THE DISSENTING WRITER IN SOUTH AFRICA: A RHETORICAL
ANALYSIS OF THE DRAMA OF ATHOL FUGARD AND
THE SHORT FICTION OF NADINE GORDIMER

DISSERTATION

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By

Jeanne M. Colleran, A.B., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1988

Dissertation Committee:
Edward P. J. Corbett
Katherine Burkman
Ann Dobyns

Approved by

[Signature]
Edward P. J. Corbett
Adviser
Department of English
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for Richard
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VITA


1976..................... A.B., John Carroll University, Cleveland, Oh. Summa cum Laude

1979..................... M.A., Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Oh.

1979-1984.................. Lecturer in English, John Carroll University

1984-Present.............. Graduate Student, The Ohio State University, Cols. Oh.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM OF THE DISSENTING WHITE
WRITER IN SOUTH AFRICAN LITERATURE

I believe the position of the resident white South
African artists (including writers) is morally
indefensible. They live in a concentration camp—not
with the victims but with the guards. They share the
guards' food, their privileges, their comfortable
life-style. "But we bear witness," they respond. "We
offer words of hope, of comfort to those going to the
gas chambers tomorrow." Tell that to Nelson Mandela
and to the ghost of Steve Biko. Even if you protest
that your main reason for remaining there is to
resist oppression and injustice, all the signs are
that you have failed.

Perseus Adams
Exiled South African writer

Those three years of association with political
people did nothing to persuade me of the error of my
individualistic-liberal ways. Instead they produced
a graphic demonstration of the confusion,
destructiveness, and self-destructiveness inherent
in that form of power drive which is the radical
approach to things. Whatever possibilities it holds
out for the rectification of society, it yields, at
any rate, nothing desirable for the pursuit of
literature beyond the farcical and tragic stories it
generates.

Lionel Abrahams
South African editor, publisher, and writer
Is it possible for the white Afrikaans writer, the member of the privileged ruling class, to write significant revolutionary literature about the struggle of a suppressed people, the black people, whom he doesn't really know?

Aampie Coetzee
South African critic

Protest must not be allowed to destroy the art of the writer. Nor must moral consideration.

Alan Paton
South African novelist

The old is dying and the new cannot be born; in the interregnum there arises a great diversity of morbid symptoms.

Nadine Gordimer
South African novelist

In *Exiles and Emigres*, Terry Eagleton examines the paradoxical position the literary artist finds himself in when he is writing about his own society. He concludes that the writer's stance is a difficult balance of intimate involvement and dispassionate distance and that the resulting work is a mixture of the "subtle and involuted tensions between the remembered and the real, the potential and the actual, integration and dispossession, exile and involvement" (18). While Eagleton's study focused on modern English writers and
their relationship to early twentieth-century life and
culture in Great Britain, his observations are relevant
to those contemporary writers, like Gabriel Garcia
Marquez, Wole Soyinka, and Milan Kundera, who live and
work in divisive political circumstances. In an even
more profound sense, they are applicable to an entire
nation of artists, that is, to those writers living in
what is surely the most divided country of our times, the
apartheid society of South Africa. For these writers,
every aspect of communal life is rent by conflict.
Though racial segregation is the most widely-known of
South Africa's problems, economic exploitation and
political oppression are rampant as well. The serious
South African writer has, in essence, no other subject
than that of his own country.

There is, however, as the above quotations from
prominent South African writers and critics suggest,
considerable disagreement about the degree of intimacy or
distance that is required of these writers. For some,
like exiled black poet Dennis Brutus, any instance of
collaboration with the white minority government deserves
complete condemnation.² Any novel that does not protest
the South African political situation is an irrelevant
one.³ Others, like the white South African writer Wessel
Ebersohn, find themselves in a "battlefield, gripped by
sympathy for the one side and held by blood ties to the
other" (17). Whatever the color of his skin, the South African writer is drastically affected by his government's policies. These policies not only determine his choice of subject, but they also decree how the subject can be handled; ultimately, they decide if the resulting imaginative work will even be read or not.

Not surprisingly, the political situation in South Africa affects writers of different races in different ways. Richard Rive, a black South African novelist, has put this fact bluntly, claiming that the "writer who cannot vote, who carries a pass and who lives in a ghetto, must necessarily write qualitatively differently from the writer who can vote, who does not carry a pass and lives wherever he pleases" (92). While there are some constants imposed upon all writers—the specter of censorship, for example—there are enough differences to back the claim that black and coloured writers and white dissenting writers operate in widely-disparate creative circumstances. Although these circumstances will be explored in depth in Chapter Three, two examples will suffice to indicate the respective positions of these writers in the social and cultural world of South Africa.

Beginning in the 1950's, black and coloured writers were far more likely to be banned than their white counterparts. By the 60's, many of them decided to leave South Africa, and others were forced out, thus, as Nadine
Gordimer has put it, "lopping off a young indigenous tradition" ("Black Interpreters" 5). It remained the task of a few committed white writers to witness the tragedies of Sharpeville.

But the massacre at Sharpeville when sixty-eight blacks were shot by nervous policemen galvanized black leaders. The banned African National Congress, now calling itself Umkonto We Sizwe, the "spear of the nation," abandoned passive resistance in favor of open sabotage (Alvarez-Pereyre 17). The Black Consciousness Movement was born, and a second dynamic came into effect. Now black and coloured writers had, if nothing else, a measure of support for their efforts within their own racial communities and a clearly-defined political agenda on which to base their art.

The white dissenting writer, on the other hand, found himself in a highly isolated position. The liberal posture (such as that of Alan Paton and Lionel Abrahams) was unacceptable to radical black leaders who saw no place for whites in what was essentially a black revolution. Furthermore, the dissenting white writer was an outcast on both sides of the struggle: to those who wished to preserve apartheid, he seemed a traitor; to those who wished to dismantle it, he seemed an accomplice.
The mention of these instances of the changed position of black and white writers in the last thirty years is not meant to imply that the plight of the oppressed majority has become significantly easier to bear. On the contrary, there is no way to overstate the hardships black writers have endured, and there should be no way of minimizing their pain. The examples are meant only to give some idea of the complex state of contemporary South African literature. More than other national literatures, South African writing is affected by social, economic, political, and linguistic factors that must be taken into account if the texts are to be fully understood.4

There are, then, two "givens" about contemporary South African literature. The first is that virtually all of this literature concerns itself with the issue of apartheid and its effects upon all who live in South Africa. The literature is, of necessity, a political literature, as Mafika Gwala points out in his essay, "Writing as a Cultural Weapon":

In a society where politics determines most aspects of our social consciousness through separate toilets, segregated transport, pass and curfew laws, the Immorality Act, unequal education—in short unequal rights based upon skin colour—our speech and written language forms cannot but be highly politicized. In a divided society, words cannot be expected to carry the same value. (47)
The second "given" is that referred to above: that South African literature is shaped markedly by the social and political factors at work in that country. These two premises determine, in part, the critical approach needed to reach a thorough understanding of South African literature. They call for a critical examination that takes into consideration the politics on both the inside and the outside of the literary text.

One such approach is that of rhetorical criticism. In the opinion of Donald Bryant, it is the one type of criticism that can address all of the "major literary problems in a work" while simultaneously doing justice to "socially and politically consequential discourse whether actual or fictive" (14). Clearly, the formalist or objective approach, the dominant mode of criticism until very recently, with its emphasis on a text as a "self-sufficient entity" isolated from all "external points of reference" fails to account for the influence of social and political factors on the work (Abrams 26). 5 Rhetorical criticism, with its emphasis on rhetorical situation, rhetorical strategies, and audience response, requires that the critic investigate not only the text itself but also the context out of which it arose and the reader reaction it aroused. Since literature that is "socially or politically consequential," that is, literature which communicates some persuasive message, is
appearing in ever-increasing numbers, the resources of this critical approach are invaluable. For South African writing, bound as it is to social and political influences and caught up in social and political questions, rhetorical criticism is not only invaluable, it is essential.

The Critical Issue: The Role of the Dissenting White Writer in South Africa

In the past twenty-five years, African literature has grown in both size and influence. Eustace Palmer, in his *Introduction to the African Novel*, comments that this growth has been the inevitable corollary to the movement towards self-determination undertaken by many African nations, a movement which has aroused a "powerful, well-educated, and articulate elite" who could "produce works of art designed to express the strength, validity, and beauty of African life and culture" (ix). Unlike other African nations, however, South Africa has not achieved the same kind of self-determination. Though the yoke of colonialism was thrown off in 1910 after the Anglo-Boer war, the newly-established Union of South Africa replaced it with the stocks of institutionalized racial discrimination. Consequently, while many African writers are asked about their commitment to political agendas or
social reforms, these questions are directed more frequently to South Africans. Their replies evidence that political commitment is no easy task; it may mean risking exile, imprisonment, and artistic silence (Duerden viii).

Legalized racism in South Africa has produced, consequently, a "literature of apartheid" that is a literature of protest by both black and white writers against existing governmental policies. This protest, as exiled poet and novelist Christopher Hope has pointed out, takes several forms. The South African author protests

on behalf of the voiceless victims of the present racial arrangements; he protests against the regime responsible for those arrangements; and he protests his own anger and above all his own guilt, at being associated by race and history with the white regime. (43)

Obviously, the first two realities are those against which any South African writer can lodge his complaint; the third is a protest peculiar to white writers.

This difference—that white writers, in addition to depicting the oppression existing in their country must also deal with their own culpability—is one of the factors separating writing done by blacks from that done by whites. In a very real sense, South African
literature is a divided literature. T. T. Moyana, in his article entitled "Problems of a Creative Writer in South Africa," calls this writing a "one-eyed literature" since both black and white writers concentrate on only "one section of the racial spectrum" (87). Nadine Gordimer agrees. In "English-Language Literature and Politics," she also comments on the effect that racial separation has had on South African writing:

Black or white, writing in English, Afrikaans, Sesuto, Zulu, even if he successfully shoots the rapids of bannings and/or exile, any writer's attempt to present in South Africa a totality of human experience within his own country is subverted before he sets down a word. As a white man, his fortune may change; the one thing he cannot experience is blackness—with all that implies in South Africa. As a black man, the one thing he cannot experience is whiteness—with all that implies. Each is largely outside the other's experience-potential. (118)

As might be expected, virtually every piece of criticism about contemporary South African writing has, of necessity, a sociological perspective as well as a literary one. But as also might be expected, unless the critic is focusing on a single author or on a historical survey, it is more common to find analyses of how apartheid has affected black writers than it is to find comment on how it has affected dissenting whites. It is partially in response to this critical gap that I decided
to examine how contemporary white South African writers, like Athol Fugard and Nadine Gordimer, lodge their protest against apartheid. Even a superficial reading of Fugard's and Gordimer's works reveals a deeply-felt anguish. Like Wessel Ebersohn, they feel strangled by their own blood ties to the white minority. As white South Africans they are implicated in the very system they condemn.

Stephen Watson, though writing about another contemporary South African writer, novelist J. M. Coetzee, coined a term that aptly describes dissenting whites like Fugard and Gordimer; he calls them "colonizers who refuse" (378). The epithet indicates part of the dilemma. Since their works—like the works of all serious South African writers—are implicitly political, the dissenting white writer necessarily frames his art according to some ideology. But what ideology? While it is certainly not the status quo, the party line of keeping apartheid intact in the interests of "separate development," the dissenting white artist nevertheless lacks the same kind of firmly-outlined plan that the black writer has at his disposal. Given this fact, what is the white artist's position—both ethically and aesthetically—in contemporary South African writing? What does he do to protest apartheid? By looking at Fugard and Gordimer's work, I hope to draw some conclusions about the
complicated and confusing, ardent and arduous roles these writers play in the struggle against minority rule.

Given that South African writers do indeed produce an ideologically-based art, critics are bound to address the politics being promulgated. Christopher Hope has recognized this critical obligation, stating that "art in the service of ideology is in much the same position as art in the service of advertising: no matter how well the message is formulated, the important thing remains the product being sold" (42). From this perspective, the South African writer, however concerned he is about the artistry of his creation, must still make specifically rhetorical choices as well as aesthetic ones. Given this fact, my primary focus while looking at Fugard's and Gordimer's writing will be precisely these rhetorical choices. Succinctly, the critical question I am investigating can be put as follows: What are the social and political factors that affect the rhetorical situation of dissenting white artists like Athol Fugard and Nadine Gordimer? Secondly, what rhetorical strategies have these writers employed as a response to their rhetorical situation and in order to communicate their particular ideologies?

At this point, before discussing the method I will be using to answer these two intertwined critical questions, it may be appropriate to say something about
the choice of Fugard and Gordimer as representative dissenting white artists. To be truthful, in a sense they are not "representative," that is, not "commonplace" at all; rather, they are, with the exception of Alan Paton, the two most well-known South African writers of any color or political persuasion.\(^{10}\) Their prominent place in contemporary South African literature is based, in both instances, on an international recognition of their literary achievements and on the fact that, compared to their colleagues, both have produced a substantial body of creative work.

These two facts guided my choice of "representative" authors. First, since one of the special contributions of the white dissenting writer is his ability to reach a wider audience than his black counterpart, it was necessary that I focus on writers who have won a significant international following. Both Fugard and Gordimer are the recipients of a large number of literary prizes that testify to this following, and both have consistently commanded a large reading public.

Secondly, in order to look effectively at the rhetorical strategies that an author characteristically uses, it was important to choose writers who have a seizable body of creative work. Because of the numerous difficulties involved in both writing and publishing political literature in South Africa, few writers have
amassed a large literary corpus. Fugard, with twenty plays and a novel, and Gordimer, with seven collections of short fiction and nine novels as well as many critical articles, are the notable exceptions. Fugard and Gordimer are unrivaled, in fact, in their positions as, respectively, the most significant South African dramatist and the most important short-story writer. Fugard has single-handedly created modern South African drama (Gordimer "English Language Literature," 114), and Gordimer is the only South African story writer who has produced several collections of short fiction. Gordimer's novels also are rhetorically significant texts, but because they have already been the subject of extensive critical examination, I have omitted them from this study.  

There is a sense, however, in which Fugard and Gordimer are "representative" white dissenting writers. The ways in which Pretoria has tried to silence them is illustrative of how the white minority government punishes its errant sons and daughters.  

The difficulty both of these writers have experienced in finding an authentic voice for themselves, avoiding knee-jerk liberalism or self-excusing rationalizations, is another problem that is faced by even the least-known white writer. Perhaps most importantly, Fugard and Gordimer are representative in their abhorrence of the label
"propagandist." While their art communicates a political vision, it does not do so in the same way that writing by black artists such as Es'kia Mphahlele, Richard Rive, Alex La Guma and Can Themba does. Fugard and Gordimer do not belong to any consciousness movement, and their politics cannot be readily labeled. Their detractors charge them with producing a diluted version of what is happening in South Africa; their defenders respond by saying that by avoiding the reductiveness of propaganda they have produced works with more complicated social visions. This quarrel takes us back full-circle to Eagleton's description of how much distance of involvement a writer should have with his subject. Since a writer's decision to act either as a reporter or an apologist (or somewhere in between) significantly influences his rhetorical strategies, I will pay particular attention to the way that Fugard and Gordimer balance their persuasive and artistic goals.

Critical Methodology: Rhetorical Situation and Rhetorical Strategies

The systematic study of persuasion--of rhetoric--derived, in ancient Greece and Rome, from the need to train citizens in legal oratory. Thus, from its very beginnings, rhetoric has been associated with political discourse (Simons 5). Political literature, as a subset
of political discourse, is therefore well-suited to rhetorical analysis. Every rhetorical analysis, however, is embedded in a rhetorical theory, and it is necessary, as I will do in the following chapter, to make these theoretical biases clear. For the moment, however, a brief overview of the methodology that I will employ, will give some idea of the direction of this study.

Two key critical concepts underpin this study of dissenting white South African writers: rhetorical situation and rhetorical strategy. Both terms are taken from Edwin Black's *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method*. In this work, Black begins by asking his readers to imagine a scale which would gauge rhetorical discourses according to the "intensity of conviction each promoted in the audience," with one end of the scale signifying temporary approval and the other permanently altered conviction. He then suggests that three factors are involved in determining the potency of a given discourse: rhetorical situation, rhetorical strategies, and audience effects. Together these components make up a "rhetorical transaction" (133-134). Black's view of a rhetorical transaction is based on an understanding of a rhetorical act as an interplay of four elements: the speaker, audience, reality, and language; as such, it has much in common with other modern rhetorical theories. Lloyd Bitzer explains and expands Black's first term,
"rhetorical situation," in his article of the same name. There he defines a rhetorical situation as:

a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence (6).

For Bitzer, an "exigence" is "an imperfection marked by urgency"; that is, it is capable of change, and it elicits a particular response, which in turn is directed towards an appropriate audience.

Bitzer also enlarges on the idea of "constraints," noting that these include such factors as "persons, events, objects, and relations which are parts of the situation because they have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence" (8). This latter concept is particularly important for South African writing since it is a literature that is created under extreme constraints, some legal, some social.

Bitzer further includes personal qualities (beliefs, attitudes, etc.) as a source of constraints in a given rhetorical situation. In this study, I will depend on all of these connotations of rhetorical constraints, looking at them from three perspectives: personal,
literary, and political. I will discuss rhetorical situation both as it generally affects all South African artists, and I will examine Fugard and Gordimer's individual rhetorical situations.

One additional observation should be made about Bitzer's view of rhetorical situation, and this pertains to Bitzer's comment that rhetorical discourse need not provoke immediate action, but that it may simply effect a change in an audience's belief system. This concept—that achieving an attitudinal change if not a behavioral one can legitimately be considered a persuasive act—is central to the rhetorical theory of Kenneth Burke upon which much of the present rhetorical analysis is based. For Burke, as Richard Coe points out, an attitude is "an incipient action, i.e. a potential action waiting for an activating situation, so all processes in which words shape our attitudes are rhetorical" (232). Political literature, as a belief-shaping undertaking, is one such "process."

My understanding of Black's term, "rhetorical strategies" also is indebted to Burke. In fact, while the broad plan of this study is taken from Black's notion of a "rhetorical transaction" and Bitzer's refinement of the term, "rhetorical situation," the key premises undergirding this effort are rooted in Burke's rhetorical theory. In his early work, Counter-Statement,
for example, Burke acknowledges the negative associations the word "rhetoric" often conjures. He defends the term, however, by pointing out that "by lexicographer's definition," "rhetoric" refers merely to "the use of language in such a way as to produce a desired impression upon the reader or hearer" (265). These "ways" of producing a "desired impression" are, of course, what Black has called rhetorical strategies. Burke argues that "critical and imaginative works are answers to questions posed by the situation in which they arose," and he makes a case for literature's use of "strategic answers, stylized answers" (Philosophy 1). These strategies "size up the situations, name their structure and outstanding ingredients and name them in a way that contains an attitude towards them" (Philosophy 1). In the following chapter, I will discuss the pertinent aspects of Burke's rhetorical theory in greater depth; it is clear, however, that Burke, although in a less-schematized manner, pre-dates Black and Bitzer in his discussion of rhetorical transaction and rhetorical situation.

In the next chapter, I also will discuss the concepts common to both classical and modern rhetorical theory, and I will demonstrate the relevance of Aristotelian rhetorical theory to the study of a literary text. Since I will be drawing upon Aristotle's
explanations of the types of discourse and the modes of appeal that an orator might employ, a brief definition of these terms may be helpful.

First, Aristotle classifies discourse into three types: forensic, deliberative, and epideictic. Forensic discourse, the oratory of the courtroom, deals principally with some criminal, or unjust, action done in the past. Deliberative discourse is the language of the assembly room where the orator is concerned chiefly with advocating some future course of conduct. Epideictic discourse is oratory associated with ceremonial occasions and therefore focuses on the present time. Some of the texts that I will be discussing, especially several of Gordimer's short stories, can be viewed as functioning in the same way as a piece of forensic, deliberative, or epideictic oratory does. As such, it employs some of the same techniques that Aristotle suggests are appropriate to each type of discourse.

Aristotle defines rhetoric as the "faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (24). These "available means" include artistic proofs (technoi) or created arguments. Aristotle divides the proofs into three modes of appeal: the appeal to reason (logical), the appeal of the speaker's character (ethical), and the appeal to the audience's emotions (pathetic). He devised the topics, a
system of invention, to assist the speaker in
strengthening his appeal. Aristotle's modes of appeal
are applicable to a literary text both textually and
extra-textually: in the first instance a work may be
scrutinized for the logical arguments contained within
the narrative or for a particular character's ethical
appeal to other characters; in the second, it may be
evaluated in terms of how the work logically, ethically,
or emotionally affects the reader or spectator.

Essentially, Aristotle's modes of appeal are what
Black calls rhetorical strategies, just as his types of
discourse are epitomized rhetorical situations.

Aristotelian rhetoric, however, is associated primarily
with persuasion to action, whereas Burkeian theory is
concerned more with persuasion to attitude. Because it
is very difficult to assess the immediate effects of a
literary text on its reader, I will be examining the ways
in which a work attempts to affect a reader's image of
the world and not its actual success or failure in
effecting a change in behavior or action. This emphasis
means that I will be following Burke's definition of a
persuasive act, and that I will be concentrating
primarily on the first two components of the rhetorical
transaction, rhetorical situation and rhetorical
strategy.
To summarize the methodology employed, then, my first task will be to examine the writer's rhetorical situation in an effort to see how this situation has determined the creation of the literary text. Next, I will analyze the literary work for its rhetorical strategies, looking first at the piece in terms of Aristotelian rhetorical categories, such as types of discourse or modes of appeal. Then I will turn this technique "roundabout," as Burke would say, and look at literary devices, such as setting or image, that are employed expressly for rhetorical reasons. In all instances, whether using the traditional rhetorical vocabulary or not, I will focus on the ways in which Fugard and Gordimer have structured their works in order to communicate their particular political vision to the reader and to bring about a change in "attitude."

Rhetorical criticism, such as I have outlined, offers an especially trenchant perspective for the student of political literature. It allows for the investigation of the converging influences of author, text, reality, and audience, and it insists that a broader, more dynamic view of the creative act be taken. As a form of discourse theory, rhetorical criticism never abandons its interest in the workings of language and the devices of literature, but it takes this interest a step forward in order to search out how these workings
and devices affect the readers or spectators to whom they are directed. Underlying this critical view is an important philosophical assumption: that literature, in some sense can be said to be influential. Recognizing the persuasive elements of a text implies reaffirming the writer's traditional role as an artist with a transforming social vision. Though he has the same aspirations to permanence and universal appeal that all artists have, the political writer also speaks to the present moment, trying, at best, to push men in a certain direction, trying, at least, to enlarge their minds and touch their hearts. Whether or not art can really alter men's behavior or really affect their actions is a matter to be endlessly debated, but it is senseless to deny its role in awakening men's consciences, especially about an issue as crucial as the fundamental denial of equality of opportunity. In this cause, there is nothing more potent than the rhetoric and poetry of committed writing, which as Peter Horn points out, helps men to bear in mind the reasons underlying their struggle. He writes:

I speak words that I have forgotten:
Freedom. Justice. Love. This is
Not enough. But it is a beginning: I gather words
and drag nets through the past and the present...
I speak. That in itself is good...
And I remember words: Equality. Brotherhood.
Notes: Chapter One

1 The first four quotations were taken from sections of *Momentum: On Recent South African Writing* edited by N. J. Daymond, J. U. Jacobs, and Margaret Lenta (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1984): 265; 4; 157; 89. *Momentum* is a collection of comments from resident South African writers, from exiled South African writers, and from critics of contemporary South African literature. As such, it is an invaluable resource for the student of recent South African writing. The last quotation is a statement made by Antonio Gramsci in his *Prison Notebooks* which Gordimer uses as an epigraph for her novel, *July's People*.

2 Presently living in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Dennis Brutus is one of the most visible spokesmen to advocate sanctions—disinvestment and cultural boycotts—against South Africa and to criticize anyone who seems to be co-operating with the government. Dramatist Zakes Mda recounts an illustrative incident. While at Harvard for the performance of his play, *The Road*, Mda received a message from Brutus instructing him to boycott one of Athol Fugard's dramas which was scheduled to play at the same theatre. Brutus condemned Fugard as a "cultural ambassador of South Africa" because of a speech Fugard had given in which he denounced the cultural boycott against South Africa, calling instead for "constructive engagement." Consequently, a boycott was organized against Fugard and his work. Mda concludes: "Such is the fate of writers who have identified themselves with unpopular political issues" (qtd. in Daymond 297). In his article, "Protest Against Apartheid" Brutus discusses Fugard's play *The Blood Knot* and though he does not blast it completely, his disapproval is unmistakable. The play, Brutus maintains, "offers the society no solution." This is the extent to which "Athol Fugard protests against apartheid" (98-99).

3 In his discussion, "The Political Novelist in South Africa," Christopher Hope comments on the fact that South African literature is inevitably political: "It is a vocation; it is also a trap, it is the unavoidable fact about writing novels, serious novels, in this country." Hope maintains that there are built-in dangers to the political novel; he claims that "South African novels are limited...by ideology...but more than this, they face double jeopardy because the ideology which limits them, i.e. racial dominance, is itself so narrow, clumsy and boring." See Christopher Hope, "The Political Novelist in

4 By political factors, I mean such things as political party affiliation, as well as those political decisions which have been imposed upon writers, such as bannings, house arrest, exile, or imprisonment. By linguistic factors, I am referring to the fact that South African literature is written not only in English and Afrikaans but also in a number of tribal dialects, notably Zulu and Xhosa. For more about these factors see: T.T. Moyana, "Problems of a Creative Artist in South Africa"; Nadine Gordimer, "English-Language Literature and Politics in South Africa"; and Oswald Mtshali, "Black Poetry in Southern Africa: What it Means" all in Christopher Heywood's Aspects of South African Literature (London: Heinemann, 1976). See also Ezekiel Mphahlele's chapter, "Censorship in South Africa" in Voices in the Whirlwind, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972): 199-215.

5Kenneth Burke discusses the limits of the objective approach in his essay, "Formalist Criticism: Its Principles and Limits" included in Language as Symbolic Action (Berkeley: U of Calif. P, 1966): 480-506. Here, Burke takes Cleanth Brooks to task for his inadequate interpretation of William Faulkner's writing. He concludes his attack by saying that Brooks failed to acknowledge sufficiently the influences of regionalism on Faulkner's style, a distinction so important, Burke maintains, that "one can readily understand why Formalist criticism should fly out the window when Regionalist lore comes in the door" (506). It is certainly viable to view South African literature as a type of regionalist writing (one novelist, in fact, J.M. Coetzee, is often compared to Faulkner) and thus in need of a kind of inquiry with greater resources than New Criticism.

Oscar Brockett also discusses the inadequacy of purely textual readings in his discussion, "Poetry as Instrument" included in Donald Bryant, Rhetoric and Poetic (Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1965): 16.

6 Consider just a few of the following "socially consequential" types of literature: writings by
feminists, African Nationalists, Soviet dissidents, German Expressionist dramatists, South American liberationists, Italian Communist playwrights, French Existentialists, Marxists, and Black American authors. To this list we might add those writers who focus on a single theme such as the holocaust or the nuclear threat. That we think of these writers as belonging to certain minority groups indicates that we regard their works as somehow being out of the mainstream of literature. Sheer numbers should convince us otherwise. However, nervous we may be about bluntly recognizing persuasive elements in art, clearly it is time to do so.


8 There are numerous critical commentaries on white South African literature from a purely or primarily aesthetic perspective. In fact, some histories of South African literature neglect the tradition of oral literature completely and begin their account with Olive Schreiner—a late nineteenth century novelist. One article which does address the work of dissenting white writers, however, is Rowland Smith's "The Seventies and After: The Inner View in White English-language Fiction" rpt. in Olive Schreiner and After Ed. Malvern Van Wyk Smith: 196-204. Also of interest is Sheila Roberts' essay, "Character and Meaning in Four Contemporary South African Novels," WLWE 19: 19-36; and J. M. Coetzee's White Writing.

9 See Nadine Gordimer, "Art and the State in South Africa" The Nation (Dec. 1983): 657-661, in which she discussed the "kit of emotive phrases" that are virtually forced on the black writer and the problems that white writers have finding their own "consciousness."

10 Because Alan Paton's name is the one that comes most quickly to mind when one thinks of South African literature, his exclusion from this study bears some explanation. He is, admittedly, the most popular recent South African writer, but he produced his two most
important works, *Cry, the Beloved Country* and *Too Late the Phalarope* more than thirty years ago. Although he died in 1988, his writing is associated with an earlier period, that of liberal realism. As such, his works do not speak to current South African events in the way that Fugard and Gordimer's do, and both of these writers have moved away from the liberal response to the more radical one of inevitable black supremacy. For commentary on the period of liberal realism, see Paul Rich, "Liberal Realism in South African Fiction, 1948–1966," *English in Africa* 12 (May, 1985): 47–79.


For an interesting discussion of the psychology behind the ways that the South African government has treated dissenting white artists, see J.M. Coetzee's comments about Afrikaner poet Breyten Breytenbach in "A Poet in Prison," *New Republic* (March 11, 1985): 29–32.

See, for example, James Kinneavy's *A Theory of Discourse* (New York: Norton, 1971). Kinneavy's "communication triangle" considers the interplay of encoder, decoder, reality, and signal as the constituents of any utterance. Since Kinneavy believes that "rhetoric is involved in discovering and shaping knowledge because of its role in assessing the relevant situational context of meaning," (Berlin 188), he, too, is interested in rhetorical transactions. See also Wayne Booth, "The Rhetorical Stance," *CCC* XIV (Oct. 1963).
14 The poem is reprinted in Alvarez-Pereyre, 266.
CHAPTER II
RHETORICAL CRITICISM: ARISTOTELIAN AND
BURKEIAN APPROACHES

Rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion.

Aristotle, Rhetoric

Art is eternal in so far as it deals with the constraints of humanity...the recurrent emotions, the fundamental attitudes, the typical experiences...But art is also historical--a particular mode of adjustment to a particular cluster of conditions.

Kenneth Burke, Counter-Statement

Fundamentally, rhetorical criticism differs from other types of critical inquiry in the way that it views a text. Rather than regarding literary works as "textual objects to be aesthetically contemplated or endlessly deconstructed," rhetorical critics consider them as forms of "activity inseparable from the wider social relations between writers and readers," and as "largely unintelligible outside the social purposes and conditions in which they are embedded" (Eagleton, Lit. Theory 206). Rhetoricians such as Edward P. J. Corbett and Wayne Booth, who are foremost in bringing the insights

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of rhetorical theory to bear on works of literature, consider the rhetorical aspect of a text to be a clarification of both the author's engagement with his reader as well as an exploration of those elements or strategies within the work "through which the reader (or in drama, the spectator) is brought to accept the world which the author has created" (Bryant, *Rhet. Dimensions* 42). In Corbett's words, rhetorical criticism is:

that mode of internal criticism which considers the interactions between the work, the author, and the audience. As such it is interested in the product, the process, and the effect of linguistic activity, whether of the imaginative kind or the utilitarian kind. When rhetorical criticism is applied to imaginative literature, it regards the work not so much as an object of contemplation but as an artistically structured instrument for communication. It is more interested in a literary work for what it does than for what it is. (*Rhet. Analysis* xxii)

Thus, although it focuses primarily on the literary text, rhetorical criticism does not remain exclusively inside the work but reaches backward to a consideration of situation and forward to a consideration of audience.

Corbett's emphasis on the product, process, and effect of linguistic activity hearkens back to Black's notion of a rhetorical transaction and his tripartite division of situation, strategy, and audience effects. (Corbett, in fact, also terms the "production of any
literary work" a "transaction between author and audience" (xx).) Both men stress the factors which bring the work into being and influence its creation, the textual strategies designed to evoke a response from the reader, and the response itself.

In some way or other, then, all works of rhetorical criticism consider one of these three factors of situation, textual strategies, or audience. In Corbett's collection, *Rhetorical Analysis of Literary Works*, for example, he divides the critical articles into four groups: argument, arrangement, style, and audience. The first three are instances of textual strategies, the last of audience effects. Similarly, Wayne Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, in examining the ways in which authors control their readers' responses, investigates textual strategies and audience expectations.

Neither Corbett's collection nor Booth's book, however, give much attention to rhetorical situation, an aspect of the *process* of the rhetorical transaction and of the *invention* stage. As I have explained previously, however, this aspect is of such importance to the study of contemporary South African literature that it is crucial that it be taken into account. In dictating the way that men and women can interact in South Africa, social situation also determines the kind of access a writer has to his subject. The fact that it is virtually impossible
for whites and blacks to interact in other than a master-
slave relationship, for example, has affected both
characterization and theme in South African literature. ¹
Similarly, infamous pieces of legislation, such as the
Immorality Act which prohibits sexual intercourse between
members of different racial groups, have caused many
writers to turn repeatedly to the theme of
miscegenation. ² For the South African artist, the myth
of the writer as a solitary being weaving his fictions
in comfortable solitude is completely inappropriate.
These writers do indeed labor in lonely quarters, but
they are more likely to be jail cells than garrets.

What all of this means for the literary critic
is that it is practically impossible to discuss a
work written by a South African without touching on some
aspect of his rhetorical situation. Can a reader fully
understand Dennis Brutus' Letters to Martha, for
example, if he doesn't realize that this collection of
poems was camouflaged as letters to Brutus' sister-in-
law as a way of circumventing an order banning him from
writing (Kiger 7)? Isn't something lost if a reader
devours Gordimer's Burger's Daughter for plot only
and is unaware that the book was censored because the
author daringly re-produced a banned tract written by one
of the Soweto students? And Fugard's dramas: are they

spare of setting and slight of plot because the dramatist
is imitating Samuel Beckett, or are they constructed to be produced on-the-run, put on in shanty theatres and performed by poor, barely-trained actors? For South African literature, rhetorical situation is an ineluctable first premise; it governs form, suggests theme, and guides characterization. Given this fact, I will devote the following chapter to a discussion of the general way in which apartheid has affected all writers; then in subsequent chapters, I'll look at the writers' individual rhetorical situations.

In his article, "Rhetorical Analysis of Writing," Jim Corder makes the point that all types of rhetorical criticism must be rooted in some theoretical conception of rhetoric "whether or not the theoretical conception is expressed in the course of the analysis" (226). In this claim, he echoes Kenneth Burke, who also insisted on uncovering the philosophical biases underpinning a work of criticism. Both Corder and Burke would claim that concentrating solely on the rhetorical analysis and ignoring the rhetorical theory which is its "enabling base" results in looking only at the pattern of the discourse and not at the underlying rationale for the work's structure. Such a truncated approach may yield some insight about certain properties of a text, but it will not shed light on the more essential issue of why the writer made the choices that he did.
The philosophical basis for this study's investigation of selected texts by Athol Fugard and Nadine Gordimer is founded on the rhetorical theories of Kenneth Burke, particularly his concepts of identification and consubstantiality. Because Burke was concerned, to use his metaphor, about the "state of Babel after the Fall," (Rhet. of Motives 58), about attempting to remedy the divisions existing between human beings, his rhetorical philosophy is especially appropriate to literary works that are born in turbulent political situations. As Kermit Lansner has said of A Rhetoric of Motives, Burke's observations about "literature, society and politics" are "important and enlightening and relevant" (qtd. in Rueckert 269-270).

Among Burke's significant contributions to the field of rhetoric is his broadening of the Aristotelian tradition, a broadening that I will turn to momentarily. At this point, however, it is important to acknowledge the second theoretical base of this study, Aristotle's Rhetoric, and to say a word about the value of this approach to literary study and about its connection to modern rhetorical theory.

Aristotelian Rhetoric and New Rhetoric

Finding earlier works on rhetoric incomplete and believing that training in rhetoric was a valuable, even
necessary, practical art, Aristotle made the subject a key part of his own school's curriculum. In the very first pages of the Rhetoric, Aristotle sets forth what he believes to be the advantages of being an accomplished rhetorician. A knowledge of rhetoric is useful, he claims, because it enables a speaker to better defend truth and denounce falsehood; because it gives him the ability to instruct popular audiences; because it improves his own grasp of issues since it requires him to analyze both sides; and because it betters his skill at defending himself (22–23). For Aristotle, rhetoric is "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion," (24) and in order to sharpen this faculty, he discusses types of proof, modes of appeal, organizational strategies, and audience analyses.4

Rhetorical criticism that is rooted in Aristotelian rhetorical theory applies the concepts of proof, appeal, organization, and audience type to the study of oral and written texts. According to Edwin Black, four foundational principles underlie Aristotelian (and what he terms "Neo-Aristotelianism" in order to include modern applications of the classical theory) criticism. These premises are:

1. That discourse can be classified according to one of three kinds: the forensic, dealing the guilt or innocence of a past action; the
deliberative which concerns future policy; and the epideictic which praises or blames persons or institutions in the present.

2. That three major kinds of proof or means of persuasion exist: the ethical, the logical, and the emotional.

3. That aspects of a discourse can be discussed in terms of the the rhetorical canons of invention, arrangement, style, and delivery.

4. That discourse can be evaluated in terms of its immediate effect on the audience. (31)

In formulating these principles, Black echoed those articulated by Herbert Wichelns in his important essay, "The Literary Criticism of Oratory," published first in 1925. Here Wichelns listed the requisite elements of criticism as:

a description of the speaker's audience...the leading ideas with which he plied his hearers--his topics, the motives to which he appealed, the nature of the proofs he offered...the speaker's mode of arrangement...the effect of discourse on its immediate hearers. (Scott and Brock 21)

Obviously, much of Black and Wichelns's taxonomies overlap, and many rhetorical approaches to literary texts continue to be based on the classical model.5

One point which Black and Wichelns imply but do not state explicitly needs clarification, and that is Aristotle's concept of the example and the enthymeme.
For the Greek philosopher, the "example and enthymeme, the rhetorical versions of induction and deduction used in dialectic, are the core of persuasion" (Booth, *Modern Dogma*, 146). Of these two concepts, an understanding of the enthymeme is particularly crucial in comprehending the way in which Aristotle saw rhetoric function.

As the rhetorical equivalent of the logical syllogism, the enthymeme is much more than an abbreviated form of reasoning. The suppressed premise of the enthymeme is omitted because it is based on a probability that is universally acknowledged to be true. Thus, the philosophical assumption underlying this rhetorical system is a belief in a shared body of knowable and acceptable values to which all rational listeners would consent. In fact, the valid lines of argument (the topoi), which develop further instances of logical proof, also are based on an expectation of rational consensus between speaker and listener.

