

In January and February 1973, one hundred thousand workers participated in a spontaneous wave of strikes that launched the African working class on the historical stage of the 1970s. The images of African workers marching through the streets of Durban and Pinetown chanting 'Usuthu' and how 'man was dead but his soul lived on' survive strongly in popular memory. This ragged army of municipal workers in Durban, textile workers in Pinetown and a host of other workers in all Durban's industrial areas challenged their conditions of exploitation and simultaneously became the initial impetus towards the formation of progressive trade unionism in South Africa. (1) In 1982, after the death of Neil Aggett in detention, the same number of workers stopped work, at very short notice, in a disciplined and organised way for half an hour as an act of protest. (2) By now, the progressive labour movement has consolidated itself centre-stage becoming one of the main protagonists of conflict in South Africa. Its impact on the social formation is unfathomable.

For the ruling classes the impact of trade unions generated a series of reform measures guaranteeing the legality of such organisations (3). But for the oppressed classes in South Africa it signified a reorganisation of political discourses and new strategies for change. There is no political organisation, be it the African National Congress or Inkhatha, Azapo or Azaso, Cosas or the T.I.C., the United Democratic Front or the National Forum, that has not preserved a central place for the black working class in its discourses of mobilisation. (4) But finally, the unions impact had over the last five years the most reverberating effect on working class cultures throughout the country. Its effects have accentuated new tensions in the cultural spaces of working class communities, and created a new possibilities for cultural struggle, linking in unique ways the relationship between culture and production.

Our work in popular or working class theatre has been part and parcel of this process, enjoying a substantial degree of support by the labour movement. From 1979 onwards we have been associated with such cultural work through the Junction Avenue Theatre Company, and through the making of worker plays. In travelling from union halls to community venues, from church halls to schools, from backyards to hostels, this work has been seen by tens of thousands of people from all walks of life, classes or 'colours'. Haphazardly at first but with more vigour by the 1980s this work has allowed us an inkling of what a people's theatre could be like in this country. That this kind of cultural activity is rapidly growing with autonomous cultural locals springing up all over the industrial areas of South Africa is encouraging: Theatrical happenings are becoming important events in popular culture.

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In 'popular', 'theatre', 'event', 'culture', 'working class' we have five words that seem rather unconnected- in short, untheorized. The need to theorize this 'event' has not been an instinctual desire. Caught in the maze of actual cultural work we had so far neither the time nor the energy to do so. Rather, it has been foisted on this work by a range of aesthetic theorists in South Africa, well meaning usually, who created a forest of false impressions that needs come under fire. Save for one instance when we were told that we were really 'pissing in the wind', the support of the community of radical aesthetic scribes has been at worst patronising, but still enormous, usually for the wrong reasons.

Being an aesthetic theorist in South Africa is a hard task: one has to rely on the imports of Theory produced in the 'thought-shops' of the world; here, the 'realist debate', there, Lukacs and Brecht, here Benjamin and Macherey, there, Negritude or Fanon. (5) Since the latest

theories are guaranteed to produce in and by themselves the 'object of thought' there has developed the most acute insensitivity to local artefacts. Local events are passed through this conceptual sieve and measured against a theory of 'realism', 'reflection', 'semiotics' etc. The 'object', this process outside and irreducible to theory has lost its autonomy and its own 'laws' or 'logic' of development. (6)

Lukacs for example has been invoked to support a 'patronising' attitude to our work. For him the drama of 'collision between great-world-historical individuals' is superior to the black and white daghuerrotype of 'relevant' or 'agitprop' theatre. (7) Writing at the time after the historic defeats of proletarian insurrections and also at a time of a marked decline in proletarian drama linked to socialist movements, his judgement is seen to be final. The aesthetic values of bourgeois drama and the novel vastly superseded the 'crude' attempts of socialist cultural militants; bourgeois drama in its 'historicist' and 'mimetic' qualities was an achievement far superior to any attempts 'from below'. (8) In this world of 'realist' aesthetics, workers' plays (and for locals the kind of work we have been doing) occupies a minor space. As *drama* on the realist aesthetic scale our work is quite poor. Does it then get its magnitude from its *class* perspective? Here enters the patronising *yes*, of course, it helps to educate, create class consciousness however crudely. On the Lukacsian scale it might appear thus, but as an event in an unfolding popular culture it demands a different means of aesthetic measurement.

Firstly, there are solid reasons to suggest that Lukacs' aesthetic theory is suspect: he deals with drama as prose or text as opposed to theatre as performance. Time and time again his general aesthetic theory was criticised on the grounds of it not relating to music, poetry and art. (9) As Astrid von Kotze has shown too, his dramatic theory ignores the first and foremost lesson of theatre: that it is a *plurimedial event*, and beyond a simple prose or text. (10) But secondly, in terms of our work we cannot but look at texts as secondary creating an unfathomable gap between realist aesthetic theory and what we are doing. What we are faced with is a lot of content, elements of popular culture and working class life *transposed* on stage in unresolved, unique and sometimes contradictory ways. There is a screeching content in search of theatrical

forms, but not yet, there can't be, a conceptual baggage of aesthetic values that necessarily flows out of a working class position in society.

Our work has also been seen to be the proof of a theory of proletarian theatre that combines materialist analysis with semiotics! in a review of Ilanga Lizophumela Abasebenzi (the foundry workers' play) K. Tomaselli wrote that:

"All actions, whether on stage or anywhere else, are encoded with signs, and the definition of performance goes beyond metaphor, where the world is like a stage or stands for a stage, but instead uses the metonymic device of stating that the world is a stage. This allows us to considerably expand the notion of 'theatre' to include the everyday events such as the actions of iron foundry workers, miners... or prison farm labourers" (11)

He sees this kind of 'spontaneism' as the epitome of a third world aesthetic which, " is a reaction against technological fantasisation and seeks to rediscover history from the point of view of working class culture". He furthermore arrives once again at the point of departure through a rather dubious equation: 'authentic black theatre' = 'the medium of working class expression' = 'third world theatre' = 'township theatre' whose content

- is there waiting to be discovered, given form and communicated to a participant audience who are themselves part of the content. This interaction with actors is a cathartic experience which works to mitigate their lot in performance which works to sepearation or distinction between actor and viewer, stage and life performance and reality: they are all part of the whole (through metonymy) playing interchangeable roles which interconnect art with life. " (12) (At this point he also quotes Shakespeare's Jacques all the world is a stage/ etc)

Of course such remarks are flattering: not only does the mundane everyday life material we deal with become a profound intervention in the world of signs, but the class power of metonymy by implication makes our work the epitome of a 'third world aesthetic'. And all this through the

mere means of a *metonymic device*! There are many issues, empirical and theoretical, historical and structural, that are wrong with K. Tommaselli's interpretation. But for the purposes of this

paper, the empirical and theoretical aspects need further mention. To any serious social historian, the contention that authentic black theatre is a medium of working class expression, or that township theatre is committed theatre would smack of such shallowness that would need no further comment. The institution of the theatre in the lives of black people has a complex and largely unwritten history. This has already begun and so far it shows that the theatre developed 'outside' the black working class's life. If such a relationship between the working class and the institution was forged, it has to be *shown* to have been forged, and not assumed in the breadth of a simple sentence. (More of this below.)

