

**AN EXAMINATION OF AN AFRICAN POSTCOLONIAL EXPERIENCE
OF LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND IDENTITY: AMAKHOSI THEATRE
AKO BULAWAYO, ZIMBABWE**

by

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ABSTRACT

Can colonised peoples in Africa use languages of their colonisation without re-inscribing their own colonisation and/or losing their own languages and cultures? This is one of the questions at the centre of the debate about the use of English in postcolonial Africa. The debate is concerned with whether or not to use English to express African cultural identities. Some critics reject English for its complicity in colonialism. In this argument, English is regarded as a threat to indigenous languages and cultures. On the other hand, some critics view English as a 'permanent' feature of postcolonial Africa and also as a language which connects Africa to the rest of the world. In this perspective English is useful for pragmatic purposes. Thus there is usually an either/or response to the question about English.

For me, the answer lies in a both/and explanation. That is, in the use of both the colonial and indigenous languages. A both/and perspective allows for the exploration of the contradictions of postcolonial identity.

Using Amakhosi theatre of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, I explore the way in which postcolonial identity in Zimbabwe takes shape at the intersection of the colonial and the indigenous languages. The space where English and the indigenous language, here Ndebele, intersect is conceptualised as a hybrid space. Exploring this space is useful for understanding colonial and postcolonial experiences. The study is also necessary for understanding postcolonial agency, that is, the ways in which colonised people position themselves in relation to the colonial experience and the ways they shape their own identities, cultures and languages.

The dissertation illustrates the impulse of internalisation of colonial structures as accompanied by the interrogation of the colonial. Using Amakhosi plays, I question the idea of postcolonial identity as a location of confusion,

undecidedness and weakness. Amakhosi illustrates postcolonial space as productive and creative and as a location where colonised peoples take charge of the formation of their identities, languages and cultures.

The hybrid space is also conceptualised as an ambivalent space, that is, as a space where English is challenged and accommodated simultaneously. The space also marks the assertion of Ndebele. But at same time Ndebele is asserted and reclaimed, it is also adapted and changed. The hybrid space announces a new language and new culture which is always being formed and fabricated. As an educator I am interested in the relevance of the hybrid space for the conception of a curriculum for Zimbabwe. I argue that a curriculum for postcolonial Zimbabwe will have to be hybrid, that is, it will have to incorporate the colonial and the indigene.

Dedication

To my children,

Michelle Nkosinomsa, Leanne S. Nothabo

and Bradley S. Thando Lunga,

for allowing me to pursue my dream away from home
and doing without what you needed most. This
work was written so that you will not forget. For
our future is in our remembering.

To my parents,

R. E. Moyo and Martha Moyo,

who have become my children's parents. For your
energizing love, support and trust.

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INTRODUCTION

Mapping African Postcoloniality: Linguistic and Cultural Spaces of Hybridity

In the complex reality of postcoloniality it is therefore vital to assume one's radical "impurity" and to recognize the necessity of speaking from a hybrid place ... an acknowledgment of the heterogeneity of my own cultural background.

— Trinh T. Minh-ha (1992, p. 140-141)

In the half-life, half-light of alien tongues, In the uncanny fluency of the other's language, We relive the past in rituals of revival, Unraveling memories in slow time; gathering the present.

— Abena P. A. Busia (1993, p. 204)

The challenge of engaging with a language that has colonised, enslaved, or oppressed one is enormous. As a language of slavery and colonisation, English bears traces of racial superiority and cultural hegemony. Is it possible, then, for colonised and/or enslaved peoples to articulate their identities in English without recolonising or re-enslaving themselves in the process? Can colonial languages be freed from their contesting and ultimately authoritative discourse? The challenge of dealing with one's language of colonisation becomes even more problematic with the added dimension of indigenous language or languages in Africa. The language question in Africa involves

the challenge of engaging simultaneously with the language of one's colonisation and one's indigenous language(s). In this dissertation I explore the challenges of articulating identities in both the language of colonisation and of the indigenous languages. Using Amakhosi theatre of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, I illustrate the way in which colonised people in Zimbabwe take on English through their indigenous language(s) and culture to articulate identities.

Several critics have explored the tenability and feasibility of using one's language of colonisation and/or language of slavery. Driven by the need to respond to the challenge of engaging with one's language of colonisation, African American writer and critic, Toni Morrison (1992a) writes, "I am interested in what prompts and makes possible the process of entering what one is estranged from" (p. 32). Morrison argues that, indeed, English, the master's language, can be used by the colonised in liberatory ways. She suggests that English can be wrestled from its imperial past.

Concurring with Morrison, bell hooks (1994) argues that the oppressor's language can be turned to the oppressed's advantage. Drawing on Adrienne Rich's (1981) famous line "This is the oppressor's language yet I need it to talk to you," hooks proposes the transformation of the oppressor's language into a culture of reclamation and resistance. She discusses some of the ways in which the enslaved reinvented and remade the language to transgress boundaries of "conquest and domination" (p. 170) and identifies music created by slaves and contemporary black vernacular as an example of counter-hegemonic practice. In her view, resistance in these practices is effected through the rupture of standard English to include forging "a space for alternative cultural production and alternative epistemologies—different

ways of thinking and knowing that were crucial to creating a counter-hegemonic world view" (p. 171).

Other critics suggest that the reclamation of the master's language is impossible. Audre Lorde (1981) argues that, "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (p. 99). She suggests that the enslaved will never be able to articulate their freedom in the master's language(s). Henry Louis Gates Jr. (1992) is equally skeptical about this project. He considers the task of positing "a full and sufficient self in a language in which blackness is a sign of absence" and "an idiom which contains the irreducible element of cultural difference that will always separate the white from blacks" (p. 276), impossible for black subjects.

In Africa, similar questions are raised about colonial languages. African feminist poet, Abena Busia (1995), alerts us to problems involved in articulating postcolonial identities in colonial languages. She captures the contradiction in the following poem:

This tongue that I have mastered
has mastered me

has taught me curses
in the language of the master

I speak this dispossession
in the language of the master (Busia in R. Mohan, 1995, p. 270)

Busia's poem identifies the problems of speaking within and against one's colonial language. Busia describes the project of reclaiming the master's

language as contradictory. Her poem draws attention to a linguistic double bind within which the colonised is locked. The very mastering of the oppressor's language speaks of the colonised's subjugation. Elsewhere, Busia explicates the dilemma further. In her view, the postcolonial dilemma turns around the negotiation of "visions of the self in tongues which inscribe our own invisibilities" (in Stanlie, M. James and Abena Busia, 1993, p. 206).

Busia's views are echoed by African writer and critic Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi (1996) who proposes the sanitization of English as a way of rescuing English from its imperial past. For her, African woman writer Buchi Emecheta and Salman Rushdie's work, symbolise the project of reclamation. Ogunyemi writes that Emecheta and Rushdie

have turned [English] to fresh, clean use by making it lean, as they divest it of those fatty words that are hazardous to genuine communication. They speak and write for the oppressed, using a language that alienates as it frees (p. 114)

Ogunyemi underscores the contradictions underlying English use by Africans. She suggests that the prospect of a sanitised English for nonnative uses will not make English totally safe for nonnative uses. As a language of imperialism, English is potentially disabling for the African. For example, the use of English alienates Africans from their own cultures and languages. On the other hand, the use of English can be liberating for Africans. Ogunyemi claims that English allows the African to challenge and expose colonialism and racism. Also English potentially connects Africans to a wider international public.

As part of her contribution to the debate about the appropriateness of English for the expression of a liberated African self, Anthonia Kalu (1996)

underscores the dilemma of using English. In her discussion of the debate about the validity of English as a language to express African indigenous cultures in postcolonial Africa, Kalu interrogates English for its complicity in colonialism. It is her view that the involvement of English in colonialism complicates its use in postcolonial Africa. The challenge for the African writer in English, in Kalu's (1996) view, involves engaging with a language whose vocabulary encodes African culture as barbaric and evil. She is concerned with "[h]ow. . . the African [should] use words from the language of a culture that posits African inferiority to claim African dignity and strength" (p. 84). Kalu's views about the advantages of English coincide with Ogunyemi's observations that writing in English allows Africans to explore the disabling traits of English. According to Kalu, English permits Africans to also "evoke a postcolonial future within the colonial present" (ibid., p. 79). It is Kalu's view that the postcolonial future involves the use of both the colonial and the indigenous languages.

While underscoring the challenges, hazards and contradictions of engaging with a language associated with one's oppression, the questions announced by both African-American and African writers and critics also point to the contradictions of postcoloniality. I will return to these issues in slightly more detail in Chapter 1 when I examine the African language debate. Engaging with language questions is necessary for understanding postcolonial identity. I have already mentioned the language differences between Africa and the Diaspora. In Africa and in other colonised countries that have maintained their indigenous languages the language questions take on a slightly different turn because of the connected issue of indigenous languages. The questions involve the challenge of engaging simultaneously with the colonial language that embodies contradictory and contesting perspectives

and also includes engaging with indigenous languages. I am interested in exploring the experience of and the strategies of inhabiting multiple languages and cultures, specifically, the colonial, here English, and indigenous languages.

While African-American and Diasporic critical engagement with the language question informs my examination of the language debate in Africa, I must stress that my work is still grounded in African experiences of colonialism. By colonialism I refer to historical phenomena of the occupation of geographic and political territories of others and the consequent subjugation of them. I am also aware of the myriad definitions and applications of the term postcolonial. Postcolonial is used either in reference to global conditions after colonialism or to a discourse that is informed by anti-colonialist strategies. While I acknowledge the validity of its other connotations, I use postcolonial to refer to historical conditions that exist after colonialism. I am also aware of the political differences between cultures subordinated by European colonialism. Anne McClintock (1995) questions the assumption of a single common condition known as the postcolonial. She writes, "Brazil postcolonial [is not] in the same way as Zimbabwe" (p. 12).

While African-Americans and the Diaspora share common experiences of imposed foreign languages, it is important to observe contextual differences between the African experience of colonisation and the African-American and the Diasporic experiences of slavery and colonisation. These differences in turn necessitate different approaches and emphases to the language question. African-American slave people and almost the whole Diaspora were forced to lose their indigenous languages during slavery. hooks (1994) reminds us of the trauma of language loss occasioned by slavery. She observes:

We have so little knowledge of how displaced, enslaved, or free Africans who came or were brought against their will to the United States felt about the loss of language, about learning English . . . How to describe what it might have been like for Africans whose deepest bonds were historically forged in the place of shared speech to be transported abruptly to a world where the very sound of one's mother tongue had no meaning (1994, p. 169)

African-Americans, Caribbeans, Pacific and Atlantic Islanders and others in the Diaspora whose indigenous languages are now lost, have been constructing and creating their own languages to challenge the hegemony of the master's language and to find a way of representing cultural difference. Ebonics and Caribbean Creole represent just a few of the examples of attempts to come to terms with the colonising or enslaving languages. In Africa, although indigenous languages were marginalised and dominated by colonial languages, they were not lost. It is my view that although the language challenge in postcolonial Africa includes interrogation of colonial languages, it also involves exploring and understanding how the indigenous and the colonial languages function together. For me, considerations of the indigenous languages in the colonial encounter constitute a point of departure in the discussion of the oppressor's language.

To this end the dissertation examines the way Zimbabwean colonial and postcolonial identity has taken and continues to take shape at the intersection of English and indigenous languages. Discursive locations are important reference points for the study of the articulation or re-articulation of postcolonial cultural identity. It is my view that colonial languages should be examined in the context of their relationship with indigenous languages

since they (colonial languages) are now a permanent feature of Africa. Africans must somehow keep a vision of the two apparently incommensurable systems. I am interested in examining the way Africans negotiate the spaces within colonial and indigenous discursive systems. It is my view that postcolonial identity takes shape only in the critical negotiation between the colonial and the indigene. I conceptualise the zone of intersection as a middle space, a hybrid space or "third space" to use Homi Bhabha's (1994) configuration. Bhabha identifies the "third space" as uncanny. That is, it is both a place of resistance/conflict and communion/assimilation. While the space is conceptualised as a threshold zone of an "alternative cultural production and alternative epistemologies" (hooks, 1994, p. 171) and an ongoing fabrication it also marks the internalisation of the colonial language and culture. In other words, the "third space," for me, becomes both a site of decolonisation and accommodation. In this dissertation decolonisation is taken to mean the interrogation of colonial and neocolonial systems (Fanon, 1963).

Locating my inquiry within this space enables me to begin to theorise about colonised responses to colonialism and the formation of postcolonial subjectivity at the intersection of multiple languages and cultures. I will argue that the key to the challenge of living at the intersection of the colonial and the indigene includes recognition and acceptance of hybridity. It involves what Kalu (1996) describes as, "the various strategies that facilitate achievement of true independence within both the indigenous culture and the culture of the vehicular language through which we must speak our silence" (p. 87). While I argue for hybridity, I do not embrace an indiscriminate hybridisation of African culture and languages. By indiscriminate hybridisation, I mean hybridisation in which Africans accept

just about any colonial or western influence. What I am proposing is a critical hybridisation, that is, hybridisation in which Africans determine, that is, invent and reinvent hybridity according to their context and their perceived priorities.

As a woman living in postcolonial Africa I have a personal stake in the ways in which identities are articulated or disarticulated at the intersection of the colonial and indigenous languages. Colonisation overdetermined the already exploited and excluded position of African women in Africa. Ogunyemi (1996) writes "Colonialism silenced women and made them invisible, since the colonialist talked only with male leaders to keep peace." (p. 8). Ogunyemi observes, "The colonial or so-called postcolonial-situation over determines woman's already native, slavish position by further enslaving her, controlling her very life and economics from a distance she cannot traverse geographically or psychically" (p. 8). Ogunyemi argues that this silencing was exacerbated by colonial systems of education. She notes that western education "further drove a wedge between men and women, as men were more likely to be formally educated and put in positions of authority to help the colonial master control the country" (p. 95). Further, the African woman was constituted as a minor by the prevailing colonial legal and linguistic systems. Such configuration worked to infantilise women and to dismiss their voices. For an African woman excluded from sites of power, silenced and condemned to invisibility, this dissertation provides a space to begin to undo some of the conditions of silencing and invisibility, ironically, through the language of colonisation. Writing this dissertation constitutes for me reclamation of voice. By writing this dissertation I am asserting my right to speak and say what I want to say. Ogunyemi's observations of the fate of African women novelists and critics whom she observes "go unseen,

unheard, and unheeded, since novels written by and about them are still generally ignored by readers and critics" (p. 1) is relevant for African women in general.

African males and western male critics dominate in discourses about definition and cultural identity in postcolonial Africa. The exclusion of women in the debate about English in Africa emphasizes the general exclusion of African women. My dissertation interrupts this patriarchal hegemony and the colonial language that constructs the African woman as voiceless. It attempts to fill in spaces in male discourse about language and identity. As Ogunyemi (1996) observes:

[T]he women novelists writing for an adult audience are numerous and insightful. Not only do they fill in the gaps in men's texts, instituting presences where there had been absences, their refined version establishes a thrillingly authentic African voice, which resonates with every new text (p. 1)

I write this dissertation in the hope that it enunciates a dialogue with male counterparts in Africa. In that sense I invoke an African womanist philosophy which, according to Ogunyemi (1996) includes:

[T]he vital unity of a people evolving a philosophy of life acceptable to both men and women is a better approach to the wo/man palava than a debilitating and devastating political struggle for woman's liberation, independence, and equality against men, to prove a feminist point (p. 121)

The inclusive approach of womanism allows meaningful dialogue between sexes; dialogue which is necessary for rehabilitating political,

economic, cultural and social stability in Africa. As hooks (1992) puts it for African Americans in conditions similar to Africa:

We believe in solidarity and are working to make spaces where black women and men can dialogue about everything, spaces where we can engage in critical dissent without violating one another. We are concerned with black culture and black identity (p. 19)

Amakhosi theatre represents such a dialogic zone. This theatre is characterised by hybridity or mixing or “mestiza” (Anzaldua, 1987) of languages, cultures and identities. In her *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Anzaldua (1987) uses this notion of “mestiza” to describe people who, in her own words, “inhabit both realities” of the colonised Mexicans and their coloniser, the United States. She examines the experience of inhabiting “both realities” (1987, p. 37). In her book, Anzaldua identifies the border territory as painful. She examines the prospects of confronting an alienating culture and an excluding culture, that is, a culture that defines her as a perpetual alien. In many respects, Amakhosi can be said to illustrate attempts to negotiate multiple and contradictory worlds by its juxtaposition of colonial and indigenous language(s). Amakhosi represents living at the border or intersection of many languages and cultures. For Anzaldua neither her cultural home nor the new white culture she now inhabits, are safe. She writes, “Woman does not feel safe when her own culture, and white culture are critical of her” (20). In Amakhosi, the border crossing is also problematic. While the indigenous language represents safety and familiarity there are moments when the indigenous language is unsafe, especially for women.

The relationship with English is also ambiguous. English represents unfamiliar and sometimes alienating discourse. But there are instances when

English is accepted as a familiar zone. The movement between English and Ndebele is unsettled. The colonial and indigenous coexist and are boundaries within which colonised peoples must negotiate everyday.

I find the postmodern trope of borders very useful in my attempt to understand border crossing in Amakhosi plays. I have conceptualised Amakhosi as an engagement of multiple references that constitute different cultural codes such as languages and experiences. The notion of border crossing is offered as a way of rethinking the stable modernist self. Postmodernist cultural criticism challenges modernist reliance on metaphysical notions of a stable and unified essentialised self. Instead, postmodernism posits a fluid and shifting subject. The self in a postmodernist vision transgresses borders by moving in and out of them. The trope of border crossing is used to explain shifty existence between the coloniser and the colonised and to characterise the multiply-defined postcolonial identities.

Border as a postmodern trope is particularly useful for conceptualising colonial and postcolonial resistance. Michel Foucault (1979) offers a concept of transgression which allows me to relate border crossing to counter-hegemonic struggle. According to Foucault, space is unfinalizable. The idea of undecidability announces the possibility of transgression. In Foucault's view, transgression involves invasion and rupture of space. In a Foucauldian sense of transgression, language shifting between the colonial and indigenous languages can be read as a counter-hegemonic struggle at a certain level. By counter-hegemonic I mean the process of contesting any form of hegemony.

Applying Foucauldian ideas of limit and transgression to British linguistic policies of exclusion yields interesting analysis. The British colonial policy in Africa which is marked by restriction, boundaries and limits provides the grounds for the transgression of those very boundaries by the

colonised. Geographical, social and linguistic restrictions imposed on Africans were meant to secure boundaries between the coloniser and colonised. However, these borders became difficult to secure as far as language was concerned because of the British need to communicate with colonised natives. Forced to release some English to the natives the colonialists limited the amount of English that the colonised could learn. The colonised learnt just sufficient English to be of service to the British as the colonialists drew lines of demarcation around English.

This strategy of linguistic encirclement can be compared to Daniel Defoe's (1983) *Robinson Crusoe's* treatment of Friday. Crusoe teaches Friday the words of servitude; "master", "yes" and "no". In her examination of the effect of this linguistic subjugation, Toni Morrison (1992b) writes, "Friday's real problem, however, was not to learn the language of repetition, easily like a parrot, but to learn to internalise it" (xxiv). By internalising this language of servitude, Friday internalised a colonial world view and a sense of inferiority. The case of Friday presents us with one of the classical examples of how language functions in the subjectification of people.

In colonial Rhodesia language played a significant role in the control of the colonised. In order to subjugate the colonised further and to maintain borders, the colonialists constructed a boundary language, "Silapa Lapa." "Silapa lapa" is a corruption of indigenous languages. In a detailed examination of colonial containment practices in Rhodesia, Yvonne Vera (1995a) defines "Silapa Lapa" as a colonial containment or prohibitive strategy. A translation of the term "Silapa Lapa" discloses its strategic relevance for the colonial project of control. Vera unveils its suspicious meaning and identifies the significance of this newly invented language as lying in its meaning "here and there." In "Silapa lapa" language, "No Work"

becomes "Aziko Lomsebenzi," "Beware of Dog" turns into "Basopa lo Inja." The "Silapa Lapa" translation attests to the violation of indigenous languages and identities. She writes:

[T]he term describes a randomness, yet it is a very strategic language. "Basopa lo Inja" demarcates space and pronounces an absolute rejection of the language of the colonised who are viewed by the coloniser as incoherent and lacking a systematic unity or meaningful trajectory (p. 30)

It is Vera's view that the coloniser's identification of indigenous languages as inchoate and undeveloped represents violence on indigenous languages and implies injury on colonised identities. The refusal to sufficiently represent the language of the colonised also testifies to uneven power relations between the coloniser and the colonised. The coloniser's power to name and to identify colonised languages symbolises his subjugation of and violence of colonised identity. "Silapa Lapa" represents the violation, the offense and prohibition of the indigenous people.

In the context of colonial linguistic prohibitions and limits on Africans described above, the act of speaking English on the part of Africans becomes an act of border crossing which is dangerous and transgressive. English becomes the boundary or limit that the colonised African must cross and transgress.

This example illustrates the way in which border crossing can be defined as struggle and resistance. Postmodern discussions of the border trope very often present border crossing as a fluid process. But borders are not simply crossed or transgressed that easily. Trinh (1997) writes about the ambiguity and fragility of the border space. She observes that, "Living at the

borders means that one constantly threads the fine line between positioning and de-positioning" (p. 12). Border-crossing can be accompanied by risk, loss, dispossession and possession. One ventures in unknown territories and one risks losing a sense of home or belongingness.

Abdul JanMohammed (1993) defines the notion of border intellectualism as the ability to effectively live between two or more cultures without being attached or tied down to either. He questions the tendency to conflate identity with location and further identifies border intellectuality as the transcendence of the identity/location conflation. Said (1993) compares the experience of border intellectuals as a kind of blissful state of not belonging or homelessness and argues that the border as a cultural space is a vantage point and place for possibility. While I agree that the border is a point of vantage and possibility, I find that applied to the context of Zimbabwe and other African colonised countries struggling towards self definition, the notion of border crossing as homelessness might, in fact, work against the struggle for self-definition. Said's characterisation of border intellectualism as a blissful state obscures the sense of struggle associated with borders. Similarly, the notion of fluidity announced by postmodernism conceals the (dis)ease, disorientation, violence and contestation involved in the movement between the colonial and the indigene. What I am suggesting here is that border crossing is not necessarily smooth but is often accompanied by pain, rupture, loss and displacement. Border crossing does not always suggest free choice. While border-crossing can be voluntary, it can equally be necessitated by social, cultural and economic constraints. Appealing to one's indigenous language or even the colonial language may be viewed, in certain circumstances, as a kind of asylum or refuge seeking.

In postcolonial Africa, crossing language boundaries or borders of the colonial and indigenous language may signal the African postcolonial double jeopardy and struggle for survival. In a situation where the power relations are skewed in favour of colonial systems, border crossing acquires different meanings than the postmodern sense of fluid navigation of choice. Navigation between English and African indigenous languages cannot be fluid because English symbolises imperialism and is more powerful than indigenous languages. Our current engagement with English as Zimbabweans, then, must be understood as emerging from colonial conditions which favoured English. Appealing to English is not always out of free choice for colonised peoples, but may signal social and economic insecurity and tension on the part of Africans. Crossing over to English can mark the desire for upward social mobility. Sometimes hybridisation fills in linguistic inadequacies, gaps or spaces of a language. For example, people can use English when an equivalent concept does not exist in the indigenous languages and vice versa. The word *sadza* or *sitshwala* has become part of the Zimbabwean English vocabulary. *Sadza* and *sitshwala* in Shona and Ndebele respectively, refer to a thick, boiled mixture of mealie meal (the staple food of Zimbabwean blacks). Because there is no equivalent concept in English, the words have been adopted into the English language. In Zimbabwe, as in most countries colonised by the British, Africans continue to engage with English because of its capital value or its historical and cultural associations. Border crossing here is not simply fluid or smooth, but attests to uneven power relations in language. The uneven power differential between English and indigenous languages creates the potential for contestation. The hybridity that results from this shifting needs to be understood not merely as free flowing

oscillation between equal entities but a struggle to survive the violence of colonialism.

Interpreting Hybridity's Topography

The hybridisation that results from the material and historical conditions of colonisation needs to be examined within a framework that acknowledges power relations. Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) offers a useful conceptual framework that allows for a politicised investigation of hybridity. Bakhtin (1981) refers to unconscious/organic hybridity, which he describes as nonconflictual.

Unconscious/organic hybridisation leads to the historical evolution of languages. Bakhtin's conscious/intentional hybridity is a politicised hybridity. Politicised hybridity—or intentional hybridity, to use Bakhtin's phrasing—is hybridity that is a result of uneven power relations. Lisa Lowe (1996) identifies this kind of hybridity as a concept that may be useful in understanding the material contradictions that inform Asian American groups. Her definition of hybridity is useful for my analysis of the encounter of the colonial and the indigene, because it grounds hybridity in asymmetrical power relations. She writes:

By "hybridity," I refer to the formation of cultural objects and practices that are produced by histories of uneven and unsynthetic power relations. Hybridity, in this sense, does not suggest the assimilation of Asian or immigrant practices to dominant forms but instead marks the history of survival within relationships of unequal power and domination. (p. 67)

Hybridity is posited as a space not only marking surviving the colonial experience but is also a location signalling invention/reinvention and

recreation of different cultural alternatives for the colonised. For me, hybridity is a space that allows for both the interrogation of colonialism, and (re)clamation and (re)interpretation of indigenous cultures and identity. And yet it is also a location that marks assimilation of the colonial impulse.

The questions on which this dissertation is centred are by no means occasioned only by academic inquiry. They take me beyond the present place, literally and figuratively, from which I speak. As Stuart Hall (1992) writes:

We all write and speak from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific. What we say is always in context, positioned" (p. 222)

Trinh (1992) suggests that "the personal is cultural, historical or political" (p. 157). If this work seems preoccupied with the colonial experience, postcolonial identity and questions of hybridity it is important to remember, as Hall (1990) reminds us, "all discourse is placed, and the heart has its reasons" (p. 223). As a colonised woman I have my reasons emerging from my own biographical history as a colonised African woman who, now, ironically speaks my dispossession and liberation in the language of the master. I present the following personal hybridity as a way of interrogating and re-interpreting my own colonised experience. The uncovering of my hybridity symbolises the beginning of a journey of sense making. Ironically, I attempt to make sense of my colonised self in the very language of my colonisation. But I take courage from Rey Chow's (1993) argument that her British colonial and American education did not "subordinate" her but rather enables her to critique her colonising enemies. I have a British, Zimbabwean and Canadian educational background. Like Rey Chow,

[M]y “personal” history is written with many forms of otherness, such otherness when combined with the background of my education, is not that of the victim but of a specific kind of social power, which enables me to speak and write by wielding the tools of my enemies (p. 22)

The following autobiographical piece is intended to disclose the specific conditions that surround the writing of this dissertation. I write from a position of privilege. I am an educated, westernised African woman with a vested interest in the colonial language. Part of my formation and identity continues to be structured by colonial systems. My professional livelihood as a lecturer in English depends on the promotion of the English language. And so, my response to the question of this dissertation reflects my coloured position and vision. It should be read as one of the several interpretations of the language situation in Africa. In addition, my hybrid identity complicates the African/west binary. Hybridity rescues the dissertation from a polarised racial and cultural dichotomy and situates it into a more ambiguous and complex margin. The use of the terms African and the west, in this dissertation, is underlined by a tacit acknowledgement of the undecidability and ambiguity of these spaces.

Locating Hybrid Spaces of the Self

I inhabit a hybrid space. My hybridity is a result of many circumstances, including my parentage and my colonisation. First, my parentage. My father is a Ndebele man, with a Scottish great-grandfather. My Scottish great-grandfather was part of the colonial contingency that came to prospect minerals in Rhodesia. He received more than he had bargained for: a child

with an African woman, ugoto Ma Sibanda (that was my great-grandmother's name), and African grandchildren. I do not know why he returned to Scotland. However, it may have something to do with the fact that, at that time, interracial marriage was illegal.

My father was born and raised in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's oldest city. He describes himself as a "born location"—a term describing those born in the cities, in contrast to those born and raised in villages. My mother is Shona of the Karanga peoples. She was born and raised in the village, "kumapfanya" or "kumusha" or "ekhaya"—a common descriptor for rural areas and its lifestyle. It is interesting how these terms take on new meanings in different contexts. "Kumusha" or "ekhaya" are terms of endearment, we Zimbabweans abroad use to refer to our country, Zimbabwe. These terms often arouse feelings of nostalgia and longing when used by Zimbabweans abroad. And yet these very terms are used simply to distinguish between urban and rural homes. Back home, they do not carry much sentimental associations. It is interesting how, in this case, geographical shifts are attended by linguistic and identity reconfiguration. Sense of identity is always relational. Stuart Hall (1990) reminds us that cultural identity is "not an essence but a positioning" (p. 226).

Although my mother has lived away from her rural home for over forty years now and her sense of identity has changed, in that she thinks of herself as Shona/Ndebele, her sense of connection with her rural traditions is still alive. She is the one who tells us about African rural traditions and knowledge. From the time we were young and still sucking at her breast she passed this information. Trinh (1989) underscores the importance of mothers in oral tradition in Africa. She writes, "Phrases like 'I sucked it at my mother's breast' or 'I have it from Our Mother' to express what has been passed down

by the elders are common in this part of the world" (p. 122). She observes that "The earliest archives or libraries were the memories of women" and that "every woman partakes in the chain of guardianship and transmission" (p. 121).

I was born in my mother's village, in a mud and thatch hut, with my late grandmother as the midwife. (She acted as midwife for my two sisters, Mavis Sithembile, Maureen Sibusisiwe. My two brothers, Stanley Jabulani and John Vimbiso were born in urban hospitals.) I remember very vaguely life in the village. It was a big village. My late maternal grandfather had seven wives and many, many children and grandchildren. But we all lived in the same compound. My mother and my grandmother taught us Shona. I remember going to Bulawayo when I was two or three where I became totally immersed in Ndebele and in township life. Townships are locations where Africans were forced to live under the Land Tenure Act (1964). The Land Tenure Act, executed colonial control mechanisms. These locations signify containment, confinement and restriction of Africans in their own country. In her exploration of the language of imposed restrictions in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Vera (1995a) draws on Fanon's work "Concerning Violence" (Fanon, 1963) to analyse the production of prison space in which Fanon explains:

The native is being hemmed in; apartheid is simply one form of the division into compartments of the colonial world. The first thing which a native learns is to stay in his place, and not to go beyond certain limits (p. 52)

Vera identifies the colonial language as a prohibitive marker in Rhodesia. She describes markers like "No Trespassing," "Trespassers Will be

Prosecuted," "Beware of Dogs," posted on high metal gates in Fanonian terms as "barbed-wire entanglement" (p. 56). In her view, these markers signify the colonial "strategy of encirclement" (Fanon, 1963, p. 71). Besides being markers of control of geography, these warning signs, according to Vera, construct the African as a "peculiar kind of passerby" (p. 30), or interloper, not belonging to white-only areas.

The specific location of townships itself testifies to the violence of encirclement, marginalisation and zoning. Townships are located on the outskirts or margins of cities or towns. In Bulawayo, townships are situated on the western side of the city. The townships are situated so that the African is always facing the sun on his way to work in town and back. Early in the morning when you go to work, you are facing the sun on the east. When you go back home, you face the glare of the sun again--uninterrupted punishment. Although Vera's analysis is about built prison space, her observations are relevant for exploring the townships as a deliberate construction of a geographical and spatial prison. Her study is useful for understanding the logic of colonial control and punishment. She writes:

The reference colonial prison suggests the very deliberate and conscious design in the introduction of a built space within Africa's social world for purposes of punishment (p. 10)

Political independence was characterised by reclamation of European land for Africans. In November of 1979 after the Lancaster House talks in England that led to the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980, my family bought a house in and moved to Fama, a then white only suburb. Many African families who had the money to buy properties in white suburbs moved to these areas. To me, this move symbolises a reclamation of our own land and

space. Drawing from Fanon, Vera (1995a) explains the political significance of the project of reclaiming land for the colonised. She writes, "Since the colonised resides in a geography of forbidden quarters the questioning of colonial authority, and resistance, begins with an emphasis on reclaiming the land" (p. 32).

Life in the suburbs was different from the communal and public life of the townships. We realised that privacy was a premium for our white neighbours and that they abhorred noise. We were used to noise and the notion of privacy was unfamiliar to us. Now and again our neighbour called to say that the children were making too much noise. We were shocked that we never met this neighbour in person. In 1995 she sold her house to other white neighbours whom we have never seen but only heard splashing into their swimming pools. In the townships we knew our neighbours and beyond. We played, shouted, and screamed. No one complained. Instead, neighbours complained if they could not hear the children's noises. They assumed that the children were sick or something. Although I now enjoyed the comfort of a bigger house compared to the four-roomed semi-detached township hovel we inhabited I missed the noise and din of the township. We still make pilgrimages to the township, because we miss the warmth and because most of our relatives still live there. My family, particularly my father, always crosses the roads, railway lines and borders that once separated African townships and European areas every weekend to visit friends and relatives and sometimes just to drive around the locations of youth and to relive the memory of colonised experience.

It is in Bulawayo, *koNtutu Ziyatunqa*, as it is fondly called, that we learned more Ndebele. Of course my father spoke to his children in Ndebele as soon as they were born. These two languages, Ndebele and Shona, became

my infant and adolescent languages and they were always in constant struggle. For many years, my Shona-speaking mother could neither speak nor understand my father's language, Ndebele; and my father could neither speak nor understand my mother's language. How on earth they communicated when they first met, I have no idea. We always ask my mother to tell us how my father proposed marriage to her. She remembers my father saying, "I love you." My mother spoke only a few English words then, while my father, who was a school teacher and headmaster, spoke English fluently.

How they must have struggled to express their emotions in English! Mother spoke to the children in Shona while father spoke to us in Ndebele. And so I grew up hearing and speaking these two languages. We also spoke and understood our friends' languages, when we were growing up. My parents have been together for over forty-five years now, and both can now speak each other's languages, eat each other's food, and understand each other's culture. I was born into a mixture of languages and cultures. I live at the intersection of different languages. You ask me what my "mother" tongue is. I have no idea as I grew up speaking several languages at the same time. Today in my family those languages, Shona and Ndebele, are still spoken—although mixed. My mother still addresses us in Shona and we tend to respond to her in Ndebele.

In my family we carry out communication in different languages—which proves that people do not have to communicate in one language for them to understand each other. The use of more than one language produces what Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) calls a state of heteroglossia. Heteroglossia refers among other things, to the contest among different socio-ideological perspectives within language and languages. These different perspectives and languages are in constant struggle, refusing any imposed hegemonic view

embedded in any one language. As a young child I became aware of the importance of one language interrupting the other, calling the other into question. I tend to speak more Ndebele than Shona—perhaps because I grew up in Bulawayo, a predominantly Ndebele region. I also attended Ndebele schools more than Shona ones. Sometimes, though, when my father addresses me in Ndebele, I answer him in Shona. Perhaps I am attempting to disrupt familiar linguistic practices and order. Also, Shona, being the language of the ruling party, is a more powerful language in Zimbabwe and it is spoken by almost two thirds of Zimbabweans. My use of Shona instead of Ndebele to my Ndebele speaking father, produces a parodic effect.

Engagement of Bakhtin's study of carnivalesque (1984) may help explain the parodic effect of my language choices here. Bakhtin's carnivalesque is based on questioning all truths and authorities. Carnivalesque operates by turning things upside down or turning them topsy turvy, shifting from the top to the bottom. In that sense, Bakhtin's carnivalesque has a potential for subversion and transgression. Using Shona instead of Ndebele, especially in the context where Shona is the language representing political power, can be read as my attempt to turn things upside down, to shift from the top to the bottom and to question its authoritative discourse. My language choices with my father mark an attempt to disrupt and destabilise hegemonic positions structured by Shona.

Added to the heteroglossic situation indicated above is the English language dimension. I also speak and write English. My memories of how I first came into contact with English are rather vague now, but I do remember that it was at school. I also recall that we were not permitted to use our indigenous languages at school. We were constantly under surveillance and censorship. When we were caught speaking our own languages we were

punished. In my early years at school, I decided to keep quiet because I did not want to be punished. I tried not to speak my own language. I bit my tongue. It was hard and painful. Occasionally, I was punished, even for not talking. The form of punishment varied from light to hard beatings. The signs of English hegemony were becoming evident to me by now. English became the language of regulation and punishment, the language of violence against our own speech and bodies. English, as a language of forced fluency, seals colonial domination while it simultaneously marks the delegitimisation and peripheralisation of indigenous languages. I find Lisa Lowe's (1996) brief discussion of language and colonial hegemony useful in understanding the process and the meaning of coming into the English language. She describes the novel *Dictee*, by Theresa Hak Kyung, as about the "process of coming into speech" in which the hybrid and multilingual subject is "articulated in antagonism to the uneven determinations of the French, Japanese, and the English languages" (p. 129). Lowe traces how *Dictee* treats the learning of colonial languages as physical disfiguring. The colonial language in *Dictee* becomes an index of material violence. My tongue and my physical body bore the "traces of colonial disfiguring and mutilation" (p. 139). As a postcolonial subject, I am still forced to use the language of my violation and mutilation. What remains is to explore the experience of engaging with a language of one's violation and the feeling of using the colonising language simultaneously with one's indigenous languages. According to Lowe (1996), the postcolonial relationship to English is one of a "double movement." The relationship is characterised by ambivalence towards the colonising language-opposition and acceptance. The postcolonial subject cannot return unproblematically to indigenous languages. The postcolonial relationship to marginalised indigenous languages needs to be understood in its relation to

the colonising language, that is, how it marks and has been marked by the colonial language. The engagement of the postcolonial with the colonising language and the indigenous languages is complex engagement characterised by ambivalence and constant struggle and negotiation.

My own engagement with language is marked by constant struggle. Negotiating and juggling many languages is something I had to learn to do, very quickly, at an early age, in order to survive. When I went to school, I switched to English. I switched back to Shona or Ndebele when I went home. Sometimes I had to switch to my friends' languages. From an early age I was constantly in negotiation with many valences of my ongoing sense of a hybrid. I have always been "multiply" claimed or multiply dispossessed—mediating between the languages of the self and many others—mother, father, friends, coloniser, all with their legitimate and varying claims.

What is the experience of living a hybridised identity?

Hybridity: Spaces for agency

The hybrid space has been posited as a location of confusion, of being caught between different levels of consciousness. Homi Bhabha (1994) writes:

[The hybrid space is] being caught athwart the frame, at once inside and outside ... performing a certain problem of identification between nations and cultures, between foreign and floating signs. (p. 5)

But Bhabha's articulation of postcolonial identity as being somehow caught in between different systems is misleading. I think this kind of theorising leads to an inaccurate conception of postcolonial subjectivity—as being caught in between, helpless—a position of lack. The postcolonial subject is not 'caught between cultures,' as it were, as Bhabha suggests, but negotiates

tensions and contradictions and must constantly shift frames. Hybridity is not a location of weakness; rather, it signals agency and survival of the violence of colonialism. It is a site for the re-articulation of identity and of oppositional resistance. The space the postcolonial subject inhabits can be seen, equally, as creative and enabling. Like Busia (1993) I believe that the “evidence of hybrid or translatable selves is textual and performative, not lack, but plenitude” (p. 213).

For my exploration of the space between the colonial and indigenous and its implications for Zimbabwean postcolonial identity I examine recorded videos of three of Amakhosi performances; Dabulap, Stitsha and The Members. I bring to this interpretation personal experience, autobiographical accounts, historical perspectives, cultural and literary theory. N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (1994) have discussed such utilization of multiple perspectives as a bricolage. They identify research that manipulates multiple methodologies as an “interactive process shaped by [the researcher's] personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity, and those of the people in the setting” (p. 3). I have already made reference to Stuart Hall’s idea of all discourses as “placed” (Hall, 1990, p. 223). As my identity is multiply positioned, my dissertation will reflect the spaces I inhabit and the places I come from. It explores language use in Zimbabwe and seeks to understand the experience of being colonised and the way in which postcolonial identity takes shape at the intersection of the colonial and indigenous language(s) and culture(s). Understanding or interpreting colonised identities and postcolonial identity formation is a complex project that is informed by several intersecting axes such as history, race, class, ethnicity, culture, language and identity. No single perspective can capture the complexity and the interconnectedness of these issues. The questions of colonisation,

language, culture and identity can only be fully understood and interpreted from multiple perspectives. The postcolonial experience, itself, is a kind of bricolage, that is, it emerges from a mixture of intersecting influences.

The work of Amakhosi can be read as a bricolage. Amakhosi plays incorporate a mixture languages, cultures, ideas and style. In its use of many languages, Amakhosi plays illustrate people coping with many languages and issues. Amakhosi theatre is an eloquent description of the ways in which the colonised people of Zimbabwe attempt to work out questions of identity, language, gender and culture. I concentrate on language because it is my view that examining what people do with language (that is, the way in which colonised peoples situate themselves in relation to and negotiate with colonial and indigenous languages) is helpful in understanding colonised identities and the complexity of postcolonial subjectivity.

Amakhosi is a useful location to study the ways in which postcolonial cultural identity takes shape at the intersection of languages. Augusto Boal (1979) identifies theatre as a significant location for self-representation. He discusses the ways in which theatre allows human beings to observe themselves. In this sense, theatre can be read as an appropriate location to examine issues of self-definition, self-representation and identity.

I must acknowledge at the beginning that my analysis of the plays from video recordings risks the danger of losing the immediacy of the performances. The political, cultural and social significance of Amakhosi plays, like any other performances, can only be fully appreciated by experiencing them. In her examination of the assumptions about the connections between representational visibility and political power, Peggy Phelan (1993) reminds us of the impossibility of reproducing the Other as the

Same. In her discussion of the limits of visible representation of the real, she writes:

Performance, insofar as it can be defined as representation without reproduction, can be seen as a model for another representational economy, one in which the reproduction of the Other as the Same is not assured (p. 3)

She notes that the actual event or time/space of performance is lost in our attempts to reproduce. For her, performance occurs over a time which can never be repeated. She writes:

Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representation of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance (p. 146)

The document of the performance cannot capture the "now," the actual events of a performance of a specific time and space. Phelan gives an account of the reproduction of stolen paintings of the Isabella Stewart Garner Museum in Boston to illustrate the relevance of reproduction. Phelan makes reference to Sophie Callie's work in which she requests visitors to describe the stolen pictures as they remembered them. The texts were then transcribed and juxtaposed against the photographs of the gallery. According to Phelan, the descriptions of the stolen paintings whilst not capturing the "now" constitute "presence despite the absence of the paintings themselves . . . the descriptions fill in, and thus supplement (add to, defer, and displace) the stolen pictures" (p. 147). Phelan suggests that descriptions offered differ over and over about the same paintings. That is, each time the people were asked to describe the

same paintings, they described something slightly different. She suggests that these changes in perspective demonstrates that act of memory and description is a performative expression.

I find Phelan's observations about reproducing art and performance particularly useful in understanding the limits and strengths of my analysis of recorded video of Amakhosi plays. As I have already mentioned, the recorded versions of Amakhosi plays are representations of a representation, traces of the performance events. That is to say, they are other than the performance particularly since the production itself depends, for example, on the video recorder's perspective, on what the microphone records and on what the editor decides to include and/or exclude. In other words, they will never reproduce the event of the performance. And although I have participated in the live performances, what I have as I write this dissertation is not the actual event, for that cannot be reproduced, but, instead, a memory or a trace of the plays. Phelan notes that the documented performance is "only a spur to memory, an encouragement of memory to become present" (p. 147). She explains that while historians focus on questions of accuracy and clarity in the recovery of the lost, Calle is concerned with a remembering as a location "where seeing and memory forget the object itself and enter the subject's own set of personal meanings and associations" (p. 147). My analysis and description of the plays should be read as an attempt to recover and remember that which is lost to my memory of the live performances, but more important as my own personal reading and understanding of the performances and the issues they deal with. The dissertation should be viewed as my own interaction with the event of the performance.

