relationship of many of his characters: Morrie and Zach; Johnnie and Hester; Boesman and Lena; Gladys and Piet; Piet and Steve; Hally and Sam; and, perhaps the most telling love-hate, that of self--Dimetos and Pavel--those who desert their kind and wallow in guilt and self abuse to the point of madness. Fugard wrote in his Notebooks in August, 1968, "... my life's work was possibly just to witness as truthfully as I could, the nameless and destitute (desperate) of this one little corner of the world." (Notebooks, 172)⁴ Fugard is, of course, neither nameless nor destitute, but he remains desperate.

In July of 1963, while he rehearsed his actors for The Cure, the first production of the Serpent Players, the Special Branch

"burst in. . . . The cast and I took it easily. . . . [I]t would be unfair to say they behaved offensively. . . . Still, I did remember later that he [Du Plooy, head of the local SB] could have taken me away and locked me up for 90 days without any trouble." (Notebooks, 92) [emphasis mine]

It is Fugard's gift that he can bear witness out of his own sense of desperation.

"I would like to believe that in the final analysis I could be described as an honest witness," he told me. "It would reduce me to a state of panic if anybody said to me that in living my life I had ignored something. I would be

so frightened I would run screaming into the night. . . . My country as I experience it, as I think a lot of people experience it, is a situation with final moments. Christ, I'm hurting." He pronounced the word "hoorting"--it sounded like a wail. (Gussow, NYer, 80)

Inherent in the above is the essence of entrapment. Fugard must bear witness; as an artist, he can do nothing else. And so, his two greatest loves--theatre and his country--are also his captors. Love-hate. He cannot survive, either as a man or an artist, without both South Africa and Theatre. The question coming to mind--the unanswerable question--is what would Fugard have done if South Africa had attained to a relatively just social structure twenty-five or thirty years ago?

I stated in my second chapter that Fugard's writing was "the core, the very foundation of his theatrical endeavors," and I maintain that this remains true. However, it becomes clear that his involvement with his plays is not complete until he has directed them (and, often, acted in them); until the "event" is satisfactory to him. He will pursue this completion avidly. As I pointed out in the preceding chapter, in discussing The Road To Mecca, he was very dissatisfied with the Yale production, blaming himself to a great degree, but also Actors' Equity Association for refusing to allow Yvonne Bryceland to originate the role of Helen.

His rage at Equity nearly equaled his rage at himself.

FUGARD: Oh, Jesus! It's just been absolutely Well, you know, I tried to get her for Yale Rep. We mounted a massive case for her there, and after due consideration they turned us down. I said to the Broadway producers, "Well, you can try to get her again, if you think that's possible, otherwise I'm going to where she can work, which is either London--the National Theatre--or South Africa." So, they went to American Equity, and American Equity said, "Well, if you push us, you've got her." So, they phoned me, very jubilant--I was in South Africa--and they said, "Relax, we've got Yvonne." Forty-eight hours later, American Equity turned around and said, "No. Sorry. You haven't got her." Anyway, I felt put off by that because for twenty years my plays have been making quite a contribution to the careers of actors in this country. I've never asked for a favor--my first favor, ever, and it's a favor I ask out of artistic concerns, I mean, the concerns of the integrity of the piece and they turn around and say, "No." Well, I was kind of so upset that when I heard that they'd said "no" again I phoned Lloyd [Richards] and I said, "Lloyd, because of their treatment of Y, I'm not going to submit myself to the humiliation of asking them to let me act, so you can cancel The Blood Knot next year."

CREAMER: When was this?

FUGARD: I phoned Lloyd about two weeks ago and Lloyd was immediately incensed that the situation had driven me to this point, so he got hold of Equity again and spoke to them strongly about it, as a result of which they said to him, "Well, we've agreed to reconsider once again." So now, Yvonne's being considered by them for the third time!⁵

Actors' Equity again turned down the request. So Fugard, needing to "complete the project," went to South Africa and

mounted a production at the Market Theatre, starring his chosen actress, Yvonne Bryceland.

Once Fugard has faith in a play, it never diminishes, and he pursued the completion of Mecca for four years. After the Market Theatre production, he took the play to the National Theatre in London where Yvonne Bryceland won the prestigious Laurence Olivier Award for her performance.

"After she won the Olivier Award," he [Fugard] explains, "it was easier to convince Equity of her star status." The pair sent Equity a photograph of the National Theatre's marquee where Ms. Bryceland's name was prominently displayed, and that convinced the union that she was essential to the play's performance."⁶

Fugard's respect for theatrical unions, however, remains low:

FUGARD: I mean, I tried. I wouldn't be in the dilemma I'm in now with relationship to Mecca if American Equity had been generous enough--but they were just regrettably so . . . whatever is the opposite of generous. I asked them to allow Bryceland to do the play.

CREAMER: They wouldn't let her do this?

FUGARD: Don't talk to me about Equity in the arts. Not just in America, I'm not singling out American Equity. I've had the same fights with British Equity. They're counter-productive. They're not interested in the work. They're not interested in the work.⁷

And further:

FUGARD: You know, apart from myself . . . you know, whatever's said about my own personal situation, I think that they could have bent the fucking rules to accommodate me. One actress, who would in turn have given, when the play came to New York, two other actors and three understudies work. Would have given a stage management--Equity people--work. Which would have got a theatre which is dark, opened and playing and alive. I mean the number of people that don't work, because of that decision. I just find their fucking logic so anti-American actors, because, make no mistake, Yvonne Bryceland has something to teach American actresses.

CREAMER: But she's not a star, they said.