Secondly, had we been asked whether we were assuming that the whole world 'is a stage', we would have responded with an emphatic NO. It would be hard to convince Alpheus Nhleko, a grinder at a metal foundry on the East Rand that in his 'life he plays many parts' or that his theatrical performance is a rebellion to the white man's machines or 'technological fantasisation'. It would be very hard for him to understand that today he is a worker and tomorrow a boss, *save through a theatrical conceit*.

Thirdly, out of our own work the impressions about theatrical dissemination are rather bleak: the foundry workers, (migrants), had no prior experience of theatre nor had they seen a play in their life. For them, what they were doing was a spectacle, like a slide and tape show or a soccer game, for a big audience. This group of workers who resided in the main at Vooloo's hostels, were illiterate, and have kept a traditional distance from missions, schools, or township life. Of course, in their dancing competitions, their songs or their ancestral rites, there is much that resembles theatrical performance. But this was not ^{institutionally} separated. On the other extreme, our work with Alexandra Township people showed the strongest awareness of theatrical traditions. The range of plays actually seen, and acted is remarkable: from *King Kong* to any Gibson Kente play, from *merch* plays to *Workshop 71*. ^{With} Soweto workers, and East Rand workers (Watville, Daveyton, Tsakane) the strongest tradition is the Kente-type plays buttressed by a whole range of theatrical entrepreneurs.

Of late, work in Durban has shown the hegemony of the Kente-type or morality plays amongst workers. The majority of them had seen more than one Kente play, a great number of morality or school plays; following far behind in exposure was Ilanga Lizophumela Abasebensi which was extensively circulated by the trade unions on video, and Woza Albert, seen at union organised performances. None of the self-proclaimed political or popular plays was seen by any of this populous part of the populace. Out of the same working experience arises also the following: the more exposure to school education, to missions or churches, the least is the audience participation. (Of course enjoyment and bursting into song abounds, but also strict audience discipline abounds too). The more distant an audience from institutions like the ones mentioned above the more spontaneous is the rapport between actors and public. It is idle then to assume the spontaneity of such theatre through gross 'metonymic generalisations'.

Fourthly, 'third world theatre' is not sui generis linked to working class theatre. It would be difficult in third world countries with an infinitesimal working class. Difficult too, to link urban cultures with rural cultures, the Balinese theatre with Latin American folk plays; Iranian religious theatre with the kind of theatre Ngugi wa Thongo has initiated with peasants in Kenya; Césaire's poetic theatre with the reenactment of a strike. What we have to account for in South Africa is the existence of a large black working class very unlike most other third world countries. This creates very specific experiential shocks that render cultural work quite unique.

There is though a third aesthetic position emerging amongst left intellectuals over the last few years associated with the revival of interest in W. Benjamin's work. Here, of late, the work of Eagleton, of Wolin and of Roberts ⁽¹⁴⁾ has begun a process of 'Benjamin-restoration' on the side of popular culture and class struggles. Such a reading of Benjamin contrasts radically from the elitarian position of some Marxist aesthetic theorists, like Lukács and the Frankfurt School. Benjamin's emphasis on

the traditional and communal bases of experience within peasant, artisan and seafaring cultures and the shock waves of capitalist society provides a sound entry point for cultural studies. Furthermore, his brilliant analyses of popular forms, like story-telling, showing their use-value and moral orientation show the importance of the continuity of tradition and experience. Finally, his writings on the dwindling of this experience through the rise of the factory system, the new relations of production and the rise of the urban crowd invoke the possibility of a materialist theory of cultural production without parallel. In these writings, following Marx on the 'labour process' (15) and Baudelaire as entries into the shocks of urban life (16) he accounts for the dissolution of the old basis of popular culture and the rise of widespread reification. (17)

However masterful this is, it shares certain common motifs with the Frankfurt School that make Benjamin rather distant from any *actual* comprehension of popular culture reconstituted through proletarian experience. A close scrutiny of the oft quoted pieces reveals that he does not attempt to provide such a theory at all: rather, pre-capitalist popular culture, the basis of storytelling as a form, is contrasted not with any proletarian or popular culture but with the bourgeois novel as a new narrative based on the capitalist mode of production; or still, the possibility of lyric poetry or of art in the age of 'mechanical reproduction'. (18) Secondly, as concerns the working class and its activities, Marx's comments on the alienation of the worker under the factory system, are taken as a statement of *fact*. This stops Benjamin from exploring even the possibility of any independent cultural formation, of any attempts to defend and extend communal as opposed to alienating forms of existence, or of any, symbiotic artistic activity. It is the lack rather than the contribution of any theorisation of popular culture that is most striking. ^{in his work.} Neither our work, nor the work of many others in South Africa, can be weighed on this theoretical axis.

If, in short, the 'object of thought' can be thought of, it has to proceed by firstly accounting for the universal experience involved in proletarianization, secondly how popular culture is related to attempts by people to exercise a sense of community on the basis of this 'shock experience' and thirdly, how performing events — like the theatre —

relate to popular culture. Having done this it would be possible to initially outline the contradictions of working class theatre that propel most creativity.

III

In South Africa over the last 20 to 40 years we have witnessed the consolidation and the dominance of relations of exploitation based on extensive manufacture and relative surplus value extraction.⁽¹⁴⁾ Through this, the nightmare of the modern factory system haunts and stalks most urban concentrations. Modern steelworks and foundries, electrical and electronic component manufacturers, power, chemical and automobile assembly plants, gigantic food processors and mills, textile and clothing giants, massive brickworks and construction conglomerates define the conditions of life of the working population. Alongside this, the mining industry and increasingly modern and mechanized agriculture traverse the countryside. Inside these, the discipline of mass production, of the clock, of processes that allow little human intervention, and of simplified and repetitive tasks define too the dictatorial regime of our society of 'plenty'. This transition to the gigantic modern factory has launched South Africa's predominantly black working class on the plane of a profound universal experience: An experience increasingly dominating the lives of workers the world over. Here, as elsewhere, the scientist of the 'laws of motion' of capitalist society, Marx, is also the poet of the shock of experience in alienation.