In speaking about the challenges of writing about the "undocumentable event of performance," Phelan notes that to write about

the event of performance is not only to “preserve” it, but to reinvent or alter it. This implies that writing about Amakhosi performance becomes another performance as Phelan writes:

[T]he challenge raised by the ontological claims of performance for writing is to re-mark again the performative possibilities of writing itself (p. 148)

She argues that writing about performance “cancels the tracelessness inaugurated within this performative promise” (p 149). As a performance and translation of my own hybridity, this dissertation mixes English and Ndebele. Translation of Ndebele to English at all occasions cannot do justice to the performance. The performance loses its immediacy. Part of Amakhosi’s project involves the decolonisation of English, that is, Africanisation of English. Amakhosi also attempts to resituate African languages and expressions in public spaces. My dissertation re-marks those very possibilities. I attempt to perform a decolonisation, that is, a displacement of English at some points in the dissertation. I also perform a resituation of indigenous languages by giving them space in my writing.

In Chapter 1, I set the stage for this performance by exploring the language question in Africa. The debate illustrates two main perspectives of English in Africa. On the one side of the debate are the people who reject English in Africa. On the one side of the debate are the people who reject English, mainly for its complicity with colonialism. Ngugi Wa Thiong’o (1986), one of the chief proponents of the move against English, ties English with imperialism. He identifies rejection of English as part of the decolonisation process. On the other hand, those who argue for the continued use of English in Africa base their argument on pragmatic grounds. Chinua Achebe highlights the significance of English as an international language,

and a language of getting ahead. The presentation of two views is not intended to polarise the arguments, but to separate the different attitudes towards English, for discussion. I acknowledge that attitudes towards English are much more complex. For example, the influence of English is evident in Ngugi's own writings. His references to Shakespeare's work attest to that influence. Although he speaks against the use of English in Africa, he is unable to erase its trace. Ngugi uses English even in his critiquing of it. Achebe who seems to support English, is nonetheless uncomfortable with the use of English. He expresses a sense of guilt even in his support of English.

After presenting the debate, I offer a critique of the various positions on the relevance of English in Africa. I argue that although English has negative implications, its use in Anglo-Africa is unavoidable. In fact, I argue that English is now a part of our African experience. I argue that the colonial encounter created conditions for hybridity—linguistic and cultural hybridity. I suggest that the colonised's relationship to English should be understood as complex and ambivalent.

In Chapter 2, I examine the relevance of theatre in the exploration of the language identity question in Africa. Theatre, especially localised theatre like Amakhosi, is a useful location for exploring Zimbabwean cultural identity formation. In this chapter, I examine theatre and its role in the decolonisation process. I argue that theatre provides a space for colonised peoples to begin to challenge hegemony and to also invent new possibilities for themselves. In addition, I describe Amakhosi theatre as a localised work engaged in a specific agenda at a specific place and time. To this end, I offer a historical account of the theatre group's formation and evolution. In its incorporation of and negotiation with many languages and techniques, Amakhosi lends itself as a location for studying hybridity. My discussion of

Amakhosi theatre leads to Chapter 3 in which I examine hybridisation in the plays.

In Chapter 3 I discuss hybridity as a strategy of survival; that is, as a means of coping with many languages. Through hybridisation the colonised resist and use English. They also incorporate their own languages into their discourse. Using Bakhtinian notions of hybridisation, I show the ways in which languages contest each other's authority. I focus on the ways in which Ndebele challenges or unmasks the hegemony of English and to some extent Shona. As well, I suggest that the relationship of English and Ndebele is not always contestatory. Although Ndebele and English constantly fight it out on the territory of utterance, there is a sense in which they also accommodate each other. I employ Ogunyemi's (1996) exploration of the concept of palaver to explore hybridity as marking both contestation and communion. Of particular significance for me, is the way in which English is criticised even in the using of it, in Amakhosi plays. My analysis of hybridity highlights the contradictoriness of colonised identity and establishes and confirms the idea of a hybridised postcolonial identity.

Chapter 4 explores the relevance of African expressive forms, such as songs and dances, in the critique of English and the formation of Zimbabwean cultural identity. African expressive forms constitute necessary aspects of African cultural identity. Expressive forms such as songs and dances are also important for anticolonial struggle and the survival of African cultural traditions. Songs and dance are also avenues for resistance to the hegemony of language. While the chapter celebrates the presence of African expressive forms in Amakhosi plays as an assertion of cultural identity and marginalised forms, the chapter also critiques ideas of purity of African cultural expressions. The chapter posits a dynamic culture and illustrates the ways in

which African expressive forms are modified even in their challenging and working together with English. Again, a focus on the contradictions of African colonial and postcolonial experiences leads to a conception of a hybridised Zimbabwean cultural identities. This discussion of hybridity in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 leads to an exploration of the pedagogical implications of hybridisation. As an educator, I am interested in the way in which the exploration of the concept of hybridisation may help me articulate a curriculum for hybridised spaces. With this in mind, I explore the possibilities of hybridisation for curriculum and pedagogical practices in postcolonial Zimbabwe, in Chapter 5.

Education has been one of most difficult locations to implement change in postcolonial Zimbabwe. Education was very significant in the colonisation of African people in colonial Zimbabwe. The colonial government used education to control and subjugate African peoples in Zimbabwe. At independence education becomes very important in the decolonisation process. The colonial education system is challenged and in many cases changed or replaced by what is viewed as relevant content. In this chapter I examine the nature of colonial education in Zimbabwe, especially how the colonial government manipulated African education in order to control Africans. I examine education in postcolonial Zimbabwe, showing how the new African government in Zimbabwe attempted to interrogate the colonial education structures. The government could not eliminate the trace of colonialism in the education system. The Zimbabwean education system is a hybrid—a combination of African indigenous culture and Western culture. I argue that this is unavoidable and that the curriculum needs to respond to the hybrid society in Zimbabwe. I argue for a curriculum that responds to “Third Spaces,” locations characterised by multiplicity and ambivalence. I

conclude this chapter by suggesting a curriculum that incorporates indigenous and Western knowledge. I argue for a responsible and critical hybridity, a hybridity that is politicised. I draw on Bakhtin's notion of conscious hybridity to conceptualise a hybrid curriculum for Zimbabwe. In its treatment of hybridity, Amakhosi theatre offers us insights of how such a curriculum might look like. In this dissertation I have established the significance of hybridity and the necessity for the education system in Zimbabwe to take into account the languages, histories and cultures which children bring to school.

I conclude this dissertation by re-examining some of the notions I have developed. Of special attention is the concepts of postcolonial and hybridity. The term postcolonial in its linearity suggests that colonialism is past. But as the analysis of Amakhosi demonstrates, colonialism still informs postcolonial experience. When I started this dissertation, I was uncomfortable with the concept of hybridity; nonetheless, the concept of hybridity constitutes a central idea in my dissertation. At the end, I still have a sense of discomfort and will revisit the concept by examining its weaknesses and its potential. In her *The concubine's children: Portrait of a family divided*, Denise Chong (1994) describes her answer to her daughter's frequent, "Is the book finished?" Chong writes, "The truthful answer is probably that such a book is never finished, but there is a time when a story is ready to be told" (p. x). The formal ending of this dissertation is not to be viewed as a closure or wrapping up of issues, rather it reanimates fears and apprehension and opens up new concerns and sets up a stage for another tale to be told.

CHAPTER 1

The Language Question: African Perspectives

Those of us who have inherited the English language may not be in a position to appreciate the value of the inheritance. Or we may go on resenting it because it came as part of a package deal which included many other items of doubtful value and the positive atrocity of racial arrogance and prejudice. . . . But let us not in rejecting the evil throw out the good with it.

— Chinua Achebe (1975, p. 96)

How did we, as African writers, come to be so feeble towards the claims of our languages on us and so aggressive in our claims on other languages, particularly the languages of our colonisation?

— Ngugi Wa Thiongo (1995, p. 287)

“Language is a technology of power,” writes Franz Fanon (1967) in *Black Skin White Masks*. Colonialism involves the domination of a people’s material wealth and culture. Part of the control of a colonising country is accomplished through the propagation of colonial languages. Ngugi Wa Thiongo (1986) argues that the “domination of the people’s language by languages of the colonising nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonised” (p. 18). Colonial language policies, and colonial schooling

systems systematically degraded African languages, forced Africans to speak colonial languages and created feelings of inferiority in African peoples. Fanon (1967) has written extensively about the way colonised peoples participate in their own subjection through internalising inferiority. One of the symptoms of internalisation or “epidermalisation” of inferiority is collective self-hatred and preference for the colonial language and its culture on the part of the African. Forced to speak colonial languages, colonised peoples tended to adopt colonial ways of thinking and to identify more with the colonizing culture than with their own cultures and languages and to be alienated from their own languages and culture. But Fanon (1967) also draws our attention to the paradoxical aspects of colonial subject formation by identifying the colonial subject as contradictory. The imposition of English forces an assimilation of colonial values and world view. But this imposition produces the very grounds of antagonism. The colonial coercive encounter with its demands of internalisation of the coloniser’s superiority and the colonised’s inferiority is not only met with assimilation of the colonial impulse but with antagonism and resistance to those demands of fluency (Lowe, 1996).

Fanon’s identification of the paradoxical colonial subject is useful for understanding the contradictory postcolonial engagement with colonial languages. Engagement with English in Africa today is marked by contradiction and paradox. While fluency in English is deemed necessary and prestigious, it is also critiqued for its cultural and linguistic genocidal repercussions. In other words, at the same time English is assimilated, it is interrogated. In Chapter 3 of this dissertation I will explore this contradiction further by examining the way in which Amakhosi plays illustrate how and why English is internalised and critiqued simultaneously.

The debate about the appropriateness of English as a language of literary and cultural expression in postcolonial Africa symbolises the contradictory impulse in Africa's engagement with the colonial. This debate is by no means the only forum where these issues have been discussed. In Zimbabwe, these issues are discussed in public fora such as the mass media, theatre, schools and parliamentary discourse. Issues about language also enter private and personal discourse and ruminations. In other words, people think and talk about these issues in informal ways. However, these discussions are not systematic. I locate my study in the literary debate because it is the most systematic and most sustained academic/theoretical engagement with issues. It is also the most quoted in scholarly work. It is my view that the literary debate provides provocative impetus to African scholars engaged with language issues. It is in this spirit that I present the following debate. Important as the literary debate is, I chose to focus my analysis on theatre for the following reasons. In its mixture of voice and the oral aspects, Amakhosi theatre is more accessible even to the illiterate people in Zimbabwe and has its own appeal to a wider range of people. In that sense theatre is much more democratic. While the literary debate is accessible to academic audiences, theatre encompasses and engages a much wider audience. Also, in its immediacy, theatre is able to critically intervene in public or actual events. Since the literary debate highlights the postcolonial language dilemma, in a systematic and academic manner, I use it as a launching pad for my discussion of language issues.

The debate embraces a wide variety of concerns. Writers who are concerned about cultural and language preservation argue against English, while writers who weigh the advantages proffered by English make a case for it. The critique of the positions I offer will lead to an introduction of the

concept of hybridity, its relevance in the decolonisation of English and for understanding postcolonial identity.

One of the chief proponents of the argument against English is exiled Kenyan writer and critic, Ngugi Wa Thiongo. Ngugi is an accomplished writer who has written novels in English, which include, *River Between* (1965), *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) to name only a few. Ngugi (1986) sees the most obvious means of confronting the language problem in postcolonial Africa as learning and promoting African indigenous languages. His position on this issue is symbolised by his rejection of his Christian name, James, and the adoption of his "native" name, "Wa Thiongo, which means son of Thiongo. Ngugi's outright rejection of English is further marked by his refusal to write in that language. He opts for his 'mother' language, Gikuyu (one of the many Kenyan indigenous languages). Ngugi's politics of language are documented in his book of essays, *Decolonising the Mind* (1986). He identifies this book of essays as his departure from English. He writes, "This book . . . is my farewell to English as a vehicle for my writings. From now on, it is Gikuyu and Kiswahili all the way" (p. xiv). Ngugi describes the continued use of English as a perpetuation of imperialism. His rejection of English marks and executes his ideological confrontation with English. His decision to reject English is necessitated by his conviction that English cannot be freed from its racial and colonial assumptions of superiority and authority. For Ngugi, the struggle against colonial and neo-colonial domination includes resistance and rejection of colonial authoritative discourses.

His views resonate with Bakhtin's (1981) definition of authoritative discourse. Bakhtin describes authoritative discourse as discourse that exerts power and influence over us. He describes how the influence of another's discourse in the process of ideological formation assumes an authoritative

quality. According to Bakhtin, authoritative discourse,

[D]emands that we acknowledge it, that we make it our own; it binds us, quite independent of any power it might have to persuade internally; we encounter it with its authority already fused to it. The authoritative word is located in a distanced zone, organically connected with a past that is felt to be hierarchically higher. It is, so to speak, the word of the fathers. Its authority was already acknowledged in the past. It is a prior discourse (p. 342)

Ngugi describes English as functioning in such an authoritative zone. He considers the school as the site of such deployment of authority and power. He writes:

The settler despised peasant languages which he termed vernacular, meaning the languages of slaves, and believed that the English language was holy. Their pupils carry this contempt a stage further: some of their early education acts on receiving the flag were to ban African languages in schools and to elevate English as the medium of instruction from primary to secondary stages. In some schools, corporal punishment is meted out to those caught speaking their mother tongue; fines are extorted for similar offenses (p. 59)

In its association with holiness and the imperial, English operates in elevated, sacred, and epic zones. Ngugi's description of English corresponds with Bakhtin's (1981) identification of authoritative discourse as the "Sacred Writ," a language "that must not be taken in vain" (p. 342). Ngugi's resistance of English in favour of his native language can be read as a struggle against the authoritative demands of English.

Ngugi's arguments against writing in English mark his philosophy and ideology of language and culture. For Ngugi, as for many others, language, besides being simply a means of communication, is a carrier of culture. Ngugi's view of language echo positivist notions of language which cast language as either a code or simply a transparent vehicle for transmitting meanings and ideas. Ngugi distinguishes three important aspects of language as culture. The first cultural aspect of language is that it is a product and reflection of history. Ngugi's observations about language and history point to his sensitivity to language as an embodiment of a particular historicity. Bakhtin (1981) reminds us that language is never a single language, but that it will always carry the "survivals of the past" (p. 66). The second aspect of language is its psychological role in mediating between self and self, self and other and self and nature. Ngugi's conception of language in its mediating role is similar to Bakhtin's dialogic view of language. In his study of language in society, Bakhtin (1981) draws our attention to language as a pluralist construct:

Language lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word is half someone else's. . . the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language. . . but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions; it is from there that one must take the word and make it one's own (p. 293)

Ngugi's view of language reveals its dialogic and heteroglossic nature. He presents language as an intersection of many voices, creating a dialogue among the self and self, the self and other and the self and context. His views of language move beyond constructs of language as fixed and as being a property of individuals to include the view of language as a collective and

shared entity. Ngugi is cognisant of language as an expression of dialogicality, that is, the presence of the other/s.

Ngugi identifies the third aspect of language as its capacity to transmit or impart images of the world and reality through spoken and written words. Thus, in Ngugi's view, a particular language transmits the images of the world contained in the culture it carries. The particularity of the sounds, the words, the word order in phrases and sentences, and the specific manner of laws of their ordering, are what distinguish one language from another. He writes, "a specific culture is not transmitted through language in its universality but in its particularity as the language of a specific community with a specific history" (p. 15). Ngugi's definition of language as representing a particular or specific culture or reality does promote a difference and distinctiveness that does not admit any universality or commonality of languages. His rejection of colonial languages is based on his view that the imposition of colonial languages introduces a particular culture and a specific world-view that alienates colonised people from their own language, culture and universe.

Ngugi (1986) ties language to cultural identity. He asserts that language is central to one's cultural identity and to one's relationship with the universe. He writes "The choice of language and use to which language is put is central to a people's definition of themselves in relation to the entire universe (p. 4). He argues, after Fanon (1967), that a sense of self on the part of African people is inhibited by use of European languages. He sees the continued use of English and its dominance in Africa as a kind of mental colonisation and cultural imperialism. Ngugi regards the use of colonial languages to be a cultural and conceptual prison house that holds the African mind captive. For Ngugi, decolonisation requires, among other things, a

rejection of colonial language.

Other writers in Africa have expressed similar views to those of Ngugi. African writer, Omafume Onoge (1990) argues that continued use of European languages in postcolonial Africa forces Africans to abandon their own languages and therefore their commitment to an identity based on kinship (symbolised by a shared language) and religious beliefs. Another African writer and critic, Oyekan Owomoyela (1979) postulates that African languages embody what Ghanaian writer Ayi Kwei Armah (1969) calls "our way," as well as express conceptions of reality that are specifically, uniquely, African. African kinship illustrates well this relationship between culture, language and identity.

The following illustrations of kinship terms offered here are drawn from languages with which I am more familiar. In Ndebele the word for aunt (mother's sister) is *umama omncane*, younger mother in English. The word for uncle (father's brother) is *ubaba omncane* (younger father) if the uncle is younger than the father. If the uncle is older than the father it becomes *ubaba omdala* (older father). The concept of more than one mother or father does not exist in English. Like other African languages, the Shona language does not have the notion of cousins, nephews and nieces. In Shona, a cousin is referred to as a sister or a brother. This example represents a particular way of viewing kinship, based on an uniquely African concept of extended family. Western concepts like cousin, nephew, niece, uncle, aunt tend to be rather distancing. They are not compatible with the African concept of family. Family in African culture does not refer to immediate family members as in the western nuclear family system, but to the whole clan. I am often reminded of my sisters' children, who sometimes call me "Aunt Vayi." I am their younger or older mother, not their aunt. The word aunt maximises

distance, while the word mother minimises distance between relations. But often western concepts are mixed with African indigenous concepts to create a hybridised culture.

Owomoyela (1979) believes like Ngugi that language carries cultural values and distinguishes one culture from another. He also argues that language is not primarily or exclusively a means of communication, but a system of representation. For him, language represents cultural values. He associates the death of a language with the demise of a culture. Owomoyela considers African languages, cultural identity and the distinctive African ways of speaking to be at risk of disappearing with the increasing dominance of European languages in post-independence.

Ngugi, Onoge and Owomeyela all share similar concerns about English. Their radical responses are necessitated by fear of cultural loss. Ngugi suggests that the continued use of English is a perpetuation of imperialism. He proposes the shedding of English.

Writers who support the use of English in Africa do not view the continued use of English as linguistic imperialism. They argue that English justifies itself as an African language by virtue of its long history in Africa. In addition, proponents of English propose a dynamic view of culture and language. I present the ideas of the three most prominent proponents of the use of English: Chinua Achebe, Gabriel Okara, and Wole Soyinka. According to these authors, any language can adequately express any culture. They claim that language is malleable enough to be used in the service of the creative mind and therefore the use of English does not necessitate loss of African culture.

As part of his contribution to the debate, Chinua Achebe (1975), a Nigerian writer and literary critic, points to historic and pragmatic reasons for

continuing with English. Achebe suggests that English has become so much a part of Nigerian life as to qualify as an African language. He argues that a language that is spoken by Africans on the African soil necessarily justifies itself as an African language. Achebe (1975) is militant in his insistence on using English. He charges that "And let no one be fooled that we may write in English for we intend to do unheard of things with it" (p. 7). He argues for an indigenised or Africanised English which can recover English from imperialism and contribute to the project of decolonisation. In other essays, Achebe explores the indigenisation process even further. He writes:

I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit new surroundings (1975, p. 103)

Achebe's novels proliferate with African proverbs, idioms and African oral tradition. A proverb which comes to my mind is from his book, *Things Fall Apart*. It is about the lizard who jumped from the high *iroko* tree and said that he would praise himself if no one praised him. Significantly, the titles of his novels *Things Fall Apart* and *No Longer At Ease* are adaptations from Yeats and T. S Elliot, respectively. The use of Western titles can be viewed an instance of appropriation of English--an attempt to Africanise English, and, to force English function in an African context. Such strategies have been explained as part of empowerment of the colonised. Taking charge of English by adapting it to African contexts and situations is also read as part of the resistance against the imposition of English. On the other hand, this kind of appropriation of English titles can be read as act of mimicry. According to Homi Bhabha (1984), mimicry functions as "authorised versions

of otherness" (p. 129). Bhabha posits mimicry as part of a subjectifying practice. In Bhabha's view, Achebe's attempt to appropriate English titles can be read as a symbolic expression of the relationship of colonial domination which is perpetuated through internalisation and reiteration of the coloniser's superiority. But Achebe (1975) insists that Africanising or indigenising English is part of African empowerment. Responding to the charge about the ineffectiveness of writing in English, Achebe writes:

I do not see any signs of sterility anywhere here. What I do see is a new voice coming out of Africa, speaking of African experience in a world-language. . . The price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to many different kinds of use (p. 100)

Achebe's insistence on the functions and adaptability of English perpetuate his instrumental vision of language. Achebe argues that English presents itself as a lingua franca, a language for wider communication, and a language necessary for national unity in Nigeria, a country which has over 200 languages. In multilingual countries in Africa (almost all African countries are multilingual) the choice of official languages becomes problematic. The choice of one or two African languages as lingua franca or even official language, will always alienate other speakers who do not speak those languages. English and French are viewed as suitable lingua franca and/or official language because of their assumed neutrality. Achebe views the use of English as possible and as politically necessary. But a consideration of the complicity of English and French in colonialism problematises any idea of neutrality. The argument for English as a language for uniting the diverse ethnic groups in Africa is problematic. First, that monolingualism (use of English instead of indigenous languages) unites ethnic groups is not obvious.

Ethnic tensions have not declined with the introduction of English as a lingua franca. Also, the argument for English does not take into consideration the inaccessibility of English to the ordinary indigenous populations and the gap between English and indigenous meanings. Indigenous people are forced to negotiate in a language which they do not speak or use.

The use of English can have tragicomic effects. African court scenes provide examples of some tragicomic effects of the gap between official uses of English and indigenous interpretations of English. Court proceedings assume ridiculous proportions in situations where many litigants do not understand English. The gap between English meanings and the indigenous translations make court cases in English laughable. It points to the ridiculousness of English use in such contexts. Ogunyemi (1996) draws attention to the complexity of this issue when she writes, "The paradox lies in Nigeria's continued use of these vestiges of colonialism as a safety valve to avoid ethnic blow up" (p. 97). The use of English, in my view, has not avoided ethnic blow up, but has in many instances entrenched ethnic domination. That is, the use of English obscures ethnicity.

Achebe's views are shared by other African critics such as the Nigerian writer, Gabriel Okara. Okara (1963) argues that English can be "bent" to suit the African culture, that is, language can be made to do anything. He endeavours to keep English as close as possible to his vernacular languages. Okara experiments with this idea in his novel, *The Voice* (1970), where he expresses African idioms in English. Like Achebe, he argues for the potential of language to express any culture. He writes:

Some may regard this way of writing as a desecration of the language.

This of course is not true. Living languages grow like living things, and English is far from a dead language. There are American, West Indian,

Australian, Canadian and New Zealand versions of English. All of them add vigour to the language while reflecting their own respective cultures. Why shouldn't there be a Nigerian or West African English which we can use to express our own ideas, thinking and philosophy in our own way? (1963, p. 15-16)

Okara draws attention to the dynamism of language. He believes that any language can express any culture, thinking or philosophy. He sees this difference as invigorating to the English language. This view is in contrast to Ngugi's idea that languages reflect specific thought and culture.

Wole Soyinka (1988), an African novelist and social critic, is driven by political considerations in his choice of English. In his essay, "Language as Boundary" (1988), Soyinka describes language as a revolutionary tool that is necessary for the liberation of the oppressed. It is his view that English can be used to challenge colonial systems of oppression. Soyinka's views are expressed by other African scholars like, Ali Mazrui (1975) who identify the liberating potential of the colonial language. These critics suggest that although colonial languages were used to dominate African peoples, the same language was used by the colonized Africans to question colonial systems. Significantly, it was educated Africans who were at the forefront of Pan-Africanism and African Nationalism challenging colonialism in colonial languages. Soyinka (1988) associates English with liberation. He presents a list of revolutionary figures who resorted to the language of oppression to liberate themselves and their nations from colonialism and slavery. He writes:

Du Bois, Franz Fanon, Nelson Mandela, Agostino Neto, Nkrumah, Malcom X, Eldridge Cleaver, Angela Davis, Imamu Baraka, etc, etc--an

unending list through the history of colonial experience. This brutal reversal of the enslaving role of language--prophesied by that unusual Elizabethan Shakespeare--tells us all we wish to know about the possibility of creating a synthetic revolutionary culture in place of the bastardised or eradicated indigenous culture of the colonised. The unaccustomed role which such a language is forced to play turns indeed into a new medium of communication and simultaneously forges a new organic series of mores. . . Black people twisted the linguistic blade in the hands of the traditional cultural castrator and carved new concepts into the flesh of white supremacy (p. 139)

Like Ngugi, Soyinka acknowledges language as a repository of culture and the complicity of English, French or Portuguese in the colonial project. However, Soyinka does not think that the significance of indigenous languages for cultural identity is sufficient to warrant the jettisoning of colonial languages. Like Achebe, Soyinka considers language to be malleable. He suggests that English should be used together with indigenous languages. However, it must be noted that Soyinka's references to Shakespeare betray his own Anglicisation. Although Soyinka uses Yoruba myths in his novels and work, his novels, such as *The Road* (1965) and *The Interpreters* (1970) are inaccessible to his African audience. They appeal more to English readers. Part of this inaccessibility can be related to Soyinka's own over reliance on Western literary traditions of writers such as T. S. Eliot and W. B. Yeats. In view of this, his commitment to indigenous languages can be read like lip service.

While the proponents of English acknowledge the hazards of English, they do not feel incapacitated by English. They argue that English is essential

for their future. They choose to adapt English to their own African cultural experience. They propose the indigenisation of English.

The preceding debate highlights two reactions to the language question. Both reactions to the place of English in postcolonial Africa raise crucial questions about colonial languages. Achebe's position highlights the possibilities, potential and opportunities of English. Ngugi's reaction emphasizes the dangers and limitations of English in the expression of African cultural identities. Also, the different responses to colonial oppression problematize the notion of decolonisation. For Achebe, decolonisation involves the process of incorporation of the colonial structures into African culture while, for Ngugi, it entails a nationalistic rejection of colonial arrangements, specifically colonial languages.

As part of my response to the debate, I engage in a dialogue with Ngugi and Achebe's views respectively. I must add that my critique of Ngugi and Achebe is underlined with a sense of reverence for these scholars. Ngugi and Achebe have had an enormous influence on discourse about language, culture and identity in postcolonial Africa. Their contribution to the debate about language is acknowledged.

A Dialogue with Ngugi

Ngugi's concerns with the preservation of indigenous languages and cultures are persuasive in that identity is clearly embedded in our language and culture. I do not minimize his concern with language and culture loss, for to lose language and culture is to forfeit aspects of identity and sense of relationship to other humans and the world. However, I find Ngugi's conceptions of culture and language rather unsettling, and his conception of the way culture reflects language and language reflects culture rather difficult

to defend.

Much of the problem of understanding culture and its relationship to postcolonial conditions and practices results from a failure on Ngugi's part to examine culture beyond the narrow constructs that have been established by a Western anthropological discourse of the radical uniqueness of culturally constructed universes of thought and experience. The notions of difference and uniqueness served as the basis of distinguishing validating western anthropologists sense of superiority and underscored the Other's inferiority. Writing about language and construction of reality in anthropology, Trinh (1989) illustrates the way the language of difference and uniqueness facilitated the European anthropologists agenda of othering. She writes, "Terming us the 'natives' focuses on our innate qualities and our belonging to a particular place by birth; terming them the 'natives,' on their being born inferior and 'non-Europeans'" (p. 52). Ngugi's characterisations of culture as containing and conveying essential and unchangeable ideological and cultural values also perpetuates stereotypisation of African culture. They promote homogeneity at the expense of heterogeneity. All this leads to an underestimation of differences within African cultures and languages. At another level promoting notions of difference and uniqueness can be read as what hooks (1995a) refers to as "commodification of the Other." She identifies this process as part of the colonial exploitative agenda and a desire to dominate its Otherness.

In her examination of appropriation, exploitation and commodification of the Other, hooks (1995a), offers a theoretical framework to analyze the problems of linguistic appropriation, exploitation and imperialism. Such an examination places the language problem in Africa within a wider perspective of cultural studies. hooks' ideas can be used to

address Ngugi's apprehensions about "enriching" English with indigenous African languages. According to hooks, the commodification of Otherness is now being offered as a new 'entree.' She observes the way in which cultural difference is consumed and commodified in the West. The commodification of difference and ethnicity undermines its potential for resistance. Further, commodification of difference trivialises and obscures difference.

Part of hooks' concern is that cultural differences are manipulated to serve the interests of mainstream white culture. Although in a different context, Ngugi expresses similar concerns about abuses and the exploitation of cultural difference. Ngugi charges that Achebe or Soyinka's literary inventiveness with English is "literary gymnastics" that serves to enrich English. For Ngugi appropriation of English, constitutes "linguistic encirclement." Vera (1995a) reads Ngugi's protestations in light of Fanon's account of the colonial appropriation of space. Fanon (1963) describes the tactics of appropriation of space as a "strategy of encirclement" (1973). Vera (1995a) writes "Ngugi and Fanon each regard this occupied world as one of "barbed-wire entanglements" (p. 65). For Fanon, this is a physical truth, for Ngugi a linguistic one as well" (p. 178). There are differences between hooks' and Ngugi's ideas. hooks is responding to the commodification of difference. hooks allows for difference but cautions against its potential abuses. Ngugi's argument for difference de-emphasizes sameness. Ngugi's negative responses to an idea of African English are shaped to a large extent by his conceptualisation of cultural identity.

Ngugi and others who argue against English believe in shedding English, in the process of discovering the essential, pre-colonial self or cultural identity. They view the rejection of English as part of the larger process of recovering an African identity. Ngugi's ideas raise questions of

whether we can posit the notion of an essentialised African identity. In other words, can we talk about an unproblematic concept of African identity? The famous trio, Chinweizu, Jamie and Madubuike (1983), most fervent of anti-European critics, refer to Africanness as a straightforward construction. In their book, *Towards a Decolonisation of African Literature*, they make it clear that:

[W]orks done for African audiences, by Africans, and in African languages, whether these works are oral or written, constitute the historically indisputable core of African literature. Works done by Africans but in non-African languages, and works done by non-Africans in African languages would be those for which some legitimate doubt might be raised about their inclusion or exclusion from the canon of works of African literature, and it is for them that some decision procedure would have to be established (p. 11-12)

The above argument leads to simple binaries about what is African and what is not and hence simplifies what is otherwise a problematic construction. Chinweizu et al., (1983) present an either/or option--a work of art is, simply, either African or unAfrican. For them, language becomes a significant determinant of what constitutes Africanness. Chinweizu et al., refer to a core African literature, as if there is an essential notion of Africanness. In their appeal to authenticity they are dismissive of works written in English by Africans. The authenticating factor of African literature becomes the indigenous language. In Chinweizu's et al., (1983) conception, how, for instance do we begin to define Africans who do not speak African languages? But as Trinh (1989) observes "Authenticity as a need to rely on an "undisputed origin", is prey to an obsessive fear: that of losing connection.

Everything must hold together" (p. 94). But Achebe has observed that everything does not hold together. In his *Things Fall Apart* (1958), Achebe maps out an Africa that begins to fall apart, culturally, socially and economically, with the coming of white missionaries.

The sentiments expressed by Chinweizu et al., (1983) draw attention to some of the problems of postcoloniality, particularly the efficacy of English to express postcolonial African experience. For me, these questions are related, not simply to the process of writing, but to the challenge of expressing identities a colonial languages. Not only that, the questions are also related to the problem of constructing meaningful identities and experiences within two contesting languages namely indigenous and colonial languages not evenly placed.

Ngugi presents cultural identity as an already accomplished fact, and as reflected in cultural practices. Stuart Hall's (1990) analysis of cultural identity is useful in seeing inadequacies of such a view because it problematises the "very authority and authenticity to which the term, 'cultural identity,' lays claim" (p. 224). Hall posits two different possible ways of conceiving cultural identity. The first way involves thinking of cultural identity in terms of a shared culture, the notion of a collective, shared history and ancestry. In other words, cultural identity, in this case, reflects collective history, experiences, shared cultural codes, which then provide stable, secure points of reference. Culture belongs to the past. According to Hall's view this kind of sentiment has under girded nationalist movements and cultural movements such as "Back to Africa," "Black is Beautiful" or "Back to Roots." According to Hall, this concept is useful in the initial mobilisation against colonial domination and oppression. It allows for the emergence of counter-narratives by marginalised groups. But identity politics has its own limitations, it leads to

essentialisations and perpetuates the colonised/coloniser, us/other binaries. Fanon (1963) reminds us that the challenge of dismantling colonialism or any kind of oppression is to learn how to visualise an alternative social structure that does not reproduce the structures being dismantled. Trinh (1997) observes,

For many members of long-silenced cultures, if the claim to rights of (self)-representation has been in some ways empowering, the shift to the politics of representation proves to be still more liberating, for what is renounced is simply an exclusive form of fictionalising; namely, the habit of asserting/assigning identity by staking out one's/other territory, Africanizing, or Orientalising the Oriental (p. 7)

And so, assertions of blackness, roots, and African's, while empowering as counter-narratives by marginalised citizens, generate into essentialism. Ngugi's view of African culture as something that identifies and unites Africans should be critiqued for its essentialism.

It is important to note, however, that cultural identity as a socially constructed entity has been shown to have strategic value. Lowe (1996) identifies the strategic relevance of the notion of identity for resistance politics. She identifies the grouping Asian American not as a natural or static category, but as a socially constructed unit, situated in a specific location and for political reasons. Drawing on Spivak's (1993) discussion of the positive uses of essentialism, Lowe (1996) examines the value of identity politics by exploring the politics of the Asian American group in the United States. It is her view that the assertion of individual or collective identity can be an essential process which is both empowering and strengthening. Lowe draws on Spivak's description of the strategic uses of essentialism for political

interest. Lowe discusses the “specific signifiers of racialised ethnic identity, such as ‘Asian American,’ for the purposes of contesting and disrupting the discourses that exclude Asian Americans” (p. 82). She suggests that rethinking “racialised ethnic identity in terms of differences of national origin, class, gender, and sexuality rather than presuming similarities and making the erasure of particularity the basis of unity” (p. 83) helps guard against essentialism.

Hall’s second sense of cultural identity describes identity as a positioning. According to him, cultural identity is not a fixed essence or fixed point to which we can make some final and absolute return. Hall identifies identity as a discontinuous process of becoming. He argues that identity does not proceed in “straight unbroken lines” (p. 226). He writes:

Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a positioning. Hence, there is always a politics of identity, a politics of position, which has no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic, transcendental ‘law of origin’ (p. 226)

By positing identity as a positioning, Hall implies that identity is not a prepackaged entity. Cultural identities are not ready made, they come from somewhere, they are situated in time and history. Far from being fixed, cultural identities are subject to social, historical and political changes.

Hall’s second sense of cultural identity is particularly useful for examining postcolonial identity. He reminds us of the need to “think [instead] of identity as a production which is never complete, always in process and as a matter of becoming as well as being” (ibid.,). Contrary to

Ngugi's view, Hall defines cultural identity as belonging to the future as much as to the past.

Ngugi's argument against English is based on his belief that language has the capacity to represent already-lived experience. However, this suggestion that language reflects culture has been problematised by postmodern configurations of language. Ngugi argues that since language reflects culture, losing one's language means losing one's culture. However, language can conceal meaning in ways that Ngugi's argument does not anticipate. The idea of language as simple representation of reality has been problematised by poststructuralist discourse that has retheorised language and meaning, after Jaques Derrida (1978). Derrida challenges the logocentric logic of language as a reflection of some prior meaning or reality. Derrida considers meaning as constituted in language in very complex ways. For Derrida, meaning does not exist prior or independent of language, rather, meaning is created in and through language. Derrida retheorised language and meaning as "constructed out of and subject to the endless play of differences between signifiers" (Stanley Aronowitz and Henry Giroux, 1991, p. 75). This conceptualisation of language undermines positivist notions of language as a reflection of reality or a transparent medium of ideas and meaning. Postmodern theorising about language puts Ngugi's assumption that language reflects culture into question.

Besides presenting narrow and static views of culture and language, Ngugi's arguments are based on what appears to be problematic notions of human agency, views of agency as both static and passive. Ngugi describes human beings as carriers of culture. This suggests that human subjects do not have the ability to change culture but merely reproduce it. But human beings do not just reproduce culture, they change it even as they pass it on. Agents

both create and alter social structures.

Ngugi's view of culture as a reservoir of African ways and values leads to the notion of culture as differentiating "us" from "them," almost always with a degree of xenophobia (Said, 1994). Said locates postcolonial identity in its relation with imperialism. His theories of culture and identity are developed in his *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) In these books Said expounds a theory of culture and identity which posits contemporary cultural identities as resulting from the interaction among dominant and subaltern cultures. According to Said, cultural identity is a fluid heterogeneous formation constructed out of the collusion of the imperial and colonised cultures. In Said's view, it is impossible to conceive of an essential culture untouched by its Other. He sees postcolonial cultural identity as fluid and heterogenous. The difficulty with Ngugi's view of culture is that it entails not only venerating one's own culture but also thinking of it as somehow divorced from other cultures within which it is in contact(Said, 1994, p. xii).

By positing static and purist notions of culture, Ngugi, and others holding similar views, overlook its dynamic nature. Far from being unitary and monolithic or autonomous constructions, culture and language actually assume more "foreign" elements, alterities, differences, than they consciously exclude. Ngugi's views do not take into account that African languages and cultures have been marked by colonial cultures and vice-versa. In examining notions of decolonisation and resistance, Said (1994) observes that part of the problem of resistance is that "it must to a certain degree work to recover forms already established or at least influenced or infiltrated by the culture of empire" (p. 210). It is in this sense that Said rejects notions of cultural purity.

In its appeal to indigenous languages and to a sense of African

traditional culture, Ngugi's project can be read as a reclamation project, an attempt to rehabilitate and revive the dignity of the African wisdom tradition, cultural philosophy and African languages and tradition. This position has been criticized by some postcolonial critics. Spivak (1993), for example, has critiqued such projects. She states that it is impossible to return to the pre-colonial state. I think Spivak makes an important observation about the impossibility of recovering the past in its purity. As I have already mentioned, the past itself has its strategic value for those who have been colonised and those who still live with the effects of colonisation. The past can be a reference point for the articulation of repressed and damaged identities. As I suggest in Chapter 4, the past needs to be engaged with in much more critical ways than is suggested by simplistic returns to the past. As well, the past needs to be understood in its relationship with the present, that is the ways in which the past shapes the present. It is important to note, however, that while I have difficulty with Ngugi's views about cultural identity and language, I do not completely dismiss his appeal to the past. Rather Ngugi's views of cultural identity need to be tempered with an appreciation of the effects of the encounter of the colonised African with the West on African cultural identity.

A Dialogue with Achebe

While Achebe is more compromising in his attitude to English and cultural identity, I find his arguments for English slightly problematic because he underestimates the cultural implications of linguistic imperialism. His accounts of the potential of English to express African culture, although compelling, do not address serious concerns of language loss and cultural alienation expressed by Ngugi and supported by examples from experiences of

colonised people all over the world. The spread of English through colonisation has led to the loss or destruction of colonised peoples' own languages and culture (Phillipson, 1992). For example, the imposition of English on Welsh, Irish and Scottish peoples led to the demise of these people's own indigenous languages. The imposition of the English language on the Native peoples of North America led to the systematic eradication of native languages and cultures. Concern with recovery of lost languages and cultures is registered in the following Mohawk song:

People. Listen to what our ancestors are saying: People. We are still continually hearing our ancestors' voices. People. Our ancestors are saying, Use your language again. (in Owomoyela, 1992, p. 93)

Imposition of colonial languages on peoples has been accompanied by language and culture loss. The challenge for Achebe and others appropriating English is to use colonial languages without erasing or losing their own languages, identities and cultures. The challenge also involves freeing the colonial language from its vestiges of imperialism. Achebe seems helpless and passive in the face of English. He finds the use of English dreadful but for him "there is no other choice. I have been given the language and I intend to use it" (Achebe, 1975, p. 102). Adrienne Rich's justification of English, like Achebe's, reads like resignation. She writes, "This is the oppressor's language yet I need to use it to talk to you" (quoted in hooks, 1994, p. 167).

As I have already indicated in the introduction, other critics suggest that the project of sanitising English is impossible. Audre Lorde (1981) suggests that the project is impossible. In her famous line, she explains, "For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (p. 99). She argues that the oppressed cannot beat the master at his own game. In her view, using

the master's language has temporary value and does not bring about genuine change. The oppressed need to come up with alternative strategies to challenge the master's house. Trinh (1989) alludes to this challenge in her examination of the appropriation of male discourse or institutionalised language by women. She observes, "How many, already, have been condemned to premature deaths for having borrowed the master's tools and thereby played into his hands?" (p. 79-80). She considers the benefits of unlearning institutionalised discourse. She writes, "The more one depends on the master's house for support, the less one hears what he doesn't want to hear" (p. 80). What she implies here is the whole problem of critiquing a discourse one is part of. She argues that political intentions are jeopardized by a dependence on the master's language. She suggests that silence might be an effective strategy of gaining attention instead of the master's language. According to Trinh, "Silence as a refusal to partake in the story does sometimes provide us with a means to gain a hearing. It is voice, a mode of uttering, and a response in its own right" (p. 83). I think that silence has its political or subversive value, that is, there is power in some forms of silence. The locus of power in silence is insidious. When the other remains ignorant of the subversive thoughts, the silent party remains a mystery (Ogunyemi, 1996, p. 186). Silence can be counterproductive at some points, though. Silence cannot always replace talk. Silence can equally be read as complicity or tacit approval of oppression. Silence can be a result of deliberate silencing agendas. When silence is forced, then I think that particular silencing should be exposed and interrupted with talk or what hooks (1989) calls "talking back". Speaking out becomes a very crucial retaliatory strategy for people who have been silenced through oppression. Ignorance of English (or the master's tools) can facilitate the other's oppression. In such a context, speaking or writing

English assumes different contours. Speaking or writing English can be a way or the only way out of that oppression.

While I agree with Lorde and Trinh, that using the master's tools can implicate the oppressed in their own oppression, I also think that using the master's tools can provide the only means out of oppression. As part of my contribution to this discussion I argue that those of us forced to use the master's tools can do so in creative ways that are both subversive and freeing. Although one can never totally free English of some of its racial and colonial assumptions, one can critique it even in its using, as my analysis of Amakhosi plays illustrates in Chapter 3.

It is my view that English can be used to the oppressed's advantage. Although the task of expressing colonised identity in a colonial language is difficult, it is nonetheless possible. Bakhtin (1981) identifies the project of appropriating another's word as difficult. He defines the word as not neutral; that is, the word belongs to other people and other contexts. The word, according to Bakhtin, is "half someone else's" and that it becomes "one's own" only when the speaker fills it with the speaker's "own intentions. . . accent" (p. 293). This coincides with Achebe, Okara and Soyinka's vision of making English their own, by bending it. But Bakhtin reminds us of the difficulty of that process of appropriation. Because Bakhtin expresses the challenges of appropriation of language very succinctly and accurately, I cite him at length:

And not all words for just anyone submit equally easily to this appropriation, to this seizure and transformation into private property: many words stubbornly resist; others remain alien, sound foreign in the mouth of the one who appropriated them and who now speaks them; they cannot be assimilated into his context and fall out of it. . .

Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated-overpopulated-with the intentions of others expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process (p. 294)

While Bakhtin's dialogic principle may suggest an idea of free and easy exchange of words, the above quotation suggests something different. Bakhtin suggests the difficulty of the process of appropriating others' words, that is, filling another's words with our own intentions and meanings. The challenge is not just in the appropriation of words but in the cleaning up of those words for our own uses. In our use of another's words we encounter another's intentions and meanings which may be hazardous for us. Bakhtin suggests that language needs to be cleaned in order to fit one's uses. Bakhtin notes that not all words will be easily reclaimable. In fact, he suggests that some words resist easy expropriation. Bakhtin summarises, for me, the issues that are raised by the language question. Like Bakhtin, I think that English needs to be cleaned for nonnative uses. But like Bakhtin, I believe that language does not submit easily to appropriation by colonised or enslaved peoples. Some words will be easily appropriated while others will refuse appropriation. The word "black" is an example of words that have been "reclaimed" or "redeemed". Blacks have turned the negative associations of the word. Black is used by African-Americans to signify beauty and black pride. But, I have often wondered the extent to which this word has really been 'rescued' from its racist connotations. To the extent that black is a response to its negative connotation, it remains confined to the racist

structure that determines its negative meanings in the first place. Perhaps we need to look for alternative meanings for the word, meanings that are not necessarily in response to its negativity. What all this suggests for me, is that expropriation of other's language(s) is problematic. Achebe's view that English can be easily appropriated is questionable. On the other hand, Ngugi's rejection of English is not the solution either. As I have already said, English is now a permanent feature of African linguistic and cultural space. An alternative way of using English without disabling African cultural identities and without losing indigenous languages is needed. My analysis of the plays in Chapter 3 illustrate this possibility.