FUGARD: Oh, don't worry. I've just come from a meeting, I'll tell you: I was with the Lorimar people where you have a complete confrontation with British Equity! After an unbelievably complex period we finally managed to cast, for Master Harold, Lou Gossett, Matthew Broderick and a South African actor, John Kani. Lorimar ready; going to shoot in London; going to be a co-production with Yorkshire Television. This morning British Equity turned down--said "no" to Lou Gossett! And that's your problem.⁸

Fugard's faith in his work, plus his experiences in South African theatre (where major impediments to his productions are from government, not unions), have instilled in him a low tolerance for "rules." Because of his integrity to his work, he is always, spiritually, subversive. The following is from a discussion between Fugard, Arthur Miller, Wallace Shawn, David Mamet and an

unnamed moderator:

FUGARD: Can I ask you a question, because I don't know how this system works? You have written a new play, David, and it involves two actors. And we're sick and tired of this whole economic scene; we're sick and tired of producers and the whole machine, but we're going to try and survive in New York. You come to Wally and to me and you say, "Come on, chaps, let's do it." and we say . . .

SHAWN: What a good idea!

FUGARD: "... let's find an attic. Let's put up some lights and let's do it." Is there anything to stop us running?

MAMET: Actually, no. I mean Actors Equity and the fire marshal and so forth would get their hooks into you pretty soon.

FUGARD: How?

MAMET: Well, the first thing they'll do is if I'm not paying you--or you're not paying yourselves--Actors Equity will come and they'll say, you guys are working . . .

FUGARD: All right. So we abandon Equity. We're not going into this as Equity members. We say to Equity, you can have your card back.

MAMET: O.K. So Equity will then say to you, that's fine, but you'll never work again.

FUGARD: O.K. We accept that.

MAMET: O.K. That's great. So then we open up the thing and the fire marshal comes and says, you can't have 12 people here unless . . .

FUGARD: O.K.

MAMET: So then you say, well, we'll just be a club.

FUGARD: Yeah.

MAMET: You could do it.

FUGARD: O.K. O.K. That's all I wanted to know.⁹

In May of 1984 I had mentioned to Fugard that I felt he had written the role of Marius for himself and he said, "I did!" And in 1988 at the Spoleto festival in Charleston, South Carolina, Fugard first played Marius opposite Yvonne Bryceland's Helen, and went on to play the role throughout the off-Broadway run at the Promenade Theatre. Frank Rich, writing in the New York Times, although still somewhat critical of the play, felt that:

While as seemingly slender in polemical effect as its heroine's sculptures, "The Road to Mecca" is its author's most personal play to date, an essential Rosetta stone for the entire canon. The production, impeccably staged by the playwright, beautifully designed (by John Lee Beatty and Dennis Parichy) and, for the most part, superbly acted, is a huge improvement over the work's botched premiere at the Yale Repertory Theater in 1984. [emphasis mine]¹⁰

Everything about the New York production was a "huge improvement" over the Yale production, and Fugard can be said to have truly completed the project. (It was Frank Rich who had complained of "mundane lapses in casting"¹¹ in his review of Yale's

1984 production, not knowing of Equity's role.)

But in Fugard's "most personal play to date," does the South African context provide a metaphor for his life, or is his life a metaphor for South Africa? Recall Jack Kroll's assertion, which I quoted in Chapter Two, that in Mecca, "... Fugard subjects himself to merciless triple fission: he is the balked rebel Elsa, the iconoclastic artist Helen and the Calvinist Marius." (endnote 41, Ch. 2) In life, Fugard has at one time or another played each of these roles, and they represent cultural, political and philosophical factions of his society. All of these elements are embodied in himself. His art as a playwright rests in his ability to develop these elements into three three-dimensional characters--no good guys; no bad guys. Where are the seams? Where does the man end and the playwright-actor-director begin? Or vice-versa?

As director, Fugard approaches actors as equals in the creative process and, since he is often an actor, this includes himself. Except in those rehearsals where he employs the "this one's for you, this one's for me" process, there are no lines of demarcation. A production becomes an organic process; not rigid or

conforming to previous "rules." Each contributor involved--Fugard as director/actor, other actors, designers, costumers, producers, etc.--is equal as the piece evolves, just as Fugard as playwright/director is equal. The play itself guides them all.

Moreover, with each new group of actors, the "method" is adapted:

"Every actor has to be dealt with in terms of a different vocabulary or chemistry," he said. "There are some actors who need to get their heads sorted out before they can get their emotions sorted out. Others need to get their emotions sorted out before they can get their heads sorted out. Some actors do not want to hear words from the director; they like sign language. I discover an approach in the course of rehearsal. I always try to drink with the actors, and, in fact, some of the best directing I do takes place outside the theatre." (Gussow, 84)

Except when met with the "publiotropic" actor, Fugard is capable of, had developed to, a kind of method: the ability to sacrifice his own ego as playwright/director to the needs of the play. This ability to divide himself, more than anything else, may account for his outstanding success ratio in directing his own works.

Fugard is, to some extent, a Zen Buddhist (and a romantic, as we have noted); and recognizes a kind of mysterious,

inexplicable energy in his creativity.

"The whole business of writing has become so precise, so accurate," he said. Like a painter or--the comparison he prefers--a carpenter, he chooses his instruments with care: a specific quality of paper, the special blend of ink, and a single pen to suit his purpose. "I always knew that writing was eventually going to end up a little bit of a Zen experience for me," he went on. "I don't think so much about content anymore as about the sheer sensual pleasure of watching words go down on paper. . . . One pen writes a play, and I think it's slightly adulterous if you take a pen and write another play with it. After it writes a play, it's retired from writing plays. A little delicate, modest, totally unassuming Parker, so simple it looks like nothing, wrote 'Master Harold.'"