Here, of course, for contemporary theorists is the proverbial "rub." Modern philosophy, especially as it is embodied in modernist literature, rejects the notion of a universe of shared values. In *Modern Dogma and the Rhetoric of Assent*, Wayne Booth delineates this twentieth-century view, which he calls the "scientistic," and identifies some of its prevalent features. Taking Bertrand Russell as representative of contemporary
philosophical thinking, Booth examines those factors—empiricism, materialism, rationalism—which have produced an irremediable divorce between "proved truth and asserted values" (76). This split, Booth concludes, has had disastrous consequences:

A thoroughly articulated, seemingly impregnable system of dogmas has sliced the world into two equal parts, the tiny domain of the provable, about which nobody cares very much, and the great domain of "all the rest," in which anyone can believe or do what he pleases. (85)

While Booth devotes the rest of his book to demonstrating that there are alternatives to these consequences, it is important to recognize the ramifications that this widely-accepted split has had for rhetorical theory. In his article, "On the End of Rhetoric, Classical and Modern," S. Michael Halloran discusses these implications and says, simply, that the "assumptions about knowledge and the world that informed classical rhetoric are no longer tenable" (624).

Responding to the perceived inadequacy of the classical model, "new" rhetoricians, such as Kenneth Burke, I. A. Richards, and the General Semanticists discussed in Daniel Fogarty's *Roots for a New Rhetoric*, sought to broaden the scope of rhetoric from a primarily persuasive art to one which could account for
the many kinds of human communication. According to Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede in their overview of the way in which new rhetoricians assess classical theory, modern theorists object to Aristotle's definition of men and women as "rational animals" and to the preference given to logical proof over any other type of appeal. The new rhetoricians also contend that the Greek world of "stable values, social cohesion, and a unified cultural ideal" no longer exists and that the relationship between an orator and his adversary, each bent on winning his case, is antagonistic, manipulative, and unidirectional (83). To the new rhetoricians, classical theory seemed more concerned with winning consensus than with achieving understanding, and it was therefore at best, a manipulative art and, at worst, a deceptive one.

The primary contribution made by modern theorists is their insistence on rhetoric as more than an art of "skillful verbal coercion" (Young 8). I. A. Richards, for example, completely discarded the notion of rhetoric-as-persuasion and proclaimed it to be a "study of misunderstanding and its remedies" (1). In developing this definition, Richards formulated his "context theorem of meaning," which explores how individuals, using their past experiences, process new data (30). His point—that persons bring widely differing perceptual abilities to any given rhetorical transaction—has become
a standard view in contemporary rhetorical studies and exemplifies the way that modern theorists emphasize discourse as a meaning-making enterprise rather than as simply a form of advocacy. All of the major modern rhetoricians, in fact, locate their study of the field in the framework of co-operative communication. The theorist most responsible for laying the foundation for this revised view of rhetoric is Kenneth Burke.

Before turning to an examination of Burke's extremely significant contribution to the history of rhetoric, it is important to address the questions left dangling by the previous discussion. Given the differences between classical and modern rhetoric, is there any way in which the two can be reconciled? What values does Aristotelian theory have for a modern rhetorical critic? What do Aristotle and Burke have in common?

**Shared Assumptions of Aristotelian and Burkeian Rhetoric**

Lunsford and Ede have addressed the issue of the contemporaneity of classical rhetoric, and they conclude that there are indeed shared assumptions between the two systems. In particular, Lunsford and Ede cite three: first, both systems see man as a "language-using animal" who "unites reason and emotion in discourse with one another" (94). Secondly, both theories claim that rhetoric provides "a method by which rhetor and audience
... together create knowledge, most often by building on shared or prior knowledge" (95). Finally, as interdisciplinary enterprises, "classical and modern rhetoric ideally unite theory and practice in the communicative arts of reading, speaking, writing, and listening" (95). While the ancient view posits a much more clearly-defined idea of the accessibility of knowledge and the possibility of communicating this knowledge, it nevertheless shares with the modern a belief that, ultimately, knowledge, however partial or obscure, can be transmitted through the dynamic operation of rhetorical discourse (91).

In justifying their claims about the intersections of classical and modern rhetoric, Lunsford and Ede repeatedly refer to areas where Aristotle and Burke overlap. They observe that Aristotle, both in the Rhetoric as well as in his treatises on logic, ethics, politics, and epistemology, "recognized the powerful dynamism of the creating human mind" (94). They equate this recognition with Burke's famous statement that rhetoric is "rooted in an essential function of language itself, a function that is wholly realistic, and is continually born anew; the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols" (Rhet. of Mot. 43).
Lunsford and Ede assert two other similarities between Aristotle's and Burke's rhetorical theories. First, both the Greek theorist and the American one conceive of rhetoric as a method by which orator and listener create knowledge together. Aristotle's concept of discourse as enthymemetic is based on the idea that rhetor and audience, working on an assumption of a commonly-acknowledged, though unmentioned, minor premise, are united in a mutual endeavor to achieve understanding. Although this observation should not blind us to the fact that Aristotle's focus is still on persuasion, it does alter the view of Aristotelian rhetoric as an all-or-nothing enterprise. Recognizing the true, dynamic nature of enthymemetic discourse and remembering that Aristotle considers the function of rhetoric to be the discovery of potentially persuasive arguments should do much to relieve "rhetoric of the onus of having to achieve persuasion at any cost" (Rhetoric, Corbett intro. xv).

Identification, the key term in Burke's theory, is a similar recognition of rhetoric as a shared undertaking. In defining the term, Burke explicitly acknowledges his debt to Aristotle when he cites Aristotle's repetition of Socrates' maxim: "It is not hard to praise Athenians among Athenians" (Rhet of Not 55). As Burke goes on to say, however, it is quite
difficult to praise Athenians "when you are with Lacedaemonians," and thus the "simplest case of persuasion arises." To this "simple case," Burke proposes a simple but profound solution: that since "you can persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, or idea" a rhetor must identify with his audience and achieve a state of consubstantiality (Rhet of Mot 55). Compared to Aristotle's, Burke's definition of rhetoric as "the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or induce actions in other human agents" more overtly relieves the orator of the burden of achieving persuasion at any cost (Rhet of Mot 41). Despite this difference in emphasis, however, it is clear that both theorists focus on the rhetor-auditor relationship.

Finally, Lunsford and Ede contend that both men avow the interdisciplinary nature of rhetoric. Aristotle did so by placing it in relation to other fields of knowledge, notably logic, poetics, politics and ethics (Lunsford and Ede 95). Burke's writings (including fifteen books, over one hundred essays, and more than one hundred forty reviews) are incredibly wide-ranging, accounting both for his genius and for his critics' frustration. Those trying to classify him have called Burke, among other things, a "poet, novelist, critic, musicologist, psychologist, sociologist,
semanticist, moralist" and even a "Burkologist" (Frank preface). Lunsford and Ede conclude that although Burke's vast opus has not been systematized in a "way that would give it the generative and descriptive power of the Aristotelian system," nevertheless his theories are those that come closest to providing a framework capable of "establishing a coherent interdisciplinary" rhetorical base (96).

Two other similarities between Aristotle and Burke that Lunsford and Ede did not mention deserve comment. As Armin Frank has observed, Burke's fundamental orientation in analyzing literature as symbolic action is Aristotelian (146). Burke habitually approaches a text from the point of view of the "pleasure" it affords the reader, and he uses the word in the Aristotelian sense of tragic pleasure or catharsis (Rhetoric 240). For Burke, the starting point for analysis is the audience's psychology, a matter that Aristotle discusses in the second book of the Rhetoric and that undergirds all of Burke's criticism. In Counter-Statement, for example, Burke writes that the "artist's manipulation of the reader's desires involve his use of what the reader considers desirable" (170). Burke repeatedly discusses the writer's use of ideology in terms of his or her exploiting or discrediting certain assumptions and beliefs in order to contribute to the "formation of
attitudes and thus to the determining of conduct" (Dictionary 71). In The Philosophy of Literary Forms, Burke defines his "pragmatic" approach to the study of poetry, and his focus is again on audience reaction: this approach assumes that literature is functional, that it is "designed to do something for the poet and his readers, and that we can make the most relevant observations about its design by considering the poem as an embodiment of this act" (89). Finally, in the Rhetoric of Motives, Burke reminds us that the nature of rhetoric is as "addressed," and that it is fundamentally a "socializing" or "moralizing" process (38-39).

A second point of agreement between Aristotle and Burke that Lunsford and Ede do not mention is the common method of critical inquiry that the theorists use. The term that is usually associated with Kenneth Burke is "pentad," the name he gave to his dramatistic method.\(^9\) Outlined in A Grammar of Motives, the pentad consists of five terms--act, scene, agency, agent, and, purpose--which when used in ratios help to locate and to explain the substance of an act, literary or otherwise. Frank points out that these terms are actually an "expansion of the four Aristotelian causes"--formal, material, efficient, and final--and he cites sections from the Grammar where Burke traces Aristotle's recognition of an instrumental cause (135). Dramatism is a vital concept
in Burke's thought because, as an investigation into 
human relations and motives, it gives special attention 
to man as a "symbol-using, symbol mis-using, and symbol-
making, and symbol-made animal" (*Language* 63).

In spite of the different emphases, then, it is 
possible to unite—as Burke did—much of classical 
doctrine and contemporary theory. Though Aristotle 
stressed persuasion to action, and Burke extolled 
identification and persuasion to attitude, both men 
concentrated on the speaker-audience relationship as the 
heart of a rhetorical transaction. It is this very 
relationship that I will be investigating in regard to 
Fugard and Gordimer's works. As I look at the way in 
which these South African writers communicate their 
political attitudes by "manipulating their reader's 
desires," both Aristotelian and Burkeian theory will 
provide the "enabling base" for this discussion.

**Further Relevance of Burkeian Rhetoric**

In the above discussion, I have alluded to many of 
the reasons why Burke's rhetorical theory is especially 
relevant to a discussion of contemporary political 
literature. Before delving further into Fugard and 
Gordimer's works, however, it is appropriate to end this 
chapter with some explicit acknowledgment of the 
advantages of Burke's thought for a study of recent South
African writing. While I will make reference, in the course of this investigation, to other aspects of Burke's criticism, such as his thoughts on image and metaphor, four over-arching ideas have been significant in laying the conceptual groundwork. These ideas are 1) Burke's political perspective; 2) his concept of identification; 3) his thoughts on situation and strategy; and 4) his correlation of rhetoric with poetics.

One of the fundamental reasons why Burke's insights on literature in general give greater insight to contemporary South African writing in particular is that Burke's approach has an inherently political perspective. Early on, Burke makes it clear that his interest in aesthetics is not simply a response to literary beauty, but it is, rather, a "willful attempt to act on prevailing social and political attitudes" (Dictionary 63). In the "program" that he sets forth in Counter-Statement, Burke acknowledges that while art is "eternal" because it deals "with the constants of humanity," it is also "historical," and as such it is a "particular mode of adjustment to a particular cluster of conditions" (107). A few pages later, he gives an example of how a pastoral novel can be regarded as making political statements:
The artist—as artist—is not generally concerned with specific political issues. He usually deals with the attitudes, the emphases, in which the choice of some one political or economic policy is implicit, but he need not—as artist—follow the matter through to the full extent. He may sing of pastoral moments on the shores of the Mississippi, nothing more; but of the things he extols there are found to be endangered by the growth of chain stores, his purely pastoral concerns involve by implication the backing of an anti-chain store candidate for President. Thus, a system of aesthetics subsumes a system of politics (and though the artist—qua artist—may ignore it, the present Program of critical orientation cannot ignore it). (113)

Burke's political perspective is two-pronged. In one sense, he looks at the internal constituents of a texts as being politically-motivated. He argues that works reflect their creator's attitudes, an issue he discusses in relation to the psychology of the author in The Philosophy of Literary Form, and he claims that the works also reflect the historical conditions which have acted as their stimulus.

The second way by which Burke makes a case for the political impact of a literary piece involves factors outside the text. Literature, apart from the way that it embodies authorial attitudes or reflects historical occasions, is political because it affects readers. Booth takes up this point in Modern Dogma and the Rhetoric of Assent when he discusses art as a "changing of minds" (164). He notes (and Burke, with his frequent remarks
about the unconscious effects of language would heartily approve) that despite the fact that the change may be unlooked for, or even indiscernible, it is nonetheless real. "We are what we have consumed," Booth claims, "we take in whatever takes us in, and we are forever altered" (166). In Burkeian terms, literature, because it affects our "attitudes" has worked persuasively on us.

Because we are so resistant to overt attempts to change our minds or attitudes, because we are so divided, Burke calls for identification as the key term for his harmonizing rhetoric. Identification (and related to it, consubstantiality), the act of finding some shared ground between speaker and listener as a means of working toward a new consensus, is pertinent to a criticism of political literature because this kind of writing—as opposed to propaganda—largely avoids those tactics which force, rather than forge, understanding. "In identification," Burke writes in Rhetoric of Motives, "lies the source of dedication and enslavement, in fact of co-operation" (xiv). The pursuit of co-operation, is, at bottom, the process in which every political writer is engaged.

The goal of identification in turn affects the rhetorical strategies a writer employs, and these strategies are devised in response to particular conditions. Both concepts are critical to this study. Burke begins his The Philosophy of Literary Form by
stating that "critical and imaginative works are answers to questions posed by the situations in which they arose" (1). Therefore, in order to appreciate fully the work of art, "we must understand the environmental conditions out of which it arose" (CS 77). That there is a connection between social context and a work of art is, for Burke, an "irrefutable" point: "insofar as a social context changes," he claims, "the work of art erected upon it is likely to change in evaluation" (77). Burke does not believe that art is simply a transcription of social reality, however. He holds, instead, that art reflects a particular social situation in the way that it deals with the situation not in the way it mirrors or reproduces it (Dictionary 72). "Art," maintains Burke, "is not experience but something added to experience" (80).

Burke's comments on social situation are relevant to recent South African writing for two reasons. First, his acknowledgment of a social situation's influence on a work reinstates the importance of an extra-textual reading of a literary text. Secondly, the distinction that he draws between art and reportage is one of enormous relevance to South African literature. Several South African writers have been attacked for producing works of journalism instead of works of art;10 Fugard and Gordimer, in consciously avoiding the temptation to substitute reportage for artistic creation, have been
condemned from the other side for being too "removed" from the situations they write about. Burke's defense of the "something added," upholding the artist's right to maintain a somewhat distanced perspective, is a defense of the rhetorical stance Fugard and Gordimer have chosen.

Critical and imaginative works are not only answers to questions posed by the situations in which they arose, Burke says in *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, but they are also strategic answers (1). These strategies, or "tactics of expression," size "up the situations, name their structure and outstanding and ingredients, and name them in a way that contains an attitude towards them" (1). In deciding on which strategies to employ, the writer may capitalize on his reader's desires. "If people believe something the poet can use this belief to get an effect," Burke claims in *Counter-statement* (70). In *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, Burke uses a militaristic metaphor to defend the use of strategies. He writes:

Surely, the most alembicated and sophisticated work of art, arising in complex situations, could be considered as designed to organize and command the army of one's thoughts and images, and so to organize them that one imposes upon the enemy the time and place and conditions for fighting preferred by oneself. One seeks to direct the direct the larger movements and operations in one's campaign for living. One maneuvers and
the maneuvering is an art. Are not the final results one's strategy? (298)

Burke takes the idea of strategy even further, in fact, since he maintains that the very forms of literary discourse are also an "arousing and fulfillment of desires (CS 124).

In my analysis of Fugard and Gordimer's works, Burke's view of rhetorical strategies comes into play because it 1) recognizes that literary works are indeed strategically organized to communicate attitudes and 2) suggests investigating both how the literary text draws the audience into its world and how the writer uses his reader's own values to make the work's values more acceptable.

Finally, the fact that Burke draws the fields of rhetoric and poetics closer together is also germane to a study of contemporary political literature. Burke is always concerned with language as a symbolic action, as a means by which men act upon each other, and this pre-occupation explains his continued interest in the motives underlying human action. Literature, as a type of symbolic action, is also, in Burke's view, reflective of motives and designed in strategic ways to inculcate particular attitudes; it is always "socially purposeful" (Dictionary 77).
Despite this functional view of literature, however, Burke always approaches it as "art." As much as he emphasizes the historical context of art, Burke, especially in his comments about ritual, extols its universality. "Art is eternal," he proclaims in Counter-statement, since it deals with "recurrent emotions, fundamental attitudes and typical experiences" (107). The essence and end of art is eloquence, Burke maintains, and since eloquence is an aspect of rhetoric, "effective literature" can be "nothing else but rhetoric." (CS 53). In making these connections, Burke, unlike Aristotle, narrowed the distance between rhetoric and art. 11

In allowing that literature can be persuasive but in insisting that this persuasion not veer into "pamphleteering" (CS preface), Burke provided the framework for Booth's thesis that literature can act as a particularly effective form of appeal. "Every kind of argument that anyone could ever use in real life might be used in a narrative work," Booth claims in Modern Dogma, "and it could presumably carry as much force one place as another" (181). In fact, Booth elaborates, "narrative embodiment" often strengthens persuasion since "any literal statement of message loses the special kind of knowing the stories offer" (186).

Athol Fugard has said that his task as a writer is "to witness to one little corner of the world" (Benson
5); Nadine Gordimer has said that because she lives in South Africa and is white, she has "an inherited responsibility for what whites have done" (Sternhull 60). Both statements indicate the writers' admission that their art has a persuasive component, that they are using their narratives to convey a "special kind of knowing." In creating texts that respond both to a historical moment and to universal elements underlying all human behavior, Fugard and Gordimer blend artistic and political elements. Since the philosophy of art which defines Burke's critical stand is "one in which the esthetic and the ethical merge," his theory is the one most able to address all of the elements of Fugard and Gordimer's texts, whether they are aesthetic concerns, political issues, or rhetorical factors.
Notes: Chapter Two

1 In "The Interpreters," Nadine Gordimer discusses how the forms of African literature are often a direct response to the situation which served as a stimulus for writing. She notes, for example, that autobiography provides a needed catharsis for disaffected African intellectuals to express the "sufferings of second-class citizens with first-class brains"; that ex-political detainees have created a prison literature; and that exiles have created "a small but significant category--escape books." She also elaborates on five themes that are the "pre-occupation of African writers everywhere." See "The Interpreters" Kenyon Review XXIII (1970): 9-26.


Legally-sanctioned and socially-accepted racial inequality accounts for another peculiarly South African theme: the master-slave relationship. This theme seems to be especially compelling for J.M. Coetzee, for it appears in at least three of his works: In The Heart of the Country, The Life and Times of Michael K, and Foe.

2 The theme of miscegenation is also prevalent in South African literature. Works like Lewis Nkosi's Mating Birds; Athol Fugard's The Blood Knot and Statements After an Arrest under the Immorality Act; Nadine Gordimer's "Town and Country Lovers" (and tangentially, The Late Bourgeois World); and J.M. Coetzee's In the Heart of the Country all have inter-racial sexual intercourse as their primary subject. Sarah Gertrude Millin's God's Stepchildren (1924) is an early example of the literary obsession with "mingling the blood"; her book chronicles the disastrous consequences that ensue when a minister marries a Hottentot woman.

3 Kermit Lansner makes this point about Burke's insistence on exposing underlying premises: "Ordinarily, I see little reason to push every critic back to his "philosophical" assumptions, for many critics have none at all or improvise makeshift theories to suit the particular problem at hand. However, Burke is always so theoretical, so insistent upon the "philosophy"
underlying his reading of a work, that he constantly
turns attention away from the stuff of his criticism
towards questions of a more theoretical kind" (268). See
Kermit Lansner, "Burke, Burke, the Lurk" in William
Rueckert (ed.), Kenneth Burke (Minneapolis: U of

4For related articles on Aristotle's Rhetoric and
Poetics see Richard McKeon, "Rhetoric and Poetic in
Aristotle," in Elder Olson (ed.), Aristotle's Poetics and
English Literature (Chicago" U of Chicago P, 1965):201-
236; and William M.A. Grimaldi, Aristotle, Rhetoric I: A

5For rhetorical analyses that are classically-based,
see two of Edward P.J. Corbett's books: Classical
Rhetoric for the Modern Student (NY: Oxford UP, 1971) and
Rhetorical Analysis of Literary Works (NY: Oxford UP,
1969). The latter has an a helpful bibliography of
articles that treat literary works from a rhetorical
viewpoint.

6For more on the relevance of classical rhetoric to
modern discourse, see Richard Hughes, "The
151-159.

7Virginia Holland discusses common assumptions
shared by Aristotle and Burke in Counterpoint: Kenneth
Burke and Aristotle's Theories of Rhetoric (NY:
Philosophical Library, 1959).

8For an extensive bibliography of Burke's writings
and relevant criticism see William Rueckert, Kenneth
Burke (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1969): 495-521. See
also Armin Frank, Kenneth Burke (NY: Twayne, 1969): 175-
180.

9Burke has since enlarged his concept from a pentad
to a "hexad": the sixth element is "attitude." See
"Dramatism." The International Encyclopedia of the Social
Sciences 7: 445-51.

10In his article, "South Africa" John Povey
discusses the brutal realism of many South African
stories and notes that they often fail to grow from
anecdote to artistic narrative. See: Literatures of the
World in English Ed. Bruce King (London: Routledge,
1974). Lewis Nkosi is also critical of what he calls
"journalistic fact parading outrageously as imaginative
12 For one discussion of the intersection of politics, poetics, and rhetoric, see Herbert Simons and Aram A. Aghazarian (eds.) *Form, Genre, and the Study of Political Discourse* (Columbia, S.C., U of South Carolina P, 1986).
CHAPTER III

THE RHETORICAL SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA: LEGAL AND SOCIAL CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING LITERARY PRODUCTION

Imagine, if you will, that social pressure required John Updike to write about the same themes as William Faulkner. Imagine Ann Beattie taking up Alice Walker's subjects, Saul Bellow repeating Ralph Ellison, Donald Barthelme speaking for James Baldwin. Obviously, the American literary world would shrink to the size of one very bruised pea. While the thought of putting some of America's best minds to the task of addressing one of our most pressing problems is appealing, it is doubtful that even writers as talented as Updike, Beattie, Bellow, and Barthelme could produce works that would rival those of Faulkner, Walker, Ellison, or Wright for depth of insight into American racism. And the loss on the other side would be enormous: gone would be the witty portraits of Pennsylvania Wasps and Chicago Jews, gone the innovations of minimalist fiction and the New Yorker style short story to be replaced with one vast social statement.

Imagine, too, that even if Updike or Beattie could write feelingly about the troubled relations between
whites and blacks, that their efforts would be hampered by an incredibly intricate network of censorship laws and governmental interference that makes McCarthyism pale by comparison. Imagine further that despite this repression writers would continue to work knowing full well that this choice means enormous professional and personal trial. They would continue to work knowing that their books might never be published, and they could be prohibited from writing so much as a personal letter. They would continue to work, knowing that they surely would be listed as a political subversive, that they would be put under house arrest, have their passports revoked, and be barred from entering parts of their native cities. Amazingly, they would continue to write knowing that similar privations have driven many of their fellow artists into exile and a few to commit suicide.1

The scenario described above, taken from accounts of what a writer's life is like if he lives under the system of apartheid, is drawn in an attempt to breathe fresh air into a stale truism: all serious art in South Africa is affected by the political climate of that country. This bald fact is such a commonplace in South African literary criticism that it is easy to neglect the human cost behind the generalization. The truth is that literature in South Africa is sometimes strangled, sometimes aborted by the terrible, twisted realities of apartheid.
Given these circumstances, it is amazing that anyone in South Africa writes at all, and every book that is published is a tribute to the artist's courage, endurance, and creative drive. Anecdotes abound about the measures a writer will take in order to keep on working, but the one about novelist Alex La Guma is especially telling. While under house arrest, La Guma worked secretly on a novel. After a page was completed, he would hide it under the linoleum floor, so that the special police would not find it if he was raided (Brutus 94). Naturally, as Dennis Brutus has observed, art created under these conditions is marked with a "special urgency and intensity" (94).

No artist in South Africa is engaged solely in an act of detached literary creation; in the words of Mbulelo Mzamane, every writer is either an "enemy or supporter of the regime, either part of the problem or the solution" (qtd. in Daymond 304). Because of the extremely intimate relationship between circumstance and art form, a full understanding of South African literature requires an understanding of its rhetorical situation.

As defined earlier, rhetorical situation is a "complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced
into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence" (Bitzer 6). In Burke's words, rhetorical situation would include the "particular ways of seeing and feeling" that the artist brings to the situation and the "special kinds of intellectual and emotional adjustments which their works make possible by the discovery of appropriate symbols for encompassing the situation" (CS 80). Of special importance to the concept of rhetorical situation is the aligned notion of rhetorical constraints. Standard sources of constraints, as Bitzer has noted, include "beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests, motives and the like" (8).

Two approaches are possible in examining a rhetorical situation. The first might be termed the long view; this is when the rhetorical critic looks at the general factors of a rhetorical situation as they affect all writers operating in that particular historical circumstance. This is the view I will be taking in the present chapter. The second approach requires a closer scrutiny as the rhetorical critic examines a writer's individual rhetorical situation. I will be taking this approach in subsequent chapters.
South African Censorship and Its Affect on Literary Production

According to T. T. Moyana, the South African government is determined to destroy freedom of expression, and where it cannot destroy free thought, it is bent on controlling it. The following partial list of laws with censorship components gives an idea of the extent to which the government has sought control:

the Bantu Administration Act (1927);
Entertainment Act (1931); Suppression of Communism Act (1950); Customs Act (1955); Prisons Act (1959); Unlawful Organizations Act (1960);
Publications and Entertainment Act (1965);

While these laws are the most overtly restrictive, the apartheid government has built censorship provisions into other laws as well. The Defense Act, for example, prohibits publication of any information about the movements of the South African Defense Force, and thus South African newspapers were prevented from covering the 1974 South African invasion of Angola (Omond 225). In fact, the written word is not safe even if it is merely a saying written on a t-shirt: "Free Mandela" slogans have been proscribed (Omond 245). Nor do cups or movie posters go unscreened. A twenty-three year old diesel mechanic who scratched a political motto onto his tin mug
was arrested immediately and imprisoned (Lelyveld 32). A poster of *The King and I*, showing an Asian Yul Brynner embracing a white Deborah Kerr, had to be re-drawn since it violated the Immorality Act (Omond 224).

That the South African government is especially wary of political literature is indicated by the sheer number of censorship provisions aimed specifically at imaginative writing. "In South Africa there are 97 definitions of what is officially "undesirable" in literature," writes Nadine Gordimer in "The New Black Poets," and something may be deemed undesirable "either because it is subversive, obscene, or otherwise offensive" (133). A running joke is that the Publications Board banned *Black Beauty* and *Return of the Native* on the basis of their militant titles (Lelyveld 29). Gordimer notes that although the censorship laws are not always invoked, they are "there when needed to suppress a particular book or silence an individual writer" (133).

Silencing occurs in two ways in South Africa: either the work is banned or the writer himself is prohibited from working. The first kind of censorship comes under the auspices of the Publications Control Board, formed in 1963. This board established *ad hoc* committees consisting of three members chosen from a list compiled by the Minister of Home Affairs. As of 1983, at least
1,000 of these committees existed (Omond 236). The committees can find that the content of a book is objectionable if it promotes "feelings of hostility between Natives and Europeans" or if it represents "antagonistic relations between capital and labor, or makes reference to international politics, or carries scenes of intermingling between Blacks and Whites or pugilistic encounters between them" (Moyana 88). Additionally, a text may be censored if it seems "indecent" or "blasphemous" (Omond 235). Given the scope of these restrictions there is simply no way for a writer to avoid violating some part of a statute. The Publications Act of 1974 and the Internal Security Act of 1950 insure that the "South African reader is deprived not only of sexually titillating magazines, books and films but also of serious works that question, radically, the institutions and practices of a society based on racial discrimination. Together those statutes are designed to preserve political orthodoxy according to the ruling color and class by isolating the public from radical political thought and contemporary literary trends" (Gordimer, "Art and the State" 659).

If strictly and consistently enforced, South Africa's censorship laws would put an end to all political literature. But they are not. Books are unbanned, persons are unlisted, and custom embargoes are
lifted. In a liberal mood, the Publications Board will release a censored text, as it did when it allowed copies of Wessel Ebersohn's *Store Up the Anger*, which contains clinically-detailed descriptions of a death in prison which closely parallels that of Steve Biko's, back into circulation.

The Publications Board would never, of course, feel lenient enough to unban Biko's own words. Nor are concessions made to most black writers. The writings and speeches of 750 persons, including all of the best-known black and coloured writers have been banned (Moyana 88-89). Censorship is so certain and so pervasive, in fact, that many black writers practice a kind of self-censorship. "Aspirant writers are intimidated ... by the fear that anything at all controversial... makes the writer suspect, since the correlation of articulacy and political insurrection, as far as blacks are concerned, is firmly lodged in the minds of the Ministers of the Interior, Justice and Police." This "polymorphous fear cramps the hand," and projects are aborted before they are even begun (Gordimer, "New Black Poets" 133).

When Pretoria does grant some freedom to a writer, the obvious impulse is to ask, "Why?" There are several possible explanations for the occasional relaxations of the censorship laws. The temporary halt in vigilance may be made in response to artist-organized protests and the
support these have garnered internationally. The fluctuating mood of Parliament is another factor, especially as liberal activists like Helen Suzman make globally-pitched demands for social reform. But the inherent contradictoriness of the Boer mentality is a more compelling factor than either of the above. Although he does not mind being described as authoritarian, the Afrikaner chafes at being regarded as totalitarian. Sensitive to world opinion, he occasionally makes concessions to his enemies.

The case of Zwelakhe Sisulu is illustrative. A prominent journalist, Sisulu went, in three years time, from being an editor and union activist, to being banned as a nonperson, to being detained without charge or trial, and, finally, to being released to return to his newspaper work. His father, Walter Sisulu, however, will never be on the receiving end of Afrikaner generosity. As a former leader of the African National Congress and as an intimate of Nelson Mandela's, he can fully expect to serve out his life sentence on Robben Island.

Finally, the South African government hasn't made up its mind about just how dangerous political literature is, and this ambivalence further explains the uneven application of censorship laws. Sometimes it seems to think that political literature is extremely incendiary,
and during these times it acts quickly to halt theatrical performances (as was the case with several of Fugard's plays, including *The Island*, *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and *Master Harold and the Boys*) and to get subversive literature off the bookshelves. In the Seventies, works by four dissenting white writers were banned: Nadine Gordimer's *The Late Bourgeois World*, Mary Benson's *At the Still Point*, Jack Cope's *The Dawn Comes Twice*, and C. J. Driver's *Elegy for a Revolutionary*. Since all of these works tried to trace "through imaginative insights," the "motivation of the young whites who turned to sabotage against the regime in the late sixties," their themes were naturally found to be "offensive" (Gordimer, "English-Language" 111).

At other times, the government seems to think it can live with a certain amount of protest writing, and so it unbanned Gordimer's *Burger's Daughter* after just three months. Strangely enough, though virtually all prose written by blacks is banned, much political poetry is left uncensored. An incredible arrogance seems to underlie this phenomena, for it suggests that blacks lack the sophistication to extract the political message from the poetry protecting it. The final effect, as Lelyveld has observed, of a system that can "ban a mug and release a poem, torture one activist and seem to ignore another" is to "keep its enemies constantly off-balance" (33).
The second way that the South African government controls expression is by directing laws specifically at the writer himself. The Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 is a particularly potent tool for silencing the opposition. Ostensibly aimed at ferreting out destabilizing socialists, the law provides for the arrest of anyone who expounds doctrines which threaten to bring about "any political, industrial, social, or economic changes within the Union by the promotion of disturbance" (Omond 203). As the 1961 Minister of Justice B. J. Vorster said, with typical apartheid logic, "You do not have to be a communist to be banned under the Suppression of Communism Act" (194). If found guilty and banned, the writer cannot attend any kind of gathering of two or more people, regardless of the nature of the meeting, cannot leave his magisterial district, and must report regularly to the police.

In light of these restrictions, it is not surprising that so many South African writers have chosen to go into exile. All of the best-known black and coloured writers have fled South Africa, including Ezekiel Mphahlele, Alex La Guma, Lewis Nkosi, Dennis Brutus, Bloke Modisane, Peter Abrahams, Arthur Nortje, and Bessie Head. White writers also have left, and these include Roy Campbell, William Plomer, Laurens van der Post, Dan Jacobson, C. J. Driver, Jack Cope, Sheila Roberts, and Christopher Hope.
(Moyana, 89; Daymond, ix). This exodus has resulted in two strains of South African literature, the kind produced within its borders and the kind produced without. And although the exiled poet now enjoys a greater measure of freedom, he must cope with the pain of being cut off from his own culture and people. His new circumstances can be as "psychologically damaging, morally corrupting, and imaginatively debilitating" as the ones he left behind (Jacobs, qtd. in Daymond 244).

How does the government decide which writers to sanction and which to ignore? The cases of Dennis Brutus and Breyten Breytenbach reveal the mindset behind the government's decisions. After being released from Robben Island, Brutus was served with a five-year set of bans which prohibited him from writing at all. It did not matter if the work was political or publishable, the act of writing itself was considered criminal. Brutus was further prevented from even drafting a text, and he was told specifically not to write slogans. As might be expected, these restrictions were unbearable, and Brutus left for the United States (93). As an educated black man "with a sensitive, perceptive insight into men and their affairs," Brutus is the very "embodiment of revolt to the apartheid mentality" (Moyana 90).
Breyten Breytenbach is the second example of a man whom the government considers dangerous. If Brutus' type is repugnant to the South African government, then Breytenbach's must be even more so since he is a viper in the Boer breast. A poet, Breytenbach was once the darling of the Afrikaans literary world. Despite the fact that he married an anderskleurig, a woman of another color (she was Vietnamese), and was engaged in anti-apartheid activities, he was left alone on the assumption that blood would win out, and the prodigal would see the error of his ways. When Breytenbach began to recruit members to a radical resistance group, however, the government could no longer stand silently by. He was arrested, and after the government reneged on a deal for a light sentence in exchange for not using the trial as a political platform, he was given the harsh sentence of nine years. After spending two of these in isolation and the rest at Pollsmoor prison, he was flown into exile to France (Coetzee, "Poet in Prison" 30). Like other white activists, notably Bram Fischer and Benjamin Pogrund, Breytenbach incurred a special kind of wrath. As Ezekiel Mphahlele has noted, when the government sees that a "white man is championing the African's cause," it "bares its teeth...It feels it is dealing with a dangerous species of white man, one who must not be allowed to incite the Africans or open the
eyes of the white community or the world in general to the barbarism the black man is subjected to in South Africa" (199).

Whatever means it chooses—banning a text or silencing a writer—the ultimate effect of the censorship laws in South Africa is to relegate art to what Nadine Gordimer calls a "desk-drawer literature." She says: "Any piece of writing that thrusts deep into life here will find itself not in the bookshops or libraries but in the desk drawer, waiting, as the work of many writers did in Germany and Russia, for the times to change and for the dialogue in which truth begins to be heard again ("Desk Drawer" 74).

Other Legal and Social Constraints Affecting Writers and Their Texts

South Africa is a compartmentalized society; in the words of T. T. Moyana, it is a country based on the principle of "bastardization" (93). The most obvious example of the divisiveness of South African society is the government's practice of racial classification. Every citizen belongs to one of four ethnic groups: White, African, Coloured, or Indian. The criterion used by the court for determining a person's race are the tests of "appearance" and "general acceptance." These
standards are not hard and fast, however, and 595 South Africans were reclassified in 1984.  

Another way that the government has sought to keep inter-racial contact to a minimum is through the establishment of homelands and group areas. Ten homelands, covering about 13% of South Africa's total area and occupied by about 40% of the total population, were set up on the basis of ethnic groups: KwaZulu for members of the Zulu tribe, KaNgwane for the Swazi, etc.  

Four of these homelands—Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei—have been declared independent states, although no one in the world but South Africa recognizes them as such. Economically, the homelands have been a disaster; none are self-supporting, and the government must allocate close to 10% of its budget for their maintenance (Omond 110-121). The human cost is also very high. Prevented from living near their places of employment, non-whites often travel hundreds of miles to and from work. If they are "fortunate" enough to secure permission to remain in the city, the worker usually has the "luxury" of a room in his baas' garage.  

The Group Areas Act is another law granting the government the right to decree who can live where. Group areas are designated stretches of land, usually in urban areas, which are marked for occupation by members of a particular racial group (Omond 36). In practice, the
Group Areas Act has resulted in the sudden dislocation of large numbers of the population\textsuperscript{13} and the establishment of townships in urban areas\textsuperscript{14}. Because of the Group Areas act and other euphemistically-termed "development plans," over three million people were forced to move between 1960 and 1983 (Omond 132). The fact that many blacks live in make-shift shanties which easily can be re-constructed is a visible sign of the frequency of these removals.

The three phenomena I have just outlined, racial classification, homelands, and group areas, are the ways that the government limits racial interaction on a grand scale. But there are an infinite number of small ways that the government also uses to maintain racial separation. Despite the much-touted reforms of the Botha administration, hospitals, ambulances, public beaches, some trains, and most hotels remain segregated. Although other services have officially been opened to all, the day-to-day implementation of these reforms are very slow in coming: many large city libraries have dropped their apartheid practices, for example, but their branches remain segregated (Omond 55). Sometimes the government allows economic factors to do the work of apartheid; although a number of theatres have been desegregated, the cost of tickets is prohibitive for most nonwhites (Omond 56).
Perhaps the most striking legal expression of the Boer's deeply-ingrained racial hostility, indeed racial repugnance, is the Immorality Act, first enacted in 1957. This law forbade sexual relations across the color bar, and those who engaged in "unlawful carnal intercourse were subject to imprisonment with hard labor and lashings" (Omond 32). Although the Immorality Act was repealed in 1985, social taboos and the other segregation laws do the work of a statute which was scrapped primarily because, in the words of President P. W. Botha, it made "enemies for South Africa" (Omond 30).

The point I wish to emphasize by the above discussion is the extent to which apartheid is a palpable presence in the lives of all South Africans. From the bedroom to the beach, no aspect of human existence has been left untouched by governmental interference. For writers, the experience of living and working in such an alienated society has had a profound effect on their works. Part of the influence can be traced to the fact that the whites and non-whites seldom interact in other than a rigidly-maintained relationship of dominator and dominated. In fact, the uneasiness that results when class and color lines are breached has been a frequent theme in South African literature. Because racial interaction is not only discouraged socially but prevented legally, the South African writer must deal
with a much more menacing kind of racism, one which is nearly impossible to circumvent. Gordimer describes this profound separateness by claiming that for the writer "the totality of human experience within his own country is subverted before he sets down a word." She says, further:

there is no social mobility across the colour line. The identification of colour with class means that breaching class barriers is breaking the law, and the indivisible class-colour barrier is much, much more effective, from the point of view of limiting the writer's intimate knowledge of his society, than any class barrier has ever been. The black writer in South Africa writes from the inside about the experience of the black masses, because the colour-bar keeps him steeped in its circumstances, confined in a black township and carrying a pass that regulated his movements from the day he is born to the status of "piccanin" to the day he is buried in a segregated cemetery. The white writer, aseptically quarantined in his test-tube elite existence, is cut off by enforced privilege from the greater part of the society in which he lives; the life of the proletariat, the 19 million whose potential of experience he does not share, from the day he is born baas to the day he is buried in his segregated cemetery. ("English-Language 118)

Gordimer's conclusion that racial separateness is the element most responsible for hampering the creative imagination is one that is shared by Alex La Guma. He concedes that South African writers inevitably produce
only "figures in a situation" instead of viable characters because they live in a compartmentalized society:

Whatever opinion they express inevitably becomes involved with the impact of this situation, this colour situation on them. The difficulty, of course, is to try to project oneself across the colour line and I think that is where most writers have failed or have met with extreme difficulty. The problem is living in one set compartment and knowing only of your own life and then trying to project yourself into the life or the environment of another part, of another party. (qtd. in Duerden 92)

La Guma refers to one of the specific problems that the African writer frequently encounters—the problem of creating flesh-and-blood characters. In addition to this difficulty there are several others: plot and theme construction (which are bound to the problems in characterization); choice of literary modes; and finally, the integration of politics and art.