Here as elsewhere the worker is 'annexed for life by a limited function', a function crippling to any human faculties or capacities that 'are bound hand and foot to a specialized operation' and 'riveted to the most simple manipulations'.⁽¹⁵⁾ There he is transformed from an early age into a 'new machine for the production of surplus value' and becomes a mere 'appendage' to the factory's giant mechanisms; the worker here as elsewhere is but a 'fragment of a man'.⁽¹⁶⁾ The worker then, 'is at home when he is not working and when he is working he is not at home'.⁽¹⁷⁾ Through his or her non-ownership of any means of production he has to work to live or pauperisation and starvation is his lot.⁽¹⁸⁾

Here again the experiential evidence of productive life speaks of grievances common to most workers: the migrant foundry worker from Mahlabatini talks

the same language as the Indian woman machinist in the garment industry.⁽²⁴⁾ Both talk of similar grievances as the black automobile workers in Detroit and the chemical workers of Chem Co U.K.⁽²⁵⁾ Brazilian workers express similar worries about the loss of life and limb, and the speed of production lines as their counterparts in Turin.⁽²⁶⁾ So the shock of modern productive life, the experience of a generalized form of exploitation and alienation is an irreducible facticity of life and a central concern of workers here and elsewhere. But this is where it is necessary to go beyond Benjamin and argue that in so far as alienation is an irreducible pressure of modern life so are responses to it. Within this framework of alienation workers respond by attempting to control their condition of life, through defensive combinations, through normative communities and cultural formations.⁽²⁷⁾ And here, the universality of alienation is handled through unique local forms. The experience of production, captured in the Zulu word *khalo*, which means pain but also grievance, which is lamentation but also complaint, which is tears but also a 'wrong', is handled through unique cultural formations.

Whereas alienation from the process and product of work and from fellow human beings is an irreducible process towards anti-social 'serial' and 'atomistic' forms of life under capitalism⁽²⁸⁾, this pace the Frankfurt School, can by no means be the final word in the explorations of working class culture. On the contrary, the historical record speaks volumes about forms of association or defensive combinations that arise within working class life ever since the industrial revolution in Britain. These associations of workers cannot be seen but as a struggle for control over conditions and ways of life. Whether these are the moral economies of the English working class⁽²⁹⁾, the cooperative societies of Proudhon's followers in France⁽³⁰⁾, the 'mancomunales' of Chilean miners⁽³¹⁾ or the autonomous cultures of job control in Durham's mining communities⁽³²⁾, they all spell out so many attempts to organise life against the pressures of industrial life. They are so many varieties of self-organisation of working people and of collective experience.

It is within such defensive combinations ⁽³³⁾ that working class culture proliferates, now as an oppositional force, now as an accomodationist instance within social formations. And finally it is within such combinations, ⁽³⁴⁾ ~~the~~ universe of customs, mores and instrumental codes of conduct, beyond formal controls and institutional behaviour, that any theory of performance, be it ⁽³⁵⁾ theatre or ⁽³⁶⁾ other popular spectacles, has to be situated. 10.

IV

But this tip of Africa adds further complications to the pursuit of aesthetic theorists that need further mention. Firstly, the nature of accumulation and class formation in South Africa has created tremendous obstacles against genuine grassroots self-expression. Furthermore, ⁽³⁷⁾ ~~the social system~~ ⁽³⁸⁾ has ~~been~~ forced any such self-expression to subsist under the most limiting material conditions. Secondly, from segregation to apartheid, racial domination and separation have worked against genuine cross-colour or in many instances cross-'ethnic' homogeneity. X

As concerns the first point, what has occurred is that the aforementioned transition to mass production and a mass producing working class has not ⁽³⁹⁾ ~~initiated~~ in any way the revolutionising of ⁽⁴⁰⁾ the 'social consumption norms' of especially the African working class. This legacy has meant that on the one hand, the African workforce was barely reproducing itself through the sale of its labour power, on the other, segregated urban areas with minimal infrastructural facilities, if at all, provided for the material milieu of its life. ⁽⁴¹⁾ As concerns the second point, from the era of segregation to apartheid again, the ruling classes have always treated the urban African population as migrant labour. ⁽⁴²⁾ This extends to the 'model townships' so much lauded for their superiority to the urban slums, they too look more like extended 'mining quarters for married natives' ⁽⁴³⁾ Both points again in concert make little space for institutional cultural reproduction in South Africa. >

Any forms of defensive combination that arose here, have done so in the midst of poor urban concentrations² in the most adverse climate of state and managerial hostility.³² This so summarily stated points towards another concern prior to the examination of popular events in local grassroots culture: an imperative to situate the physical spaces of cultural reproduction amongst South Africa's workers.

I call these 'spaces' rather than institutions for in their majority, they have not resulted in any significant specialisation of functions: the open fields, the hostel yards, the streets, are as much carriers of events in popular culture as much as church halls, soccer clubs, shebeens and of late trade union halls. And even in the latter actual practices are variegated. The I.C.U. Workers' Hall in Johannesburg was what its name implies, but also a dancing and prancing venue for the African middle class, a staging venue for Zulu royalist plays, a prayer meeting place and a night-school.⁽³¹⁾ As variegated as an open field, (which was a soccer-field, but also an Ethiopian church-meeting place and a drinking and entertainment space by night, to become a boxing bout venue the day after). Or the Iscor compounds that are spaces for ethnic dancing, for soccer practices in their yards, for drinking amongst 'brothers', assembly points for 'homeboy' groups and entertainment venues. Or again 'Market Square' in Johannesburg and 'Red Square' in Durban providing for political rally spaces to church congregations.⁽⁴⁰⁾ In short we need to define cultural spaces broadly: they are material environments, institutional or non-institutional, that act as physical and social carriers of events in popular or working class culture.

Within these cultural spaces, the theatre as an institution has a thin base in working class life in South Africa.⁴¹ The theatre after all is not an indigenous institution, although many of the rituals and indigenous forms of expression have much that is mimetic and include remarkable reenactment qualities.⁴² The word 'ithyeta' in the Nguni and Sotho languages betrays as much. It is not part of ukulima (culture in its pre-capitalist sense) it is rather part of okunjengokwabelungu (the light that 'shines' from the white man). It was introduced through the churches and mission schools, to permeate much of educational instruction. It furthermore was inverted to fit a local cultural perspective by an educated African middle class for either nationalist or traditionalist themes in the cultural politics of South Africa.⁴³ It was finally buttressed by the white liberal community and the Joint Councils with very rare incursions into the cultural spaces of the working class.⁴⁴

In such spaces it does not even begin to compare with other performance traditions related to song, music and dance, that were indeed strengthened through a series of mutations in urban communities.⁴⁵ Neither does it compare favourably with traditions of storytelling that survive as oral forms in the interstices of compounds and hostels. Nor finally does it compare favourably with mass events in the townships like the soccer game or the giant music concerts that involve also laws of performance and spectacle.⁴⁶ The only institutional achievement has been through the work of Gibson Kente in the mid-1960s and after.