"You wrote it," I said. "The pen didn't write it."

"Well, a Zen artist would disagree," he said.
(Gussow, 89)

Along with this mystical "faith" comes, of course, a certain element of non-control; and with that, the terror of "loss of creativity." As Helen, Fugard's artistic surrogate in Mecca, explains to Elsa why she has not created the "moon-mosaic" they had talked about months earlier:

. . . I can't see it clearly enough yet to start work on it. I've told you before Elsie I have to see them very clearly first . . . they've got to come to me inside like pictures . . . and if they don't, well all I can do is wait . . . and hope that they will. I wish I knew how to make it happen, but I don't. I don't know where the pictures come from. I can't force myself to see something that isn't there. I've tried to do that once or twice in the past when I was desperate

but the work always ended up a lifeless, shapeless mess.
If they don't come all I can do is wait . . . which is what I'm
doing. (Mecca, 16)¹²

I have considered Fugard's works, especially the non-collaborative, as representative of the playwright's own "rites of passage" as he examines his life. After Mecca he wrote A Place with the Pigs, which he subtitled "A Personal Parable," and his latest, My Children! My Africa! Although neither was written when I began this study, I will touch on them to point out the consistencies in inspiration, structure and devices which continue to be hallmarks of the Fugard style. (Although Children is very propagandistic, it was apparently, like Pigs, non-collaborative.) Pigs is based on a true story of a deserter from the Russian army in World War II (See Chapter Two, p. 217), and I have speculated that this is Fugard's "confession" that he pursued his theatrical career--committed to his art--while some of his countrymen suffered under a tyranny. It is true, nevertheless, that he, perhaps more than any other South African literary artist, brought the horrors of apartheid through very gut-level experiences to the attention of the world; and that, again more than any other South African artist, worked hand-in-glove with oppressed peoples in close and comradely relationships, helping them to express their

frustrations and rage in a most effective manner. Moreover, he sometimes helped create vehicles which, while exposing the injustices of his country, were geared to help friends to successful careers in theatre. (My Children! My Africa is dedicated to John Kani who originated the leading role in the play, and to Fugard's daughter, Lisa, who creates the role of the White schoolgirl in the New York production. "I wrote it with them in mind hoping that they would take the roles," said the 57-year-old playwright . . . ")¹³ But it remains that, however many stones David has accurately slung, Goliath still lives, and this must cause David much agony.

There is little information and no script available at this time for Children, and the methods Fugard used in directing the work are unknown outside of the rehearsal room; but the work appears to be--as are Sizwe Bansi and The Island, for example--decidedly propagandistic. However, the material available--reviews and an interview with John Kani--suggest strongly that the art of Fugard raises the level of this propaganda above the usual. Although Kani is quoted as saying, "You can't always play the hero. You have to play the villain,"¹⁴ there is evidence that his character, Mr. M, has decided ambiguities which

raise the character above the merely "villainous." Mr. M becomes apparently, in the course of the play, a collaborator. It is important to note that he is not an habitual collaborator; far from it. He is a dedicated and inspiring teacher:

He is, in his own words, "an old-fashioned traditionalist" whose life-long dream has been to find "that one special pupil, that one eager and gifted young man into whom he can pour all that he knows and loves and who will justify all the years of frustration in the classroom." That young man has at last been found, in the person of Thami Mbikwana In the promotion of Thami's gifts Mr M has teamed up with Isabel Dyson . . . , a white schoolgirl from the nearby town; together they hatch a plan to win Thami a scholarship by entering a local inter-schools quiz. The plan is thwarted by the onset of the 1984 townships' rebellion and the attendant schools boycott. Thami identifies with the "comrades," turns (hesitantly) on his old teacher who "informs" to the police and the play moves to an awful climax as an un-comradely lynch mob performs an "unrest-related incident." (Beresford, Guardian 8/27/89)

Note that "informs" above is in quotes, suggesting the author's own questioning use of that term as applied to Mr. M's actions; and note further that Christopher S. Wren, in the New York Times article on Kani, writes that Kani "perceives of Mr. M. as a collaborator, however unwitting, with the white minority government." ¹⁵ (Wren, 8) [emphasis mine] The strong implication is that Mr. M, like so many in South Africa, Black, White or Colored,

is a victim. He is neither hero nor villain, regardless of Kani's opinion, and his "unwitting informing" suggests an ambiguity in character; a divided nature. Fugard has never written stereotypes.

"I can remember a very interesting and slightly bewildering chat I had with Nadine Gordimer about 'A Lesson from Aloes.' She saw it at the time when her novel 'Burger's Daughter' was about to appear. She said, 'What sort of hero is Piet Bezuidenhout? Wait until my novel comes out and you'll see what a hero really is.' I wasn't writing about a hero. I was writing about a victim. I've never written about a hero. I don't understand heroism. . . ." (Gussow, 90)

With only this limited material on the play, it is still easy to recognize the "Fugardian" techniques in full flower: ambiguity of character; victims victimizing victims; a play based on a true incident with neither heroes nor villains; insidious racism; characters interdependent on one another (though not related by blood) in pursuit of a precious goal; ultimate separation. This is Fugard's first privately written work of propaganda since No-Good Friday; and, like that play only, it ends with the death of the protagonist.

As with Mecca, the inspiration for the play and the actual writing and production are very close in time. Although the specific incident on which the play is based is not clear, the plans

for Thami's scholarship are "thwarted by the onset of the 1984 townships' rebellion and the attendant schools boycott." (Beresford)

Fugard seems no longer to be dependent on old entries in his notebooks. His own realization, quoted in Chapter Two, p. 116, that "... the completion of a work has always depended on a correspondence, a relevance, between the external specifics of the play ... and my sense of myself at the time," becomes more significant when one considers that all three of his last plays have concerned incidents very close in time to the completed event.