Ngugi/Achebe: A Difficult Alliance

Ngugi and Achebe's apparent opposition conceals similarities in their positions. Both present English as being in opposition to indigenous languages. Achebe (1975) presents himself as being caught between two languages. His rhetorical question, "Is it right that a man should abandon his mother tongue for someone else's?" (p. 102), sets the languages in question in binary opposition. Ngugi's rejection of English in favour of African indigenous languages is premised on a strict dichotomy between English and indigenous languages. For Ngugi, it is an either/or situation, one cannot use both languages. And yet the boundaries between English and indigenous languages, are in many respects, theoretical and not that clearly defined. English overlaps and blends with indigenous languages.

The debate symbolises, for me, the contradictory impulses that characterise colonial subject formation. Fanon (1967) refers to the coercive colonial impulse which demands assimilation on the part of the colonised. But Fanon also argues that the very demands for assimilation provide the

grounds for antagonism. Postcolonial subjectivity is characterised by the impetus to assimilate the colonial and the impulse to be antagonistic to colonialism. This relationship has been defined as the love-hate relationship. This situation presents a contradictory subject.

For me, the question is not whether to adopt Ngugi or Achebe's position, each of which, for me, produces a contradictory situation. The resolution of these contradictions is not through an either/or negation, but through adopting a both/and perspective, that is, adopting both languages. It also entails working within and against these contradictions. The concept of hybridity is useful for conceptualising this space of contradiction or fragmentation, a space of inhabiting several identities and languages. Monisha Das Gupta (1996) describes how her identity as an Indian woman working in the United States presents her with dissonance. She writes:

I am an Indian woman who has been going to school in the United States for the past three-and-a-half years. I live a fractured life: fractured between two realities--Third World and First. The feeling of dislocation is ever-present, as is the need to find a comfort zone. I have come to value the unstable, amorphous terrain that I inhabit even though it is a very painful experience (p. 1)

Gupta identifies postcolonial identity as fragmented and fractured. In the rest of the article, Gupta describes postcolonial zone as a dislocating, disturbing and distabilising terrain. In her exploration of postcolonial identity, Pratibha Parmar (1990) asks, "Are we victims of fragmentation or, precisely because of our cultural hybridity and postcolonial experiences of displacement and marginality, are we a synthesis placed very much in the center?" (p. 108). It is my view that the hybrid space is a location of

intersection of multiplicity. Postcolonial identity is not a location for synthesis and resolution. Postcolonial identity as I elaborate in Chapters 3 and Chapter 4, is mediated through coexistence and contradiction or opposition.

Trinh (1992) refuses to see fragmentation in binary terms, polarised against wholeness. For her, fragmentation needs to stand alone, and is “a way of living with differences without turning them into opposites, nor trying to assimilate them out of insecurity”(p. 156). Michelle Cliff (1985) discusses her struggle to get wholeness from fragmentation in *The Land of Look Behind*. She writes:

My experience as a writer coming from a culture of colonialism. . . my struggle to get wholeness from fragmentation while working within fragmentation, producing work which may find its strength in its depiction of fragmentation, through form as well as content, is similar to the experience of other writers whose origins are in countries defined by colonialism (cited in Lowe, 1996, p. 128)

Trinh and Cliff do not attempt to reduce fragmentation or contradiction as a site of resolution, but rather seek to work within fragmentation and conflict. To suppress tension and opposition through resolution is not only to obscure conflict and inequality that underlie hybridity, but it is to foreclose the re-articulation of culture and postcolonial identity out of contradiction. Working within fragmentation allows for a forging of discontinuous postcolonial identity instead of an unproblematic return to precolonial identities. Contradiction and fragmentation become ground for imagining alternative subjectivities, communities and practices in new ways. In characterising hybridity, I do not intend to suggest an always conflictual space. As I argue in Chapter 3, the hybrid is a space for

communion. However, by emphasising the oppositional and conflictual, the counter-hegemonic effect of hybridisation can be more radically grasped.

The debate about language leaves us with incommensurable viewpoints: The colonised within a language that is dictated by the coloniser's world view. The solution for Ngugi is a rejection of the colonial language in favour of indigenous languages. Achebe argues for the adoption of the colonisers' language. I have argued that Ngugi and Achebe's positions are problematic. Kalu (1996) describes the relationship of the postcolonial writer to English as incommensurable. She observes:

Language is a major tool of the West African writer in English, yet this very language imposes a framework of logic and usage that falls prey to intensive interrogation of anticolonial and postcolonial writer. The perspectives inherent in language itself reveal the problems confronted by these writers in their projects of national and individual quests for liberation (p. 79)

Kalu explores the possibility of attending to both perspectives at once, without negating either position. The perspectives include English as invested with colonialism and English as a potentially liberating language. There is the risk of losing a whole history of oppression in rejecting English language and cultural memory. She suggests that the key lies in the postcolonial writer's ability to work within both indigenous culture and the culture of the colonial language. The project of appropriating language is problematic. I argue for a repositioning that allows for working within and against the colonial and the indigenous languages and cultures. This is an indeterminate space which has been described by Homi Bhabha(1994) as "Third Space" or the hybrid space.

Bhabha (1994) makes the “third space” a precondition for the “articulation of cultural difference.” According to Bhabha, this space which accompanies the “assimilation of contraries, creates [an] occult instability which presages powerful cultural changes” (p. 38). I am interested in the space “in between,” for in Bhabha’s view, “it carries the burden of the meaning of culture” (p. 38). It is the space of emergence of newness.

In Chapter 3 of this dissertation I will illustrate hybridization as a way of negotiating incommensurabilities, contraries and ambivalences. By using theatre, I will illustrate the ways in which colonized peoples mix English and their own indigenous languages as a way of making sense of the paradoxes of using English and Ndebele. The hybrid space allows colonised people to enter into the language they are estranged from and to articulate their identities without inscribing their own invisibilities. In other words, it allows them to move back and forth into English with ease or dis-ease and on their own terms. This illustration engages with the “cultural and conceptual prison house” problem Ngugi raises in his discussion.

But before I engage with the actual plays, I contextualise the form of theatre I use in my analysis. Amakhosi plays are hybridised forms. And as such, they lend themselves to the study of hybridisation.

CHAPTER 2

Theatre, Language, Culture and Identity

In short, theatre signals for me a kind of paradigm shift away from the purely textual toward the performative, the evanescent, the non discursive, the collaborative. It [can enable] playwright and audiences to confront dilemmas and situations that are “good to think” in powerfully engaging modes quite different from conventional academic prose.

— Dorinne Kondo (1995, p. 51)

Because theatre is so much a part of people’s lives, even the colonial onslaught on culture through education or Christianity did not manage to eliminate these theatre forms. They have, in most cases, only been modified in response to socio-economic changes.

— Penina Muhando Malama (1991, p. 31)

When I set out to explore the ways in which languages intersect in Zimbabwe, and the way in which Zimbabwean postcolonial identities are shaped at the intersection of the colonial language and indigenous language(s) in postcolonial Zimbabwe, I was not deliberately searching for theatre. Theatre found me. In 1995 while in Zimbabwe, I was invited to one of Amakhosi theatre plays, Dabulap. The play captivated me in its engagement with

multiple languages. Its songs and dances were animating; its issues topical. The play portrays people who are attempting to come to terms with postcolonial realities. Dabulap deals with post-independence disillusionment. In the play, ordinary citizens challenge the meaning of independence by dramatizing the pathos of post-independence. Independence is caricatured as a sham—an empty and meaningless act. The play invites the audience to reinterpret independence in the present context of post-independence. The play evokes some of these questions: What does independence mean when it does not lead to qualitative changes in people's lives? What does it mean to fight for independence and not be rewarded? The lives of ordinary people in independent Zimbabwe are depicted as not better off, socially, economically and politically, than in colonial days. Fanon (1963) examines the contradictions of independence in his *Wretched of the Earth*. He speaks of the reproduction of colonial structures in postcolonial societies. In addition, he suggests that decolonisation does not mark the end of colonialism. He defines decolonisation as a process—a continual project of resistance struggles that goes on even after independence. A Fanonian reading of Dabulap, renders the play a project of decolonisation.

Dabulap presents people struggling to make sense of their colonised experiences and postcolonial realities. This play shows that post-independence does not mark a clear rupture from past oppressions nor a break from colonial languages and practices. The postcolonial experience involves the complex task of inhabiting the vision of the promise of freedom and liberty while also experiencing a sense or shadow of colonial oppression. The postcolonial attempt to assert freedom from colonialism is made complex by the fact that colonial structures are so deeply entrenched in colonised nations and have become part of the postcolonial subjectivity. The

struggle to come to terms with this complexity is registered at several levels in Amakhosi plays. The conflict is registered in the play's incorporation of multiple languages and experiences in self-expression. Multiplicity in the play not only suggests that colonised subjectivity is multiply determined, but it suggests that negotiating a sense of self within multiplicity is a complex process. Amakhosi plays focus on the complexity of articulating and reconstructing identity in the colonial and indigenous language(s). The task involves using English in ways that do not reinscribe colonisation, that is, in ways that do not perpetrate and restage African recolonisation. As a colonial language, English evokes a certain ambivalence for colonised people. The plays engage with these problems through their appeal to hybridity. English is mixed with indigenous languages in complex and creative ways. The points where languages intersect mark for me not only the struggle to negotiate postcolonial identity but, also, signal sites of cultural production--points of emergence of cultural identity. As Homi Bhabha (1994) reminds us the state of emergency always mark emergence. I have situated the postcolonial formation in Zimbabwe within the context of cultural production, as one site of a contemporary "state of emergency." The state of emergency for me is symbolised by the struggle for definition. I will argue in the analysis of the plays(Chapter 3) that the state of emergency is a locus of newness and a primary site for the emergence of new cultural identities. Amakhosi theatre marks a site of cultural production that allows for the exploration of powerful articulation of complex postcolonial subjectivity and emergent identities.

I explore Amakhosi theatre as a site of cultural production--that is, as a location where culture is constantly being formed or fabricated. As cultural production, Amakhosi is implicated in the way in which identity and culture are being interpreted and re-interpreted. As cultural production, Amakhosi is

also significant as a location for studying the process of decolonisation. Besides being a location for exploring cultural identity formation, Amakhosi became, for me, a space to examine my own identity formation. I find myself asking the question Dorinne Kondo (1995) asks:

Theatre specifically has come to possess me-not film, not visual art, not poetry or novels-though I also love these genres and though theatre does not exclude any of them. What, then, is the genealogy of that joy, pleasure, and excitement, and how did theatre “choose me” as a subject of investigation and co-creation? (in Behar and Gordon, 1995, p. 49)

It is my view that how I choose theatre as a subject of investigation is as important as how theatre chooses me as a subject of investigation. We do not just investigate theatre, theatre interrogates us in the process. My engagement with theatre became for me, a process of self-revelation, self-understanding and self-interpretation. Instead of being read by the world, I began to read myself. It is in this sense that I consider engaging with theatre as a form of personal inquiry. The theatre forced me to come to terms with my own colonised identity and thus to confront my historically negotiated identity. By interrogating my past experiences and previous conditionings, theatre altered both my present and projected experiences.

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1990) suggests that “when we interpret the artwork, we interpret ourselves; and as the work comes into interpretation, so we come to be also” (97-98). And, as well, theatre asked me to engage in an important process of re-interpretation of my understanding of the historical past. Drawing on Gadamer (1976), who locates aesthetic consciousness not in the mind but in “the relational aspects of our existence in the world” (p. 39), Dennis Sumara (1996) writes that the significance of literary fictions is more

in what it reveals about us than what it says about itself. The locus of my engagement with my history and the consequent re-invention of my perspective cannot be located in the plays of Amakhosi, as such, but in the process of my engagement with the plays. The locus of audience engagement with the plays is configured as relational. Gadamer (1990) and others have discussed the ways in which spectators are changed or re-invented in this relational configuration. Jacques Derrida (1992) warns that the re-invention of the reader or spectator (in the case of theatre), is not to be understood as a “natural” phenomenon. In Derrida’s view, re-invention depends on reader’s or spectator’s “willingness to countersign” (p. 74). The reader/spectator, needs to agree to become a part of this process of self-interpretation (Sumara, 1996, p. 33).

One of the many things that attracted me to Amakhosi is their use of language. The plays I watched, Dabulap, Stitsha and The Members, were all performed in a mixture of English, Ndebele, and, occasionally, Shona. I was interested in the way language, identity and culture are negotiated in the plays. I believe that exploring how languages work together or against each other, in Amakhosi, allows for the exploration of the formation of new subjectivities, specifically postcolonial identity formation.

My investigation of postcolonial cultural identity is not limited to language. I understand that cultural identity is formed at the confluence of several axes which also include performative dimensions of human existence. To that end, I decided to explore the ways in which African expressive forms such as songs and dances are used in the articulation of Zimbabwean cultural identity. Public use of African expressive forms in the postcolonial period can be read as a political statement, part of the decolonisation process. The marginalisation through colonialism of African

expressive forms, such as songs and dances, led to their general devaluation. For example, African languages and expressive forms did not feature very much in the school curriculum, except when they were denigrated as savage and simplistic. The Rhodesian colonial government further entrenched the suppression of African cultural forms by excluding them from public and official domains, such as education, politics and economics. However, as Penina Malama (1991) observes, these onslaughts did not completely eliminate African cultural forms. African forms thrived on the margins of officialdom represented by colonialism. And, as Bakhtin (1984) points out, that which is on the margins is potentially subversive.

In Chapter 4 of this dissertation I will illustrate the ways in which African expressive forms are resituated in public spaces and utilized for their subversive potential. Colonialism created superficial divisions of labour between African cultural forms and Western cultural forms. English and western expressive forms were associated with formality and education while African forms were meant to signal the informal and inconsequential aspects of African life. The colonial government endeavoured to keep this separation and diametric opposition between the two. It is my view that in spite of colonial attempts to separate the African and the colonial, the two were never binarily opposed, rather they impacted each other. Paul Gilroy (1995) explains the ways in which the dominant enslaving culture was shaped by the dominated cultures. Despite its tendency to assert difference, the dominant culture was impacted by the dominated culture. Gilroy writes:

The relatively simple understanding of cultural differences that supplied the Manichean cornerstones of the colonial world gave way gradually to an infinitely shaded, protean and unquiet system of differentiation and unequal cultural exchanges that might warrant the

term post-colonial (in Cathrine Ugwu, 1995, p. 14)

In its mixture of English with Ndebele and African songs and dances, Amakhosi creates a performative space in which we can begin to examine the way languages and cultures contest and impact each other. Admittedly, colonialism had a negative impact on African languages and cultural forms, in the sense that it led to self hatred on the part of Africans. It led to a situation where Africans began to look down on their own languages and cultures. However, as Malama (1991) has pointed out, African languages and culture remain a significant part of African life. Amakhosi illustrates African resiliency in the face of colonisation and Westernisation. Amakhosi demonstrates African agency in which Africans are not passive recipients of western culture. The resistance is registered through the adaptation and transformation of western languages and culture, for African purposes. This makes Amakhosi a powerful statement of empowerment and cultural affirmation.

In its celebration of African performance styles, African energy, rhythm and spirit Amakhosi represents for me, as a spectator, a validation of African culture and identity. It marks not only the recovery of African cultural forms, but signals a re-interpretation of African cultural expressive forms in a new setting and time. Utilization of African cultural forms by Amakhosi also allows for a re-reading and re-interpretation of history from the colonised people's perspective. Amakhosi plays allowed me to re-engage with my own cultural and colonial history. Because of my colonial education and my "Westernisation," I did not comfortably relate with those aspects of my culture which were African. I suppressed those aspects in favour of my western orientation. Amakhosi allowed me to engage with those aspects of

my culture I considered primitive.

Kondo (1995) identifies theatre as a location for empowerment. She writes:

Cultural production in any register, for those of us “on the margins” is a process of representing our emergent, always historically mediated identities, creating a space for us to “write our faces.” (p. 49)

Like so many colonised peoples, black Zimbabweans were generally erased from the domains of cultural representation. When Africans were depicted in theatre and other realms of cultural representation they were stereotyped. Kondo suggests that this (mis)representation constitutes “symbolic violence,” and affects the way marginalised people are treated and the way they view themselves. Fanon (1967) makes reference to the workings of colonial representation in the subjectification of the colonised and the internalisation of self hatred.

According to Boal (1995), theatre is a representation of ourselves in the world. We only exist to the extent that we represent our experiences. Representation constructs and validates our experience. Theatre can be read as a site for the colonisation of others. At the same time, theatre becomes vital to the representation of underrepresented groups—a location for decolonisation. The power of representation in Zimbabwe was rarely situated within the respective community itself. Before independence blacks were denied the political voice to represent themselves. In theatre blacks appeared only as constructions of white people. Institutionalised theatrical forms served to regulate black subject formation. Part of the control involved the subjection of colonised peoples to western forms of theatre that were often unrelated to their contextual realities. The imposition of western forms of art

demands the subject's internalisation of the "superiority" of the coloniser and the "inferiority" of the colonised. Institutionalised theatre functioned to legitimise or justify the colonial project. When blacks appeared in theatre, they were objectified and presented as primitive and savage beings in need of civilising. African images served also to perpetuate colonial myths about blacks. Blacks were portrayed as stupid, and as a happy and contented lot.

As well, blacks did not have the financial support to produce classical theatre or theatre that was promoted in the schools. Because of this they resorted to a kind of theatre that is not expensive--the kind of theatre associated with African cultural traditions. This theatre relies on the resources of the body, that is, it uses the most immediate and inexpensive resources. This theatre was concerned with immediate issues, such as oppression. hooks (1995b) suggests that this kind of theatre is crucial for the decolonisation project because it did not require the material resources required by other art forms. The voice, the dances and songs are readily available and are powerful avenues for resistance. In Amakhosi the body is a significant location for resistance. Since the body is a visible sign of oppression and denigration, it becomes a central feature in the decolonisation process. Amakhosi is theatre by ordinary citizens, who do not have adequate material or financial resources, but do have physical and mental resources.

In their bold celebration of African languages, culture and identity Amakhosi is engaged in the repositioning of denigrated African cultural forms back into public space. Because theatre takes up public space and is self-referential it draws attention not only to itself but to the issues being presented. In his *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Augusto Boal (1979) identifies the self-referential aspect of the stage as significant for the articulation and exploration of socio-cultural and political issues. Boal distinguishes both the

literal and the metaphorical space which he calls aesthetic space as significant for the creation of the gaze.

According to Boal (1979), the gaze is what creates the stage. Space is created subjectively by the gaze of the spectators-witnesses present or imagined inside a space which already existed physically, in three dimensions. The aesthetic space comes into being because the combined attention of a whole audience converges upon it. The stage draws or attracts, centripetally, like a black hole. Centripetal conjures up, for me, the Bakhtinian (1981) notion of centripetal tendencies in language. According to Bakhtin, centripetal forces represent the tendency to draw to the centre or to unify. Bakhtin compares centripetal energy with centrifugal forces which work towards dispersion. Bakhtin's notion of centripetal forces allows us to conceptualise the unifying aspects of the stage. By attracting audience gaze, the stage potentially unifies the audience. The force of the attraction is aided by the very structure of theatres and the positioning of stages, which oblige the spectators all to look in the same direction. The stage becomes potentially, a crucial location for collective practice through its ability to pull towards itself, the stage invites the spectators into a shared interaction with the theatre. Sumara's (1996) discussion of the significance of "commonplace locations" in hermeneutic interpretation, is helpful in understanding the stage as a significant "mediating place for human interrelations and interpretations" (p. 132).

The stage has the potential to draw people from diverse linguistic, cultural and racial backgrounds. The stage becomes crucial in facilitating communal interpretation in a country that is engaged in negotiating difference and multiplicity. The stage opens up a space for potential interaction and interrelationships. In his exploration of the hermeneutical

value of public reading, Sumara identifies the commonplace location as a "space opened up by the relations among readers" (p. 132). And, further, drawing on Gadamer's (1976) notion of hermeneutical conversation, Sumara writes that "good hermeneutic inquiry emerges when speakers forget themselves and attend to the topic of conversation" (p. 126). The experience of public readings with the added value of sharing responses becomes in Sumara's view "a commonplace location for inquiry into ourselves and our learned ways of perceiving and interpreting. . . what we might call boundaries between us" (p. 133). The commonplace location has the potential of breaking down boundaries through its insistence for collectivity. Such a reading of commonplace location has useful applications for understanding theatre as a location for collective practice. While there is not much opportunity for sharing understandings or responses to the play while it is going on, in contemporary theatre, the stage is useful in allowing for an understanding of the contingency of the situation of the spectators at a particular moment in time. This understanding is helpful in beginning to interpret shared histories. The commonplace location potentially allows for commitment and responsibility. Sumara writes that commitment to one another in public readings, "depended upon knowing certain things about the text we were reading" (p. 141). Even though we cannot guarantee that knowledge leads to commitment to one another, we can certainly say that knowledge raises awareness of our contingency at a particular place and time.

In addition to the stage's potential to create commonplace locations, the stage has the capacity to magnify things, as under a powerful microscope. The stage magnifies things by bringing them closer to our view and mind. What happened yesterday or a long time ago is brought closer to today and what is far from here, is brought to here and now. The stage brings near that which

has been lost in the mists of time, and that which had deserted memory or fled into the unconscious for our attention and reinterpretation. The stage has the capacity to make everything acquire new dimensions. In Amakhosi, the stage becomes a location for the recollection and reenactment of the past, the present, and future. Stories about ancient kings and the liberation struggle, for example, gather new dimensions on stage. The audience is forced to relive the past in their imagination.

The stage makes it difficult or almost impossible to hide. All gestures, all words spoken there, become larger, clearer, more emphatic. Things brought closer and made larger can be better observed. What drew me to Amakhosi is that they were articulating issues that could not be ordinarily addressed, because the issues were sensitive and almost inarticulable in everyday language.

Wolfgang Iser (1993) suggests that the stage makes what is inaccessible accessible. According to him, what is staged is the appearance of something that cannot be present. He adds that what can never become present, and what excludes cognition and knowledge and is beyond experience, can only enter consciousness through representation. For example, music, allows us to articulate feelings that may be inarticulatable. For Boal, the platform or stage is a "place for representation." The capacity for the stage to present objects far away close for scrutiny and exposure, makes theatre a suitable place to highlight pertinent issues. Amakhosi brings to the surface issues that are important but were suppressed or culturally sanctioned. Amakhosi breaks the silence by presenting the suppressed and repressed aspects of culture and tradition. Dabulap and The Members, present a bold political critique that could lend them in jail. Amakhosi plays expose the hidden political corruption, nepotism, tribalism, and exploitation of workers. Stitsha, for

example, exposes discrimination against women and their silencing by staging the issues and by allowing women to speak for themselves. Stitsha brings traditional views about women and children to the forefront and forces spectators to engage with them.

While the stage allows for disclosure, it permits concealment or hiding. The notion of masking is helpful in understanding the significance of hiding in theatre. Masking, by its dependence on appearances, potentially allows for transgression of social and political realities. Masking allows social commentary to be made. Bakhtin's (1984) historical poetics on carnival offers a lens through which to examine the role of masking in destabilizing cultural norms, and dissolving hierarchies and boundaries and creating spaces for the unofficial or the anti-official to mock or subvert the social order. The play, The Members, is an expose of political corruption in Zimbabwe. But it is not safe to speak publicly against the government, so masking offers a convenient way of exposing corruption without actually implicating the subject who is corrupt. The focus is on what is being masked. In The Members there are several masking scenes. I will focus on just one scene of a political party rally. The rally, which is forerunner to parliamentary elections, is to be attended by the first secretary of the party. He delivers a speech during this political meeting; however, he does not appear in person, rather he is represented by a mask. The similarities between the voice and the manner of speech of the figure behind the mask and the President of Zimbabwe, are striking and revealing. The masked figure is also the secretary of the ruling party. The rhetorics are similar. The mask wears eye glasses, the President is also bespectacled. This scene parodies political rhetoric. Although there is no specific reference to the characters, the audience sees through this mask. Part of the joy of theatre for the audience is in the ability to fill in gaps.

Iser's (1989) remarks about what constitutes aesthetic response in literary engagement, are useful in understanding the spectator engagement with masks in theatre. Iser (1989) argues that the literary text depends on the active participation of the readers to be made meaningful. What constitutes aesthetic response, in Iser's view, is when readers are able to fill in during and after revealing the indeterminate spaces or gaps in a literary text. According to Iser (1989), indeterminacies in literary prose constitute "a vital link between text and reader. They are the switch that activates the reader into using his own ideas in order to fulfill the intentions of the text" (p. 28-29). Part of the success of the masking lies in the audience's capacity to see and to fill in the gaps by making interpretive connections with the real world. Spectators are engaged in an imaginative interpretive process or re-interpretation of their own situations. Masking facilitates this interpretive process by allowing the spectators to uncover or unmask the masked or the hidden.

Amakhosi Theatre

Amakhosi, a Bulawayo-based group was established in 1980. Amakhosi is a word from Ndebele which means the royals or the kings. Amakhosi did not begin as a theatre group, but first came together in 1980 as a karate club. Later that year, Amakhosi came into contact with the National Theatre Organization (NTO) of Zimbabwe, which was holding a theatre workshop in the same venue as Amakhosi. Although they (Amakhosi) were annoyed at what they interpreted to be an invasion of their space, they stayed and listened. Cont Mhlanga, the group director, admitted during an interview with me, in August, 1995, that while Amakhosi initially did not have an idea of what was going on in this workshop, the idea of theatre caught their attention when the workshop leader began to talk about theatre. That day was

the beginning of Amakhosi--an unplanned beginning.

The group was initially concerned with raising cultural awareness, especially among the youth. Amakhosi were concerned with what they perceived to be the gradual disappearance of African culture and the lack of interest in African culture among urban youths. In the face of rising unemployment rates, they hoped to occupy unemployed youth by engaging them in cultural production. But gradually, as the political climate deteriorated in Zimbabwe, the group became more focused also on socio-political issues. In the same interview, Mhlanga explained that Amakhosi is concerned with "social issues and everything that affects people."

One of the issues which affected the people of Bulawayo in the early years of political independence was the political situation in Matebeland province (the region which includes the city of Bulawayo and its outlying areas). Independence did not bring immediate peace among blacks, as was generally hoped. The two main political parties Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), which had collaborated in the armed struggle for independence, had to iron out political differences after independence. An attempt to forge political unity between the two parties saw a new name, Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU(PF)) being adopted by ZANU. This new name also distinguished ZANU from the discredited Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) of Ndabaningi Sithole. ZAPU, whose support is mostly distributed in Bulawayo and the surrounding areas, lost the first elections at independence to ZANU whose supporters are mostly in Harare, capital city of Zimbabwe, and almost all the Shona speaking provinces. After this electoral defeat, there was political instability which culminated in a political crisis commonly referred to as "Entumbane." Entumbane is a township west of the

city of Bulawayo where Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), the armed wing of ZAPU, and Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) were involved in several gun battles. After that, Bulawayo became a place of radical, oppositional politics. The Ndebele people felt short-changed—as all economic and cultural developments at that time were concentrated in Mashonaland (where most Shona people live).

The period between 1982-1987 represented a period of repression of the Ndebele people. Writing about this time, Preben Kaarsholm (1995) says, "In the period of silence, between 1982 and 1987 when ZAPU was repressed, Bulawayo became a centre for radical oppositional politics." In spite of this repression, this period was also associated with a resurgence of protest theatre. Kaarsholm says that during that period of silence Bulawayo also developed or reasserted its own specific cultural traditions. But because of the difficulties and dangers of engaging in open politics, cultural articulation gained a special significance. The dances that had been used during the rebellion against white settlers resurfaced. Toyitoyi, a defiance dance used in the ZIPRA camps and in South Africa to symbolize discontent and anger with the racists governments of Rhodesia and South Africa, is used in Dabulap one of Amakhosi plays, to signal resistance.

Kaarsholm suggests that while theatre groups mushroomed all over Zimbabwe following independence, they were particularly fearless in Bulawayo. Amakhosi and other theatre groups such as Iluba Elimnyama, Black Meridian began to engage in radical politics. In his view, the groups seemed to be building the potential for a new political culture, for the articulation of democratic initiatives from below.

Amakhosi plays today contain messages of resistance and self-assertion. They are concerned with challenging the political status quo. They serve as

social commentary exposing undemocratic political corruption and various kinds of discrimination and inequities in postcolonial Zimbabwe. Amakhosi also addresses questions about racial tensions in Zimbabwe. Blacks feel marginalised in an economic system which is still run by a minority group of whites. Blacks are asking for land which is still largely owned by white farmers. The government is trying to balance this injustice through indigenisation programmes. In business, for example, indigenisation involves giving priority to blacks rather than the white population. In this scheme the government stipulates that the blacks should have priority in the buying of multinational corporate companies. But indigenisation has not benefited the ordinary people. It has benefited only a few rich black people and government officials who are able to buy shares in multinational companies. The play, The Members engages in an attack on the notion of black indigenisation. It exposes indigenisation in Zimbabwe as serving only rich ministers and their relatives. Amakhosi dramatises the failure of these half-heated and self-centred efforts. In Amakhosi indigenisation efforts read like political rhetoric. Amakhosi shows the hypocrisy of political ministers who say one thing and do another thing. As well, it shows the paradoxical spaces created by the intersection of class, ethnicity, and gender.

Amakhosi incorporate many media of expression in their theatre. They use a mixture of mime, dialogue, dance and song. Commenting on the style of mixing music, dance, song, poetry and narration, Mhlanga (1995) said, "Because that is what African theatre is all about, it is about mixing poetry, music and dance--they are all expressions, they say a lot about our culture". He added that part of the group's agenda is to deal with cultural issues, questions of history, cultural identity--"who are we, where do we come from, what do we want, why are we in this situation, how do we get where we

want?" (ibid.).

Amakhosi theatre is commonly characterised as township theatre. Township theatre, as its name implies, is theatre by and for township people. The theatre focuses on issues that affect township people. Township theatre represents people taking ownership of means of representation. Controlling theatre allows the people to dramatise their own plight, and find a voice in which to frame ideas, feelings and protests.

Boal (1979) discusses the empowering aspects of this kind of theatre. He writes, "The theatre is a weapon, and it is the people who should wield it" (p. 122). Boal contrasts this kind of theatre with Aristotelian theatre which tends to create a passive audience. He writes, "Aristotle proposes a poetics in which the spectator delegates power to the dramatic character so that the latter may act and think for him" (p. 122). Boal proposes a theatre which transforms spectators into active agents in the dramatic action. Hence he coins the term spectators, to suggest the inter (active) dynamic between actors and spectators.

Amakhosi theatre is sometimes referred to as popular theatre. Discussions of popular theatre in Africa reveal a multiplicity of definitions of popular culture. It is referred to as Theatre for Development (TFD), Theatre for Integrated Development (TIDE), Theatre for Integrated Rural Development (THIRD), Community Theatre (CT) and Community Theatre for Integrated Rural Development (CTHIRD). But most African theatre scholars (Abah, 1994; Mda, 1993; Malama, 1991) are agreed that these various designations all refer to the same practice.

Abah (1994) defines popular theatre as "the new theatre which engages in intervention and action, which declares which side it is on." (p. 82). Zakes Mda's conception of popular theatre includes performances that are aimed at the whole community, not just those who are educated. It includes local

people as performers. It is usually performed free of charge and in public spaces. It uses local languages and deals with local problems and situations (1979). Penina M. Malama, whose views of theatre are informed by Marxism, regards popular theatre as the employment of theatrical expressions at a grassroots level to research and analyse development problems and to create critical awareness and potential for action to solve those problems. In addition, she views popular theatre as a type of theatre relevant to people's lives and struggles as opposed to theatre for entertainment or theatre that is removed from people's reality. All these definitions of popular theatre emphasize people's involvement, action, change or transformation. In other words, it presents theatre as political.

Boal presents a revolutionary view of theatre practice that is antithetical to Aristotle's apolitical vision of theatre. Boal argues—contrary to Aristotle's claim that poetry and theatre have nothing to do with politics—that human activity, particularly the arts are political. He shows how, in spite of Aristotle's claim about the independence of poetry (lyric, epic, and dramatic) in relation to politics, Aristotle's vision “constructs the first, extremely powerful poetic-political system for intimidation of the spectator, for elimination of the “bad” or illegal tendencies of the audience” (p. xiv).

Bertolt Brecht (1964) also conceptualises theatre as political. While his vision of theatre is different from Boal's, they nevertheless share the concept of a political theatre. In Boal's view, Brecht (in Boal, 1979) objectifies the spectator. Brecht's spectator is not free to make own choices, but is subject to social forces. However, like Boal, Brecht believes in a transformational theatre. Unlike Aristotle, who aspires for a quiet somnolence at the end of the production, Brecht wants the theatrical spectacle to be the beginning of action: the equilibrium should be sought by transforming society, and not by purging

the individual of his demands and needs (Brecht, quoted in Boal, 1979, p. 106). Brecht distinguishes his Marxist theatre, which demands decisions, from Aristotelian-based theatre, which only arouses feelings (p. 106). For Brecht “the present-day world can only be described to present-day people if described *as capable of transformation*” (in Boal, 1979, p. 112).

Amakhosi theatre is a cultural form through which the issues and experiences of contemporary society are expressed and reinterpreted. The plays are characterised by mixed texts and influences from a variety of inspirations. The plays rework and integrate traditional performance styles and genres into new settings. They adapt different traditions—for example, dialogue, a western tradition, and song, dance and other oral performances—based on African cultural traditions. This creates a hybrid which characterises popular theatre in Africa. Abah (1994) observes:

What is today known as Popular theatre in Africa is a hybrid practice encompassing dialogue drama, which is Western in orientation and origin, and indigenous performance forms, such as singing, drumming, dancing, puppetry and mime (p. 44)

Amakhosi is characterised by hybridity which includes a mixture of languages, cultural practices and performance styles. What does this hybridity mean for the audience of Amakhosi plays? Linguistic hybridity, for instance, has a notable effect on some of the audience. Cont (as he is commonly referred to) indicated to me that the strategy of mixing Ndebele and English was deliberate. When I asked him whether the use of Ndebele would not exclude English speakers who attend Amakhosi performances, Cont said that it was a deliberate effort to exclude some and to include others. This shows the actors' relationship to the audience: to the audience that understands

Ndebele and to the audience which does not. When the actors use Ndebele, they implicate the addressee (those who understand Ndebele) in the content of the discourse, creating an intimacy and an expression of solidarity, at the same time marking a difference from non-speakers of Ndebele. The use of Ndebele sharpens the dichotomy between the speakers of Ndebele and English, thus potentially making the audience aware of the power of a collective force towards a shared goal.

A deliberate effort to exclude through language is a form of resistance to the easy decoding of cultural information. Jokes, fragments of oral epic, proverbs cannot be deciphered without background knowledge. The person who understands English only is excluded from the larger meaning of the play. Opportunities to express feelings through direct conversation with audience interrupts the appropriation process. It suggests, in other words, that this is a shared responsibility. It is a redistribution of new found cultural capital.

The use of Shona in the plays almost always produces a satirical effect. This is because of the political and historical division between Shonas and Ndebeles in Zimbabwe. (I say in Zimbabwe, because Ndebele people are also found in South Africa.) The Ndebeles feel that the government is out to promote Shona people. The use of Shona is a parody of government policies that are in favour of Shona people. In Dabulap, for example, the stupid policeman is Shona speaking. In The Members, the political slogans are in Shona and the display dances (dances for party officials) are Shona. The use of Shona in a predominately Ndebele/English text also de-homogenises African identity and essentialisation. The use of Shona puts into question purist notions of African identity, culture and language as homogenous.

The engagement with issues of tribalism is commendable, but it

perpetuates stereotypes in its representations of a group of people. I see this as problematic because it may alienate people for whom this cultural and political production is also meant. Alienation of audiences for whom theatre is targeted raises questions of the risk and accountability in theatre. Kondo (1995) discusses risk and accountability in introducing the issues of cross-racial identification and coalition that she encountered in writing her play. She distinguishes the politics of accountability in art forms and in academic forms. She argues that they each require a different kind of authority and that the audience has a different stake in their observations of the two genres. She explains:

[M]ost theatre presumes no cult of expertise or arcane jargon, no credentials necessary to respond and evaluate. Moreover, its impact can occur on multiple levels, producing a more visceral impact than does textual prose and hence eliciting greater intellectual/emotional response. (in Behar and Gordon, 1995, p. 62)

Kondo suggests that the dynamics of the politics of accountability in theatre make it possible for everyone to be affected by theatre and empowered to respond. Theatrical practices which alienate and exclude some groups, may in fact, be disempowering. While disempowerment of powerful groups and empowerment of oppressed groups is justifiable, at times, I remain skeptical of shifts or transfer of power which tend to reverse the order of oppression (from one group to another). The danger is that the practice of empowering the powerless or oppressed, can generate a new hegemony over time. The power structures are only reversed and repeated. And so, while hybridisation or introduction of cross-cultural, cross-racial and cross-linguistic identification may help in the dehegemonising and resituating African

identity and in empowering oppressed groups, hybridisation may be potentially counter-productive if it creates reverse oppression.

Theatre is a suitable location to examine people struggling with many languages and cultures and people attempting to make sense of their colonised identities. What makes theatre a particularly appropriate location to study these issues is that “theatre is so much a part of peoples’ lives” (Malama, 1991, p. 31). Because of its collaborative nature, theatre, according to Kondo (1995) enables “audiences to confront dilemmas and situations that are ‘good to think’ in powerfully engaging modes quite different from conventional academic prose” (Kondo, in Behar and Gordon, 1995, p. 51).

I have examined theatre as a location for resistance. I have suggested that Amakhosi theatre is used as space for challenging the status quo. Amakhosi can be interpreted as a location for resistance and transformation and for asserting African cultural traditions. In their celebration of African song and dance, Amakhosi plays promote African cultural expression. Amakhosi functions both as a location for counter hegemony and as a collecting place for tradition. These contradictions can be understood in the context of Amakhosi work as a political project. The dilemma for Amakhosi is how to reassert marginalised forms without reCanonising them. Although the past is crucial in political struggles, the past needs to be invoked in a way that avoids sentimentalisation and hegemony. Interpretation of the past, as I suggest in Chapter 4, is significant for counterhegemonic struggle. In Amakhosi plays, the past is invoked for resistance purposes. In their appeal to the past, Amakhosi avoid the reCanonisation and hegemonising these forms by re-interpreting and transforming them for present realities. Amakhosi theatre is site for re-interpretation of the past and for resistance to westernisation and neo-colonialism.

In Chapter 3 of this dissertation I will explore Amakhosi as a location for resistance and for cultural production. I illustrate the way in which English is interrogated and used simultaneously. I also explore the way in which the hegemony of the African forms of expression are constantly interrupted by English. This interruption marks Amakhosi as a location that refuses monologic discourse. Rather, Amakhosi is involved in re-interpreting and re-defining forms of speech.

CHAPTER 3

Making Identity in Hybrid Spaces

In border zones, all of our academic preconceptions about cultural, linguistic, or stylistic norms are constantly being put to the test by creative practices that make visible and set off processes of adaptation, appropriation, and contestation that govern the construction of identity in colonial and postcolonial contexts.

— Françoise Lionnet (1995, p.111)

The decolonization becomes complete with palava sauce, an additional pidginisation that incorporates a ritualistic component as a socioreligious means of coping with exacerbating conditions.

— Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi (1996, p. 105)

The current crisis of representation of colonized peoples needs to be redressed. To this end, colonial systems of representation based on orientalizing and othering of colonized peoples must be examined, critiqued, and overturned. When colonized peoples take charge of systems of representation, they challenge colonial systems of representation. Having control over systems of representation constitutes reclamation and empowerment, a point made by black feminist, Pratibha Parmar (1990). She

writes:

It is in representing elements of the 'self,' which are considered 'other' by dominant systems of representation that an act of reclamation, empowerment and self-definition occurs. (p. 116)

As I have already mentioned, the challenge for colonized peoples engaged in projects of reclamation involves the articulation of elements of the "self" or identities in colonial languages, languages which may inscribe the colonised's own invisibilities and misnaming. In addition, and most important for me, the challenge entails articulating a sense of self in one's colonial and indigenous language(s).

In this chapter, I analyse hybridisation/language mixing in Amakhosi plays as a strategy which colonised peoples use to cope with the language of colonisation and their own indigenous language(s). Using Amakhosi plays I demonstrate the way colonised peoples challenge English even in the using of it. I examine the hybrid space or "third space" in Amakhosi plays as part of a complex and ambivalent response to English and associated Westernisation. The hybrid space in Amakhosi plays is a location for resisting colonialism, and a place marking cultural production and cultural evolution. But it is also a place that marks the internalisation of the Western language and values--a place of accommodation or fusion. In other words, it is an intersection of difference and sameness.

Bakhtin's (1981) concept of hybridisation as politicised and contestatory is useful for examining the complexity of the colonised's relationship with the colonial language and indigenous language(s). Bakhtin's distinction between conscious and unconscious hybridity is particularly useful for theorising the co-existence of cultural fusion/change and resistance. I will

also make reference to postcolonial uses of hybridity in projects of subversion. Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi's (1996) examination of the notion of palaver/palava is useful for conceptualising hybridity in Amakhosi plays as both a site for contestation and communion. In addition, I will draw on some aspects of Bakhtinian carnivalesque, Jacques Derrida's theory of supplementarity and Julia Kristeva's concept of the abject to analyse the way in which Ndebele functions to disrupt the English discourse in Amakhosi plays. Bakhtin, Derrida, and Kristeva's work has been central not just in poststructural work in language, but also in postcolonial theoretical discussions of language and identity.

Before I begin to analyse hybridity in Amakhosi plays, I must reiterate that my analysis of hybridity is underlined with a tacit acknowledgement of hybridity as a concept that may, in fact conceal asymmetrical power relations. Also, this dissertation does not embrace a hybridity that promotes a form of tolerance that leaves the status quo unchanged when the margins are merely drawn into the centre and differences are fused into homogeneity. In other words, I do not view hybridity as necessarily a leveling of material, economic, or even racial unevenness. For me, hybridity is not suggestive of a neat resolution of difference. Rather, hybridity marks constant negotiation, challenge and struggle within relationships marked by asymmetrical power relations. Hybridity symbolises the struggle to subvert, to change, the dominant language, English. The notion of hybridity I appeal to here remains grounded in the material and historical conditions that bring it about in the first place. The hybridity that ensues from the colonial encounter with English does not just mark a fusion of difference, it marks a location of survival. It is a place of coming to terms with and questioning imposed conditions. Hybridity in this sense is not simply assimilation of western

culture but an interrogation of it. Hybridity is conceptualised as a threshold zone--a zone of change. Hybridity suggests the survival of indigenous language and cultural aspects in its encounter with colonialism and Westernisation.

The Languages of Amakhosi

Amakhosi plays are performed in three versions: English, Ndebele and “Ndenglish,” a mixture of English and Ndebele. During the interview, Cont Mhlanga, the director of Amakhosi Theatre, stressed the importance of language, particularly Ndenglish. He stated that, “Ndenglish is the language for today whether you like it or not.” It is the language of urban townships of Bulawayo. Below I present a few examples of Ndenglish with English translations.

Please ngicela ungifilele ama tax forms?

(Please can you help me do my tax forms?)

Kanti bantu what do you think you are doing?

(But what do you think you are doing?)

Okwakhatesi ngisabhizi, kodwa, I will be with you soon.

(I am still busy at this moment, but I will be with you soon.)

Please, uxolo bakithi, bengisebenza overtime today.

(Excuse me please, I was working overtime today.)