Kente, with one leg in the liberal experiments of the past, ('the big variety show and the musical'), on the other, in grassroots morality and 'lobola plays' has managed to create a universe of theatrical 'types' that achieved a significant symbolic and aesthetic hegemony in the townships and more specifically in working class experience: the tsotsi, the priest, the mama, the shebeen queen, the moral patriarch have defined as types much of the aesthetic universe that exists.⁴⁷

But even despite Kente's impact (which in most cases is conservative⁴⁸) theatrical performance as an event in popular and working class culture does not gain its aesthetic values or power within a theatrical tradition or the contradictions within dramatic form. Rather it receives such values from a broader range of spectacles and performances that occupy the cultural spaces of working class life. That is, from all forms of umdlalo ..., as our experience discovered to its surprise, ranging from the soccer game to the church sermon. Far from any dictum based on Shakespeare's Jacques which states that all the world is a stage operates here, but a very discriminating expectation of the nature of umdlalo⁴⁹

X

The worker/performers we have been working with, owe their performing talents to such experience: K. has seen many morality plays but gained most of his theatrical experience as he insists from being a lay-preacher and a self-defense demonstrator in the townships. G. from Transkei's countryside knows about Julius Caesar and Shakespear from his little rural school, and has himself written a play about the evils of the 'stokvel', but his expectation of theatrical work and his experience is more informed by song and dance traditions. T. has acted in a Kente play and has seen all of them which puts him within the theatre of types and the big variety show. M. too has only Kente plays as his experiential matrix. The rest had no theatrical experience as such and understood theatre to be something like a live film or storytelling by other means. (More of this below)

But then Kente and the plethora of morality plays that have mushroomed over the last 20 years in urban concentrations correspond to a unique phase of South Africa's history. As is well known this period has had a profound impact and unfathomable consequences in working class cultural formations in South Africa. On the one hand, the 'Wirtschaftswunder' of the 1960s economic growth, has transformed to the marrow most of South Africa's economic backbone. Through this short burst of economic expansion it forged the link between mass production and the African working class as operative labour.⁵⁰ On the other, from the 1950s onwards

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some of the most vibrant townships and the highpoints of cultural dissemination were removed and relocated, reorganised and rechanneled, smashing in the process, most of the then existant defensive combinations. This for instance has affected the East Rand as much as Sophiatown, Cato Manor as much as the Pretoria townships.⁵¹ There is a lot of evidence to suggest that this period of economic prosperity was simultaneously a period of enormous stresses and strains in the urban areas.⁵² Alongside these pressures most of the political muscle of the popular movements in black communities, the ANC, the PAC, and trade unions, SACTU, was removed bringing about a discontinuity and a vacuum in the national political scene. My own research on the East Rand supports a hypothesis still to be comparatively tested in other urban concentrations, that this period marked a shift towards a culture of survival and accomodation in African workers, as the only strategy of absorption of a tremendous experiential shock.⁵³ Kente plays, even in their most socially critical, fitted into this moral order as its extensions both in their conservatism and their mild moral counsel to the communities.

But the 1970s were to be markedly different: the renewal of political conflict and the widespread worker organisation by progressive trade unions have created a climate within the cultural spaces of working class communities that allowed for the occurrence of some theatre of a qualitatively distinct nature. Here a militant youth movement under the banner of black consciousness attempted to forge an institutional link with township audiences through radical 'people's plays'.⁵⁴ Their failure to reach in any significant sense a primarily working class audience deserves a comprehensive study in its own right.⁵⁵ It is only of late that some of the most socially aware writers are attempting to reach beyond youth politics and capture in their work a significant grassroots feel.⁵⁶ At best, work or production has appeared if at all in their plays as a metaphor of the 'fall' from a brilliant and just past; a metaphor that is of a broader black slavery without any importance attached to production relations as a real site of oppression.⁵⁷

Simultaneously, another grouping, Workshop 71, attempted to link the experience of proletarian and black life through popular forms and the wide usage of workshop techniques to capture through a South African Aesthetic the township and rural populations.⁵⁸ This grouping that produced plays like Crossroads, ZZzip, Unosilimela, uHlanga, Small Boy, Happy Ending and Survival⁵⁸ had through its Iziggi wing a specific policy of intervening in the cultural spaces of black worker communities, by taking plays to hospitals, houses, churches, weddings and farms. Later people from this grouping joined Junction Avenue Theatre Co. through which, we have been as abovementioned involved in performing in cultural spaces that are predominantly working class in composition. (See Appendix I for the actual work involved).

The link up with the labour movement and increasing work with shop steward groupings through the workshop techniques has crystallised most that follows. There is a genuine clash of moral orders taking place ^{between} workers' attempts to express their khalo in the world of production, their strength in organisation their lives in the townships and existing popular culture. That this struggle is conducted within and through the aesthetic hegemony of the current dominant forms of culture, creates some of the central contradictions that propels this theatre to creativity. In the pages that ensue I shall draw from this experience nine central contradictory tensions that need some comment.

PART B

1. Work as a site of real oppression

The central contradiction unfolds from the need and the desire to express working class experience of work processes and exploitation. Once that is, the centrality of production as the real site of exploitation and oppression is acknowledged, this reality confronts the creative process with tremendous problems. The importance of this site of struggle in the last decade of our history needs no further comment; what needs to be analysed is the demand by worker groupings that it forms

the central concern of theatrical work on the one hand, whilst on the other, it ^{presents} one of the most difficult aesthetic problems for the theatre. On the one hand, there is the workers' khālo about exploitation and their actual conditions of work on the other hand a stage that cannot even realize the mere surface of this experience. This incapacity is well known in Junction Avenue's work; in Randlords and Rotgut after a lot of workshop failures in portrayal, only ritual stylization survived in the play; in Will of a Rebel it created the deadliest moments of the play; whereas despite the rich material in workshops, work processes had to be dropped altogether from Marabi and Dancing Shoes. But such shortcuts were not possible in the worker plays Ilanga... and Dunlop and work processes haunted the workshops and the performances. Here the urgency to present the reality was imperative in order to delineate in theatrical ways the origins of this khālo.

But how do you portray steelwork and foundry work with their furnaces smelting away at 1800 c, the noise and the dust, the looms and shuttle sounds of textile factories or the rubber plants with their giant mills, presses, extruders? How does one portray the gigantic modern mechanisms at the workforce? Any ^{mimetic} idea of portrayal of the gigantic productive forces of modern industry is idle talk, yet, something needs to be portrayed.