The Effect of Apartheid on Imaginative Writing: Characterization and Plot

David Rubadiri, in discussing *Cry, the Beloved Country* allows that the book is "unique for being the first work in the history of South Africa in which a black man is the main character" (143). This distinction aside, Rubadiri continues, the book is seriously flawed
since it is a story in which "the characters, that is the people who really matter, are of secondary importance." They are "pathetically flat" (142). He cites the figure of the Rev. Kumalo as one such problematic figure. As a combination of black humility and Christian suffering, Kumalo is an ideal straw man for the white liberal who can point to him and say, "Isn't the black man admirable?" Rubadiri sees this highly sentimentalized view of blacks as a trend among white writers that begins "with an evangelical missionary zeal in the white man's image of the non-white and is justified by the assumption that they know the answers not only for themselves but also for the poor natives" (142). What Rubadiri did not say but what surely follows from his observations is that the root cause of such sentimentalism is the writer's ignorance of his subject. The myth of the noble savage is not special to Paton or to any other artist, but it is particularly serviceable for the South African writer who has little to draw from in creating a more realistic, if less long-suffering, substitute.

Paton's work is not the only one to be accused of having characters who seem unreal; flat characterization is a charge leveled at some of the most acclaimed South African writers. Dennis Brutus, for example, criticizes Nadine Gordimer for lacking "warmth" or "feeling" and for allowing this coldness to spill over into her
character creation. He argues that the emotional relationships between the characters in The Late Bourgeois World are "forced, conjured up, synthetic," and they are this way because the author herself is the "living example of how dehumanized South African society has become" (97).

A third example is Lewis Nkosi's opinion of Richard Rive's novel, Emergency. Although he acknowledges that the work is valuable as a fictional chronicle of the political events which led to the declaration of a state of emergency in South Africa in 1960, Nkosi adds that it remains "wholly unimaginative, totally uninspired and exceedingly clumsy in construction" ("Fiction" 114). The reason for its great failure is that it does not "set us ablaze with excitement...because none of the characters have any massive presence as people." They remain completely unrealized, Nkosi argues, because the author uses dialogue to present political arguments rather than to reveal character (115).

Why is faulty characterization such a common problem for South African writers? There are two possible answers to this question, one drawn from the rhetorical situation enveloping the text, the other from the rhetorical strategies within the text. The first answer has already been alluded to: cut off from each other,
both white and non-white writers have little to draw from
to create believable characters. And since some South
African writers—particularly blacks—feel bound to use
their art to uphold certain political credos, or risk
being called "irrelevant" or "uncommitted," they create
cardboard mouthpieces rather than real, complicated,
developed characters. While the white writer does not
share his fellow black artist's problem of being
virtually required to create a certain kind of character
or plot, he does share his desire to write "relevant" and
"committed" literature. But even though the dissenting
white writer repudiates the exploitative system of
apartheid, he is not the direct victim of this
exploitation, and so his protest, as Christopher Hope has
pointed out, is always "on behalf of others—not on
behalf of himself" (43). From this marginal position, it
is difficult for the white writer to develop what
Gordimer calls a "true consciousness" ("Art and the State
659) that can move his writing beyond the level of
endless self-recrimination (voiced by morality play stick
figures of Guilt and Lethargy) to the stage where his art
reflects his real commitments, his real values.

The second explanation for why characterization is
so frequently flat in South African writing has to do
with the rhetorical strategies the writer chooses to
incorporate into his text as a means of communicating his
political vision. Because the South African writer feels obliged, in the words of Alex La Guma, to use his art to "expose the situation with a view of changing people's ideas about what is happening in South Africa" (qtd. in Duerden, 93), he often devotes more attention to his "protests, commitments, and explanations" than he does to character development (Nkosi, Tasks 76). This goal of "exposing the situation" often takes precedence over character development, and it has affected the way that the writer handles plot and theme.

The problem with plot, quite simply, is that the temptation to reduce it to transcription is virtually unavoidable for a great many South African writers. Merely reproduce the horrors you have seen first-hand, the thinking goes, and the telling itself will do the work of the creative imagination. This approach, says Nkosi, has resulted in "journalistic fact parading outrageously as imaginative literature" ("Fiction" 110). Because of this reportorial strain in South African writing, he says, it is impossible to detect in the "fiction of black South Africans any significant and complex talent which responds with both the vigour of the imagination and sufficient technical resources to the problems posed by conditions in South Africa" (109).
Nkosi goes on to say that literature by black South Africans indicates that these writers seem to be unaware of the "compelling innovations" of modernism, and that these writers go blithely on "telling stories" (109). Rubadiri agrees. Discussing Peter Abraham's novel, Wild Conquest, he concludes that the "temptations to overplay the situation somehow detract from the impact of the characters" since Abrahams "overplays ... the ready-made group attitudes and responses" (143).

The problem of overplayed themes is not exclusive, however, to black writers. White writers also have resorted to hackneyed plots of inter-racial love affairs and township violence; they have done their share to create a body of literature which critics have called both "melodramatic" and "boring."\(^{17}\) Themes become predictable along racial lines: the black subject is "all-controlling white dominance" in its various ugly manifestations of poverty, humiliation, homelessness, resignation, and rebellion. The white theme is also "all-controlling white dominance" but with, of course, a different emphasis. Its manifestations are guilt, malaise, self-victimage, helplessness, resignation, and rebellion. The end result, incredibly, is that the writer's failure to "transcend or transmute these given social facts into artistically persuasive works of
fiction" (Nkosi, "Fiction" 110) makes the horrible, commonplace, and the repulsive, cliche.

Rhetorical Situation and Literary Mode

Nkosi's description of South African literature as "journalistic fact" points to a second way that rhetorical situation affects literary production in South Africa, and this is the writer's choice of narrative mode. As might be expected, most South African writing is grimly realistic, but there is a second identifiable type—the "cryptic"—which seems to have grown in opposition to the first.

Before beginning a discussion of these two modes, however, I'd like to interject a qualifying statement. Up until now, my discussion has emphasized the way in which the rhetorical situation in South Africa has restricted or impoverished the writer's creative imagination. In outlining the impact that rhetorical situation has had on the writer's choice of narrative mode, however, I do not mean to imply that all uses of these styles are inept. In fact, as the subsequent chapters will demonstrate, most critics consider Gordimer's realism to be of the finest sort, and Fugard's unique blend of realist and absurdist elements to be a hallmark of his powerful dramatic style. In less-talented hands, however, the realistic and cryptic modes
can diminish the effectiveness of the texts both as artistic pieces and persuasive ones.

Because of the common assumption, therefore, that merely re-telling a tragic tale is intrinsically artistic and persuasive, most South African literature is cast in the realistic mode. Wilfred Cartey has made the same observation. He says that in South African literature, "Pathos is effected through mere statement, for the total situation of this land breeds the pathetic." Works of fiction "need not rely upon the highly imaginative processes for the outward features of South African reality seem in themselves to be fiction" (106). Moyana echoes Cartey's sentiments when he says that in South Africa "life itself is too fantastic to be outrunned by the creative imagination" (95).

One instance of how true Cartey and Moyana's observations are is the prevalence of thinly-disguised autobiography masquerading as fiction. Ezekiel Mphahlele's The Wanderers and Enver Carim's Golden City are two examples of fiction as self-dramatization (Nkosi Tasks 82). Certainly personal experiences can be fruitfully transmuted into art—Fugard does so in many of his dramas—but both Mphahlele and Carim are examples of writers whose fictional works are less moving than their non-fiction. (Brutus makes the same comment about Paton's novels and his political pamphlets, 96). The techniques
of *cinema-verite* are simply not enough to produce powerful and artistic political literature (Nkosi, "Fiction" 111).

Whether the work is fictionalized journalism or fictionalized auto-biography, the same problem results. In art, recounting the facts is not enough; even the writer's fervent commitment is not enough. As Nkosi has observed, "each time we pick up a new novel about South Africa we expect to know it and feel it in our bones that we have been brought into contact with a fresh experience" (Tasks 87). Poetry can be felt in the bones, documentary cannot.

The term "cryptic mode" is taken from Gordimer's article, "The New Black Poets." Here she discusses the rise of black poetry in the 60's after most black prose writers had been harassed into exile. Poetry flourished, Gordimer writes, because it is a less explicit medium. The "cryptic mode" is a "long established one that has been resorted to in times and countries where religious persecution or political oppression drives creativity back into itself and forces it to become its own hiding place, from which, ingenious as an oracle, a voice that cannot easily be identified speaks the truth in riddles and parables not easily defined as subversive" (133).

Finding a medium that can more easily avoid being called subversive is a goal that would attract many South
African writers. Two in particular, Sheila Fugard and J. M. Coetzee have transferred the oblique protest of political poetry to the novel. Their works—Fugard's *The Castaways* and Coetzee's *From the Heart of the Country*, *Waiting for the Barbarians*, *The Life and Times of Michael K* and *Foe*—all have some allegorical quality. Two of them have deranged narrators: *The Castaways* is told by a mental patient, and *From the Heart of the Country* is the diary (266 stream-of-consciousness entries) of a paranoid, possibly delusional woman who has murdered (or simply thinks she has) her father. Two are apocalyptic: both *Waiting* and *Michael K* are set in end-of-the-regime futures. One is a fable: *Foe* retells the story of Robinson Crusoe. All of the novels are recent ones, written after 1972, and by their obvious rejection of realism, all prompt the same critical question, "Why?"¹⁸

In her review of *Michael K* Gordimer suggests that Coetzee chose the cryptic mode as a means of avoiding agitprop:

*It seemed he did so out of a kind of opposing desire to hold himself clear of events and their daily, grubby, tragic consequences in which, like everyone else living in South Africa, he is up to his neck, and about which he had an inner compulsion to write...He seemed to be able to deal with the horror he saw written on the sun only—if brilliantly—if this were to be*
projected into another time and place. His *Waiting for the Barbarians* was the North Pole to which the agitprop of agonized black writers (and some white ones hitching a lift to the armored car) was the South Pole; a world to be dealt with lies in between. It is the life and times of Michael K. ("Idea" 3)

If black poets use the cryptic mode as a way of saving their writing from the censor (and their necks from the Special Police), white writers, like Coetzee, seem to prefer it for the freedom it gives them to express unpopular sentiments. The protective covering of a parable allows the writer to lodge a protest that is more than just a political slogan. As Sheila Roberts has observed, Coetzee's novels not only criticize white oppression, but also point out black collusion (20). Needless to say, blaming the victim—even if warranted—is never popular, but the cryptic mode allows Coetzee to be more faithful to his understanding of the social reality. Ironically, the cryptic mode can permit a greater psychological realism.

The primary advantage of the cryptic mode, then, is a greater measure of artistic freedom for the writer. The primary disadvantage is that the work might be too cryptic, that the reader will not make the necessary associations, will not connect the fable to the reality.
Divergent critical opinion of From the Heart of the Country illustrates that such "misreading" is a real possibility. One critic sees this story of patricide, incest, rape, and miscegenation as clearly parallel to the situation in South Africa and regards the narrator as the prototype of an "ineffectual dreaming liberal" (Roberts 20). Another critic, however, interprets the book as less a political statement and more a universal one about the search for self (Current Bio., 106).

In all his works, in fact, Coetzee, seems purposefully mysterious.19 In Michael K, for example, the landscape and place names are clearly South African, but there are also references to Nazi Germany. Michael K, marginalized because of a deformed lip, seems an obvious parallel to the black man, but Coetzee also weaves references to Kafka into the story, thus connecting his hero to a whole range of literary underground men. The effect of aligning Michael K with Gregor Samsa or Prince Myshkin actually shifts the focus to evils that are inherent in the human condition and away from the specific evil of South African apartheid. For a "sophisticated" reader, the literary allusions may be diverting, but they add little to the elements of social protest in the novel. For the less literary reader, obliqueness may actually become obscurity.
Poetry and Protest: The Difficult Balance

G. E. Gorman has identified the root issue that afflicts the South African writer. The problem, he says, is one of balance because it is likely that the "reality of oppression impinges so heavily upon his existence that the artistic urge takes second place" (15). When this happens, when "commitment and creativity give way to propaganda and reportage, the result" says Gorman, is no "longer fiction but some other form of literature" (19).

The balance which Gorman commends is very difficult to come by; when the editors of Momentum asked African writers to describe how they--as writers--responded to crises in South African affairs, virtually every artist recounted his struggle with the conflicting demands of art and politics (3-106). Many would agree with Gorman's opinion that the two types of commitment frequently seem incompatible, that "the social or ideological concern is a powerful force which all too easily overpowers the fragile delicacy of artistic creation" (19).

David Rubadiri has written that in many ways a "literature of protest, assertion, and declamation has produced writing which lacks balanced sensitivity and has tended to cloud the understanding of values, which, above all, society requires of an artist" (143).
However, what society seems to require most in a writer—authenticity of vision wedded to the revitalizing power of language—is at a premium in South Africa. On all sides the writer is surrounded by forces that would either silence him or give him the words to speak. Because so much about life in South Africa stultifies the creative imagination and cripples the writing hand, it is all the more remarkable when a writer with an authentic voice is heard. Although there is no shortage of committed writing in South Africa, there is a scarcity of writing that is both committed and creative. Successful political literature—like the dramas of Athol Fugard and the stories of Nadine Gordimer—are successful because they are both meaningful and moving, both artistically and politically persuasive.
Notes: Chapter Three

1 All of the instances I have described are true: the works of virtually every black or coloured writer have been banned, many written by whites have been censored also; Dennis Brutus was prohibited from writing anything, even a personal letter; Alex LaGuma was placed under house arrest; Athol Fugard and Alan Paton had their passports revoked; Fugard was barred from entering black townships; Can Themba and Nat Nakasa were driven to commit suicide. For further personal accounts about life under apartheid see the first and last sections of M. J. Daymond (ed.) Momentum as well as Killam, African Writers on African Writing, and Duerden (ed.) African Writers Talking.

2 For a fictional version of a raid by the Special Police because of suspected political activity, see Gordimer's "A Chip of Glass Ruby" in Selected Stories, 264-275.

3 One group of South African writers who did keep themselves removed from political events (or were pro-government) were the Afrikaner writers. In the 60's, however, a group known as the Sestigers (Sixties) began to engage in anti-apartheid writing. Breytenbach was one of the earliest of the committed Afrikaans poets, but his voice has since been joined by those of Andre Brink, Elsa Joubert, and J. M. Coetzee, among others. For more on Afrikaner writing, see Alvarez-Pereyre, pp. 25-31; the introduction to Brink and Coetzee's A Land Apart: A Contemporary South African Reader; and the sections by and about Elsa Joubert in Daymond's Momentum, pp. 58-61; 147-158.


5 Fugard organized a playwright's boycott to protest whites-only theatres. In September, 1962 he wrote "An Open Letter to Playwrights" to draw world-wide attention to these segregation practices. By the following June, 276 playwrights refused performing rights "in any theatre where discrimination is made among audiences on grounds

6 For more on the heinous practice of detention without trial, see Omond, pp. 184-192. Since the declaration of a state of emergency in June of 1986 till April of 1987, some 8,000 South Africans were detained without trial, including about 2,000 minors (Newsweek April 27, 1987, 36).

7 For a vivid, unsettling account of prison hardships at Robben Island, see Indres Naidoo, Robben Island (NY: Vintage, 1982). Fugard's The Island is also about political prisoners on Robben Island.

8 See also J. U. Jacobs, "In a Free State: The Exile in South African Poetry" in Daymond, 243-262, as well as the third section of Daymond's Momentum. Two of the writers mentioned, Nortje and La Guma, are now dead.

9 Benjamin Pogrund and Laurence Gander were, respectively, reporter and editor-in-chief for the Rand Daily Mail. In a famous trial, they were found guilty of contravening the Prisons Act by disseminating false information about prisons. The trial gained notoriety because of the widespread acknowledgment that the government made it impossible to verify prison stories and because white men were championing the black man's cause. See Mphahlele, Voices, 199. Bram Fischer was a prominent member of the Communist Party of South Africa who, after spending nearly a year on the run from the police, was captured and tried. His trial captured Gordimer's attention; she wrote two articles on Fischer: "The Fischer Case," London Magazine, March 1966, 21-30 and "Why did Bram Fischer choose jail?" NYTimes Magazine, 14 August 1966, 30-1, 80-1, 84. Fischer was the real-life model for Lionel Burger in Gordimer's novel, Burger's Daughter.

10 The ludicrousness of racial classification becomes all the more evident when one considers facts such as these: because of trade relations, Japanese are considered "white" though all other Asian people are classified as "Indians"; in 1984, 518 "Coloureds" became "white," 89 "Africans" became "Coloured," one "white" became an "Indian"; to determine racial classification, a comb test is sometimes used: if it is hard to pull the comb through the person's hair, the classification will
be "coloured" instead of "white" (Omond 25-27). "Passing for white" is an issue in Fugard's *The Blood Knot*, and the pass laws are the subject of *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead*.

11 One of Gordimer's stories is set in the homelands; see "Oral History" in *Six Feet of the Country* (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1956).

12 Gordimer movingly evokes the lives of black servants living in their employer's garages or spare rooms in "Happy Event" in *Selected Stories*, pp.107-121 and "Blinder" in *Something Out There*, pp. 79-88. Her novel, *July's People* also dramatizes the double lives of black servants who live and work in the cities and have families in the homelands.

13 Fugard depicts the plight of homeless blacks, dislocated because of the Group Areas Act in *Boesman and Lena*.

14 One of the most celebrated and moving accounts of township violence is Alex La Guma's *A Walk in the Night* (London: Heinemann, 1973).

15 See note 2, p. 55.

16 Gordimer's stories which depict the uneasiness of racial interaction include: "Which New Era Would This Be?" (81-95) "Open House," (387-398) and "The Smell of Death and Flowers" (122-144) in *Selected Stories*. *The Late Bourgeois World* also touches on this theme.

17 Nkosi used the term "melodramatic" in *Tasks and Masks*, 87 and Hope used "boring" in "The Political Novelist," 42.


19 A striking instance of Coetzee's cryptic style is his essay, "A Note on Writing" in *Momentum* (11-13). Here he discusses a linguistic oddity, the phantom presence of a "middle voice" (neither active or passive) in Indo-European languages, and he defines the unusual relationship this middle voice established between subject and object. Though he never says a word about politics and the South African writer, it is difficult
not to take Coetzee's remarks as an oblique request for a middle voice for writers.
CHAPTER IV

ATHOL FUGARD'S RHETORICAL SITUATION

Because theatre is a more immediate art form than prose writing, many critics believe it is a medium more conducive to making political statements. In the last decade, South African drama, as politicized an art form as any other that has come out of South Africa, has grown in both national and international stature,¹ and the recent success of productions like Asinamali! and Woza Albert suggests that it will continue to be compelling theatre. As playwright Zakes Mda has commented, however, the present prominence of South African theatre was achieved in spite of severely repressive circumstances. He says:

Theatre has always played a vital role in reform and reflection; and in South Africa, a society characterized by racial segregation, economic exploitation and political oppression, it continues to be a significant voice in the resistance of the repressed majority. This it does despite the censorious nature of the environment in which the artists work. In fact the harsher the hand of the censor, the more impressive our theatre. (qtd. in Daymond, 295).
South African theatre is a relatively recent phenomena. Despite a rich history of oral drama and the existence of groups like the Bantu People's Theatre, black and multi-racial drama was not considered an important art form before 1950, and white theatre was virtually non-existent.² For this reason, it is understandable that those involved in the 1958 production of Athol Fugard's No-Good Friday considered their work a new beginning (Kavanaugh 43). This "beginning" was novel for two reasons: No-Good Friday was the result of a collaborative effort between Fugard and several black intellectuals, notably Lewis Nkosi and Nat Nakasa, and it was a distinctly South African work, set in Sophiatown and chronicling the violence of township life.

Fugard went on to write many more plays since No-Good Friday; his most recent, A Place with the Pigs, premiered at the Yale Repertory Theatre in March of 1987, and his 1984 play, The Road to Mecca is presently being performed on Broadway. While not every one of his plays explicitly describes the South African situation—Pigs is the story of a Red Army Deserter—those which have gained him an international reputation all deal with some aspect of apartheid. Seven plays in particular—The Blood Knot, Sizwe Bansi is Dead, Boesman and Lena, The Island A Lesson from Aloes, Statements After an Arrest on the Immorality Act, and Master Harold and the Boys—make
the strongest political statements. These plays, written between 1981 and 1982, describe what it is like to live under a racist, separatist system. Some, like No-Good Friday were written collaboratively; others were not. Some seem strongly steeped in the absurdist tradition of Beckett, Sartre, and Camus; others show little trace of their influences. Together, however, these dramas have focused world attention on the brutal situation in South Africa. For this achievement, Nadine Gordimer has said of Fugard: "significant South African drama has been created, single-handed, by Athol Fugard" ("English Lang." 114).

But if the Fugard has single-handedly shaped African drama, he has done so by making adjustments to—and at times, compromises with—his country's repressive political regime. Over the years, his "favor" with the apartheid government has fluctuated; sometimes he has been silenced; other times he has been granted modest concessions.3 Because of his commitment to remain living in South Africa, Fugard has had to deal with a number of constraints on his creative output, and his dramas reflect the accommodations these constraints have demanded. A first step, then, in understanding Fugard's contribution to the tradition of the dissenting white writer, is to come to an understanding of the rhetorical situation in which he is working.
Kenneth Burke has contended that situation is really another word for motivation, and he has said, further, that "the motivation out of which" the writer writes "is synonymous with the structured way in which he puts events and values together when he writes" (Philosophy 20). The values that a writer brings to his works are part of what Bitzer has termed "rhetorical constraints" and include personal factors such as "beliefs, facts, and motives" as well as situational factors which can also "constrain decision and action" (8). In the second part of this chapter, I will be discussing both kinds of constraints and how these factors have influenced the manner in which Fugard has shaped his protest against apartheid.

Before I examine the rhetorical constraints that have affected Fugard's work, however, it is important to consider the issue of rhetorical exigence--the reality that has been the impetus for Fugard's dramatic response. Exigence, as Bitzer has defined it, is an "imperfection marked by urgency" (6). The exigence is rhetorical when "it is capable of positive modification and when positive modification requires discourse or can be assisted by discourse" (7). Obviously, the very existence of apartheid and all of the evils resulting from it is an "imperfection marked by urgency," and many writers have sought to alter this evil in some way by their artistic
protests. In examining the individual writer's rhetorical exigence, however, a rhetorical critic must move beyond these general factors and investigate both the particular experience of apartheid that the writer has had and how this experience has shaped his discourse.

Rhetorical Exigence

Perhaps it is impossible for any creative artist living in an extreme political situation to ignore the forces at work in his country, especially as these forces affect the way in which he regards what is most basic to all literature: the human spirit and man's interaction with other men. If it is true that there are some circumstances that by their very nature beg for telling, life under apartheid is certainly one of these. But every writer comes to a personal apprehension of the larger, more abstract situation he is involved in, and it is this personal experience which prompts utterance. As Burke has observed, "The poet will naturally tend to write about that which most deeply engrosses him—and nothing more deeply engrosses a man than his burdens" (Philosophy 17).

Fugard is no exception to the general rule just expressed. His "burden," or the "rhetorical exigence" which drew forth a response, was his experience working as a clerk in the Native Commissioner's Court in 1958. It
was here that Fugard realized that human degradation is the very marrow and sustenance of the system of apartheid. The Native Commissioner's Court was established to adjudicate all violations in the pass laws, those laws requiring non-whites to carry a passbook containing stipulations about where they can live, travel, and work. Failure to have a passbook on his person usually meant a punishment of two weeks imprisonment for the offender. As Fugard witnessed thousands of his countrymen being sent to jail, a new case passing through the court on the average of every three minutes, he saw more suffering than he could "cope with" and "began to understand how his country functioned" (Boesman viii). Although he stayed in the job only a short time, the experience was to change him irrevocably. It replaced his naivete with a grim realism: "I knew that the system was evil, but until then I had no idea of just how systematically evil it was. That was my revelation. As I think back, nothing that has ever happened to me has eclipsed the horror of those few months" (Benson, "Keeping an Appt." 78). In a later interview, Fugard revealed that though he left the Native Commissioner's Court "angry, appalled, depressed," he also had gained "a sense of the need to say certain things, and to say them unequivocably" (qtd. in Gray, AF 123). What Fugard does say "unequivocably" in his dramas is
that repression in South Africa is a man-made, systematic evil. This persistent theme figures prominently in Sizwe Bansi is Dead, Statements, and The Island and is also evident in Master Harold, and A Lesson from Aloes.

Although his experience in the Native Commissioner's Court was a pivotal one, there are certainly other incidents in Fugard's life that a critic could point to as comprising part of the rhetorical exigence. In fact, more than one critic has observed that Fugard's drama is highly autobiographical: Master Harold, for example, is based on Fugard's own boyhood in Port Elizabeth, and A Lesson from Aloes recounts the time when his own home was searched by the Security Branch (Vandenbroucke 177). If the drama is not rooted in some personal experience, its genesis is often a real-life incident that Fugard has seen or heard, such as the story of Helen Niemand, which provided the basis for A Road to Mecca (Honegger 33) or the sight of the wandering bergie woman who became his heroine in Boesman and Lena. These examples demonstrate how deeply the fact of living in South Africa has imposed itself upon Fugard's creative consciousness and given direction to his dramatic art.

Not only has life in South Africa provided Fugard with his subject and his theme, it also has endowed his work with purpose. His life's work, Fugard has said,
is "to witness as truthfully as I could, the nameless
and destitute of this one little corner of the world"
(Notebooks, back cover), and keeping this goal clearly in
mind has enabled him to survive in South Africa,
especially after his passport was revoked:5

I finally realized that this is a fairly dark
world. Things are happening that are not
seen and heard about; not talked about.
There is a conspiracy of silence abroad in
that country, and witnesses are needed. And,
if nothing else, my writing and my work could
come down to that. (qtd. in Gray, AF, 56)

Fugard's response to his rhetorical exigence has
been to create politically-conscious theatre in an
effort to bear witness to the injustices of apartheid.
This very purposeful goal has led him to use his dramas
to attack specific pieces of legislation, such as the
Immorality Act in Statements, the Group Areas Act in
Boesman and Lena, the Population Registration Act, the
pass laws, and the Bantu Education Act in Sizwe Bansi is
Dead, the Suppression of Communism Act in The Island
(Gray, AF 26). It has led him to explore, in
virtually every one of his plays, the lives of
marginalized people: their want, their despair, the ways
in which they survive. For Fugard, living in South Africa
has determined the very core of his art:

What I want to do—you could call it bearing witness to what happens in my time. More simply, I think it's just a question of saying that as a South African I want to talk to other South Africans about what is happening here and now. Now being a South African means that I have got to acknowledge the fact that my whole style of living, everything comes down to...how many decisions have I got that are not related to my own white skin? I can only acknowledge that these exist, that they are facts. It's like...thorn trees don't protest the endless drought of the Karoo...They just go or trying to grow. Just a basic survival informs the final mutilated, stunted protest. That's all I'm about as a writer. You know, I can't see myself...I think I am now finally conditioned, irrevocably shaped—you might like to call it mutilated—by the South African circumstances. (qtd. in Gray, AF 114)

There is one additional element to Fugard's goal of bearing witness to the South African situation. As Stephen Gray has observed, the "quest of Fugard's life this far has not been so much to conscientise audiences, but to conscientise most effectively" AF, 28). To this end, Fugard has endeavored to do two things: to create an African theatre (and thus his collaborative playwriting and his work with amateur-theatre groups), and to tread the fine line between artful protest and agitprop. The strategies he has used to accomplish these ends will be the subject of
the next chapter, but these strategies themselves have been informed by the forces which have imposed themselves on Fugard's drama.

Rhetorical Constraints

In the previous chapter, I discussed various aspects of censorship and other restrictive legislation as a general source of rhetorical constraint. Here, I intend to look again at laws which inhibit creative writing, but more specifically, as these laws pertain to drama and, even more particularly, to Fugard's own works.

I will not repeat the observations I have made in the last chapter about the way in which enforced separateness has confined the creative imagination, except to say that Fugard, like every other South African writer, has been the victim of this racial isolation. He has said as much in an interview with Raeford Daniel: "The politicians have hijacked us: we are hell-bent for compartmentalisation. The bloody system will make it difficult for us to cross-fertilise" (qtd. in Gray, AF 64). He has certainly felt the alienation eloquently described by T. T. Moyana and Nadine Gordimer, and, at various times, the South African government has increased this alienation even more painful by making Fugard one of their targets. The government has, among other actions, prohibited Fugard from entering some black townships,
arrested members of the amateur-theatre group, Serpent Players, which he founded (Gray, AF 11-13), and banned several of his works, notably Master Harold, Sizwe Bansi, and The Island (Omond 244). 7 I will, however, make some comments about the constraints exerted by developments in South African theatre, since these changes have determined, in part, the direction of Fugard's own artistic evolution. I will also say something about the constraints exerted by the facts of his own heritage.

White theatre in South Africa is a comparatively recent development. Robert Kavanaugh notes that it was possible in "1958 to write that ten years ago (i.e. in 1948) theatre was confined almost entirely to an occasional musical company from Britain or a Christmas pantomime" (49). Despite the paucity of theatrical activity, it was legally possible, however, to organize multi-racial activities (in the form of multi-racial casts and audiences) in the 1940's and 1950's. In the absence of explicit legal sanctions, social attitudes, such as the long-standing tradition of whites-only theatres, did the work of apartheid, but the daring producer might occasionally get around these taboos.

Repression in South Africa worsened in the 60's. Ironically, while the rest of the world entered the era of hippies and radicals, the South African government tightened its hold on the lives of its people. This
death-grip was not to ease for more than a decade, and its effect on Fugard's playcraft was enormous; oddly, its relaxation has been equally influential.

During the 1960s, the South African government made the de facto racial separation de jure segregation. Laws were introduced which made racial inter-mingling virtually impossible, and two of these laws had special consequences for the theatre. The Group Areas Act, in addition to zoning special areas for racial occupation, also "forbade the association of different races in clubs, cinemas, and restaurants" (Vandenbroucke, "Chiaroscuro," 46). In response to this law and to the de facto segregation already described, Fugard published "An Open Letter to British Playwrights" in 1962 to inform them of the practice of whites-only theatres. The response was enormous. Some 276 playwrights from around the world agreed to withhold performing rights "in any theatre where discrimination is made among audiences on the basis of color" (Vandenbroucke 56).

Because the Akrikaner Nationalist government was firmly committed to its program of racial separation, it did not allow the playwright's boycott to deter them. In 1965, the Group Areas Act was amended so that theatres were explicitly mentioned: mixed casts and audiences were prohibited unless a permit was secured (Vandenbroucke, "Chiaroscuro" 47). A second statute, the Copyright Act,
was enacted to undermine the boycott; it allowed texts to be pirated when "performing rights are withheld on ideological or unreasonable grounds" (Vandenbroucke "Chronology" 45).

A third piece of legislation aimed specifically at theatrical activity was also enacted in the Sixties. This was the Publications and Entertainment Act of 1963. As I explained in the previous chapter, this Act allowed for the establishment of ad hoc committees to decide what was "undesirable" or "offensive" and should therefore be kept from the viewing public. All films that are to be shown in public must be seen and passed by a committee. Plays may be staged without prior permission, but at any point, a complaint may be made to a committee, who may then decide to withhold approval. Some plays are approved for certain areas—such as white Johannesburg—but prohibited in others—such as the black townships (Omond 242).

What was the effect of these laws on Fugard's theatrical activity during the Sixties and early Seventies? As the primary artist in the phenomena known as "town theatre" (theater that tended to be based in town not township because it involved both whites and blacks and was often experimental), Fugard constructed his early works knowing that they would be performed by inexperienced actors, produced on slender means, subject to on-the-spot alterations, and possibly shut down on a
moment's notice. His first plays, *No-Good Friday* and *Nongogo*, were performed in church halls and social clubs and included cast members who had never acted before. The props for the premiere of *The Blood Knot* were household items borrowed from Fugard's friend, Barney Simon, and since it was staged on the top floor of Dorkay House in a highly-trafficked area, the cast put egg cartons and old costumes over the windows to block out the noise (Vandenbroucke 47). Even more importantly, Fugard's friend Zakes Mokae played the part of Zach, even though it was customary for whites in blackface to play the part of blacks and coloureds (46). A later play, *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, was canceled only minutes before curtain time—with a sold-out house—since the entire cast and management were threatened with arrest (Astbury 60).

Many more examples could be added to complete the picture of the precariousness of Fugard's early theatrical experiences. The point to be made, however, is that the constraints under which Fugard labored, whether they were economic or legal, resulted in features which have become more or less constants in his drama. As Gray has observed, the necessity of making drama from limited resources—in one-room theatres well outside the university and professional hierarchy—was a condition which Fugard learned to turn to his advantage (Gray, AF
18). Some of the lasting effects of his early, impoverished beginnings are the methods by which he handles setting, props, characterization, and language.

Stephen Gray has referred to Fugard's works as "chamber dramas" because they usually take place in one-room settings. Plays that do so include The Blood Knot, Hello and Goodbye, People are Living There, and Master Harold and the Boys. Since all of these plays also explore family relationships, the single settings help to emphasize the intimacy and dependency of close ties. But the plays also examine issues related to the class and color barriers of apartheid, and the settings are equally representative of the severe limitations imposed upon those who constitute the bottom strata of this rigidly-controlled society. This aspect of Fugard's dramas--that he uses his settings to re-enforce the thematic content of the play--is one of his most skillful strategies, but it is important to remember that this strategy was not abstractly conceived. The fact that most of his dramas use only one set is directly related to the slimness of Fugard's early operating budget, which seldom exceeded fifty dollars (Gray, AF 19).

Later on, in works like Boesman and Lena, The Island, and Statements, Fugard's sets would become even more stripped down, prompting critics to cite Beckett's influence. The backdrop for the first play is simply an
open road; for *The Island* the empty stage is a jail cell, and for *Statements* a blanket suggests the room where the inter-racial lovers meet. Although these bare stages do recall Beckett's *Godot*, there are two critical differences between the craft of the Irish playwright and that of the South African. Beckett's empty stages were not born of economic necessity and governmental interference. Nor are his tramps literal figures, whereas the actual counterparts of Boesman and Lena, as dispossessed blacks, can readily be found in South Africa.

Fugard's most recent plays, *The Road to Mecca* and *A Place with the Pigs* also use single settings even though production costs are no longer such an issue. Although they do so in very different ways, both plays present an enclosed world—*one a haven, the other a cell*—that is threatened by outsiders. These latest plays demonstrate Fugard's continued interest in the subject of entrapment and in the use of single settings to reinforce this theme.

As he does with his sets, Fugard generally uses ordinary, easily-obtainable stage props or does without them entirely. Rubbish is all that is needed to put on a production of *Boesman*, and again, this dramatic decision was the result of financial hardship and of experience with real-life people who literally had only rubbish as their belongings¹⁰ (Honegger 37). Gray
observes that like setting, props alert the audience that they are experiencing a different kind of theatre. "Recurring condensed milk tins and empty bottles alone tell us how far we are from the drawing room comedy of much legitimate theatre," writes Gray, "and how Fugard is intent to ferret life from the detritus of a waste land of a society, wasteful in terms both of consumerism and human dignity" (AF 23).

In the Sixties, Fugard's reputation as a radical dramatist was based partially on his uncanny ability to get productions on stage that would ordinarily be banned. Even in the post-Sharpeville period of severely enforced segregation of theatres and meeting places, Fugard was able to write political dramas and have them produced because he chose to "go it alone, operating with low risk in small-budget, small-cast plays." (Gray, AF 19). These small casts were necessary, not only for economic reasons, but also because the actors had to be willing to work knowing they could be shut down or arrested. These grim realities--no money, untrained actors, small rehearsal rooms--meant that a sparer kind of drama was the only kind of drama possible.

In addition to these constraints, Fugard was committed to putting aside the exclusive power usually delegated to writer and director and to making theatre a shared endeavor. Obviously this commitment expresses a
political attitude as well as a dramatic philosophy. Two plays in particular, The Island and Sizwe Bansi, are successful examples of collaborative writing. Because they were co-authored with two black actors, Winston Ntshona and John Kani, they provided Fugard with an opportunity rare for a white writer—the opportunity to really cross over the colour bar. Fugard frequently has been praised for the vividness of his characterization, for producing a "gallery of fully materialized South African characters whose immensely detailed lives are set before us for observation" (Gray, AF, 19). Fugard himself acknowledges that he "revels in and can only tell a story by way of very, very specific detailing" (Honegger 36), but it should be acknowledged that his achievement is due in part to the unique access he has had to the various levels of South African society.

Ultimately, a Fugard play is a character study—his earliest success, The Blood Knot, was one, and his most recent plays, The Road to Mecca and A Place with the Pigs, also explore the human psyche. The fact that plot is of secondary importance to character is another Fugardian feature which has grown out of his political consciousness and his need to adapt to the resources at hand. Simply put, Fugard's protest is to shed light on the human sufferings occasioned by institutionalized evil. Consequently, his works are a "most tenacious
examination of the minimalising effect of their time on human potential, and the fragmentation of the individual psyche under the pressures of South African society" (Gray, AF 19).

Like all South African writers, Fugard works in a "bastardized" society (Moyana 91). The fact that his audience is comprised not only of different racial groups but also of different ethnic sub-groups has influenced Fugard's dramatic language. He frequently incorporates bits of Zulu, Xhosa, and Afrikaans into his plays, no doubt as a result both of his collaborative work habits and his desire to create an African theatre. His use of the various South African languages also indicates his desire to reach as wide an audience as possible and to make a political statement. "In a country where language barriers are frequently used as means of social control," Fugard purposefully attempts to dismantle these barriers (Gray, AF 25).