Mhlanga expressed his commitment to truth as far as language is concerned. Ndenglish is the language Bulawayo urban township peoples use to survive the demands of English and Ndebele. In my view, Ndenglish signifies resistance and compromise. People are not willing to give up

Ndebele for English, but neither are they willing to forego economic and social benefits associated with English. The orthography of the word Ndenglish is revealing. Having Ndenglish instead of Engndesh, for example, suggests attempts to prioritize Ndebele instead of English. Placing Nde before Eng is an attempt to draw attention and recognition to Ndebele. In this sense, then, Ndenglish is a form of resistance. Ndenglish challenges the position of English. It may also be understood as a form of linguistic appropriation where English is understood as a supplement rather than as the supplemented.

In the following section, I present a brief summary of selected/ illustrative plays as a way of contextualizing my discussion of the role of Ndebele in Amakhosi plays. I use the recorded versions of the plays in my examination. I also refer to written scripts. The discussion is informed, as well, by my having watched live performances of the plays I discuss here.

Dabulap

The play was written and directed by Cont Mhlanga in 1991. *Dabulap* gets its title from “Double up,” a slang word meaning to “jump” the border. The word “Dabulap” signals the hybridity of Amakhosi plays. The word announces a zone of confrontation, tension and struggle between English and Ndebele. The English phrase, “Double Up” is corrupted by an imposition of a Ndebele pronunciation, “Dabulapu.” Dabula in Ndebele means to tear apart. In a sense, the phrase “Double up” is torn away from its English context, and dragged into a Ndebele linguistic and cultural zone. The word Dabulap is shaped to assume a new profile and tone which is strategic. Together English and Ndebele form an alliance or frontline force against a corrupt government. For to dabulap, is to wage a political and economic war against postcolonial Zimbabwe. It is to braindrain postcolonial Zimbabwe. Bakhtin

(1981) writes how words break through their own circle of meaning to mix with alien others. He describes how words "harmonising with some of the elements in this environment and striking a dissonance with others, is able, in this dialogized process" (p. 277) are reshaped in stylistic profile and tone" (p. 277).

Inspired by the political and economic problems of the mid 1980s, the play presents the life of five men who take to street vending (selling goods on the streets) in order to make a living in hard times. Vending is a function of rising unemployment in Zimbabwe. Vending is only permitted in special circumstances, that is, with a valid licence for hawking. The sensitivity to illegal vending in Zimbabwe, especially in Bulawayo, testifies to the residue of colonial obsession with cleanliness. Poverty leads many to "illegal" vending. Police street patrols are set up to deal with the problem of illegal street vending.

The play Dabulap documents the life, hazards and dangers of "illegal" vending. The penalty for illegal vending is \$100 Zimbabwean dollars (which was about \$40 Canadian dollars when the play was written), or three months in jail. Life is not easy for these vendors who must constantly dodge the police. After a life characterized by running and by the threat of prison, the vendors in the play decide to "double up" to South Africa. (For some of these vendors, South Africa represents green pastures, economically, while for others it represents danger.) The play ends tragically with the death of one of the vendors, Xola, who is stabbed while working in South Africa. (South Africa turns out to be not a safe place.) The play ends with a picture showing the disillusionment of the vendors.

Stitsha

This play was written and directed by Cont Mhlanga in 1989. It gets its name from “to stitch up.” Stitsha , as the word implies, stitches many languages and themes together. In Stitsha the stitching together is signaled even in the title of the play. Stitching is an attempt to bring together different pieces of cloth. The “a” at the end of the word, and the “ts” in the middle, makes this otherwise English word, stitch, a Ndebele word, stitsha. English and Ndebele are stiched together to create a tapestry of languages and cultures. In this tapestry, Ndebele and English do not always sit well together. As I will illustrate, Ndebele and English constantly interrogate each other to produce what I will call a palava sauce.

The play deals with various issues: social, political and economic. It also deals with effects of colonialism in Zimbabwe. Colonialism brought about the idea of money and the related need to work in urban areas. The disruption of traditional family structures is attributed to colonial employment practices which relied on the separation of families. Colonialism created the conditions which forced men and women to leave their families in the villages and to look for work in towns. The play refers to the ensuing dislocation of families. As well, the play exposes patriarchy and sexism in Zimbabwe. Thuli, the only girl in this family, faces problems because of her sex. Thuli is denied certain opportunities only because she is a woman. She cannot be a producer; she can only be a secretary. She cannot choose her own partner; her father chooses a man for her. Thuli’s father and brother are domineering and are presented as the embodiment of patriarchy par excellence.

The main plot revolves around Thuli’s struggle to produce a music and dance performance, which she calls, Stitsha. Thuli defies her father,

brother and mother's expectations of her. The play ends with Thuli having stabbed her brother who has been a hindrance to her success throughout her life. Thuli is sent to prison. Other themes are interwoven into this main theme: the problem of unemployment, and the problem of poaching. The play is characterized by a juxtaposition of languages and perspectives in union and tension. For example, cultural traditions are juxtaposed with western traditions and Ndebele is set against English.

The Members

The Members takes its title from Member of Parliament. The play documents the failures of Mr. Mujaji as a Member of parliament. A Mamba in Shona and Ndebele is often used sarcastically to refer to men with an air of self-importance. The title needs to be understood both in its English context and in its vernacular insinuations. This play was written and produced by Cont Mhlanga in 1995. It is social commentary on the political system of Zimbabwe. It takes on corruption, inefficiency and mismanagement in government, and also touches on sex discrimination. The play takes a critical look at members of parliament who, when elected into office, forget about the constituencies they represent. The Members, just like the other plays, is characterized by a mixture of Ndebele and English, a mixture of themes; traditional songs with modern songs, traditional dress with modern dress, and the urban with the rural. The Members is marked by tension between the Western and the indigenous elements of Zimbabwean cultural and social life.

Amakhosi: A Carnival of Cultures

Amakhosi plays are characterized by mixing at many levels. A carnivalisue

fusion of dialogue, music, dance and narrative characterises Amakhosi plays. For example, Dabulap begins with a song, “Maye sathwala kanzima, Oh we are having such a hard life,” which is followed by a traditional dance. The dance is followed by a dialogue with the police. That dialogue is followed by another dance and song. A pattern of song, dance, dialogue, narrative, song, dance and dialogue is repeated throughout the play. Mixing is at several levels in Amakhosi plays. There is also a mixing of time and places.

In Dabulap , for example, we move from the past to the present. One of the characters, Boyce, narrates his predicament by relating incidents that stretch back to the liberation struggle to his present hardships:

Boyce: Ya, sisi, we can't get decent employment. As it is my wife is pregnant. And we are lodging in Pumula, my mother is very sick. My two sisters need school fees, My father became a war victim. I am the bread winner. Phela sisi lapha akusakhulunywa. Kuyayilahla sibili.

The play moves from Zimbabwe to South Africa. Boyce and Mafraya consider going to South Africa to join Xola, one of their friends who has “jumped” the border to South Africa:

Boyce: But these years, it's worse than ever, majida. I think something is wrong in this country.

Mafraya: For me it's clear guys. Let's go to South Africa. Don't you remember Xola's promises, nice job, nice house, and nice everything. Let's go to South Africa.

Stitsha is also characterized by various kinds of mixing. There is a

mixture of song, dance, stories and dialogue. The dances range from traditional dance forms, such as the Shangani dances, to modern styles, such as pansula. Shangani dance is a warrior like dance that has been used by the Shangani people for generations. Pansula is a township dance, that originated in South Africa. The dance is characterised by sophisticated foot work. There is also a mixture of stories—stories which shift consciousness from the past and to the present. The stories are also characterised by shifting of place—from the urban to the rural and from past traditions to present traditions. The need to recover and preserve Ndebele traditions is a strong theme in this play. In the play, Mbazo, one of the members of Thuli's production, Stitsha, enlists Thuli's mother to teach them traditional dances--dances which are on the verge of extinction. The recovery of past traditions form the basis from which an oppositions to the dominant construction of Zimbabwean reality by indigenous Zimbabweans can be taken.

The following excerpt from Stitsha illustrates shifting. The extract presents Thuli discussing her desire to to write and produce a story, *uStitsha*.

Baba: What do you want to write about?

Thuli: I'm writing my family story, Baba, *u Stitsha*.

Baba: What about us, Thuli? We are not a rich family, we are not a rare family, we are not a newsworthy family, we do not deserve a story, we are not a corrupt family, angitsho naka Thuli?

Nina: Sibili Baba, let's hear what uThuli has to say.

Thuli: What is happening now in this house is a story, Baba (interruption from Baba). ...

Baba: Comeon, Thuli, Tshayi' umphini ekhanda. What do you

want to produce? We know a lot about this family. We can help you. Ehe, ehe, ehe.

Thuli: The first act baba lo mama is about my mother here.

Baba: What about her?

Thuli: How money has torn a beloved from her. She is living 300 km away in the countryside. While you, Baba, is living somewhere in town trying to make money, not enough of it either.

Baba: UThuli madoda. These things are too serious mani. You can't do anything about it. Ahaaaa.

Nina: Thuli my child, you talk as if you know how much it burns and pains me ngane yami. Your father umbona enje can only manage to come once a month just for twenty-four hours nje kuphela.

Thuli: Yes, Mama, yet before the white man brought money to the village ... (Baba interrupts)

Baba: Ehe ehe Thuli, did I hear you say white man?

Thuli: Yes, Baba, the white settlers.

Mama: Yes, Thuli.

Baba: Do not write racism in the story, uzwile, is that clear?
Proceed.

The story about her mother's suffering conjures up the coming of the white settlers. The story takes us back to the precolonial days, the colonial days and to the present day. But we are jolted back to the reality of the situation when Naka Thuli refers to her present suffering in the village. References to colonial history are never far.

In Stitsha there is sometimes an unsettling mixture of African cultural traditions with western values. Amakhosi stitches together different, cultures, and experiences. For example, the notion of celebrating a birthday, particularly the twenty-first birthday, is a Western idea which has been adopted by many black Zimbabweans. In African culture, the twenty-first birthday does not carry the same significance it has in most Western cultures - that is, signifying independence. In African culture, a child remains a child until she or he dies. Like all other western celebrations which have been adopted by Africans, the birthday ceremony has been adapted to suit the African cultural context. For example, on Thuli's birthday the famous western tune, "Happy Birthday to you," is interspaced with a Ndebele song, Ngelanga lami elikhulu, On my big day/birthday. The Ndebele song is accompanied by dance, ululation, and whistling.

African weddings also present examples of this kind of mixing and adaptation. The church or court wedding ceremonies, the white dress, the cutting of the cake, the exchanging of rings, introduced during colonialism are interspaced with African traditional cultural practices. For example, the church or court ceremony is preceded by long and laborious negotiations based on African custom. The intending bridegroom announces his intentions to marry a girl through a munyayi, idombo (an intermediary or go between) and not directly to the in-laws. The munyai or idombo makes several trips to tete, uyisekazi (the girl's aunt) to ask for fire, kukumbira moto or ukucela umlilo, (ask for marriage). The aunt, tete, uyisekazi, then takes the message to the girl's father, who may or may not be keen to agree. It may take very long. Marriage is not a private affair in African custom, that is, just between the two people intending to marry, for a whole clan is involved. Appropriate relatives are consulted at every stage of the negotiations. These

talks are followed by roora, lobola (bride price or dowry) and the all important mombe yewumayi (the cow for being the girl's mother), a must for anyone marrying into the Shona people. The wedding reception is equally a mixture of African and Western traditions. The invitation cards, the cutting of the cake, and the kissing of the bride and groom are characteristically western. In African custom, everybody in the neighbourhood and village is invited because weddings are a public affair. The songs, dances and the general tempo of the wedding reception are African in many cases. Weddings are one of the many ceremonies that illustrates cultures coming together very creatively.

Funerals also provide an example of hybridisation of culture. A funeral is not a private, but a public affair in African culture. In Dabulap, Vusa makes reference to this fact when he describes Xola's funeral. He commends the people of Mpopoma (a township in Bulawayo) for organizing and attending Xola's funeral. African customs are mixed with western ideas. An idea that has been incorporated into African funerals is one of laying wreaths on graves. In African culture we lay some of the person's possessions, such as cups and plates. It is frequent to observe the mix and clash of western and African cultural traditions. Today one finds wreaths piled together with broken cups, plates, walking sticks and other personal belongings on graves. This attests to the hybridisation of Zimbabwean cultural identity.

In The Members, the rural and the urban, the new and the old converge. Westernisation is emphasised as being set against African cultural traditions in this play. For example, Gloria, who normally wears a pair of trousers to work, is asked to wear an African traditional costume during a dancing session in her boss's office. Mr Mujaji, Gloria's boss, stocks European whisky in his office. The idea of traditional African beer, tototo, is never far. Mr Nkomaza, a representative for the people of Mbomanzi, makes reference

to tototo, when he finds whisky in Mr Mujaji's office. He says, "Yebo, yiyo itototo yabo le?," translated in English to mean, "I see, this is their kind of beer." Examples of mixing abound in the plays and are examined in more detail in the next section. Mujaji's lavish lifestyle, symbolised by his cellphone and his designer suits, is contrasted with the poverty of the villagers. In Stitsha, Thuli's sense of modernisation and liberation is contrasted with some of her traditional actions. For example, she kneels when she talks to elders. In Dabulap, there is also a clash between the western culture and the African culture. Immediately after announcing the death of Xola's son in English, Dabula kneels and switches to Ndebele traditions of mourning and announcements.

Such sites which illustrate mixing and clashing of Western culture and African culture, English and African languages, are useful locations to begin to examine the configuration of postcolonial cultural identity and the enunciation of emergent cultural practices. The postcolonial identity is always already a hybridised formation. By studying language mixing we can begin to understand the way the postcolonial identity is constituted at the intersection of the colonial and the indigenous. African postcolonial identity takes shape only in the critical negotiation between sometimes contradictory western and indigenous culture.

Ndebele and English: A Strange Co-existence

English and Ndebele are different languages carrying different socio-cultural values. Although they function in antagonism, they also work together. The inclusion of Ndebele in Amakhosi plays emphasizes the coexistence of that language with English, as a living language. Moreover, the interplay of Ndebele and English allows for a complex expression of cultural conflicts in

the Zimbabwean psyche. I have conceptualised the mixing of English and Ndebele in Amakhosi as hybridisation. English and Ndebele mix to form a tapestry or quilt giving Amakhosi a variety of tone and texture. Because these languages represent different world views, the mixtures of various languages endows Amakhosi with a variety of particular perspectives. Bakhtin(1981) writes, "A particular language. . . is always a way of viewing the world, one that strives for a social significance" (p. 333). And so my analysis of languages in Amakhosi goes beyond linguistic analysis to include the opposition or dialogisation of differing socio-linguistic world views. Bakhtin defines intentional hybridity as "not only (in fact not so much) the mixing of linguistic forms--the markers of two languages and styles--as it is the collision between differing points of view on the world that are embedded in these forms" (p. 360). While Bakhtin's notion of unconscious hybridisation is useful for understanding the evolution of languages in contact, I find his concept of intentional hybridity important in its subversive potential.

I have already referred to the political significance of Bakhtin's notion of intentional/conscious hybridisation and distinguished between Bakhtin's conscious and unconscious hybridisation. According to Bakhtin (1981), hybridization, in a general sense, involves the mixing of two social languages "within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter, within the consciousness, separated from another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor" (p. 358). Bakhtin (1981) attributes language evolution to conscious or organic hybridisation. According to Bakhtin

languages change historically primarily by means of hybridization, by means of mixing of various "languages" co-existing within the boundaries of a single dialect, a single national language, a single branch, a single group of different groups of such branches (p. 358)

In organic or unconscious hybridization, mixture and fusion remains “mute and opaque, never making use of conscious contrasts or opposites” (p. 360). Unconscious hybridity is a feature of the historical evolution of languages. Bakhtin writes:

[S]uch unconscious hybrids have been at the same time profoundly productive historically: they are pregnant with potential for new world views, with new “internal forms” for perceiving the world in words. (p. 360)

This form of hybridization is exemplified in creolization and is the basis for the formation of New Englishes (Young, 1995). It is my view that Bakhtin’s notion of unconscious hybridization as neither political nor contestatory, is not completely accurate. Creole languages, pidgin, New Englishes, which result largely from unconscious hybridization, are highly political and contestatory once they have been formed. These languages put established definitions of language and the concept of “standard” language in question. Young (1995) describes pidginization and creolization as potentially subversive. He writes:

[the] structure of pidgin crudely—the vocabulary of one language superimposed on the grammar of another—suggests a different model from that of a straightforward power relation of dominance of colonizer over colonized. (p. 21)

That is, creolisation signals the challenging of the dominance of the colonizers by the colonized. Pnina Werbner (1997) considers the function of organic hybridity in the development of intentional hybridity. She explains

that, “organic hybridity creates the historical foundations on which aesthetic hybrids build to shock, change, challenge, revitalize or disrupt through deliberate, intended fusions of unlike social languages and images” (p. 100). Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1995) identify postcolonial creative writing as a feature of organic hybridisation, that is, the evolutionary interaction of indigenous languages of the colonized and the colonial language. They conceptualise postcolonial writing as one of the most powerful ways of disrupting colonial hegemony and of communicating difference.

Mixing of English and Ndebele in Amakhosi plays can be examined, at one level, as an example of unconscious hybridisation. Unconscious hybridisation tends towards fusion. English used in the plays has been fused or affected by African languages. Ndebele too has been Anglicized—so much so that we neither speak of a pure English nor a pure African language. The indigenization of English and the anglicization of Ndebele occurs at several levels—accent, expression, structural, proverbial and more. These languages, like all human languages, are going through the process Bakhtin calls unconscious or organic hybridization—a process to which Bakhtin attributes language evolution (p. 360)

Bakhtin as I have already indicated, is concerned with conscious hybridity for its political and cultural significance. Bakhtin’s (1981) conception of intentional hybridization is helpful for my analysis of the interruptive and subversive uses of hybridization in Amakhosi. Bakhtin views intentional hybridisation as the “perception of one language by another language,” or the dialogisation of one language by another language. Bakhtin writes:

[The intentional or] the novelistic hybrid is an artistically organized system for bringing different languages in contact with one another, a system having as its goal the illumination of one language by means of

another, the carving-out of a living image of another language. (p. 361)

According to Bakhtin, “intentional semantic hybrids are inevitably internally dialogic (as distinct from organic or unconscious hybrids)” (p. 360). The dialogisation and illumination of one language by another presents a double-voiced discourse, that is, discourse that contains two voices ironising each other. Bakhtin argues that in addition to being double-voiced, intentional hybrids are “double-languaged” and “double-accented”. That is to say, they consist of “individual consciousnesses, two voices, two accents, as there are two socio-linguistic consciousness, two epochs, that, true, are not here unconsciously mixed (as in an organic hybrid), but that come together and consciously fight it out on the territory of utterance” (p. 360). In Amakhosi, intentional hybridity is represented by deliberate juxtaposition of English and Ndebele, and sometimes Shona. The following excerpts exemplify the opposition and contestation of different world views, accents and consciousness.

Bakhtin’s intentional hybridity offers us a framework to begin to understand the dynamics of language mixing. Bakhtin describes intentional hybridity as the process of authorial unmasking of another’s speech through a language that is double-accented and double-styled. Bakhtinian unmasking involves the “disclosing of the unvarnished truth under the veil of false claims and arbitrary ranks” (Rabelais, 1984, p. ix). In other words, there exists the exposing of pretensions and the dissolving of hierarchy. In intentional hybridity, two different points of view are set against each other in conflictual structure dialogically, to ironize and unmask each other.

The following extract demonstrates the unmasking of English by Ndebele. The unmasking is not just a linguistic unmasking, but an

unmasking of the values represented by English. The scene involves an argument between Baba and Thuli. Baba has a problem with Thuli's manner of dressing. In this passage Baba confronts Thuli with the issue.

Baba: Shut up wena Thuli, awuxwalanga wena?

Thuli: Can't people in this house give me some peace?

Baba: Give you peace in my house, even to wear trousers? I know who is spoiling you, ngunyoko. Nina ngizakuvala lokhu ngempama. Ungaphi, where is she? He, naka Thuli, Nina.

Naka Thuli: Yebo Baba ngiyeza.

Baba: Phangisa, phangisa.

Baba: Just look at her, wearing trousers and big T shirts in my house. What's wrong with your child, Nina?

Nina: Wena Thuli woza la. Tell me why you are wearing that, you know your father does not approve of women who wear trousers?

Baba: Bangamazanka Nina. Wena Thuli are you a prostitute wena?

Thuli: Please Baba, this is my training tracksuit.

Baba: Tracksuit yokwenzani lapha, wearing trousers in my house. What kind of a man is going to marry a girl who dresses like you, Thuli?

The tension between Baba and his daughter Thuli is registered through language. Baba disapproves of girls who wear trousers. He identifies his problem significantly in English, "tracksuit and trousers." It is interesting that Baba does not use Ndebele to "name" or identify his problem. Baba's problem is girls who wear "tracksuits." The Ndebele word for tracksuit or trousers is

“amabhulukwe.” What is the effect of using English and not Ndebele here? In Zimbabwe, the wearing of trousers, painting of nails, wearing lipstick or mascara by women is widely associated with prostitution and is supposed to mark the corruption of African women by the west. The phrase Baba chooses to use to describe Thuli is “bangamazanka” (they are loose women). Baba uses the Ndebele phrase to comment on prostitution. By using the word “tracksuit,” and “prostitute”, Baba is not just challenging the idea of tracksuits but what “tracksuit” and “prostitute” signifies or represents: westernization or Englishness. This point is also made by Rajan Sunder Rajeswan (1993) in his discussion of the meaning of English in India. He writes that English needs to be viewed not as simply a language but , “the locus of a set of values, loosely termed ‘Westernisation’ must be viewed within an essentially conflictual social dynamics” (p. 14).

In the following excerpt Baba’s anger about Western values is also reflected in his use of English. Baba asks naka Thuli to make him a cup of tea, and naka Thuli refuses saying:

Naka Thuli: This time you will have to make yourself a cup of tea

Baba: A naka thuli, make myself a cup of tea wena ukhona, aha mani!!

Baba’s complaint is registered partly in English and partly in Ndebele. He dismisses naka Thuli’s protestations by using Ndebele. He vows to not make himself a cup of tea, as long as naka Thuli is in the house (wena ukhona). Here we witness cultures in conflict. Make me a cup of tea conjures up Englishness. The English are associated with their love for tea. The phrase also invokes some colonial practices in colonial Zimbabwe. It conjures the

English women or “madams” demanding tea from their black servants, who in many cases were male. One gets the sense that if black men used to make tea for madams in colonial Zimbabwe, they can still make tea for themselves, surely. But Baba’s remarks “make tea for myself” carve out naka Thuli as attempting to be like an English white woman. Even the struggle for women’s liberation is associated with Westernisation and English. English is viewed as the language that corrupts women, that is, introduces them to notions of independence. Baba wields Ndebele as a weapon to counteract naka Thuli’s English values and tendencies. Baba remarks in English that he will not make tea while naka Thuli is there (wena ukhona). While Ndebele is presented as a language that challenges English and its associated Western values. In this incident Ndebele is exposed as a language that may potentially subvert women’s efforts for liberation.

The following excerpt from Dabulap involves a confrontation between illegal vendors and a policeman. These vendors have just been released from jail and in this scene they are performing an improvised skit. The policeman is suspicious of this activity. He thinks it is subversive activity (that is, critical of the government) and so he attempts to stop it. The policeman’s use of English is parodic.

- Police: Heyi heyi liyenzani? Now what is this supposed to be?
- Xola: Ha-a-a don’t worry Mr. Policeman, it’s a street performance, 20 minutes kuphela and it’s over.
- Police: What are you, club, political party, youth or what?
- Xola: No, just a group of friends, we have just been released from prison, so we are celebrating by showing this small piece of protest theatre about our experience in prison to the public.

- Police: Ha!! ex-convicts. I know you must be up to something, where is the script for your shows?
- Vusi: No script, sitshaya ngekopo.
- Xola: He means it's improvised, if that means anything to you.
- Police: I know what that means, it means you are criticizing the government. Now what is your show about?
- Mafraya: It's about our lives and experiences of being unemployed here!
- Dabula: Protest theatre, why must the government you work for arrest us for not being employed?
- Xola: why must your government verbally and physically harrass us because we are not employed?
- Police: So you are political. Hayi it's not true. The police only arrests law breakers, otsotsi, pickpockets, not what you are saying?
- Xola: My friend and I were arrested and sentenced for three months because we jumped the border to South Africa to look for jobs.
- Police: You know that it is illegal.
- Mafraya: Jobs that your government is failing to give us.
- Police: I see, so you are against the government?
- Xola: We are protesting... My child has just died because I could not raise \$450 for his operation, and I did not even bury him. Yet some people bury their friends with even 99% media coverage—sis!
- All: We protest! Siyala, sis man!

The irony in this extract is played around attitudes to English. The

policeman who feigns education is lampooned by the vendors. He thinks “to improvise” is to be against the government—which it can be in implication, but that is not the meaning of the word. What this scene satirizes are attitudes about English. It is important to speak English in Zimbabwe, for it is associated with one’s level of education and one’s social status. The fact that this policeman cannot speak English is itself a critique of employment practices such as nepotism in Zimbabwe. Entry into the police force is determined by one’s performance in Ordinary Level (an equivalent of Grade 12, in Canada) examinations. The play with the word “improvise” marks the carnivalisation and satirisation of English officialese. English is the dominant official language in Zimbabwe. It is the language of education, politics, administration, economics, law, and the judiciary. What is being questioned in this passage is not only nepotism in the police force, but the school system which puts so much emphasis on English and pressure on people to learn and use English. This policeman has to pretend that he understands English in order to appear educated. This is a subtle but powerful critique of colonisation and the colonising culture.

The following excerpt from The Members illustrates the way in which English is rendered in the light of Ndebele, or the way in which English and Ndebele fight it out on the territory of utterance.

In The Members meetings proliferate. Examination of language use in the different types of meetings yields some interesting revelations about the way languages ironise each other. I will use two different political meetings for my analysis of the interrelationship of language, culture and identity and for an examination of the way in which English and Ndebele ironize or expose each other.

The meeting arranged by Nkomazana, the chairperson of the village

committee, prior to the election of constituency representatives is mainly in Ndebele. There are few occurrences of English here and there. Significantly, the meeting in the village takes shape within African indigenous structures. The meeting conjures up “inkundla,” that is, a traditional meeting or gathering place. Inkundla is characterised by communal participation and communal respect and consensus. In the play, Nkomazana and other old men and women exchange ideas with the audience-cum villagers. The issue at hand, that is the selection of a representative, is everybody’s concern and everybody has a say in this process. The meeting conjures up the notion of the Ndebele traditional “indaba” (gathering around an issue). During indabas issues are brought to the villagers’ attention by village elders for consideration. In this meeting Matshuma, one of the older women in the village, addresses the meeting in Ndebele. But she uses a few English words whose significance I would like to examine, briefly. In her account of how she went to see Mr. Mujaji, the Member of Parliament of her constituency, whose fate is now in question, Matshuma says, “Ngezwa bethi uMjaji uye emasamina, eHarare ngefulayimatshina” (Mujaji flew to Harare to attend a seminar). I find the corruption of seminar to samina particularly significant. The use of samina suggests the level of education of these villagers.

Vernacularisation of the word also illustrates the struggle with a foreign language, that is, the attempt to make English meaningful. But in the same vein, it shows the ridiculousness or meaninglessness of English in this context. This woman has no idea what seminar means. She lashes out at Mujaji, “Hamba, asikufuni, bazakuvotela khonangale e masamina” (Go away, the seminars will vote for you). In her view seminar represents a place or people. But the corruption or vernacularisation of seminar also unmasks the idea of seminars in their context in Zimbabwe. Seminars have become a

very frequent occurrence in Zimbabwe. But the problem is that ordinary people who are supposed to benefit from most of these seminars, do not see their value and relevance anymore. This is because seminars have become almost synonymous with idle talk. Some officials take advantage of seminars by turning them into money-making projects and an occasion for excursions all over Zimbabwe and the rest of the world. In addition, seminar is part of the calculated and strategic repertoire that separates the ordinary people from the educated officials. These officials use such high sounding words to mystify and to give credence to their projects. Given this context, the use of *samina* can be read as a satirisation and trivialisation of the notion of seminar by ordinary people. It exposes the various (both explicit and implicit) meanings collected within this linguistic place holder. The Ndebele twist on seminar yields connotations of “me myself”. The idea of me myself suggests selfishness. The word *samina* further exposes seminars as part of a strategy of exploitation of ordinary people. Nkosana, a political member and friend of Mujaji’s makes pretences to speak English. He says, “we are robbing for support.” The use of robbing instead of lobbying can be read as a slip or a genuine ignorance of English. On the other hand, this incident can be read as a satirisation of pretences to speak English. While this can be read as an exposure of false pretences, it can be examined for its ironic twist. In actual fact, these party officials are robbing innocent citizens. After they have been elected they do not fulfill their promises. In that sense they can be said to be robbing people.

At another occasion Nkomazana, who has tried in vain to see the Mujaji, the Member of Parliament, says of the Member of Parliament (MP), “Yiyo le i hofisi ha empti p?” (Is this the office for the MP?). Nkomazana’s unconscious or conscious play with MP and empty p, is revealing.

Nkomazana mispronunciation of MP, to empty p, is a fitting descriptor for Mujaji who is a corrupt and lazy Member of Parliament. The vernacularisation of MP exposes government practices. In addition, vernacularisation of MP exposes high flown English concepts. The notion of Member of Parliament was introduced by the British government to colonial Zimbabwe. Indigenous peoples had their own traditional systems of rule. The imposition of English concepts adds to the language problems of the indigenous people coping with and struggling to make sense of a foreign language. Africans must struggle to make sense of foreign concepts.

At the same meeting, Nkomaza makes an attempt to add English vocabulary in his speech to Mujaji when he says, “Nxa ngikhuluma angithandi umuntu othanda ukuintarapta” (I do not want to be interrupted in my talk). The vernacularisation of interrupt is funny. It shows Nkomazana showing off his English skills. But it also shows how English is adapted to suit the indigenous peoples context and how English is parodied. In the same speech, Nkomazana uses English to warn Mujaji. He says “Ngifuna ukukutshela ngesikhiwa” (I want to tell you in English). You politicians do not have the ultimate power. The power rests with us, the grassroot members.” Mujaji, in his manner of dress, suit and cellphone in his hand, represents westernisation. Nkomazana attempts to reduce Mujaji by giving Mujaji a lecture on politics, in English. Mujaji is left dumbfounded. Nkomazana beats Mujaji at his own game. Nkomazana speaks back to Mujaji in the language Mujaji understands. Here language is shown in its manipulative mode. Mujaji has been manipulating the people through his high sounding English rhetorics. But Nkomazana refuses to be manipulated by Mujaji. Nkomazana uses English to fight back at and to reduce Mujaji.

In contrast to the indaba (meeting) by the villagers, the play presents a

political rally. In this meeting, the villagers are talked down to. The villagers do not participate. The meeting is held in English. English alienates the people from the leaders. English also denies the villagers a voice to speak or participate. Significantly, Nkomazana and the old woman do not speak at this meeting. Mujaji shouts political slogans in English, "Forward with the people's army" and the people echo back single mechanical responses "Foward!" Here English, functions to control people. Mujaji talks about dedicated leadership, which he claims to represent. The use of English words relating to the army, regulations and marching suggest the mortifying aspects of English.

In the extract quoted below, Nkosana the Member of Parliament of Vhivhiri, phones Mr Mujaji, the Member of Parliament of Mbomanzi, to arrange a meeting with Mujaji. Being in the same political party, the two men have a semblance of a relationship. Their telephone conversation is interesting for the way in which it highlights the level of corruption in the party ranks.

Mujaji: Mujaji's office

Nkosana: Hullo Members (They both laugh loudly). Unjani Mdala wami?

Mujaji: Yini okurighti Members?

Nkosana: No Mujaji, you sound good mani.

Mujaji: Why not?

Nkosana: I people's party ikuphethe kuhle.

Mujaji: Ya, i Why Not iHotela yeSigodini. Umjaji ozijajayo, a hero who fought a war but never killed an insect.

Nkosana: Ayayaya uyahlanya Mujaji

Mujaji: Yes please, the honourable MP for Mbomanzi. . .

Mujaji: Hanti uyabona, people with business that's what I want.

Otherwise how are you?

Nkosana: Ngidlani ebabyo. . . When the food is ready you must learn to eat quietly.

Mujaji: Ungakubali mfana, mina njengezikhundla, ah mina ngizibambile, zibambane njengechain. from grassroots to central committee.

Mujaji calls Gloria

Gloria: Mujaji's office good afternnon.

Mujaji: Hullo Gloria, flower ele self raising.

Gloria: Oh yes Mr. Mujaji can I help you.

Mujaji: Zwana ntanami, I'm expecting uNkosana any minute from now. You know the MP from Vhirivhiri?

The references to "Why Not Hotel" in this extract are interesting. Why Not is the name of a hotel in Esigodini, a rural centre about forty kilometres north east of Bulawayo. Nkosana's observation that Mujaji sounds good are answered with a "Why not" from Mujaji. Mujaji's comments, "Why not, ihotela yeSigodini" (Why Not is the name of a hotel at Esigodini) are funny when properly contextualised. The comedy turns around English use in Zimbabwe. Many people in the villages or rural areas of Zimbabwe do not read or speak English (They might know some words and phrases, though). Yet it is common to find English names in the rural areas, where the vast majority do not speak or understand much English. The tradition of naming sometimes verges on the ridiculous in Zimbabwe. Stores, hotels and schools are named after English heroes and English catch phrases. The name Lonely Mine, comes to mind. Lonely Mine was situated in one of the the rural areas I

knew. The mine was surrounded by villages, stores and schools. As a child I often wondered what was so lonely about the mine. These names reflect the Zimbabwean colonial legacy. But, at the same time, the names point to the ridiculousness or irony of English in these contexts. It does not make sense to give English names in places where people cannot even read or use English. Such naming practices reflect not only the colonial legacy but imperialist impulses that still grip Zimbabwe. In this excerpt, the play exposes these colonial practices. Mujaji's use of "ihotela" (hotel) suggests a twisting or Ndebelisation of the English word hotel. Ndebelisation of the English word does not simply suggest an appropriation or Africanisation of English language, it suggests the adoption and internalisation of the concept of hotel, and its connotations, by Africans. In an incident just preceding the excerpt, Nkosana boasts that he is staying at the Sun Hotel located at the city centre of Bulawayo.

Personal naming in English is satirised further in the same excerpt. In the above extract, Mujaji calls Gloria, his secretary, Gloria. He says, "Gloria iflour ele self-raising" (Gloria, flour with self-raising). He makes references to a particular brand of flour in Zimbabwe, called Gloria. This flour is advertised as the best self-raising flour. Mujaji's comments to Gloria are supposed to be complimentary or flattering, but the analogy with flour (self-raising flour) raises this comment to epic zones of parody. Gloria's name and its references to flour render it funny, meaningless and inappropriate.

Mujaji's name comes from the English word, judge. His references to his name in the above excerpt invoke laughter. Mujaji boasts, "uMjaji ozijajayo, a hero who fought a war but never killed an insect". Mujaji's comments, though boastful as they are, are self-defeating. In English, "Umjaji ozijajayo" means the judge who judges himself. These comments suggest the

height of self-importance, that is, that he, Mujaji, is above the law. Mujaji exposes himself as an unaccountable, power hungry politician. The play is making a tacit commentary on politicians who perceive themselves above the law. At another level, the expression, “Umjaji ozijajayo” can be viewed as a corruption of the Ndebele tradition of totems or clan names (izibongo and izitemo). In the Ndebele and other African cultures, one’s totem is important for cultural identity. Clan names are usually sung in praise of an individual or a whole clan. For example, people sing praises to me by saying “MaMoyo, abafazi abageza ngocago” (Moyo women are beautiful because they bathe in milk). The play uses this tradition, in Mujaji’s case to expose Mujaji’s selfishness and self-centredness. The references to English names in this excerpt also satirise aspirations of Englishness symbolised in Gloria and Mujaji’s names. In his self-valorisation, Mujaji performs a self-critique. Mujaji is a hero that cannot kill an insect. In other words, he is a coward. Hero here has references to the Zimbabwean liberation struggle. After the struggle, many people, even those who had not fought, claimed the status of hero. Given this context, Mujaji’s comments can be read as a satirisation of self-valorisation. As well, the reference to hero exposes the gender biases that cast the nationalist struggle as a struggle by man. The liberation struggle in Zimbabwe was fought by both men and women. The political discourse that excludes women is both inaccurate and unfair.

Further, Mujaji’s statement about the hero who never killed an insect sounds like a Ndebele proverb. However, the use of English gives it a parodic edge. While it shows creativity and the fusion of Ndebele culture and English, the use of this proverb is part of the satirisation of government officials. Sometimes politicians manipulate traditional knowledge and culture in order to gain support from the people. Mujaji’s appeal to African

traditions are exposed and satirised.

Ndebele/English: Transgressing Boundaries

As I have illustrated above, exploration of hybridization in Amakhosi plays is useful in understanding how Zimbabweans challenge colonial structures, values and assumptions about colonial languages. Unlike French in Africa, the English language was in double jeopardy. The French were not as 'protective' with their language as the British were with English, during colonialism. Where the British promoted a policy of segregation or separation, the French favoured assimilationist policies. The French policy of assimilation in colonial Africa was concerned with turning Africans into French people, or more precisely, to de-nativize or de-Africanize them—an agenda carried out through the French language. The French mandate for the colonized was to force Africans to lose their language through schooling. To be educated and civil meant to speak French. The French language policy was part of their assimilation strategy. The British language policy for the colonised was exclusionary. The British kept Africans away from English as much as was possible. English was used to separate the natives from the colonial masters. In that sense, English functioned to divide the coloniser and the colonised. English not only signaled colonial authority, it conferred it. This point is illustrated in colonial Africa by the recruitment of Africans with good English skills for administrative jobs in the colony. English also patrolled certain "important" borders: It delineated "civilized" from "savage," the coloniser from the colonised. Speaking English, on the part of Africans, was construed as a transgression of the boundaries that separated the colonial Self and its colonized Other. The challenge for the colonizer was to colonize the natives effectively through English without erasing the boundaries

between Self and Other—for to speak English like the master was to collapse boundaries put in place by the masters. In colonial Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia), natives were given just enough English to be able to take instructions and orders (their lot in life) (Atkinson, 1972). Speaking English just like the English master was viewed as a gesture of intransigence by the colonizer, because it threatened to dissolve boundaries.

In colonial Zimbabwe, this problem was fixed by the construction of “Silapalapa” (a corruption and conglomeration of African languages and Afrikaans). In South Africa “Fanakalo” and “Kitchen Kiffir,” were constructed to maintain boundaries between whites and blacks. I have already discussed the significance of “Silapa Lapa” in relation to linguistic colonisation, encirclement and containment of Africans, in the introduction of this dissertation. The constructions Fanakalo and Kiffir need to be viewed as part of the colonial impulse to control and undermine Africans. It is significant that Fanakalo suggests a sense haphazardness and fakeness in its meaning--neither this nor that. It is important to observe the practice of trivialisation of African languages in the pattern of naming. All the names of these languages conjure up a sense of insignificance and randomness--a hotchpotch. The term describes a randomness, yet it is a very critical language of control and subjugation. Kiffir derived from Arabic, means infidel, unbeliever. Its derogatory applications in South Africa are clear. Understood in its religious context, the word becomes part of the biblical justification of white supremacy. Apartheid is based on the biblical references which attribute the darker people to servitude. In this ideology blacks were named the hewers of wood. Kitchen Kiffir is the language constructed to communicate with African kitchen workers and miners. It is interesting to also note the way in which these linguistic constructions, Silapa, lapa, Fanakalo and Kitchen

Kiffir, in their randomness cross the border between South Africa and Rhodesia.

In 1986, six years after political independence, a white woman insisted on talking to me in this kitchen kiffir or silapalapa, even when I told her that I would not understand, let alone speak the language. She was angry with me because I could speak English perfectly well, could not and would not speak kitchen kiffir. By refusing to be contained in kitchen kiffir, I had transgressed boundaries. Foucault (1979) reminds us in his analysis of transgression, that there can be no transgression without borders or boundaries. My crossing of the limit can be read as a counter-hegemonic act. By speaking English, I had invaded this woman's space, so to speak. I had not just invaded the English language, but I had assaulted her sense of identity constituted in English. By speaking English I was also assuming a world view and an identity. Fanon (1967) reminds us that to speak a language is to assume or internalise a culture and way of being and thinking.

As I have said, the fortification of linguistic boundaries necessitated by the British need to separate themselves from Africans was attended by a dilemma. The predicament involved how to "civilize" natives through English and still keep them "native," that is, contain and objectify their nativeness. The "special" status of English maintained mainly through separating English from indigenous languages—no mixing of languages policy. English began to be associated with morality, sophistication and formality while indigenous or native languages were linked with immorality, primitivity, and informality. The colonial conception of indigenous languages as incomplete and lacking in sophistication and coherence forced Africans to internalise an inferiority complex about their own languages.

The above contextualization of English helps us to read language mixing in Amakhosi theatre as part of a subversive act. Mixing English with Ndebele or any African language for that matter, essentially voids or displaces perceived boundaries between English and African languages. Mixing English and Ndebele “de-territorializes” space.

Besides challenging compartmentalization of language, hybridity in Amakhosi renders perceptible the linguistic cracks existing in English. Hybridity in its double meaning, that is, as sameness and difference, shows the ways in which English needs its others. Mixing problematizes the relationship of English and its Other. For example, in many cases Ndebele has to be used in order to express particular feelings which English is not sufficient to express. In this respect, English needs its other.

Hybridization in Amakhosi illustrates excessive stretching of boundaries that disrupts limits and fences between languages. Hybridization constitutes the site where the very idea of what constitutes English and the very idea of language is challenged.

This extract from Stitsha involves a scene when Thuli has been delayed for practice by her brother. Mopho who does not want her to be involved with the production of the play Stitsha just because she is a girl. In this excerpt, one of the members is wondering why Thuli is late.

Dancer: Where is Thuli kanti? We are 40 minutes behind. Maybe Mbazo can tell us better, if there is a problem.

Mbazo (Thuli’s boyfriend): Lami Madoda kuyangimangalisa. But I know nothing ngo Thuli.

Dancer 2: Maybe she is preparing for her birthday party since it is three days away.

- Mbazo: Libona njalo. She could have told us if that is the case.
Maybe usisi here knows something.
- Sisi: Please, I know nothing of Thuli's problem, ngicela
lingixolele, I don't know anything.
- All: My si, ungaboyenza njalo.
- Sisi: Please, I said I know nothing, angazi lutho.

In the above excerpt, English sentences run into Ndebele sentences and vice-versa without distinctive boundaries. The sentence, "But I know nothing ngo Thuli and I know nothing of Thuli's problem, ngicela lingixolele", illustrates the way in which language mixing obscures or blurs boundaries between English and Ndebele. Conceptions of what is or what is not English and what is or what is not Ndebele are challenged tremendously. This blurring of distinctions is most clearly evident in performance. For while English and Ndebele orthography is easily recognizable here in the above text, recognition skills are put to test in the live performance of this mixing, and made more difficult with the added dimension of culturally specific information, such as gestures, facial expressions, body language and so on. The languages are not simply put next to one another with their boundaries kept intact. When English and Ndebele words and phrases are mixed in performance, as in the above passage, each language gathers something new from the other. For example, in the sentence, "Please ngicela lingixolele, I don't know anything," the English words and phrases become marked by Ndebele, so that if an English speaker does not listen carefully, they may not recognize them as English. The phrase "my si" is short form for "My sister," but if it is not spelt, it sounds like Ndebele. The word "Mysi" is a new form of language, which is neither English nor Ndebele. Intentional

hybridity can be read as a “third space” which presents us with the potential of a new language: Ndenglish. Ndenglish is a language that is characterised by impermanence. It has no fixed vocabulary. It is a language that is constantly being reinvented and a language on the border. Rey Chow (1993) identifies the condition of being at the border in similar terms. She describes border existence as a finality or a goal or “teleological”. In her view a border “[I]s not so much about the transient eventually giving way to the permanent as it is about an existential condition of which “permanence” itself is an ongoing fabrication” (p. 15).

The sentence “Please ngicela lingixolele, I do not know anything” may not convey a meaning to somebody who does not understand both languages. While watching one of Amakhosi performance videos with me, Dennis Sumara, my advisor, commented that while he could recognize the English used in these plays, he could not fully understand it as English. He was not talking about accent or pronunciation as such, but the way in which languages were used together to produce a sense of fragmentation. But fragmentation as Trinh (1992) reminds us is not an absence of order, but a way of living within borders. According to Trinh, fragmentation involves continual pushing of borders and limits.