Two contradictory solutions constantly arise; the first involves the revolutionization of the stage, the use of gigantic mechanisms to begin approximating the experiences of production. The second is to find the correct metaphors or conceits to illuminate this reality. The first brings us close to the concerns of innovators in the German and Russian proletarian theatres in the early 1920's and 1930's. (5a) Piscador with this contradiction in mind set about to revolutionize the technical conditions of the stage and through that, began to approach the age of technology and machines. Although the solution begins to confront the aesthetic problems involved here, it works against the necessary mobility of popular theatre; it furthermore will prohibit its growth as an institution within popular culture.

During the preparation of 'Ilanga' it was suggested to build a gigantic moulding machine to occupy the centre of the stage. After a few experiments with experienced metal designers and sculptors the idea was dropped because it was unfeasible. Even if a solution was forthcoming it was not so much the realism in the stage that would dominate but the symbolism of the structure. So stuck with a labour intensive process involving the fitting together of cast iron pipes we had to concede defeat: these were the weakest moments of the play.

The second, the metaphorical option is greater but also limited. Here, it involves the usage of the actors' ^{metaphoric} and bodily abilities to create a rich texture of work. The best moments of this were realized in 'Security' and 'Dikhitsheneng': The man who through his job as a watchdog becomes a dog, involved a superlative peace of mind by Ramolao Makhene, which portrayed faithfully processes of domination. Similarly, in Arthur Molepo playing the maid in 'Dikhitsheneng', the inter face of domination was successfully resolved. But both "labour processes" involve very little of what makes the modern factory system. They work theatrically because they are situations of acute personal contact: the dog with his trainer and with his boss, the 'maid' with her girlfriend and the madam. Similar solutions were found in 'Woza Albert' which gave the play its crazy episodic nature. But the minute similar solutions were attempted by the Dunlop workers to show something of their gigantic work processes it made work look entertaining, a circus of tyres, which again contradicted the original intention.

This propels the plays towards solutions bearing a second set of contradictions: it thrusts all solutions to the social relations of work. Here the interaction between supervisors and workers, workers and bosses, indunas and managers etc makes the "middle men" (eg supervisors and indunas) the strongest characters and the motive forces of the play. They initiate any action and become almost sympathetic and mischievous villains. Ramolao Makhene

of
Lazam's
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as the boss boy in 'R and R', Arthur Molepo as the miner's translator in the same play, Arthur again as the dog trainer in Security, Siphwe Khumalo as the induna in Ilanga ("a baas to the boys and a boy to the baas") and Khuzwayo's performance in the Dunlop play crystalize as the highest moments in achievement. They become the strong individuals as against the ^{facile} ^{celebrations} ^{of the} rest. Given their interaction furthermore with the bosses they imbalance all class dynamics on the stage.

The onus now is on the workers to counter pose that with a dynamism that is always undermined by the inability to show the processes of production and exploitation satisfactorily. Exploitation especially, is not a visible process, it is something that is inferred by workers ^{from} their everyday experiences. So the spoken word and the monologue about the khalo of production become the solution. 'Stand there' centre stage, talk, and tell-eg the foundry worker:

limitation of work
time?
??

→ see out in
'supra' (human)?

"You get to work and pray that nothing serious will happen, like an explosion when the metal is cast, or a grinder breaking off to chop you in two, or a ladle capcising of a leak in the cast. -I tell you if we put together the pieces the workers lost in this place from their bodies, we would fill up a room with fingers, hands, noses and feet."

or the rubber worker:

"Now I want to tell you our side of the story: what we have lost over the last 25 years and how little we have gained. The manager said they will never forget us and we shall never forget this place. Look here, rubber is in my hands and my lungs and when I sweat it comes out of the pores of my skin. It's part of me"

or Mabongo in 'Marabi':

"Bloody rubbishes, move us around like cattle. I built this dairy, moved the bricks with my own hands. I was just a boy and for weeks we worked to keep his dairy going when times were bad. Now he is rich and look at me. I don't want his job getting

getting up at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning so white madam can have her milk riding in white suburbs where I will never live, yes Maam, yes Baas. I taught him how to run this dairy when his father died. I have watched him put money in his pocket when he sits in his office all day and we milk and wash and bottle and sell so that he can get rich. Hey, Tereplatsky, can you hear me? I don't want your job."

2. The clash of moral orders

The first contradiction does not arise out of fortuitousness. It arises from the organizational practices of South Africa's workers, their consciousness and militancy. This new moral order based on new forms of worker association involves novel codes of conduct and expectations. This most often clashes with the old cultural formation and practices. This is manifested clearly in workshops where forms of individualist escapism, drinking habits and forms of violence come under incredible stresses and strains. It has tremendous implications for performance and narrative.

After all it is these 'escape mechanisms' of township life, the so-called 'vibrancy' of the ghetto that ^{has} created some of the most interesting theatrical characters. They are indeed popular characters. They are what Kente has mythologised in his "types" of theatre. They are characters that are morally ambiguous and flamboyant, storing wisdom and a sense of self-preservation however much their life is degraded. They are resolute survivors, 'off-beat', halftotsie and half drunkard.

As concerns acting, to perform in exciting ways means to perform in this 'off-beat' way: it gets you out of trouble, it uses a language of moral cripples when confronted with authority and uses the system whilst 'grabbing what you can'. In many of the workers' experiences, performance, means this kind of action which creates moral tensions. M, an iron foundry worker, a migrant, was caught trying hard to escape authority in a workshop. He ~~was~~ caught

himself halfway, threw his arms up in the air and exclaimed:
"what about my brothers? Why do I behave like this?"
And here moral orders clash both in the workshop and in
performances, the 'urban' versus the 'migrant', the 'worker'
versus the 'tsotsi', the 'irresponsible worker' versus the
'powerful shop steward', the 'drunkard' versus the 'trade unionist'.

This is a serious contradiction precisely because
most of the exciting theatre around has gained its vibrancy
from such off-beat characters. Shebeen scenes
that turn into funerals, the cops arrive with
the drinkers providing coffin and all, provide a simple
parallelism in the theatre. This for instance crystallizes
in Marabi as the essential conflict of the play. This is the
conflict between Ntebejane, the father of Marabi music
against Makhali, the trade unionist:

"Ntebejane sustained by nothing but Skomfane
and his love for the 'real people' of the
slums is ugly and repellent like the slums
and sustains them with his music, with his
Marabi, with his hatred for anything else.
He is funny, entertaining and totally
compelling and Ntebejane, the union man
sees the danger in evil Marabi. The two
characters are almost direct opposites and
so create much of the play's dramatic tension
and colour. Finally though, we see their
fight is the same. In the deserted slum
yards after removals we discover in striking
images the State silenced union man strung
to a doorway; this Skomfane duped Marabi
maker lying abandoned like a forgotten note
across his panio." (p. 2)

But this conflict in moral orders cannot easily
be resolved in theatre. The new seriousness of class
conscious workers has not yet found its vibrant equivalent
in formal terms. The performance dynamics bias plays
in terms of excitement towards the drunkards and the off-
beat characters. It is difficult to counter balance
this contradiction.