The theatrical innovations Fugard forged in response to the obstacles he encountered helped to create theatre that was directly opposite to the state version. The differences were profound:

in place of dazzling production and technology, they offer the performer, often next to naked; in place of sanctified texts they offer impromptu inventiveness; in place of the "conspiracy of silence" (Fugard's phrase of
that period) about South Africa evident on the commercial circuits, they offer undorned "statement." Most potent of all, instead of acquiescence and sweetness, they offer an exhilarating blend of verve and defiance. (Gray AP 21)

The Emergence of Black Theatre and Its Effect on Fugard's Dramas

Ironically, although Fugard was the key force in creating alternative theatre in South Africa, it was a theatre which would eventually find no place for him. "With the emergence of a greater militancy in the 1950s," writes Ian Steadman, "organizations such as the Black People's Convention and the South African Student's Organization began to posit a radical independence from white influence" (215). Two theatre groups in particular, the Theatre Council of Natal (TECON) and the People's Experimental Theatre (PET) were committed to the principles of Black Consciousness (Kavanaugh, South African People's Plays xiv). Although it is difficult to assess the present influence of Black Consciousness theatre,¹³ the movement has clearly had an influence on Fugard's most recent works. Although all of them—A Lesson from Aloes (1978), Master Harold and the Boys (1982), The Road to Mecca (1984), and A Place with the Pigs (1988)—have political overtones, they have moved from "confrontational politics" in part because the Movement no longer has a place for a writer like Fugard.
Shut out from the kind of themes he embraced earlier, Fugard uses his latest dramas to explore a more personal concern: his won ethnicity. "Half of me by birth, and maybe my whole soul, is Afrikaner," says Fugard (Henry 82), and he recent plays depict the agony of this birthright. Because of his opposition to Afrikaner nationalism, he is a "traitor inside the laager," but he also rejects the idea that whites must evacuate South Africa (pers. interview). For Fugard, leaving South Africa is simply unimaginable; he is a member of a "white African tribe" and belongs to that soil as much as the aloes and thorn trees about which he has written so lovingly (pers. interview).

The final constraint, then, that has been a force in Fugard's drama is the fact of his own blood. Piet Bezuidenhout, the hero of Lesson, is an Afrikaner liberal abandoned by all of his friends because he is suspected of being an informer. Fugard concedes that "A hell of a lot of me is invested in the character" (Vandenbroucke 176) and that that he shares Piet's love of country and sense of commitment (Barnes 11). Master Harold explores a young boy's experience with the attractiveness of racist power. Mecca poses two worlds—that of the English liberal and that of the Afrikaner conservative—against each other. The evidence of Fugard's plays from the Seventies, claims Sheila Roberts
(and I would add the Eighties), is of the "irrevocable South Africanness of South Africans, of their tenaciously clinging to a hard earth in an oppressive political situation" ("Fugard in the Seventies" 232).

It may seem odd to assert that Fugard's latest work, *A Place with the Pigs* is also about being a South African. It tells the story of a deserter from the Red Army, Pavel, who spends thirty years hiding in a pigsty. Yet Fugard subtitles this play a "personal parable," and as an allegory it fits into the cryptic mode described in the last chapter. The parable in the play works two ways; in one sense it is an indictment of any system which forces men to live in "less than human" conditions (Wallach 46); in another it points to man's own responsibility for his self-imprisonment and self-liberation. For dissenting writers, Fugard seems to be saying, it may be time to lay down the isolation and guilt that comes with the burden of being white. "It's been a long loneliness in here," says Pavel to his wife, "I'm homesick" (ms. copy 58). Laying down the white man's burden does not mean, however, resuming the white man's tyranny; Fugard has said, in fact, that "I'll have lived a successful life if at my death I die a powerless man" (pers. int). It does mean leaving the pigsty of twisted human relations, of self-loathing and self-pity, to live, as equably as one can, in a place that is home.
Notes: Chapter Four

1 Russell Vandenbroucke has compiled *A Selected Bibliography of the South African Theatre* Theatre Quarterly 7 (Winter 1977-78): 94.


3 Fugard has been given a number of political labels. The government, having seized his papers, banned him from entering the black township of New Brighton, revoked his passport, and censored several of his plays, obviously regards him as a subversive. Incredibly, Fugard has also been accused of being an informer, the anguish of which he has fictionalized into *A Lesson from Aloes*. For a discussion of the various ways Fugard's politics have been assessed, see Russell Vandenbroucke's chapter, "Politics and Fugard's Critics" in *Truths the Hand Can Touch* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1985): 142-147.


5 Fugard's passport was revoked for a period of five years, between June 13, 1967 and May 29, 1971. Through PEN, 4,000 signatures were collected petitioning the government to return his passport so that he could direct *Boesman and Lena* in London (Vandenbroucke 58).

6 On his desire to create an African theatre, see Fugard's letter, "African Stages" to the *New York Times*, Sept. 20, 1965, (Gray, AF, 52). Fugard refers to the Serpent Players as his "laboratory" and describes the sustaining power this group had for him even though he was prohibited from entering a black township to see the works he helped create. See Williams' interview, "Athol Fugard," *Ink*, July 24, 1971 and Fugard's comments in his *Notebooks* (NY: Knopf, 1984): 142.

7 Brian Astbury recounts both the time the police threatened to shut down a performance of *Sizwe Bansi* and the decision to call *The Island*, "Die Hodoshe Span" (Afrikaans for a carrion fly) since a reference to Robben Island would surely mean government interference. See "Athol Fugard at the Space" (Gray, *AF* 57-62). Amato recounts the banning of Master Harold in the article cited in note four.

8 Although Fugard initially supported the boycott, he reversed his decision in 1968. As Vandenbroucke points out in "Chiaroscuro: a Portrait of the South African Theatre," the playwright's boycott has had mixed effects. Some, like director Barney Simon, believe it has had little influence over the government since the government places little value on theatrical activity. Others go even further and point out that the South African government seems to thrive on isolation. Faced with the choice of going into exile, quitting the theatre, or accepting government control, Fugard has chosen the last course. He cannot, he says, "sit in moral paralysis while the days of my one life, my chance to discover the brotherhood of other men, pass" *Theatre Quarterly* 7 (Winter 1977-78): 53-54.


10 In an interview with Gitta Honegger, Fugard describes his experience while writing *Boesman*; he developed, he said "an incredible sensitivity to rubbish," searching for the usefulness of every discarded item, much as Boesman would. *Theatre XVI* (Fall 1984): 36. Cosmo Pieterse in his "Notes on Athol Fugard" praises the author's "documentary reality" (qtd. in Gray, *AF* 200).

11 The two actors who co-wrote *Sizwe Bansi* and *The Island*, Winston Ntshona and John Kani were detained without trial in Transkei in the mid 1970s for performing the plays; they were forbidden to put on the plays in that territory (Omond 244).
12 Fugard has reached wide audiences in his own country; by April, 1971, Boesman and Lena had been seen by as many as 70,000 people (Gray, AF 19).

CHAPTER V

RHETORICAL STRATEGIES IN ATHOL FUGARD'S DRAMA

Athol Fugard has commented that his early dramatic models were not British writers but American playwrights, such as Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, and Clifford Odets, from whom he learned the craft of dramatic structure (Vandenbroucke, Truths 43). It was from another American, however, that he learned something far more valuable to his work:

There was obviously for me this one remarkable discovery, at a certain point in my life, of a great writer who had taken the very simple, very specific stories, and had made astonishing literature out of it. And, more than anybody else, Faulkner turned me around in the sense that, where I'd been looking at American plays and European experiments, suddenly he gave me total security to turn around and look at the specific, the humble specifics of an Eastern (Cape) Province World. (Hough 43)

These "humble specifics" have become the key feature of Fugard's work as a dramatist. Together his plays comprise an entire world of finely-drawn characters, vividly-realized locations, and minutely-detailed circumstances that, though fictionalized, are
identifiably South African. His characters include such distinct figures as the *bergie, baas, capie, tsotsis, hotnot, coolie, boer,* and *blourokkie*. They speak Zulu, Xhosa, and Afrikaans and live in such places as Korsten, Port Elizabeth, Swartkops, and Kleinskool.

Fugard's regionalism, however, is not merely a matter of dialect and local color. He also weaves peculiarly South African phenomena, such as the Afrikaner practice of *kwaardwilligverlating*, into his characterization, and he takes actual historical incidents, such as the 1964 bombing of the Johannesburg train station, as a basis for his plots. His plays protest specific South African laws, explore the barriers between members of different racial groups and the conflicts within the groups themselves, and depict the anguish of both political protester and political prisoner.

Given the abundance of topical references made, it would seem that Russell Vandenbroucke is correct when he says that Fugard's works "presume an understanding of that society" (*Truths* xiv).

Vandenbroucke's conclusion, however, does not explain the enormous popularity Fugard's dramas have enjoyed on foreign stages. His works have been adapted for German, French, Canadian, and Dutch audiences (Gray, *AF* 3-14), and with one exception, British and American runs of Fugard dramas have been extraordinarily well-
received. The Road to Mecca, which was performed on Broadway in 1988 was Fugard's fourth major New York production of the decade, following A Lesson from Aloes (1980), Master Harold and the Boys (1982), and a twenty-fifth year revival of The Blood Knot (1985). According to drama critic William Henry, Mecca "confirms his standing as the greatest active playwright in the English-speaking world" (81).

Not only have Fugard's plays enjoyed favorable reviews, but they have also won a number of coveted prizes: a Drama Critics Award for Best Play for Aloes, an Obie award for Boesman, and both the Drama Desk Award and the Outer Critics Circle Award for Master Harold. West End critics also have honored him; Master Harold received the Evening Standard Best Play of the Year Award (Cont. Aut. 196). In addition to these large-scale successes, Fugard's dramas have toured college campuses and played in regional theatres. This widespread popularity suggests that his works do indeed appeal to non-South African audiences who may not have an "understanding of that society." Dan Jacobson, an exiled South African writer living in England, concurs with this conclusion. He has commented that "the success enjoyed recently on the London stage by several of Athol Fugard's plays demonstrates that his work appeals strongly to audiences unfamiliar with its South African settings" (82).
What is the explanation for Fugard's international appeal? How is it possible that works so topical, so thoroughly grounded in a specific historical context, can reach and move audiences that have little knowledge and no experience of apartheid? It is easy to understand why recent plays, like Pigs and Mecca, are having the success that they are; by this point in his career, Fugard's reputation alone guarantees him an audience. But what about The Blood Knot? How did that work, written by an obscure playwright and starring an untrained actor, make the leap from a Johannesburg Y.M.C.A. to a London theatre? How were British audiences able to understand the dilemma of two mixed-blood brothers trying to "pass for white"?

One critic, Jonathan Marks, asked Fugard if he realized that foreign audiences, who are "learning virtually the first thing about South Africa," often may get rather "distanced from the play" as they try to work out the color problem (68). Fugard's response, "I think you're absolutely right there," and his comments elsewhere indicate that he is aware that the subject matter of his plays is not immediately accessible. When asked what techniques he employs to make them more comprehensible, Fugard, who has become increasingly reticent about discussing his writing, declined to say anything except that he "tells the story" (pers.
interview). As anyone who has read or seen more than one of his plays can attest, however, Fugard does indeed "tell a story," but he tells it strategically, carefully providing the viewer with the information he needs in order to understand the context of the drama. That he accomplishes this task without deadening the work's dramatic intensity is a tribute to his subtle craftmanship.

I intend to explore the rhetorical dimensions of this craftmanship in the following pages. I'd like to begin my discussion of Fugard's dramas by backing up a bit to briefly re-examine his rhetorical situation, seeing it as the impetus for the development of key rhetorical strategies. Next, I will look at The Blood Knot in depth, using this play as a "case study" of Fugard's rhetorical techniques. Finally, I will see how these techniques are used in his later works. Before beginning my discussion of Fugard, however, it is important to define several of the rhetorical terms I will be using.

Rhetorical Terms: Psychology of Audience, Form, Strategy

Brander Matthews, in "The Relation of Drama to Literature," points out that "the dramatist and the orator are bound by many of the same conditions; and one
of these is inexorable: each of them must please his immediate audience" (6). Kenneth Burke agrees. In Counter-Statement, he writes, "The drama more than any other form must never lose sight of its audience: here the failure to satisfy the proper requirements is most disastrous" (37). The "proper requirements" for "pleasing the audience" include capturing their attention, drawing the spectators into the world of the play, and preparing the way for their ultimate acceptance of the play's values. Focusing on the ways that the dramatist purposefully constructs his play in order to accomplish these ends means examining the rhetorical aspects of his writing. Wayne Booth defines this critical approach as an examination of the "art of communicating with readers," of investigating the "rhetorical resources available to the writer of epic, novel, or short story as he tries consciously or unconsciously to impose his fictional world upon the reader" (Rhet. of Fiction xiii).

While a rhetorical critic may choose to emphasize any number of features about the text he is investigating, such as its argumentative strategies or stylistic elements, his analysis always operates in the same framework: how do these features affect the audience's understanding and acceptance of the issue at hand? Burke discusses this fundamental concept in his essay, "Psychology and Form," where he shows how the
first act of *Hamlet* plays off of the audience's expectations and is constructed not according to the "psychology of the hero, but the psychology of the audience" (CS 31). Burke continues his analysis by linking form to audience:

form is the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the adequate satisfying of that appetite. This satisfaction—so complicated is the human mechanism—at times involves a temporary set of frustrations, but in the end these frustrations prove to simply be a more involved kind of satisfaction, and furthermore serve to make the satisfaction of fulfillment more intense. If in a work of art, the poet says something, let us say, about a meeting, writes in such a way that we desire to observe that meeting, and then he places that meeting before us—that is form. While obviously, that is also the psychology of the audience, since it involves desires and their appeasements. (31)

I will be following Burke's lead in my discussion of Fugard's dramas. My analysis of each work will take as its reference point the issue of audience psychology, as I examine the rhetorical techniques Fugard uses in order to enable the viewer to 1) grasp the issues at stake in the play and 2) accept the values offered by the drama.

One of the assumptions commonly made about rhetoric is that it is a gratuitous element in a work, present for embellishment and of no intrinsic or
substantive value to the work of art. Burke's comments on form do much to correct this notion. First, by equating form and audience psychology, Burke points out how deeply persuasion is embedded in a work of art. A writer is able to communicate his vision not because it contains some readily-identifiable, detachable, exhortative passage, but because the very structure of the text draws the reader or viewer into the writer's world. In *Language as Symbolic Action*, for example, Burke suggests that

the sheer forms of expression--be they called poetic or rhetorical--is universal. Hence, an audience can readily yield to this aspect of an exhortation. And in thus responding to the doctrinally neutral aspects of the address, the audience is in more of a mood to accept by contagion the rest of the author's plea. (296)

In *Rhetoric of Motives* Burke explains this phenomenon by looking at how formal stylistic devices, like climax (gradatio) or paired oppositions, establish a pattern which invites audiences "to grasp the trend" and "participate regardless of the subject matter" (58). Just as stylistic devices "awaken an attitude of collaborative expectancy" in the audience on a small scale, the form of a text operates in the same manner
on a larger scale. As such, the very structure of a work itself exerts a persuasive appeal:

In cases where a decision is still to be reached, a yielding to the form prepares for assent to the matter identified with it. Thus, you are drawn to the form, not in your capacity as a partisan, but because of some "universal" appeal in it. And this attitude of assent may then be transferred to the matter which happens to be associated with the form. (58)

That Burke sees form and psychology as synonymous with eloquence further amends the view of rhetoric as extrinsic or unnecessary to a text (CS 40).

In constructing the form of his text in such a way that it will compensate for his audience's ignorance and capitalize on its expectations, a writer naturally devises particular strategies. As I indicated in Chapter Two, "strategy" is another key Burkeian concept. Noting that an "act of persuasion is affected by the character of the scene in which it takes place and by the agents to whom it is addressed," Burke advocates the use of strategies that take into account both rhetorical situation and audience (Rhet. of Motives 62). In The Philosophy of Literary Form, Burke refers to the examination of a text's strategies as a kind of "sociological criticism" which attempts to
codify the various strategies which artists have developed with relation to the naming of situations. In a sense much of it would be "timeless," for many of the "typical, recurrent" situations are not peculiar to our own civilization at all. (301)12

Burke defends this critical method by claiming that it "gives definite insight into the organization of literary works, and it automatically breaks down barriers erected about literature as a specialized pursuit" (303). "Sociological categories," the critic's recognition of the writer's strategies, are constructed on the basis of how an audience is affected. They would consider works of art as strategies for selecting:

enemies and allies, for socializing losses, for warding off evil eye, for purification, propitiation, and desanctification, consolation and vengeance, admonition and exhortation, implicit commands or instructions of one sort or another. Art forms like tragedy of comedy or satire would be treated as equipments for living, that size up situations in various ways and in keeping with various attitudes. The typical ingredients of such forms would be sought. Their relation to typical situations would be stressed. Their comparative values would be considered, with the intention of formulating a "strategy of strategies," the overall strategy obtainable by inspection of the lot. (304)

Burke's explanation of sociological criticism and of strategies provides the basis for the analysis in the
pages that follow. Beginning with The Blood Knot, I will endeavor to isolate the "typical ingredients" of the form of Fugard's dramas and, on the basis of an examination of his other apartheid dramas, formulate a "strategy of strategies" that seems consistent with Fugard's dramatic method. At times, I will look at the works in light of traditional rhetorical concepts, such as modes of appeal. At others, I will describe how various dramatic (or literary) devices serve a rhetorical as well as an artistic purpose. In every instance, whether using a traditional rhetorical vocabulary or not, my focus will be on the ways that Fugard has crafted his dramas to bring the audience into the world of the play and the play's values.

Rhetorical Situation of The Blood Knot

The action of The Blood Knot is set against a backdrop of two specific South African locations: Korsten and Oudtshoorn. Korsten, as the drama's introductory notes explain, is a non-white location near Port Elizabeth, Fugard's childhood home.\(^{13}\) To a South African audience or to a viewer familiar with South African geography, this setting immediately conjures up a world of shanty dwellings, nameless streets and numberless houses, a "world where anything goes," where the inhabitants "live with the terrible smell of the lake"
that is a "dumping ground for waste products from the factories" (Notebooks 9). Even if the South African spectator did not not know the particular city of Korsten, he certainly would realize that as a "location," one of the countless black areas on the periphery of white cities, it could only be a desperately poor place to live. For a non-South African audience, the facts about Korsten are communicated in a few deft strokes: the setting of a squalid one-room shanty, the references to the putrid lake that can be seen from the pondok's window, and the short speech one of the characters, Morrie, gives describing his hometown.

Oudtshoorn, the second place to figure prominently in the play, is never seen, but once again it is possible that a South African viewer might know that it is a white settlement in the Karoo. If not, Fugard provides him—and non-South African audiences—with pertinent descriptions. Morrie has been in Oudtshoorn, and he describes it to his brother, Zach, as a "dry country" that is "white," with "white thorns and bushes gray and broken off...not a pally sort of place at all" (25). Thus, though he may have arrived at the theatre completely ignorant about South African geography and race relations, the viewer has been provided with the information that he needs in order to understand the drama.
Both of the examples I have just cited are illustrative of Fugard's ability to provide the audience with necessary expository information without interrupting the progress of the play. Both are examples of what Booth has called "acceptable rhetoric," by which he means rhetoric that is so smoothly integrated into the text that it has an "intrinsic" quality to it (103). Both demonstrate why Fugard's dramas play well to foreign audiences as well as to native ones.

The unanswered question, however, is what prompted Fugard, at this early point in his career, to incorporate such explanatory passages into his work? Since he saw his drama as "intended only for South Africa," why did he include well-known information that might unnecessarily weigh down his drama (Coveney 34)? The explanation is to be found in Fugard's rhetorical situation.

While working in the Native Commissioner's Court, Fugard was introduced to a group of black intellectuals living in Johannesburg's ghetto, Sophiatown. These men, Lewis Nkosi, Bloke Modisane, Can Themba, Nat Nakasa, and Zakes Mokae, wanted to begin a theatre group, and Fugard was immediately interested. (Vandenbroucke, Truths 15). Through his association with these writers and actors, Fugard came to a deeper
realization of the cruelties imposed upon blacks in South Africa. He came, in short, to understand their lives and to cross over the color bar in a way that few other writers have (O'Sheel 74). As restrictions on inter-racial interaction became harsher in general and on Fugard in particular, he became even more dependent on his black friends to supply him with the half of South African life from which he was cut off. His later collaborative work with Ntshona and Kani represents the extreme of this symbiotic relationship; although the actors needed his expertise at dramatic structure, the writer needed them also:

I've not been allowed inside a black township in South Africa for many years, so I am very dependent on the two actors for a basic image, an assertion of life. (Coveney 35)

What bears repeating here is that Fugard's interaction with non-whites, while not extremely unusual for artists and other "bohemians," was certainly not the norm for the white South African mainstream. And the reverse is true also: few blacks had the kind of relationship with a white man that Zakes Mokae had with Athol Fugard. Fugard knew that his works would play to racially-segregated audiences, and even in the rare instances where the theatres were
integrated, he realized that the audiences would remain racially-polarized. In order to compensate for the ignorance, not to mention the antagonism, of his very divided audience, he had to include passages like the Korsten and Oudtshoorn ones. Ironically, writing for his home audience required the same double focus that is needed to write simultaneously for native and foreign stages. Thus while many critics emphasize the universals underlying Fugard's plays as the factors which enable them to communicate both at home and abroad, no one mentions that the very divisiveness of South African society itself accounts for the same phenomena. Because Fugard wished to be as "courageous as possible in that context in indicting a social system" he had to insure that his works would communicate on both sides of the color bar (Coveney 34). This aspect of his rhetorical situation forced him to adopt rhetorical strategies to compensate for the wide gulf separating white from non-white in South Africa.

Rhetorical Techniques Used in The Blood Knot

For many audiences, the most stirring of all of Fugard's dramas is one of the earliest, The Blood Knot. And, as Kim McKay has explained, the twenty-fifth year revival of the play appeared to move New York audiences
as strongly as it did Port Elizabeth ones in 1961 (496). In fact, the drama seems to possess an even greater urgency than it originally did, which Fugard attributes to the deteriorated situation in South Africa:

The play was written 25 years ago and there was a kind of prophecy in it that if the South African people didn't sort things out, something terrible would happen. And it has. The experience of these brothers, the journey of self-discovery, the terribly dangerous game they play is not as innocent as it was 25 years ago. Because South Africa has lost its innocence. All its innocence. (Freedman 21)

Despite Kenneth Tynan's original prediction that the play and playwright would not last, The Blood Knot has proven itself to be an enduring and effective drama.15

Set in Korsten, a non-white settlement in Port Elizabeth, the play dramatizes the lives of two Coloured brothers, Morrie and Zach. Morrie has come home after several years absence to live with his brother in a one-room shack. For an audience unfamiliar with the racial situation in South Africa, it might initially appear that the two men are unrelated, for Morrie (originally played by Fugard) is light-skinned, and his brother (performed by Zakes Mokae) is dark.16

As the play opens, the audience hears an alarm clock ring and observes Morrie leap to his feet and go
purposefully about a set routine of household tasks in anticipation of his laborer-brother's return from work. One of his tasks is to prepare a foot bath for Zach, and this action neatly sums up both the care he takes of his brother and the new regimen of cleanliness and order he has imposed upon him. In the year that he has lived with Zach, Morrie has given his brother's once-aimless life direction and purpose. The two are saving to buy a small farm, and to accomplish this goal, Morrie has decreed a strict program of thriftiness and self-denial. For Zach, however, life has become all but empty. Far less-educated and ambitious than his eloquent brother, Zach has found it difficult to forgo those few comforts--drink, women, music--that previously made life bearable or, at least, forgettable. Only Morrie's constant talk--cajoling, reminiscing, imagining--keeps Zach from exploding in rage about his joyless life.

Zach's unhappiness finally convinces Morrie that some small measure must be taken to keep his brother from abandoning the plan for a better life. Such is Morrie's role in the drama and in the family: Zach brings in the money, but Morrie portions it out, plans for the future, and enforces the strict routine of deprivation and dreaming in an effort to win a chance to escape the one-room shanty. Morrie recognizes, however, that his ability to appease his brother merely
through talk and promises of better times ahead is limited. He comes up with the perfect plan of getting Zach a female pen-pal, one who can provide his brother with the feminine companionship he craves without interfering in Morrie's designs.

The idea seems promising, especially when Zach learns that Miss Ethel Lange is "eighteen and well-developed," but this harmless pastime explodes when the brothers receive a letter from Ethel with a snapshot enclosed. Ethel, of course, is white; Zach, who is illiterate, had mistakenly taken the address from a "whites only" newspaper. For a South African audience, well aware of the Immorality Act, the moment of discovery is portentous. For foreign audiences, the specifics of the legislation barring sexual interaction between persons of different races may be unknown, but the dramatic tension is so great at this point that it clues them into the futility of the correspondence.

After Fugard has established his characters' dilemma, he uses the problem to dramatize the antagonism between the brothers that is a direct result of having different colored skins in a society where such differences are fraught with implications. Zach realizes that Morrie could pass himself off as a white man, and so he convinces him to spend their savings on new clothing. When Ethel comes to visit—as she has
promised to do in her subsequent letter—Morrie can meet her as the white Mr. Zachariah Pietersen. Morrie reluctantly agrees, for even he cannot resist the temptation of trying to "pass over," but after the money is spent on a new suit and all the trappings of the well-dressed man, a third letter arrives. Ethel, really more a common trollop than the fine lady Morrie has imagined her to be, has decided to marry her town-bully boyfriend and must therefore cancel her visit and all future correspondence. Left with only a set of new but useless clothes, the brothers spend the rest of the play acting out, in brutally realistic fashion, the roles of white boss and black servant. When the game reveals the real bitterness each brother feels toward the other, it is called to a halt. Nevertheless, Morrie concludes that "it's a good thing we got the game. It will pass the time, because we got a lot left, you know. I'm not too worried. I mean other men get by without a future. In fact, I think there's quite a lot of people getting by without futures these days" (96).

Robert Green has commented on The Blood Knot; he says,

And yet, despite the setting and the pigmentation of the play's two characters, The Blood Knot is not merely a dramatization of the evils of apartheid: of course the play is firmly embedded in a particular and specific environment, but
Athol Fugard has transcended the immediate and topical issues of political and racial injustice by writing a play that has universal resonances. The play's universality, however, does not weaken or disable it as a commentary upon contemporary South Africa; indeed both the play and its author are deeply engaged with that world: in fact The Blood Knot can be seen as an allegory of politics in South Africa; and Fugard himself, though abhorring apartheid, has publicly stated his intention of continuing to live in the country of his birth. (331)\(^1\)

Green is describing the tension between the artistic ends of the play and the political ones, and while it is the former accomplishment that will ensure a lasting place for The Blood Knot long after the specific problems of apartheid have been solved, it is the second goal—the communication of political opinions—that is of concern to the rhetorical critic.

In each of his apartheid dramas, Fugard faces the same critical problem: how to make the context of the play, based on a reality unknown to foreign audiences and unpleasant to native ones, understandable. After he has solved this difficulty, he immediately encounters another. Fugard must next determine how to impart his political vision to his audience. He must, in rhetorical terms, devise strategies that will help his audience to be persuaded to think critically about apartheid. He must, in short, "discover the available means of persuasion" (Rhetoric 3). In regard to The Blood Knot,
these problems can be re-phrased more specifically. The first issue is really a matter of exposition, a problem common to all dramas, but much more pronounced in one based on a specific political situation and bent on making a specific political statement. In The Blood Knot, Fugard must communicate the following givens: segregated residential areas, being coloured (as opposed to black), work situations, the Immorality Act. Once the audience is in possession of these facts, Fugard must insure that they will be evaluated in light of his political vision. He must, for example, demonstrate not just the existence of segregation but its heinousness; not just the fact of the Immorality Act, but its fascism. Obviously these are not separate, sequential acts; the process of providing needed information is simultaneous with the persuasive process.

In meeting these challenges, Fugard is essentially solving a rhetorical problem. In the Korsten and Oudtshoorn passages described earlier, he has constructed these scenes according to the psychology of the audience, according to what his spectators need to be told. These scenes are similar to ones that Booth speaks about in The Rhetoric of Fiction:

In many completely dramatic works there are scenes which are obviously rhetorical in intent. Sometimes Ibsen uses such scenes simply
to make the play more easily intelligible, but sometimes they are used to argue for ideas that the spectator must understand and at least tentatively entertain if he is to grasp the play. (101)

Additionally, Fugard has a burden that prose writers do not: he cannot digress or damage the immediacy of his scene. For this reason, it is very important that Fugard's rhetorical strategies be smoothly integrated into the play's structure. He must, as Burke would insist, allow the form of the play to exert the appeal.

What are the strategies that Fugard employs to accomplish exposition and begin persuasion? In one interview, Fugard acknowledged one ready-made technique. He comments as follows:

You know if I was Ionesco I most probably would have given the second one of the brothers two noses, or I would have given him three ears, four eyes, or two heads, if I was a writer in that tradition. South Africa, though, gave me a little device by virtue of which I could highlight that distinction between you and me, the separateness of two existences, simply by taking what is a fact in South Africa—that from the one mother, from the one "coloured" mother, as we understand "coloured" in South Africa (mulatto, in other words, a woman of mixed breed) there could be two children of very radically different skin color. And that device for me in the play, although it then does operate in terms of making a statement at a certain level about South African society, was really just used in a way to say there are two different existences, and one feels terribly responsible and terribly guilty about the other, and he
makes a fuck-up and a mess-up of the other's life by virtue of an attempt to come to terms with those guilts and responsibilities for the other existence. (Marks 69)

This device is, however, peculiar to The Blood Knot. Fugard has forged other strategies which work not only in this play but in many later works. Some of these strategies are literary devices used for rhetorical purposes; they include the use of settings, images, story-telling episodes, tutorial relationships, and game-playing. Other, more overtly rhetorical strategies, include the use of the emotional and ethical appeals. In every instance, these strategies are used to build a "rhetorical bridge" between the play and the audience. At the most fundamental level, they help make sense of confusing topical references, but more importantly, they guide the viewer to an appropriate understanding and assessment of the political situation described. In Fugard's case, the rhetoric enables the audience to understand how apartheid ultimately victimizes all who live in South Africa, especially the black man, but also the white.

Setting. Virtually every Fugard play uses a simple and single dramatic setting. This fact, as I discussed previously, was initially the consequence of lack of finances, but Fugard has kept his stages bare for
rhetorical reasons as well. In *The Blood Knot*, the setting of a barely-furnished shack with two beds, a table and two chairs, walls covered with corrugated tin, flattened cardboard boxes and old Hessian bags, immediately gives the audience an idea of the economic class of the two characters. The fact that the room is not just filled with rubbish but literally constructed out of it tells the viewer that the squalor of the makeshift room is the result not just of poverty but also of displacement. The setting immediately informs a South African audience that they are in a location shanty; to a non-South African, it calls to mind the temporary housing of squatters or migrants. Before a single word has been spoken, the visual impact of the setting lets the spectators know that they are in a world where men's lives are marked by poverty and interruption.

This setting does not change throughout the play; the audience never sees either brother leave the room, and no one else ever enters it. The isolation, coupled with the cramped quarters, establishes a feeling of claustrophobia. Drawn into the cheerlessness of the room and the dismal sameness of the men's lives, the audience begins to feel the confinement that has prompted Morrie to dream of a farm and Zach to dream of a girl. By returning again and again--through seven scenes--to the
same tiny cell, the audience begins to understand how
trapped the brothers really are.  

In order to make his political point, Fugard needs
to establish that this room is not exceptional, that it
is one of many just like it, all housing equally
destitute, equally desperate black men and women. He
accomplishes this bit of exposition by having Morrie
describe the world outside the shanty. To make the
description more credible, he places it in the context of
Zach criticizing Morrie for always staying indoors.
Taking offense, Morrie answers in a way that is
believable yet at the same time gives the audience a
picture of what a South African location is like:

You think I like it here more than you? You
should have been here this afternoon. The wind
was blowing again. Coming this way it was, right
across the lake. You should have smelt it. I'm
telling you that water has gone bad. Really
rotten! And what about the factories there on the
other side? Hey? And the lavatories all around
us? They've left no room for a man to breathe.
Go out, you say. But go out where? On to the
streets? Are they any better? Where do they lead?
Nowhere. That's my lesson. City streets lead
nowhere...just corners and lamp-posts. And roads
are no different, let me tell you...only longer,
and no corners and no lamp-posts which, in a way,
is even worse. I mean...I've seen them, haven't
I? Leading away into the world--the big empty
world. (10)

This passage is an important one not only because it
describes the outside world but also because it establishes the brothers' room as emblematic of the houses and townships where all black South Africans are forced to live. It also is the first reference to the unseen presence which will grow more apparent as the play proceeds: the ubiquitous "they," the people who have "left no room for a man to breathe." Barely minutes into the drama, Fugard has combined visual image and imaginative description to say to the audience: "These are the horrifying living conditions of black South Africans."

**Image.** In the play it is Morrie's habit to gaze abstractedly out the window. There he observes two important phenomena: he notes that moths are always attracted to the whiteness of light, and he watches white birds circling over the polluted lake. By the drama's end, the moths have become potent images for Morrie and Zach's destructive tendency to be attracted to whiteness.²⁰

The birds flying overhead provide an even more potent symbol for race relations in South Africa. Despite its "smell of rotting waters," the lake is a "remarkable sheet of water" which always remains the same color, a dirty brown, no matter what the day's conditions. Morrie notices further that the white birds fly around the brown water but "never get dirty from it"
(14). The analogy is transparent: the whites are like the pristine birds, able to circle over the stinking rot of decaying flesh, of men dying physically and spiritually, and remain untouched by it. That the birds remain oddly beautiful to the brothers complicates the image further and points to one of the more complex aspects of the drama's psychopathology. The oppressor, despite what he has done, remains inexplicably attractive to his victims. That the birds come to the lake unexpectedly and intrusively suggests again that aspect of the white man's constant, imposing presence referred to earlier. The lake and the birds, like the moths and the light, and in fact, like the two brothers themselves, symbolize the symbiotic, unbalanced, and in some ways, mysterious relationship between whites and blacks.

Gerald Weales has observed that "images is the word that crops up most frequently in Fugard's comments about his own plays" (3). For the playwright, an actual image from real life is often the starting point for his dramas; a lonely traveler was the image Fugard kept in mind while writing The Blood Knot, a wandering hbergie woman was his symbol for Boesman and Lena (Vandenbroucke Truths 37).

In addition to being generative, images are also rhetorical. As Kenneth Burke explains in Counterstatement, an image (or symbol) can, "by its function as
name and definition, give simplicity and order to an otherwise unclarified complexity. It provides a terminology of thoughts, actions, emotions, attitudes for codifying a pattern of experience" (154). Symbols operate persuasively because they can, among other things, "enable us to admit the existence of a certain danger which we had emotionally denied." 22

Fugard's images and symbols clearly function in the way that Burke describes. First, they help an audience to grasp a complex situation by reducing it to a single, stirring image. An abstract, distanced understanding of apartheid as "Afrikaner nationalism" or a policy of "separate, multi-national development" is replaced with a palpable, empathetic understanding of a futureless life, symbolized by a squalid room, or of an unequal balance of power, symbolized by predatory bird. Images, as Burke maintains, reflect "underlying patterns of experience," but they reflect them in an emotionally-charged manner which in turn adds to the persuasive power of the discourse or of the drama (159). Finally, images are easily internalized; they are portable. A student attending a lecture on apartheid might leave with a more complicated understanding of the social system—if he can sort through all that he has been told. But a spectator leaving The Blood Knot will certainly carry with him a deeply-felt impression of the inhumanity of apartheid as
it is expressed by the image of trapped men or the metaphor of the moth and the light. 23

Storytelling. In Modern Dogma and the Rhetoric of Assent, Booth claims that "even the most elaborate literal statements, like Aristotle's Ethics, will always lack the kind of knowing which the great narratives convey" (185). To support this premise, Booth poses possible replies to the question, "How should I live my life?" Scientific answers, full of quantified data, and absurdist answers, replete with metaphysical angst seldom satisfy the questioner. But if a story is told, especially one of the great ones of Job or Lear or Anna Karenina, Booth concludes, the seeker is more than contented. The point is, Booth concludes, "that any literal statement of message loses the special kind of knowing that the stories offer; even the most blatantly didactic fable by Aesop or allegory by Bunyan loses most of its value when we treat it as if it were a statement of its moral rather than a living out of how some problems of life can be represented" (186).

Fugard also incorporates story-telling episodes into The Blood Knot, and as Booth has suggested, they exert a particular kind of rhetorical appeal. Not surprisingly, it is Morrie who is the story-teller. His tales accomplish the following rhetorical tasks: first, they allow the audience to glimpse the world outside the
shanty but by being imaginative journeys rather than actual ones do not diminish the sense of the brothers' entrapment. Secondly, they bring invisible antagonists onto the stage, and in addition to dramatizing the kind of encounters that take place between black and white, reinforce by virtue of the villains' anonymity that the racial conflict is a societal, rather than individual, problem. Finally, as Booth has suggested, the stories offer a kind of proof—via example—of the hatred and mistreatment the brothers have recounted.

Morrie's tales are based on experiences he had while trying to "pass for white." In the first anecdote, he tells what happened to him one day as he was walking along a lonely, barren road. Although he saw a possible traveling companion ahead, he maintained his distance until night began to fall and then naturally hurried his pace. The closer he came to the man, however, the more worried Morrie became. "There was something about him, about the way he walked," Morrie recalls to Zach, and he soon learned that this ominous "something" is that the man is white and therefore automatically expects some sort of struggle. In fact, he had already armed himself with a stout stick and was ready to land a good blow except that Morrie passed peaceably by. The story is told as much for the audience's benefit as for Zach's. It depicts rampant paranoia and grave mistrust between the
races. It demonstrates the unlooked-for violence that haunts the black man.

In case the audience has not gotten the full gist of the story, Fugard has Morrie mull it over aloud. The odd part about the meeting, Morrie tells Zach and the audience, is that the two men had traveled the same road harmoniously together for several hours, but despite this act of "good faith," for neither lacked the opportunity of doing harm to the other, suspicion prevailed. In his final long speech of the play, Morrie offers a prayer that is a variant of the "Our Father": it is one that he should have said that day on the road:

let Your kingdom come as quick as it can, for Yours is the power and the glory, but ours is the fear and the judgment of eyes behind our back for the sins of our birth and the man behind the tree in darkness while I wait. (95)

Morrie's story, like his prayer, communicates to the audience more powerfully than any fact sheet or political tract could the fear that is a constant in every black South African's life, the fear of unfounded suspicion, the fear of further disenfranchisement, and the fear of unwarranted violence.

Morrie's second story tells of his trip to Oudtshoorn, the place where Zach's penpal, Ethel, lives. Initially,
before either brother knows that Ethel is white, Morrie tells the story to rouse Zach's interest in having a penpal. His description of Oudtshoorn is unwittingly ironic. It is in the "dusty uplands of the Karoo," a "dry country" that is "white," with "white thorns and the bushes gray and broken off." In fact, as Morrie reminisces about the place, he concludes that it seems a curious one to find a friendly correspondent, for it didn't seem "a pally sort of place at all." In fact, he passed straight the village since since he "didn't make no friends there" (25).