The context of linguistic hybridity in Amakhosi involves pushing one’s questioning of the limit of what English, or any language for that matter, is and is not. Hybridization in Amakhosi needs to be viewed as an attempt at introducing a break into fixed notions about what English is and what it represents. Through intentional hybridization, Amakhosi theatrical productions challenge the dominance of English and also void the boundaries between English and Ndebele. Shifting borders from Ndebele to English and vice-versa, allows Amakhosi to lay claim on English, and at the

same time to maintain a vision of Ndebele. Chow (1993) identifies borders as zones which announce the idea of propriety and property. According to Chow, the border crossing allows for appropriation of new spaces. Not only that, border crossing anticipates reinvention of the old. Chow writes that the “practice of borders is to anticipate and prepare for new proprietorship by destroying, replacing, and expanding existing ones. For this notion of borders-as margins waiting to be incorporated as new properties” (p. 15). English is reinvented in the process of its appropriation. But the colonised and their languages are also reinvented at the border. Mujaji’s play with a Ndebele proverb in English, is just one example of the reinvention of Ndebele.

The appropriation of English or any language, at that, does not imply simply an acquisition of syntax and grammar, but it involves the internalisation of the values of the language also. Fanon (1967) reminds us that “speaking involves [using] a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilisation” (p. 17-18). Yet when the colonised appropriate English they internalise also internalise its values. In *Stitsha*, Thuli, who has mastered English seems to have internalised some foreign values. This is obvious when she speaks to her parents. She is confrontational. She does not defer to her parents, she answers back. In most African cultures, children do not confront their parents. Children listen and do not voice their disagreements right away. The internalised colonial values in paradoxical ways become part of the colonised mind. Yet as Lowe (1996) suggests:

[T]he colonised subjects produced within such an encounter does not merely bear marks of the coercive encounter between the dominant language and culture, constructed as whole. . . Such encounters produce contradictory subjects, in whom the demands for fluency in

imperial languages and empire's cultural institutions simultaneously provide the grounds for antagonism to those demands (p. 97)

Ironically, it is this internalisation of English that creates the grounds for its interrogation. The policeman in Dabulap and Mr. Mujaji in The Members become the butt of the satire because of their pretensions about English. The impulse to appropriate English is accompanied by the impetus to interrogate English. This condition creates contradictory subjects in whom the demands for internalisation of western values simultaneously provides grounds for antagonism to those demands. Many theorists have drawn attention to the contradictory postcolonial subject. Spivak (1993) underscores this ambivalence, in her definition of postcoloniality as an "an impossible 'no' to a structure, which one critiques, yet inhabits intimately" ("p. 225). Appiah (1992) discusses the untenability of an either-or choice between Africa and the West. For Appiah, there is no place for that kind of thinking in the 'real world'.

But Spivak and Appiah's positions on this leave the colonised in a state of paralysis for action. A conceptualisation of hybridity as struggle and as constant interrogation and negotiation is useful for imagining a way out of the stalemate situation, which Spivak and Appiah's positions tend to engender. The contradiction is not an essence but an ongoing state of being. Postcolonial notions of hybridity conceptualise this space of contradiction, inhabited by the postcolonial as hybrid. Postcolonial conceptualisations of hybridity help us to conceptualise postcolonial agency, that is, to view the postcolonial subject not as helpless but as subverting colonial structures even in the inhabiting of them.

Postcolonial Discussions of Hybridization

Hybridity is a central concept in postcolonial discourse on identity. The concept of hybridity is not exclusive to postcolonial discourse, however, but has been central in the cultural construction of race and sex (Young, 1995). This dissertation focuses on postcolonial articulations of hybridity only, especially the role of hybridization in the decolonizing process, that is, the significance of hybridisation in the disruption of colonial and neocolonial arrangements.

For Homi Bhabha (in Parry, 1987), “hybrid” spaces indicate moments when the colonizer’s discourse is “interrogated by the natives in their own accents” (p. 39). He suggests that hybrid locations challenge and expose “the uncertainties and ambivalences of the colonialist text” and its “authorizing presence” (Bhabha, in Parry, p. 41). Bhabha associates hybridity with betweenness, ambivalence and,

the construction of a political object that is new, neither the one nor the Other, properly alienates our political expectations, and changes, as it must, the very forms of our recognition of the moment of politics. (p. 30)

Hybridity is central to Bhabha’s (1994) notion of difference. Bhabha implicates hybridity in the enunciation of difference. He examines the notion of hybridity in terms of agency and self-assertion—identity. Bhabha writes:

[O]rdinary language develops an auratic authority, an imperial persona: but in specifically postcolonial performance of reinscription, the focus shifts from the nominalism of imperialism to the emergence of another sign of agency and identity. (p. 52)

Although I find Bhabha's premise of hybridity questionable, I find his notion of third space, an ongoing and unstable sign, very useful for conceptualising hybridity as a location for transformation. Bhabha constructs his notion of hybridity in an attempt to deconstruct the colonial text. According to Bhabha, the colonial text is already hybridised with native's voice. Bhabha argues that since the colonial voice contains the native's voice, the subaltern has already spoken in the spaces of the colonial text. Chow (1993), who finds Bhabha's argument unconvincing writes, "But what kind of an argument is it to say that the subaltern's voice can be found in the ambivalence of the imperialist speech?" (p. 35). She suggests that Bhabha's idea of hybridity serves to perpetuate or revive "the functionalist notion of what a dominant culture permits in the interest of maintaining its equilibrium" (p. 35). It seems to me that Bhabha's argument denies the subaltern agency. His view of hybridity privileges the imperialist voice. I am interested in hybridity that takes into account power relations and the way in which the subaltern is constituted within imperialist discourse. I am interested in the ways in which the subaltern constitutes him or herself at the intersection of the colonial and the indigene. In other words, I am concerned with hybridity that identifies subaltern agency.

But as I have already said, Bhabha's concept of hybridity allows us to examine and understand postcolonial identity as always in the making or in process. In Amakhosi plays, English is challenged by the Ndebele discourse in many ways. The perception of English as a superior to Ndebele and all other indigenous languages can be linked to the colonial strategy of inferiorisation of the colonised. The mere fact that English and Ndebele appear together as 'equals' in Amakhosi plays, is a challenge to the superiority of English. The

mixture of English and Ndebele in Amakhosi signifies this “betweeness” that Bhabha speaks about announces a different and new language in constant refashioning and refabrication, and with it, new and different relations of social and political power.

The following excerpt illustrates some of Bhabha’s ideas about hybridity.

Mama: A ha mani, heyi wena Thuli woza la. Akungitshela, why are you embarrassing me?

Baba: Ok, Ok, enough about trousers. Now back to the real matter. Why did you not turn up for the interview that I arranged for you at the Ranger’s offices, why Thuli?

Thuli: I was busy Baba, busy. And secondly, I don’t want that kind of job.

Baba: Come on Thuli, I am your father and that job is your twenty-first birthday present from me.

Thuli: Hashi Baba, I don’t want to join your department of game rangers which goes out to the villages to shoot people.

Mopho: Ulilema wena. Baba shoot poachers, don’t you know that shooting is illegal.

“Shut up wena Thuli,” “Ungaphi where is she ?” “Tracksuit yokwenzani lapha.” “Wearing trousers in my house,” and “Baba shoot poachers” represents two distinct languages: English and Ndebele. But in performance, these languages are not separate at all. For without the other, meaning is incomplete. They are functioning together to form a new signifying system. Bhabha discusses the significance of this phenomena as related to “the emergence of another sign of agency and identity,” which challenges the “auratic authority” of English. In addition to its subversive role, hybridization is examined as a reclamation strategy and a way of appropriating those spaces which have been denied colonized subjects in colonialism. Postcolonial theory (Ashcroft et al., 1995) emphasize the effectiveness of hybridization as a cultural strategy for appropriation, reclaiming, reinterpretation, self-determination and decolonization. For Ashcroft et al., as well as for Bhabha, hybridity is an enunciation of difference. Jan Mohamed (1993) emphasizes hybridization as a strategy of establishing a dialogic relation with English. In language and literature, hybridization is invoked as a structural device repeated in novels in English in which the vernacular idiom tacitly decomposes the authority of English. Concerning the related concept of pidginization, Young (1995) writes:

[T]he structure of pidgin crudely—the vocabulary of one language superimposed on the grammar of another—suggests a different model from that of a straightforward power relation of dominance of colonizer over colonized (p. 25)

While, as Young suggests, subversion of the model of a straightforward power relation of dominance of colonizer over colonized is implied in pidginization and creolization and hybridization, the relation of dominance of colonizer over colonized may still be intact in hybridized forms of languages, making the project of reclamation, reinterpretation and self-definition problematic. For example, questions, like who and what does this hybridity privilege, are important. Subversion is, therefore, not inherent in hybridity but is inserted by the use of strategies that acknowledge asymmetrical power relations between languages. As Ella Shohat (1996) warns in her interrogation of postcolonial notions of hybridity, "A celebration of syncretism and hybridity per se, if not articulated in conjunction with questions of hegemony and neo-colonial power relations, runs the risk of appearing to sanctify the *fait accompli* of colonial violence" (p. 330). Shohat (1996) cautions postcolonial theorists against the dangers of an oversimplified and uncritical use of hybridity. She writes that hybridity, as a descriptive catch-all term, obscures the diverse modalities of hybridity, for example, "forced assimilation, internalised self-rejection, political co-optation, social conformism, cultural mimicry, and creative transcendence" (p. 331). Useful as it is, as a subversive trope, the concept of hybridity needs to be interrogated for how it may in fact signal colonised defeat and co-optation.

Also, the potential for a resistant project runs the risk of being lost through an uncritical appeal to hybridity. In the same essay, Shohat (1996) suggests that hybridity and its anti-essentialist emphasis might occlude "all searches for communitarian origins as an archaeological excavation of an idealised, irretrievable past" (ibid.,) which are important for resistance. She sites nostalgia as a sometimes useful trope of resistance, for example, in communities that have been colonised. She writes:

[N]ow in the process of forging a collective identity, no matter how hybrid that identity has been before, during, and after colonialism, the retrieval and reinscription of a fragmented past becomes a crucial contemporary site for forging a resistant collective identity (in Mongia 1996, p. 330)

Shohat advocates interrogation of postcolonial fixation with newness. In her view an overemphasis on the new occludes the past, which has some strategic relevance for colonised peoples.

So far, I have conceptualised Amakhosi, specifically Ndebele, as a location for the articulation of a resistant collective identity. Not only that, the constant shifts in language and perspective mark the struggle for identity embodied in Amakhosi plays. Amakhosi plays articulate a voice in opposition to the domination of English and its world view. Yet Amakhosi is also a site where those very languages of domination and their values are persistently assimilated. Amakhosi symbolises the contradictions of postcolonial subjectivity. Amakhosi is a possible site for contestation and for communion. In the following section I will develop the conception of Amakhosi as a contradictory location--a site for antagonism and union of the coloniser and the colonised.

Hybridization: Communion and Contestation in Amakhosi

Bakhtin's theorizing of intentional hybridization as conflictual is useful for understanding hybridization as resistance. However, hybridization is not only a location for contestation, it is a site for communion. Bakhtin's concept of organic hybridisation contains the notion of hybridity as fusion. Bakhtin's analysis of intentional hybridity is useful for understanding subversive uses

of hybridity.

African feminist writer and critic, Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi's (1996) discussion of the notion of palaver offers a framework to begin to conceptualize hybridization in Amakhosi as both contestation and communion/conciliatory. In *Africa Wo/Man Palava*, Ogunyemi (1996) traces the genealogy of the word "palaver" and its roots in colonialism. She shows how the word palaver, derived from the Portuguese word, *palavra*, in use since 1735, was institutionalized to indicate fine, diplomatic art of talking or empty talk between Africans and Europeans. She examines the etymology of the word and observes that the word is used to refer to "a long parley usually between persons of different levels of culture or sophistication" (p. 93). In contextualizing the word in reference to unequal power relationships, she implicates its use in colonization and in the consequent subjugation of African people—through the tedious negotiations culminating in colonialism. She describes the role of European palava in

shaping African geopolitics, in order to benefit from the seemingly limitless economic advantages of owning the continent. Northern shenanigans, especially as manifested in Swiss banking, have replaced them in contemporary negotiations (pp. 93-94).

Ogunyemi's examination shows Western palaver with its other as still premised on unequal or skewed power dynamics. The uneven dynamics of palaver privilege superior parties in the negotiations and enable them to negate the seriousness of the talk, "denigrate the other, who appeared to him naively garrulous, and schemed to mislead or beguile him through the play with language." Palaver signifies inequity for Africans, "for they (Africans and Europeans) were literally and figuratively not speaking the same

language.” The talks were skewed in favour of the Europeans. Palaver “soon became a metonym for calamity, and its homophone palava, as trouble or quarrel.” (p. 98).

For Africans, palaver soon became palava, that is, trouble. In Nigeria, for example, woman palava traditionally refers to woman trouble. Ogunyemi notes and exposes the sexism in the uses of the phrase, woman palava. I am interested in her uses of palaver specifically as they relate to the examination of the relationship of English and Ndebele. Ogunyemi’s sense of palava as trouble or danger is useful in examining conceptions of English as African palava, that is, of English as a treacherous and dangerous affair for Africans. The issue is to investigate ways in which English has become palava in postcolonial Africa. English can be regarded as African palava—a problem for several reasons in postcolonial Africa. Firstly, by accepting to palaver in European languages, Africans have been duped into demeaning, putting aside, or even losing their own languages. The late 19th century great Indabas, great talks, between the settlers and the Ndebele people illustrate African palava, trouble. Lobhengula, the Ndebele king, is said to have signed an agreement to give over the country of Zimbabwe to the settlers without much understanding of the implications of his signature. Although Lobhengula did not understand English (he probably spoke through an interpreter who also did not quite understand English), his signature on that piece of paper had catastrophic implications for the Africans, it led Africans into deep soup. It led to the expropriation of Zimbabwe by the white settlers. But Lobhengula and the settlers were operating on different assumptions about discourse. For Lobhengula, and those steeped in an oral culture, discourse is flexible, not final. But for the literate Western discussant, discourse is fixed or sealed by writing. The signature, the written word, marks finality. Those from the

written culture consider oral discourse as unfinalisable and ephemeral and less binding. They view written discourse as final and binding. Ogunyemi (1996) writes that real trouble or “palava arises when the recorder arms himself with the authority of the written word (hence the Nigerian myth that written words do not lie)” (p. 97). Ogunyemi’s analysis helps in understanding the palava for discussants who are illiterate in the colonial language and its written forms.

It is interesting to consider how English is used in negotiations between people of unequal power all over the world. The Canadian government’s attempts to negotiate land claims with First Nations peoples, come to mind as a kind of palaver. In international affairs, the West continues to palaver through English. What happens when one discussant has linguistic power or economic advantage over the other--trouble or palava for the linguistically and economically less powerful party.

Ogunyemi traces the meanings of palava sauce in parts of West Africa. It is a generic term referring to a range of dishes in West Africa. In Liberia and Sierra Leone it refers to a “stew served with fufu,” “pounded starch,” “while palavering to ease talks.” In Nigerian Pidgin English it is known as a soup. The sauce’s essential ingredients include palm oil, vegetables, condiments, various meats, and seafood. According to Ogunyemi, a greater variety of ingredients increases its richness. Preparations are painstaking and exhilarating. In all these cases, the sauce or stew/soup is a source of nourishment. However, “palavering to ease talks” conjures up communality and camaraderie implied in eating together, and also conflict implied in “to ease talks.” Ogunyemi’s analogy of this “magical interaction” to that of “the daily labour of cooking” as similar to the energy and attention to detail that go into creating a novel, and the resultant text is a palava sauce has interesting

implications for her project. For Ogunyemi, the tediousness of the cooking is in itself the “palava” (p. 100). Ogunyemi’s discussion of palava sauce is particularly interesting. The culinary references of palava enhance our understanding of African attempts to negotiate the problems of English. For example, how does the African use the language of his or her colonization to suit his or her needs? In other words, how do they in turn palaver through the language, maneuver, or force the language to express their own interests without being caught in the game of palaver all over again?

Further, the culinary associations of palava sauce offer a useful analogy to the deliberate mixing of languages in Amakhosi plays. Amakhosi plays are made up as they are, of the ingredients of English, Ndebele and sometimes Shona, presenting us with a rich mixture or cacophony of languages.

Ogunyemi suggests:

[T]he analogy of palava sauce with textuality and the possible disputes arising from textual interpretation is instructive. What is palaver, that is, idle talk, for the British degenerates into palava, quarrel and trouble, for Nigerians. (p. 100)

For Ogunyemi, palaver and palava are mutually dependent on each other for meaning. She shows how palava’s culinary associations can be viewed as a kind of “counter-identification with a master’s voice; it is a quarrel about how the Nigerian situation is perceived by the dominant forces,” and how they are run and seen by dominated groups, including women in Nigeria.

The above uses of palava epitomize its loadedness and may be useful for examining the complexity of hybridization in Amakhosi plays. In exploring the nature of African women writing, Ogunyemi (1996) views

palava sauce,

[A]s a site for (comm)union, of eating together, epitomizes complaint and reconciliation. Palava sauce becomes the woman writer's text, the *piece de resistance*, served as a gesture of conciliation in resolving national problems. However, in performing this textual function, it opens up as discourse a great deal of controversy. Thus, it provides food for thought: gather together, to quarrel, to reconcile. (p. 102)

For Ogunyemi, besides signaling trouble, palava sauce is a location of community. The hybrid text of *Amakhosi* can be regarded, figuratively and metaphorically, as palava sauce, simultaneously signaling a location for communion, that is, a coming together of languages, but also as a site for struggle, quarrel, trouble and resistance or counter discourse. Functioning in its reconciliatory and unifying capacity, the *Amakhosi* text attempts to reconcile the master discourse, English, and a previously marginalized discourse, Ndebele. The coming together is signaled, as mentioned earlier, even in the titles of the two plays Dabulap and Stitsha. But at the same time, this communion can be examined as an occasion for potential counter discourse or disidentification. Dabulap is a corruption of the English phrase "double up," and Stitsha is a corruption of "to stitch up." The titles indicate a refusal to go English; instead, they reflect an attempt to bend English to suit their own purposes—an indigenization of English.

In their mixture of languages, style, themes, song and dance and story, *Amakhosi* plays can be viewed as palava sauce, a site of communion, a coming together, palavering to ease talks. But this is a mixture of elements that do not go together. *Amakhosi* sauce is a potential source of trouble and unease.

The performative text marks native distress about the colonial language even in the speaking of it. The performative text of Amakhosi is the palava, trouble for the dominant discourse. In other words, it is a counter discourse to colonial discourse, an attempt to dismantle the hegemony of whiteman's words. Amakhosi text can be considered in Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s (1992) words, "As a double-voiced word, that is, a word or utterance in this context, decolonized for the black's purposes" (p. 50), or the African response in the game of palaver. Elaine Showalter (1982) provides a useful discussion of double-voiced discourse in her examination of women's fiction. She reads women's literature as "a double-voiced discourse, containing a "dominant" and a "muted" story. . . in which we must keep two alternative oscillating texts simultaneously in view" (p. 34). While English is the dominant language in most cases, there is a sense in which English becomes the muted language in Amakhosi plays. I have argued that Amakhosi refuses any notions of fixed centres and margins. The languages in Amakhosi oscillate between centre and margin creating constant fluctuation.

I have already referred to Amakhosi text as a palava sauce which incorporates a variety of unrelated ingredients, that is, different languages and experiences. My dissertation should be read as a palava text which incorporates a variety of ingredients. I have already included Western, European, African-American and African voices in my palaver.

Ogunyemi's (1996) analogy of palava sauce with textuality is useful in understanding the textual variety of this dissertation. In Ogunyemi's view, palava sauce itself can be read as "source of generating dispute" (p. 100). I have illustrated the way in which Amakhosi in its use of English and Ndebele and various cultural ingredients, generates communion and dispute, simultaneously. Ogunyemi identifies palava sauce as woman's text,

specifically, Nigerian text by women. According to Ogunyemi, palava sauce performs a variety of textual functions. For women, palava sauce symbolises communion, eating together and reconciliation. Palava sauce signals women's solidarity and potential for coalition. But palava sauce also marks a site of complaint. Women texts as palava sauce attempt to resolve and conciliate in national affairs. At the same time women textual palava registers complaint. It functions as counterdiscourse. In their texts, women complain against discriminations of all kinds. In this sense, then, textual palava has connotations of communion, gathering, reconciling and quarreling. In Ogunyemi's view, the palava sauce as text "provides food for thought; to gather together, to quarrel, to reconcile" (p. 102). As textual palava, my dissertation attempts to understand the complexity of my textuality. Informed by African and Western influences, my own experiences conjure up a palava textual sauce of some sort.

In this dissertation I bring together diverse influences, theoretical perspectives and experiences in an attempt to gather together, to reconcile, to understand my colonial and postcolonial experiences. Even as I attempt to understand and reconcile my colonised with my postcolonial experiences, my Westernisation with my Africanness, I register complaint at the historical conditions surrounding my colonisation and Westernisation. The next section takes me deeper into the soup or palava of my textuality. I invite a Russian and two French theorists into the palaver/palava of my dissertation. I am aware that, in its incorporation or mixture of different textual and theoretical perspectives, this dissertation potentially generates dispute, quarrel and controversy. For example, it could be asked why an African woman would rely on a white male theorist like Bakhtin. But as I have already said, there are diverse ingredients that go into the palava sauce of my

colonised experiences. Ogunyemi suggests that palava is often accompanied with distress. One sometimes comes across unsalvageable bones in the soup. She uses Yoruba traditions of palava sauce to make reference to the meat and bone aspects of palava. According to Ogunyemi, the Yoruba register their distress with the exclamation, *Mo k'eran*, "I collect meat". She discusses the sometimes dismissive aspects of the rejoinder; "It's not meat but the unsalvageable bones"(p. 100). This suggests the problems of palava sauce. In eating palava sauce one has to sometimes deal with the bones. Inclusion of white male critics can be read as part of the process of dealing with the bones in the soup-bone of contention. If the bones in the palava sauce symbolise contradiction and trouble, the bones, Bakhtin and other Western male critics I appeal to in my dissertation symbolise the contradictions of postcoloniality. Spivak describes the postcolonial bone of contention (contradiction) as the "impossible no" to what one intimately inhabits. I bring these theorists as a gesture towards reconciliation, conciliation and also as an acknowledgement of contradiction. My palava sauce brings in unrelated ingredients in order to attempt reconciliation and also to generate dispute and discourse. In the following section I engage Derrida's analysis of supplementarity, aspects of Bakhtin's carnivalesque and some aspects of Kristeva's abject in an attempt to explore the function of Ndebele insults in the project of decolonisation.

Ndebele: Neither In Nor Out

The Ndebele text in Amakhosi plays can be viewed as what Jacques Derrida (1976) calls a supplement. There are various uses to which Derrida puts the idea of the supplement. Patrick Fuery (1995) identifies two major issues of the supplement that are consistently evoked in Derrida's work. Fuery suggest that Derrida's main ideas of the supplement can be summarised under two

headings: the idea of the supplement as excess and the supplement in its double function. I will focus on the idea of the supplement as the excess of the text which can be read in view of Derrida's notion of the aporia. Aporia suggests defying containment within "structures and logics of texts" (Fuery, 1995, p. 42). The supplement in many senses defies containment. In Derrida's view, the supplement is that which is neither in nor outside, neither at the centre nor at the margin. In *The Truth in Painting*, Derrida (1987b) deconstructs the notion of centres and margins when he relates the supplement to the parergon. According to Derrida, the parergon is "neither work (ergon) nor outside the work, neither inside nor outside, neither above nor below, it disconcerts any opposition but does not remain indeterminate and it gives rise to the work" (p. 9). In his reading of Derrida's idea of *parergon* and its relationship to the supplement, Patrick Fuery (1995) states:

The *parergon* is, in one sense, like the frame of a painting--both a part of and apart from the text which it surrounds and defines. The *parergon*, like the supplement, exceeds the work, being located as essential to it, yet also distinct from it (p. 42)

Derrida's conceptualisation of the supplement as something neither in nor out constantly challenges notions of centre-margin and internal-external divides or oppositions. Ndebele can be read as a parergon, that is, as framing English, and yet as also as a significant part of the text. In Amakhosi plays Ndebele exists all-at-once, in more than one place, simultaneously at the centre and on the margins. In its ubiquitous existence at both the centre and on the margins, Ndebele realigns any static binaries between margin and centre and between English and Ndebele. Fuery's (1995) reading of Derrida's *parergon* helps in understanding the uncanny relationship of Ndebele and

English in Amakhosi plays. While English is more predominant in the text than Ndebele, that is in terms of the number of English occurrence, Ndebele is central in terms of the meaning of the plays. English alone cannot generate the whole meaning of Amakhosi plays. Given this context, Ndebele functions like the “frame of a painting—both a part and apart from the text which it surrounds and defines” (p. 42). Derrida’s view of the supplement as neither inside nor outside helps in understanding the role of Ndebele in Amakhosi as both subversive and also as part of the dominant structure. Ndebele functions both as a marginalised element of the text and as a dominant aspect of the text.

The incommensurability of English produces the very conditions that lead to mixed genres in an appeal to capture the whole experience. This makes Ndebele central for access to a fuller meaning of the plays. The exclusionary extreme permits—actually requires—the very uninhibited inclusions it would repress. In her discussion of the subversive aspects of narrative in drama, Mary Krieger (1990) writes:

[T]he drama, as the tightest of genres, becomes subject to the Bakhtinian carnival, the heteroglossia that Bakhtin himself reserved for the mixed genre (or antigenre) of the novel. Through exclusion, pressed to its limits, the drama must let everything in, if only through the back door of narrative to disfigure it (p. 231)

The image of the back door is useful for describing the role of Ndebele. Backdoor, “umkoto” in Ndebele, conjures up the idea of illegality—outside the licenced. Ndebele is on the margins in the sense that it does not have the same status as English (a consequence of colonization). Ndebele is pushed outside official domains and discourses. But that marginality becomes a

strategic marginality. As Bakhtin (1986) explains “the most intense and productive life of culture takes place on the boundaries.” Rutherford (1990) discusses the margin as a supplement. He writes:

It is at this point, where the potentialities of meaning are congealed into fixity that the margin is established. But it is more than a simple boundary marking the outer limits of the centred term because it functions as a supplement, marking what the centre lacks but also what it needs in order to define fully and confirm its identity. It is then an integral though displaced part of the centre, defining it even in its non-identity. (p. 22)

Ndebele can better challenge the authority of English from the margins, from outside. But as I have already argued, English is insufficient for the expression of a full Zimbabwean cultural identity. English is displaced from the centre by the re-entrance of Ndebele through the cracks of English. This very lack implicates Ndebele in the centre of the discourse. And so, Ndebele can be said to be on the margins and in the centre all-at-once. The same can be said about English. The problematisation of the centre/margin distinctions is strategically appropriate. This overture sets up the stage for the re-examination and reconfiguration of the coloniser and colonised relationship. The usual binary order, colonised versus coloniser, which privileges the coloniser, is rearranged and problematised. The straightforward power relationship between the coloniser and colonised is overturned. Exploding the binary relationship allows us to imagine a different relationship that takes into account the influence of each on the other. In the following sections, I illustrate the way in which the Ndebele language of insults helps to rearrange the coloniser/colonised relationship. I view

rearrangement of this relationship as part of the decolonising strategy of Amakhosi. The subversion of the coloniser/colonised relationship redefines and complicates the coloniser/colonised binary or opposition. The connection between the coloniser and the colonised, the west and the African is less predictable and less decidable than is often imagined. The west and Africa, the coloniser and the colonised merge in very intricate ways to create an ambivalent zone--the middle-space.

Cursing, Swearing, Complaining and Laughing

In the performance texts, especially Dabulap, Stitsha and The Members, Ndebele is used (although not exclusively) to express feelings of anger and excitement, to curse, to insult, to swear, to complain, and to threaten. In the following excerpts, the language of feelings and emotions is mixed with sanctioned language. In my examination of hybridisation, I am interested in how language works towards interrupting language. The language of insults and curses and the Ndebele culture which pervades the plays, can be read as interrogating English formality and values.

The first extract to be examined is from Dabulap and concerns an arrest in the streets of Bulawayo. The scene is characterized by outbursts of anger and curses in Ndebele and illustrates how language interrupts language.

Vusi: Hey, Mr. Policeman. Do you know how much my father spent on my education wena? And I can't get no job. You think it's funny?

Xola: Aha mani. You see, Mr. Policeman, being unemployed does not mean that one is automatically a criminal, lazy youth, drug addict or what you people think. Please, we are not that! We are suffering, law abiding citizens. Sithwele nzima and

liyasithuka lapha.

All: Aha mani!

Dabula: Officer, we not being rude to you, we are sick and tired of being harassed just because we are unemployed.

Xola: We are here on this street corner looking for employment, right! Now, will you leave us alone to count our frustrations!

All: Aha Bloody fokolo mani, wena fokolo, tshiya mani.

Policeman: Ngiyalitshaya bafana.

All (sing): Egoli, kunzima emhlabeni.

Policeman: Shut up! Ha ngizalisotha. Ayika.... Lizonya. Shut up, ha.

In the above excerpt the vendors appeal to the language of insults and curses to interrupt the language of government officials. The abusive language registers their resistance to the establishment, the police. The use of this kind of language, which is self-referential because of its grotesqueness, symbolises the vendors' attempts to draw government attention to their plight. This language registers the vendors' presence. As well, the abusive overflow in the play helps in defining the carnivalesque nature of the play. Juxtaposition of the base with the polite, the humorous with the serious, unsanctioned language with sanctioned language, and Ndebele with English conjure up Bakhtinian carnivalesque.

Bakhtin (1984) defines the language of insults as the language of the market place, the open non-official spaces of carnival (p. 16). Bakhtinian carnival is defined by its subversion of official discourse and by its erosion of authority's seriousness. Insult or what Bakhtin (1984) calls 'bilingsgate' functions in carnival to undermine officialness and authority. In this excerpt the insults work towards mocking, denouncing and reducing authority. The

vendors respond with a string of invective to the policeman's order to shut up. Aha mani, a Ndebele phrase which runs throughout Dabulap and Stitsha, as a language of vilification. Aha is a brief but forceful epithet that suggests resolve. In Ndebele, Aha mani is often prompted by feelings of disgust and irritation. In this extract, aha mani indicates both the street vendors' disgust at the police and the vendors' resolve to hit back. The vendors, fed up with the unfair treatment from the police, resolve to fight back. Aha mani and bloody fokolo which, roughly translated, mean "get lost," "bloody fool", mark the policeman's dethroning and deflation, and provide an instance of reducing the distance between the official and unofficial language, a transgression of the official, indeed.

The language of insults especially the language relating to the lower parts of the body, reminds us of human mortality. Such language can be used to reduce authoritative figures to humanity. The aspects of the body associated with excrement emphasise the connection of human beings to others human beings. In a Bakhtinian sense, the insult and the language of vilification work toward reducing or eroding the policeman's authority. The official discourse that prohibits the vendors from making a living almost forces a certain resignation and hopelessness, yet the vendors' insults are a manifestation of rebellion and resistance that transgress official boundaries. Through abusive language, the vendors reduce their distance from authority and open opportunity to renegotiate their plight. The non-official spaces of carnival language allow the vendors to vent their anger and emotion and to undo the authority of the policeman.

The policeman interrupts the vendors' insults with a language of abuse and threats. It is significant that he prefaces his sentence with "Shut up". Shut up announces his agenda of silencing the vendors. "Shut up" also

symbolises the silencing nature of English. He screams, “Lizonya, ngizalisotha.” Lizonya, meaning, I will fix you. This language gains its force by its reference to the scatological, the excremental, the obscene. Lizonya means to force someone to defecate. Ngizalisotha means I will sort you out. In its persistent reference to images of waste, the policeman’s language attempts to reduce the vendors’ sense of dignity. Also, in its vindictiveness, the language of the policeman marks dangerous violence against the vendors. Bakhtin (1984) defines abusive language in its various uses. He writes “These abuses were ambivalent: while humiliating and mortifying they are at the same time revived and renewed” (p. 16). Bakhtin’s concern, however, is the subversive aspects of abusive language. He writes, “But we are especially interested in the language which mocks and insults the deity” (p. 16). The policeman’s abusive language is intended to humiliate and mortify the vendors’ dignity as human beings. The policeman achieves and executes violence through abusive language. But he cannot silence the vendors, for they respond with a language that subverts the policeman’s authority. They respond with the language of the body. Their frustrations, inarticulate in ordinary language, are articulated in dance.

The following extract from Dabulap is set in a prison and dramatizes the dehumanizing prison practices and pathetic conditions by conjuring up past prison practices of the colonial regime. The prisoners queue up for inspection. They are forced to undress to make sure they have not brought prohibited items into the cells. The following discussion examines how language is used together with the body to assert will within imprisoning conditions.

Prison warden: Woza, woza, mbanditi iwe, iwe mbanditi. Khamisa, vula, Vala, dunisa, next.

The prison warden repeats the above commands as the prisoners open their mouths, show their private parts and backside.

Prison warden (to a prisoner who seems to be taking his time): Ayika,
iwe mbanditi, matuzvi enyoka, Vula, dunusa, vala.

Prison warden: Ndichakusota mfana, ndinonzi matuzvi ka ini.

This particular scene depicts a prison warden doing a routine check. The prisoners are searched thoroughly: in the mouth, body and genitals. The reference to body parts conjures up Bakhtinian carnivalesque with its insistent preoccupation with the body's physicality, materiality, mortality, and potential for subversion. The lower body stratum, specifically, the stomach, the navel and the rectum are, in Bakhtin's critique of the body, crucial to the purpose of subversion of official discourse. The requirement of prisoners to open their mouths, show their genitals and backsides, is a remnant of colonial practices. Imprisoning is here disclosed as an act that aims to control all body parts, especially internal parts. The prison system executes its punishment through dehumanisation and humiliation and denial of privacy. The prisoners perform a pantsula dance in defiance (Pantsula is a township dance originating in South African townships, a defiance dance). The dance that accompanies this inspection is an assertion of the prisoners' will which remains strong even within imprisoning practices. The vendors' dance shifts the boundaries of this dehumanisation. The dance shows the prison practices as a personification of a depraved humanity. It marks an unmistakable oppositionality to abusive authority. As well, the dance is used to reverse order, to induce laughter and to mock prison practices. Through

the dance the prisoners attempt to frustrate the prison warden's molesting authority. The dance foregrounds the physicality of the body, marks its refusal to be suppressed, and celebrates triumph of the human body.

The policeman's appeal to Shona in the extract is revealing. *Ayika* is a Shona phrase which signals a threat or warning, a call to line up or face trouble. *Mbanditi*, Shona for Bandit, is a demeaning and dehumanizing word. *Matuzvi enyoka*, feces of a snake, is very insulting in Shona. *Matuzvi* refers to excrement, the scatological. *Ndichakusota mfana, ndinonzi matuzvi ka ini*, I will fix you boy, I am called feces (bragging about his badness, identifying himself with excrement), reverberates with references of defecation. The policeman's display of his abilities to inflict punishment is part of his self-valorisation. References to excrement in this excerpt work towards the carnivalisation, the emptying of power of the self-satisfied image of the police officer. The policeman's act of calling himself "Matuzvi" (feces) functions to disrupt his self-valorisation. *Matuzvi* is pronounced with elocutionary force, that is, it performs what it names. The policeman becomes *matuzvi*, in his pronunciation of it. The humiliation is not on the part of vendors but turns out to be on the part of the police officer who names himself "Matuzvi". The policeman has succeeded towards his own subversion, his misnaming. The policeman writes and completes his own violence and destruction through his language. This illustrates how our own language can function to injure us. This is what Judith Butler (1997) attempts to explore when she asks the following question: "When we claim to have been injured by language, what kind of claim are we making?" (p. 1). Citing Toni Morrison's work on the agency of language, Butler writes:

We do things with language, produce effects with language, and we do to language, but language is also the thing that we do. Language is the

name for our doing: both “what” we do (the name for the action that we characteristically perform) and that which we effect, the act and its consequences (p. 8)

Like Butler, I am curious about the potential of language to harm, and to misname. But I am also interested in the way in which language is manipulated, that is, how we act on language, how we use language to undo harm, injury and misnaming. In the above examples I have illustrated how language can be used to harm and also how language can function towards self liberation and self rehabilitation. The language of the policeman is injurious. The language of the vendors functions to injure the system, but it also functions to liberate them.

The choice of Shona in this passage should not be limited to its carnivalisation of authority but as well, to the way it extends to the politics of language practices in Zimbabwe. At the production of this play, in the late 1980s, tension between the Ndebele and Shona people was at its peak. At that time, there was tribal discrimination. The ruling government was made up mostly of Shona speakers who preferred Shona people in the police and other government institutions, rather than Ndebeles. When the play is viewed as a response to social injustices and tribalism, reference to Shona takes on political connotations. Here in Dabulap, reference to Shona is a satirisation of government practices of tribalism, favouritism and nepotism that plague the country. In this example, language is implicated in its own misnaming.

The following scene from Dabulap features Xola and Dabula (street vendors) and a mfundisi, priest, who does not appear on stage but is a presumed addressee. In this semi mime extract, Xola and Dabula are lampooning government officials as usual. Xola has been asked to lay out his

plan if he is elected president of Zimbabwe. This scene is meant to be a satire of government officials who cling to power.

Xola: I will walk to the parliament and gazette everything. Set out globe trotting, state visits, conferences, looking for investments for my development trust foundations and going into serious business.

Dabula: No mfundisi, no! Xola must never be given a chance to become president. Eh mfundisi, let's hear what he will do on the seventh day.

Xola: And on the seventh day, I rest and sit pretty and work out a strategy of making those who made me president to make me president again and again and again.

Dabula: Aphu! Xola, you disappoint me.

Dabula: Ha-a-a mfundisi you are going, ha-a-a without buying a watch. Look mfundisi, we don't eat ukuxoxa. You have wasted our time. Ha hamba lapha, mfundisi wobulema, fuseki, mfundisi, wobulema.

In this excerpt, the hypocrisy of the church is exposed through language. Xola's eruption, "Hamba lapha mfundisi wobulema, fuseki, mfundisi, wobulema" is loaded with vulgarities. The priest, umfundisi, who is the presumed listener in this extract, just walks away after listening to Xola and Dabula's exchange. Xola renders commentary on religious hypocrisy. The church is figured as an irrelevant institution. Xola's "Aphu!" signals disappointment in the priest who walks away without buying anything from the vendors. Xola and Dabula expect the priest to ease their suffering not just by listening to their complaints and sufferings, but by buying their goods.

Xola's exclamation, "A ha-a-a mfundisi wobulema" (go away useless priest), carries similar overtones, disappointment even as it satirises the priest. What makes this emotional outburst or harangue particularly significant is its intended addressee, the priest. The vendors view the church as part of an oppressive formality that is not grounded in the reality of the vendors. Hence Xola says, "We do not eat ukuxoxa," we do not live by words alone. Abusive language works towards carnivalising the priest, reducing the distance of reverence between the base and the holy, the irreverent and the reverent. Here language, especially Ndebele, is shown in its disruptive and its unmasking potency.

Examples from *The Members*

The language of insults is invoked as a subversive strategy in The Members. In the play one of the women who is attending the political party, is angry and fed up with the hypocritical Member of Parliament, Mr. Mujaji, who does not care about people in his constituencies. She threatens to undress herself before Mr. Mjaji and the rest of the people. She says, "Ayi ngizakwembulela izigqoko mina. Uyangazi mina," (I will undress myself before you. Do you know me?).

Undressing conjures up the vulgar. Public undressing by women is a subversive act. Women in African culture often resort to the body, especially the bottom parts, to resist male domination and oppression. It is not becoming for males to see the bottom parts, especially of old women. Carolyn Cooper (1993) makes reference to this practice in her examination of the vulgar in Jamaican folklore. She identifies the "vulgar image of the bottom as a site of anticolonialist resistance" (p. x). She cites the historical Nanny whom Jamaican legend describes as a powerful guerrilla leader in the fight

against the British as an example of the representation of the potency of female bottom power. Nanny is said to have deflected bullets of British soldiers with her bottom/anus. Cooper reads Nanny's action as an anticolonialist resistance. She identifies Nanny's action as symbolising derision and abuse of the colonialists. Her reading coincides with Bakhtin's (1984) critique of the body. Bakhtin (1984) as I have already mentioned, identifies the body, particularly the lower body strata, as a relevant aspect of subversion. It is Bakhtin's view that the lower stratum of the body as an aspect of the non-official functions to reverse order, minimize distance or proximity between the official and the non-official, the high and the low and the holy and the profane and reminds us of our mortality. The old woman's threat to undress herself and expose her private parts can be read as a mockery of the officialness of the political meeting. The woman's desire to undress minimises the distance of reverence between her and officials like Mr Mujaji. Mr Mujaji the representation of seriousness is "portrayed without any distance, on the level of contemporary reality, in a zone of direct and even crude contact" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 23).

In The Members, the language of abuse functions as the language of open non-official spaces to disrupt and undo the official. In The Members, Nkomaza emits a string of insults when he does not find Mujaji, the member of parliament, in his office for the third time. When Gloria, Mujaji's secretary, suggests that he (Nkomazana) come back next Saturday, Nkomazana says, "nxa umtshaza wakhe udikiza," a reference to Mujaji's rectum. Nkomazana goes on to say, "Umsundulo ka nyoko," meaning your mother's ass. The language of insults gains its force through its self-referentiality. Using Ndebele to insult, curse, or swear, allows Ndebele to draw attention to itself. These abuses induce laughter among the spectators.

Bakhtin (1981) identifies the significance of laughter in demolishing hierarchical distance. According to Bakhtin, the subversive uses of laughter involve:

[T]he remarkable power of making an object come up close, of drawing it into a zone of crude contact where one can finger it familiarly on all sides, turn it upside down, inside out, peer at it from above and below, break open its external shell, look into its centre, doubt it, take it apart, dismember it, lay it bare and expose it, examine it freely and experiment with it. Laughter demolishes fear and piety before an object, before a world, making of it an object of familiar contact and thus clearing the ground for an absolutely free investigation of it (p. 23)

Besides adding to the forceful energy of the plays, Nkomazana's insults operate in the zone Bakhtin describes above. Laughter achieves a zone of minimal distance. The object, Mr Mujaji, is brought close for investigation. It is through laughter that Mr. Mujaji, as a figure of authority is reduced to insignificance. Language is further witnessed in its unmasking potency.

Why do the performers revert to their own indigenous languages to express anger? Ogunyemi (1996) identifies language (English) as a problematic palava for Nigerian women writers. She writes that the Nigerian woman forced to write in English lacks 'facility with a sensuous language nor luxury of experimenting, the woman writer, as mother, uses her text more functionally as she zeroes in on the problems that face her constituency' (p. 113). Ogunyemi's observations about the global condition of Nigeria and of the problem of using English are insightful. Part of the problem for the Nigerian writer in English, I add, for the African, involves negotiation of self in a forced language. She identifies the rigidity and foreignness of English as a

handicap for African writers. I have already referred to this problem in earlier chapters of this dissertation. There are instances in Amakhosi plays where actors battle with expressing themselves in English with ease. These struggles are revealed in their speech and bodies. They miss lines, stammer and are rendered generally frigid. Ogunyemi's interpretation is relevant for understanding lack of closeness the actors experience with English in Amakhosi plays. She writes:

Nigerian novelists experience no closeness with English, because they manipulate this rigid language that is not their own, and one that has been the masters' instrument of control. They fail to see any milk of human kindness in it, causing [Buchi] Emecheta to lament the lack of an "emotional" language for writing (p. 113)

Resorting to one's indigenous language/s, can be read as a struggle for the search of the milk of human kindness in one's language. One's mother tongue/s are associated with one's infancy. It is the language in which one first learns to express the inexpressible, the yearning for milk, for food, love and attention. It is therefore the language associated with expression of emotion, feeling and desire. The significance of Ndebele as a language to express emotions, feelings of anger is underscored by insistent appeal to Ndebele to express insults, emotions of anger and elation. Julia Kristeva (1984) discusses desire as part of the language of the abject. In suggesting that abject language worries and fascinates desire, Kristeva links the subject of the abject to desire. For Kristeva, "desire is more dominated by passion, by drives, by instincts" (Feury, 1995, p. 91). I find Kristeva's critique linking abject language to desire, instinct and passion, useful for understanding why actors in Amakhosi plays resort to Ndebele to insult and to express various

emotions. In appealing to Ndebele, they appeal to the drives and instincts.

