

**SOSIO-POLITIEKE VERSET
IN DIE AFRIKAANSE DRAMA**

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Ek sien die stede soos wit angeliere
tuimel voor 'n swetterjoel kommandomiere.
D.J. Opperman (*Blom en baaierd*, 1957:27.)

Die eerste skemering van begrip vind plaas
by 'n kreatiewe minderheid. Finale welslae kom egter dan
eers wanneer die gemeenskap as geheel deur die nuwe *élan*
meegevoer word.
W.A. de Klerk (*Tyd van vernuwing*, 1979:33.)

Thus the avant-garde ... would be a kind of 'pre-style' in-
dicating and pointing the direction of a change which will
triumph in the end, a change which will truly change every-
thing.
Ionesco (*A talk about the Avant-Garde*, 1964:40.)

Rebellion removes the seal and allows the whole being to
come into play. It liberates stagnant waters and turns them
into a raging torrent.
Camus (*The Rebel*, 1953:23.)

Frederik: Iets in die land sal voortaan altyd mor.
Brink (*Die verhoor*, 1970:98.)

VOORWOORD

Hiermee my opregte dank aan:

- professor M.C.A. Seyffert wat so baie aande “... moeitevol getorring [het] aan die taai knoop van *ons* gedagtes ...”;
- professor J. van der Elst vir sy hulp met “... ons fyn, fyn net van die woord ...”;
- Magda du Preez vir die tikwerk met haar masjien “... wat sing soos ’n besie ...”;
- Attie de Lange vir sy kontrole van Shakespeare “... a third eye, detached from the situation ...”;
- Marthinus du Plessis wat die teater van die Absurde toegankliker gemaak het met die bespreking van Ionesco se woorde “... a work of art is not a reflection, *an image* of the world; but it is made *in the image* of the world ...”;
- die personeel van die Ferdinand Postma- en die P.O.K.-biblioteek vir hulp en raad en kontrole;
- my kinders wat met hulle oë gesê het:

“Roer jou voete deur die droë blare
roer hulle
roer hulle
want ruik jy die winter?”

- Susan omdat jy “... saamgeloop het met duifies in jou keel ...”;
- almal wat begrip getoon het vir ’n stokperdjie en gehelp het dat die skrywe hiervan “louter spel” gebly het.

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ABSTRACT

Revolt manifests itself in the spirit of man that “steps forth out of its repose despite of all satisfaction therein, and involves itself in the contradictions of the broken and confused medley of earthly existence” (Hegel, 1975:97). Revolt against socio-political structures is one of the themes of primitive, classical Greek, neo-classical and modern drama. Throughout the ages the dramatist has used drama as an instrument to criticize society and to bring about change. It is because of this that Brustein (1964:14) can affirm that under the drama of appearances lies a pattern of solid facts.

In the Afrikaans drama socio-political revolt is represented in three different categories:

- like Prometheus and Hamlet in world drama, characters (Kemp and Frederik Bezuidenhout) are depicted in the drama protesting *directly* against injustices and existence;
- *situations* are dramatized (*Die verminktes, Kanna hy kô hystoe*) to expose as in French drama, for example man’s inhumanity to man in *Le Roi se meurt*; and
- revolt is also represented in drama (*Die keiser*) that refers *allegorically* to reality like *Lucifer* in world drama.

Characterization in world drama shows the following progression: from gods and kings to angels and amplified men and women, to ordinary humanity, caricatures and symbolic characters. Since 1952 the following line of development has unfolded in Afrikaans drama: amplified characters (*Die Generaal*), ordinary men and women (*Kanna, Makiet*), caricatures (*Man, Vrou, Kruier*) and symbolic characters (*Kultuur, Nar ...*).

Characters protesting against the socio-political structures developed in Afrikaans drama from secondary characters to main characters, from antagonists to protagonists. It was only in 1960 and 1976 that brown and black characters respectively appeared as the equal of the Afrikaner in the fictional world of the drama. Revolt against the injustices and socio-political structures developed from the protest of Afrikaners against the English colonial rulers to Afrikaners in revolt against Afrikaners. It also developed from protest on behalf of the brown and black people to revolt of the people of this country against injustices.

Colour orientated racism is a unique South African cause for revolt. Racism as a cause for socio-political protest has a very high frequency in the drama of revolt in Afrikaans. It developed from protest against the English in the drama before 1952, to protest emanating from a confrontational situation between black, brown and white characters. The remaining reasons for socio-political revolt are universal. The views of Hegel, Camus, Brustein and Leach were used to identify these.

The study further reveals that religion and political ideologies are also used by characters as alibis and masks in Afrikaans drama.

The representation of socio-political revolt in Afrikaans drama has enriched the form and structure of the drama. The influence of contemporary world dramatists such as Brecht, Ionesco and Miller is evident in the Afrikaans drama after 1952. A marked deviation from classical to non-classical drama is also observed in Afrikaans.

The study finally reveals that revolt has estranged some of the Afrikaans dramatists from officialdom (Smit, Brink,). All the dramatists of revolt are or were involved in the South African socio-political struggle. Their dramas are used as instruments to change the scene to a more humane and just world for all its peoples. As such, the role of the Afrikaans dramatists is in many ways similar to that of dramatists like Aeschylus, Shakespeare, Ionesco and other famous world artists in that they share a strong prophetic voice. W.A. de Klerk, for example, prophesizes in *Die jaar van die vuur-os* that hard times are waiting on the Afrikaner and that ultimately a new Trek will be their future fate.

In conclusion it was found that the modern Afrikaans dramatists of revolt are - like their European counterparts - essentially metaphysical rebels. They are militants of the ideal, anarchic individualists, concerned with the impossible rather than the possible, and their discontent extends to the very roots of existence. In Afrikaans the drama also becomes "a subversive gesture - a more imaginative reconstruction of a chaotic, disordered world" (Brustein, 1964:9).