Morrie's story takes on fuller meaning a bit later in the action. By the fourth scene, the brothers have learned the awful truth of their mistake, and thinking over this unexpected turn of events, Morrie asks himself where the "good times in a man's life" go. For Zach, the question is meaningless; the mere struggle to survive has obliterated all memories. Therefore, when Morrie poses a philosophical question, "where do the bad times come from," Zach has a practical answer: they come from Oudtshoorn. In his simplicity, Zach is giving a straight-forward answer about the cause of their present troubles, but, as the audience recognizes, he also has unknowingly addressed the larger issue. The bad times in a black man's life come from places, like Oudtshoorn, where white people live. Just as the shanty represents the
prison/haven of a black man's narrow existence, Oudtshoorn becomes a symbol of menace. This reality—of a white man's sudden and usually violent intrusion into the black man's life and of the black man's helplessness in the face of this intrusion—has already been hinted at by the story of the lonely road; it is emphasized by the second narrative episode, and it will be further illustrated by the bit of play—acting that the brothers do at the drama's end.

**Tutorial Relationship.** Fugard's dramas usually consist of only two or three characters, and in most plays, one figure is clearly (or temporarily) in command of greater insight, greater knowledge, or greater information than the other. This seemingly wiser character assumes a leadership role in the drama; he acts as a teacher. During the "lessons" that take place, two ends are accomplished: the secondary character is schooled in some insight, and the audience is given information essential to an understanding of the drama. The dynamic of the tutorial relationship allows the author to put into one character's mouth the objections that members of the audience might have. Into the other's mouth, he puts his answers. In rhetorical terms, what is occurring is the establishment of some kind of bridge of shared knowledge between the playwright and the audience. Again, as Burke pointed out, no act of persuasion can take place unless there is some degree of
mutually-held information; there must be some common ground on which consensus can be built, and the tutorial relationship helps provide this common ground.

While this "tutorial" technique could certainly be regarded as an artificial, theatrical means of conveying information, its use is actually supported by actual conditions in South African life. As I have described in Chapter Four, the separation of the population into four racial groups has produced as one of its consequences not only the usual kind of misunderstanding that occurs between whites and non-whites but also a more severe kind of distrust that polarizes all segments of the population. Thus the Coloured South African, who is brown, has little knowledge of, and some contempt for the Bantu or black South African. Indians and Asians are regarded with similar suspicion.

In addition to the color bar which separates the racial groups, there are, as I have indicated, the economic and geographic factors which divide the South African population. Few non-whites would have money, or for that matter, reason for travel, and, like Zach, many live out their entire life in the place of their birth. Thus while it might seem slightly incredible to a non-South African audience that one character must actually teach another some rather rudimentary facts about their own country, the South African tradition of legally-
imposed and socially-upheld segregation has naturally resulted in this kind of ignorance. Zach's innocence and Morrie's savvy are defensible characterizations.

As a South African, Fugard was well-aware when he wrote The Blood Knot of the ignorance caused by racial segregation. He turns this misunderstanding to his advantage, however, in two consecutive scenes of the drama. The first, which takes place in Scene Three, has Morrie and Zach reminiscing about their mother and about their childhood. The question that each poses to the other, "Don't you remember," can well be regarded as a query posed to the audience, "Don't you know?"

Interestingly, the same information is imparted twice, and each time it reaches a different audience. The information given, the facts of racial classification in South Africa, is told to the audience both in English and in Afrikaans.

Despite the fact that Morrie has fancied himself the consummate realist, his memories of his mother are purely romantic. He recalls a woman in a gray dress, going to church and singing lullabies. Zach, on the other hand, has a far more vivid memory of a woman wracked by hard work, wearing ill-fitting shoes and making daily visits to the butcher shop for scraps of refuse. This mother also sang to her child, but her songs were not the idyllic nursery rhymes that Morrie recalls. Much like a
blues singer, Zach's mother sang of her bitter fate:

My skin is black
The soap is blue
But the washing comes out white.

I took a man
On a Friday night;
Now I'm washing a baby too.

Just a little bit black,
And a little bit white,
He's a Capie through and through. (48)

By now the audience knows that a child of mixed blood is a Coloured and that being partially white counts for nothing. It is that drop of impure black blood that dictates a child's future, and that future is to be a "Capie," a Cape Coloured, "through and through."

The second time that they remember their childhood, however, it is Morrie's turn to be the realist. He recalls a jingle that, like many children's rhymes, innocently but cruelly, taunts the South African black, calling him a "kaffir" or "nigger." This time it is Zach's turn to feel the sting. Although it is in Afrikaans, the jingle is practically recognizable in English. With Zach's English responses and with a gesture or two, the rhyme would, in fact, be accessible to anyone in the audience, but the fact that it is told in the language of the oppressor, of the "baas," is still
driven home. This jingle not only refers to what it means to be Coloured, but it also alludes to the pass laws. Morrie begins the song:

Kaffertjie, Kaffertjie, waar is jou pas?  
(Nigger, Nigger, where is your pass?)

To which Zach responds:

But my old man was a white man.

And Morrie replies:

Maar, jou ma was 'n Bantoe  
So dis nou jou ras.  
(But your mother was a Bantu,  
So that's now your race.)

Zach's final response is, "That hurt" (52). The interchange is important for both theatrical and rhetorical reasons. Dramatically, it prepares the audience for the next scene, one of the most powerful in the drama, where Morrie, continuing his role as schoolmaster will force Zach to acknowledge the harsh truths of the jingles. Rhetorically, it does two things. It reminds the audience of the pain that is unique to persons of mixed race and of the suffering imposed by the pass laws which not only control movement but form personal identity. As Fugard dramatizes even more vividly in Sizwe Bansi is Dead, in the eyes of the law, the non-white person is only the sum of his pass book notations. The final effect of the jingle is subtly
to suggest to the spectator the extent, indicated by the use of a child's song, to which the black man's anguish is simply invisible or inconsequential to the white man.

The first two aspects of South African life that the jingles refer to may be regarded, in rhetorical terms, as more informative than persuasive. But the last point, that oppression is so common that it is the stuff of children's rhymes and that it does, in reality, "hurt," comes closer to making a directly persuasive statement. As the viewer searches for the "implied values of the author" (Booth, Rhetoric 72), it is at this point in the play that he might review the "case" the drama has built. There are the "facts" that have been placed for the audience's perusal: the claustrophobic existence of the one-room shanty which, in turn, represents the limited choices available to the black man; the constant threat of intrusion, often violent, from whites, and the lack of legal or social recourse if unjustly treated; the frequent acts of degradation to which the black man is subjected through reminders that he is only and always a "kaffir"; the immobility imposed by the pass laws; and the simple difficulty of economic survival. On the whole, these facts have been laid before the audience without editorial comment, but it takes no great effort to connect them and Zach's cry of pain to an inescapable conclusion: that apartheid oppresses, that it
dehumanizes, that it incarcerates. Needless to say, it
takes an even smaller effort to recognize these facts
for what they really are: condemnations of the political
system. The power of this drama, then, lies partially in
Fugard's skill in forcing an audience to look upon and
acknowledge a number of social realities that they may
well have wished to ignore. It lies, too, in depicting
the moral repugnance of this reality without ever
creating a character whose function is to serve as an
ideological mouthpiece. Fugard's dramas, illustrating as
they do the efficacy of indirect persuasion, provide a
trenchant rebuttal to those who contend that art, with
its veiled rather than blunt statements, is less powerful
than oratory.

Although it is difficult to imagine that the
judgments being made about apartheid have not already
been driven home to the audience, the fourth scene
provides the playwright with an opportunity to reinforce
once more his contention that, as Morrie says, there is
nothing that a "man can say or pray that will change the
colour of his skin or blind them to it" (58). This scene
is the most forceful dramatization of the lesson that
each character—and the audience—must learn by the
play's end: if you are black, you have no hope. Once
again, Fugard uses a "tutorial" relationship to make this
point.
By the fourth scene, Zach and Morrie have received a second letter from Ethel, in which she has promised to visit Korsten in the next few months. Zach, so pitifully confident that nothing would ever come of his game of "playing with whiteness," now turns to Morrie in desperation. Morrie, of course, is severe; there is no escape from this dilemma, and the consequences are dire:

When they get their hands on a dark-born boy playing with a white idea, you think they don't find out what he's been dreaming at night? They have ways and means, my friend. Mean ways. Like confinement in a cell, on bread and water, for days without end. All they need for evidence is a man's dreams. Not so much his hate. They say they can live with that (59).

Zach, distraught by Morrie's predictions of torture and prison (and a South African audience would recognize that because of the Immorality Act these are not merely scare tactics while a foreign audience would wonder at a system where the punishment so exceeds the crime), begs his brother to help him, but Morrie will do so only if Zach gives up his illusions. Like a harsh schoolmaster, he insists on a review of the "facts," and so Morrie begins his recitation, "Ethel is white. I am black" (59).

From this starting point, Morrie forces Zach—and the audience—to see all of the implications of a white-
black affair, thus coercing his brother into bluntly assessing what will happen when he and Ethel finally meet. She will be, Zach agonizingly admits, more than simply "surprised" that Zach is Coloured; and she will, in fact, do more than simply "laugh" or even "swear" at him; she will scream as though she has met a deformed and dangerous creature. Nor will her screams go unheard. To her rescue the "others" will come, the "uncles with fists" and the "brothers in boots." They will "ransack" Zach, and he will have nowhere to turn for help. The law will not protect him; flight will be his only answer. When Zach finally realizes the desperateness of his situation, Morrie approves:

That's better, and bitter of course. I realize that. You see we're digging up the roots of what's the matter with you now. I know they're deep; that's why it hurts. But we must get them out. Once the roots are out, this thing will die and never grow again. You're lucky, Zach. (60-1)

But like the teacher who knows that repetition leads to mastery, Morrie does not stop here. He forces Zach to repeat all that he has learned, that "Ethel is so...so snow white. And I am too...truly...too black" (61).

More like a revivalist preacher than a teacher now, Morrie encourages Zach to "let it hurt" and to swallow the "bitter pill" of self-knowledge. A third time, he
forces Zach to repeat his lesson and to add the note of final acceptance, which Zach does. "I can never have her," he states, and then, more significantly, "She wouldn't want me anyway. She's too white to want me anyway, so I won't want her any more." By the end of this declaration, Zach, exhausted and weeping, begs for a halt to the session. He has finally seen that the heart of his problem is not his loneliness, not his bone-wearying job, not even his aching feet or his joyless nights with Morrie, but rather, "the whole, stinking lot is all because I'm black" (62).

This scene could well end the drama; if the curtain were drawn here, the audience would surely leave with a profound sense of desperately-lived lives, and of men existing on meager dreams which come to naught. But if cut here, The Blood Knot would not convey the psychological complexity that Fugard wishes, and, incredibly, the vision rendered would not be black enough. Fugard, like Hopkins, writes of a "pitch past pain," and this pitch requires dramatizing not only how apartheid eats away at the basics of human existence, but how it devours men's souls. Life under apartheid engenders such self-loathing that even the solace usually found in the simplest type of self-acceptance is denied the black man. In the fourth scene, the audience has been compelled to witness the devastating sight of a
disintegrating man, one forced to admit that because of his color, he is actually repulsive to other humans, and there is no way of turning back this repugnance. But Fugard undercuts Morrie's belief that once this bitter truth is recognized, peace will follow. He will allow no such self-delusion, either for Zach or for his viewers. In the remaining scenes of the play Fugard shows the audience what happens to a man when he turns the revulsion he feels inward. In dramatizing this inevitable growth in self-hatred involves another rhetorical device, the use of the ethical and the emotional appeal.

**Ethical Appeal** The "tutorial" relationship that exists between the two brothers is credible in *The Blood Knot* because the audience accepts the fact that, because of his light-colored skin, Morrie has had greater chance for travel, for education, and for interaction among whites. Thus his presence on the stage is a more commanding one, and there are several reasons why he is such an impressive personality. His quick intelligence, his love of poetry, his ability to sacrifice to attain goals, his preference for order, and his compassion for his brother are all qualities which win the audience's approval and admiration. Most importantly, they make him acceptable to the audience as a spokesperson for moral values. Morrie exerts what Aristotle has called the ethical appeal.
In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle explains that persuasion may be achieved by any one of three kinds of appeal. The first, *logos* or the rational appeal, is the "apparent proof" which is provided "by the words of the speech itself." The emotional appeal, or *pathos*, is achieved when the speaker is able to put "the audience in a certain frame of mind." The third type, *ethos*, which Aristotle claims can be the most effective, depends "on the character of the speaker" (24).

In literature, the ethical appeal may be exerted in one of two ways. First, the writer's reputation may precede him; hence a reader takes up a particular work with a pre-conceived notion of what to find contained therein. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, for example, will be read for his protest against some of the brutalities practiced by the Soviet government; James Baldwin will be read for his sympathetic portrayal of the black American. More commonly, however, the writer's reputation may be either unknown or unassociated with a given ideology. Today, Fugard habitually is described as a South African dissident, but at the time he wrote *The Blood Knot*, he had no such international reputation. Consequently, the source of the ethical appeal in *The Blood Knot* is not located in the author's reputation but rather in the second means of exerting this type of
appeal, in the creation of a character who will articulate the implied values of the work.

Aristotle wrote that for a speaker to be credible, he must appear before his audience as a man of good sense, good moral character, and good will (91). "We believe good men more fully and more readily than others," Aristotle claimed; "this is generally true whatever the question is, and absolutely true where exact certainty is impossible and opinions are divided" (25). Clearly, Morrie embodies all three qualities of the ethical speaker, and so it is not surprising that until the midpoint of the drama, his character predominates, and his judgments guide those reached by the audience. Because Morrie has seen life from both sides, as a Coloured and, mistakenly, as a White, he also exerts the "appeal of the expert" since few others would be in the position to speak from personal experience about life on both sides of the color bar (Burke, CS 176).

In addition to establishing himself as an authority, Morrie is clearly a man of good character. His nightly ritual of bible-reading, his thriftiness, and his dream of a life of honest, hard-working self-reliance are all qualities which win the audience's good opinion. The means that Morrie employs to obtain his goal, all of the careful budgeting and hopeful planning, serve only to increase this approval. Clearly, Morrie is the kind of
capable, ambitious, prudent man who would command respect in any arena, but that he has done so even under the most onerous of conditions gives greater testimony to his abilities. Again, were the play to end at mid-point, the audience would be well-satisfied with this portrait of a heroic, solitary man struggling, despite insurmountable odds, to achieve a sense of personal dignity. Even for the most rigid promoters of apartheid, Morrie is an admirable figure. His dream of the two-man farm is not a dream of power or enfranchisement; it is simply a goal of a separate, self-reliant life.

Of course, the play does not end at mid-point, and the final character Fugard creates, while sympathetic in many respects, is no tragic hero. Morrie's flaws become apparent, but as they do, it is evident how bound his personality is to the political reality, try as he may to escape it. In revealing Morrie's limitations, Fugard alters the audience's evaluation of Zach. Instead of being simply a common man, with few aspirations and fewer talents, Zach becomes, in the final episode of the play, its new spokesperson, albeit a less articulate one.

**Emotional Appeal.** If Morrie has gained respect by the loftiness of his dreams, Zach does so by his realism. What Fugard has done to create this impression is to change from using only the ethical appeal exerted by a single character to devising a situation which, because
of its complexity, not the least of which is illustrated through the change in the major character, stirs the audience's emotions and becomes, ultimately, more suasive than the ethical appeal alone. By setting up the dramatic situation of the latter half of the play as one of mutually revealing antagonism, anguish, and futility, Fugard aims to stir the audience to feelings of pity and of outrage. He has moved firmly from the ethical appeal to the emotional appeal.

The term for the emotional appeal, pathos, derives from πάσχειν meaning to suffer and experience. It literally means, as James Murphy has stated, a "state of being acted upon, that is experience" (45). The audience is indeed acted upon in the last three scenes of the play: Morrie's hope of getting out of Korsten has been blasted, and the audience must now watch a spectacle of anger and self-loathing. In case the audience does not put the play together, Fugard provides them with a final statement when Morrie says, "There's quite a lot of people getting by without futures these days" (96).

By the end of The Blood Knot, then, the audience is moved more by the circumstances that the characters are in than by the characters themselves (though this distinction cannot be too broadly argued for one technique surely reinforces the other). In fact, Aristotle's comments about what moves an audience to
feelings of pity reads like a virtual description of the final events of the drama. Pity, writes Aristotle, is a feeling of pain caused by the sight of some evil, destructive or painful, which befalls one who does not deserve it, and which we might expect to befall ourselves or some friend of ours, and moreover to befall us soon. (113)

Aristotle goes on to say that "in order to feel pity we must also believe in the goodness of some people; if you think nobody good, you will believe that everybody deserves evil fortune" (113). This last point is important in evaluating how The Blood Knot evokes responses from different groups within the audience. If it is true, as Aristotle claimed, that an appeal occurs whenever a sense of a similar, imminent disaster is felt by the spectator, then it is conceivable that a drama like The Blood Knot will have no discernible effect on the callous man who feels himself immune from the problem. Neither Burke nor Aristotle ever argued that persuasion must succeed at any price, and it is, unfortunately, a fact that some are able to remain unmoved by any kind of suffering that is not their own. Nevertheless, the universal resonances that underlie the particulars of the drama are meant to offset this unfeeling reaction. The play suggests that any type of oppression, whether it is
the legally-sanctioned racism of apartheid or the socially-acceptable racism of prejudice or even another form of persecution altogether, preys on its victims in subtle, unseen ways that ultimately inflict greater pain than mere physical deprivation.

Aristotle did contend, however, that many viewers may be moved simply by the sight of a good man, though in a situation vastly different from their own, who has had evil unfairly befall him. This insight points to one of the complexities of Fugard's dramatic construction. The playwright knew that the ethical appeal had to precede the emotional one if the play's psychological complexity was to be appreciated. He intuitively realized that the form of the drama also exerted a persuasive appeal. Obviously, the audience had to be convinced of the viability of Morrie's dreams and to believe with the two brothers that a better life was really possible, if they are to feel with the characters the anguish of dashed hope. A lesser writer, one more given to "pamphleteering," would probably have chosen to forgo the psychological dynamics of the drama in favor of making a more overt political point. It would have been enough for a lesser playwright to say merely, "Apartheid oppresses through denying men opportunities for jobs, for relationships, for physical comforts." Communicating such obvious truths, while politically effective, is
insufficient for a dramatist of Fugard's ability; he has chosen, by undermining the ethical appeal and re-establishing the emotional, to depict the more hidden, but more insidious, ways that apartheid destroys a man's sense of personal esteem and in doing so, robs him of the hope necessary to make changes.

Gameplaying. By the play's end, the spectator finds himself back with Morrie and Zach in their narrow, inescapable little room. With skillful symmetry, Fugard ends the drama much as he began it, with the alarm ringing. No longer does the noise signal another day of planning and dreaming; there is no more money to count, no point in poring over the map to find the perfect location for the farm. With nothing left for them to do, the brothers begin to play a game of mimicry.

The game is a brutal one. The brothers impersonate a white baas and his black worker. Morrie, as the boss, begins by taunting Zach but ends by beating him. Had the alarm clock not sounded, jolting them back to reality, the assault would have continued.

On one level the scene emphasizes again the way that racism leads to self-hatred. Rhetorically, game-playing allows Fugard to bring the oppressor on stage and to have the audience witness what he is like. By having a character impersonate the antagonist, Fugard avoids turning his play into an easily-dismissible
melodrama. He also economically portrays both oppressor and the victim's view of the oppressor in a single stroke, and this artistry keeps the drama from becoming propaganda.

The techniques Fugard has made use of in *The Blood Knot*, because they are so skillfully devised, serve both the writer's dramatic and rhetorical ends. In each instance, the device used to assist the reader in understanding the world of the play and to accept the play's values is harmonious with the dramatic action. Instead of including long, polemical speeches in his plays, Fugard has so constructed the dramas that the audience is drawn actively into them both as witness and as judge. The rhetorical use of setting, for example, forces the spectator to acknowledge the character's particular situation as emblematic of the larger problem of institutionalized racism. The rhetorical use of story-telling and game-playing, on the other hand, compels an even more active role, as the spectator makes the appropriate connections and conclusions. The vividness of Fugard's depiction of life under apartheid gives his plays a polemical candor; the intensity with which he has shown these brutalities to be man-made make them outraged protests. No spectator can leave the drama unmoved by either the candor or the protest.
Rhetorical Techniques in Fugard's Other Apartheid Dramas

As I indicated in Chapter Four, part of Fugard's response to his rhetorical situation has been to write dramas that target specific pieces of South African legislation for attack. At times, as in The Blood Knot, the laws are not explicitly mentioned but are nevertheless severely protested. At others, the criticism is more open. In Sizwe Bansi is Dead, for example, Fugard condemns the pass laws by depicting the troubles of a black worker who cannot find employment because he does not have the right stamp in his book. Statements after an Arrest under the Immorality Act dramatizes, as its name suggests, what happens when a white woman and a black man become involved in a sexual affair. Boesman and Lena depicts the common plight of homeless South Africans, displaced because of the Group Areas Act. The Island takes the audience inside the notorious prison at Robben Island where political prisoners are detained; in this case, the two inmates are jailed for burning their passbooks. Like an earlier drama, The Coat, The Island also makes reference to the Suppression of Communism Act (Vandenbroucke, Love 20). Although all of these plays are grounded in a specific political reality, they still attempt to portray the particular injustice against the larger backdrop of universal evil.
Fugard's more recent works, such as *Master Harold and the Boys*, *A Lesson from Aloes*, and *The Road to Mecca*, continue to dramatize the dehumanizing effects of apartheid but do not focus on specific government laws. *Master Harold* demonstrates how racism grows in a young boy, *Aloes* shows the agony of a liberal Afrikaner, and *Mecca* explores the conflicts between the English white and the Afrikaner white.

Whether the plays look at a specific aspect of the South African political reality or whether they look more broadly at the situation, Fugard still faced the problem that he confronted in writing *The Blood Knot* of making his subject understandable to different kinds of audiences. In fact, as Fugard's international reputation increased, so did his rhetorical problem. If he assumed a South African audience, he usually encountered two reactions: his dramas were too radical (to the white minority, for example) or they were not radical enough (to Black writers, for example, like Dennis Brutus and Lewis Nkosi). 27 In either case, Fugard was writing for what Aristotle has termed a "hostile" audience. If he were to assume an international audience, Fugard had to take into account their lack of knowledge about the very issues the plays addressed. Having successfully solved both of these problems in *The Blood Knot*, Fugard has re-employed many of the same rhetorical techniques. In the
pages that follow, I will discuss some of the most notable instances of Fugard's continued use of such "devices of disclosure" as setting, image, storytelling, tutorial relationships, game-playing, ethical and emotional appeals.

**Setting: Boesman and Lena, The Island, Statements.**

Just as the shanty in *The Blood Knot* deftly emphasized to the audience the brothers' feelings of confinement and limitation and became, by the end of the play, a symbol of their shrunken horizons, so too the settings of many of Fugard's other works about apartheid help to intensify the emotional world of the play and to emphasize the values communicated through the drama.

Perhaps the most striking example of a setting's power to support the play's assessment of the political reality it is depicting is the staging of *Boesman and Lena*. First produced at the Rhodes University Little Theatre in Grahamstown, South Africa in 1969 and later performed off-Broadway with James Earl Jones and Ruby Dee, the play begins, Godot-like on an empty road. The audience soon realizes, however, that this is not absurdist theatre. A coloured man, Boesman, crosses the bare stage, burdened down with all of his possessions: a mattress, a blanket, a piece of corrugated iron, and an old apple box containing some cooking utensils. Shortly after, Lena enters. Like all bergies, she carries her
burden on her head (Vandenbroucke, Love 90). The rest of the play, again Beckett-like for its lack of dramatic incident, takes place on the desolate spot where the two stop to rest.

What the audience soon realizes is that this forsaken place is just one of many similar sites which Boesman and Lena have tried to make into a home. But as the often repeated litany of their past dwellings—Coega, Veeplaas, Korsten, Kleinskool, Missionvale, Redhouse—suggests, this new place, Swartkops, will be just another temporary dwelling until the whiteman comes with his bulldozer and forces them out.

The emptiness of the setting of Boesman and Lena does more than just inform the audience about displacement; it is also emblematic of the hopelessness of the characters' lives. As Lena sits scraping the mud from between her toes and Boesman scavenges for more cast-offs that can be used to build their pondok, the audience connects scene, theme, and political message: non-white South Africans are simply another aspect of the mud and trash.28 Fugard confirms the audience's intuition, in fact, by putting the message into Boesman's mouth. "We're whiteman's rubbish," he tells Lena, and he figures out why this fact is so irritating to whites: Boesman and Lena—and all non-whites—are a kind of rubbish that can't be gotten rid of permanently. That's
why, Boesman tells his wife, the white man is so "beneukt (mad, fed up) with us. He can't get rid of his rubbish" (277). In his notes, Fugard has written that the visual impact of the setting combined with the image of the destitute couple contains the core of the play's political message. "At one level," he writes, "their predicament is an indictment of this society which makes people rubbish" (Boesman and Lena xxv).

Almost as sparse in its setting is the staging of a later work, The Island. First produced in 1973 and, like Sizwe Bansi, the result of a collaborative effort between Fugard and his actors, Kani and Ntshona, the setting of the play is a bare stage meant to represent a cell on Robben Island. There are few props—only a couple of blankets and sleeping mats, a bucket of water and two tin-mugs. Again, as in Blood Knot, the audience is taken on imaginative journeys out of the cell by means of the characters' story-telling but is always returned to the reality of the small room where the two men seem destined to spend endless years.

Again, the staging of The Island might initially lead the audience to think of absurdist theatre. In fact, though the stage is bare, the story is horrifyingly realistic. The men's tales of their labors, endlessly splitting quarry rocks for no purpose, digging and re-filling sandholes, though they seem like the punishment
imposed on Sisyphus, are virtual transcriptions of actual life on Robben Island. For South Africans, the near-mythic stature of Nelson Mandela, Robben Island's most famous prisoner, insures that the stories would be understood. Whether Western audiences bring the same level of awareness to the drama is unlikely, but the starkness of the setting and the men's tales combine to make the same persuasive point: life on the Island is meant to crush the spirits of those who have dared voiced opposition to the white majority government.

A third example of effective staging is found in _Statements_., a play which Robert Green has called "politically incisive" (170). Making its world premier in London in 1974, the play opens to reveal a man and a woman sitting naked on a blanket on the floor. The initial scene is tender; the Coloured man is caressing the white woman's hair, but the same scene soon turns nightmarish. The couple are frozen in their embrace as a police-sergeant enters to read a complaint from a neighbor and his own observations from staking out the pair. At the close of his speech, a series of "flash-sequences" catches and freezes the discovered pair in their horror and humiliation. By this time, their nakedness and the nakedness of the setting have merged and become metaphorical. As Frieda Joubert and Errol Philander try desperately to defend themselves against
the charges of the Immorality Act, it is clear that they are as defenseless as they are naked. Even a couple's most intimate moments are subject to government harassment and stricture; the setting re-enforces Fugard's point that there is no escaping the ubiquitous, voyeuristic government.

Image and Emotional Appeal: Boesman and Lena, Sizwe Bansi. Related to the use of evocative settings is Fugard's rich handling of dramatic images. In many of his plays, as in the scenes from Statements described above, he freezes a particular moment to produce a tableau vivant, and the image becomes indelibly stamped into the audience's memory. The rhetorical dynamic at work here is the one I discussed in reference to images in The Blood Knot: the playwright, by focusing on a representative, memorable, and portable image allows this mental picture to wordlessly convey the persuasive message. The rhetorician, like an adept advertising executive, knows that humans respond deeply to strong visual images; the most efficacious appeal that can be made on behalf of the world's needy is simply a picture of a mute plea from a hungry child's eyes. In much the same way, Fugard has created stirring images that are striking examples of effective emotional appeal. Lena, her neck rigid with the burden she must carry, is one powerful example. Her weary self-reproach, "Put your
life on your head and walk," merely reiterates what has already been communicated visually to the audience.

_Sizwe Bansi is Dead_ presents another instance of how the playwright has raised a visual image to a rhetorical level. The setting for this play is slightly more complicated than those of Fugard's other dramas. The scene opens on Styles in his township studio, and there are a substantial number of props, all needed to convey the owner's occupation as part photographer, part dream-maker. The most important prop is also the play's most important image: a larger-than-life-sized photo of Sizwe Bansi.31

The play begins with Styles' opening monologue. A long speech, nearly half the length of the drama, the monologue is itself rhetorically significant for it informs every audience about Styles' former employment in a Ford factory and pointedly tells Western audiences about the effect of foreign-owned multinational corporations on the lives of poor blacks. Styles is finally interrupted by one Robert Zwelinzima. The new customer is actually Sizwe Bansi who has come to Styles for a photograph to send back to his wife in the homelands. Styles convinces the reticent Robert to adopt the pose of the carefree businessman, and when Robert finally does assume such an attitude—pipe in mouth, walking stick in hand—the picture is snapped and the
image is caught in a living photograph for the audience to contemplate.

When the photograph "comes alive," it is Sizwe who speaks, composing a letter to his wife in order to explain the circumstances of his changed identity. His narration becomes stage action, and the audience witnesses the story of a man who, in the process of finding work, realizes that he never will since he does not have the proper worker's permit in his passbook. In fact, his situation is desperate, for his passbook dictates that he must return within a day to his township home. Deciding to drown their sorrows, Sizwe and his mentor-friend, Buntu (played by the same actor who portrays Styles) visit a local bar. As they stumble drunkenly home, one of them stops to urinate only to realize that the pile of rubbish is actually a human being. The pragmatic Buntu forces Sizwe to admit that his name is nothing compared to a chance to support his family, and so the switch is made: the dead man's passbook is exchanged with Sizwe Bansi's.

After the story is told, the audience is returned to the sight of Sizwe/Robert as he appears in the frozen moment of the photograph being taken. The image, highlighted in its first appearance at the drama's beginning with a flash and a short black-out, receives further emphasis by its position at the very end of the
drama. It is, in fact, the last sight the audience sees, and the picture of a man, forcing a smile after his has just had to sell his very identity in order to simply feed his family, makes a profound statement about the validity of the pass laws. The protest has been made by having the image, present from nearly the beginning of the play, grow in significance. Sizwe Bansi's plight is pathetic, and the play's final irony, that he is "lucky" to be "dead" is not lost on the audience. 32

**Storytelling: Master Harold** Not all of the images that are seared into the audience's consciousness are physical ones, however. Interestingly, the "scene" that most who have read or seen *Master Harold and the Boys* remember is one that is simply a verbal image. In this play about a young white boy's realization of the nature of his relationship to the black man who served as a surrogate father to him because of his own father's handicaps, the boy's innocence about racial differences is conveyed through a simple, but eloquent story.

Years ago, Sam had fashioned a kite for "Hallie," and he taught him how to sail it. With much encouragement, the boy is able to get the kite aloft, but he doesn't realize that, "unlike the other 'dads,'" Sam cannot sit on the nearby bench to watch his young charge's enjoyment, for the bench is marked, "whites only." The anecdote re-told--of a child whose happiness
depends on the kindness of a black man and of society's refusal to grant even the simplest rights to that man—is a memorable protest about the daily cruelty of apartheid. Like Statements, Master Harold demonstrates that no matter what the quality of the relationship between two people is, no matter that it is based on genuine affection and kindness, there is no place for this kind of intimacy if it exists between members of different racial groups.

Tutorial Relationships and Game-playing: Sizwe Bansi, The Island, Master Harold. Master Harold also illustrates, perhaps more than any other of Fugard's dramas, the effective use of a "tutorial relationship" to simultaneously inform the audience of the "givens" of the play's social reality and to persuade them of the author's judgment of these givens. Other plays, like Sizwe Bansi is Dead and The Islands also make use of the tutorial relationship, but in a less poignant manner than Master Harold. In Sizwe, Buntu serves as Sizwe's mentor simply because Sizwe, as a rural black, could not know the intricacies of urban life. Like the unsophisticated Zach, Sizwe assumes possibilities where there simply are none, and so both men need "teachers" who will guide them toward ways to survive—and even, temporarily, overcome—the restrictions imposed upon them.
In *The Island*, the audience is shown two different kinds of political prisoners. Winston is the courageous revolutionary whose actions arise more from instinct than from philosophy. John is the idealist; it is his plan to perform *Antigone* as a way of heartening the other prisoners and reminding them of why they are on Robben Island. As John explains to Winston the similarities between Antigone's act of conscience and their own, he also convinces the audience about the morality of acts the government labels "terrorist."

*Master Harold* presents a different kind of mentorship, that between "parent" and "child." The boys alluded to in the title are Sam and Willie, two black men who work for Hally's family in a Port Elizabeth tea room. Hally has grown up with the two men, and in the first half of the drama, the three, but especially Sam and Hally, converse companionably about past good times.

From the very start of the drama, Sam is portrayed both as a teacher and and as a father-substitute. In fact, the very first moments of the play are spent with Sam instructing Willie both on proper ballroom techniques and girlfriend management. When Harold enters and describes the spanking he got for drawing a cartoon of his teacher, Sam again assumes his teacherly role. He tells Harold about the beatings that blacks get in jail, and when his description becomes too graphic, Harold
stops him saying, "It's a bloody awful world when you come to think of it. People can be real bastards." He believes with the optimism of youth, however, that "things will change" (13-14).

Harold's belief in the possibility of gradual social reform prompts him to begin a game with Sam, naming which historical figures are truly "men of magnitude." Each offers suggestions; Sam's understandably enough include Abraham Lincoln and Jesus, but Hally puts forth the names of Charles Darwin, Leo Tolstoy, and Alexander Fleming. In fact, he makes Sam guess the identity of the latter and when Sam does so, Harold is immensely delighted with himself. "Tolstoy may have educated his peasants," he tells Sam, "but I've educated you" (22).

It's true that Hally was the first to introduce Sam to books and general learning, but Sam has tried to educate the boy's heart. Whenever the child was lonely or upset because his father, both an alcoholic and a cripple, could not give him the affection he needed, the black men's room provided a safe haven for the distraught boy.

The mood changes, however, when the phone rings. It is Harold's mother, calling to tell him that she will be bringing his father home from the hospital. Upset at the prospect of having his demanding invalid father home again, Harold turns suddenly cruel. When he insults his
father, calling him the winner of the "All-Comers-How-to-Make-a-Fuckup-of-Life Championship," Sam upbraids him for his hardness. Immediately Harold pulls rank. "You're only a servant in here," he reminds Sam (53), and when this admonition is not enough, he goes further, insisting that Sam call him "Master Harold" and saying that he and his father have a favorite joke about a "nigger's arse." Despite this barrage of verbal abuse, Sam remains controlled. He tells Harold bluntly that he is a coward because:

The face you should be spitting in is your father's but you used mine, because you think you're safe inside your fair skin. (57)

Ultimately, Sam feels he has failed with Harold. Despite his efforts to compensate for Hally's drunken father—as illustrated in the kite-flying episode—Sam has not prevented the racist seeds from taking root. Even after Hallie spits in his face, Sam makes a final effort, suggesting to him that they try "flying a kite" again.

When Harold responds that he is unsure if anything of their former friendship can be salvaged, Sam counters with a comment that, in light of their earlier game about historical figures, is most appropriate. He points out the wastefulness of learning nothing from the past.
Fugard ends his drama, however, on an ambiguous note, leaving it unclear whether Hallie will recapture the lessons of his youth or whether his own self-hatred will be expressed as racial bigotry. As the play fades out on Sam and Willie practicing a dance step to a recording of Sarah Vaughn's blues lullabye promising a little boy that his dad will take care of him, the audience is again reminded what the real relationship between Harold and Sam has been. It reminds them, too, that even the most solid and unselfish of friendships, like Sam's to Hallie, will crumble under the weight of racial prejudice.

The tutorial relationship and game-play operate in a similar rhetorical manner. They are, essentially, debates. In the first technique, the debate is openly weighted in order for the dramatist to indicate which side he is on. Thus, in the conversation about Hally's being punished at school, the tutorial relationship allows Fugard to make the point that white boys are pandied but black men are beaten. The device is effective because it allows information to be conveyed and persuasion to start in a non-didactic manner.

Game-playing, or its frequent variant, role-playing, also operates in the manner of a debate. In this instance, however, a slightly different rhetorical dynamic is at work. Here, the playwright allows the illusion of an even-drawn match; the audience quickly
discerns, however, who the real "victor" is. Hally crowns about "educating" Sam, but the audience realizes that the black man has been teaching Hally far more significant lessons. The point to be made is that the game-playing episodes make the audience itself assume an active role as judge of the competition. The technique dislodges complacency and compels involvement in the action: is Hally correct or is Sam? Obviously, Fugard intends Sam to be the more sympathetic character, but by drawing the audience into the play as decision-makers, he begins a process that might well continue outside the doors of the theatre.  

**Ethical Appeal: A Lesson from Aloes.** Friendship, and how apartheid undermines it, is also the theme of *A Lesson from Aloes*. This drama investigates what has been the concern of Fugard's latest works: how whites can live morally in South Africa. The principal character, Piet Bezuidenhout, is an Afrikaner, and the rhetorical technique most evident in the play is the ethical appeal. Like Sam and Lena, Piet is offered to the audience as a kind of exemplar, and it is through the selflessness of this character that the playwright is able to make a statement about commitment and fidelity to a cause.

Providing the audience with a character who elicits both admiration and compassion is, of course, one of the oldest dramatic devices, but in Fugard's hands, this
classical technique is made to serve subtle, persuasive goals. Piet seldom makes grand speeches, and we never see him engaged in any courageous act. Rather it is the sight of Piet at the end of his struggle, when he appears worn-out, cast-off by friends, baited by his wife, and reduced to categorizing aloes by species, that Fugard uses to win the audience's approval. 34

Because the story of a man who is at the end of a bravely-lived life may not give the work the kind of dramatic intensity which sustains an audience's interest, Fugard chose to give Piet's story a twist. Presented in two acts, the first builds suspense much as a mystery story does. The audience finds itself wondering why Piet and his wife, Gladys, have been rejected by all of their friends. Is it because of Gladys? Have her objections to her husband's political activism been too obvious? Has her mental instability, brought on by the trauma she experienced when the Special Police raided their home and took her diaries, alienated their friends? Or is it that, as a white of European descent, she cannot understand Piet's love of South Africa?

All of these factors seem cause enough for the Bezuidenhout's isolation, but Gladys insinuates that there is a darker reason for their isolation. In an almost sadistic fashion, she asks whether it because of Piet that they have been abandoned. There has been talk
among their black and dissenting white friends of an informer in the group, and perhaps, Gladys suggests, it was Piet who alerted the Special Police about their friend, Steve, breaking his banning order. Only an "insider" would know that Steve illegally attended a private party, and as the first act ends, Gladys voices the suspicion that others in the group have long harbored. But to her question, "It's not true, is it," Piet turns wordlessly away.