As I have already suggested, Ndebele is conceptualised as the language of desire, the “milk of human kindness” for the actors of Amakhosi plays. English is associated with formality in the most. I provided examples of the formal uses of English in the plays and also illustrated the ways Ndebele is used to express emotion, anger or excitement. The following example illustrates the struggle to negotiate self in English and the ease of expressing emotion in Ndebele. Majaji, the Member of Parliament in The Members expresses his excitement after Gloria dances for him and his colleague. He claps his hands and says, “Ah Ah uyangicaza.” Ukucaza is a Ndebele expression meaning to make happy. On the other hand, his failure to express emotion in English is represented by his failure to choose appropriate words. At the news that the President of the party would be attending Mujaji’s pre-election rally, Mujaji, who is highly elated, says inappropriately to the President, “Thank you chef. I love you chef.”

Julia Kristeva’s (1982) idea of the abject adds to my understanding of the significance of insults, curses, slurs, and explicatives in Amakhosi plays. For Kristeva, the abject is, among other things, “already a wellspring of sign for a non-object, on the edges of primal repression” (p. 11). The abject is related to perversion because “it neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition, a rule, or a law; but turns them aside, misleads, corrupts; uses them, takes advantage of them” (p. 15). Kristeva adds, “Abjection appears as a rite of defilement and pollution ... Abjection persists as exclusion or taboo” (p. 17). The abject language in Amakhosi performance texts shares with Kristeva’s concept of the abject by virtue of its exclusion from socially useful discourse, its repression and its marginalization. The language is dismissed as emotional and needing to be repressed. Also, Kristeva relates the abject with

revolt. She writes:

[abjection is] one of these violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable. It lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated. It beseeches, worries, and fascinates desire (p. 1)

Kristeva (1984) also speaks of the disruptive capacity of desire in carnivalisique, that is its relevance "to the continuous productions of, and disruptions to, meanings" (p. 95). Such an interpretation which grounds the abject in disruption of social order is important in conceptualising the language of insults in Amakhosi in its subversive functions. Just as Kristeva's operation of desire and the abject are closely connected to social disruption, the language of desire and abjection in Amakhosi performance text can be read for the way it marks, transgresses and disrupts the choreographed and sanctioned discourse in Amakhosi texts. Abject language serves disruptive purposes in Amakhosi. It disrupts the smoothness and logic of the discourse in the plays. These eruptions signal oppressed feelings of anger and resentment in the plays. The abject eruptions in Amakhosi, although momentary and brief, displace the ordered discourse of English, and thereby challenge the monopoly of and the logical order or linearity imposed by English in the performance texts. The intrusions of abject language, language fueled coming out of frustration and repressed drives, represent the transgressive elements that seek to provoke and contaminate the English discourse in Amakhosi.

In colonial Zimbabwe, the boundary or division between English and its indigenous Others was clear. English was superior to the indigenous language(s). The phrase *kutsenga chirungu*, meaning to chew English, leads us to view English as an edible language. The culinary references make English seem pleasant. On the other hand, indigenous languages were perceived by the “Europeans” to be inferior, crude and undeveloped. Perceptions of the superiority of English persists after independence. Given this historical, social and political context of English in Zimbabwe, the inclusion of Ndebele, particularly abject language can be viewed as contamination of English. It mocks and undermines the perceived separation of English and its Other and its perceived superiority. Inclusion of language associated with filth, degradation, defecation, brings down or dethrones English from its imaginary pedestal.

The monopoly of English is constantly being challenged in postcolonial Zimbabwe. While the superior position of English in pre-independent Zimbabwe was “assured,” its relevance and position today is in continual negotiation. *Amakhosi* can be seen as part of the process of negotiating the status of English in postcolonial Zimbabwe. *Amakhosi* can be seen as (re)staging the relationship of English and Ndebele in Zimbabwe. In the carnival space, English loses its monopoly of space, allowing Ndebele to (re)stage itself. English is forced to negotiate its relationship with Ndebele in new and creative ways, and so does Ndebele. How English responds to the intrusion of Ndebele is significant. Besides, English ceases to be viewed in isolation; rather, it is seen in relationship with Ndebele. The question is, how does the (re)formulation of the relationship of English and Ndebele affect

postcolonial cultural identity in Zimbabwe? What this means is that we can no longer define ourselves solely in terms of our indigenous languages. Through historical and political circumstances, we have come into contact with English. We cannot erase the trace of English. We need also to define ourselves in terms of how English affects our cultural identity.

In the preceding section I used some of Bakhtin's ideas of carnivalesque to examine subversive uses of Ndebele insults and curses. Bakhtin offers a model of analysing the language of insults and scatological references. According to Bakhtin, scatological references, particularly references to the lower parts of the body, work towards achieving minimal distance between the official and the unofficial, the high and low. In Amakhosi plays, scatological references serve to reduce and undercut the officialness of authority. The language of insults used by vendors is part of the project of the attack on the official and on English. The language of insults is used to attack and reduce the government and its representatives and to diminish English.

I also made references to Kristeva's idea of the abject. According to Kristeva, the abject gains its force by virtue of its hideousness, its subterranean qualities. The language of abjection is troublesome language, that is, it refuses to be unacknowledged and to be repressed. Its sudden eruptions mark its dangerous trajectory. The abject in Amakhosi operates in such dangerous and transgressive zones. Its eruptions disrupt the neat choreography of the English discourse. It destabilises and blurs boundaries between sanctioned and unacceptable discourse, creating a blurred carnivalesque world.

In addition, I referred to Derrida's notion of supplementarity. Derrida's idea of the supplement as that which is neither in nor out, allows me to reconceptualise the relationship of Ndebele and English. English and Ndebele are generally viewed as two separate discourses with clearly defined divisions of labour. English has been viewed as the central discourse, while Ndebele and other indigenous languages operate on the periphery or margins. However, Derrida's ideas allow me to question those divisions between English and Ndebele. Derrida's identification of the frame as neither inside nor outside the picture is useful for conceptualising the function and capacity of Ndebele in Amakhosi. Ndebele is neither at the centre nor on the margins, Ndebele exists all-at-once in more than one place, at the centre and on the margins. I have already discussed how this destabilisation of boundaries allows for a redefinition of centre/margin relationship and exposes the power structures and assumptions that feed these binary configurations.

On the whole, this chapter has been concerned with exploring ways in which Ndebele and English fight it out on the territory of utterance. Ndebele constantly confronts English and seeks to unmask English. I have also illustrated the way in which languages are not only involved in contestation but are in communion. In other words, these languages work together in complementary ways to achieve meaning.

In its role in the decolonisation project, Amakhosi seeks to undo the hegemony of English. Ndebele is used to challenge that hegemony. Ndebele is also examined for its capacity as a language for communal solidarity. However, even this sense of common place is destabilised and questioned in the plays. Amakhosi struggles to resist hegemonic or monologic discourse by critiquing even those very forms it uses to challenge English. Amakhosi is

marked by constant turning, flux, and illumination of voices. I have conceptualised Amakhosi as a heteroglossia of voices, that is, a locus where different voices collide and never congeal.

In Chapter 4 of this dissertation I examine the intersection of song, dance and discourse in Amakhosi plays for what it yields for our understanding of postcolonial identities and resistance. I examine songs and dance as an avenue for the resistance against English hegemony. Part of the challenge of the project of resistance through cultural forms involves the avoidance of hegemonisation of these forms. Part of the postcolonial struggle, as I have already indicated, involves living within these contradictions. For example, while the African cultural past and African traditional forms are useful resources in the struggle against colonialism, they may mark also, rigidity, tradition and fixity. When cultural forms assume monologic proportions, then they too have to be critiqued.

In addition, I explore the ways in which songs and dances function in the assertion of cultural identity. African expressive forms are appealed to both in the anticolonial struggle and in the search for a cultural identity. While song and dance provide a location for resistance, they can mark, ironically, locations for the assimilation of that which they challenge. In other words, African songs and dances assimilate Western aspects in their encounter with and challenge of English. Amakhosi illustrates negotiation of these contradictions. This negotiation involves simultaneously maintaining a vision of the past and of change or transformation.

In the next chapter I examine ways in which Amakhosi engages with these contradictions. In Amakhosi plays, while African expressive forms are used to challenge the hegemony of languages they are not allowed to become fixed, but are constantly being reinterpreted and transformed in the context of

postcoloniality. One of the ways Amakhosi deal with this contradiction is by challenging, reinterpreting and transforming those very traditions they rely on for the assertion of cultural identity. Amakhosi succeeds in asserting a unique cultural identity which embraces change and transformation. The constant negotiation creates a heteroglossic zone in which voices and ideological perspectives constantly interanimate each other.

CHAPTER 4

Resituating African expressive forms: Songs and Dances in Amakhosi

It is no wonder, therefore, that the search for African identity and the growing awareness of the cultural achievements of the past have awakened in independent Africa a new interest in traditional music.

— Nketia, J. H. K (1974, p. 18)

If you can talk, you can sing. If you can walk, you can dance.

— Zimbabwean proverb

In this chapter I explore the song and dance space in Amakhosi as an avenue for potential resistance. Besides being locations for contestation, they are spaces for forging new African expressive forms and Zimbabwean cultural identity. This space marks the negotiation of or struggle for Zimbabwean postcolonial cultural identity. In previous chapters I have argued that questions of definition and struggle for identity reveal themselves in textual and discursive strategies. The constant shifts between languages and cultural practices is read as a negotiation of identity. In this chapter, I argue that questions of definition and struggle for identity find their way in modes of expression, such as song and dance. Inclusion of Ndebele songs and dances is read as part of the struggle to assert and rearticulate Zimbabwean cultural identity. I also argue that by allowing African expressive forms to permeate

their plays, Amakhosi theatre provides a stage or forum for the expression and legitimisation of African cultural forms.

In addition, performing expressive forms in public situates them at the point where they take up cultural and social space and contest the place and hegemony of English. Aligning expressive forms with English discourse in Amakhosi marks a conscious assertion of cultural identity. Incorporating this body of language in(to) the centre of Amakhosi constitutes a repositioning of the displaced and a momentary displacing of English. The space occupied by the expressive forms in Amakhosi is potentially a space for resistance, transgression, subversion, and re-creation. The acknowledgement of certain distinctly Zimbabwean expressive forms implies a transgressive ideological position which redefines the boundaries of the acceptable or permissible. The legitimisation of these forms both restructures official English and challenges the very notion of English.

Of course, appeal to and reassertion of traditional cultural forms opens the possibility of reanonisation. Although these forms take centre stage, they do not remain fixed at the centre—not in Amakhosi plays, at least. The forms are marked by a radical dependency on English, and vice versa, that refuses the fixing of margins and centres. Instead, the space is characterised by turn-taking or constant shifting and redefinition of boundaries and centres—from centre to margin, margin to centre. This continual movement from centre to margin and vice versa, avoids the risk of reanonising or hegemonisation of these very expressive forms and allows for an understanding of expressive forms as being in constant negotiation and change. Although the songs and dances incorporated are adapted from indigenous African traditions, Amakhosi enacts re-creation of tradition by engaging in a reinterpretation of traditional forms. In its interpretative project, Amakhosi is not merely

recycling old cultural forms but is re-reading them in relation to present day realities. The expressive forms invoked in Amakhosi are also reinterpreted in their relationship to English. We witness their modification and their effect on English.

The dynamics of the juxtaposition of African expressive forms and English in Amakhosi also allow for an understanding of the hybridity of Zimbabwean African cultural identity. That is to say, Zimbabwean identity is made up of both African expressive forms and English.

I have conceptualised song and dance as communicative and expressive forms. As Kwabena Nketia (1974) observes, music is a form of communication and artistic expression. He writes:

[T]he song [is] an avenue of verbal communication, a medium for creative verbal expressions which can reflect both personal and social experiences. Accordingly, the themes of songs tend to centre around events and matters of common interest and concern to the members of a community or social groups within it. (p. 189)

This view of song and dance coincides with the opinions of African-American scholar, Samuel A. Floyd, Jr. (1995). For Floyd, the defining characteristic of African is its ability “to translate the experiences of life and of the spiritual world into sound, enhancing and celebrating life. (p. 32)

Nketia and Floyd foreground the communicative uses of African music. African music, in their view, serves to express sociocultural experiences. In other words, African music can be studied for the way it reflects the African cultural, social and political experiences. But music does not reveal or convey messages unproblematically. While music can disclose messages, it can, for political, social and cultural purposes, also hide

intentions. The African-American spiritual song, "Steal Away to Jesus", for example, carries double-meaning, in the context of slavery. The surface meaning of this song is related to its religious meaning. The slave master read the song only in its reference to the slaves' desire of going to heaven. On the other hand, the same song carries political connotations. Among the slaves, this was a warning song. The song can be read as concealing the slaves intentions of escape.

In apartheid South Africa, songs were used to convey political messages. But not unproblematically. The oppressive apartheid government sanctioned and censored African speech. The Africans could not freely express their political views about apartheid without risking imprisonment. Religious songs offered the Africans a safe location to express subversive views. Concealed in these religious lyrics are messages of resistance and rebellion. The oppressive apartheid government did not read beyond the religious surface meanings of the African songs. But underlying religious lyrics and tunes are messages loaded with resistance and rebellion. A song that comes to mind is the song "Thula Sizwe" (Don't cry my people). The following are the lyrics of the song: "Thula Sizwe, Ungabokhala, UJehova wakho uzokunqobela." The approximate English rendition is "Don't cry my people, God is going to conqueror your enemies." At one level, this song expresses the oppressed's hope and solace in God. But at another level this song is an indictment of an insensitive government which is deaf to the oppressed people's suffering.

In my critique, I integrate my discussion of song with dance because they are not separate in African cultural practice. In his critique of the survival of African-American music, Christopher Small (1987) recognizes the interconnection of music and dance in African societies when he writes:

[M]usic and dance interpenetrate to an extent that can scarcely be imagined in white society. It is not just a matter of musicians playing while dancers dance, but of musicians dancing as they play and of dancers contributing to the music, and of both responding to another on equal terms, in doing so contributing to the meaning of the occasion. (p. 28)

In African performance, music, theatre and dance are not compartmentalised as in Western society (Nketia, 1974). Although, song, dance and theatre are distinct realms of experience, they do not exist in isolation from each other in African cultural practice. In African performance, they are interconnected and come into existence in and through their relationship with each other. In her study of performance in art and performance, Mary Jo Arnoldi (1995) applies Bakhtin's (1981) idea of simultaneity to describe the integrated nature of African performance arts. Simultaneity is defined as the occurrence of multiple ideologies within a single act or utterance. Arnoldi also uses Bakhtin's notion of multivocality to examine the ways in which multiplicity informs Malian performances. She writes:

The multiple voices in the theatre carried by song, masquerade, dance and drumming contribute to the production of divergent and sometimes competing interpretations of the dramatic action. It is the interplay of these multiple voices that energizes these performances. (p. xvi)

Arnoldi underscores the holistic nature of African performance. The various performance arts are fused together in the creation of meaning.

Michael McMillan (1995) underscores the polyphonic nature of black culture when he writes, "In African arts and culture, divisions do not exist. Instead drama, dance, movement, music, the spoken word, poetry, song and visual arts are all fused holistically" (p. 191). In Western culture, performative aspects such as song, dance and theatre are demarcated. For example, categories such as dance theatre, music theatre, dance, theatre function as separate entities. The opera, in western culture, is one of the few artistic forms that attempts to integrate various performative arts. In African cultural practice, theatre, song and dance work together to bring about desired effect. Theatre, dance and song are experienced in the totality of their relationship in performance. In their integration of song, dance and theatre, Amakhosi plays deny the privileging of one particular performance art. The plays force an integrated experiencing of song, dance and theatre. The songs and dances in Amakhosi theatre must be experienced in their relation to each other and together for a fuller effect.

Song, dance and theatre in African cultural practice are public events that although privately experienced, primarily serve communal and public purposes. This is different from how arts are experienced in Western cultural practice. Sumara (1996) observes that the way theatre, movies and other public spectacles are experienced in the Western culture is steeped in expectations about the private-public distinction that characterises Western sensibility. He writes:

Although accomplished in full-view of others (in public), this response [to cinema] is expected to remain private during the activity of watching the movie. It is unacceptable, for example (in Western cultures, at least), for an audience member in a movie theatre to make public announcements of her or his response. (p. 137)

Sumara suggests that while expressions such as laughter, cheers, applause, and/or tears are expressed, responses to the film are largely perceived to be private, “owned by the individual and. . . not to be shared” (p. 137). In African cultural practice, the work of art is not owned by the private individual, as such, but by the community. The community has a stake in the performance. There are spaces within the performance that allow for spectator intervention. The theatre develops out of audience involvement as the audience participates freely, at any point. In the West, although individuals experience the performance privately, public disclosures of private feelings are usually unacceptable. The distinction between spectators and actors is not as pronounced as it is in the West. The inclusion of the audience destroys the sense of theatre as spectacle. Spect(actors), as Boal (1979) refers to active or involved spectators, are considered to be an integral part of African performance. Individuals are allowed to comment on performances in process. I have witnessed performances in which the audience has suggested how certain dances, for example, ought to be done. The actors do not necessarily ignore commentary from spectators, but may incorporate them into their act.

The play The Members, for example, provides excellent examples of the disruption of the division between actors and spectators. In the play, Nkomazana, the old man disgruntled about Mr. Mujaji’s performance as a Member of Parliament, calls for a meeting of the villagers. Instead of using the acting cast, Nkomazana improvises an audience for this meeting by using the spectators. Nkomazana walks about among the spectators, addresses them and demands a response from them. Nkomazana comments loudly on the racial make up of the audience. He says, “Black and white, together.” The

temporary involvement of spectator in the creation and meaning of the play, allows the actors to claim ownership of the play to a certain degree. The playwright and actors cannot really claim absolute ownership of the play. The question of ownership and copyrights takes on different meanings in an African context. Creativity is not a product of a single individual, but is constituted within communal relationships.

Having said this, I need to place African theatre in its present context. As I have already indicated, African cultural practice should be examined in its relationship with the western culture, that is, in view of the effects of colonisation. Although the aspects I have discussed as African still characterise much of African cultural practice, there is a sense in which African cultural practice has been changed by its encounter with western notions of art. The notion of hybridised African aesthetics is evident in Amakhosi plays. This hybridisation is signalled, for example, by mixed response practices. An encounter with Amakhosi plays reveals ambivalent responses. The ambiguity is obvious at many levels. For example, while there is free commentary, ululation, and spectator involvement, especially during the singing and dancing in the play, the plays are also marked by a certain level of reservedness in spectator response. There is the private and quiet response which finds its release in the clappings, whistlings, and standing ovations at the end of the plays. I have already suggested that questions of definition and struggle find their way into our texts, our language, our discursive strategies, and our modes. The variety of responses to and experiences of the plays does not indicate confusion, but marks the struggle for a Zimbabwean cultural identity. In the next section I discuss aspects of the oral tradition in Amakhosi plays. It is my view that oral aspects in Amakhosi plays are set against non-oral aspects, to indicate among other things, the

ongoing struggle for identity. But first of all, I need to elaborate my understanding of oral tradition.

Oral Tradition: Singing, dancing and telling stories

I have conceptualised African song and dance practices as part of oral tradition. Oral tradition is a very wide subject of study. There is a vast amount of scholarship in this area, in the west (Finnegan, 1970; Goody, 1977; Havelock, 1963; 1986; Ong, 1982). I will only make references to this work only as it relates to the concerns of the African context and this dissertation.

I draw on Carolyn Cooper's (1993) classification of what constitutes oral tradition in Jamaica for my understanding because the categorisation she offers is broad and incorporates the kinds of practices I want to examine in this chapter. Cooper conceives of oral tradition as including a wide range of themes and cultural practices and verbal styles. She considers cultural beliefs or practices such as religion which includes "obeah, myal, ettu, revival, kumina, spirit possession" (p. 2) and social practices such as children's games, story-telling rituals, tea-meetings, and social dance as part of oral tradition. She incorporates verbal techniques such as the proverb, the riddle, oral narration in folktale, legends, and song-text and performance in her conceptualisation of oral tradition. Cooper's discussion of what constitutes oral tradition is illuminating and much more inclusive than traditional definitions. It extends common understanding of oral tradition as exclusively passing on stories or tradition from generation to generation to include everyday social practices. Oral tradition is an intergenerational dialogue and interaction that engages the entire being and society. For Trinh (1989) and some African critics, such as feminist writer A. Hampate Ba (1966), oral tradition is a total knowledge which really cannot be named .

In western discussions, orality is figured in its relation to writing/print/literacy. Orality is associated with absence of writing. Writing about primary societies, Walter Ong (1982) says,

Human beings in primary oral cultures, those untouched by writing in any form, learn a great deal and possess and practice great wisdom, but they do not 'study'. (p. 8)

Ong identifies print as crucial in the re-organisation of cultures and knowledge. He defines print as the location of knowledge, cultures, beliefs and tradition in print cultures, and narrative stories as the embodiment of knowledge, culture and tradition in oral or pre-print cultures. He further argues that situating knowledge in print has implications in the way knowledge is constituted. He declares that print makes for the easier access of previously unexplored depths of the mind. He writes that technologies of the word are not simply storage places of knowledge, rather, "they style what we know in ways which made it quite inaccessible and indeed unthinkable in an oral culture" (p. 155). He further suggests that locating knowledge within orally transmitted stories has significant implications not only for the way knowledge is constituted, transmitted and shared. Ong's formulations around literacy and the way print reconfigures knowledge and thinking provide the basis for his argument that the literate mind is different in quality from the orthographic or print dependent mind.

Jack Goody (1977) citing Levi-Strauss, writes that the literate mind is "more accessible to scientific enquiry: one roughly adapted to that of perception and imagination: the other at a remove from it" (p. 6). The other in this sentence refers to the oral mind. It is Goody's view that the literate mind has a more sophisticated mind and imagination than the oral mind.

Such conceptualisations tend to lead to the belief that the oral mind is inferior to the literate mind and to the binarisation of oral and literate. Clearly, there are profound differences in the way the oral culture and the print-dependent culture organise knowledge and interpersonal relationships. For example, print has reduced the need for memorisation of information, in print-based cultures. Memorisation of information is necessary for those cultures that do not have storage facilities, such as print. In his reading of Ong's formulations, Sumara (1996) analyses the social and hermeneutical value of stories within the oral cultures and observes that, "storytelling facilitates continued intergenerational dialogue. . . Because stories are continually updated, each storytelling is hermeneutic; each is an interpretation of what has been" (p. 45). Sumara's view coincides with Trinh's (1989) understanding of storytelling as a collective activity steeped in history. She writes about the collective nature of the activity of storytelling in oral cultures. She writes, "The story depends upon every one of us to come into being. It needs us all, needs our remembering, understanding, and creating what we have heard together to keep on coming into being"(p. 119).

The perceived distinctions between the pre-print mind and the literate mind sets orality and literacy in binary opposition, with the oral cast into primitive status. Trinh (1989) identifies the Manichean aspects of western discourse on orality and literacy. She writes:

[Oral tradition) cannot be named (so) without incurring the risk of sliding right back into one of the many slots the "civilised" discourse of knowledge readily provided it with. The question "What is oral tradition?" is a question-answer that needs no answer at all. Let one who is civilised, the one who invents "oral tradition" let him define it for himself . For "oral" and "written" or "written" versus "oral" are

notions that have been as heavily invested as the notions of “true” and “false” have always been. (p.126)

Trinh suggests that current discussions of oral tradition serve the interests of the western world. These discussions work towards primitivising oral tradition. In her discussion of the articulation of racial identity and related terms like “white” “nonwhite” or “majority” and “minority”, Lowe (1996) reminds us of the dangers of binaries. She cautions against “[forgetting] that these binary schemas are not neutral descriptions. Binary constructions of difference utilise a logic that prioritizes the first term and subordinates the second”(p. 71-72). Discourse about oral cultures and literate cultures is overly determined by the binary logic of western culture which primitivises orality. Orality is figured as secondary to literate. In fact, in most some western discourses orality is infantilised. Oral cultures are constructed as lacking the capacity to philosophise or engage in logic, while literate cultures are attributed with higher thinking potential. Orality is also viewed only in its relation to writing and literacy.

It is my view that orality is not definable only in its relation to literacy or absence of writing. Orality for me, includes more than its existence outside literacy and writing. Following Cooper (1993), I believe that orality is not merely the absence of literacy; it is a way of seeing, a knowledge system. Part of an oral tradition involves interpersonal relationship with each other, and relationship with the world and the universe. Trinh’s (1989) observation that, “The line distinguishing societies with writing from those without writing seems ill-defined and leaves much to be desired”(p. 126), is useful for an understanding of the complexity of orality/literacy relationship.

In their incorporation of oral aspects and elements from the literate/scribal or

written domain (head or book English), Amakhosi plays problematise the orality/literacy distinction. The court scene in Dabulap, exemplifies the juxtaposition of the oral and the scribal/written/literate aspects. The Judge sentencing the vendors, uses scribal language. The sentence, "I now hereby sentence you to nine months in prison" reads like book English. The judge's sentence is followed by the vendors chorus and song-like response, "Siyakwazi lokhu" (We know that) and "Siyabuyela" (We are going back). Amakhosi plays operate on the edge of Ndebele and English, song, dance and discourse, orality and literacy, making them accessible to a larger audience. The juxtaposition of scribal/written aspects of English and oral aspects such as song, proverbs, slang and other oral aspects tests the boundaries of orality and literacy.

Song and Dance in African Consciousness

The social, cultural, and political importance of music in Africa cannot be overstated. Music is a social force deeply integrated into African social, political, and cultural life. In his examination of African music, the Ghanaian musicologist, Kwabena Nketia (1974) highlights the importance of music for African cultural life. He describes how music informs African life from birth to death. He suggests that nothing happens without music in African cultural life. Nketia's observations about music in African cultural practices need to be tempered with a consideration of colonialism. African encounter with the western world has changed African musical practices. While colonialism failed to destroy African cultural practices, colonialism led to the marginalisation and inferiorisation of African cultural practices. Adoption of western culture by the colonised led to a decreased importance of African musical practices in many colonised societies. Nketia's comments that

nothing happens without music in Africa must be understood within the context of colonialism and its impact on African musical practices. As well, Nketia and Herbert's comments may, in fact, help fix certain stereotypes about Africans and music as monolithic and unique. Although there are underlying characteristics and themes that run through most African music and song practices, African musical practices are marked with heterogeneity and difference which depend on place, history, economic factors and religion. Emphasizing the uniqueness of African music and dance can potentially resituate African music in a third-world primitivist context where these practices become the basis of knowledge about African musical cultural practices. In a primitivist context Africans become spectacles for curious Westerners. This, in my view, constitutes a process of Othering. Like all other cultural practices, music is dynamic. It adapts to the changing circumstances and needs to be understood in its relation with other cultural practices. African music and dances are shaped by their relation to the dominant representations that deny or subordinate Africans music as "other."

In the next section, I examine the song and dance as part of African cultural practice that is subversive, disruptive and transformative. Song and dance mark movement towards empowerment of African artists. The song and dance space is also viewed as a space where communities of resistance are forged. Songs and dances create a space which aims to subvert and challenge institutionalised domination, along with colonialism, sexism and political corruption. It is my view that song and dance are central to the process of decolonisation.

Songs and Collective identity

Songs serve as specific sites for the creation of collective identity. Songs

represent shared experience. hooks (1995b) identifies black performance as one such location for forging communities of resistance or coalition building. Writing about unmediated direct engagement with the audience as a practice that leads to coalition building, she says that such moments that “direct engagement with an audience, in its diverse forms, remains a place where we can educate for critical consciousness; where communities of resistance can emerge” (p. 219).

The song requires communal participation. For all singers must know the song, the gestures, and the dances, they must be able to take cues from the leader, and know when to join in for the shared experience to happen. As collecting places, songs yield a sense of belonging.

Songs are like stories; they are to be shared. In Amakhosi, Ndebele songs often represent shared experience, collectivity, and solidarity. Tsitsi Dangarembga (1989) makes this point in her *Nervous Conditions* when she describes the festive spirit at the new shopping place in the village. She writes, “They played the rumba. . . There was swaying of hips, stamping of feet to the pulse of these social facts. There was solidarity. The authorities became alarmed” (p. 4). The authorities, that is, the white government began to feel threatened by this sense of solidarity and its potential for resistance.

In their constant run-ins with the police, the vendors in Dabulap, always come together to sing to mark collective engagement. Songs also mark points of solidarity. In Stitsha, Thuli who is annoyed with her family’s unfair treatment of her says, “Oh, ngathwala nzima, I wish I was not born a girl in this family.” Her speech is followed immediately by her friends’ song whose lyrics communicate the group’s support. The song Thuli’s friends sing communicates Thuli’s resolve to fight corruption and the group’s support. The song is a place where Thuli knows she is not alone in her struggle. The

song becomes a site to build communities of resistance. In contrast to individual speeches and monologues in Amakhosi plays, most of which are in English, songs offer a collective site. Songs symbolically and literally suggest coming together. Actors must physically come together to sing a song. This coming together can be read as a recovery from the oftentimes alienating effects of English language. Using English in the plays takes a great effort on the part of the actors. This is indicated by their facial expressions, the effort they put into pronouncing English words, and the general formality of their speeches. Ndebele speeches and songs are done with much more ease. For these actors, Ndebele signifies an internally persuasive language, a zone of familiar contact and emotional identification. Ndebele songs signal a point of reference for the actors. In this sense, the songs become the familiar background from which actors can negotiate self. Bakhtin (1990) explains in his *Art and Answerability*, the significance of the positioning of others outside the self in the development of a consciousness of self. Ndebele is the other presence, the standpoint from which the actors can evaluate their sense of self or personality. Vera (1995) examines the significance of others in the emergence of self. In her application of Bakhtin's notions of the dialogic self in her critique of prison as total consummation of personality, she writes:

It is the presence of caring individuals to whom we matter, such as children, friends and community in which we respond and correspond ensures that we are conscious of identities in a continuing way-in a reciprocal, co-creating pattern. (p. 258-259)

Ndebele songs function in such an zone of familiarity. The presence of Ndebele, the language of milk of humankindness ensures that the actors "are conscious of identities in a continuing way" (p. 259). The songs symbolise

comfortable and familiar zones that facilitate identity anchoring and formation. In other words, songs provide the community in which the actors respond and correspond.

The notion of the song as the commonplace becomes problematic when commonplaces begin to assume hegemonic proportions. Bakhtin's (1981) analysis of tradition and historical progression of language provides useful critique for notions of commonplace. Michael F. Bernard-Donals (1994) defines Bakhtin's notion of tradition and historical progress as incorporating "implicit and explicit agreements between subjects over what is most often written and uttered" (p. 81). When people identify and define certain speech traditions as the most acceptable, that speech pattern or tradition may degenerate into monologic discourse. As Bernard-Donals observes:

Speech genres, for example, come to be generic through their use over time, and what began as a "dialogic" force of language gradually becomes "monologic", in that it loses its original meaning and becomes a kind of commonplace of language for one or another social group. (p. 81)

While the struggle for commonplaces remains necessary for many reasons, for example, as zones of familiarity and points of reference for dislocated subjects and as vantage points for counter-hegemonic struggle, these locations can gradually become "monologic", or "already given" discourses. In Bakhtin's view, monologism can be used as a tool for authoritarianism and hegemony. Dialogic forces or heteroglossic forces work towards disrupting monologic tendencies of thought and language. Bakhtin (1981) identifies dialogic or centripetal tendencies and monologic or centrifugal forces as part of the life of thought and language and as always

being in constant interanimation. In Amakhosi plays, for example, collecting locations such as songs are constantly disrupted. I examine this phenomena later in the chapter. While Amakhosi allows collecting spaces in the plays, the plays deny monologic views by the constant disruption of commonplaces of songs and language. Songs and dances are intermingled with discourse, dialogue or speeches, so that a single monolithic view of a particular discourse or perspective does not congeal into permanence. One witnesses a dissolution of forces which tend towards unification. In this sense Amakhosi plays conjure up Bakhtinian play of centrifugal and centripetal forces. Bakhtin (1981) views centripetal forces as representing the unifying or centralising tendencies in language, that is, the forces that tend to monologism or authoritarianism. Centrifugal forces are the decentralising, dispersing or decrowning forces in language. Centrifugal forces produce heteroglossia or dialogism in language. Commonplaces, necessary for the recovery of dislocated psyche, need to be interrogated and to be continually re-invigorated with newness. In forging new cultural identities, old traditions need to be re-interpreted or even discarded in light of new contexts and present realities. In Amakhosi, for example, old lyrics acquire new tunes and vice-versa.

Besides providing collecting spaces, songs constitute collective memory, that is, cultural experiences that have shaped a society. When we sing songs we participate, consciously or unconsciously in the culture that brings birth to those songs. Floyd (1995) analyses black music and its connection to cultural memory. He defines cultural memory as a “repository of meanings that comprise the subjective knowledge of a people, its immanent thoughts, its structures, and its practices” (p. 8). He examines the way black music in the United States is driven by and drives memory of the

past. He cites Sidney Bechet (1960) who analyses blues and its underlying memory of slavery. Bechet suggests that black music, particularly the blues that his grandfather played, carries memories of slavery. Bechet observes that there “was something happening all the time to my people, a thing the music had to know for sure. There had to be a memory of it behind the music” (cited in Floyd, p. 8). He identifies his grandfather’s songs as remembering songs. Bechet writes about his grandfather’s remembering songs. He states that “Inside him he’d got the memory of all the wrong that’s been done to my people. That is what the memory is. . . . When a blues is good, that kind of memory just grows up inside it” (cited in Floyd, p. 8-9). The memory of slavery becomes encoded in the songs. In his elaboration of the notion of remembering through song, Becht (in Flloyd, 1995) identifies black-music making as the “translation of the memory into sound and sound into memory” (Floyd, 1995, p. 9). Becht writes that the distinguishing feature of black music is its cultural memory. Becht writes, “no matter what he’s playing, it’s the long song that started back there in the South. It’s the remembering song. In that sense music can be said to know or to remember.

Becht’s idea that songs remember, coincides with the idea of intertextuality, an idea developed by Julia Kristeva (1980) in reference to Bakhtin’s theory of language. Intertextuality points to the relationships among all texts. In other words, black music becomes comprehensible or intelligible in its relation to the history of slavery. Bakhtin’s (1981) philosophy of language highlights the historicity of language and thought. His views are useful in understanding the way songs can be said to carry historical and cultural memory. He writes, “All language [carries] with it all its sign-baggage: all different sign-orientations in which it has been implicated” (cited in Bernard-Donals, 1994 p. 108). Song, as communicative practice, carries within

it the contexts that bring its birth about. In Amakhosi these contexts are re-created to suit the present realities. It is in this sense that songs can be viewed as a people's imaginary recreation of history. Songs represent the historical collective experiences repeated from generation to generation, but changing over and over. The repetition of songs from generation to generation conjures up the idea of passing on stories. In the next section I will focus on the role of story-telling song in the project of cultural reclamation and reinterpretation. Story-telling also functions as part of the counterhegemonic struggle against master narratives.

Story-telling songs

Story-telling in Africa is often an interactive performance, with listeners being invited to take part in the story at different levels. The story-teller may craftily leave planned spaces that can be filled in by the listeners. I remember participating in the stories my grandmother, mbuya MaDube told when I was young. We punctuated the story at every juncture where she decided to pause. For example, the story about a man who was a thief would sound something like this: Paivepo / Jefunde! / Umwe murume / Jefunde! / Murume uyuayiba zvikuru. / Jefunde! / Nerimwe zuva / Jefunde! / and so on.

This pattern continued until mbuya (for that is what we used to call my late grandmother) decided to stop the story, unceremoniously sometimes. On many occasions, she refused to continue the stories, in spite of our protestations against her abrupt stopping. But when she told it, we enjoyed the story and our participation in it. She taught us the call and response pattern, very common in African cultures. She led the song and we echoed back a response. Our participation in the story gave it a chantlike or magic

aura. In Zulu, listeners say *cosi*, we are listening, after the story is introduced. Listeners end the story by a ritualistic saying, “*yaze yamnandi indaba*,” Oh, what an interesting story! Sometimes information is omitted deliberately, to enable listeners to elaborate with questions or answers. The audience and the story-teller engage in an act of meaning making. Trinh (1989) writes, “The story depends upon every one of us to come into being. It needs us all, needs our remembering, understanding, and creating what we have heard together to keep on coming into being” (p. 119). McMillan (1995) identifies audience participation in black theatre as setting up possibilities for challenging ideas of ownership, territory, control and identity. Within a conceptualisation of theatre or performance which privileges audience participation, the audience controls and owns the space. This has the effect of empowering the audience.

Story-telling songs, especially in their references to history, can be read as an attempt to assume control over the story-teller’s history. In Amakhosi plays, story-telling songs challenge colonial master narratives. In colonial times in Zimbabwe (before 1980) history was told from the settlers’ point of view. Ngugi (cited in Boehmer, 1994, p 189) defines colonial narratives as Eurocentric. He explains that these narratives forced the colonised subject to evaluate the world according to the way it was seen by Europeans, and so were presented with a “distorted image” of themselves. Achebe (cited in Boehmer, 1994) emphasises the need for re-telling colonised history from the colonised perspective. He defines re-telling of history as a subversive activity that includes waging “a battle of the mind with colonialism,” and “re-educating” (p. 189) readers. The songs in Amakhosi can be seen as re-telling and re-presenting history from the perspective of the previously colonised.

Besides being a re-interpretation of narrative from the colonised’s perspective, story-telling songs can be understood as locations for resistance.

This point is made by Trinh (1989) in her definition of woman story-telling as “a defiance of a whole system of the white man’s lies” (p. 150). The story in the song “Wathati ilizwe” is told from a particular perspective, that of a woman. Her telling symbolises intervention by oppressed women. Thuli’s production is a song-story about her mother. It narrates the story of colonialism from a woman’s point of view, discussing the struggles of women during colonialism and in the present. Thuli’s story marks the interrogation of the patriarchal perspectives of history which are embodied in postcolonial projects of recovery of history. But Thuli’s intervention through story reminds us that the critique of colonial orientalist discourse needs to move beyond a privileging of patriarchal master narratives. African nationalist discourse in its male orientation needs to be further critiqued and exposed for its phallogocentrism. Story-telling from a woman’s perspective constitutes just such a move.

Besides constituting a decentering of male perspective, the re-telling of the story from a marginalised perspective, suggests a retrieval of history that has been subjugated or erased. But colonisation could not erase the history of the African people from their memories. While stories from an African perspective were conspicuously absent in the colonial history books, African history was collected by an oral tradition. Cultural forms became a repository of countermemory or counterhistory. The story is not simply a retrieval, but a re-interpretation of events from the perspective of the marginalised. It constitutes a re-interpretation of the past, a re-reading, a re-membering, a re-arrangement, putting back together or a “stitching” up of the past from a subaltern perspective.

As I have pointed out already, the retrieval or recovery of the past is problematic because there cannot be an unproblematic return to a precolonial

Africa. Instead, the postcolonial engagement with the past is marked by discontinuity. Rather than conforming to a narrative that requires an identification with an “original” precolonial history, the postcolonial remembering is partial and fragmented. In her telling of her mother’s story and the story of the coming of the settlers, Thuli participates in oral tradition, in a fragmented and discontinuous way.

Songs As Collective Memory

Indigenous African songs constitute one of the most important matrices within which cultural memory is embedded, retained, and recreated. Songs may record famous events such as wars, battles, famine, and historical landmarks. A song we used to sing when I was growing up comes to my mind. The song “Kudala kwakunganje”, roughly translated to mean “things have changed,” laments the demise of Mambo, Mzilikazi, and Lobhengula, ancient kings of now Zimbabwe, at the hands of the colonial masters. The words are as follows:

Kudala kwakunganje,
Umhlaba uyaphenduka,
Kwakubusa uMambo Lo Mzilikazi,
Kwasekusina izulu wasenyamalala.

In English, the song is,

A Long time ago, It was not like this
The world changes
Mambo and Mzilikazi ruled
And then it rained

And he disappeared

The story alerts us to the idea of change. The song laments the changes that have taken place in the African world. There is a sense of lament for the past. In this song, the yearning for the past is accompanied by a tacit acknowledgement of the inevitability and unavailability of change and the temporality of things. Part of the postcolonial struggle involves a simultaneous vision of the past, the present and the future. The challenge involves grasping and making sense of history in an ever changing society. As well, the task includes re-interpreting the past without re-canonising it.

In addition, this song intimates the pains of colonialism. The connection with the past is achieved by references to the battle between the settlers and the Ndebele people in Bulawayo. Bulawayo was then the capital of the Ndebele kingdom. The settlers register their defeat of the Ndebele by burning down Bulawayo. It is said that Lobhengula, King of the Ndebele at that time, disappeared in shame, never to be seen again. Although there is a lot of speculation about his fate, nobody knows precisely what happened to him. This song links Lobhengula's disappearance to this historic event, the destruction of Bulawayo, and the defeat of Ndebele people. The song provides information that the colonialists suppressed. The colonial textbooks, in their determination to present their glories, highlighted their victory over the Ndebele king. In their attempt to deny responsibility in the disappearance of Lobhengula, the colonialists perpetuated the story that Lobhengula committed suicide. But the song suggests that Lobhengula vanished or disappeared in mysterious circumstances.

Songs are a key to people's relationship to their past, their heritage and culture, and their sense of cultural identity. As such, they are significant in

interpreting and understanding one's history. Why do songs, dances have this capacity? It seems that music strengthens the auditory, associative, and oral memory. Eric Havelock (1986) explains this fascination with song through his concept of "rhythmic hypnosis." According to him, "rhythmic hypnosis" poetry is performed in such a way (and usually enhanced with music) that the episode does not leave the hearer's memory. Because songs are easy to recall by reason of their oral nature, they are more likely to be used to reclaim the past and to challenge hegemony. Remembering in song also allows for an uncovering or unveiling of repressed history. The recovery of Milkman's (the main character in Morrison's (1978) *Song of Solomon*) family history is related to song. Milkman's memorisation of the song opens the door to his family history.

Shifts in time and consciousness contribute to the already hybrid and dialogic structure of Amakhosi plays. Although shifts in time are manifested at many levels, they are most pronounced in the songs of Amakhosi. The lyrics of songs such as "Idlozi lami lilomnyama", "Sayiwela sibili," refer to African indigenous practices of ancestral worship. The song is sung by the vendors in jail. Idlozi lami is a song about invoking the spirits of dead relatives. In traditional African culture, the dead are active participants in the living and they link the living to u Nkulunkulu, the Biggest One (God). And so, when things go wrong, people are quick to summon the spirits of their ancestors. In this song, the singer is wondering why his spirits are bringing him bad luck instead of good fortune. The song shows a part of African cultural practice which is still deeply rooted in African people's consciousness, the association of song and work. This consciousness exists side by side with Western spiritual beliefs. Funeral songs in the plays are all Christian based. But hybridity, as I have already mentioned does not always

mark fusion, hybridity may indicate irresolution and irreconcilability. The mixture of two contradictory systems, African spiritual beliefs and Christian songs, engenders such contradiction and potential dispute.

The song “Wathati ilizwe” in Stitsha is an engagement with a catastrophic past. The song refers to the time when Zimbabwean indigenous land was stolen by the white settlers. These messages are communicated through dances, in the form of toyitoyi. Naka Thuli’s preface to this song with “I remember” locates memory at the centre of counter narrative. With a sad and far away look on her face, Naka Thuli says , “Baba Ka Thuli, I remember those gone days of war.” Memory becomes Naka Thuli’s weapon against an oppressive system. She exclaims, “Li system lento zayo” (This system and its ideas). Naka Thuli’s creative and imaginative appeal to memory is a battle against oppression. Lowe's (1996) interpretation of the significance of narratives of the oppressed is useful for our understanding of the political significance of Thuli’s mother story. According to Lowe:

[A] subject who remembers is not exclusively a matter of finding better modes of representing or narrating those “histories” of colonialism, modernisation, underdevelopment [but it] is also to retrieve in places other than official history a repertoire of forms of memory, time, or counterhistory. (p. 127)

The song “Wathati ilizwe” is part of the repository of countermemory in its presentation of a history that is not part of the ‘official’ history. The settlers’ version of these events is different from the rendering of the song. The settlers account is that the land was unoccupied when they took it. The song clearly says that the African people were present when their land was stolen. In its re-configuration of the colonial story, the song enables a

subversion of the master narrative and permits the “formation of new subjects outside official dictations and dominations” (Lowe, 1996, p. 127). The narrative struggle culminates in dance. The Toyitoyi dance is an “unofficial” dance that symbolised resistance. The song itself invokes the spirit of the struggle:

Wathath' ilizwe, wathath' ilizwe
Ngubani wathathi ilizwe, ngubani wathathi ilizwe
Wathathi ilizwe bantu likhona. . . .