Between Mecca and Children, Fugard wrote the aforementioned "personal parable," A Place with the Pigs. The idea for and the actual production of this work are apparently very close in time. The following is from an interview with Steve Kemper:

You said the last time we talked that Master Harold was and act of introspection. It struck me that his play is a further step in that direction.

You're absolutely right.

I'm wondering --

Where's it going to lead? Oh, I suppose to a one-act play with me sort of in a john or someplace like that, talking to myself.¹⁶

Although based on one Pavel Navrotsky, "a deserter from

the Soviet army in the Second World War, who spent forty-one years in hiding in a pigsty," (*Pigs*, n.p.)¹⁷ this incident becomes a metaphor for Fugard's own life, and interestingly, is Fugard's only play which may truly be called "Absurdist." Interestingly, but not surprisingly. Fugard remains a devotee of Camus and Beckett, and is an existentialist. That *Pigs* bears considerable resemblance to Beckett and/or Ionesco is not at all surprising. (*Krapp's Last Tape* was once performed by Fugard on short notice in an emergency situation under Barney Simon's direction. Simon called Fugard's work "a breathtaking performance." [Truths, 97])¹⁸ Moreover, as stated in my Chapter Four, p. 274, Fugard considered himself "most successful" directing Beckett's works.)

Fugard had told me (see Chapter Three, p. 234) what he had been able to accomplish that Grotowski hadn't: "relate those experiments . . . of his by way of tapping the actor's creative potential related to an input from a writer." And in *Pigs*, Fugard accomplished what Beckett and Ionesco haven't: grounded an essentially absurdist event in strict reality. *Pigs* is at once absurdist; metaphorical of Fugard's own life; metaphysical--dealing with man's relationship to the universe, à la Beckett; and

social--dealing with man's relationship to society, a la Ionesco. It is at once absurd and true, as is life--as any existentialist will tell you.

As with Absurdist drama (and nearly all of Fugard's works) the plot of Pigs is slight: Pavel Navrotsky, a deserter from the Russian army in World War II, plans to turn himself in on the 10th anniversary of the end of the war. He has spent that ten years hiding in his own pigsty, cared for only by his wife. At the last moment he loses faith in the "[c]ompassion and forgiveness. . ." (Pigs, 10) of his fellow men and remains in the sty while his wife goes to ceremonies where he is awarded a medal, which she brings to him with pride. Except for one brief excursion from the sty disguised as a woman, and at night when the town is asleep, he does not leave for another twenty years. At the end of the play, in a defiance much like that of Berenger in Ionesco's Rhinoceros when he refuses to join the "herd," Pavel drives the noisy pigs out into the night and, in determining to surrender himself up for punishment, finds himself at last. As in Rhinoceros, the sound of the unseen beasts provides an almost constant background to the action. However, Berenger is evidently defeated by the beasts and

the play ends in cacophony as "a huge cut-out rhinoceros drops in from the flies . . . -¹⁹ (Rhin., 89) Pigs ends on a positive note in a peaceful, church-like silence as Pavel and Praskovya finally leave their mutual prison.

Like Beckett's Endgame, Pigs is essentially a two-character play in which one character is trapped and embittered and is in turn cared for by another who, because of that responsibility, is also trapped and embittered. (The similarity to the South African context is evident.) In both plays there is an apparent love/hate relationship, or at least a strong interdependence, and much talk of life's vicissitudes and responsibilities. Compare the opening lines of each:

CLOV: (fixed gaze, tonelessly):

Finished, it's finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished.

(Pause.)

Grain upon grain, one by one, and one day, suddenly, there's a heap, a little heap, the impossible heap.

(Pause.)

I can't be punished anymore. ²⁰

In Pigs, although Pavel is more Hamm's counterpart than Clov's, the theme of punishment is paramount and Pavel's rage is immediately presented:

PAVEL: 'Comrades, Pavel Ivanovich Navrotsky is not dead. He is alive. It is he who stands before you. I beg you, listen to his story and then deal with him as you see fit. Comrades, I also beg you to believe that it is a deeply repentant man who speaks . . .' (He can hardly hear himself above the noise from the pigs. He speaks louder.) ' . . . that it is a deeply repentant man who speaks these words to you . . .' SHUT UP! (He grabs a stick and rushes around the sty, lashing out at the pigs.) Silence, you filthy bastards! I want silence!

Silence! Silence!

(Squeals and then a slight abatement of noise. PAVEL returns to his speech.)

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

(The pigs are starting up again. PAVEL goes to a door.)
(Pigs, 1-2)

Pavel call to his wife, Praskovya, counterpart to Clov, and immediately berates her for not feeding the pigs. This relationship, Pavel dominant over a surly Praskovya, echoes the Hamm/Clov relationship exactly, except Praskovya's commitment to Pavel is clearer, she being obliged (in this "real" world) by her duties in a traditional marriage.

At the close of Endgame, Clov is "dressed for the road. . . .

He halts by the door and stands there, impassive and motionless, his eyes fixed on Hamm, till the end." ²¹ (Endgame, 82) Like Vladimir and Estragon at the end of Godot, neither Hamm nor Clov can (or will) leave. However, Pavel and Praskovya, at the close of Pigs "... leave the sty." (Pigs, 40)

I have already noted that Boesman and Lena was a study of Fugard's relationship and guilt about "trapping" his wife, Sheila Meiring, in South Africa. If Pavel and Praskovya are again surrogates for Fugard and Meiring, what do the pigs represent? Continuing with my theory that Fugard's plays have been progressive examinations of his own life's "rites of passage," could not the pigs represent the old guilts and ghosts of his past? Burdens of conscience which he succeeds in driving out at last?