Consequently, by the end of the first act, the audience is unsure of how to take Piet. Has all his talk about harnessing himself to a higher purpose been mere bombast—or worse, all lies? Traitors are all too common, and Piet's own silence seems to condemn him. That the accusation comes from his apolitical wife further leads the audience to suspect him. What Fugard has accomplished in Aloe is a rhetorical legerdemain; though they do not realize it, the audience has assumed the very attitude of distrust that pervades all of South African society. Without a single piece of real evidence, the spectators are willing to question Piet's integrity. In theatres as far from South Africa as London and New York, Fugard has duplicated the atmosphere of racial prejudice and irrational suspicion that is common in South Africa.

With this end accomplished, the play is given more than simply detective-story suspense. A Lesson from Aloe
actually draws the audience into the apartheid mentality that is ultimately Piet's undoing. By having the audience participate, albeit unwittingly, in the kind of thinking that makes a habit of skepticism and snap judgment, Fugard wordlessly condemns, even as he demonstrates, the far-reaching consequences of such systemic prejudice. Piet has indeed been more "sinned against than sinning," and it is his reproachless acceptance of his situation that finally re-captures the audience's sympathy and returns them to more defensible judgments. By the end of the play, the audience realizes the absurdity of doubting a man who has given virtually everything to the cause of justice and who stands willing to sacrifice the little he has left.

I have been discussing the manner in which Fugard has structured his play in order to involve the audience in deciding if Piet is in fact an ethical man. After this decision has been reached, the audience is in a position to re-evaluate aspects of Piet's character and to see it as having the kind of moral goodness that South Africa so desperately needs. There is another reason, however, why Fugard's use of the ethical appeal is so convincing. It would have been easy to make Piet the villain of the play, the Afrikaner informant, but giving into this simplistic kind of propagandizing, while it might make some small point about the Boer mentality, would hardly
have done justice to the complexity of apartheid politics. Rather than setting up straw men adversaries or making Piet a bloodless oppressor, Fugard has chosen to demonstrate how apartheid rule has ruined the lives of conscientious Afrikaners as well as non-whites. Nor did Fugard err by making Piet a one-dimensional stick figure of lifeless goodness. By having Piet speak only of the personal reasons he has for persevering in the "cause" and by putting the hardships he has endured and the contributions he has made into the mouths of others, Fugard has given his character a selfless humility that, in the final analysis, is far more persuasive than if he had given him fiery speeches and impassioned rhetoric. Such characterization is, of course, the very essence of the ethical appeal where the audience is moved by the rightness of a man's words because they are moved by the rightness of his heart.

There is a second, perhaps subtler reason why Piet's staunch anti-apartheid principles are so able to move an audience, and this is because they are grounded in his love for his homeland. Shading his character's personality in this way may have sprung from Fugard's own mixed Anglo-Irish/Afrikaner heritage and his conviction that the Akrikaner is as indigenous to that part of the world as the Bantu (pers. interview). Unlike other South Africans, Fugard has never advocated the wholesale
withdrawal of the white race from South Africa, and Aloes reflects this political position. That Piet's activism is partly a product of self-interest—he wished to save his country and sees co-operative action as the only possible solution—makes the argument all the more believable. It literally "hits home" with an audience, for it claims that survival itself depends on mutual understanding and compromise. Nothing less than the survival of South Africa is at stake.

Conclusion

Fugard's political vision and rhetorical techniques have had a number of consequences for his dramatic craft. For one thing, there are no visible villains in a Fugard play; the oppressor is never allowed on stage. Ethel never arrives in The Blood Knot, the warders never brutalize the prisoners on stage in The Island, and the Security Police do not re-appear to ransack the Bezuidenhout's home in A Lesson from Aloes. The effect achieved, however, is not a sparing of the audience's emotions; the oppressors, because they are described by their victims, seem all the more barbaric. By never appearing, they seem omni-present, and a police-state atmosphere pervades the dramas, allowing the audience to experience the anguish of the oppressed more deeply.
Just as there are no obvious villains in Fugard's dramas, neither are there spokesmen for the government's view (the police-sergeant in *Statements* is the closest to an official representative). Fugard's dramas, unlike George Bernard Shaw's, do not pit antagonists against each other. Rather, Fugard allows the business of game and role-playing to set up oppositions for the audience to consider. Unlike a logical argument, Fugard's debates are always weighted: having the victim, through role-playing, make the oppressor's case automatically undermines it. By refusing even to give the proponents of apartheid an unqualified voice in his plays, Fugard takes the complete unacceptability of such a political view as the starting point for his dramas.

All of Fugard's plays deepen the audience's understanding of the particular suffering that is a result of apartheid. Foreign audiences may leave the theatre shocked by the existence of such laws as the Immorality Act, the Group Areas Act, or the Suppression of Communism Act. Unaware of how systematically and tenaciously the minority government has sought to restrict and control virtually every aspect of the life of a non-white, these audiences will have a far more specific understanding of what it means to support apartheid. Native audiences, given to the usual kinds of denial and ignorance that is the result of living in such
a compartmentalized society, will find it difficult to justify the positive side of apartheid. Whether or not the new understanding prompts either kind of audience to take immediate action does not diminish the plays as effective pieces of persuasion. A new awareness has been forged, a new kind of identification has taken place. That is the starting point of all rhetorical discourse, and, indeed, of solving all political problems.
Notes: Chapter Five

The translation is as follows: bergie, derelict or roaming woman; baas, boss; capie, Cape Coloured; tsotsis, hooligan; hotnot, originally Hottentot, a term of abuse; coolie, abusive term for Indian; boer, farmer or Afrikaner, blourokkeie, prisoner, literally blue dress.

For a discussion of the importance of place and place-names in Fugard's canon, see Chris Wortham, "A Sense of Place: Home and Homelessness in the Plays of Athol Fugard" in Olive Schreiner, Smith (ed.) (Cape Town: David Philip, 1983): 165-183.

Kwaardwilligverlating means, literally, "malevolent parting," and is the term applied to Afrikaners who do not support the Nationalist government. Piet Bezuidenhout in A Lesson from Aloes is Fugard's example of a disaffected Afrikaner. For an actual account of kwaardwilligverlating see the story of Nico Smith in "White Among Blacks," Time 27 June 1988: 40-42.


Conflicts between Coloureds and Blacks are explored in Boesman and Lena; between European whites and Afrikaner whites in The Road to Mecca and A Lesson from Aloes. Political protesters are depicted in Aloes; political prisoners are shown in The Island.

The notable exception was Kenneth Tynan's review of the London production of The Blood Knot The Observer 24 Feb. 1963: 26. The review was scathing, and Fugard felt that Tynan's negative reaction contributed to the unsuccessful run of the play. Mel Gussow re-counts Fugard's reaction to Tynan's review in his profile of the dramatist in the New Yorker 20 Dec. 1982: 47-94. Gussow wrote that Tynan's review "still rankled" Fugard, and this was certainly the impression I got when I asked Fugard about it. He said, bluntly: "The Blood Knot's had its twenty-fifth revival and Tynan's dead." (pers. interview).

For a bibliography of theatre reviews up to 1980, see Gray, Athol Fugard: 238-240.

Joel Schecter's interview with James Earl Jones, who toured the U.S. in Master Harold, gives an account of how the drama was received in different parts of the country. Theatre 16 (Fall/Winter 1984): 40-42.


See Mary Maher, "Internal Rhetorical Analysis and the Interpretation of Drama" Central States 26: 267-273.

See also Burke's discussion of the "pragmatic approach" in The Philosophy of Literary Form: 89.

All quotations are taken from The Blood Knot, in Boesman and Lena and Other Plays (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

Many Fugard critics contend that his plays communicate to foreign audiences because of the mythic substructure (such as the story of Cain and Abel in The Blood Knot, and Antigone in The Island). While these allusions are certainly present in the dramas, this emphasis overlooks the other strategies Fugard has employed to reach across cultural barriers.

For reviews of the first production of The Blood Knot see those by James Ambrose Brown and Jimmy T. Matyu, both reprinted in Gray, Athol Fugard: 71; 72-73.


18 Robert Green discusses the implications of the isolated setting of *The Blood Knot* in his article, "South Africa's Plague: One View of *The Blood Knot*," *Modern Drama* 12 (1970): 331-345. He acknowledges the importance of the room as an image in the play and suggests that it is a "cocoon" which protects the brothers from the outer world that "is pressing in upon them" (333).

19 Fugard uses the same technique in his latest play, *A Place with the Pigs*. The play is about a deserter from the Red Army who hides in a pigsty; as each new act begins the audience wonders if Pavel will still be in the sty. By keeping the same setting, Fugard inverts the usual expectation that each scene will bring some new setting or action. In both plays, this technique magnifies the sense of confinement.


23 Burke discusses the difference between the kinds of knowledge I am describing in his section on "scientific" and "aesthetic" truth in *Counter-statement*: 168.

24 Fugard investigates this racism within the racist system in *Boesman and Lena*.

25 Fugard calls the tutorial scene an "exorcism."

26 Cosmo Pieterse has agreed that Morrie's white skin would have given him far chance of education, travel etc. See his comments in "Notes on Athol Fugard," rpt. in Gray, *Athol Fugard*: 198-201.

27 For a discussion of why Fugard's politics are not radical enough, see Mshengu, "Political Theatre in South Africa and the Work of Athol Fugard," *Theatre Research*

Derek Cohen makes the point that Boesman and Lena are white man's rubbish in "Athol Fugard's Boesman and Lena," Journal of Commonwealth Literature 12 (1978): 78-83. For another view of Boesman and Lena, see: Temple Hauptfleisch, "Fugard's Dramatic Expression of the Freedom Concept in Boesman and Lena," rpt. in Gray, Athol Fugard: 179-189. While Hauptfleisch does not classify his approach as rhetorical, he does distinguish it from a purely literary reading. He looks at the "communicative conventions of drama" and does give some attention to the setting of Boesman and Lena as a communicative device.


Very little has been written on Statements (even though Samuel Beckett apparently thought it a remarkable play); two reviews, one by Afrikannie novelist Elsa Joubert and one by Robert Cushman are reproduced in Gray, Athol Fugard: 85-86.


The technique of tableau vivant is also used at the end of The Island.

Laurie Anderson makes the point about greater audience participation in her article, "The Audience as Judge in Athol Fugard's The Island," Notes on Contemporary Literature 16 (Jan. 1986): 5.
CHAPTER VI
NADINE GORDIMER'S RHETORICAL SITUATION

In a filmed interview produced by Chris Davies, Nadine Gordimer commented on the charge made by the government-appointed censors committee that she was "exploiting the black-white dichotomy for political ends." Gordimer's reply was that, despite government's wishes, she could not serve as their apologist. She is a writer, Gordimer maintains, not a propagandist, and a writer cannot be expected to seek for balance if the balance doesn't exist. A writer deals with what is there in the society around him or her. The fact is it's proved in people's lives that there is no balance in South African society. The power is weighted on the one side, the oppression lies on the other. I can't invent a balance that isn't there, I can only reflect the imbalance that is there. (34)

The government's interest in her and Gordimer's own comments are an indication of her position as South Africa's most prominent active writer and hence its most public critic. The comments also give some idea of Gordimer's aesthetic: the task of the writer is to reveal
what "his or her sensibility, alone, succeeds in conveying as a transformation of a specific reality" (Gordimer, "Tyranny" 1). In her case, the "specific reality" is life in South Africa, and her "sensibility," though not given to propagandizing, is deeply political.

The specific reality of life in South Africa is, however, very different for Nadine Gordimer than it is for Athol Fugard. Although both are white dissenting artists committed to radical governmental change and to remaining in their native country, Gordimer has focused in her fiction on a much different aspect of South African life than is found in Fugard's dramas. There are exceptions, but, on the whole, Gordimer's fictional world is populated with middle- and upper-class white South Africans. Portraits, such as Fugard has drawn, of the lowest strata of South African society, the dispossessed and the impoverished, occupy a much smaller place in Gordimer's work. The reasons she has chosen to concentrate on white South Africa have much to do with her rhetorical situation. Kenneth Burke's observation that writers choose their "burdens" or that "which engrosses them most" (Philosophy 17) as their subjects is as applicable to Gordimer as it was to Fugard. Gordimer's "burden" is living in a society where the racist decisions of the minority have caused so much suffering for the majority. She has said in fact that
"because I live there and I'm white...I have a kind of inherited responsibility for what whites have done" (Sternhell 30).

I will not repeat the definitions and observations about rhetorical situation that I made in Chapter Two, except to say at the onset that Gordimer's writing has been affected by all of the factors I discussed. She has felt the restraining hand of censorship and has had her creative imagination limited by being denied access to parts of South African society. These constraints have in turn affected her characterizations, her themes, and her choice of literary modes. Most importantly, Gordimer's fiction is marked by a historical consciousness that is a result of her rhetorical situation. As Stephen Clingman has observed, "Gordimer's work could not have been written 'anywhere,' and while there are many ways of approaching her fiction, these will never be complete unless its close relationship to South African history is taken into account" (18).

Rhetorical Exigence: Growth of a Political Consciousness

The following is a passage from Gordimer's 1979 novel, *Burger's Daughter*:

the...labour, resettlement, the Siberias of snow or sun, the lives of Mandela, Sisulu, Mbeki, Kathrada, Kgosana, gull-picked on the Island,
Lionel propped wasting to his skull between two warders, the deaths by questioning, bodies fallen from the height of John Vorster Square, deaths by dehydration, babies gutted by enteritis in 'places' of banishment, the lights beating all night on the faces of those in cells. (208)

Other examples might be singled out, but this excerpt gives an indication of how extensively events in South Africa figure into Gordimer's writing. While not all her work is as topical (and her novels are more so than her short stories), the fact remains that the South African experience looms large in Gordimer's creative consciousness, coloring virtually everything she has written. South African politics are not only Gordimer's burden but also her obsession.

She was not always so obsessed. Though she has been described as an "intuitive radical" (Hammer 63), Gordimer describes her early years as fundamentally apolitical and cites her isolated childhood as the reason for her late entry into the world of politics.

Gordimer was born on November 20, 1923 in a small mining town near Johannesburg (Haugh 12). Her father, Isidore Gordimer, was a Lithuanian Jew who fled to South Africa to escape Nazism. Her mother, Nan Myers, was of English Jewish extraction (Clingman 23). In addition to living, as she describes it, in a "cultural backwater"
(Boyers 10), Gordimer's isolation was intensified by a strange incident which occurred during her childhood.

Although she initially hoped to be a dancer, Gordimer was forced to give up this passion because of a "bad heart." Years later, she discovered that her illness was actually rather minor and that her mother's insistence on extremely restricted physical activity and frequent medical check-ups was completely unnecessary. Nan Gordimer's decisions, it seems, grew out of her unhappy marriage and the fact that she was unconsciously in love with the family doctor. Having a sick child gave her an excuse for frequently consulting him, and so Gordimer grew up with the "legend" that she was "very delicate" and "had something wrong" with her heart (Hurwitt 90). A year later, she was taken out of the convent school she had been attending, and a complete personality change was effected:

She changed my whole character. Then she arranged for me to go to a tutor for three hours a day. She took me there at ten in the morning and picked me up at one. It was such incredible loneliness—it's a terrible thing to do to a child. There I was, all on my own, doing my work; a glass of milk was brought to me by this woman—she was very nice but I had no contact with other children. I spent my whole life, from eleven to sixteen with older people, with people of my mother's generation. (Hurwitt 90)
And so Gordimer channeled her former hopes into a new love, writing. By the time she was fifteen, she had published her first story (Haugh 12).

Growing up during a time when South Africa was still part of the British Commonwealth and having hours of solitary reading time on her hands, Gordimer initially identified herself with English authors.¹ She consciously adopted—attitudinally, if not stylistically—the Bloomsbury writers as her models (Boyer 11). But the attraction she felt to Forster and the tradition of the liberal British writer in general was really Gordimer's second awakening. As a child she discovered Upton Sinclair, and politics found their way into the isolated, bourgeois world she inhabited. Reading The Jungle started her thinking about politics:

I thought, good God, these people who are exploited in a meat-packing factory—they're just like blacks here. And the whole idea that people came to America, not knowing the language, having to struggle in sweatshops...I related it to the blacks. Again, what a paradox that South Africa was the blacks' own country, but they were recruited just as if they had been migrant workers for the mines. So I saw the analogy. And that was the beginning of my thinking about my position vis a vis blacks. (Hurwitt 92)

It would not be long before Gordimer began writing
stories which would in turn affect her own readers' ideologies.

Her "political education" continued when she entered the University of Witwatersrand. There she began mixing with blacks for the first time, meeting with them in artistic circles and discussion groups. Her first reaction, which she later saw as naive, was simply to ignore the color issue. Taking what she termed a "humanist approach," Gordimer felt that defying the color bar was sufficient action in itself. Like Alan Paton, she initially believed in the possibility of reconciliation between South African racial groups; now, she supports—and sees as inevitable—the black majority rule. She counts herself among those whites in South Africa who "believe in a non-racial state and think that the way toward it is through black liberation" (Boyers 15). In an interview with Arthur Ravenscroft, Gordimer summarized her political pilgrimage, with its beginnings in her literary education and its fruition in the political credo that underlies all of her works:

As a person my allegiance to South Africa is responsibility toward the situation to which I was born. A white South African brought up on the soft side of the color bar, I have gone through the whole packaged-deal evolution that situation has to offer—unquestioning acceptance of the superiority of my white skin, as a small child, acceptance of the paternal attitude that "they" are only human
after all, as an older child, questioning of these attitudes as I grew up and read and experienced outside the reading and experience that formed my inheritance, and finally, re-birth as a human being among other human beings, with all this means in the face of the discrimination that sorts them into colours and races. Whether I like it or not, this has been the crucial experience of my life, as the war was for some people or membership of the Communist Party for others. I have no religion, no political dogma—only plenty of doubts about everything except my conviction that the colour-bar is wrong and utterly indefensible. Thus I have found the basis of a moral code that is valid for me. Reason and emotion meet in it: and perhaps that is as near to faith as I shall ever get. (23)

Gordimer's "faith," the absolute repudiation of apartheid, has been the reason that she has chosen to remain in her native country. Like Fugard, she has found that the "roots of other countries, however desirable, were not possible for a plant conditioned by the flimsy dust that lies along the Witwatersrand" ("Johannesburg" 49). While Fugard's employment in the Native Commissioner's Court and his experience with various South African laws have been the exigence prompting his dramatic response, Gordimer's fiction has similarly been motivated by her experience of specific events and movements in recent South African history.

Stephen Clingman has chronicled these events and movements in great detail in his study, The Novels of
Nadine Gordimer: History from the Inside. While space does not permit an exhaustive discussion of the connection Clingman has documented between South African historical events and Gordimer's literary response, a brief overview will give some idea of the closeness of this bond. Clingman gives very little attention to Gordimer's short fiction, but numerous remarks that Gordimer herself has made show that these works were also prompted by her involvement in and awareness of South African history.

Lewis Nkosi has called the fifties the "fabulous decade" because the opportunity for multi-racial interaction was greater than ever before or since (Home and Exile, chapter title). It was during this time that Gordimer, like Fugard, became friends with the circle of black intellectuals already mentioned: Can Themba, Bloke Modisane, Nat Nakasa, and Ezekiel Mphahlele. It was also during this time that she became politicized. A "most important event" for Gordimer was the Treason Trial of leaders of the African National Congress who had put together a Freedom Charter claiming that South Africa belonged to both black and white (Clingman 47). One of the ANC leaders, Chief Albert Lutuli, stayed in Gordimer's house during the Trial, and this world of freer interaction is reflected in Gordimer's 1958 novel, A World of Strangers (Clingman 51). Gordimer's second
collection of short stories, *Six Feet of the Country*, published in 1956, also contains fictional embodiments of that decade's hope that racial unity was possible. In particular, two stories, "Which New Era Would that Be?" and "The Smell of Death and Flowers," Gordimer has noted, "were written during the heyday of the multi-racial dream that possessed some blacks and whites (including myself) during the Fifties, and that found expression both in a variety of personal relationships as well as in non-violent political action in which blacks and whites co-operated (*Some Monday forSure*, intro.)

If the Fifties was the "fabulous decade," the Sixties was the disastrous one. The massacre at Sharpeville, the increased repressive legislation, and the exiling of major black writers put an end to the "multi-racial dream" that had shaped Gordimer's earlier texts. In contrast to the note of optimism sounded earlier is the pessimism Gordimer records in her article, "Where Do Whites Fit In?" in which she questions whether whites will have a place in an independent black Africa (*Clingman* 76). The novel she wrote during the Sixties, *Occasion for Loving*, also "pays close attention to its historical context, from its broadest to its most intimate patterns" (*Clingman* 77). Included in this context are references to the Extension of Universities Bill, designed to bar blacks from white universities; to
the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), a black group which rejected multi-racialism; and to a love-affair across color-lines, clearly prohibited by the Immorality Act.

Short stories written in the Sixties also express the historical context. "Something for the Time Being" from her 1960 collection, *Friday's Footprint*, explores the "inevitable limits of the white liberal attitude" and "Some Monday for Sure" and "A Chip of Glass Ruby" from the 1965 volume, *Not for Publication*, examine the lives of black and Indian revolutionaries (Gordimer, *Some Monday*, intro). Gordimer's fascination with the figure of the revolutionary, it should be noted, has been a lasting one. She was extraordinarily interested in the case of Bram Fischer, the leader of the South African Communist Party, who was arrested in the mid-60's. She wrote two articles about Fischer, and he served as the model for the character of Lionel Burger in her later novel, *Burger's Daughter* (1979).³

"Open House" and "Africa Emergent," two selections from *Livingstone's Companions* (1972) reflect the early Seventies, "the period after the banning of black mass movements and the left-wing-black-and-white movements in the Sixties, when liberalism both black and white could be seen to have outlived its usefulness and its betrayal of the ideals it believed it stood for" (Gordimer, *Some Monday* intro). In the second half of the Seventies, the
period of the Soweto uprising and the solidification of the Black Consciousness Movement, Gordimer's fiction becomes an exploration of the place of the white in the inevitable black revolution. Rosa Burger, the heroine of the aforementioned Burger's Daughter is left at the end of the novel imprisoned in solitary confinement, and she serves as a "striking symbol of the alienated condition of a dissident white consciousness" (Clingman 194) at the end of the decade.

In her recent fiction, both long and short, Gordimer's writing has become apocalyptic. July's People (1981) depicts the shattered lives of Maureen and Bam Smales and their children when they are caught in the middle of a civil war and are dependent on their former servant, July, for sanctuary. Gordimer's most recent novel, A Sport of Nature, imagines a post-revolutionary future. Her short stories, like "A Soldier's Embrace" and "A Lion on the Freeway," also recount what it is like to "live in the interregnum," when the old order has not yet died and the new one has not yet been born.

My point in providing this rather broad overview of Gordimer's works, especially her short stories, is to reiterate Clingman's thesis that "it is nothing less than Nadine Gordimer's 'consciousness of history' that defines the special character of her writing and her stature as a novelist" (224). Her rhetorical situation has
therefore both compelled and shaped her fiction, a fact that Gordimer herself has admitted. In her introduction to her Selected Stories, she has commented on how, if chronologically arranged, her short stories make up a history of changed social attitudes. The stories reflect the time in which they were written:

the white girl in "Is There Nowhere Else Where We Can Meet?" whose first conscious encounter with a black is that between victim and attacker—primary relationship indeed—is several years and a book away from the girl in "The Smell of Death and Flowers," experiencing her generation's equivalent of religious ecstasy in the comradeship of passive resistance action in the company of blacks. Both white girls are twenty-five years and several books away from the whites in "Open House" and "Africa Emergent," experiencing the collapse of white liberalism. (14)

Gordimer concludes that in a certain sense, "a writer is 'selected' by his subject—his subject being the consciousness of his own era. How he deals with this is, to me, the fundament of commitment" (15).

Gordimer has expressed her own commitment in an interview with Stephen Gray. There she explains that there is only one "thing I can say I'm sure of—that any form of racism is wrong" (271). In expressing this commitment fictionally, she has endeavored to provide South Africa with the "articulated consciousness" it so desperately needs (Gray 270). In doing so, however, she
has met both with governmental interference and social barriers that, together, have acted as rhetorical constraints on her writing.

Rhetorical Constraints: Legal and Social Apartheid

The issue of a writer's rhetorical constraints, those situational factors which "constrain decision and action" (Bitzer 8) and ultimately affect the form and content of a creative work is as relevant to the examination of South African prose as it is to South African drama. It is an issue which Gordimer herself has addressed although without using specifically rhetorical terminology. In her essay, "The Novel and the Nation in South Africa," for example, Gordimer isolates class and color as the primary cause for differences in the quality of South African creative writing. "When I began to think about writers in my own country," Gordimer writes, "I saw that the reasons why many of them have written as they have are centered more in the social situation they share than in their individual differences of talent and temperament" (33). As Gordimer has observed, economic and social constraints such as these can drastically affect a writer, causing his creativity to be "falsified, trivialized, deflected, stifled, deformed, and even destroyed by the state and the condition of society it decrees" (657). For Gordimer, as for Fugard, one of the
most onerous constraints has been South African censorship.

Censorship: Gordimer's Experience and Response

Gordimer is an extremely prolific writer; she began contributing regularly to the *New Yorker* before she was thirty, and her first novel, *The Lying Days* (1953), won immediate critical acclaim in the form of a front-page review in the *New York Times* (Hurwitt 97). Like Fugard, she has won considerable international admiration, and the prizes she has been awarded are an indication of how far her voice has reached. In addition to recognition such as the Booker Prize, the Thomas Pringle Award, the James Tait Black Memorial Prize, and the Grand Aigle d'Or (France), Gordimer has received a fellowship from the Scottish Arts Council and several honorary degrees, including ones from the University of Leuven and Mount Holyoke College (*Contemporary Authors* 355). As a short-story writer, she has no peer in South Africa; indeed her stories are among the best being written anywhere. With eight collections of stories to her credit, Gordimer has been able to use this sometimes difficult medium to create effective portrayals of South Africans trapped in the machinery of apartheid.

Because Gordimer began her career as a short story writer, her earliest works were published in minor
literary journals, and a collection, *Face to Face* was released in 1949 by a South African publishing house. Just one year later, a story, "The Hour and the Years," was published in *The Yale Review*, and a year after that, another, "A Watcher of the Dead" was accepted by the *New Yorker* (Haugh 12). Early on, Gordimer acquired an American agent, Sidney Satenstein, and his strenuous efforts on her behalf led not only to the placement of numerous other stories with prestigious American magazines but also to a contract with Simon and Schuster and enough money to allow her to continue writing full-time (Hurwitt 96). Thus, unlike many of her colleagues, Gordimer did not have to depend on the very underdeveloped South African publishing firms to get her works released. And, even more importantly, by publishing abroad, she knew that her works would reach some audience, even if the texts were not allowed back through South African customs.

This fact, that at a young age, Gordimer was assured of publication, was soon joined by another important factor, her firmly-established international reputation. Together, these circumstances have protected Gordimer from the extensive governmental interference that other writers have experienced. She has, for example, been less personally harassed than Pugard. Even given her rather privileged position, however, Gordimer
still has felt the sting of censorship. Four of her own books have been banned: *A World of Strangers* for twelve years, *The Late Bourgeois World* for ten, *The Conservationist* for ten weeks and *Burger's Daughter* for several months. The early books were censored because they "dealt with political matters in what was considered an 'undesirable way'" (Burrows 233). The politics in her later books—*Conservationist* lacerates the privileges of white South Africa while *Burger's Daughter* praises the early leaders of the South African Communist Party—were no more appealing to the censor, but by the time of their publication, Gordimer's literary prominence made it difficult to ban her books without provoking an international outcry. *Burger's Daughter*, is a case in point. Significantly, the censorship decision was quickly reversed even though Gordimer openly defied regulations by including a banned tract, written by students after the 1976 Soweto riots, in the book. Protests from distinguished writers like Nobel Prize winner Heinrich Boll and English novelist John Fowles caused the censors to almost immediately re-release the book (Boyers 23).

Despite her occasional victories, however, the experience of being artistically strangulated has made Gordimer one of Pretoria's harshest critics, and she has written scathingly of the various "tricks" the government uses to disguise its silencing operations.9 Exposing the
extensiveness and the consequences of censorship in South Africa has been, in fact, Gordimer's own brand of political activism. She has written at least seven articles on censorship,10 and she has used her fame as a platform for publicly denouncing the government's tactics, especially those practiced by the Botha administration.11 Knowing as she does that the draconian censorship laws, which are especially severe on any writer who has treated the black liberation movement "sympathetically or even honestly," are insurmountable, Gordimer has adopted an attitude of "publish and be damned" ("Art and the State" 661). In spite of her run-ins with the Directorate of Publications, Gordimer writes what she wishes, relying on her reputation and the unpredictability of the censors to get the work into print (Nagorski 71). For her, there is simply no alternative. Virtually all South African literature is "implicitly political," and hence liable to censure, since it depicts an unbalanced society. "For writers who really care about the truth, the sincerity, and the integrity of their writing," Gordimer has said, there is nothing to do but write and wait (Burrows 233).


Gordimer's fame may help her to get her works past the censor, but it can do nothing to overcome a more
insidious, and ultimately more crippling, constraint: the way in which the color bar limits the creative imagination. Its existence, in fact, has forced Gordimer to abandon at least one project, a novel that she hoped to write about a young Soweto black. Because the major figure was "too much outside the potential of her experience," Gordimer never finished the book, turning it instead into a short story, "Not for Publication" (Morris 26).

Just as she has vigorously denounced censorship, Gordimer has relentlessly exposed the color bar, which she calls the "98th" kind of censorship. She has argued that because segregation has made impossible a real and deep knowledge someone of a different race, the term "community" is meaningless for the South African writer. Citing Karl Jasper's view that man's "inner being is enriched as the substance present in the community grows fuller," and that the "creative individual is representative of this substance, recognizing himself in this echo," Gordimer concludes that in a society where 78% of the population is cut off from normal cultural activities, the novelist is forced to be "creative in uncreative circumstances" ("The Novel and the Nation" 36). In a society as compartmentalized as South Africa's, the limitations placed on a writer's
potential are "unscalable":

There are some aspects of a black man's life that have been put impossibly beyond the white man's potential experience, and the same applies to the black man and some aspects of the white man's experience. Both can write of the considerable fringe society in which black and white are "known," in a meaningful sense, to one another, but there are areas from which, by iron circumstance, each in turn finds himself shut out, even intuitively, to their mutual loss as writers. (52)

Gordimer's beliefs, that black men and white men are segregated to the point of being unknowable to each other and that the real tragedy of this segregation is that it is a man-made evil, are ones which have had decisive implications for her writing, both in the areas of theme and characterization and in her choice of literary mode. At the risk of over-simplification, it seems fair to say that she has used the more expansive form of the novel to explore apartheid at the societal, systemic level, and she has used the more concentrated form of the short story to depict the effects of apartheid on individuals.

Consequences of Rhetorical Constraints: Theme, Characterization, and Mode

While there are some exceptions in her short fiction, the vast majority of Gordimer's writing deals
with the many nuances of a single theme: the effect of
apartheid on the white inhabitants of South Africa.
Ursula Laredo, commenting that while typically
Gordimer's themes "emphasize disillusion, resignation,
acceptance of what is, and futility," the author is not
unsympathetic to the sterility or lovelessness of her
characters' lives since that "sterility and lovelessness
are the products of life in a particular society" (42-
43).

A second theme to figure prominently in Gordimer's
short fiction, especially in stories from the late
Sixties and early Seventies, is the effeteness of
liberalism. Despite the tradition of protest against
apartheid by white writers—a tradition dating back to
Thomas Pringle's *African Sketches*, published in 1834—
many hold that this protest is really a form of
paternalism. Others claim it endows the white minority
with a dangerous respectability since it suggests that a
mere change of heart is all that is needed to alter
political realities. Gordimer is exquisitely aware that
her protest is itself a luxury. Because of this
realization, she has devoted much of her writing to
drawing portraits of the well-meaning but oblivious
liberal, such as the priest in "Not for Publication." She
has striven relentlessly to expose the pitfalls of the
liberal attitude, which has "proven itself hopelessly
inadequate to the historical situation ("The Novel and the Nation" 51).

A third theme, found in her most recent short fiction, is that of betrayal. From the secret agent who betrays his lover in "Crimes of Conscience" to the black woman who betrays the terrorist who has been hiding in her house in "A City of the Dead, A City of the Living," Gordimer explores the many sides of what she believes to be an institutionalized problem, brought on by a government that encourages subversion and thereby subverts itself (Prescott 74).

Gordimer's focus on white South Africans, like her themes, is another obvious consequence of her rhetorical situation. Her decision to concentrate on the side of the color bar she knows best has not gone uncriticized. Poet Dennis Brutus, for example, has accused Gordimer of being the "living example of how dehumanized South African society has become" (97). Yet his condemnation of Gordimer's fiction on the grounds of its "impersonality" and "detachment" is ironic since the exiled Brutus knows firsthand the difficulties of crossing the color bar. In this light, Gordimer's reaction to the rhetorical situation in which she finds herself seems the only realistic one. As Abdul JanMohamed has stated, her writing is a "direct response to the moral dilemma created for her by the manichean
bifurcation of apartheid society which has refined the essential characteristics of colonialism to their pure fascist embodiment" (86). In fact, despite Brutus' attack, Gordimer has explicitly acknowledged that she "uses her fiction as a weapon against apartheid" (JanMohamed 86). That she does so by drawing on her own finely-honed understanding of the difficulty of being a member of a supremacist society to thereby create complex, credible characters rather than choosing to populate her fiction with one-dimensional characters who serve as mouthpieces for the "right" political sentiments, ultimately makes her fiction an even more potent weapon.

Brutus' observation about Gordimer's " impersonality" is as much a comment on her style as it is on her characterizations. One of the most notable qualities of her writing is Gordimer's penchant for the telling detail which in turn reflects the author's exceedingly close observation of her world. The reason for this detail, Clingman has commented, is that Gordimer embraces Georg Lukacs' "true great realism" as the perspective most appropriate to literature with a historical consciousness (8). For Lukacs, man is primarily a social or political being, and therefore the "ontological being" of characters cannot be "distinguished from their social and historical environment" (Clingman 8).13 This
literary perspective explains the essential dynamic at work in Gordimer's fiction: the connection between the personal and the political in South Africa, the merging of what John Cooke has called "private lives and public landscapes" (Novels sub-title). Gordimer has chosen the realistic mode because at bottom, her works are "engaged in truth-telling; hers is a realism of naming and showing, of being witness to the times she has lived through" (Clingman 221). A "corollary of her realism," Clingman asserts, "is that it has undermined many of the 'lies' of apartheid" (221). How she has strategically designed her stories to communicate and undermine these lies is the subject of the next chapter.
Notes: Chapter Six


2 Stephen Clingman's study, The Novels of Nadine Gordimer: History from the Inside (London: Allen & Unwin 1986) is the best starting point for a rhetorical critic. Drawing upon a thorough research of the historical events that were occurring as Gordimer wrote each of her novels, as well as Gordimer's own reading interests and political pre-occupations, Clingman is able to put together a picture of how events in South Africa have shaped Gordimer's novels. He outlines her evolving political sympathies, from her earliest apolitical stance through a liberal phase and to her present radical position. Because Clingman's study is primarily historical rather than rhetorical, his attention is almost exclusively on the elements that have shaped the texts rather than the strategies in them. His focus, as such, is on rhetorical situation more than rhetorical strategies.

3 The two articles Gordimer wrote about Bram Fischer are "The Fischer Case," London Magazine (March 1966): 21-30 and "Why Did Bram Fischer Choose Jail?" New York Times Magazine 14 August 1966: 30-1, 80-1, 84. Gordimer has written about revolutionaries and their families both before and after Burger's Daughter; however; her 1966 novel, The Late Bourgeois World explores the life of Elizabeth Van Den Sandt, the ex-wife of a political activist, and her most recent work, A Sport of Nature focuses on Hillela, a white Jewish South African woman who becomes "a legendary figure in the revolution that destroys apartheid" (Sternehell 30). Her novella, Something Out There simultaneously explores the lives of revolutionaries and the obliviousness of the white community.


6 In "Art and the State in South Africa," Gordimer also discusses the rhetorical constraint of class and
color. She says that "the nature of art in South Africa is determined primarily by the conflict of material interests in South African society. Make no mistake about it, when South African writers and artists gather, they do so rent by that conflict." The Nation 24 Dec. 1983: 657-661.

7 Gordimer actually declined the honorary doctorate at Mount Holyoke, explaining that she would defer accepting it until Winnie Mandela—the other honoree, who was barred from leaving South Africa—was also free to accept hers. See Paula Span, "Presence for an Absence," The Washington Post 27 May 1985.


9 In South Africa, some books are merely placed "under embargo" while a censorship decision is pending, but the effect is just as deadly since booksellers are forced to remove these volumes from their shelves. Others, like one of Gordimer's own, The Conservationist, are held back for only a short time, but sales drop off since the book loses valuable publicity time. See Gordimer's comments to J. Hurwitt, Paris Review 88 (Summer 1983): 82-127, particularly 102-104.


11 Gordimer has spoken out against the recent actions of President P. W. Botha. In August of 1986, when he gave the police the right to seize books at will, without consulting either the Directorate of Publications or the Publications Appeal Board, Gordimer immediately set to work inciting international outrage. Botha's decree ensured that anyone convicted of selling "subversive material" could be imprisoned and fined up to $8,000. The immediate effect was what Gordimer called a "second crisis of censorship," since most small presses which published the works of black or dissenting authors began to be harassed, causing other small publishers in turn to begin practicing a kind of self-censorship. See "Cry the South African Writer," Newsweek 4 August 1986: 29.

Occasionally Gordimer does depart from critical realism, especially in her more recent, apocalyptic works. When she does veer off into symbolism, as in "A Lion on the Freeway," it is in an effort to capture the indistinct connections between individual psychological states and historical events.
CHAPTER VII
RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF NADINE GORDIMER’S SHORT FICTION

In his 1968 text, *Rhetorical Analysis of Literary Works*, Edward P. J. Corbett writes that to his regret, he could not include a rhetorical analysis of a short story because he "simply could not find one" (viii). Although it has been nearly twenty years since the publication of Corbett's book, there are still very few rhetorical assessments of pieces of short fiction to be found.¹ Several explanations for this dearth of criticism suggest themselves, the obvious one being the scarcity of short-story criticism in general.² Nadine Gordimer herself has commented that while no critic would suggest that the short story is a "dead art form," it survives because it is "like a child suffering from healthy neglect" (*Short Story* 457).