This short song is loaded as its English rendition below attempts to show:

They have taken our land people
They have taken our land
They have taken it in your presence
Why?

The song, “Wathati Lizwe,” in particular records the dispossession of the indigenous people’s land. It is an inquiry into this significant historical event—how did it happen? The song announces the pain of dispossession, but it also forces us to engage in self-critical examination by asking why Africans allowed this to happen. The song is unsettling in its tune and lyrics. It demands a re-examination of the events that led to the expropriation of Zimbabwe by the British. The song sets up the possibility of re-feeling a past that the current audience may not have witnessed. But in its persistent reference to “where were you?”, the song demands Zimbabweans to take responsibility for the past. The re-enactment of the event fixes and situates the event in memory.

In its shifts between the past and present, the song conflates the past and present. The song also forces spectators to not only view the event as belonging to history or the past, but as part of the present, as having contributed to the present condition—the postcolonial condition. The “post” in “postcolonial” tends to give the impression that colonialism is past, while in fact, the effects of colonialism are still with us, and new forms of colonisation are manifesting themselves all around. This song converges the past and the present and pronounces the dual presence of past and present. The simultaneity of the past and present may be marked by tension and conflict.

The song “Wathati ilizwe” presents a past that is not perfect either. It challenges the African to take responsibility for what happened. “Wathath’ ilizwe” in Stitsha also invites us to self-examine how we, as Africans, participated and were complicit in our own colonisation. Hence the song asks, “Where were we when the land was stolen?” The past is not always glorious. The process of self-recovery and sense-making in postcoloniality requires that the past be seen for what it is, with its own horrors. For, as Bhabha (1994) says, “past-present” becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living (p. 7).

The song, “Hapana basa, No work, no job” also invokes the past in order to comment on the present. Appeal to the past in the song “Hapana basa, No work” allows for the reassessment of the present situation in Zimbabwe. The phrase “Hapana Basa, No Work”, is in the language referred to as “Silapa Lapa.” In my introduction and in Chapter 3, I explained how “Silapa Lapa,” as a language was used to degrade and contain the colonised. In its reference to colonial practices through language, the song forces a blurring of distinction between the colonial times and the present times, making the notion of postcolonial problematic. Where does the colonial end and where

does the post in colonial begin? In a Western world that is oriented to the idea of progress, it may be time to anticipate post-postcolonial, or is it here already? The song “Hapana basa,” in a very insinuating way, forces us to question the views of progress and linearity. Political independence promises progress, but the present in post-independence, as the song alludes, is in some sense, as repressive as the colonial past.

Songs as Counterdiscourse

I have conceptualised songs and dances as social events and as public fora for bringing the people together to celebrate and to discuss common points of interest. In African cultures, indigenous rural songs were often used as a vehicle for expressing anger and resentment at the establishment. Songs offered sharp social and political commentary. Songs had this capacity because they are understood as sanctioned performances. A song could potentially challenge and dislocate official authority. In rural indigenous Africa, songs functioned as counter-narrative for the oppressed, particularly women. Women who were dissatisfied with unfair male practices appealed to song and dance to voice their complaints and resistance. The Shona “jikinya” (a dance registering female complaint) and the songs of nheketerwa (song of complaint) are some examples of complaint genres.

The social and political commentary of song was carried over to the political struggle of resistance by most African nationalist movements. A great majority of political struggles in Africa drew on this subversive element of African songs and dances. The power of song and dance was evident in the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe. Alec J. Pongweni (1984) has put together what he refers to as “songs that won the war”. He documents the subversive aspects of Shona indigenous songs. In his book, Pongweni identifies song as

collecting places for the freedom fighters and the African people. In addition, the songs worked towards conscientisation of the oppressed African people. Writing about what he calls "eurythmics of intervention," Oga, S. Abah (1994) discusses the subversive aspects of *Jerusarema*, one of the most popular traditional Shona dances. The name "*Jerusarema*" shows the transformation of a foreign culture in Zimbabwe. The *Jerusarema* is an energetic dance convention. I quote Abah's (in Breitingger, 1994) description of the dance verbatim, because he offers a very precise description:

The dance is done to rhythmic drum beats and powerful percussive wooden instruments: Dugungun gudun! Kwakwa kwa kwakwa kwa! The body assumes a lateral posture; the waist combines a sideways with a circular motion, the arms describe a centrifugal movement to balance the body. The beats signal a termination and the body comes to a crisp stop. The sequence is now complete. (p. 89)

The dance conveys urgency and the execution carries the sense of immediacy. It was these very characteristics of the dance that made it suitable as a space of intervention during the years of the war against Rhodesia. It bound the guerrillas fighting in the forest together and with those at home on the other hand. Abah asserts that the resistance of *Jerusarema* in the Pungwe (a tradition of indigenous performances ranging from singing and dancing to story telling and children's games generally) culture

was contained in the underlying agenda of befuddling the colonial officers' awareness of the organisational framework the performance provided. *Jerusarema* in its vigorous and energetic routine, as is the case with many other African dances, seemed unrefined and savage in the eyes of the colonial masters. Therefore they were ignored.

However, the people understood the power codes in the action and made use of them (p. 90)

The body resources (singing and dances) are here being deployed for purposes of resistance. The Toyitoyi dances used in the ZIPRA camps in Zimbabwe and used in marches and riots by South African blacks during apartheid contained messages of resistance in their military beat and urgency. The dance is done to the chants rhythm: Toyitoyi–hayi–hayi–hayi hayi. Toyitoyi-hayi-hayi-hayi, hayi. This dance-march, announced danger to the South African police. Toyitoyi performs a war on the apartheid system.

The element of subversion distinguished most African popular music during the period before Zimbabwean independence. Thomas Mapfumo, one of Zimbabwe's most popular musicians, is notable for his vitriolic lyrics. His song, "Pfumvu Paruzevha" (Trouble in the Reserves) was recorded at the height of the war of liberation. It captures the desperate villagers caught in the cross fire between Rhodesian soldiers and the terrorists, *ma tororo* (for this is how the freedom fighters were referred to). The song communicates the suffering of the black people during the liberation war. Because it was dangerous to engage in open altercation with the white government, most of Mapfumo's and other artists' songs were couched in seemingly harmless language.

Some of the songs were disguised as harmless songs. Mapfumo's song, *Nyoka Musango* (Snake in the forest), was a scathing attack on the white government. Although Mapfumo's song appeared to be about a snake in the forest, the snake in the song was in reference to white settlers. The song although directed at the oppressors, was not understood as that by them. If it was about the white oppressors, and not for them, who was it meant for

then? The song was part of the project of conscientisation (Freire, 1970) of African people in Rhodesia. This song and others like it were a morale booster, or *morari* in Shona. Such songs sensitised the African people against the white government.

Contemporary singers today still draw on the cryptic and frequently hard-hitting social commentary quality of rural indigenous traditions. Songs in this category include lyrics about the disease AIDS, ESAP (Economic Structural Adjustment Programme, imposed on Zimbabwe by the World Bank), money, love and other social issues.

Female singers, marginalised in the music industry, for example, have used song to push “dialogue and debate between men and women over marriage and a wife’s right in the public domain” (Chitauro et al., in Breitinger, 1994). Women singers in Zimbabwe have used song to challenge stereotypical notions about women singers. Chitauro et al. examine female singers, debunking notions such as “Music is the business of crooks and prostitutes.” The authors conceptualise music and music-making by women in Zimbabwe as a space for challenging gender discrimination and a space for “controlling and shaping cultural space and of realigning the relations between dominant and subordinate” (p. 192). This is useful for conceptualising the potential of song as social and political comment. Their article provides a detailed examination of the music and music profession of three prominent female Zimbabwean singers: Dorothy Masuka, Susan Mapfumo, and Stella Chiweshe. The authors claim that the music of these three women is significant in potentially creating a “transformative space in terms of gender stereotypes” (p. 188). Concerning Mapfumo’s song, Chitauro et al. write:

[Mapfumo] moved beyond [the nationalistic] to construct a woman’s

discourse of gender relations which made the private public. Some of her songs, in a way very similar to Masuka's much travelled "wife's song to a drunkard husband" bit deep into male patterns of abuse of their wives. (p. 191)

A song that comes to mind is Miriam Makeba's (one of South Africa's most prominent woman singers) old song about the lazy man who refuses to look for a job. In my language such a man is derogatorily referred to as "umatshayi inyoka," a man who beats snakes, or a man only good for keeping snakes away from home. Makeba's song is a social satire on indolent men. This particular song describes a man who stays at home while his wife and children go to work. He is hungry and desperate. He ransacks all drawers in the house. He cannot find money in the house, nor anything to eat.

Iyaguduz' indoda isele yodwa endlini

Iyaguduz' indoda umfazi usesilungwini (x2)

Iyaguduza, yemu, Ifuni imali, yemu

Ayisebenzi, yemu, Isele yodwa endlini

The English rendition of this song might highlight some of the details that Ndebele/Zulu conceals.

The man is searching hoping to find something

The man is searching , his wife is at the English people

The man is searching, he wants money

He does not do to work, he is alone in the house

Makeba's ridicule of irresponsible men is communicated through the repetition of uyaguduza (ransacking). Ukuguduza (to ransack) gives an impression of desperation and of being stranded. Of course, the man is not really stranded, he is just too lazy to look for a job. He depends on his wife's meagre income from her work as a domestic servant in the white suburbs.

This song also carries political commentary. The word esilungwini, at the English, conjures up the maid system in South Africa. It is a commentary on employment practices of apartheid, which separated and destroyed families. The song also insinuates female discrimination. Why should the woman be the one to work?

In the above section, I have identified song and dance in their context as counterhegemonic discourse. The following analysis of songs in Amakhosi plays is informed by the above considerations of the subversive aspects of Amakhosi songs and dance.

Songs and Subversion

Conceptualising song and dance in Amakhosi plays in their dialogic relationship to English allows us to understand their subversive application in the plays. Bakhtin's dialogism foregrounds those moments when languages face one another in struggle or contestation. At one level, the oral aspects, that is, the songs and dances in Amakhosi, can be seen as challenging the authority or monologue English seeks to impose on Zimbabwean consciousness. The oral presentations offer systematic resistance to English. Bakhtin's (1981) idea of heteroglossia, especially the notion of centrifugal and the centripetal forces is useful in examining ways in which Ndebele oral expressive forms work to explode the dominance of English discourse. If English constitutes centripetal forces, that is, the unifying tendencies in the

discourse of Amakhosi, then the body of oral language represents the centrifugal forces or disunifying and stratifying tendencies of language, centrifugal forces which tend towards heteroglossia.

According to Bakhtin (1981), heteroglossia represents, “the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between present ... between tendencies ... all given a bodily form” (p. 263). He adds, “These languages of heteroglossia intersect each other in a variety of ways, forming new socially typifying ‘languages’” (p. 263). At the same time the oral is engaged in the subversion of English, it is itself being (re)created and remodelled. For, as Bakhtin suggests, centripetal and centrifugal tendencies in the language encounter and mix with each other chaotically, so that any particular utterance “participates in the unitary language” (p. 263) and simultaneously shares social and historical heteroglossia or polyphony. In Amakhosi, different world views represented in the oral tradition and the English official discourses are brought together as heteroglossia, characterised by a mixture or variety of voices and world views. The different voices are not simply juxtaposed together, but function to unmask each other. The different voices emerging in Amakhosi compete against the tyranny of a monologic discourse. These voices create what Bakhtin calls an “interraminating discourse” (p. 63) which by definition denies the imposition of a single authoritative voice.

Evident in Dabulap is a confrontation and a relativisation of the given set of voices and world views through double-voiced discourse. The official and the unofficial, in constant struggle, relativises the authoritative norm and thus produces the possibility of change. Bakhtin explains the way in which words smell of other words. In the struggle, one voice is affected by the other. The dialogic itself refuses binaries. In Bakhtin’s conceptualisation, the centrifugal and centripetal are never simply in binary opposition, they are co-

extensive.

In Stitsha, this co-existence is symbolised in the song by Thuli's mother and women friends. Tired of being bullied by her husband, Thuli's mother, runs away from her "duties," that is, making tea and cooking for Baba. She vows never to make tea for the man, again. As she runs away to join Thuli, she sings a song which is invoked by her frustrations with Baba. It is about her resolve to mobilise against discrimination against women. The song is done in a call and response pattern. Thuli's mother leads the song while the other women take turns to voice their concerns.

Chorus

Maye maye mfazi ozeleyo (x4)

Lelilizwe lentozalo

Na na na na na na (repeated right through the song)

Naka Thuli (Mama) Leader

African women, women of Africa

Black and beautiful

In a world of male domination

Chorus

Aha mani (chorus)

(Woman leader)

Even you are his

Aha mani (chorus)

(Woman leader)

African woman, women of Africa

Born to labour and till the land

To grind and care

The children are his, the field is his (etc.,)

The song combines the two languages, English and Ndebele, to bring across its message. Ndebele songs provide the beat and rhythm to the otherwise dry English speeches. English is operating here as a language of expressing independence or rights and of articulating grievances. Human rights, in the way they are perceived by ordinary people in Zimbabwe, represent western forms of knowledge. This is not to suggest that African languages and cultures do not have ideas of human rights. Feminism, for example, is associated with westernisation because of the way in which it is pushed by western feminists. Emphasis on western forms of democracy and the notion of globalisation/recolonisation in African countries has forced Africans to adopt western concepts democracy, feminism and human rights. These notions are constituted in the English language, at least when they get to Zimbabwe. That is why English tends to operate as the language of rights, feminism and democracy. Ndebele may not be sufficient to express these notions at present. And so by incorporating English and Ndebele, this song illustrates how languages may work together to enlarge each other. Both languages work together here to forge something new, a synergy.

This song and many others in the plays move us toward an understanding of postcolonial identity as not enshrined in one language and culture, but in a multiplicity of voices and languages.

Song and Dance: Locus of counterhegemony

The following analysis focuses on the antagonistic encounter between songs/dances and English in the Dabulap, Stitsha, and The Members.

Dabulap begins with a Ndebele song, "Maye Sathwala Kanzima, Oh! what a hard life it is." The song is filled with rage, evoked in the lyrics and dance. The vendors are angry at a government that does not provide opportunities for them. The words, "Ngingathi ngithengise, ngiyabotshwa, Ngingathi ngiye eGoli, ngiyabotshwa. Aha mani," suggest futility. The dances, which are physical and combative, suggest the vendors' indignation. This song is suddenly interrupted by the appearance of a policeman who is speaking in English. The policeman's voice brings the singing and dancing to a halt. The policeman roars, "Hey, Hey, Hey. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 don't move! Just stay where you are. Nwake, What are you doing on this street corner, liyenzani?" A confrontation between the police and the vendors ensues. The policemen push and jab the vendors with sticks. One policeman delivers a warning, in English, to the vendors and then leaves. The vendors burst into another song and chant as the policeman leaves. The song they sing comes across as a counterstatement to police brutality. The song expresses the hardships of vending life. The next song is signalled by police arrival. Xola, who seems to be complaining too much is arrested by the police. As the police leave, the group erupts into singing and dancing. They repeat the song, "Maye Sathwala Kanzima." The next confrontation between the police and the street vendors is marked by singing and dancing. The song, "Wathathu Hambo Lwe Dabulap," (The Dabulap journey), expresses their resolve to defy the system. The dance is a creative choreography of border crossing. The singing and dancing are interrupted by the South African police, who interrogate them in

English, arrest them and deport them back to Zimbabwe.

Police Officer: Where to?

Dabula: Johannesburg Nduna.

Police Officer: Where from?

Xola: Bulawayo Nduna.

Police Officer: What for?

Dabula: Job Nduna, looking for a job.

Police: Border Jumping?

Xola: Yes Nduna.

Police Officer: You mean you can't stay in your country?

The vendors sing as they leave the stage. Music, accompanied by a guitar and drums, introduces the next scene and continues until the Xola and his friends, who have been caught border jumping, are brought before a judge in court. The song stops abruptly as the judge brings the hammer down and says, "Silence in court." The vendors who cannot pay the fine are sentenced to three months in prison, each. Their songs in jail are interrupted by prison wardens for one reason or another. For example, the song, "Idlozi Lami Lilomnyama, I am unlucky," which the prisoners sing in prison is interrupted by a prison guard. The prison guard silences them and orders them to work. But they sing as they work.

The prisoners' release is marked by celebration in song and dance. Their jubilation is broken by police arrival. The vendors stop abruptly with the police appearance. The policeman's suspicions of the vendors' political intentions, leads him to ask, "What is this supposed to be?"

Xola: Ha-a-a don't worry Mr. Policeman, its a street performance, 20

minutes and its over.

Police: What are you, club, politically party, youth or what?

Xola: No, we are just a group of friends, we have just been released from prison, so we are celebrating by showing this small piece of protest theatre about our experiences in prison to the public.

Police: Ha-a-a ex-convicts. I know you must be up to something, where is the script for your show?

The conversation above registers police paranoia of revolt. The police are aware of the power of African expressive forms to move people and to instigate protest, and attempt to silence this performance. The vendors burst into song, in defiance, as they withdraw from the scene, leaving the policeman standing immobile on stage. Their song deals a mortifying blow to the policeman.

The interruption of songs by the police, and singing that is in response to police presence, characterises the rest of the play. The police represent law, discipline or the authoritative. Authoritative discourse is represented by “language that approaches us from without; it is distanced, taboo, and permits no play with its framing context” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 424). The police represent this language. That the police speak in English to carry out their duties in English is symbolic. English by extension becomes associated with oppression, law, order and containment. The interrogation, which is in English, “Hey, hey, hey. Just stay where you are. What are you doing on this street corner?”, is disruptive by virtue of its harsh tone and also by its form and its regulated beat. In the context of preceding musical expressions, the words “hey, hey” are anticlimactic and represent the dry word, the letter that killeth.

While English symbolises law and containment, the songs and dances, on the other hand, represent free expression. They may be compared to what Bakhtin (1981) calls “internally-persuasive discourse.” Internally-persuasive discourse in Bakhtin’s formulation is “more akin to retelling a text in one’s own words, with one’s own words, with one’s own accents, gestures, and modifications” (p. 424). Songs and dances represent this very zone where people can express themselves freely in their own language and rhythm. The fact that the vendors vent their anger through song and dance makes song and dance the locus of a counterhegemonic resistance to the centralised authority of official discipline. The point at which the police disrupt singing and dancing is a zone of potential conflict and confrontation. The song and dances in Dabulap are witnessed, in this instance, as part of the counter-hegemonic struggle.

In Stitsha, expressive forms, such as song and dance, are set against the conservative, authorial voices represented by Baba and Mopho, Thuli’s father and brother respectively. The points of contact between Thuli’s songs and Baba or Mopho become zones of conflict. Thuli’s efforts to produce a musical/dance production, u Stitsha, are hampered by her father and brother. Stitsha begins with a song, “Chiutsi Wutsi” (Smoke, Smoke) which is immediately disrupted by Mopho’s friend. The next song, “Woza Stitsha, *Come On Stitsha,*” is interrupted before it is over. Thuli’s sharp screams, which are a response to her brother’s disturbance, bring the musical performance to a halt. Next we witness the struggle between Thuli and her brother, Mopho. Mopho who is chasing Thuli, shouts, “Shut up.” He roars, “Your friends are spoiling you.” Thuli stands up to him and picks up a knife, threatening to stab her brother if he continues to harass her. Mopho runs away, scared. Thuli sings the following song with a knife on her neck, ready to stab herself:

Baba lo mama, give me my freedom (x2)

U Stitsha mama, uStitsha baba, uStitsha bhudi

Lithemba lami engizaphila ngalo

The song registers Thuli's appeal to her family for freedom to produce her play uStitsha. While Thuli sings, Baba enters shouting, "Mopho." Thuli picks up the knife and runs away. Baba shouts, "Where is your sister?" Mopho answers, "Maybe she is gone to her friends, baba." The two talk about how irresponsible Thuli is to refuse to attend a job interview Baba has set up for her. We see Thuli left alone on stage, crying. The confrontation between her and her father and brother delays her for musical rehearsals.

The next scene shows Thuli's friends singing about Thuli and her production, u Stitsha, and wondering at Thuli's absence. Her friends welcome her with a song about her:

Ngubani Lo?

Ongadlala u Stitsha

Njengo Thuli?

Their song, "Kwelakithi" (Where we come from) is again immediately interrupted by Mopho and his friend. The group freezes in silence. Mopho's friend symbolically silences the music by stepping on the drum. Mopho wields a knife at Mbazo, Thuli's boyfriend. Thuli screams. Mopho kicks the drum and threatens to stab the men if they do not stop singing. Mopho and friend depart leaving the group in fear. One of the members of the group observes, "Now you see guys, here is Thuli's problem. Someone is trying to stop her from coming here." Overcome by anger, Thuli breaks down crying.

Her girlfriend consoles her, “Thula Thuli, Thula” and the group breaks into a song about discrimination against women and they encourage Thuli to be determined:

Ha-ha mani Thuli. Don't be cheated
Ungavumi wena. Don't be intimidated
Ungavumi wena.
You know how to do it ...
You are going to be a producer

Thuli erupts into a song of determination. She sings:

Kumnandi ukuba yimi
Kumnandi ekucineni
Kumnandi ekucineni
Angilandaba kungaze kube njani

Mopho and his friend waylay the male group members and stop the men from singing. The fight which erupts is choreographed to the song, Abafana Bako Nthuthu, The Boys of Bulawayo . The fight continues with the beat of the drums and singing in the background.

The disturbance of songs and dances by Thuli's family is continued throughout the plays. For example, Mama (Thuli's mother) interrupts Thuli's song “Umuzi Uyatsha” (The Home Is On Fire). Umama who is concerned about Thuli's anger shouts, “Uhlaleleni khonapho? Why are you sitting here?” She commands her to stop singing and lazing about and to wash the dishes and help with the house work. Thuli answers, “Yebo mama” and starts to sing again. Her singing annoys Mama, who inquires, “Thuli my child, Why are you so frustrated?” Thuli's story about her brother Mopho and his

friend's disturbances angers Mama. Thuli's mother does not condone Mopho's actions whereas Baba sanctions them. At the end of the play, Thuli stabs Mopho who was an accomplice in Mbazo's death (Mbazo is Thuli's boyfriend). Thuli kills her own brother who is Baba's extension and is an embodiment of Thuli's oppression.

Bakhtin's dialogic is a model of subversion and resistance with which to begin to analyse the significance of songs in Amakhosi plays. Thuli's father and brother symbolise instruments of oppression, authority and official discipline. The struggle between Thuli and her father, brother, and, by extension, societal laws, which discriminate against women, is taken to symbolise the contest between African expressive forms and official forms. Thuli's father's oppressive attitude to Thuli is represented in the following excerpt:

Baba: And you, you are my wife, you too will do as I tell you. No questions or negotiations.

Nina: A ha mani.

Baba: Sit down. ... Naka Thuli I will only listen to her when she talks about work, not when she talks about producing stories and dances. No. Producing dances and stories is for white men in their countries because their governments and business houses do finance and promote their people's culture. Not in this country.

Nina: Ya Baba ka Thuli, now you go back to politics again, angitsho.

Baba: It's not politics naka Thuli, it's true. All people here consume American entertainment which the government imports for them. Wena Thuli who is going to consume your

production?

Thuli: Don't people appreciate foreign culture?

Baba: Who is going to finance your production?

Thuli: I will look around.

Baba: Who is going to import your production? Are you an American wena?

Thuli: No Baba.

Baba: Then stop your nonsense about production, especially by a young black woman in a country that does not have a tradition of encouraging its own arts and acts.

Thuli: But baba, I believe that other people would like to know how my mother, brother and you live in everyday of our life.

Baba: And what will you get for that? What will you get? Jail, if not exile. That is what Africa is good at giving its own creative artists, mani.

Nina: A ha baba ka Thuli, uyazi ukuthini, she does not want to write politics, she only wants to write about the four of us in this house.

In the above excerpt Baba represents logic. In the above extract, he tries to reason Thuli out of her project, citing political risks. Although Baba has moments of understanding here, he is nevertheless part of the repressive system himself. He is part of the odds against Thuli. His commitment to block Thuli's efforts to produce a musical story about her mother's suffering is symbolised by his constant interruption of Thuli's story. When Thuli says, "I am writing a family story, Baba," Baba interjects. He asks, "What about us?" Thuli's story about her mother's suffering and colonialism are frequently

interjected by Baba's questions. At one point Baba asks, "Did I hear you say, white man?" When Thuli retorts, "Yes, Baba, white settlers?", to which Baba responds, "I do not want to hear you write politics." Baba's rejection of Thuli's script of cultural resistance to the hegemony of colonialism and patriarchy make him the more a symbol of oppression.

I extend the confrontation between Thuli and her father to include language. That Thuli's father's and Mopho's objections to Thuli's participation in the musical production are almost always voiced in English is significant. It associates English with hegemony. The songs and dances on the other hand are drawn from African languages and forms of oratorical expression. By extension then, the struggle between Baba and Thuli becomes a contest between African expressivity through song and dance and the hegemony of English. The African songs and dances in Stitsha deny, as it were, the "absolutism of a single unitary language" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 366), expressing a "liberation ... from the hegemony of a single and solitary language ... an absolute form of thought" (p. 367).

The songs in The Members contest the official establishment. The song, Lingoma sizoyihlabela, this song we will sing, is sung by Nkomazana, the spokesperson of the Mbomanzi constituency and the constituent members. The song contains messages of resistance. It is about the peoples resolve to fight corrupt leaders. The lyrics are few, but the emphasis is great:

Lingoma Sizoyihlabela

Helele ingoma sizoyihlabela

These lines are repeated over and over again. This repetition signals the peoples resolve and commitment to expose the corrupt government representative of Mbomanzi.

Another song which contains messages of contention is the song, “Woye, woye, phasi ne ndoda yako Mujaji” (Down with Mr Mujaji). In its lyrics and dance, the song conjures up a slogan which was popular during the war of liberation. The slogan “Pansi labathengisi, Phasi nevatengesi” (down with sell outs), was used at political rallies to incense people against sell outs and all those who were anti-revolution. In this context, it is used to express the Mbomanzi people’s discontent with Mr Mujaji, their representative.

Gloria’s song, Asijabuleni (Let us be merry) in Mr Mujaji’s office works as a satire against government officials. The song is about exploitative government officials and ministers. It makes reference to unfair government economic programmes, such as the economic structural adjustment policy. The economic structural adjustment policy, for example, only benefits the rich government leaders while economically disempowering ordinary citizens. The song also makes reference to pleasure seeking leaders who are not concerned with the people they represent. The satire in the song works through irony. The irony is in the fact that Nkosana and Mujaji dance to the song and do not pay attention to its lyrics which contain messages of suffering. In Mujaji’s shortsighted interpretation, this song symbolises a celebration of culture. Mujaji remarks to Nkosana, “Tshayi culture mfana” (This is culture my boy). But this song is less about culture as it is about a scathing commentary on the government.

Not all songs in The Members are counterhegemonic. Some of the songs are used by oppressive government leaders to contain or dissipate peoples’ anger and aggression. As Cooper (1993) asserts “song, itself functions as a complex mechanism for containing and displacing aggression” (p. 33). In The Members, for example, some songs and dances are used to entertain and to maintain those in power. In The Members, Mr Mujaji, for example, uses

his secretary's dances to entertain the guests in his office. In the same play, some songs are used as empty political slogans, to maintain the leaders in power. The song sung at the political rally arranged by Mujaji, illustrates this point.

Mawuya, mawuya ngangezwe
Zvamauya isu thichazofara
Mawuya , mawuya comrade,
Zvamawuya tichazofara

The above song trumpets the praises of a political leader. This song expresses people's trust and confidence in an irresponsible leader. Given that this leader is irresponsible and lazy, the song serves as a mockery of these people's gullibility. The dance and song here illustrate the ways in which African cultural forms can be used to dominate and control people.

The fact that some songs are used in subversion while others are used to contain suggest to me that subversion is not a given. Songs are cultural and social constructions. The subversive elements in song are created by people who compose these songs. hooks (1995b) makes similar observations about performance and the sense of immediacy. Citing Cornel West, hooks writes:

The sense of immediacy is there not because art intrinsically functions in the manner West describes, rather it is present precisely because performance art and performance artists invoke that sense of immediacy by working critically to intervene in public response to events, in ways that are empowering. (p. 214)

This helps in conceptualising music in Amakhosi as conscious and intentional activity which functions as a counter-hegemonic strategy.

In this chapter I have examined song and dance as a space for challenging the hegemony of English and Western forms of expression. I have explored songs and dance in their function in assertion of cultural identity. I have suggested that locations of resistance can generate into hegemonic spaces. Part of the challenge for Amakhosi involves using African expressive forms without fixing, canonising or reifying them. Amakhosi succeeds in this project because it engages in a constant project of reinterpretation and transformation of the past and of African tradition.

As well, the problem in the project of resistance is that, locations of resistance in Amakhosi also become locations of assimilation or internalisation. Ndebele songs and dances are changed in their encounter with English to incorporate aspects of English and westernisation. This makes the space of resistance also a location for emergence of new African expressive forms which are hybrid. Considerations of hybridisation render the notion of pure African expressive forms suspect.

In the following chapter I explore the possibilities of hybridity for examining and conceptualising curriculum for Zimbabwe. I have argued in this dissertation that hybridisation marks a location for resistance. I have also discussed how locations for resistance are also marked by internalisation of the very practices being critiqued. I characterised Zimbabwean cultural identity as hybrid and as contradictory. What remains in this dissertation is to explore implications of hybridity for curriculum and pedagogy.

Chapter 5

Pedagogy for Third Spaces

Nyasha knew nothing about living, having only been taken to places—to the mission, to England, back to the mission. She did not know what essential parts of you stayed behind no matter how violently you tried to dislodge them in order to take them with you.

— Dangarembga T. (1989, p. 173)

The calabash, which holds memories of the future carries signs of lasting beauty. Forgetting is not easy for those who travel in both directions of time.

— Vera Y. (1995, p. 3)

As an educator in Zimbabwe, I am interested in extending the discussion of Amakhosi plays, initiated in the preceding chapters of this dissertation, to the educational space of Zimbabwe. Amakhosi plays are examined for the way they depict challenges of inhabiting multiple positionalities, that is, living simultaneously within colonial and indigenous linguistic and cultural systems. I explore hybridisation as a way colonised peoples use to cope with the language of their colonisation and simultaneously attempt to recreate their own indigenous languages and cultures and identities. In this chapter I examine the nature of education in Zimbabwe along the same lines. That is, I

explore the possibilities of hybridity for examining and conceptualising curriculum and pedagogical practices in postcolonial Zimbabwe.

The colonial encounter set the stage for hybridisation in Africa. The Zimbabwean educational system, in a way similar to other previously colonised countries, is marked by interaction of the imposed colonial education system and African indigenous forms of knowledge. Hybridity is therefore crucial for understanding, explaining, interpreting, examining and evaluating the Zimbabwean curriculum and pedagogical practices. At a basic level, hybridisation suggests the mutual imbrication of colonial and indigenous cultures. Hybridity is a negotiation of multiple positionalities emanating from “displacements, immigrations and exiles without policing the borders of identity along essentialist and originary lines” (Shohat, 1996, p. 329).

My use of the concept of hybridity in explaining and interpreting curricula and pedagogical practices in Zimbabwe is underscored by a tacit acknowledgement of the limits of hybridisation. To this end I employ a concept of hybridity that is rooted in power relations. I have already argued that hybridity is not a combination of equal entities nor is it a levelling of imbalances. While it is true that Zimbabwean curriculum is characteristically hybrid, that is, a combination of colonial and indigenous practices, it is also true that that hybridisation may be at the expense of the indigenous Zimbabwean cultural practices and identities. In other words, by concealing asymmetrical power relations between cultures, hybridisation may favour colonial systems at the expense of indigenous cultures and knowledges. It is necessary to interrogate the hybrid curricula and pedagogical practices for what they may in fact hide.

The notion of hybridity advanced in the dissertation moves beyond description of hybridity as simply mixing. This dissertation foregrounds hybridity in power relations, that is, as a reference to the formation of cultural objects and practices that are produced by the histories of uneven and asymmetrical power relations. Read in this sense, linguistic and cultural mixings are assertions of power to challenge or modify dominant forms. While the dominated may not have the power to displace dominant structures, they do have the power to modify these structures and in the process create something new. Hybridisation marks the history of survival within relations of unequal power and domination.

A conception that foregrounds hybridity as a practice based on asymmetrical power relations and as struggle for survival allows me to conceptualise Zimbabwean educational space as a terrain of struggle and negotiation—a play between challenging colonial educational hegemony and asserting an African cultural identity. What kind of curriculum responds to this space? One aspect of this curriculum would be acknowledgement and recognition of hybridity as an inevitability of colonialism and postcolonialism. But such concession should involve the struggle to challenge colonial hegemony and simultaneously seek to assert cultural difference.

As I have already suggested, a hybridised curriculum may conceal serious power imbalances. For example, most postcolonial governments think that merely adding African-based knowledge in a curriculum which has been predominantly Eurocentric solves the problem of colonialism. Others think that simply adding a multicultural or postcolonial text in a curriculum takes care of the problems of racism, sexism and homophobia. Adding African content to a predominantly Eurocentric curriculum may be valuable

only in the sense that it imposes a certain re-arrangement on the curriculum, thereby destabilizing colonial arrangements. But power structures may still be intact even within a re-arranged curricula. All too often, African work is included in the curriculum without the willingness to give that work the consideration given European texts and to interrogate either the biases of Eurocentric canon or the cultural values and beliefs of the African texts. The inclusion of African-based knowledge becomes a kind of tokenism.

This brings me to my teaching experiences in Zimbabwe, in 1984, just after political independence. Because the government was keen to reflect an Africanised curriculum, the curriculum was changed to include African writers such as Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiongo, Wilson Katiyo and others. This move, in itself, would have been commendable but for the fact that all the writers are African males. By privileging African males, the new African government was perpetuating the silencing of African women, which reached its peak during colonialism--the "double colonisation" of many women. My point in raising this issue is that changing content does not necessarily lead to pedagogical reform.

In her article, "The Burden of English," Spivak (1993) examines the complex pedagogical place of English literature in contemporary Indian curriculum. She implies that re-arrangement of classroom material does not necessarily lead to change. She opposes any forms of nativism and proposes that literature in English needs to be taught in conjunction with the literary and cultural expression of the mother tongue. She suggests that rearranging classroom material is meaningless without pedagogical change.

A few years after independence in Zimbabwe, the curriculum was rearranged to reflect African experiences and knowledge. This move was not accompanied by pedagogical changes. A certain white, male, colleague of mine

was in charge of teaching the new English literature course. He taught these books from a Eurocentric perspective. He was perpetuating negative stereotypes about African writers and their work in his teaching. For example, he always compared African texts with European texts in order to justify his opinions that African literature is inferior to European literature. Further, this teacher presented an ahistorical and apolitical analysis of the text. As Said (1994) argues, one cannot appropriately examine African writing except within its political context, that is, in its history of colonialism and its project of resistance. This teacher's failure to disclose social and political realities that inform African texts curtailed students' ability to think critically about their condition as colonised peoples. Freire (1970) advocates a critical thinking education instead of a banking system of education which domesticates students. In a Freirian pedagogy, students are posited as active, critical and reflective agents. The reflective stance conceptualises students as critical examiners and interpreters of their situations or experiences. Certainly, the white teacher's approach to education disempowers students. Freire (1967) reminds us also that teaching is a political activity. In his paraphrase of Freire's work, Stanley Aronowitz (1993) writes, "Politics is not one aspect of teaching or learning. All forms of education are political, whether or not teachers and students acknowledge the politics of their work" (p. 27). The white, male teacher's failure to disclose the political context of the texts he was teaching and his glorification of work by "great white men," is a political decision. It reflects the ways in which his white supremacist standpoint informs how and what he teaches. Curriculum changes need to be matched by pedagogical changes.

I want to suggest that Bakhtin's idea of conscious or intentional hybridisation, in which the multiple voices are in constant interrogation,

critique and ironisation is useful for conceptualising an effective politicised hybrid curriculum that begins to deal with asymmetrical power structures concealed in some hybridised curricula in postcolonial countries. The principle of constant interrogation, unmasking of the other, that informs Bakhtin's intentional hybridity informs my conceptualisation of a curriculum for postcolonial Zimbabwe. The idea of intentionality conjured up by conscious hybridity implies that the colonised are not simply caught up in hybridisation, but that they can consciously determine the conditions of their own hybridity. That is to say, it allows colonised peoples to participate in decisions regarding what should be assimilated and what should be thrown out, what should be modified or adapted and what should be left unchanged. This is in line with Freire's idea which places students as subjects and not objects of learning. Freire's work emphasises the importance of the oppressed taking an active role in their education. Freire envisions an education in which students constitute themselves as subjects and not objects of history. As subjects of history, students can choose action and not be acted upon.

At the end of this chapter, I will propose a curriculum that places Zimbabweans as subjects. I concentrate on the English curriculum in Zimbabwe because that is where my experience lies, having taught English for eight years there. First, I offer a brief description of my conception of curriculum; then I provide a historical overview of education and colonialism in Zimbabwe. In my discussion of a hybridised curriculum I also suggest why ideas of Africanised or indigenised curricula, Afrocentric curricula and notions of postcolonial pedagogy as used in the west, are inadequate for postcolonial Zimbabwe. If my presentation of education in Zimbabwe suggests a developmental linear conception of history, it is not because I subscribe to that approach. I am aware of the discontinuities and

gaps in the history of education in Zimbabwe, but I present a linear account to map out a general history of colonialism and education in Zimbabwe.

Curriculum as Struggle and Negotiation

There are multiple definitions of curriculum, but it is not within the scope of this dissertation to describe and compare the various definitions. My understanding of curriculum is informed by William F. Pinar's (1975) conceptualisation. Pinar questions and moves away from a "conceptual empirical" of curriculum. For Pinar and other Reconceptualists--a loosely knit group which includes critical theorists, feminists, historians and phenomenologists and others "more critically reflective of the existential quality of life in schools" (Sumara, 1996, p. 172)--curriculum should include an individual's lived experience of curriculum. The word "Currere" announces Pinar's move away from the conceptual empiricism of Franklin Bobbitt (1924), Ralph Tyler (1949) and Joseph Schwab (1971) and their followers, who viewed curriculum in the perennialist sense of an objective, essentialised entity. Sumara (1996) writes that the word "Currere" characterises Pinar's method of curriculum. Etymologically speaking, the word "currere" suggests a course to be run. According to Sumara's reading of Pinar, the word "currere" suggests an approach to curriculum theorising that views that curriculum not as a prepackaged set of objectives to be covered or a course to be run, but as the actual running itself. Like Sumara, after Pinar, I view curriculum not just as the "artifacts of curriculum (documents, content, methods, strategies, teachers, students)", but as "the relationships that [bind] them [individuals] together and to the way these relationships evolved as they moved through time and space" (p. 173). The word, "currere", suggests the indeterminacy of curriculum. Sumara writes:

Currere explicitly acknowledges that there can be no fixed and clearly defined boundary between schooling and other lived experiences; events of schooling become inextricable from the path of life. Of course, this is not a pre-determined path; the path of life, as Buddhist philosophers have told us, is a path laid down while walking. (1996, p. 174)

Following Pinar and Sumara, I understand curriculum as that which is always in a process of becoming--never a finished product. If curriculum is to be meaningful at all, it must emerge from the lived experiences of individuals involved. In the same vein, curriculum for colonised peoples should engage them in a process of attempting to understand their colonised experience. As I have already said, postcolonial identity is not an already accomplished fact, but is a process of becoming. If postcolonial identity is marked by becoming and negotiation, then a curriculum for colonised peoples attempting to come to terms with their colonisation and attempting to forge new identities can never be a prepackaged artifact.

In his work on liberatory pedagogy, Freire (1970) reminds us that the initial stages of liberation involve the moment when oppressed peoples begin to think critically about their identities in relation to their political circumstances, when they begin to see themselves as subjects and not objects in history. Postcolonial curriculum needs to reflect a sense of negotiation and struggle for self-definition in relation to political and social circumstances. It should be understood as coming from the experiences of colonised peoples, and as a process of understanding colonised experience. Third spaces or colonised spaces call for a curriculum and pedagogical strategies that will allow students to come to terms with the complexity and ambiguity of

colonised spaces. It is not a simple question of discarding colonial curricula and pedagogical strategies and recovering pre-colonial indigenous forms. Rather, it involves challenging Eurocentric models and also re-interpreting African cultural forms in the context of postcoloniality, that is, in the aftermath of colonialism. A postcolonial curriculum also involves challenging neo-colonial power imbalances. For, as Fanon (1963) reminds us, those who are oppressed can turn out to be oppressors.

Education and colonisation in Zimbabwe

In a conversation about education in Zimbabwe with a Canadian friend who had taught in Zimbabwe for eight years, the issue of colonialism reared its ugly head, as it does whenever we discuss education issues in Zimbabwe. She suggested to me that perhaps in ten years time, people will forget about colonialism, and begin to talk about globalisation instead. I found her remarks troubling. bell hooks' (1991) words about the difficulty of forgetting the dread inflicted by oppressive structures of racism, class exploitation, and sexist domination, seized hold of my memory. Walter Benjamin (1969) reminds us that the articulation of the past does not involve remembering it the way it was exactly, but rather means "to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger" (Benjamin quoted in Lowe, 1996, p. 97). For me, this conversation, particularly the suggestion that colonialism will disappear, announced danger of the loss of pain and also the enunciation of another form of colonialism, globalisation. hooks' words provided the comfort. She says:

This dread surfaces as forgotten scar, permanently inscribed on the body, a sign of past terror and torture, aggressively demanding recognition . . . That remnants of the dread remain in individuals, like

myself, who believe our political self-recovery to be complete, unsettles, but it need not disenable. This dread returns me to memory, to places and situations I often want to forget. It forces me to remember, to hold close the knowledge that for people globally who for liberation, resistance is also “a struggle for memory against forgetting”. Remembering makes us subjects in history. (in Mariani, p. 53-54)

I engage in a historical survey of education, not to self-indulge in pain or nostalgia, but in order to not forget the memory of colonisation. For me, writing about the colonial history of education also constitutes a journey towards self-understanding. That is, it is part of my attempt to understand my colonised identity. On the other hand, it is an act of empowerment. When colonised peoples take charge of narrative they reclaim the power to name themselves. Said (1994) identifies the power to narrate or to block narration as crucial for the imperialist subjectification project. To re-write our own histories as colonised peoples is to question the kind of silencing which imperialist domination imposed on us. Re-writing the history of colonial education demonstrates, for me, a narrative of resistance to colonialism. Without fully understanding the process of subjectification of the Zimbabwean psyche through education, it is impossible to understand how and why Zimbabweans think about education today. That is why I seem to linger on the historical specificity of colonialism in Zimbabwe.

In this section of the dissertation I examine, briefly, the colonial foundations of Zimbabwean education. The education system and attitudes to education are shaped to a large extent by colonialism. Education in postcolonial Zimbabwe can be better understood within its context of colonialism. This is not to suggest that education did not exist before colonial

Zimbabwe. As John Anderson points out regarding East Africa: "The Europeans did not bring the idea of formal education to Africa: in many ways this had been established in African societies long before their arrival" (In Nkomo, 1990, p. 25). Mokubung Nkomo (1990) argues that the beginning of the colonial epoch did introduce something new to (South Africa), "a written culture-which required a different educational system." We can explain the difference between traditional and western education by pointing out that "through such practices as grouping children in classrooms for regular daily lessons, emphasizing the importance of reading and writing, showing particular concern over examination results and certificates, Europeans have done much to shape Africa's more recent perception of the school" (p. 25). As well, the introduction of western forms of education interrupted indigenous forms of education by marginalising African forms. Western education led to many social and psychological problems as people who were educated in the western systems became alienated from their own indigenous societies. The female Zimbabwean writer, Tsitsi Dangarembwa (1989) deals with this theme in her novel, *Nervous Conditions*. In the novel she deals with the dilemmas associated with acquiring a western education. Her heroine, Nyasha, has to face the incompatibility of western education with her indigenous culture. At the end of the novel Nyasha is portrayed as experiencing a nervous and psychological breakdown.