Supportive of that theory, the final scene, Scene Four, which is mostly an extended monologue by Pavel, echoes images and themes from many of Fugard's earlier plays. It is reminiscent of Johnnie's extended speech in the opening of Hello and Goodbye in that it is an attempt to ward off total insanity and is therefore full of strange images and word play. Pavel is struggling to stay awake, fearing that if he sleeps another night in the sty, "that will

be the end of it." (Pigs, 34) In his struggle to stay awake he tells himself a story, much like Dimetos's story of the man dreaming he was a horse: "Once upon a time, in a small village, there was a very very stupid man who woke up one morning and decided that he wanted to be a pig His feet turn into trotters," (Pigs, 34) as in Dimetos's dream the man's hands turn into hooves.

He does fall asleep, however and, snapping awake, is consumed by guilt and regresses to childhood fears of father. "... I think Daddy should take off his belt and drag you out from under the bed and give you a bloody good thrashing!!" (Pigs, 34) After father, mother appears in his thoughts:

... Can you even remember why you betrayed your country and its people? A pair of slippers. (Heavily sarcastic tone of voice.) A pair of pretty red slippers which dear old Mama made for her darling little Pavel.

DON'T drag my mother into this! Say anything you like about me but leave my mother alone!

What do you mean 'leave her alone'? Giving birth to you makes the old bitch an accomplice in all your treachery. (Pigs, 35)

Compare this to the brothers' chasing off the imaginary old woman while game-playing in The Blood Knot:

ZACHARIAH. So she must go.

MORRIS. I think so, too. [A step in the direction of the old woman.] Go away.

ZACHARIAH. Is she moving?

MORRIS. No [Trying again.] Go away, old one! Begat and be gone! Go home! [sigh.] It's no use.

ZACHARIAH. [TRYING TO SCARE HER OFF]. Hey!

MORRIS. [excited] She jumped! Ha ha. She jumped!

ZACHARIAH. Voetsek

MORRIS. Another jump. [Zachariah goes down on his hands and knees.] What are you doing?

ZACHARIAH. Stones.

MORRIS. Hooooooo! She heard you. She's trotted off a little distance. But you're not really going to use them, are you?

ZACHARIAH. It's the only way [Throws.]

MORRIS. Almost. [Zachariah throws again.] She jumped!

ZACHARIAH. Voetsek!

MORRIS. Yes. Voetsek off! We don't want you!

ZACHARIAH. Bugger off!

MORRIS. You old bitch! You made life unbearable!²²

All of this echoes the existential position that human suffering is a kind of punishment for the "crime" of "having been born," and similar sentiments are repeated in Waiting for Godot , Hello and Goodbye and The Road To Mecca. The poignant,

melancholy quality of this statement takes on more than philosophical weight when one considers this excerpt from Fugard's

Notebooks:

Last night, just as we were falling asleep, a scream of terror from the little girl (1-1/2 years) in the next flat--then the angry bitter voices of her parents. They were having another fight I thought of that family, locked together in their two small rooms, in each other's arms, each other's blood, the one bed, hating and loving--and with time hating more and more If there is one story set in Bird Street that I would like to write, it is that one. Myself (the writer) with my family--and the family next-door, fighting themselves out to the death. . . . One night--I almost say inevitably--came the moment when I was present at one of these fights.

There was a knock at the door. Mrs B. Stood there panting heavily, red-eyed. 'Please, Mr F . . . , will you call the police?'

'What's he done?'

'Just call the police, please. I can't go on' Her lips started trembling. 'I can't go on. I've had enough of that bastard.' She was crying now.

'Did he hit you . . . ?'

Yes. I know the backstreets. I know the sound of the fight--with a drunk husband, naughty children, no money--and yourself. Finally--that most terrible of all adversaries--yourself, and why? Maybe as Mrs B. said one night: 'For having been born.' (Notebooks, 57-58) [emphasis mine]

Unlike the final entrapment--the unchanging world of the Beckett plays or the total defeat in Ionesco's--Fugard ends Pigs on a positive, if oxymoronic, note: "It's a crooked fate that ties up a

man's freedom and his surrender in the same bundle, but I've got no choice." (Pigs, 39) How is this resolution accomplished? Pavel, as the commissar (not game-playing now, but a true personality split), orders himself to release the pigs to their freedom. And Pavel, the good soldier, obeys out of sheer exhaustion, in a desperately funny culmination of the monologue:

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

(Back to his mirror)

Then do it, Pavel.

Now?

Yes. Now! What are you waiting for?

All right, all right. Hold your horses while I think about my pigs. Your suggestion might be simple, but that doesn't mean it's easy. It involves me ending a relationship that has survived decades of filth and nonsense and mutual abuse. I can't just turn my back on it and walk away as if it all meant nothing.

(Laughing at himself in disbelief) My God, Pavel, you're amazing! You're up to your old tricks, aren't you? You're stalling for time. Yes, we've caught you at it again . . . backing away from the moment of decision and action. Well, it has got to stop! You are going to do it and you are going to do it now. Open the doors, open the pens and let them go. That's an order.