3. However ^{rich} enriched worker performers, ^{one, two, three} they become 'bearers' of social processes. On the one hand their crowded existence on stage; on the other their attempts to show collective heroism, work against rich individual characterization. Furthermore the most exciting traditional forms of performance involve precisely such characterization. In the working class cultural spaces there is a lot which tends towards individualization. Expressive ^{scenarios} articulated by migrants influenced by imbongi forms of praise ascribe heroic deeds towards individuals however much these individuals are community based. This contradicts the original intention of heroic collective action. Furthermore the moral authority of elders as ~~an~~ assuming leaders in working class life has been challenged by the younger workers' grassroots militancy. Whereas the elders tend towards individualistic performances a scribing to themselves heroic deeds, the younger workers rebel against this and push back performance towards collectivity and collective behaviour.

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Furthermore cultural events that inform much of working class theatre arise as abovementioned from a variety of non-theatrical activities. Broadly speaking performance has to be "magical" or "brilliant" and a degree of exhibitionism is always involved. This is buttressed by a whole range of events in popular culture. Exhibitionism is involved in much of the musical performances (eg the Malombo guitarist playing his guitar with his mouth), soccer playing (where exhibitionism is often valued over and above strict team work), boxing bouts (where the aura of the boxer is ^{as} important as his ability) and dancing forms (where dance competitions engender exhibitionist performances). The logic of all this spills over into theatrical performance which again works against collective forms of representation.

This has interestingly the opposite on women workers. The mere fact of everybody in the workshop becoming equal 'bearers of social processes' releases them usually from their subordinate roles. It works against the theatrical stereotypes of the "mother".

the "mama", the "woman". The implications of this are yet to be explored.

But if most group acting involves collective bearing of social processes it usually works against some of the most vibrant ways of producing material. A way out of that was explored in 'Woza Albert' with the actors assuming a whole range of characters and thus avoiding the pitfalls of, on the one hand characterization, on the other group work. This allowed them to present a play moving through breakneck speed across a variety of social issues, which leads us though to the next contradiction.

4. Time and pride

The necessity of a vibrant, athletic (and 'breakneck speed') in the mode of presentation utilizing the full bodily capacities of performers crashes headlong onto the pillar of working class pride creating thus a fourth contradiction. Many workshops marked the death of such theatrical niceties. There is an obstinate correlation between pride, dignity and time in the worker performances. It is as if autonomous working class time is in direct contradiction to the degraded rhythms of factory work: it is ^Slow. Neither theatrical prototypes as in Kente's plays form an adequate language 'yes, but they're baboons' stated a worker "but we want to speak the truth". Nor the pressures of time constraints can transform such deeprooted forms of action. To portray your story in dignity you have to be dignified and the time count is slow and eloquent.

Here especially the older workers insist that the time must take its course; they take more than an hour to recount one event with all its correct ^{nuances}. They insist on being in control of such time that takes on an epic quality in its unfolding layers. They demand all the correct emphases included in the plays without any external interference.

NB

As an old foundry worker stated:

"Things will come to pass and the story will be told in its own time"

To the customary theatre audiences such time sequences are cause for concern. The influence of the cinematic speed on the theatre has had a devastating impact bringing with it a dread about any production running for more than one and a half hours. That this is changing with especially European film making it does not in any way ameliorate the difficulties we confront here.

This lack of performance 'time discipline' is part and parcel of the undefined status that theatre enjoys as part of a popular culture. For the worker performers constraints exist but they are always social; performance cannot exceed past their last means of transportation to and from home or it cannot take so much time over union meeting. But there is nothing else save these to constrain their unfolding narratives. (After all music concerts take a day. Church gatherings take that or half the time, entertainment is the whole night or the whole weekend, story telling takes hours and hours).

So on the one hand . . . by the most exciting plays occur through their galloping speed and a crazy concentration of events . . . related to either real or "dignified" time sequences. On the other hand this is checked by a pace which works against customary conceptions of time limits. The tension is a creative one and we are loathe to jump for an either/or, at least to do so prematurely.

5. There are four further contradictions, closely interrelated that I shall briefly sketch out saving a more elaborate exploration for another time (5) The first one arises from what was referred to earlier on about the autonomous nature of time sequences so that stories unfold in the right way. This has its roots in strong traditions

of story telling amongst workers. This brings about a sharp tension between the 'spoken' and the 'acted' in a play. Some of the most interesting narrative in working class life come from the nuances of telling a story. The irony and the humour, the understatement and the overstatement are closely linked to the spoken word. Attempts to recreate these in acted sequences misses time and time again what makes these stories. The solutions usually are two-fold. Either you introduce a story teller or you have a combination of story telling and re-enactment. We had great difficulties for instance in the Dunlop project where a vast span of time was retold in very interesting ways but could not in any way be re-enacted the way it was told. The strategy to solve this was to juxtapose a story teller with a 'cranky' (unfolding tableaux) that gave graphically the historical sequences whereas the rest of the group acted out snatches of this unfolding history. In the process a lot of the nuance was lost. (61)

6. ^{The sixth} ~~The second~~ one is again closely related to this and appears as a clash between the oral communication of a story, ^{versus, the} necessary information to explain and construct reality. If reality is to be understood at all and forms of power to be shown for what they are a lot of information has to be unpacked through the process of the play. This information usually is narrated. It forms too much of the "aside" of the story to warrant lengthy re-enactment. The narrator though is also the oral story teller who does not so much give information but through the nuances, the ironies and the humour of his narrative gives moral counsel. (62)

7. ^{A seventh} ~~The third~~ contradiction arises as a conflict between cognitive versus cathartic moments. The cognitive moments involve the lessons of the play and the points around which the audience is invited to think.) Usually this relates to two things: (a) making the audience aware that they should not confuse this play with the reality and that this play should function as a spark for an understanding of the reality of oppression in South African, and (b) usually it is easier to spark of thought processes in an audience

if you use cathartic moments. In other words you do not let the audience substitute for themselves victories shown on stage as a definitive statement of the play.

In contradiction to this the strong identification demanded of an audience invariably creates cathartic moments and an emotional identification with the workers on stage. eg when the union wins as against management when the workers are converted to trade unionism, when authority is flummoxed or when identifiable songs are used and audience's participation is illicit.