In Zimbabwe, as in most colonised societies around the world, education functioned as a colonial narrative of subjugation and an apparatus of power. Colonial education was tied with the project of domination and was characterised by racial separation or segregation. The colonial government manipulated economic, political, and educational structures to maintain dominance.

Three systems of education emerged in colonial Zimbabwe—a system for white settlers, a system for Asians and Coloureds and a system for Africans or the “native education policy” as it was called. The order in which the different races are presented in the preceding sentence is significant, since it reflects the hierarchical structure of education which informed the colonial education system. Education was formulated and administered differently to reflect the policy of apartheid. Education for Europeans was underlined by the need to inculcate the moral principles which under-girded imperialism. European education promulgated the myth of white superiority. Concerning this myth, Vimbisai Nhundu (1995) writes, “the superiority myth was also used to justify educational inequalities and explain why the blacks were to be ruled by the whites” (p. 24). Asians and Coloureds were to receive an inferior education which was to prepare them for employment. The education was to emphasize the practical subjects such as handicrafts, and not academic education. Colonialist apologist, Norman Atkinson(1972) [incidentally, my former professor] reports that the European government “considered that for Asians and Coloureds there should be a departure from the courses normally offered to European pupils; languages other than English and Afrikaans would be of little value; mathematics should be taught in a practical form, and science along broad, general lines; manual work should be stressed, and offered among the examination subjects; book-keeping might be offered if there was sufficient demand” (p. 86). Although Asians and Coloured were perceived by whites to be inferior to whites, they were perceived and considered themselves superior to Africans. Hence, Asians and Coloureds engaged in discriminatory practices against Africans, such as not allowing Africans to attend their schools.

African Education: Education for Servitude and Compliance

Education for Africans was a means to serve narrow class, race, religious, gender and other sectional interests. Atkinson (1972) writes:

Africans were to be given such training as would enable them to become more efficient workers in agriculture and industry, and perhaps render more efficient service to European employers. There was no great interest in giving them instruction in the three Rs. (p. 90)

Colonial educational policies sought to exclude Africans from political, economic and social participation in the colony of Rhodesia. The colonialists achieved this exclusion by containing what Africans could know. In line with this policy of exclusion and containment, the colonialists imposed an education system which denied the African useful knowledge about surviving in the society they (colonialists) were creating. Missionaries, who were the first to bring western education to Zimbabwe and the whole of Africa, are often applauded as having been benevolent towards Africans. Missionaries were interested in educating Africans only to facilitate conversions to Christianity. Their mission is often captured in three words which all begin with a C: Christianity, Civilisation and Commercialism. Their curricula consisted in teaching Africans literacy in the Bible, hygiene lessons, carpentry and farming (which Africans already practiced). It is often said that David Livingstone, the cum-Christian explorer, prospector, missionary, held the Bible while he hid a gun behind his back. Nhundu (1995) provides a detailed account of missionary education and its effect on the Zimbabwean psyche. On the other hand, the colonial government, pushed a different kind of servitude from the missionaries. The colonialists aimed for an education that gave Africans the training needed to fulfill European needs for African

labour. Africans were doubly, if not thrice claimed. Their allegiance was required by the missionaries and the colonial government, and at the same time they had their own cultural obligations. How can a man or woman serve two, let alone three masters? Dickson Mungazi (1991) observes:

The colonial government never wavered in its belief that the education of Africans must prepare them to be efficient drawers of water and hewers of wood for their white masters: although with the passage of time it acquired more subtle techniques to conceal its intent.

The colonial agenda to educate the African for servitude is cited in Mungazi's work (1991), in which he identifies the colonial position on African education. He writes:

I do not consider it right that we should educate the Native in any way that will unfit him for service. The native is and should always be the hewer of wood and the drawer of water for his master. (p. 9)

This kind of education created a mentality of servitude and compliance in the African. Regarding colonial education, Mungazi (1991) concludes that the colonialists' emphasis on practical training and manual labour concealed their fears and suggests vulnerability in their position. According to Mungazi, the real reason was that the government feared that a good academic education would enable Africans to acquire the essential elements of critical thinking, thereby enabling them to question the structure of colonial society. Education was for quelling potential rebellion. Writing about how education was used to consolidate colonial power in India, Viswanathan Gauri (1992) says, "The British position itself was a fragile one in that it was the role of educational decisions to fortify, given the challenge posed by historical

contingency and confrontation" (p. 10). He argues that British policy-making did not necessarily correspond with what was in reality occurring in the subjugated population.

At one level, representation of Indians as morally and intellectually deficient provided the ameliorative motive and self-righteous justification for colonial intervention. But at another level that same system of representation, depicting the natives as irrational, inscrutable, unstable, and volatile, doomed British rulers to inhabiting an imagined, dreaded world of imminent rebellion and resistance. (ibid., p. 11)

Gauri identifies Indian agency and the ways in which it shaped Indian education. He writes:

For this reason it is entirely impossible to study the ideology of British education quite independently of an account of how Indians actually received, reacted to, imbibed, manipulated, reinterpreted, or resisted the ideological content of British literary education. (ibid.,)

In her explication of the myth of white superiority in colonial Zimbabwe, Nhundu (1995) argues that education for Africans in colonial Zimbabwe was underlined by fear on the part of the colonialists, a fear not only of African rebellion, but a fear that the myth of white superiority would be undermined. Thus, education for Africans was arranged such that Africans would always consider themselves inferior to whites. She writes:

Educational programmes were designed to preserve such myths. For example, primary reading textbooks were illustrated with pictures of white people only. Where pictures for blacks were

used, these appeared as servants working in white homes or were portrayed working in inferior occupations. Thus, black primary school children, indoctrinated at an early age into accepting characterizations of blacks as an inferior race incapable of attaining greater heights, experienced loss of self-esteem, confidence and human dignity. (p. 24)

But denying Africans useful and relevant education, for the system the colonialists had created, was to become a point of conflict, as Africans began to challenge the unequal education system. Sybille Kuster (1994) presents a comprehensive and detailed examination of Zimbabwean responses to colonial education in the years between 1890-1962. In her attempt to interpret African agency, Kuster suggests that Africans willingly embraced colonial education. In other words, she suggests that Africans cooperated in their own colonisation. I find this argument a little troubling, though. In an attempt to make a case for African agency, the strategy of blaming the victim is repeated once again. Further, by implying that Africans readily embraced colonialism, she minimises the evils of colonialism. By putting emphasis on African agency, the historic agenda of imperialist conquest and control through education, is concealed. The title of her book, *Neither Imperialism, Nor Precious Gift of Civilization* discloses this problematic. It would be a mistake, on my part, to deny agency to the colonised in order to show the force of colonialism. I have been arguing for agency throughout this dissertation. However, I realize that agency is not a given. There are conditions which determine agency.

The argument that colonial education was not in fact imposed on Africans but, rather, Africans sought after it in their eagerness to be educated

occludes the fact that education was presented by the colonialist as something that was to be desired. Having reduced the African to bestiality, the colonialist propped up a myth about the values of western education. They presented education as something that was intrinsically valuable, as something that would civilise and save Africans from bestiality, but that they were to be excluded from. In *Black Skin, White Mask* (1967), Fanon argues that the colonised, by virtue of their condition of colonisation, begin to participate in the process of their own subjection through the internalisation of inferiority. It is in understanding the gradual process and final effect of this consent that colonialisation can be examined and defeated, especially understanding the “epidermalisation” of inferiority. Africans’ demand for better education can be explained as a symptom of the internalisation of inferiority. On the other hand, it makes sense to demand better education if education is being used as a means to exclude. Demand for better education by Africans, is not political cooptation, as Kuster seems to suggest, but can be explained as the embryonic stages of resistance. Kuster (1994) admits that Africans questioned the type of schooling which basically undermined their chances of receiving an academically-oriented education because it was this form of schooling which promised the only access available to better payment and higher social status (p. 166). She writes that “[T]he resentment of adapted policies and the demand for an academically-oriented education was taken up and more forcefully voiced by leaders of African proto-nationalist organisations, which came into existence in the 1920 and 1930s” (ibid., p. 169). Such protestations were voiced by people like Martha Ngano, the newly-appointed Southern Rhodesia Bantu Voters’ Association secretary. Ngano denounced the provision of industrial schools and of Third Class schools in particular, which, she said, were “absolutely meant to keep the black man down” (in Kuster, p. 169).

Prospective voters had to demonstrate a certain mastery of the English language, the teaching of which, however, was not at all a part of government educational priorities (Kuster, p. 173). At another meeting, Ngano complained that it was unfair to make literacy in English a prerequisite for voting while the education blacks received did not prepare them for this. According to Kuster, the colonial educationists discouraged all advanced teaching and “all the outside natives’ schools had been teaching the aboriginal language” (Kuster, p. 171). She demanded that the government either change the voting qualifications or provide adequate African educational facilities including the training of African pupils in English (in Kuster, p. 171). Kuster writes:

Thus in the context of moderate proto-nationalist African politics, educated Africans in particular began to view a western-type, academically-oriented education as a means of achieving the right to vote and greater African participation in the political process. They consequently criticized the political implications of an adapted form of education and articulated their preference for literary instruction in African schools. (in Kuster, p. 171)

Atkinson (1972) cites the Domboshava strike as an example of African agency. The Domboshava students went on strike to challenge what they perceived to be unfair colonial educational practices. According to archival records, thirty boys went on strike for being refused to read an English text that they wanted to read. Atkinson wrongly attributes the strike to African impatience with their progress in English language. He suggests further, that the students thought they were being kept back in English by being denied an English book. Knowledge of English became increasingly necessary as English

became the language of employment and economic advancement. It is my view that students did not just want more English, for the sake of English, as Atkinson seems to suggest. The students' demand for English marks the questioning of unfair colonial practices. For example, in an attempt to curtail rebellion and the economic advancement of Africans, the colonial administration limited the amount of English Africans could learn. As far as learning English was concerned, Africans were to learn English only in order to take instructions--to obey. Nhundu (1995) gives examples of some of the language that was used to control and contain Africans. She cites words, like "yes master," "yes baas/boss." This was a way of answering white folk irrespective of their age. They, in turn, infantilised Africans by referring to them "boy" or "girl" irrespective of age. Yvonne Vera (1995a), Zimbabwean female Commonwealth award winning writer, discusses language and its uses in colonial domination. She writes that the language, "Silapa lapa" which the settlers used to communicate with natives was a language used to control them. She writes, "Silapa lapa is a language of orders, commands, fences" (p. 30).

Afraid of insurrection and rebellion and what they considered general chaos, the colonial government gradually provided a liberal kind of education. There is little doubt that a great deal of strategic maneuvering went into the creation of a blueprint for social control in the guise of a literary education, for the education which the colonised received was used to further alienate them from their own cultures and to perpetuate the myth of white superiority. Colonial education was a way of alienating the colonised from their own cultures.

George Dei, in an unpublished paper, makes a significant observation about his colonial education in Ghana. He suggests that his frustrations were

not so much about the content of colonial curricula, but rather what he was not taught. He writes,

Even to this day I am angry about what was NOT taught. I have wondered in my later years why learning about Niagara Falls in Canada was more important than being taught about local rivers in my village. After all, these were the rivers in which I swam, bathed, caught fish and fetched water for household use. (Dei, p. 15)

According to Vivek Dhareshwar (1995), “The relationship of colonial domination gets perpetuated as agents internalise and constantly reiterate the norms of another culture and its superiority” (p. 85). In all this the school is a localised manifestation of the power of the colonial apparatus. It plays a distinctive role in “the construction of the colonial subject as the effect of stereotypical discourse” (p. 85). He argues further:

The abstract education provides him with knowledge about European history-about French kings and ministers, about European landscapes; enables him to write essays about French, English and Russian films. But this education does not leave him ignorant about his island and its community, it disengages him from them by subjecting him to stereotypical knowledge about them, by devaluing his local knowledge and community, the attempt to disentangle oneself from the camouflage of people. (p. 92)

Michelle Cliff’s (1985) novel, *Abeng*, set in postcolonial Jamaica, exposes the classroom as one of the most significant locations for subject-formation. Her novel narrates in detail the workings of colonial education in Jamaica, especially its alienating nature. She writes:

These manuals, for the most part, stressed reading and writing and simple arithmetic. The history, of course, of the English monarchs. The history of Jamaica as it pertained to England--the names of the admirals who secured the island from the Spanish, the treaties which had made the island officially British. . . The manuals were oblivious to any specific facts about the nature of Mr. Powell's class. No doubt the same manuals were shipped to villages in Nigeria, schools in Hong Kong, even the settlements in the Northwest Territory--anywhere that the "sun never set," with the only differences occurring in the pages which described the history of the colony in question as it pertained to England. (p. 85)

I have presented the colonial education system as a cultural institution implicated in the subjugation and control of Africans. The colonial enterprise depended on the legitimization of white superiority and the subjugation of Africans. Colonial education functioned to sustain and reproduce an unequal society based on race, class and gender.

Education in postcolonial Zimbabwe: Narratives of Revision

Education becomes a site of decolonisation at independence. The task of decolonisation involves deconstruction of the (self)-representations of colonial subjects. In other words, it is the attempt to alter ways in which the colonised are constituted as subjects by the colonial educational apparatus, opening the possibility that education will ultimately help us to break out completely of the subjectification constituted in colonial narratives of superiority. According to Fanon (1963) decolonisation does not necessarily imply an end of colonialism. Decolonisation, in Fanon's view, is an ongoing

project of resistance struggle that continues well into the postcolonial. The postcolonial era does not signal an end of exploitation and oppression. In his critique of the limits of nationalism, Fanon shows how nationalism can reproduce the very repressive structures it seeks to dismantle. Hence Fanon calls for an alternative order that challenges and breaks with structures of domination and is characterised by self-reflexivity, that is, an order that continually criticizes the institutions of rule. Fanon's conceptualisation of decolonisation as an ongoing project of resistance struggles is useful in understanding decolonisation not as single act and not as an always successful endeavour.

At independence, in 1980, the government of Zimbabwe had the opportunity of redressing the orthodoxies and injustices of colonial education by attempting to revise the colonial curriculum. The revisions were guided by Socialist-Marxist principles (Socialist countries provided the material and moral support during the Zimbabwean liberation war). The new curriculum was to reflect ideals of liberation and socialist ideas. Hence slogans such as education for liberation, education with production, education for self-reliance and education for national development were adopted.

Nhundu (1995) gives a detailed examination of why these ideals, particularly education with production, were unsuccessful in Zimbabwe. Nhundu attributes failure partly to the government, whom she charges for having paid lip service to the ideals. She writes that the political leaders and the 'bourgeois African' "had the chance to do something about socialism rather than just talk about it" (p. 46). She writes that "While there was a lot of talk about socialism after Zimbabwe declared itself socialist in 1980, there was no corresponding evidence to show how society was being changed from capitalism to socialism" (p. 46). Nhundu identifies a gap between government

theoretical pronouncements and government actual practices. She attributes failure of educational projects to government rhetoric. Following Fanon, Said (1993) discusses the significance of transcending rhetoric on identity. He cautions about the dangers of remaining “trapped in the emotional self-indulgence of celebrating it (p. 229). While I agree that political will was lacking on the part of political leaders to implement socialist changes in education, there are other more compelling reasons why socialism did not work in education. First of all, Socialist-Marxist ideology is not suited culturally to African indigenous society. And secondly, colonialism has entrenched certain perceptions about education that were difficult to dislodge. In my discussion of the present education system, I will focus on the second reason.

The struggle to come up with an appropriate education system for Zimbabwe’s culture is a difficult one given the influence of colonial education in Zimbabwe. Seventeen years after independence, the educational system still reflects a colonial bias, both in its content and pedagogy. People still look for a British or western style of education. This is reflected in the way Zimbabweans take “O” level and “A” level examinations seriously (“O” and “A” level examinations were traditionally set by Cambridge University. “O” Level examinations are now set by Zimbabwe in consultation with Cambridge University). Ruth Weiss (1994) observes that the school system in Zimbabwe is still based largely on the colonial education system. She writes, “The fact that all secondary schools aspired to British-style “O” levels was not a good thing.” (p. 116) She also comments:

[F]oreigners were dismayed at the rigidity of Zimbabwe’s school system, modelled on white pre-independence education. It surprised visitors to see black boys in formal attire, white blazers, ties and caps, even old-

style boaters. It's totally incongruous' they exclaimed, until it was explained that Rhodes had created 'little England-on-the-veld' schools, complete with British public-school principles of leadership, sportsmanship and of course male virtues, as befitted Rhodesia's masculine society. (p. 116)

Barbara Robinson (1996) makes similar observations about the colonial aspects of Zimbabwean postcolonial education. Robinson discusses colonial influences and remnants on the Zimbabwean education system. She writes:

The British public school is alive and kicking, in Zimbabwe where the vast majority of schools are modelled on the British system of stiff upper lip inflexibility, and a prefect body, second only in authority to the headmaster or headmistress. (p. 88)

The predominance of colonial education principles based on British school systems is troubling. What I find disturbing is that African cultural forms are further and further marginalised. It is now necessary to develop a hybrid curriculum which acknowledges its roots in colonialism yet simultaneously recognizes the value of African indigenous cultural forms in education-without canonising either.

Indigenisation/Africanisation of Curriculum

Political independence in Africa brought about an emphasis on Africanisation or indigenisation of virtually everything that had previously been run by colonialists. Indigenisation programmes are part of the decolonisation process of questioning of colonial structures. These programmes are a response to a concern about the appropriateness of

curriculum based on western definitions of education. It is argued that western based education does not address educational questions in terms of African cultural and social dynamics. Having been tailor-made specifically for the western world, western-based curricula often fails to recognize the cultural integrity of African values and attitudes. Some critics of western education for Africans have dismissed western formulations of educational theory for other nations as cultural imperialism (Carnoy, 1974, Wa Thiongo, 1982). These critics challenge the validity and legitimacy of western educational practices in non-western countries. For example, emphasis on white European history and culture perpetuates the marginalisation of African forms of knowledge and practices alienating Africans who are unable to feel an attachment to the content being offered. Indigenisation or Africanisation as a response takes various forms. In education, there is an emphasis on the Africanisation or indigenisation of the curriculum. For example, western content is replaced by African content. In literature, for example, African writing is added onto or replaces the Western canon. There is an attempt to contextualise the learning and make it fit the African cultural, social economic and political setting.

But Africanisation projects have not been entirely successful. One reason for this failure is that the premise for indigenisation is problematic. Africanisation is based on purist assumptions of Africa. These arguments assume a pure Africa untouched by colonisation. Indigenisation draws on the very notion of a hitherto repressed and devalued African experience to form the basis of a new African epistemology. But the problem with positing the African repressed histories as a basis for pedagogy is that it sets up binaries. In projects of indigenisation, African knowledge and content is often held up against (and posited as a corrective to) the category of imposed colonial

knowledge. The African/colonial opposition simply masks the way in which African subjectivity has been constituted by colonisation. A consideration of the Afrocentricism in the United States might illuminate some of the problems with Africanisation.

Afrocentricism: Narrative of Reclamation

Afrocentricism is used as a pedagogy of resistance by African-American, African-Canadian and others in the Diaspora, who are marginalised in the mainstream education system of North America. Afrocentricism is the attempt to reclaim the significance of Africa not only in the history of African-Americans but in the whole world. According to Mofe Kete Asante (1990) one of the leading proponents of Afrocentricism, Afrocentricism involves “[The] study of phenomena, events, ideas and personalities related to Africa” (p. 14).

Annette Henry (1990) views Afrocentricism in its liberatory capacity as a pedagogy for the marginalised. Although she is not comfortable with its sometimes narrow, neo-nationalist, heterosexist fundamentalism, she is still convinced of its value at this historical moment, for those “trying to invent [their] own words and [their] own experiences on the margins, using the dominant language” (p. 14). She writes:

I have spent many months and moments deliberating about, wrestling with and against the notion of Afrocentricism as it might pertain to a pedagogy of resistance for children of African descent. I have despised it. Defied it. Dismissed it. Continually I return to it. Because as I deconstruct the term, I recognize the layers of meaning and desire it portrays for an alternative, perhaps even oppositional, but indeed liberatory pedagogy for children of African descent. (p. 13)

She views Afrocentric curricula as offering a useful way to (re) conceptualise Black educational theory.

Afrocentricism as a theory has been critiqued for its underlying assumptions about culture and identity. Underlying Afrocentricism is the assumption that since the western curriculum thrives on the marginalisation of the culture of the colonised, identities can only be fully redeemed by replacing the western and Eurocentric bias of the curriculum with non-western minority educational content. Rejection of a Eurocentric knowledge is supposed to be part of the journey towards self-definition.

Paul Gilroy (1993) problematises the relationship between tradition and modernity. He suggests that Afrocentricism is questionable because it seems to posit a linear idea of time. He writes:

[Time] that is enclosed at each end by the grand narrative of African advancement. This is momentarily interrupted by slavery and colonialism, which make no substantial impact upon African tradition or the capacity of black intellectuals to align themselves with it. (p. 190)

Gilroy undermines the appeal to pure roots that underlies Afrocentricism. He also suggests that Afrocentricism be aptly called, Americocentricity, because, “[i]ts proponents frequently struggle to place their histories onto a bigger diaspora web but have no inhibitions about claiming a special status for their particular version of African culture” (ibid.,). He adds that “the trope of family which is such a recurrent feature of their discourse is itself a characteristically American means for comprehending the limits and dynamics of racial community” (ibid.,).

Henry and Gilroy's comments about Afrocentricism underscore the postcolonial identity problem. Henry suggests that while Afrocentricism has its problems, it is useful for resistance purposes. Gilroy questions the purist notions underlying Afrocentricism. In my opinion, the ensuing discussion raises the problem of articulating identity in forms that may reinforce or reinscribe essentialism. While the past and African cultural knowledge and forms are necessary in the articulation and re-articulation of African cultural identity and for resistance, those very forms may become reCanonised and may gradually fossilise. I have argued in this dissertation that the past and African cultural forms must be used in ways that do not allow for reCanonisation and stagnation. The past is important. A resituation of African knowledge and culture is necessary for colonised Africans. But the past and African knowledge must be re-interpreted within its present context. In other words, the colonised have to continually move between the past and the present, while also anticipating a future. The epigraph from Vera (1995) summarizes the postcolonial problem clearly. She explains, "Forgetting is not easy for those who travel in both directions of time"(p. 3).

Postcolonial Pedagogy: Limits and possibilities

Before I discuss postcolonial pedagogy I will attempt to explicate the term postcolonial. The term postcolonial has become very difficult to define with precision. Part of the indeterminacy of the term stems from the fact that it covers heterogeneous interests. At a basic level, the term refers to concrete historical and political conditions associated with colonialism. That is, it refers to that which succeeds colonialism. In this case it refers to conditions in formerly colonised societies. It has been used more abstractly, and much more loosely too, to refer to a description of a global condition after the period of

colonialism. For Arif Dirlik (1994) the confusion arises out of the use of the term both as a description of global conditions after colonialism and “as a description of a discourse on the above-named conditions that is informed by the epistemological and psychic orientations that are products of those conditions”(p. 296). In other words, postcolonial is understood as “discursive thematics,” or as a reading practice, a discourse now popular in United States academic institutions.

The term postcolonial and theory associated with postcolonialism has been a subject of widespread debate. Some critics have rejected the historical reference of the term on the grounds that it is limiting. Other critics have criticised the diffuseness of the term. Others have criticized the institutionalisation of postcolonial theory, arguing that it neutralizes the political import of the term.

Postcolonial pedagogy is generally envisaged as a pedagogy of resistance. Theorists using postcolonial pedagogy draw on postcolonial theories of resistance. For example, Peter McLaren (1993) conceptualises postcolonial pedagogy as resistance, a pedagogy that attempts to challenge imperialism. In his article with Tomaz Tadeu da Silva, McLaren views postcolonial pedagogy as “a temporary suspension of the colonial moment, a liminal space that, while still containing traces of colonial and neocolonial discourses allows for their suspension and for the development of a community of resistance” (p. 86). For McLaren, a critical multicultural pedagogy involves a collaborative discourse “in which thought and action combine to dismantle the structures that support oppression” (p. 12). Stephen Selmon (1995) focuses on a postcolonial pedagogy that challenges both conventional canonicity and conventional teaching. He argues on behalf of postcolonial pedagogical structures that allow two or more systems to

encounter each other and reconstitute frames of cultural reference to question established institutional structures and habits of perception. He writes, "But in a postcolonial pedagogical practice—a space of teaching at the end of Empire, and thus a space of direct political engagement with the continuing ravages of neocolonialism—there must be a space that allows the claims of both modalities of reading to take place" (p. 12). What I find disturbing here is Sermon's assumptions about the end of empire. I have argued in this dissertation that colonialism never really ends. The effects of colonialism are evident long after official colonialism is over. Throughout this dissertation I have suggested that the effects of colonialism cannot be totally erased. In this chapter I further establish that position and further propose a hybrid curriculum for postcolonial Zimbabwe. A hybrid curriculum must include colonial remnants and African knowledge (which is constantly changing).

In her doctoral dissertation, Ingrid Johnston (1996) examines the potential of a postcolonial pedagogy in contemporary Canadian classrooms. Her study offers a theoretical and pedagogical framework for a literary curricula in a multicultural/pluralistic world. A postcolonial pedagogy in her view includes engaging with multicultural literature and adopting what she calls postcolonial deconstructive strategies. It involves deconstruction of misrepresentations of "the "other" in literary texts, and to acknowledge challenges to their perceptions of themselves" (in abstract 1996). She writes, "My research study has explored ways to promote such openness through a postcolonial pedagogy which attempts simultaneously to offer students opportunities to engage with multicultural texts which resonate with their own cross-cultural backgrounds and experiences and to create possibilities for interrogating and deconstructing representations of the self, place and others in literary texts" (1996, p. 189-90). While this approach is useful in

multicultural societies in North America, it minimises the postcoloniality as a historical event, by reducing it to a strategy.

In his doctoral dissertation on postcolonial pedagogies, James Greenlaw (1994) distinguishes between a postcolonial pedagogy and a multicultural pedagogy. He argues against prescriptive multicultural curriculum whose basis for including multicultural texts is to increase multicultural harmony. In Greenlaw's view, the ethos of postcolonial pedagogy is socio-political. Postcolonial pedagogy allows students to "deconstruct racist (mis)representations of the Other as they are found in political, social, and cultural discourses which are inscribed within literary texts, films, music videos, magazines, newspapers, television shows, and computer fora through which students attempt to interpret their world' (1994, p. 7-8).

The main problem with such conceptualisations of postcolonial pedagogy is that they present an historical and universal view of the post colonial. It is also a view of that is unable to come to terms with the multiplicity and heterogeneity of the world's cultural practices. As McClintock (1995) suggests, what we need is not yet another single term to substitute for postcolonialism and its variants but "rethinking the global situation as a multiplicity of powers and histories which cannot be marshalled obediently under the flag of a single theoretical term, be that feminism, Marxism, or postcolonialism" (p. 342). To talk of a postcolonial pedagogy in general is to homogenise it. I do not think we can talk about a postcolonial pedagogy in general, that is a pedagogy that suits all places. The idea of a unitary and undifferentiated postcolonial pedagogy is therefore called into question. McClintock suggests that postcolonial theory leads to "an entrenched suspension of history, as if definitive historical events have preceded us, and are not now in the making" (p. 11). Even Maclaren's idea of

suspending the colonial moment is unthinkable in contexts which have to deal with the effects of colonialism. For colonised peoples, postcolonial pedagogy is not a theory or strategy, but it represents their realities. In reality, colonised peoples have to actually live with the effects of that history, everyday. The postcolonial is not simply a literary device, a trope or frame of reference, but an engagement with a material historical conditions of exploitation, and oppression.

In its treatment of hybridity, particularly conscious hybridisation, Amakhosi theatre offers a paradigm of curriculum that incorporates both the colonial and the indigenous. Our identity as colonised peoples in Zimbabwe cannot be fully redeemed by replacing the Western and Eurocentric bias of the curriculum with non-Western African knowledge. Our identities can be expressed at the intersection of the colonial and the indigenous. Our curriculum in Zimbabwe should foreground the challenge of living in a world of difference. In its most compelling forms, Amakhosi shows us the way to embrace the old and the new, multiple worlds, divided loyalties, the oppressed and the oppressor. Amakhosi leads us to consider a community of border people. Amakhosi teaches us how to acknowledge our colonial selves while still validating our indigenous selves. The pragmatics of such a curriculum should engage the people of Zimbabwe. They should recognize unavoidable and useful aspects of colonialism and also reclaim and reinterpret what is important in their culture. This chapter calls for a hybridised curriculum which is informed by material and historical conditions of a place.

The theory of critical hybridity developed in this chapter foregrounds experience as temporarily, geographically, culturally and politically situated. Such a theory might help us to understand curriculum as contextually

grounded. Critical hybridity puts to question the view of curriculum as prepackaged and unchanging. Curriculum for a hybrid society such as Zimbabwe must emerge from the geographic, historic, political and social context of Zimbabwe. The concept of hybridity developed in this dissertation emphasises the idea of culture, identity and experience as shifting and unpredictable. Amakhosi plays illustrate the notion of hybridity as change and as unpredictable. In Amakhosi, hybridity leads to new formations. These creations are in constant movement and cannot be easily defined. This notion of motion, mutation and unpredictability is useful for understanding curriculum not as stable and obvious, but as constantly shifting and unpredictable.

Issues Revisited: Possibilities, Fears and Questions

“Is the book finished?” The truthful answer is probably that such a book is never finished, but that there comes a time when the story is ready to be told.

— Chong D. (1994, p. 10)

A good deal of postcolonial has set itself against the imperial idea of linear time. Yet the term postcolonial, like the exhibit, is haunted by the very figure of linear development that it sets out to dismantle.

— McClintock A. (1995, p. 10)

Fanon (1967) reminds us that the official end of colonialism does not necessarily signal the end of colonialism. He argues that the process of decolonisation continues even after political independence. Colonial languages in Africa represent part of the residual structure of colonisation which colonised peoples must deal with even after political independence. In addition to the challenge of the colonial language, colonised peoples must come to terms with their own marginalised indigenous languages.

The questions I raised at the beginning of this dissertation were “how do colonised peoples come to terms with their colonial languages and experiences? How do colonised peoples express and assert cultural identity in a language that was used to control, subjugate and demean their identities? How can colonised peoples keep a simultaneous vision of the colonial

language and their own indigenous languages?" I have explored the ways in which colonised peoples must cope simultaneously with English and indigenous languages--the ways in which colonised peoples negotiate the spaces between contradicting and contesting languages and cultures.

The task of expressing African cultural identities in English is problematic. It includes engaging with one's colonial language, includes negotiating one's identity in a language that may reinscribe one's colonisation. I have argued, however, that the use of African languages together with colonial languages allows Africans to express unique identities rooted in African experiences and cultures without necessarily reinscribing their own colonisation. I have identified the intersection of colonial and indigenous languages as a location where this can begin to take place. The intersection of the colonial and the indigene is identified by some postcolonial theorists as a location which suggests being caught between frames, indecision and confusion. Besides polarising the frames, the metaphor of being caught athwart two frames casts the colonised as a helpless victim pulled from one frame to the other. My exploration of the ways in which colonised peoples negotiate spaces between the colonial and indigenous languages illustrates the plenitude of this space. Far from being a location for limited options and for desparation, the postcolonial space is a space for agency and creativity and cultural production and identity formation. Amakhosi theatre illustrates people choosing to critique English while using it. The theatre portrays people adapting, dislocating and destroying English so that it serves their purposes. Amakhosi depicts people engaged actively in their own linguistic and cultural definition and redefinition.

The language debate explored in Chapter 1 perpetuates the metaphor of being caught between two frames--caught in a dilemma. The debate casts the relation between English and indigenous languages as an either/or dichotomy. The controversy illustrates two different perspectives on English in Africa. Ngugi and other writers concerned with the preservation of indigenous languages and cultures reject English. In their view English represents colonial imperialism. As well, the use of English by Africans represents cultural domination. Achebe on the other hand is concerned with pragmatic functions of English. Achebe acknowledges the damaging aspects of English, but considers English valuable for cross-cultural communication. To counteract the effects of imperialism, Achebe argues for an Africanised English. Indigenised English according to Achebe is English that can express an African culture and experience. The issue is, however, more complex than the either/or binary perpetuated by the debate. I have argued that the solution to the language question in Africa does not lie in an either/or vision but in a both/and perspective that allows for contradictions. In her attempt to resolve the West African writer's question about the validity of writing in English, Anthonia Kalu (1996) reminds us:

[T]he key is in . . . accepting strategies that facilitate the achievement of true independence within both the indigenous culture and the culture of the vehicular language through which we must speak our silence.
(p. 87)

By exploring Amakhosi theatre, I have illustrated the ways in which English can be used together with indigenous languages to express Zimbabwean cultural identity. I have examined the dynamics at the intersection of English with indigenous languages. The theatre illustrates

people not caught between English and Ndebele, but rather, it demonstrates people transcending the English and Ndebele frames by creating new linguistic and cultural spaces. Theatre, especially localised work like Amakhosi, is a useful location for examining the ways in which people negotiate language and culture to articulate, assert and fashion identities. People act out in performance their various identities and cultures. In addition, I argued that theatre provides a space for colonised peoples to assert their own cultural identities and to challenge hegemony. Theatre becomes a location for the empowerment of marginalised colonised identities, for resistance to colonialism and for cultural production. In addition, theatre becomes a location for exploring the nature of hybrid identity.

In Chapter 3, I invoked the concept of hybridisation to explore the space where English encounters indigenous languages. I argued that hybridisation allows colonised peoples to challenge English even in the using of it. In addition, hybridisation allows colonised peoples to express themselves in their own indigenous languages. Of particular significance to my exploration of the language question is Mikhail Bakhtin's (1981) concept of hybridisation and postcolonial formulations of hybridity. Bakhtin examines unconscious/organic and conscious/intentional hybridity. Bakhtin attributes cultural and linguistic evolution to organic hybridity. He identifies intentional hybridity as crucial for the unmasking of voices within utterances and discourses. Both types of hybridisation allowed me to explore the complexity of postcolonial identities. Postcolonial conceptualisations of hybridity, as well, proved very useful for establishing the the zone of intersection as a location of cultural production and resistance. While the hybrid space in Amakhosi is shown to be a location for newness, it is also a space for challenging, destabilising and reinventing cultural traditions.

On the whole, this study provides insights into the complication of postcolonial identity. It questions the appropriateness of the term “post” in postcolonial. My analysis demonstrates the ways in which the past is still a significant part of colonised identity. The colonial impulse is still part of the colonised identity today. My analysis of Amakhosi demonstrates the difficulty of critiquing that which one is a part of. It shows the importance of border work and border complexities of those of us who claim to be doing intellectual work.

The postcolonial engagement with the critique of colonialism has several contradictions revolving around the following questions: How to challenge that which one is a part of and how to express Africanness when those very subjectivities are constituted in part by the subordinating power of European colonialism. Spivak (1993) underscores this ambivalence when she defines postcoloniality as “an impossible ‘no’ to a structure, which one critiques, yet inhabits intimately” (p. 225).

In Chapter 4, I explored the paradoxes of asserting cultural identity using forms that may in fact, perpetuate hegemony. In Amakhosi plays, African expressive forms are very central in the project of assertion of cultural identity and resistance of English. I examined the ways in which songs and dance are employed in asserting cultural identity and for resisting English. The problem of appealing to cultural forms for resistance and the assertion of cultural identity is that those very forms easily turn into hegemonic discourse. The challenge for Amakhosi is to avoid canonising and reifying cultural forms. A similar challenge involves asserting a cultural past and embracing a vision of transformation and change at the same time. Related to this challenge is the problem of asserting cultural expressive forms which are constantly shifting. The question becomes, “how do we hold on to

a vision of the past within a shifting reality?" This has been understood elsewhere as the problem of looking back and forward at the same time. Amakhosi negotiates the problem by re-invoking the past, re-interpreting and challenging it. In Amakhosi plays the past is not allowed to congeal, the past is constantly being reinterpreted, re-imagined and transformed.

In Chapter 5, I examined the challenge of conceptualising curriculum for the Zimbabwean hybrid space. Hybridity allowed me to conceptualise a paradigm of curriculum that incorporates the colonial and the indigenous experiences of the people of Zimbabwe. Since Zimbabwean cultural identity is hybrid, the curriculum for Zimbabwe will have to be hybrid. By that I do not imply incorporation of just about anything from the West. My dissertation has emphasised a critical form of hybridity. By critical hybridity, I mean politicised hybridity. Politicised hybridity is hybridity that allows for the constant critiquing of voices. As well, politicised or critical hybridity allows for the uncovering and challenging of asymmetrical power relations that may be concealed by hybridity.

In my analysis of Amakhosi theatre, I illustrated the ways in which English and western cultural forms are constantly being subjected to critique, even in their using. This observation suggests that the colonial educational structures must be interrogated even in their using. As well, African indigenous knowledge needs to be subjected to critique, re-interpretation, re-imagination and transformation even in its using. Constant critique and re-interpretation sets the stage for something new-something uniquely Zimbabwean. Bakhtin's notion of intentional hybridisation conjures up the idea of intentionality. The notion of critical hybridity which I have proposed in this dissertation is underlined by the idea of intentionality. The hybrid curriculum that I have in mind must be determined by Zimbabweans. The

idea of intentionality implies that colonised peoples are not simply caught up in hybridisation over which they have no control. The notion of critical hybridity assumes that people can and should control the conditions of their hybridity. Critical hybridity suggests, for me, that colonised peoples can consciously determine the conditions of their own hybridity. In other words, colonised peoples begin to control the degree of assimilation. They also decide what should be included and discarded. It was not within the scope of this study to define the specifics of such a curriculum. I was only interested in theoretical implications of my analysis of Amakhosi plays, for education. The issue of what a hybridised curriculum might look like belongs to another study.

Although I argue that colonised peoples can control the conditions of their hybridity, I realise too that they cannot control the process totally. There are certain cultural values and ideas that are often internalised or assimilated unconsciously. And so, this leaves me with a question: To what extent can colonised peoples control their hybridity and destiny? This is the question announced by this interpretive study, and it is the question that I carry with me into my future scholarly work.

There can be no conclusion to the issues raised in this dissertation since language and identity are always and continually shifting--fluid phenomena. The concept of hybridity has been very useful for exploring the intersection of the colonial and indigenous languages and cultures. For example, hybridity allowed me to interpret the ambiguities of postcolonial language and identity formation. Hybridity permitted me to understand the vigour and productivity of the postcolonial space. In addition, hybridity marked continual change and shifting--mutation.

While the concept of hybridity enhanced my interpretation and understanding of the postcolonial space, it leaves me with fear and uncertainty, as it did at the beginning of my research. I continue, as I did at the beginning to feel a sense of discomfort with hybridity. My fears were expressed recently when I was asked to visualise the future of hybridisation in Zimbabwe. After explaining my research to my elder brother, he asked me a searching question that brought to the surface and disclosed my fears. In a mixture of English and Ndebele, he asked, "So wena Vayi, what do you think the situation will be twenty years from now?" My answer was:

Yeyi! Ngile fear. My fear is that we will probably lose the Ndebele and English that we know. My fear is ukuthi where is this all going? Ngilamafears ami. I see ukuthi hybridisation is a form of resistance and self determination and self definition. But in the long run are we not going to lose the very cultural identity we are fighting for? I am afraid that some of my language and cultural traditions will disappear in this hybridity. Is hybridisation leading us to a meaningless Babel? Abantu nje, people like to hang on to their origins and traditions. People need a familiar anchor, something to hold on to, hantsho!. But ihybridity seems to question this very sense of origins and purity. I am uncomfortable.

Besides expressing my sense of discomfort, the response to my brother's question announces my anxiety about loss and destabilisation of identity and meaning. Hybridisation triggers my discomfort by challenging and altering familiar linguistic and cultural practices. Marlene Norbese Philip (1989) reassures us that although things are altered they are not destroyed. Philip writes about the Caribbean context and the impact of slavery on indigenous

language and culture. She suggests that although African Caribbean languages were altered by slavery, they were not destroyed. She identifies the African culture as an invigorating and energising force in the Caribbean linguistic and cultural practice. Philip reassures me that although language and culture are altered through hybridisation, they are not destroyed. I end this dissertation with her poem "She Tries Her Tongue; Her Silence Softly Breaks." Her poem communicates the loss and grief that accompanies linguistic and cultural loss and destabilisation. I take from her her poem the sense of anticipation for the unknown future. She writes:

the me and mine of parents
the we and us of brother and sister
the tribe of belongings small and separate
when gone. . .
on these exact places of exacted grief
i placed mint-fresh grief coins
sealed the eyes with certain and final;
in such an equation of loss tears became
a quantity of minus.
with the fate of a slingshot stone
loosed from the catapult pronged double with history
and time on a trajectory of hurl and fling
to a state active with without and unknown
i came upon a future with anticipation.

Although I end this dissertation with questions, discomfort and with unease, I am filled with anticipation and hope for the unknown and unpredictable future. Postcoloniality is an uneasy, and sometimes

uncomfortable space. The challenge of postcolonial identity is its ambiguity, unpredictability, energy and vigour.

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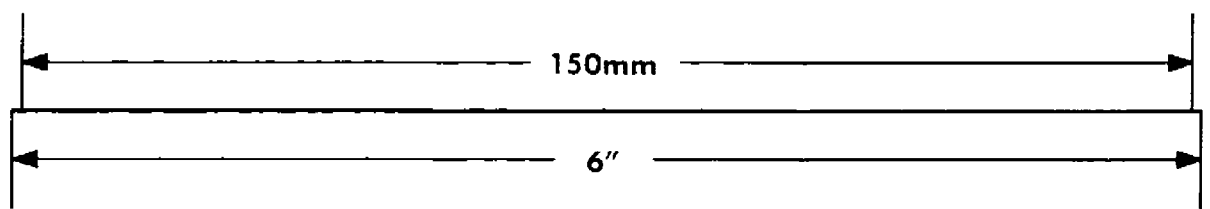
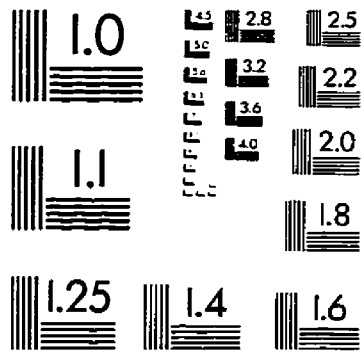
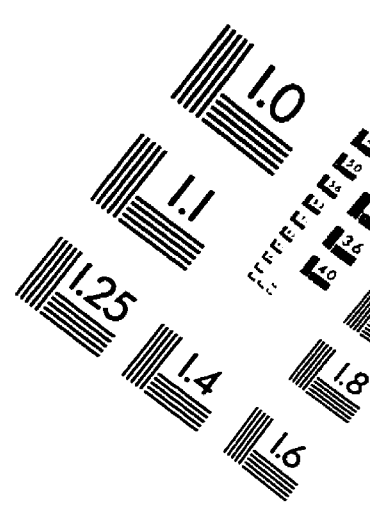
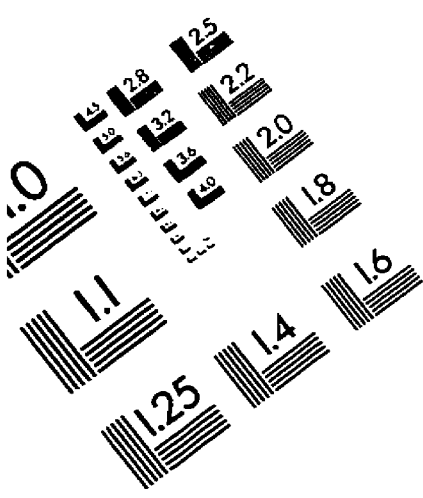
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