All right. All right. (Pigs, 36)

He does so. It is reminiscent of Berenger's final refusal to join the herd in the closing scene of Rhinoceros. Pavel opens the doors and the pens and "The pandemonium rises to a powerful

climax as the animals stampede” Unlike Rhinoceros, the herd is small and disappears in the distance as Praskovya enters. “A few stunned seconds as the two of them listen to the virginal silence in the sty.” Praskovya and Pavel then respond much as Milly and Don did in People Are Living There:

PRASKOVYA: (Suppressed laugh but still whispering) I think there's something wrong with me. You've just chased our livelihood out into the night . . . our only source of income . . . our one and only security . . . we sit here on the brink of ruin and all I want to do is laugh. What about you?

PAVEL: I feel nothing.

PRASKOVYA: Well, I'm sorry, but I can't help it . . . I want to laugh.

PAVEL: Go ahead:

PRASKOVYA: You don't laugh in church, Pavel.
(But she does so all the same. PRASKOVYA has a long, side-splitting silent laugh at themselves and their ruination . . . gestures to the open doors, the empty pens, themselves . . . 'All is kaput' . . . etc. etc. Her laugh is infectious. Exhausted as he is, PAVEL manages a faint flicker of a response.)
And now I want to cry.

PAVEL: Go ahead. You're allowed to do that in church, aren't you?

PRASKOVYA: Oh, yes . . . and as loud as you like (Pigs, 37-38)

Note the subtle swipe at the essentially morbid religious

establishment; a morbidity common to both South Africa and Russia, whether the religion is Christianity or an economic system. This "backhand" comment delivered almost as an afterthought is evidence, once again, of Fugard's growing success in his striving for economy. Pigs is a personal parable, and like Statements after an Arrest Under the Immorality Act, is Fugard's most successful attempt at his desired economy. It is perhaps telling that the premiere of his next work, the propagandistic My Children! My Africa!, was reported to have run "nearly three hours" (Beresford)

There are many other similarities between Pigs and previous works: Fugard always attempted "to understand the possibility of affirmation in an essentially morbid society" in his studies of women, and Pavel's first real attempt at escape is when dressed as a woman; there is also, as in Statements, totally justified nudity as an insane Pavel strips off his clothes and leaps in the pig pens in order to become one with the beasts; the importance of clothing to man's sense of dignity is, as in Blood Knot, considered when Praskovya reveals to Pavel that she has been cutting up and using for dust rags his old army uniform which he

wanted to surrender in, and offers him, instead, his wedding suit which he dons at the play's end. If, as Frank Rich wrote, Mecca is "an essential Rosetta stone for the entire canon,"²³ then Pigs may be the essential Rosetta stone for the entire man. As Mecca stands as a kind of summation of his work, so Pigs is a summation of his life.

Writing of Piet (Aloes) in his Notebooks, Fugard says: "Piet face-to-face with himself . . . the absurdity of himself, alone. 'A man's scenery is other men.'" (Notebooks, 141). Pavel in Pigs, says, "... I'm homesick, Praskovya, for other men and women." (Pigs, 39) Either quotation exemplifies Fugard's own connection to humanity; and I have shown how, in all his theatrical endeavors and especially in meeting his responsibilities as director, this deep connection to people is essential. His directing techniques grew out of, and are still vitally connected to, the South African milieu in which he grew as artist and man. It is vital to understand that it was the deprivations in that society which led directly to Fugard's dependence on the bare essentials required to "tell a story." In Fugard's case, the South African government is being "hoist with [its] own petard."

Because they made it essential to work as a kind of guerrilla, these deprivations led to the development and production of plays based in comradeship; establishment of working relationships closer than that of many families. This relationship is the most comfortable for Fugard and he attempts to establish a similar one with all parties involved in the completion of the "event," whether in Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, New York City, New Haven or elsewhere. It is just such a comfortable environment which Lloyd Richards consciously provides at Yale. Richards considers this environmental need, "... an aspect of [Fugard's] own function; his own necessity. It's a method."²⁴ (Int. Richards)

Hardship very often makes for strong friendships and cooperation in a struggle. In the early years, just finding a space to rehearse was a major problem and often rehearsals took place in the Fugard's apartment or garage. Often the rehearsals were, in and of themselves, "crimes," and connected occurrences certainly were. For example, Zakes Mokae often stayed overnight at the Fugard apartment while rehearsing Blood Knot, a blatantly illegal act. The techniques of "plotting" the event around a table, in secret, and/or "rehearsing" it over drinks in the night obviously grew out of the

essentially subversive condition in which the "comrades" were forced to work. Frequent raids by the Special Branch of the police, including the raid on the Fugard home and the reading of Mrs. Fugard's poetry (which may have precipitated her nervous breakdown, like Gladys in Aloes) and the regular arrests of company members on petty charges, solidified the companies even more and led to some interesting ploys:

For a long time, "Sizwe" did not exist on paper. Fugard, Kani, and Ntshona had made up the lines and the actors had memorized them--a maneuver that was partly cautionary, to prevent any intrusion by civil authorities. When the Special Branch asked to see a script, it was told, truthfully, that none existed. Fugard compares this measure to the period in Russia when dissidents such as Anna Akhmatova and Osip Mandelstam learned each other's poems and passed them on orally in lieu of publication. (Gussow, 75)

Scouting for space to rehearse and perform and scrounging--begging and borrowing lighting equipment, etc., and therefore "making do" with whatever was available--led directly to simplification, not only in the writing of the plays, but also in production and direction. Possibly a less positive result of this was the relegating of set design and make-up and costuming to a position of almost no importance. Although this may have led to

more innovative playwriting on Fugard's part, it also created a mild disdain in his mind for the technical elements of production.

This need for comradeship was the basis for the only truly unique method of Fugard's directing: the establishment of a "family atmosphere" between company members. To this end, Fugard, when working with people with whom he is not already very familiar, insists on a "pre-rehearsal" period of get-togethers, dinners, etc., in order to create this closeness.