Reasons for the lack of rhetorical criticism are harder to come by, but it may be that for some readers, the brevity of a short story precludes it from making full use of the rhetorical strategies, like extended argument or ethical appeal, that are common in longer pieces of literature. Too, the short story often relays its vision
in a flash—Gordimer calls this aspect of the short story a "firefly"—and rhetoricians have not fully developed a critical vocabulary to describe the persuasive impacts of this kind of instantaneous imagistic communication. The fact is, however, that these two assumptions—that the brevity of the short story prevents it from fully employing rhetorical strategies and that the short story's use of images or other ways of indirectly communicating its meaning cannot be talked about in rhetorical terms—are simply not tenable. If scrutinized, Gordimer's stories, especially the large number that deal with political activity, reveal both the author's deft handling of her reader's expectations as well as the final judgment that reader will ultimately make. Gordimer's stories, like Fugard's dramas, may therefore be approached in terms of the way the author has made use of the psychology of the audience to communicate her vision of social reality. Such an approach, obviously a highly rhetorical one, involves looking at the strategies implicit in the work as illustrative of the "structured way in which he (the writer) puts events and values together (Burke, Philosophy 20).

Before beginning an examination of Gordimer's rhetorical strategies, I would like to make a few additional observations about rhetorical situation. In the preceding chapter, I discussed Gordimer's
rhetorical situation as it generally affected her writing; there are some aspects of this situation, however, that are especially pertinent to her short fiction.

Corbett explains that a critic becomes "rhetorical" when "he tries to show that the choices from among the available options were made in reference to subject matter or genre or occasion or purpose or author or audience—or some combination of these" (Rhetorical Analysis xxvi). Although he doesn't use the term, Corbett is defining the way that aspects of a writer's rhetorical situation—aspects like occasion, purpose, or audience—have a bearing on the way that a text is constructed. In Chapter Six, I discussed how Gordimer's writing is a product of her rhetorical situation, seeing it as a response to particular kinds of subject matter (the debilitating effects of the color bar; the ineffectiveness of liberalism) and to particular occasions (the Fischer trial, Soweto). These subjects and occasions make up part of Gordimer's historical consciousness, and I suggested that though this consciousness is particularly evident in her novels, it is also discernible in her short fiction.3

In the introduction to Selected Stories, a compilation of pieces from the five collections written between 1952 and 1975, Gordimer states explicitly that
the works reflect recent South African history and her understanding of it. "In the writing," Gordimer states, "I am acting upon my society and in the manner of my apprehension, all the time history is acting upon me" (13). She goes on to list the historical changes revealed in the stories, including changes in characterization (the humble black servant is replaced by the young black political refugee) and in language ("native" becomes "African" becomes "Black"). Gordimer's conclusion is that "in a certain sense a writer is selected by his subject—his subject being the consciousness of his own era. How he deals with this is, to me, the fundament of commitment" (14).

Gordimer's remarks may easily be translated into rhetorical terms. Her discussion of history's claim upon the writer is a discussion of rhetorical occasion. That certain themes inevitably present themselves to writers—-the themes of apartheid, naturally, to South Africans—is an aspect of the artist's rhetorical use of subject matter. Gordimer's comments on the issue of a writer's commitment indicate that her works include a rhetorical purpose, the goal of awakening the "consciences of those who live either in this land—where my roots are—or in the rest of the world" (Jens 60). The double focus that Gordimer emphasizes—history's impact on the writer (rhetorical situation) and the
writing's impact on history (persuasion through rhetorical strategies)—demonstrates the appropriateness, indeed, necessity of a rhetorical reading of her short stories. She has employed the medium of short fiction persuasively, using its "fragmented and restless form," to express in "flashes of fearful insight" her own condemnation of apartheid (Short Story 460).

Having established that Gordimer's short stories are just as much a product of her rhetorical situation as her novels and essays are, the question remains, "how effective is this medium for conveying a persuasive message?" Obviously, the bias of my entire discussion of South African writing has been that literature is a powerful source of influence, that, as Wayne Booth argues, "narrative embodiment often strengthens persuasion" (Modern Dogma 181). There are special reasons, however, why a piece of short fiction may exert an particularly effective kind of appeal. These reasons are bound up with the very nature of short fiction, for just as a dramatic work, by reason of its immediacy and its nature as a communal experience, constitutes one type of persuasive force, the short story, by virtue of how it is read, constitutes another.

While it is difficult to assess the long-term effects a short story has on a reader, it is nevertheless true that since short fiction is published in magazines
that cost little in comparison to novels and are circulated among a wider readership, the work may ultimately reach—and influence—a far greater number of people. The possibility of this influence is even wider, perhaps, given the fact that while most novels are purchased on the basis of some type of recommendation—best-seller lists, book reviews—the short story is often read rather indiscriminately. Thus readers who are ignorant of an author’s reputation or indifferent to the political issue underlying the narrative are caught, as it were, off-guard. Readers who would never knowingly invest hours in a long novel about South African politics may be quite willing to spend a half hour on a short story with the same subject. In a very real sense, then, short stories are among the most persuasive types of discourse: most Americans, if queried, are far more likely to have read one of Gordimer’s stories in The New Yorker than a transcript of a speech by Bishop Tutu or Nelson Mandela.

Given the fluctuations over the years in the fortunes of writers and publishers in South Africa, it is difficult to determine whether the short story is in as healthy a position there as it is in the United States. Gordimer has observed that "because of the limited size of the publishing industry and the equally limited size and tastes of the reading public in South
Africa, it would be difficult for "for any serious writer to live off local earnings" (Short Story 463). Despite this fact, almost "all of the interesting fiction written by local Africans (not white Africans) has taken the form of short stories" (463). The prominence of a magazine like Drum which published the writings of many gifted black South Africans—-Nkosi, Thembela, Rive, Modisane—suggests that Gordimer is correct.4

Is there a reason why the short story is a form that seems more suited to South African writers, particularly black writers? Jacques Alvarez-Peyere believes that the short story seemed to be the "form best suited to the hectic life led by these journalist-writers, always on the move, often threatened, sometimes arrested" (9). Ezekiel Mphahlele would concur with Alvarez-Peyere's view; he, too, has argued that writers in South Africa find they cannot work in the novelistic mode because the situation impinges so urgently upon them that they find they have to say everything very quickly (Duerden 157). Richard Rive, who has published both long and short fiction, has commented that it is a given that the "short story functions in South Africa more prolifically" (Duerden 157). Gordimer herself, quoting Georg Luckac, has said that the "novel is a bourgeois art form whose enjoyment presupposes leisure and privacy." While the short story also demands some degree of privacy and
leisure, "by reason of its length and its completeness, totally contained in the brief time you give to it, it depends less than the novel upon the classic conditions of middle-class life, and perhaps corresponds to the breakup of that life which is taking place" (Short Story 461).

The short story, then, offers two advantages to the South African writer. First, its relative brevity makes it better suited for quick production and for surreptitious reading—hence its appeal to black and dissident writers. Secondly, the short story recognizes that "full comprehension of a particular kind in the reader, like full apprehension of a particular kind in the writer, is something of limited duration" (Gordimer, Short Story 460). Therefore the short story uses a "fragmented and restless form, a matter of hit or miss, and it is for this reason that it suits the modern consciousness—which seems best expressed as flashes of fearful insight alternating with near-hypnotic states of indifference" (460). This aspect—its ability to see penetratingly if not wholly—makes it appealing to all South African writers, both white and black.

Given the attractiveness of the short-story form and the possibility of its wide-ranging influence, how can it be approached rhetorically? Michael Squires, in his article, "Teaching a Story Rhetorically: An Approach
to a Short Story by D.H. Lawrence," advises teachers to guide their students to the "rhetorical problem" of the text, that is, to the "necessary adaptations of strategy to purpose and to audience" (150). Squires then demonstrates how parts of Lawrence's story actually form a kind of syllogism and follow a deductive mode of development.

Squires' methodology, while appropriate to Lawrence's fable-like story, is not particularly useful in analyzing a Gordimer short story. Concerned as she is about not seeming to propagandize, Gordimer seldom uses the logical appeal and its structure of thesis and proof. Rather, as an examination of a number of her stories demonstrates, Gordimer's rhetoric—though very real—is more subtly integrated into her narratives.

Although she does not rely much on the logical appeal, Gordimer does make use of other rhetorical strategies, including several classical techniques, such as those associated with forensic and epideictic discourse and those instrumental in making ethical and emotional appeals. These techniques are more in evidence, however, in Gordimer's "roomier" narratives; as she turns away from an emphasis on plot and character to a focus on symbol, Gordimer's stories become more compressed. In these more compact stories, Gordimer's rhetoric is one of image and juxtaposition. Her
rhetorical use of literary devices, it should be noted, draws as heavily upon the psychology of her reader as does her use of classical persuasive techniques.

Short Fiction as Forensic or Epideictic Discourse; the Employment of Ethical and Emotional Appeals

"The Train from Rhodesia," one of Gordimer's most anthologized works, provides a good test case for how a story may be viewed as a piece of forensic discourse. Forensic, or judicial discourse, as Aristotle discusses it in the Rhetoric, is the kind of oratory appropriate to issues of alleged criminality. As Corbett points out, however, this definition may be broadened to include a consideration of the "justice and injustice of human acts" (Classical Rhetoric 40). In this sense, any narrative which places the reader in the position of judging a case, making a moral or ethical decision, or reaching some decision about the justice of a given event, can be looked upon as akin to forensic oratory.

"The Train from Rhodesia," included in one of Gordimer's earliest collections, The Soft Voice of the Serpent, (Haug 12), is a mere five pages long, the time it takes for the train to stop at a station.5 With little exposition and a slight plot, the story is built primarily around dialogue. The structure or form into which Gordimer has cast her story itself exerts an
appeal. As Burke has explained, the appeal of form lies in the fact that "form is a way of experiencing," and as such, is able to draw the reader more deeply into the narrative (Counter-Statement 143). Part of the effectiveness of Gordimer's story depends on the reader's sense of being a dispassionate observer at an objectively rendered scene. The fact is that Gordimer does weight the evidence, but her rather reportorial tone encourages the reader to feel as though he has reached his own judgment about the story's incident. This sense of a freely-drawn conclusion enables the persuasion to take hold.

The scene is rendered with a few quick strokes: a young, newly-married couple is leaning from a window, looking at the wares offered for sale by the natives who line the length of the train. In between these beggar-vendors, small children cry for pennies, and chickens and dogs wander unattended. The whole scene, presented as vividly as it is, provides a setting for what is to ensue, and like the setting of a Fugard play, operates rhetorically as well as dramatically. The train serves as a barrier. Inside, the white passengers are comfortably insulated from the squalor that is outside, and appropriately enough, the whites lean down to speak with the blacks. To a South African reader, the scene may simply be one of business-as-usual; to a Westerner,
it may be a startling picture of poverty; whatever the reaction, the whole arrangement is an apt image of South African race relations. Unobtrusively, Gordimer has already begun to manipulate her reader's reactions.

The young woman is looking at a hand-carved lion. She admires the intricate handiwork, especially the bit of real fur the native has attached as a mane, "telling you somehow that the artist had delight in the lion" (Selected Stories 44). She considers buying it, but decides it is too expensive and resumes her seat. Moments later, her husband re-joins her, triumphantly carrying the little statue; as the train was pulling out, he bartered for it, and the native, knowing he was about to lose the sale, let it go for a pittance. His wife's reaction is surprisingly harsh:

If you wanted the thing, she said, her voice rising and breaking with the shrill impotence of anger, why didn't you buy it in the first place? If you wanted it, why didn't you pay for it? Why didn't you take it decently when he offered it. Why did you have to wait for him to run after the train with it, and give him one—and six? One and six? (47)

The young man, of course, is amazed. They argue a bit more until the woman throws the lion onto the seat and turns her back to her husband.
What has taken place in this story is that the reader has acted as a witness to an incident and to an argument. The impulse, naturally enough, is to take sides, and it is the girl's opinions that prevail—just as Gordimer wishes. As already indicated, the beginning of the story offers little exposition. The train, the station, and the confusion of the impromptu marketplace are described, but the attitudes and emotions of the two principal characters are never revealed. Like the young husband, who of course is only trying to please his wife, the reader is initially caught off-guard by the girl's reaction, but her outlook quickly becomes understandable because Gordimer has quietly shifted the point of view. The reader enters into the girl's thoughts midway through the narrative; while she had mistakenly thought her discomfort was due to some other cause—the newness of her marriage, her aloneness—the girl now half-realizes that her nausea is a sickness special to her race:

Everything was turning round inside her. One-and-six. One-and-six. One-and-six for the wood and the carving and the sinews of the legs and the switch of the tail. The mouth open like that and the teeth. The black tongue, rolling, like a wave. The mane round the neck. To give one-and-six for that. The heat of shame mounted through her legs and body and sounded in her ears like the sound
of sand pouring. Pouring, pouring. She sat there, sick. A weariness, a tastelessness, the discovery of a void made her hands slacken their grip, atrophy emptily, as if the hour was not worth their grasp. (47)

Conversely, Gordimer never allows us into the young man's thoughts. As the train moves on, the final reflections are those of the girl's, the final mood is her shame-filled one. This mood, which in turn colors the reader's judgment, is an unstated condemnation of the husband's unthinking inhumanity. His actions--begrudging a poor man his livelihood so that he could save a few pennies on what is to him a mere trinket--are the source of his wife's nausea and, ultimately, of the reader's disapproval. That he intended no malice does not excuse his actions; it only makes his insensitivity seem more commonplace.

As Wayne Booth has observed, "direct and authoritative rhetoric," instances of the author openly informing the reader about what conclusions should be drawn, are not likely to be found in a typical modern short story (Rhetoric 6). But the fact that authorial intrusions are found less frequently in modern literature does not mean the writer no longer guides his reader's reactions. Rather, the author's presence becomes obvious "on every occasion when he moves into or
out of a character's mind—when he shifts his point of view" (17). Gordimer has used this method to influence the reader's judgment about the incidents of "The Train from Rhodesia." By seeming, initially, to objectively present a case, the reader is invited to take part in the narrative, acting as a kind of jury member who renders a judgment. By the subtle shift in vantage point, Gordimer insures that the reader's sympathies will be with the girl.

"Is There Nowhere Else Where We Can Meet" is another story that can be seen as piece of judicial discourse, only in this case, the debate the reader watches is that of a young girl arguing with herself. Like "The Train from Rhodesia," "Is There Nowhere Else" hinges on a very slim plot. As Barbara Eckstein notes, it "seems to be the story of a young white woman who, finding herself alone in a deserted lot, encounters a ragged man who robs her" (343). 6

Thus stated, the plot is virtually every white South African's nightmare; in fact the fear of being accosted by a black stranger is so prevalent that it appears frequently in South African literature. 7 Joseph Lelyveld attributes this fear to the "unfocused anger" that is a "by-product of South African life" and its "patterns of aggression and casual violence." Reports of interracial violence are so common in newspaper articles that,
Lelyveld reports, the reader will come upon "archetypal stories of the white madam that has been raped by a black servant or intruder" (207). Gordimer exploits this deeply-entrenched fear in her story: she purposefully builds the tension leading to the attack, but then describes the theft in ambiguous terms and thus prepares the reader for the reversal that occurs at the end.

By exploiting her readers' fears, Gordimer has built her narrative on "patterns of experience" (Counter-statement 190) and "ideological assumptions" (161). In Burkeian terms, Gordimer has used her readers' ideologies to lead them to her point of view; she has capitalized on their "beliefs and judgments" (161). Because a person's ideology is seldom completely consistent, Burke explains that an artist can achieve his desired effect by playing off "some assumptions against others" (162). He concludes that

An ideology is not a harmonious structure of beliefs or assumptions; some of its beliefs militate against others, and some of its standards militate against our nature. An ideology is an aggregate of beliefs sufficiently at odds with one another to justify opposite kinds of conduct. Thus, the artist's patterns of experience may be manifest in his stressing of the ideology. Accepting certain assumptions or beliefs as valid, he will exploit them to discredit other assumptions or beliefs which he considers invalid. He may, for instance, exploit assumptions of individual dignity to
attack the assumptions that we must obey without protest the king... It is by such aligning of assumptions that poetry contributes to the formation of attitudes, and thus to the determining of conduct. (163)

In "Is There Nowhere" Gordimer has pitted two ideological assumptions against each other. The first "assumption" can be stated either as the primarily Afrikaner-held belief that apartheid or "apartness" is the only viable solution to the "complex racial make-up of South African society" (Omond 11), or it can be seen as simply a factual statement of the white's common fear of racial violence. Whether this assumption is termed an "ideology" or a "prejudice," it is nonetheless a very real attitude among white South Africans. Gordimer depicts this fear by picturing the black stranger as the girl sees him: first he is merely a red "dot of a figure in a picture." Then the figure becomes alive: the dot is a "native in a red woolen cap standing at the next clump of trees." Next, the girl sees the red of the black man's eyes as she passes him. Then, in an unexpected moment he is suddenly in front of her, "panting right into her face," so that the girl feels that it is "Fear itself that had her by the arms, the legs, the throat" (Selected Stories 16). This carefully-controlled
crescendo is an aspect of the way the story's form envelopes the reader.

Eckstein also points out, however, that Gordimer balances a "beautifully created tension and ambiguity," making sure that the attack might also be read credibly as simply an encounter. The crucial point to be made is that the reader, as bound up in the event as the girl in the story, has no real objectivity; he so identifies with the girl's fears, that he cannot say with any certainty what has actually transpired. Eckstein's summarizes the problem shared by reader and character:

In this dark room of fear without sense or thought, she sees what she has anticipated all her life: assault by a black man. However, in this dark room, the reader cannot be certain that the character's "awful dreams came true," because the black man's movements are always a response to the white woman's; he may be steadying her, after all, and not robbing her. (343)

The ambiguity that Eckstein has observed is heightened by the girl's subsequent actions. After she flees, leaving her handbag behind, she sees the gate of a house ahead of her and begins to go there for assistance. But "suddenly" she turns away and begins questioning herself: "Why did I fight? What did I fight for? Why didn't I give him the money and let him go?" She recalls
that the native was shoeless, his bare feet cracked from the cold (18). The girl's realization—as well as the reader's—is based on the second ideological assumption that Gordimer plays on, that is, the belief in compassion, charity, or simple human decency. The girl's decision not to seek "justice"—that is, not to set the police against a man more poor than malevolent—is a triumph of the second ideology over the first.

Throughout the story, the reader has been intimately caught up in the girl's reflections. Her paranoia governs our own reaction, just as her change of heart prepares the way for our changed attitude. Again, as in "The Train from Rhodesia," the reader has been a witness to a kind of incident and hearing. In fact, the girl's questions are the very kind that would be asked by a defense lawyer, and they call for a complete re-assessment of the encounter. In searching for the truth, the girl poses questions that are comparable to those Aristotle suggests for discovering means of accusation and defense, questions such as these: Who was harmed by the alleged injustice? Was the alleged injustice done intentionally or unintentionally? If intentionally, what was the cause of the action (profit, revenge, punishment, pleasure)? What kind of person was the doer of the act (Rhetoric 63–7)? The answers to these questions, like the realization that one ideology (fear
of strangers) has irrationally taken precedence over another (belief in justice and compassion), lead to the same conclusion: that the wrong perpetrated against the girl—if there was one—on that cold gray morning is nothing in comparison to the wrong daily imposed upon the man. Coming out of the wood—the archetypal reading is unavoidable—the girl understands that the real evil she has encountered is not the stranger but her own fears and hostilities. By using the incendiary example that she does, Gordimer creates a situation in which the intensity of the art is increased or "charged" because it makes use of the reader's situation outside of the work of art (Counter-statement 163). The title, with its overtones of simple hospitality, is both the antithesis of this emotional volatility and a statement of what the girl—and the reader—has begun to learn.

Just as stories that are viewed as types of forensic discourse ask the reader to judge events set before him, stories viewed as types of epideictic discourse do so also. The difference is that in forensic discourse, the reader decides if something is morally correct while in epideictic he determines if an action is praiseworthy. A story like Gordimer's, "A Chip of Glass Ruby," may be profitably examined as a type of epideictic discourse.

In this story, Mrs. Bamjee, formerly a widow and now the wife of a vegetable vendor and the mother of nine
children, is in many ways a traditional Indian woman. She still wears the sari; she wouldn't think of dining with men, and she waits on her husband and children. Nevertheless, political activists seek her out, and intellectuals stop by for conversation.  

As the story begins, Bamjee is grumbling about his wife's latest project: she has agreed to run off political leaflets in their home, and the old hand-turned duplicator crowds the dining room table. Even as she turns out the illegal tracts, Mrs. Bamjee seems more the housewife than the radical, running off the papers "as if she were pounding chillies." She is discovered, however, and sent to a prison some fifty miles away. Bamjee cannot comprehend his wife's involvement with politics, especially the black liberation movement. The conditions of black workers are not of their concern, Bamjee thinks, and he greatly resents the inconvenience his wife's jailing has caused him. He refuses to visit her, and when he learns that, along with the other political prisoners, she is on a hunger strike, he is enraged:

For a crowd of natives who will smash our shops and kill us in our houses when their time comes...He fell into bed each night like a stone and dragged himself up in the mornings as a beast of burden is beaten to its feet. (232)
Weeks later, when his step-daughter, Girlie, surprises Bamjee with birthday greetings, the bewildered husband finally begins to understand his wife. Girlie has just come from visiting her mother in prison where she was admonished not to forget her stepfather's birthday. Bamjee initially shrugs off the gesture as another instance of his wife's characteristically female silliness, and, as he tells Girlie, "What importance is my birthday when she's sitting there in a prison? I don't understand how she can do the things she does when her mind is full of women's nonsense at the same time" (233). For Girlie, Mrs. Bamjee's actions are thoroughly consistent: remembering birthdays and printing leaflets are two manifestations of her mother's compassion: "she always remembers, remembers everything--people without somewhere to live, hungry kids, boys who can't get educated--remembers all the time." Bamjee finally grasps why his wife is so admired, why, in fact, she is so appealing to him. Like the fact of his pregnant step-daughter's belly, Mrs. Bamjee is life-affirming. Her political activism and her maternal instincts are all of a piece; she is more saint than radical.

In the Rhetoric, Aristotle states that epideictic discourse, the act of praising someone, is "in respect akin to urging a course of action" (61). Modern rhetoricians concur. In The New Rhetoric, Chaim Perelman
and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca claim that epideictic oratory "forms a central part of the art of persuasion" because by intensifying the listener's adherence to certain values, it prompts commitment (49). By applauding a person's character, especially as it is expressed in specific deeds, the orator is implicitly advocating that a similar mode of conduct be adopted. For such an address to be moving, however, it is essential that the orator depict vividly the kind of behavior he thinks is worthy of emulation. Dry abstractions will not do; virtues must be fleshed out and made immediate to the listener. Because of the potency of poetic language and the immediacy of well-drawn narrative, a work of short fiction is per se able to animate abstractions. In fact, most epideictic discourses use the narrative mode, as the speaker strings together representative anecdotes or describes at length a particularly illustrative incident. In the Rhetoric of Motives, Burke observes that the "modern variant of epideictic rhetoric is in human interest stories depicting the sacrificial life of war heroes in war times" (70). "A Chip of Glass Ruby," is one such "human interest story" in which the actions of the heroine in her war on apartheid are "deeds that seem to have been done without profit and reward" (Burke, Rhetoric 71).
In order that her story be especially moving, Gordimer made two rhetorical decisions. First, she chose to reveal Mrs. Bamjee's character primarily through her husband's growing appreciation of it. Secondly, she kept Mrs. Bamjee practically mute about her political convictions; the only exception is her request that the police not confiscate the copy of Nehru's writings that she had been keeping for her children. Mrs. Bamjee, in fact, disappears from the story midway through, but her absence is a far more eloquent testimonial to the depth of her beliefs.

Because epideictic discourse is directed to the praise or censure of individuals, it naturally makes use of the ethical appeal. This kind of appeal presents another way in which Gordimer's story might be viewed rhetorically, for Mrs. Bamjee possesses that "genuine wisdom and excellence of character" that Quintilian defines as ethically appealing (Institutio Oratoria III, viii, 13). And of the nine virtues that Aristotle considers to be features of a person who merits admiration--justice, courage, temperance, magnificence, magnanimity, liberality, gentleness, prudence, and wisdom (Rhetoric 57)--Mrs. Bamjee exemplifies all but one. And the fact that Mrs. Bamjee is hardly "magnificent," that she is plain-looking, humble in demeanor, and modest about her accomplishments, only increases her appeal and
puts her actions more in reach of the common reader.

Centuries after Aristotle and Quintilian, Hugh Blair also described the virtues appropriate to one who would lead or persuade. His description, too, fits Mrs. Bamjee's character. In great measure she possesses:

the love of justice and order and indignation at insolence and oppression, the love of honesty and truth, and detestation of fraud, meanness, and corruption; magnanimity of spirit;...zeal for all great and noble designs and reverence for all worthy and heroic characters. (131)

Finally, Corbett has stated that the ethical appeal demands a certain "coherence," meaning that a stable image must be maintained throughout the whole of the discourse (Classical Rhetoric 95). In this sense, there is no need to refine Mrs. Bamjee's portrait, for consistency and fairness are at the very core of her being. As Martin Trump has commented, Girlie's explanation of her mother "is one of the warmest personal tributes in Gordimer's entire fictional oeuvre." It is "a special moment in South African short fiction where the humanism of a political commitment is completely vindicated by the nature of the character engaged in that cause" (358).
The three constituents of the ethical appeal, as Aristotle defined them, are trustworthiness (or good character, arete), intelligence (or good sense, phronesis), and benevolence (or good will, eunoia). Modern theorists continue to adopt Aristotle's definition but often add a fourth quality, power or charisma (Golden 295). Gordimer's portrait of Mrs. Bamjee embodies these qualities. She has an intellectual side, as evidenced in her reading of Nehru and her long conversations with academics and activists, but because Gordimer is interested in depicting the connection between her political conscience and her personal conscientiousness, she does not dwell on this quality much. Instead, Gordimer emphasizes the other two Aristotelian features: trustworthiness and benevolence. Her good will is, of course, evident throughout the entire text; indeed every single one of Mrs. Bamjee's actions or comments is directed toward the care of some one other than herself. But her trustworthiness, especially as it is manifested in the related qualities of sincerity, consistency, and integrity, is her most admirable quality, for it solidifies the reader's impression of her selflessness. The reader's reaction is, simply, the very common one of wanting to see "actions" that "speak louder than words." George Campbell has phrased this very natural human phenomena in
rhetorical terms: "When our practice conforms to our theory, our effectiveness trebles" (Golden 295). For this reason, any criticism about Mrs. Bamjee's neglecting her family instantly dissolves; her political activism is a natural extension of her maternal instincts.

"A Chip of Glass Ruby" and stories like it, communicate Gordimer's social vision primarily through the persuasive use of characterization. It is easy to imagine other ways that Gordimer might have re-cast her tale, focusing more on plot, for example, or creating an antagonist with whom Mrs. Bamjee might debate the merits of political protest. But Gordimer seems to know intuitively what Aristotle has admitted in the Rhetoric: that the ethical appeal often proves to be the most effective strategy. Gordimer's story, in fact, is remarkable because the ethical appeal actually increases even though the main character disappears from the action of the story rather early on. But though Mrs. Bamjee disappears from the action, she never vanishes completely from the narrative; her spirit like that of Mrs. Moore in Forster's Passage to India haunts the rest of the story. In fact, the image of the incarcerated Mrs. Bamjee, fasting in solidarity with her fellow prisoners but sending home little reminders about birthdays, epitomizes
her character and is more persuasive than if Gordimer had kept her in the story till the end.

The primary liability in employing the ethical appeal in fiction is the tendency to produce one-dimensional characters. Gordimer saves Mrs. Bamjee from becoming a cardboard "do-gooder" by comically interposing scenes of common household calamities with those of political action. Even with this touch, however, it is difficult to find another Gordimer character who is as saintly as this "Ghandian woman" (Eckstein 345). There are, however, more fallibly human characters in her fictional world, characters who may be as heroic in their aspirations as Mrs. Bamjee but are more human in living them out. Looked at rhetorically, these stories merge the ethical appeal—which calls forth admiration for commitment or character—with the emotional appeal—which elicits sympathy on the basis of the difficulty of the character's situation. This combination of ethical and emotional appeals is especially persuasive rhetorically, for it allows the author to place a less-than-perfect character in a difficult situation and still win the reader's approval of the character. It was this combination that worked so effectively in The Blood Knot, because it allowed Fugard to depict appealing qualities, like Morrie's ambition, while showing how these virtues are crushed by apartheid. In describing a country like
South Africa, where, in Gordimer's view, one can still find heroes (Sanoff 74), but where, in Fugard's view, one more often finds victims (pers. interview), the writer must find a rhetoric that balances its claim on the reader's admiration against its claim on his pity.

Pat Haberman, the main character of "A Correspondence Course" is one figure who calls forth both praise and pity. Like Mrs. Bamjee, Pat Haberman is a mother with the "right" politics and one who has tried to raise her daughter to be equally fair-minded. Twenty years ago, Pat left her husband, purposefully eschewing a life of "businessman dinners and drunken golf-club dances (Something Out There 104). She has taught her daughter, Harriet, to be equally conscientious, to realize that her "life of choices and decent comfort is not shared by the people in whose blackness it is embedded" (105). Now that her daughter is grown, Pat is pleased that Harriet works on a literacy program for blacks and studies for a Master's degree by correspondence.

One of Harriet's articles, "Literacy and the Media" has been published in a journal that, by an odd coincidence, is read by a political prisoner. Intrigued by her ideas, the prisoner--Roland Carter--uses one of his few permitted letters to write to Harriet and respond to her essay. Pat, who has had her place in the "ritualistic discussion of what can be done" about
apartheid (105), encourages her daughter to write back; as letters are exchanged, the mother eagerly follows the correspondence and even boasts of it to her like-minded employer and friends. While she admits that there is some slight risk involved, such as Harriet's name being placed in some kind of file, she sees the letter-writing as virtually a political duty. She cannot, however, resist the status that the correspondence has gained for her; mere mention of the letter

would immediately "place" her and her daughter in respect for people who had not met them before. Sometimes she added what a pity it was that more people who talked liberalism didn't make the effort to write to political prisoners, show them they still were regarded by some as part of the community. Did people realize that in South Africa common criminals, thieves and forgers, were better treated than prisoners of conscience? (108)

Obviously Pat is not the revolutionary Mrs. Bamjee is.9 But to her credit, she has tried to live a life of integrity, to guard against an all too easy "white suburban amnesia" (110). Given the narrow confines of her existence, her petty bragging is hardly a vice. Ultimately, however, Pat is oblivious to the consequences of her political ideology. Even though she thinks of herself as savvy about the "inside" world of left-wing politics, she misjudges the danger of her daughter's
friendship with Carter. After she hears of his escape from prison, Pat is sure Carter will flee to the borders and inwardly smiles at her daughter's assumption that he will seek them out. When Carter does show up at their door, Pat is genuinely surprised, even terrified. She retreats to her bedroom and mechanically waters an African violet. Feeling jailed in her own room, in her own ideology, she waters the flower "like a prisoner tending his one sprig of green," petrified "for what she had done, done to her darling girl, done for" (115).

Not only has Pat misjudged the seriousness of the situation, but she has also misread the profound effect her ideology has had on her daughter. Unlike Mrs. Bamjee, who keeps Nehru's writings on the shelf for her children to read and who willingly accepts jailing as the consequence of her ideals, Pat Haberman has never really put her values to the test. Her activism has been of the most comfortable sort. But raising children to be radicals is dangerous business, dangerous because they may indeed take up the cause and take it up regardless of the personal sacrifices demanded of them.

The subject matter of this story, like that of "Is There Nowhere Else We Can Meet," is highly-charged; it hits home at well-meaning liberals whose political sentiments cost them nothing. By placing Pat in a situation where her political views do indeed extract a
heavy toll, Gordimer merges the ethical and emotional appeals to make a statement about both the price and the value of real activism.

Gordimer begins with an ethical appeal. Pat Haberman knows that the white man in South Africa is seriously flawed, knows that his personality threatens to split and "dribble its endowment like a drying pomegranate" (110). That she has tried to live justly and that she has raised her daughter to do so merits our admiration; that, in the end, she cannot bring herself to the ultimate sacrifice--giving up her child to the cause--does not merit our scorn. It is an entirely human reaction. But in light of the 1976 Soweto Uprising, one of the most cataclysmic events in recent South African history where teen-agers were jailed and children were killed, Pat Haberman's dilemma elicits two responses from the reader: a natural sympathy for a mother's anguish but the inescapable knowledge that as "black people have accepted...the death of children and adolescents (as) part of the struggle" (Gordimer, "Letter from South Africa" 3), white people, too, must sacrifice what they love best.

The emotional appeal of "A Correspondence Course" is rooted in the reader's understanding of the no-win situation in which Pat Haberman and all white liberals find themselves. That to do what is right may ultimately
mean endangering your child is surely among the most agonizing of decisions. The understanding accorded to Pat is a result of the reader's sympathy for her predicament, a result of what Aristotle terms "pity." To a South African audience, his definition is very much to the point. "Pity" is that "feeling of pain" aroused in the audience by the "sight of some evil, destructive or painful, which befalls one who does not deserve it, and which we might expect to befall ourselves or some friend of ours" (Rhetoric 113). Aristotle explains further that we "pity those who are like us in age, character, disposition, social standing, or birth," and for this reason, Pat's ordinariness makes her all the more abject.

In addition to pity, Aristotle enumerates eight other pairs of emotions that a speaker might try to arouse in his listeners. His discussion of shame is particularly pertinent to Gordimer's short fiction. This emotion surface, Aristotle writes, when a hearer is reminded of "pains or disturbances" which "seem likely to involve us in discredit" (107). Over and over again, Gordimer shows the reader whites who are shame-filled; often her stories end with white characters making some futile gesture of kindness as if to compensate for the larger wrong that they cannot redress. In "Ah, Woe is Me," for example, the child of a former servant seeks out her mother's old employer because she is wild with
anxiety over her mother's illness.¹⁰ "What could I do for her. What could I do?" the narrator asks defensively, and the girl leaves not with medicine or money or even advice—only an old handkerchief of the mistress'. So, too, in "Blinder" the lady of the house is unwilling to comfort her housemaid who is grieving over the loss of her lover lest any show of compassion be taken as a relaxation in the relationship. Unable to give solace, she offers her servant an old armchair. In "Six Feet of the Country," the landowner's wife, embarrassed over the Health Division's callous treatment of the body of one of her field hand's brothers, helplessly offers an old suit to the worker's father.¹¹ Ineffective gestures all, the actions in each story bespeak shame and futility. Simply put, they depict the shame of being white.

In discussing Gordimer's combined use of ethical and emotional appeals, I have alluded to, but not made explicit, a feature that these stories share: a moment of reversal for the characters. In "A Chip of Glass Ruby," Bamjee reverses his assessment of his wife's activism, and in "A Correspondence Course," Pat reverses her assessment of her daughter's naiveté. The characters' attitudinal changes are important, for they lead the way for the readers to experience a similar epiphanic moment, if they have not done so already. Most readers, given the clues that Gordimer has provided, would have already
concluded, for example, that Mrs. Bamjee is exemplary; the pleasure of the story is in observing how Bamjee gets to the point where the reader already is. Burke has commented on this dynamic:

It is the suspense of certain forces gathering to produce a certain result. It is the suspense of a rubber band which we see being tautened. We know that it will be snapped—there is thus no ignorance of the outcome; our satisfaction arises from our participation in the process, from the fact that the beginnings of the dialogue lead us to feel the logic of its close. (Counter-Statement 145)

Similarly, the reader knows—all too sinkingly knows—that Harriet will leave with Roland Carter; Gordimer doesn't even need to "finish" her story, and indeed she doesn't. The point is that in reaching this realization before the character does, the reader is in the position of first, discovering the consequences of certain kinds of actions and secondly, having this discovery validated by the character's journey toward full knowledge. Not only does this rhetorical technique draw the reader more fully into the story, it also allows the reader to grasp Gordimer's political sentiments. Observing Bamjee understand that his wife is noble validates the rightness of political protest; watching Pat grasp the integrity with which her daughter puts her political ideas into practice validates a life of radical commitment.12
The Rhetorical Function of Literary Devices in Gordimer's Short Stories

In an essay entitled, "The Flash of Fireflies," Nadine Gordimer claims that short-story writers see by the light of the flash; theirs is the art of the only thing one can be sure of—-the present moment. Ideally they have learned to do without explanation of what went before, and what happens beyond this point. How the characters will appear, think, behave, comprehend tomorrow or at any other time in their lives, is irrelevant. A discrete moment of truth is aimed at—not the moment of truth, because the short story doesn't deal in cumulatives. (181)

Her comment that short-story writers see "in a flash" is also a comment on the narrative technique she uses in some of her most recent fiction. In stories like "A Soldier's Embrace" and one I will discuss shortly, "A Lion on the Freeway," Gordimer shifts the rhetorical burden away from plot and characterization to symbol. In other stories, particularly the two that comprise "Town and Country Lovers," Gordimer uses juxtaposition as a way of making an appeal. To those who think of rhetoric as highly explicit, indeed almost intrusive, commentary, it may not seem possible that symbol and juxtaposition can be used to effect persuasion. Yet, as Burke has demonstrated in his comments on these two kinds of "incidental forms," literary devices such as these two can function rhetorically.
The stories I have just mentioned each illustrate what Walton Patrick has called the "metaphorical dilations" common to the modern short story (77). Patrick's term refers to the compactness of recent short fiction and suggests the rather elliptical quality that is commonly associated with the modern story. This elliptical quality, combined with a certain urbanity and sophistication, has been the feature of the loosely-affiliated school of artists known as the "New Yorker writers." Gordimer has been associated with this magazine since 1951, and she, too, has been given the appellation of "New Yorker writer" (Cooke, "African Landscapes" 533). As Martin Trump has observed, the stories that Gordimer writes for the New Yorker have a different quality to them, notably the numerous instances when "narrators offer explanations that would be unnecessary to South African readers" (365).

I mention Gordimer's association with the New Yorker for two reasons. First because this association may constitute part of the reason for Gordimer's shift from critical realism to more symbolic modes of expression. I say part of the reason since the themes of Gordimer's recent writing--particularly the impending revolution--themselves call for a non-realistic treatment. Secondly, because Gordimer is writing for a non-South African readership, she has the added burden of explaining
topical events in a way that does not detract from her narrative. Sometimes her explanations are rather clumsy, as in this example from her most recent tale, "Home," a story about a woman whose mother and sister are detained in prison without trial:

When Nils came from his meeting, he turned the key, but the door was quickly opened from the inside—Teresa was there, a terribly vivid face. The law classified her as Colored; now the blood of her Ithosa and Javanese ancestry surfaced, dark and glowing. (34)\(^13\)

The second sentence is a red flag to the reader: "you are in South Africa," it warns him, "watch for racial themes." "A Lion on the Freeway," on the other hand, merges topical comment into the narrative almost imperceptibly.\(^14\)

The story is one of the briefest in Gordimer's 1980 collection, A Soldier's Embrace. It is virtually a prose poem, with sections that read more like stanzas than like paragraphs. About the narrator we know nothing—except that she (or he) cannot sleep. She thinks that she hears one of the zoo lions roaring and panting in the night and reflects how a tourist, expecting the Africa of Tarzan movies and adventure books, would easily be fooled. But, muses the narrator, "roar" is not quite the right word to describe the lion's outburst. Nor are these restless,
night-stalking lions much like their daytime doubles, she muses, those caged, sleepy beasts who complacently gnaw at their already-slaughtered meals. The new freeway has made the lion's groans less distinct, yet a dull rumbling is unmistakable; it sounds low, but insistent, like the lion's strained, anguished growl. As insistent, the insomniac narrator continues, as the black workers who struck that day, the "dockers with sticks and knobkerries" who formed a "thick prancing black centipede with thousands of waving legs advancing" (27). In her imagination the centipede and the lion mysteriously merge:

Prance, advance, over the carefully-tended please keep off the grass. They went all through the city not far from this one, their steps are so rhythmical, waving sticks (no spears anymore, no guns yet); they can cover any distance, in time. Shops and houses closed against them while they passed. And the cry that came from them as they approached—that groan straining, the rut of freedom bending the bars of the cage, he's delivered himself of it, it's as close as if he's on the freeway now, bewildered, finding his way, turning his splendid head at last to claim what he's never seen, the country where he's king (27).

