

Introduction

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Countering the tendency that contemporary African theatre is only that published with roots in Western dramatic, Mzo Sirayi suggests that this delusion may be rectified by including oral and performance theatre in indigenous languages in curricula. As the disabled comrade in culture-related studies, such a focus may importantly contribute to the appreciation of the dramatic patterns integral to human life and the African cultural heritage. African theatre as communal act is illustrated in view of oral narratives, indigenous African wedding celebrations and the African indigenous doctors' celebration.

Even though a first reading of Zakes Mda's plays may give the impression that their character construction is 'depersonalised', 'weak' and not psychologically developed, Carolyn Duggan argues that a second reading proves the issue to be more complex. Resonating with Brecht's theatrical technique, Mda's perceived lack of 'awareness of self', she reasons, is quite deliberate and due to his concentration on the social and political. His 'analysis of society' calls for ethical and not psychological awareness. Dealing with characters as types allows him to achieve universal resonance beyond the muteness to which colonialism has banished African culture.

On representation in Bushmen ethnographic research, Elsie Leonora Cloete argues that research has not only 'captured' the Bushmen (more than any other culture globally) for purposes of western consumption. It has deprived the Bushmen of 'a past unmediated by a westerner', especially Bushmen women. The problems, she argues, arise from the ethnographic researcher's narrational intervention in the mediation of 'life-histories', blurring of boundaries, shiftings and crossings backward and forward between the narrator's and researcher's geographical, linguistic and cultural contexts, raising questions of authority and authorship.

Focusing on the importance of the 'cultural empathy essential for reinterpreting the frontiers within', Pieter Conradie engages the unhappy history of the Khoi girl, Krotoa,

and Antoinette Pienaar's staged production of the text she wrote on Krotoa and performed in the Castle on December 1995. Tracing the significance of Krotoa's alternation between the Christian van Riebeeck household and her native Goringhaicona and Chainouqua Conradie explores both the realities of cultural prejudices and the possibilities of renewal in the context of miscegenation. Following Pienaar's use of music and the body (dance) in her production, he points to the importance of stylisation for the renewal of theatre and the self's dependence on the Other for self-realisation and re-cognition of itself.

Asserting the importance of questions on colonial female identity, women's roles in colonial society and narratives about their own life experiences, Julie Pridmore points to the fact that existing histories of the Fynn family do not account for Vundhlase, Daughter of Zelemu, Ann Brown and Christina Brown—the women to which Henry Fynn was married. From the scant information available, she pieces together a context accounting for Vundhlase's experiences, contextualises Fynn's move to the Cape and his two year marriage to Ann Brown followed by a more fuller account of Christina Brown. Pointing to gender education for girls/women, she evaluates Christina's diary as that of the wife of a colonial official.

Despite the fact that the Bolshevik Party, the Soviet government and the Comintern were mainly interested in Africa for ideological reasons, Apollon Davidson and Irina Filatova point to important literature published by Soviet scholars and their students. More ideological than academic, the material did raise some important questions, identified problems and generated some ideas which may prove to be valuable still today. These range from the earlier Stalinist interest in promoting class struggle for revolutionary purposes in Africa through the study of economically-related forces in South Africa to Zulu folk tales and Zulu and Xhosa songs. More comprehensive books dealt with the history of the African continent as a whole and as a history of Africans, African societies and peoples, the Union of South Africa after the Second World War and gold.

Beyond nation building within the context of a secular South African state, Anand Singh warns about the national euphoria, the myths of democracy, shared values and non-racialism coupled with an internal amnesia which blur the continuing dividing forces of ethnicity and (fundamentalist) religion. As in other multi-cultural and racially fragmented societies in the world, these myths will never succeed in expelling

the deleterious potential of ethnicity. Distinguishing between the 'culturalisation of politics' and the 'politicisation of culture' as they impact on ethnicity, he critically shows how people from Indian origin and especially one Indian politician engage the former. Following Howe and Mukherji, he asserts that the spectre of the politicisation of culture may be laid to rest if a democratic space is created in which social formations can choose how they define themselves and how they democratically engage on local, regional and national levels.

Overviewing the political agenda of South African postcolonial studies, Kelwyn Sole points to postcolonialists' shortcomings and contradictions. Shortcomings, he argues, arise from their falling prey to the linguistic fallacy, hypostatizing discourse (and negotiation) at the expense of being able to account for material culture in its economic sense. Symptomatic is their discursive articulation of race and culture without addressing the historical and context-specific realities of the race/culture nexus as well as materialist concerns about local-global, finance-labour, production-consumption, urban-rural binaries and regional inequalities. Contradictions mainly arise from their textualising practices, ranging from the postcolonial critics' academic (class) positioning (whether black or white) through the allegorising of history, the fragmentation of cultural agency, identity, politics, ideology and conflict to democracy. Sole suggests alternatives.

Arguing that the post-Marxism advocated by some South African English literary-theoretical proponents combines a misrepresentation of Marxian theory with a decontextualisation of post-structuralism, Shane Moran points to their oversimplification of the category of class, the fallacy of replacing the category of class with race and the further marginalising of the already marginalised. He counters this tendency by overviewing the general features of South African 'posts' theory and the revisionist work of a South African Marxist historiographer. Drawing on views by Lyotard and Derrida in the face of the post-modern disenchantment with Marxism's goal of the disalienation of humanity, he then suggests aspects of post-structuralist theories which may prove relevant.

Addressing linguistic questions related to discourse as 'text plus situational context', Nils Erik Enkvist summarises some of the views he has developed throughout his career. These comprise notions of discourse including communication, meaning, redundancy and communicative competence and success concepts also related to

grammaticality, acceptability and appropriateness. Turning to comprehension, he points out that 'linguistic well-formedness' is not a criterium and elaborates on referential and pragmatic meaning and the important roles 'choice', information structure, text strategy and style play in comprehending information transfer.

Addressing questions related to cross-cultural or inter-cultural rhetoric, Enkvist's second article deals with contrastive rhetoric, i.e. the study of patterns of text and discourse in different languages that vary in structure and in cultural background. A sub-branch of applied linguistics, contrastive linguistics moved through various phases to text and discourse analysis focusing on the inferential role a shared knowledge of the world and culture play in empathetic comprehension. Positioning contrastive rhetoric in its interdisciplinary relations, he addresses problems of 'cultural contrasts' and how empirical research may deal with contrastive rhetoric.

Shane Moran positions his review article of Richard Beardsworth's *Derrida and the Political* in the context of the continued economic inequalities and power politics in South Africa. Sensitive to current local rethinkings of the relations between academia and politics, Moran contextualises similar Euro-American efforts around Derrida—concerning the apolitical/political nature of deconstruction. After reviewing Beardsworth's arguments in his expository readings of Derrida, Moran shows that his views emanating from his distinction between politics and the political misrecognise deconstruction's relation to its institution as a site of production, complicit in ideology or power and material conditions.

The review article of Rocco Capozzi's *Reading Eco: An Anthology* contextualises Eco's *oeuvre* since the early 1980s in current questions on African hermeneutics. As implicitly argued for in the *Anthology*, the argument is that the writing as well as the interpreting of historical narrative in the context of culture as semiosphere does not sanction hermetic drift. Illustrated in view of Eco's interrelating of his theorising of semiotics and writing of historical narratives, his metadiscursive awareness and novelistic expression, historical narrative in the semiosphere facilitates the growth of knowledge and learning—not only concerning culture but also on questions related to hermeneutics.