Drinking, of course, is nearly always an inevitable side result of such relationships, alcohol being used as a kind of anesthetic, at least. For Fugard, as for many other artists, alcohol became intimately connected with creativity and even became an essential ingredient in that creativity. I have written of Fugard's dependence on alcohol to engender a "certain creative madness" as director in the rehearsal room and as an inevitable crutch for Fugard, the actor. I have also stated how this drinking became ritualized in the early years, not only because of the role model his father provided, but due to his years as a merchant seaman and the pressures of creating theatre under the difficult strictures of the Nationalist government. The ritualization of "creative drinking,"

drinking as even an inherent part of the writing "discipline," is present in the earliest years:

Throughout most of Fugard's career, he has created a daily routine for his writing. . . . "By noon, I've finished my morning session and Sheila's finished her morning session, and we sit in the shade of one of our trees, drink a little bit of white wine, and watch the birds. That's all the drinking I do until Charles Frodsham says it's six o'clock and I can have my one whiskey and a couple of carafes of red wine and supper. . . ." (Truths, 167, 168)

So, more than just as director and actor, alcohol informed (to use one of his favorite terms) his writing to a great degree. Perhaps without the influence of alcohol, he would not have had the courage to "expose" himself so ruthlessly in his plays. The relatively moderate drinking while writing gradually increased, as is usual with any drug addiction, and became both a creative spur and a major personal problem:

For a playwright like Athol Fugard, an alcoholic who stopped drinking in 1983, one of the hardest parts of abstinence was giving up the liberating effect of liquor. Anyone who saw "Master Harold" . . . and the boys," a self-lacerating memory play, can well imagine how an alcohol-fed melancholy helped Mr. Fugard touch the old wounds that underlie the work. "When I was writing a play," Mr. Fugard recalls of his old process, "I would start drinking after sunset and then fairly steadily into the night. And that last carafe of wine at night--that spell of wildness--was when I would set up the ideas that I'd work

on soberly the next day."

By the time Mr. Fugard began work on the follow-up play to "Master Harold," "The Road to Mecca," he had stopped drinking. The prospect of writing without alcohol was terrifying. "Mecca' was hard for me because I didn't have that moment of madness at night, he said. "I had to ask myself, could I still get into my dark side? Could I still put my dark side forward without the aid of a drug? And, obviously, alcohol was a powerful drug for that.

Nothing I could do could replace it. I've found other things--running, biking, Buddhist mantras. And maybe my art now will be more about light than dark."²⁵ [emphasis mine]

And, indeed, both Mecca and Pigs, as stated above, have up-beat, positive endings. My Children! My Africa does not; but again, this is a work of propaganda, based in an all-too-brutal reality.

Beresford wrote that a "... more Fugardian title [for Children] would perhaps have been An Unrest-Related Incident . . .," (Beresford) but I believe that Fugard's choice of title is an accurate, profound and aptly personal statement by a fully matured artist of "prodigious talent." The words, "My Children! My Africa!" complete with exclamation points, read like a cri de coeur. Perhaps this is meant to represent the feelings of the protagonist of the play, Mr. M; but on another level, could it not be the cry of the playwright? Fugard has, after all, in the face of overwhelming odds, been a most powerful voice against apartheid. He has, in

spite of political and personal obstacles, created a body of work which not only brings to the world a heartwrenching view of injustice, but at the same time (and within the same vehicles), he has come to know himself as few men ever do; and it is precisely this investigation into self which has made his work universally recognizable to other men. It is not pretentious to speculate that, because of this universality, Fugard's works will live as vivid and exciting theatre long after the Nationalist Government of South Africa is no more.

In the May, 1984 interview with Fugard, I asked him in passing if he had ever read Thoreau's Walden. He said that he had not, and that it was a long overdue appointment. I presented him with a copy at our next meeting, in July of that same year. I next spoke with him after a performance of the Broadway Blood Knot in 1985, when he expressed his gratitude to me for introducing him to Thoreau, and said that he had been invited to speak at Georgetown University on which book had most influenced his life. He chose to speak on Walden. This was, at first, surprising since he had become familiar with it so recently; but taken in light of his similar late discovery of Grotowski, it makes more sense:

Fugard has frequently expressed his debt to Grotowski, although he has never seen any of Grotowski's productions. He sometimes leaves the impression that Grotowski was a startling revelation, and the subsequent plays such as Orestes, Sizwe Bansi, The Island, and Statements were entirely due to that influence. This is simply not so. Fugard was not transformed like Saul on the road to Damascus. Grotowski was not a prophet of a new theatrical religion different from the one Fugard was already practicing. Rather, he was an envoy whose message Fugard was predisposed to accept because it was so similar to his own.²⁶

I have been speculating that many of Fugard's works were investigations into self and represent a kind of excursion through universally recognizable "rites of passage." Perhaps Thoreau, like Grotowski, was "an envoy whose message Fugard was predisposed to accept because it was so similar to his own."