8. Finally the ^{fourth} contradiction concerns the clash between mythological aspects of portrayal as against real aspects of portrayal. Much of working class culture involves rich mythologies around, figures, characters, types and buttressed by forms of story telling. This clashes against the attempts by workers to show the realism of their situation. For instance ~~Cecilia's~~ portrayal of a white manager wearing a mask (that gives him supernatural possibilities) is one of the most unique moments achieved in workers' theatre. It created a mythological management that was theatrically very effective. Similarly in Marabi Ntejane out of the rumours about his physical appearance and his mischievous capabilities achieved a mythological status in the play. Similarly again the dog in Security moved beyond realism in order to portray reality succinctly. This clashes with the insistence by workers in workshops to show in detail their reality. For example, a conflict between a group of workers sincere and as faithfully presenting their problem as is possible on stage confront a management that is mythological in appearance and buttressed by dynamic middle men: all this blunts the emergence of a realist conflict.

confusing here - 'reality'?

9. [The ninth contradiction experienced in workshops arises from the fact that theater is a plurimedial event utilizing not only words and interaction but sets, songs, music

visuals, dance etc. Here there is an acute tension between the old established forms like song or dance, with their own laws of development, with strong roots in peoples' consciousness as against the demand for them to perform a new function within the play. Songs are strategies in the plays, that bend them beyond their customary function. It would be easy to sing "Hlanganani basebenzi" and get the audience on its feet shouting for an hour or using call and response techniques to achieve audience participation but these choices are strategies. You also need songs to make a statement, to create a mood, to pass on information related only to the play whilst at the same time using the most identifiable sung forms. This difference can be illustrated in the contrast between the MAJWU song when the 'impimpi' in the Dunlop play joined the union: this is a moment of identification and Ntebejane singing about how Marabi's piano playing "left hand, pump, like a factory, pump pump, like a milkman, like an engine etc" or the workers' song from Ilanga:

"Benoni, Boksburg, Springs, Egoli,
We workers make you rich,
Dayshift, nightshift, overalls and sweat,
Keep the foundries pumping steel,
Casting steel and casting money."
*.

And for instance Arthur Molepo using jazz techniques to make a statement:

"Father, mother
They eat your brother
They do their cannibal stomp
White man eats your brother baby
They do the cannibal stomp
'Cause we live in ghetto land
In tinsack and in matchbox land
In compound and gold miner land
'Cause we live in
Jazzland."

In summation then it is only through the exploration of theatre as an event in popular culture that theory of aesthetics begin to make sense of what takes place

in the cultural spaces of the working class. Within this milieu theatre is becoming an important activity in and through the growth of a labour movement in South Africa. Theatre might become a central institution within working class life but equally it might not. It might dissolve itself into a broader plurimedial event or a broader ritual thus avoiding institutionalization. But in any case the nine contradictions outlined above shall for some time create the necessary tension for most creative output. Whether a new aesthetic shall arise within popular culture linked to theatrical performance is a point of speculation and/or cultural struggle. This paper attempted to show that practice is primary and theory and critique is always a postmortem examination. It is imperative to take the "object of theory and critique" seriously.

FOOTNOTES

1. On this initial impetus, the I.I.E.'s The Durban Strikes, Durban, 1974 is still unsurpassed.
2. For coverage of this stoppage see, South African Labour Bulletin, (hitherto, S.A.L.B), 1982: 'Special issue: Swaziland'
3. cf. S.A.L.B vol.5 no.2, 1979: 'Special issue: Wiehahn'
4. See inter alia: R.Davies and D.O'Meara, "The workers' Struggle in South Africa", mimeo, 1983; AZAPO, "Details on Black Consciousness and the Emphasis on the workers' Position", mimeo, 1979; Azaso and Cosas are well covered in Saspu National, 1981/2; Anonymous, "The Transvaal Indian Congress" in Work in Progress, no.28, 1983; N.Alexander, "Nation and Ethnicity" in Work in Progress, no.28, 1983; on the UDF, cf. Africa Perspective, no.22, forthcoming.
5. From my cursory experience of aesthetic debates in South Africa the following seem to have been the most crucial texts: F.Jameson (ed.) Aesthetics and Politics: Adorno, Benjamin, Bloch, Brecht and Lukacks, London, 1978; T. Eagleton, Marxism and Literary Criticism, London, 1976 and, ibid, Criticism and Ideology, London, 1976; and P.Macherey, Theory of Literary Production, London, 1978. Black Consciousness intellectuals on the other hand continued using extensively the works of A.Cesaire, F.Fanon and sometimes Jean Paul Sartre.
6. This is derived from much of contemporary writing which alludes to K.Marx's statement in the Grundrisse, London, 1974, that: "The real subject retains its autonomy outside the head just as before"...etc. cf.p101/2.
7. See for instance G. Lukacks' discussion of drama in The Historical Novel Harmondsworth, 1976, p.101 ff. Also his debate with Brecht in Jameson (ed) op cit. He elaborates his theory much more thoroughly I am told in his Die Eigenart des Asthetischen
8. For some of this background cf. C.D.Innes Erwin Piscator's Political Theatre, New York, 1972 ; for some of the Soviet experience cf. E.H. Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, vol.3, London, 1953.
9. This criticism is made particularly strongly by G.Lichteim in Lukacks, London, 1970, p.116ff
10. A. Von Kotze, Peter Handke's 'Kaspar': Spielmodelle fur die Wirklichkeit Oder wie Engagiert ist das Theatertheater', PHD Thesis, Witwatersrand University, 1980
Some very interesting arguments about the fundamental differences between oral forms and textual discourses is offered in W.J.Ong, Orality and Literacy: the Technologizing of the Word, London/New York 1982. For the "bricolage" necessitated in the primacy of performance see p.75.

11. cf. K.Tomaselli, "From Laser to Candle", in S.A.L.B. vol.6 no.8, p.67
12. *ibid*, p.66
13. On Latin American working class theatrical pageants on the Bolivian mines see, M.T. Taussig, The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America North Carolina, 1980, p.151ff; on theatre work amongst the people see A. Boal, The Theatre of the Oppressed, London, 1979; H. Thoreau, "Das Theater des Augusto Boal" in Theater Heute, no.12, 1978; see also the special issue on Latin American people's theater "Latein-Amerika:Theater" Theater Heute, no 6, 1982; on Iranian theatre cf. A. Witth, "Ein Perser-teppich von Codes" in Theater Heute, no.10, 1978; cf also Nai Yu Hsu (ed) The Chinese Literary Scene, Harmondsworth, 1977; etc.
14. See T. Eagleton's Walter Benjamin, London, 1982; F. Wolin's *ibid*, and J. Roberts' *ibid*, London and Basingstoke, 1982.
15. W. Benjamin, Illuminations, p.177.
16. *ibid*, p.177 ff
17. See G. Lukacs' History and Class Consciousness, London, 1971, for the origin of the concept. See G. Stedman Jones' critique of it, "the Marxism of the Early Lukacs: an evaluation" in NLR (eds) Western Marxism: a Critical Reader, London, 1977. And L. Coletti's critique in From Rousseau to Lenin, New York and London, 1972, p.111ff
18. W. Benjamin, Illuminations, op cit, 219f. Benjamin is ambiguous though: in his Understanding Brecht, London, 1973, he seems to be in full agreement with Brecht on proletarian struggles and revolutionary theatre, which is often contradicted by his metaphysical emphases of his other writings. On such ambiguity see Wolin op cit,
19. On this process see G. Bloch, "The Development of Manufacturing Industry in South Africa" M.A. Thesis, Capetown University, 1980. See also, D. Kaplan, "Class Conflict, Capitalist Accumulation and the State" PhD Thesis, Sussex, 1977.
20. K. Marx, Capital, vol I, Harmondsworth, 1976, p.614/5
21. *ibid* 523-799
22. K. Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, in Eastmann and Guddatt, (eds) Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Politics, London, 1976 p.292
23. K. Marx, Grundrisse, op cit, p.694
24. See the experiential account of such a worker in P. Stewart, A Worker Has a Human Face, B.A. Hons Thesis, Witwatersrand University, 1981. On garment women workers forthcoming research reports from Sociology Dpt, Natal University, research on women and labour in Natal's industries.