Suddenly the story is no longer a nighttime rumination; it has become a nightmarish prediction. Revolt, like the insistent approach of the centipede is inevitable, and
black supremacy, like the caged lion at last set free, is the justified end.

The political "message" of "A Lion on the Freeway" is a completely unstated one. It has been conveyed indirectly, through the flash of metaphorical insight. Although the symbol reveals itself in an instant, the author has carefully cleared the way for that moment of immediate understanding. She tells us explicitly that we are in Africa; she implies that the fretful narrator is white by the references to the uneasiness of the black dockers striking. The lion--like the revolution--at first appears far off and dimly heard, but it grows nearer and more demanding. That the narrator, in her drowsiness would confuse the lion and the centipede-like strikers she's read about, is a credible description of the workings of a semi-conscious mind. In addition to conveying the common experience of sleepily confusing real and fictitious events, the woman's ramblings also suggest the unconscious white fear of black revolt. Symbolizing the black man first as the caged animal and then as the freed "king" of Africa implies both the present reality and the inevitable future.

Gordimer's story is a striking instance of how literary techniques are used to exert a persuasive appeal. It also illustrates how merging rhetorical goals and aesthetic ones can produce a piece of fiction that
seems devoid of propaganda but definitely communicates a political attitude.

Burke explains the phenomena I have just described in the "Lexicon Rhetoricae" section of Counter-Statement. Here, Burke speaks of one aspect of artistic form that is especially pertinent to Gordimer's works: the rhetorical use of "minor" or "incidental" forms such as metaphor, paradox, contraction, etc. (127). In Gordimer's short fiction, three "minor" forms predominate: the use of metaphor, of image, and of juxtaposition. As "minor" forms, the effectiveness of these literary devices partially depends, as Burke states, "upon their function in the whole." Significantly, however, these forms can also be detached from the text; they "manifest sufficient evidences of episodic distinctness to bear consideration apart from their context" (127). This is an important observation. A large part of rhetorical efficacy depends, as ad-writers well know, on finding potent, portable images that the reader will long remember after the discourse has ended. As I have already demonstrated with regard to Fugard's dramas, the author's ability to create stirring, affective images is a critical and efficient way of making his works persuasive. Metaphor, image, and juxtaposition may also be considered as types of what Michael Osborn has called "rhetorical depiction," which is those "strategic pictures, verbal
or nonverbal visualizations that linger in the collective memory of audiences as representative of their subjects when rhetoric has been successful" (79). Because, as Osborn points out, depiction is a type of compression, it is a technique especially valuable in short fiction.

In "A Lion of the Freeway," the entire weight of persuasion depends on the metaphor with which the story ends. The association the narrator makes between the centipede and the lion is an unstated comparison of each of these images with the black South African--first as the relentless, advancing insect, much like some science-fiction monster, and then as the "splendid" re-instated lion king. This association relies, in turn, on the narrator's unstated but palpable fear (or "ideology"): the terror of the impending, unavoidable black revolution. That the image has shifted from a multi-limbed, frightening insect to a majestic lion carries with it a shift in tone: a sense of rightness or justice is attached to the image of the lion, and thus the political attitude is conveyed.

Gordimer's story "works" because of the unexpectedness of fusing the two images, a freshness that is the heart of any well-drawn metaphor, and because the metaphor necessitates a reader's greater involvement with the text. Burke notes that the appeal of metaphor "resides in the fact that its particular subject-matter
enables the mind to follow the metaphor-process" (Counter-Statement 143). Readers are called upon to participate actively when confronted with a metaphor, and their response to this formal aspect of the narrative automatically involves them in a response to the subject matter. Simply put, readers move from questioning, "what does the metaphor mean?" to wondering, "Is the metaphor valid?" The reader may be surprised by the connection drawn, and as Osborn observes, the "writer's radical metaphor might invite us to visualize a remarkable tenor-vehicle relationship" (80). In Gordimer's story, the relationship is remarkable indeed; through it Gordimer simultaneously communicates a sense of panic at the impending revolution and a sense of its rightness. The metaphor establishes both tone and attitude.

Rhetoricians from Aristotle, who discussed metaphor as an aspect of Style, to George Campbell, who called metaphor an "allegory in miniature" (Philosophy of Rhetoric 75) have recognized the power of metaphor as a persuasive device. At bottom, the rhetorical success of metaphor adheres in its power to bring about identification and intensification.

At a most fundamental level, metaphor facilitates the process of understanding or identification that necessarily precedes persuasion. Metaphor, in this view, is simply "abstraction for the purpose of clearer and
more vivid communication" (Fogarty 38). Like an expository passage, it works to make the unfamiliar accessible. "It brings out," writes Burke, "the thisness of that, or the thatness of a this" (Grammar 503).

Secondly, metaphor by virtue of the fact that it demands the reader's fuller participation in the interpretive act, makes the bond between writer and reader a more intimate one and thus intensifies the persuasive experience. Although metaphors are created strategically by the writer, their allusiveness calls for the reader to exert some effort in making the implicit connections. As a kind of co-creator, then, the reader has invested more in the discourse and been drawn more deeply into the text. Booth cites this phenomenon as the reason why metaphors "communicate more than non-metaphors." More passes between writer and reader, Booth claims because:

the speaker has performed a task by yoking what the hearer has not yoked before, and the hearer simply cannot resist joining him; they thus perform an identical dance step, and the metaphor accomplishes at least part of its work even if the hearer then draws back and says, "I shouldn't have allowed that." ("Metaphor as Rhetoric" 52)

The very act of puzzling over a metaphor may also be the first step toward the reader's real consideration of the
issue underlying the story. This aspect is especially pertinent to the balance of aesthetics and rhetoric in political fiction: the artistry of a well-drawn metaphor will ultimately be more effective than an obvious, propagandistic statement. The balance between art and rhetoric also is implied in Booth's stipulation that a metaphor be "appropriate to the task" and "accommodated to the audience" (55). In this respect, Gordimer's choice is a fortunate one. The lion is a quintessential African symbol and recognizable as such to readers both at home and abroad. Caged or free, it neatly epitomizes the present and future of black South Africans.16

Related to the use of metaphor in Gordimer's short fiction is the use of image and scene as rhetorical devices. Osborn has described the rhetorical potency of an effectively-drawn scene; memorable scenes of rhetorical novels serve to authenticate the author's message by their sheer quantity and vividness. What the author works to accomplish by such "proofs" is not so much verification as verisimilitude, the sense of closeness of the world modeled in the novel to that already experienced by the reader. To the degree that verisimilitude is established, the rhetoric in the one can be transformed readily into action in the other. Moreover, when readers are naive concerning the world depicted in the novel...they may be especially vulnerable. If the novel seems plausible, they may accept it as a substitute for actual experience. (86)
Osborn's comments echo observations made by both Aristotle and Burke. In his discussion of the pathetic appeal, Aristotle advises the orator to heighten his listener's emotional response by placing before their eyes scenes which would naturally elicit such reactions. Burke, in *Language as Symbolic Action* builds a similar case for the rhetorical use of scene-painting:

Many of the topics in the *Rhetoric* are in effect epitomized situations—and insofar as actions speak louder than words, the topics might also be said to have a corresponding Poetic application. For if a man can mollify us or enrage us by saying gentle or arrogant things respectively, then it is all the more likely that gentle or arrogant conduct can have the same effects. Thus, the poet can produce characters by conceiving of plots in which his puppets (by imitation) do as well as say the sort of things listed in the topics. (297)

Osborn claims that rhetorical depiction has a special ability to "show us what we already know and accept, but in a manner that attempts to reinforce our acceptance" (82). He calls this phenomena "repetitive presentation," borrowing, perhaps, from Burke's notion of "repetitive form" as "restatement" or "succession of images" (*Counter-Statement* 125) Gordimer, like Fugard, excels in this regard; she, too, has honed stories which appeal at once to two kinds of readers; to foreign audiences, her vivid scenes make an indelible impression.
in part, because of their shocking newness. The same vividness may jar native audiences out of their complacency and force re-evaluation.

Gordimer's "Six Feet of the Country" demonstrates an especially moving instance of the rhetorical use of image (or "repetitive presentation"). In this piece, a young native boy, traveling from Rhodesia to Johannesburg in search of work, stops temporarily at his brother Petrus' hut. He becomes ill and dies there, but Petrus, afraid to tell the white farm-owner of his brother's illegal presence, waits several days to notify him. The landlord, in turn, feels obligated to inform the health authorities who take the body away for a post-mortem. Much to the landlord's astonishment, Petrus requests that the body be retrieved for proper burial. The owner, thinking of the substantial cost involved and of the worker's poverty, tries to dissuade him from his plan. But Petrus insists, and pulling forth the tattered bills he has collected from his fellow-workers, asks that the body be recovered.

Like Fugard's Blood Knot, the rest of the story is painfully predictable. The farmer does retrieve the body, but when Petrus and his father begin to carry the coffin to its freshly-dug grave, they know immediately that something is amiss. The coffin is much too heavy, and prying it open they find the remains of some
man, sent over by the authorities in place of the missing body. Although the health officials appear shocked in "a laconic fashion" (Selected Stories 68), they are "helpless to put it right." The dead stranger in the coffin and the missing body of the brother symbolize the blacks' helplessness before the enormous bureaucracy of apartheid.

This story is one of Gordimer's most painful portraits, and much of the anguish felt derives from the fact that the reader, like the audience watching The Blood Knot, knows that the characters will not be treated justly or compassionately. Like Fugard's play, Gordimer's story ends with a profound sense of waste. The narrator says as much: "So the whole thing was a complete waste, even more of a waste for the poor devils than I had thought it would be" (69).

The image that the reader takes with him after finishing the story is one that appears during the climactic discovery scene. While the farmer practices his golf strokes, the workers try to bury their dead. When the father forces the pall-bearers to stop and pry open the casket, the farmer finally realizes what is wrong. After the truth is known, the aged father sits on a nearby rock, defeated and weeping. This image—the weeping, aged father—and that brief scene are among the most memorable in Gordimer's fictional world. Like
Hallie and his kite and Lena and her bread in Fugard's plays, they are emblematic of the authors' social vision. As "concrete embodiments" of ethical truths, rhetorical depiction also provides the reader with images of "basic premises that ought to govern moral reasoning" (Osborn 95).

Another example of Burke's "incidental forms" is juxtaposition. It is a technique that Gordimer favors since it allows her to make her political point completely by implication. Like metaphor, juxtaposition is also rhetorically effective since readers are called upon to draw conclusions based upon wordlessly compared scenes.

"Town and Country Lovers" is a paired set of stories; Gordimer uses juxtaposition within each and pairing them naturally suggests that some comparison be made between the two pieces. The first story, like Fugard's Statements depicts a couple caught in violation of the Immorality Act. It is sectioned into six parts, with no connections drawn between them. Each chronicles the successive stages of the affair; in the opening scene, the reader is introduced to the solitary, intellectual Dr. Leinsdorf, an Austrian geologist who is researching underground water-courses in South Africa. Though he has lived in that country for five years,
Leinsdorf is completely absorbed in his work and has no interest in politics.

Stopping by a grocery one evening, he sees that the brand of razor blades he usually buys is out of stock; the young colored salesclerk says that she will put some aside for him when the new shipment comes in. When they do, the girl delivers them to him in his whites-only apartment. From this innocent beginning, the affair develops. The girl—she remains nameless—begins to deliver his groceries, unpacking and shelving them for him during her lunch break. She refuses any payment or gratuity, enjoying the odd pleasure of being in a position to do a service for someone else. When she notices that he has included a request for trouser buttons on the weekly list, she offers to do the mending for him. At this point, Gordimer is very careful in her description of the beginning of their physical intimacy. Leinsdorf is neither calculating or loving. His aloneness seems to be the major impetus for reaching out to the girl, though he also finds her simplicity, curiosity, and quickness attractive. Watching her sew, he thinks she moves gracefully, and though she is gap-toothed, in serious profile she seems less the peasant. "You're a good girl," he says, "And touched her" (78).

By the third section, the two meet every day, making love in the late afternoon before the girl takes the long
bus and train ride home to the black township where she lives with her mother. Leinsdorf pleads with the girl to "phone" her mother and make some excuse so that she can stay the night. When the girl explains that her mother will be "scared we get caught," Leinsdorf misses the point. Thinking she is concerned only about matters of propriety, he is obtuse to the legal risk the girl is taking to be with him. He does not realize that she has already endured some humiliation; when she was questioned by the doorman about permission to be in Leinsdorf's flat, she has lied and claimed that she is working there.

The fourth and fifth sections are those that offer the most vivid contrast. In the fourth, the reader is given a glimpse of the comfortable domesticity of the pair. The girl cares for Leinsdorf, grinding fresh coffee beans for his drink, cooking his favorite meals. Leinsdorf in turn begins to teach her to type and explains his projects to her. For the intellectually-starved girl, the instruction is bliss. The last line of the section describes the felicity of their life together:

While she sat at the typewriter she thought how one day she would type notes for him, as well as making coffee the way he liked it, and taking him inside her body without saying anything, and sitting (even if only through the empty streets of quiet Sundays) beside him like a wife.
Just as the fourth scene is one of intimacy, the next is one of intrusion. It is a scene of devastating humiliation. Hearing the knock at the door and knowing something is wrong, the girl hides herself, barely-clad, inside of Leinsdorf's closet. The police force open the lock, ignoring Leinsdorf's protests, and the pair are taken to the police station. Though both are examined by the district surgeon, it is the girl's ordeal that the narrator describes. Forced to disrobe, she finds that in her haste she has pulled on Leinsdorf's underwear. These are taken from her to be examined for traces of sperm, and she is forced to undergo an internal examination. She spends the remainder of the night in a cell. Though Dr. Leinsdorf arranges her bail as well as his own, they do not meet again until the trial.17

The final section--the trial--is merely a coda to the already-ruined relationship. The love affair is reduced to a three-sentence statement:

I lived with the white man in his flat. He had intercourse with me sometimes. He gave me tablets to take to prevent me becoming pregnant. (84)

The persuasive point in this story is made by juxtaposing the fourth scene of great tenderness to the fifth of enormous degradation. This wordless contrast
uses the reader's own ideology—he belief that sexual relationships are private matters—to show how even this basic right is violated. Placing the fourth scene of harmless happiness next to the fifth of unwarranted, cruel intrusion alerts the reader to the senselessness of apartheid. Like Fugard's *A Lesson from Aloes*, the reader experiences the strangeness of a world where seclusion becomes hiding, intimacy becomes immorality, privacy becomes perversion.

The companion piece, simply called "Town and Country Lovers II," is also a story of ruined intimacy. In tracing the friendship and sexual initiation of a young farmer's son—Paulus Eysendyck—and the daughter of one of the native workers, Thebedi, the story builds a case for the unnaturalness of racial segregation. As children, the boy and girl played together, as did all of the offspring of the farmer's family and those of his workers. But with the onset of adolescence, a drastic separation takes place; by that time, the black children begin to use adult forms of address, calling "their old playmates missus and baasie—little master" (86).

Although Paulus, squires the daughters of wealthy farmers to the school dances, he still seeks out his former playmate when he is home from school. Like the girl and geologist in the first story, the bond between Thebedi and Paulus is first fed by the girl's curiosity
about life outside her own narrow existence and the boy's admiration of her simplicity. Too, Paulus is frankly flattered at Thebedi's wide-eyed admiration for his schoolboy accomplishments. But sexual attraction, especially since it is a newly-felt emotion, is also an element in their friendship, and the pair begin to meet secretly in the waning summer afternoons.

Thebedi, of course, becomes pregnant. Though by now she is engaged to one of the farm hands, Njabulo, she bears a child with "straight fine hair" and "spidery pink hands" (91). Paulus, returning from another vacation, hears of the child's birth and goes directly to Thebedi's hut. Two days later he returns and kills the infant. When the police appear, acting on reports of the sudden death of an almost white infant, Paulus is charged with murder.

At the preparatory examination, Thebedi hysterically tells the truth, that she had seen Paulus poison the child. By the time the case comes to trial more than a year later, however, she testifies that she did not see "what the white man did in the house" (93). When Paulus is acquitted and reporters press the girl for a statement, she says only, "It was a thing of our childhood, we don't see each other anymore" (93).

As a companion to the first story, the second immediately invites reflection on the circumstances of
the two women. One nameless, the other given only a first name, they are portrayed as passive, naive but eager to please, and in the end, emotionally deadened by the experience. The final scenes in each are ones of terrible, helpless resignation. In order to survive, they completely absolve the men of blame and deny that there was love. Both stories end on a hollow tone; the women seem emotionless, broken down, defeated.

Despite the insinuation that the affairs were based on some degree of love, Gordimer never suggests that they were between equals. In both, the men—the whites—initiate the sexual intimacy, arrange the meetings, and direct the course of the relationship. In both, the women's response stems from a clearly-drawn need for a fuller life. Because one man is a foreigner and the other is a boy, Gordimer does not charge them with maliciousness or even with carelessness. But, as the parallel trial scenes make clear, she does charge them with a brutal insensitiveness. The final atmosphere is one of utter helplessness and resignation. Possessed of very little control over their lives, the two women are representative of the situation of South African blacks in general.

As I indicated in the beginning of this situation, one of Gordimer's challenges is making her stories understandable to the reader without weighing the action
suggested, lies in her ability to make an aspect of her narrative function in a number of ways simultaneously. Juxtaposition, for example, not only places the situation before the reader's eyes, but it also forces him to draw his own conclusions, and it prevents the work from becoming propaganda. Gordimer's handling of the limited omniscient point of view, the point of view she used in "The Train from Rhodesia," is another example of how a literary technique functions rhetorically. Since Gordimer uses this device rather frequently, it bears a brief re-examination.

In "Blinder," Gordimer considers one of the ramifications of the Group Areas Act, that piece of legislation requiring blacks to live in specified areas. Because of this law, many blacks working as live-in domestics rarely see their families. They lead a kind of double life, as in the case of Ephraim, the "city" lover of the family's servant, Rose. When Ephraim is killed in an accident, Rose is not immediately informed. Though he has spent the bulk of his time with her, official notice was sent to his real, "township" wife:

He has--had, always had--a wife and children there where he came from, where he was going back to, where he was killed. Oh yes. Rose knows about that. The lady of the house, the family know about that; it was the usual thing, a young man comes to work in a city, he spends his whole life there away from his home because
he has to earn money to send home, and so—the family in the house privately reasoned—his home really is the backyard where his town woman lives. As a socio-political concept (the grown child who is studying social science knows) of the break-up of families as a result of the migratory labor system. And that system (the one studying political science knows) ensures that blacks function as units of labor instead of living as men, with the right to bring their families to live in town with them. (84)

This short passage, which places the reader in the mind of the lady of the house, accomplishes four ends. First, it informs non-South Africans about one specific piece of apartheid legislation, the Group Areas Act, and it does so without interrupting the smooth narrative surface. Secondly, by explaining this awful reality in socio-political terms, it indicates the whites' awareness of what they are doing; by using the jargon of those disciplines, it suggests the ways whites have rationalized their practices and emotionally anesthetized themselves. Finally, by virtue of the last phrase of the final sentence which reads like a veritable manifesto, the "right to bring their families to town to live with them," Gordimer conveys her own political attitude. Though it is put in the mouth of one of the characters who is not consciously censuring the system, the passage is undeniably condemnatory.
While Gordimer is acutely aware that her fiction reflects and comments on South African society, she is careful not to propagandize. Her particular contribution to the literature of apartheid has been to produce narratives which never over-simplify the social reality in order to serve a political cause. At the same time, she is unstinting in her condemnation of apartheid. One of her stories, "Open House" depicts the dilemma that Gordimer faces.

In "Open House," Frances Taver, the protagonist, is one of the few "right-thinking" whites left in South Africa who visiting American or English journalists can rely on to steer them to the "real" Africa. In the old days, she could easily throw together a party of African, white and Indian politicals, but now, because of all the bannings and exiles, things are different. When yet another eager American journalist phones, Frances wearily obliges, but she knows, though the American does not, that her black luncheon guests are hardly revolutionaries. Conscience-stricken, she phones the American to try to warn him. "I don't want you to be taken in," she urgently whispers, but the situation cannot easily be reversed. The writer understands that "something complicated was wrong, but he knew, too, that he wouldn't be there long enough to find out, that
perhaps you needed to live and die there, to find out" (Selected Stories 338).

"Something complicated" is indeed wrong in South Africa, and Gordimer, like Frances Taver, is lodging her complaint against facile, simplistic accounts of the situation. But her story is its own corrective. Gordimer's short fiction, stirringly written, often unfailingly drawn, does much to further the cause of freedom in South Africa.
Notes: Chapter Seven


3 Martin Trump also asserts that Gordimer's short fiction can be read as a record of recent South African history. See: "The Short Fiction of Nadine Gordimer," *Research in African Literatures* 17 (Fall 1986): 341–69. Barbara Eckstein does not believe, however, that Gordimer's short stories show the same movement from "personal to political interaction" or "direct response to the political context of a particular phase of South African history" (343). I disagree. Gordimer's most recent story, "Home," for example, is a direct response to the present political situation—the Botha administration's practice of political detention—and it shows the main character's movement from personal isolation to political action. As such, it is in line with earlier stories such as "The Smell of Death and Flowers," published in *Selected Stories*. See Eckstein, "Pleasure and Joy: Political Activism in Nadine Gordimer's Short Stories," *World Literature Today* 59 (Summer 1985): 342–346. "Home" is published in the *New Yorker* 25 April 1988: 34–42.


7 Other writers who have focused fictionally on the whites' fear of the black stranger include Athol Fugard, The Blood Knot and J. M. Coetzee, The Life and Times of Michael K.

8 Martin Trump discusses "A Chip of Glass Ruby" in connection with stories about how "political commitment can become a dividing force between husbands and wives." See "Short Fiction": 356-358. Barbara Eckstein takes a similar approach, calling the story one of Gordimer's "marriage group." See "Pleasure and Joy": 345. Christopher Heywood (Nadine Gordimer 40-41) focuses on a different aspect of the story, the ridicule Mrs. Bamjee's son experiences in school. Evelyn Schroth considers the story to be a protest against the inhumanity of apartheid that "the reader cannot fail to hear." See: "Nadine Gordimer's 'A Chip of Glass Ruby': A Commentary on Apartheid Society": 85-90.

9 Elizabeth Gerver has written about Gordimer's interest in revolutionaries; see "Women Revolutionaries in the Novels of Nadine Gordimer and Doris Lessing." World Literature Written in English 17: 30-37.


Gordimer: 140-1 who sees the story as a precursor to Gordimer's novel, *The Conservationist*.

12John Wakeman describes Gordimer's technique as presenting "her characters for recognition, and then, by the shake of the kaleidoscope as it were, to reveal the different and truer pattern implicit in the behavior." See his review of *Friday's Footprint*, p. 4.

13"Home" is a story that has much in common with both "A Chip of Glass Ruby," because it chronicles the activities of a woman involved in political work and "Town and Country Lovers, One" since it deals with an interracial couple. "Home," however, is certainly a story of the Eighties; the couple are married and the woman, Teresa, is her husband's equal.

14Bonnie Lyons considers "A Lion on the Freeway" to be a "mere exercise lacking the resonance one expects of Gordimer's work." See her review of *A Soldier's Embrace*: 336. I believe the story to be one of the best in the collection. The manner in which Gordimer weaves the narrator's semi-conscious fears of black revolution into her conscious attentiveness to the sounds of the night is an extremely skillful means of depicting the white South African's paranoia.


16Gordimer re-employs the metaphor of an escaped animal as a symbol for inevitable black revolution in her novella, *Something Out There*. See Barbara Eckstein's discussion in "Pleasure and Joy": 345-6.

17A film series, "Six Feet of the Country," (and published as a new collection under that title) has been made using stories drawn from a number of collections. One of the films is the first part of "Town and Country Lovers," but it does not end with the trial as the short story does. Rather, the last scene is of the medical examiner about to insert a speculum in the colored woman's vagina; the image is held for several seconds and dramatically underscores the story's theme of intrusion.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION: THE DISSENTING WRITER'S PROTEST

I began this study by quoting Terry Eagleton's comment on the paradoxical position of writers who take their own society as their subject. These writers, Eagleton maintains, must find a balance between "exile and involvement," between becoming, at one extreme, too immersed in their subjects, and at the other, too detached from them (Exiles 18). Here are another writer's thoughts on the same dilemma:

Powers of observation heightened beyond the normal imply extraordinary disinvolve...ment; or rather the double process, excessive preoccupation and identification with the lives of others, and at the same time a monstrous detachment... The tension between standing apart and being fully involved; that is what makes a writer. This is where we begin. The validity of this dialectic is the synthesis of revelation, our achievement of, or even attempt at this is the moral, the human justification for what we do. (12)

The speaker is Nadine Gordimer; the selection is from her introduction to Selected Stories where she also discusses how a writer is, in sense, "selected by his subject--his subject being the consciousness of his own era" (15). The
issue on which both Eagleton and Gordimer have commented is one that has been central to this study: the position of the white dissenting artist in South African literature. By "position," I mean both the writer's vantage point and the role he plays in a society where literature is implicitly political. There are, as Gordimer has intimated, two sides to this question. The first has to do with the writer's choice of his vantage point--how dispassionate or involved he becomes in his subject. The second has to do with the way that his particular moment in history has selected him--how the role he plays is as much imposed upon him as it is freely chosen.

Looking at the dissenting writer's position in terms of vantage point and role is really another way of looking at the writer's rhetorical situation and strategic protest. In the first instance, the writer's vantage point is dictated by a number of givens in the society which he is observing: in the case of Athol Fugard and Nadine Gordimer, the crudest aspect of this situation is the simple fact of their white skin. The role that these writers play is evidenced in the way that their writings communicate their abhorrence of apartheid in works that are strategically crafted to draw the same response from their audience. But as I have suggested throughout this dissertation, the aspects of
vantage point and role, of rhetorical situation and rhetorical strategy, are extremely inter-dependent.

Just as a writer's rhetorical situation informs the ideology which is then expressed in his writing, so, too, the strategies in the works are devised to cast these ideologies into their most persuasive form. As I noted in my discussion of the "cryptic mode" of some South African literature, for example, the strategies themselves often reflect the writer's awareness that his ideology may not be immediately acceptable to his audience and thus needs the protective and persuasive covering of allegory.

Investigating a writer's rhetorical situation, however, means more than coming to an awareness of his ideology. It means more than looking at the exigencies that have prompted the writer's imaginative protest, although this investigation is a crucial part of an analysis of rhetorical situation. Most importantly, it compels the critic to evaluate the constraints under which the writer labors. Since these constraints modify the shape and content of the writer's discourse, they influence the writer's selection of the strategies he employs. For South African writers, designing rhetorical strategies is more than deciding how to set off a persuasive message to best advantage; it involves finding the ways that the utterance can be heard at all; finding
the strategies to compensate for the restrictive conditions in which the art is created and exists. Here again, the mutuality of rhetorical situation and rhetorical strategy is evident.

This inter-dependence is the aspect of the writing of dissenting artists that I believe has been most neglected. While "sociological" readings abound, linking a text's themes to the corresponding social reality, these criticisms seldom demonstrate how not only the content of the work is a response to the writer's circumstances, but how the form is as well. Frankly stated, the gap in critical readings of writers like Fugard and Gordimer is an acknowledgment that formal considerations--the decision to employ short narrative; the choice of one-setting dramas--are the result of the writer's use of specifically-created rhetorical strategies drawn in response to particular rhetorical situations.

One of my primary concerns in this study, then, was to demonstrate the appropriateness, in fact, necessity of rhetorical readings of Fugard and Gordimer's works. In advocating the use of this critical approach, I do so in light of Kenneth Burke's discussions of its particular advantages. In The Philosophy of Literary Form, he cites
one such advantage:

I shall grant to our current neo-Aristotelian school...that the focus of critical analysis must be upon the structure of the work itself. Unless this requirement is fulfilled, and amply, the critic has slighted his poetic obligation. It is my contention, however, that the proposed method of analysis is equally relevant, whether you would introduce correlations from outside the given poetic integer or confine yourself to the charting of the correlations within the integer. And I contend that the kind of observation about structure is more relevant when you approach the work as the functioning of a structure (quite as you would make more relevant statements about the distribution of men and postures on a football field if you inspected this distribution from the standpoint of tactics for the attainment of the game's purposes than if you did not know the game's purposes). (74)

Burke's discussion of art as including "correlations outside the poetic integer" underlies much of my analysis of Fugard and Gordimer's texts. While I would not go to the extreme that Terry Eagleton has, maintaining that the works are completely "unintelligible" outside their contexts (Lit. Crit. 206), I would maintain that an awareness of these contexts allows not only a richer understanding of the text but also makes for a different kind of comprehension. Any reader can appreciate the interpolation of the Antigone story into Fugard's The Island; the equation of the Greek heroine's defense of a crime of conscience with the situation of a political prisoner is apparent to all. But the reader who brings an
awareness of the play's rhetorical situation and rhetorical strategies experiences the play in a different manner than as simply a contemporary variant of the universal theme of the individual versus the state. If, for example, the viewer knows that the island is Robben Island, where the cruel treatment of prisoners borders on barbarism, the unseen but ubiquitous presence of the play's prison warden takes on a more chilling tone, and the risk the prisoners are taking to stage the play seems all the more heroic. If he knows, too, that the inclusion of Antigone is not simply the way the artist has chosen to highlight the morality of the character's action but is a fictionalized treatment of an actual event, he understands more acutely the kind of prisoners who are sent to Robben Island. Leaders of the black resistance are neither reckless fire-brands nor illiterate power-mongers. Like the jailed actor from the Serpent Players who originated the idea of performing Antigone on the inside, like other well-known prisoners such as Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and Steve Biko, they are artists, intellectuals, and idealists. The choice of Antigone as emblematic of the spirit of the protest is not only the writer's--an outsider’s--perception of the kind of revolution that is occurring, but it is truly the activists' own vision of the struggle. The viewer who knows about the harshness of a
political prisoner's life sees the dramatist's decision to place his play on a blank stage with few props as a realistic—not simply metaphorical—treatment of the deprivation experienced on Robben Island. He knows, too, that the barrenness reflects the dramatist's own meager resources, as he works in a theatre that is all but illegal. Finally, the reader aware of the rhetorical situation may have a different reaction to the final tableau with which the drama ends. Instead of seeing the shackled men running in place as a symbol of the hopelessness of the protest, he takes the image as a rallying cry. The shared shackles of oppression do indeed make protest difficult and progress slow, but the emphasis is not on the prisoners' bondage but on their endurance as they keep running and keep performing *Antigone* even in the most unlikely of places.

The above discussion may suggest that I believe that an extra-textual knowledge of the rhetorical situation of a piece of political literature is absolutely required of the reader. As I stated above, I do not accept Eagleton's premise that context is *per se* necessary for intelligibility. But my reason for rejecting Eagleton's notion also is based on Burke's observations about how literary works function. Burke claims that artists construct works based on the *psychology of the audience*. Fugard and Gordimer's works are particularly adept at
providing viewers and readers with the context they need
in order to understand the drama's premises and accept
its vision. The method by which they provide these
contexts is not simply their much-touted working of
universals but also the use they make both of the
audience's ideologies and expectations and of
literature's categorical appeal.

In discussing how a writer uses his reader's
ideology and expectations, I have examined the ways in
which both Fugard and Gordimer have employed these
aspects of audience psychology. I have demonstrated, for
example, how Gordimer exploits audience expectations in a
story like "Is There Nowhere Else Where We Can Meet."
Here, this tale, Gordimer vividly recounts the archetypal
white South African's nightmare—an encounter with a
black—but substitutes an unexpected self-scrutiny for
the expected self-preservation as a means of protesting
the dehumanization of blacks via prejudicial stereotypes.
In examining A Lesson from Aloes, I looked at how
Fugard capitalizes on an aspect of his audience's
ideology—that a man suspected of treachery may actually
be guilty of it—to re-create the atmosphere of
irrational suspicion prevalent in South Africa.

Both writers also seem to be aware of what Burke has
called the "fluctuant factors" that affect an audience's
reception of an artist's work (CS 172). Burke advises
the artist to take these factors into consideration when formulating persuasive strategies, and it is clear that Fugard and Gordimer have done so. Fugard, who realized that the extreme compartmentalization of his society would make the experiences of one sector unknown to persons of another, devised strategies—like the "tutorial" technique I discussed in relation to The Blood Knot—to compensate for these differences. Gordimer, who published primarily abroad in American periodicals, found a way—as I indicated in my discussion of "Blinder"—to provide the necessary background information without detracting from the story's forward movement.

I also explored instances of the second issue, the way in which Fugard and Gordimer made use of the categorical appeal of literature in order to draw readers into the world of the narrative and consequently into their political visions. The dissenting writers made decisions both at the level of structure and at the level of language. Their rhetorical use of settings, of plots constructed along the lines of forensic or epideictic discourse, and of point of view, enables them to unobtrusively guide their reader's reaction to the issues under consideration. Similarly, the rhetorical use they made of image and metaphor was another means of drawing the reader more deeply into the narrative. In both instances, the dynamic was the same: Fugard and Gordimer
employed the formal aspects of their narratives to elicit
the reader's co-operation in the making of meaning; a co-
operation which Burke has described succinctly in The
Philosophy of Literary Form:

In the poet, we might say, the poetizing existed
as a physiological function. The poem is its
corresponding anatomic structure. And the
reader, in participating in the poem, breathes
into this anatomic structure a new physiological
vitality that resembles, though with a
difference, the act of its maker, the resemblance
being in the overlap between the writer and
reader's situation, the difference being that
these two situations are far from identical. (90)

In summarizing these remarks I have just made, then,
my point is a three-fold one. First, I wish to emphasize
the relevance of rhetorical criticism to Fugard and
Gordimer's texts. Since it is the only critical method
that takes into consideration aspects of situation,
language, and audience, as well as textual matters, it is
the only means of critical inquiry that can fully account
for the shaping of these writers' works and for their
success in communicating with readers. Because rhetorical
criticism emphasizes the inter-dependence of the four
factors of situation, audience, language, and text, it is
able to address the ways that politically consequential
works are born of particular situations and in turn
affect these situations themselves.
My second point is to underscore the degree to which Fugard and Gordimer's texts have been shaped by their rhetorical situations. In the case of Athol Fugard, I began with a discussion of the exigence prompting his response, his experience in the Native Commissioner's Court. I then moved to an exploration of some of the constraints affecting his writing, constraints common to all South African writers, such as the lack of contact across racial lines which makes writing about the "other" very difficult, and constraints special to Fugard's own situation, such as his work in a poor theatre and his own Afrikaner heritage. My point in outlining these exigencies and constraints was to direct attention to the ways—thematic, structural, theatrical—they have been influential in shaping Fugard's dramas. My conclusion was that from props to language, the constraints had made a decisive impact. I also noted that Fugard's most recent works deal more directly with the problems of white South Africans than they do with blacks, a partial result, I believe, of the Black Consciousness Movement.

In assessing Nadine Gordimer's rhetorical situation, I found that her politicalization has been a more gradual practice, and that this movement from liberalism to radicalism is reflected in her short fiction. I also charted the way in which her short fiction is a record of recent South African historical events. In regard to the
constraints Gordimer has felt, I noted that although she is a harsh critic of censorship, she is not its frequent victim. By publishing abroad and by relying on her sound international reputation, Gordimer has been able to get most of her works past the censor and the customs agent. But unlike Fugard, who had access to the black and colored communities through his collaborative theatrical ventures, Gordimer is more a victim of the color bar. Her works therefore depict the lives of white South Africans as they either struggle to maintain their humanity or are oblivious to its erosion. Her theme is often the "cauterization of the human heart" (Gordimer "Johannesburg" 46), and she chooses to tell her stories in compellingly realistic detail, believing as she does, that this mode is most appropriate to literature with an historical consciousness.

Finally, I must again re-state the importance of recognizing Fugard and Gordimer's works as "strategic answers, stylized answers" to "questions posed by the situation in which they arose" (Burke, Philosophy 1). These strategies have insured that Fugard and Gordimer's works are intelligible renderings of a specific historical reality. More importantly, they subtly begin the work of persuasion by co-opting the reader's participation in the narrative, a fact which
automatically results, as Wayne Booth has pointed out, in a change in the reader's attitude.

For some readers, the kind of protest which Fugard and Gordimer make is not a virulent enough attack. Mshengu, for example, has called upon Fugard to "turn his attention away from London, Paris, and New York" and return to black-majority theatre in South Africa. He has exhorted him to "learn the majority's languages" and when he does, his work will "be of greater value to the people in their struggle for a more humane South Africa" ("Political Theatre" 178). Gordimer, as I have already noted, has been assailed for the "cold impersonality" of her writing (Brutus "Protest" 97). These attacks are understandable given their source: they come from writers who consider the ends of their writing—to use art to effect a radical upheaval in South Africa—more important than the writing itself. This is not the orientation of Fugard or Gordimer. Although they share this political goal and although they recognize the potency of art in the cause of politics, Fugard and Gordimer, unlike Mshengu and Brutus, do not place a political goal above the truth of their own historical consciousness. Gordimer has made this priority clear:

The novelist writes about what sense he makes of life; his own commitment to one group or another enters the novel as part of, sometimes the
deepest part of, the sense he makes of life. If, on the other hand, the commitment enters the novel not as part of the writer's conception of the grand design, but as an attempt to persuade other people—then the book is not a novel but propaganda with a story. (Selected Stories 12)

Athol Fugard and Nadine Gordimer are not propagandists. They are political writers, a fact reflected in the historicity of their writing, and they are committed writers, a fact revealed by their works' biases. Most importantly, they are artists who, in balancing the demands of exile and involvement, have found an authentic voice with which to speak. It is a voice that is strained at times by the forces attempting to silence it, but it is one that is still audible: rich in insight, richer in compassion.
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