What does Africa,--what does the West stand for? Is not our own interior white on the chart? black though it may prove, like the coast, when discovered. Is it the source of the Nile, or the Niger, or the Mississippi, or a Northwest Passage around this continent, that we would find? Are these the problems which most concern mankind? Is Franklin the only man who is lost, that his wife should be so earnest to find him? Does Mr. Grinnell know where he himself is? Be rather the Mungo Park, the Lewis and Clark and Frobisher, of your own streams and oceans; explore your own higher latitudes,--with shiploads of preserved meats to support you, if they be necessary; and pile the empty cans sky-high for a sign. Were preserved meats invented to preserve meat merely? Nay, be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new

channels, not of trade, but of thought. Every man is the lord of a realm beside which the earthly empire of the Czar is but a petty state, a hummock left by the ice.²⁷

The cans piled sky-high by Fugard are his plays. It is an easy matter to compare aspects of Fugard very favorably with the greatest playwrights of world theatre. He has the compassion, understanding and commitment to character of a Shakespeare (if not the poesy), the subtlety and compassion of Chekhov, the passion of Strindberg; there are flashes of the poetry of Williams; certainly a social and political conscience worthy of Miller; the philosophical view of a Beckett; the personal insight and courage of O'Neill; the controlled rage of a Euripides. (And like the Greeks, Fugard often deals with the archetypal--"killing" the father; defying the "fates." Never losing sight of the fact, however, that today's fates are man-made.)

However one views the society which inspired and nourished Fugard's talents, it is important to be aware of the interdependence of that talent and that society. Fugard's talents and drive may have flourished in another context, but the arbitrarily divided society in which he was raised provided an (nearly archetypal) example of the split between good and evil with startling clarity. Certainly there are many other White South

Africans of conscience who are daily putting their lives and fortunes on the line in an effort to turn their country around. There was, and still is, a large Liberal community. And there are fine artists of conscience--Nadine Gordimer and Alan Paton, Barney Simon and others--who continue to protest in the face of overwhelming odds and with great courage. But none, while continuing to try to enlighten the world and effect social change, has created such a large body of work, which is at once so regional and universal.

Fugard's life and work have exposed apartheid and its resultant inhumanity in the most emotionally accessible terms and therefore can be said, on one level, to be propaganda. At the Conference on Political Theatre in Western Europe at Columbia University, I asked Eric Bentley if he felt that Fugard wrote propaganda, and he said: "Fugard and I would disagree on this point. A playwright doesn't often admit to writing propaganda, but I think that's what he does. He writes liberation literature."²⁸ But that is, I repeat, only one level. The level of the personal exposure, particularly in the non-collaborative works, accounts for their universality and it is that universality which will insure the

survival of the plays far into the future.

If My Children! My Africa! is Fugard's own cri de coeur, then that seems to place him now fully in the position of "Father."

Through his plays and his other related activities in theatre, Fugard has come to know who he is. He has rid himself of addictions to alcohol, and to ghosts. With Children he has assumed a more direct responsibility for his country's progress; but he has done so, typically for him, in a most unexpected way. As Beresford writes:

Fugard is essentially a South African liberal and both he, as a person, and his work are characterised by the compassion and courage long associated with that tradition in this country. It is a tradition which has been under threat during recent years in the face of the overwhelming demands in the anti-apartheid community for ruthless action to bring liberation. To write a play dealing sympathetically with the central character who might be termed a "collaborator" is a courageous act in present-day South Africa. (Beresford)

Fugard has stated that he wrote Children for Kani (whose career he has, like a parent, nurtured for years), and his daughter, Lisa, who created the role of the White schoolgirl, Isabel Dyson, in the New York premiere of the play. This is reminiscent of Fugard's cooperative creation of Sizwe Bansi and The Island expressly to

further the acting careers of Kani and Winston Ntshona; and like those works, Children is, again, propaganda. Moreover, it is probably a detour on Fugard's path to self-knowledge.

Although he has laid many ghosts to rest, I believe his peace of mind depends on remaining the "Lewis and Clark and Frobisher of [his] own streams and oceans," and that he will continue to explore. When writing, in May of 1977, of his fear of "the total extinction of my creativity," (Notebooks, 229) he was not concerned with his creativity as actor or director, but as playwright. Speaking of Mecca with Steve Kemper, Fugard said:

I'm luckier than Helen. Coming out of a lot of personal reasons, I've experienced something of a regeneration in my energies, in my relationship to life. So I'm not tired, exhausted, as I was at the end of Master Harold. I don't think this is my last play. I might have been tempted to say different after Master Harold. I don't know why. But Mecca has been, in the writing, in the staging, and now living quietly up there on the stage every night, has been a remarkably liberating experience. Somehow it has freed me to start travelling again, take on other journeys. Helen's Mecca is not my Mecca. I haven't reached mine yet.²⁹

Fugard, even when drinking, was a disciplined creator. The early experiments--Klaas and the Devil, The Cell, No-Good Friday, and Nongogo--were all spaced about a year apart. Since those

efforts (which Fugard has little respect for), he has "completed projects" for the stage approximately every two years. While privately creating plays of great impact (some of which may, like Boesman and Lena, be considered modern classics), he was simultaneously the guiding force in the development and sustenance of theatre companies like The Rehearsal Room and The Serpent Players. (When he, Kani, and Ntshona could spare little time for The Serpent Players because of career commitments, that group faded out of existence.) Moreover, he has written two teleplays--Mille Miglia and The Occupation; and written and played leading or major supporting roles in three films--Boesman and Lena, The Guest, and Marigolds in August. (He has also played small roles in the films, Gandhi, The Killing Fields, and Meetings with Remarkable Men.)

Lloyd Richards pointed out, as a possible aspect of method, that Fugard's residence at Yale followed a pattern of old play, new play, old play, new play. Given this knowledge, what may the world of theatre expect from Fugard in the near future? If A Place with the Pigs was, like Mecca, not his "Mecca," I expect that Fugard may soon create a very personal work, probably a one-act play of introspection. Although some of the "preserved meats" may begin

to taste very familiar, the seasoning will most likely be very intriguing; and Athol Fugard will continue to "pile the cans sky-high."

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33. Paul Viallaneix, "The First Camus," an Introductory Essay to Youthful Writings, by Albert Camus (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), 15.
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