25. Compare with ChemCo: T.Nichols and H.Beynon, Living with Capitalism Class Relations in a Modern Factory, London, 1977.
26. Of course this is not to underplay national or regional differences. Despite that, cf also, W. Chapiro & C. Entee, Of Common Clash, Notes in the Global Textile Industry, Amsterdam/Aloshigh, 1983
27. See, A.Sitas, African Worker Responses on the East Rand to changes in the Metal Industry, PhD Thesis, Witwatersrand University, 1983, p.18-56
28. On such 'serialisation' cf. J.P. Sartre, Critique of Dialectical Reason, London, 1976, p.256-269, 306-18 and 745-751
29. cf. E.P.Thompson's The Making of the English Working class, Harmondsworth, 1986, p.385-410 and his "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century" Past and Present, 50, 1971
30. See G.Woodcock, Anarchism, Harmondsworth, 1975, p.48
31. cf. Cohen et al Primitives and Postmodernism, New York, 1976
32. cf D.Douglas, in R. Sennett (ed) Generations, Minorities and Subcultures, London, 1977
33. A.Sitas, "African Worker Responses" op cit. p.116 f.
34. ibid.
35. See for an overview, P.Morris, A History of Black Housing in South Africa, Johannesburg, 1981.
36. See on this, D.Hindson, "Pass Offices and Labour Bureaux: An analysis of the Development of a National System of Pass Controls 1923-1980", PhD Thesis, Sussex, 1981.
37. M.Dikobe, (Discussions with Junction Avenue Theatre Co.)
38. See A.Sitas, op cit.
39. From Worker's Herald, 1926/7, Church of the Province Library, Witwatersrand University.
40. See on Market Square, E.Roux's Time Longer than Rope, Wisconsin, 1978.
41. Here of course our experience is limited to the Rand and Natal, perhaps the Cape differs fundamentally.
42. cf. Mshengu's introduction to his (ed.) South African People's Plays, London, 1982.
43. ibid.

44. See V. Erlman's, Black Political Song in South Africa, Some Research Perspectives, mimeo, 1983
45. See, D. Coplan, "The Emergence of African Working Class Culture" Africa Perspective, no. 10, 1982
46. On the origins of Soccer as an institution in working class life in South Africa, cf. T. Cousins, An Introduction to the History of Football in South Africa in B. Buzub (ed) Football and Contemporary in the Transvaal, Johannesburg, 1983.
47. For the impact of Kente, see Mshengu, op cit
48. Mshengu, op cit.
49. I have used the C.M. Doke et al, English and Zulu Dictionary? Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg, 1971.
50. A. Sitas, op cit. 125 ff
51. See inter alia, T. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa since 1945, Johannesburg, 1983. See also, G. Mason & A.S.B. Humphrey, Codes From Shackleton to Township (Capetown, 1975), Edward, "Living on the Small" of an village: African life on Coloured farm in the late 1940s" Journal of Modern African Studies, 1983
52. A. Sitas op cit. 301 ff
53. ibid.
54. cf. Mshengu, op cit. and K. Sole, in B. Buzub (ed) Labour, Township & Political Protest, Johannesburg, 1977
55. The interest in such work is there at least in theory, cf. M. Manaka's Theatre of the Dispossessed, Staffrider, 1979, and B. Francis, Black Theatre Theatre of truth, Wietie, 1979 NS
56. ibid. See also F.M. Ralibanda's Plays from the protestant in Search, Harare, 1982.
57. cf. K. Sole's "Culture, Politics & the Black Worker" in English in Africa, vol 12, 1983 for a critique of unassuming 'organicism' in B.C. writers see also the role of "work as a metaphor" in B.C. writing in A. Sitas op cit. p. 317 ff.
58. Mshengu, op cit.
59. C.D. Innes, Piscator's Political Theatre, op cit.
60. Saspu National,
61. see on 'cranky' techniques, H. Lesnick, (ed). Guerilla Street Theatre, 353-5, Bread & Puppet Theater: Puppen und Masken, Fischer Verlag, 1973.
62. On this see W.J Ong, op.cit. but also the amazing study of 'illiterate' Soviet peasants, A.R. Luria, Cognitive Development: its Cultural and Social Foundations, New York, 1976.

Education and Theater in Post-Revolutionary Cuba

EUGENE R. SKINNER

A continuación Eugene R. Skinner ofrece un panorama del desarrollo cultural y teatral de la Cuba revolucionaria durante la década del sesenta. Primero bosqueja cuatro etapas de la política cultural y más específicamente, de las relaciones entre los intelectuales y la Revolución, sobre la base de una división establecida por Lisandro Otero. El objetivo fundamental de la práctica artística es el establecimiento del socialismo en Cuba y la formación del Hombre Nuevo: persona dotada de conocimientos científicos y técnicos, de mentalidad humanista, para quien los intereses personales se identifican con los comunitarios, persona comprometida con los principios de igualdad y solidaridad, y que no necesita de incentivos materiales.

Luego delinea a grandes rasgos el proceso del teatro dentro de ese marco cultural. La Revolución significó un florecimiento de la actividad teatral, comprobable en la cantidad mucho mayor de funciones, el Festival Latinoamericano de Teatro, el fomento del teatro profesional y del aficionado, los numerosos festivales de aficionados a nivel nacional y regional, etc. Entre los grupos más importantes destacan el Teatro Escambray, cuyos miembros, antes de sus presentaciones, trabajan en el campo, en los talleres, con los moradores de las poblaciones que visitan en sus giras. Tal como en otros aspectos de la cultura en Cuba, se está operando la intelectualización de las masas y la proletarianización de los intelectuales.

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