

**CHALLENGING THE STRUCTURES OF POWER: AN INTRODUCTION TO
CITIZEN THEATRE**

**A MINOR DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS (THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE)**

**DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA
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ABSTRACT:

In this paper I explore and develop the notion of Citizen Theatre. Chapter 1 sets the contextual background that influenced my theory and practice. I examine the theory of structures of power as expounded by Magaisa (2006), and how it is applicable to Zimbabwe. In this chapter I briefly refer to the history of the liberation struggle and the current situation in Zimbabwe as a way of tracing the development of propaganda that informs the structures of power in Zimbabwe.

In Chapter 2, I define and examine the influences of Citizen Theatre. I provide a working definition for the term citizen. Central to this definition is the examination of the concept of citizenship so as to understand the application of the term citizen to this study. I examine the influences of Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre and Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed on my thinking towards Citizen Theatre and highlight points of interests in their theory and practices as my points of departure.

Chapter 3 is an explication of the concept of Citizen Theatre. It provides insights into the relationship between theory and practise of Citizen Theatre. I unpack this relationship through the notion of patriotic narrative, which defines the form, and structure of Citizen Theatre.

The efficacy of the concept of Citizen Theatre is tested through an analysis of my thesis project, the play *Quetropha*, which took place at Hiddingh Campus and explored Zimbabwe's structures of power as a means of challenging citizens to take charge of their lives. The production translated Zimbabwean's lived experiences into theatre as a way of enlightening them on their potential in a changing political landscape.

In my exploration and development of Citizen Theatre, I drew on influences from a number of scholars and theatre practitioners. Susan Strange's (1999) model of structures of power as articulated by Alex Magaisa (2006) was very useful in examining the source of political power in Zimbabwe. Muponde and Primorac's notion of patriotic narrative informed the form of Citizen Theatre while Brecht and Boal theory and practice were influential in determining the structure and style of Citizen Theatre.

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DEDICATIONS:

Dedicated to the people of Zimbabwe and all those who find strength in adversity.

University of Cape Town

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INTRODUCTION

In this paper I interrogate, explore and develop the theoretical framework that informs Citizen Theatre and discuss my thesis production born out of this framework. Driven by my ambition to contribute meaningfully to the crisis in my home country Zimbabwe, I developed and here-by articulate a theatre form that explores the socio-economic and political challenges of Zimbabwe. This theatre acts as a catalyst for change and compels citizens to be active participants in political matters that affect their lives. I have termed this theatre Citizen Theatre. It is informed by non-formal citizenship. Non-formal citizenship is a concept that borrows from African and Western values, local and global context, colonial and post-colonial experiences emphasizing on accepting the outcome of the people's shared history as an instrument of identification. In my performances I therefore marry elements of mainstream theatre, and elements of Peoples Theatre as proposed by Bertolt Brecht and Augusto Boal so as to achieve my aims. The notion of Citizen Theatre was explored using my thesis play production entitled *Quetropha*, which set out to highlight possibilities for challenging the structures of power in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 1

It is always useful to understand the context in which any theatrical phenomenon developed in order to understand its purpose, influences and aesthetics. The relevance of this exploration and proposed form of theatre can be best understood by examining the social, economic and political situation of Zimbabwe, which influenced my thinking. In order to understand this situation, I examine the structure of power in Zimbabwe and employ it as a premise to my theory and practice. Therefore, before embarking on the contextual background, which influenced my theory and practice, I need to make a disclaimer. This is not a political paper but a theatre paper set out to explore the possibilities of what theatre can do in times of political, social and economic crisis. Any ideas and any projects done in pursuit of this research were and are not meant to subvert or usurp any legitimate government. This work is a genuine quest, by an artist with an artistic medium at his disposal, to make Zimbabwe a better place. Those fully aware of the limitations of my medium will testify that theatre alone cannot change the world but it can contribute towards change (Boal, 1979: Foreword). Thus the theatre proposed in this paper does not profess to be the alfa and omega of Zimbabwean woes. It is my contribution towards a positive change in Zimbabwe.

1.1 Contextual Background

Citizen Theatre is informed by the conditions prevailing in present day Zimbabwe. Amanda Hammari, (2003: 17), observes that during the late 1990s Zimbabwe was faced by a collapsing economy due to a lack of sound economic policy. David Blair (2005: 63) recounts how, Britain pledged financial support to Zimbabwe during the Lancaster House Conference¹ in 1979. However, Britain's capitalist policy was in direct conflict with the socialist policy that Zanu PF had preached through out the liberation struggle. Faced with either betraying their pre-independence commitment or losing a potential and lucrative ally, in the mid 80s, the government decided to introduce both economic systems selectively in different parts of the economy (Blair: 2005: 63). This had a negative effect on the country's economy.

¹ After a protracted war between the Patriotic Front (a coalition of Zanu and Zapu) and the government of Rhodesia, Britain invited the warring parties to a peace conference at Lancaster House in 1979. A peace deal was signed bringing black majority rule to Zimbabwe in 1980 with Zanu PF as the first black government.

One of the key issues surrounding the liberation struggle was the dispossession of land from black people by white colonialists (Ranger, 1987). At the Lancaster House Conference, Britain and Zanu PF agreed to resettle black people on land acquired through the willing – buyer, willing - seller policy, with Britain, as the colonial master, providing the relevant financial support. David Blair (2005) observes that the Zanu PF government gradually and conveniently ignored this commitment as funds meant for this purpose were misappropriated. With the hype of achieving independence Zanu PF leaders went on an economic rampage, looting anything they could put their hands on (Meredith, 2002: 44). The government was rocked by numerous corruption scandals such as the Willogate Scandal² of 1988. Gradually the country began to experience an annual budget deficit while inflation steadily increased.

In 1990 the government was advised by the International Monetary Fund to introduce a new economic policy dubbed Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), to curb the inflation. However, due to the government's lack of commitment to a capitalist system, the programme failed to yield the desired results. Inflation and the standard of living continued to increase while many people lost their jobs. The worker's disposable income shirked considerably.

Matters came to a head in 1997 when the government incurred unbudgeted expenditure through the country's involvement in the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The situation was worsened by its decision to offer hefty gratuity payments to war veterans and war victims of the liberation struggle. A fund set up for this purpose was thoroughly looted by the war veterans and top Zanu PF officials (Blair, 2005: 232). Burdened by economic hardships; labour bodies, civic organization, civil servants, students and urban youth began embarking on mass protests against the government. The government failed to address the people's grievances, resorting to the use of force. This culminated into the formation of an opposition movement called Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in September 1999.

² Meredith (2002) gives a detailed account of the Willogate Scandal in which a number of cabinet ministers were implicated in corruption deals that involved the buying and selling of cars at the Willovale Motor Industry.

In a bid to win back the people, the government fell back on unfinished business – the land issue. When Britain’s Labour Party came to power in 1994, finance for the land reform was abruptly stopped. However Blair (2005) observes that it was not until 1999 that the government of Zimbabwe launched an enquiry into the matter. The British Prime Minister Tony Blair reneged on the commitment made by his predecessors to provide financial support for land distribution exercise (Blair, 2005: 143). This gave birth to a war of words between Zimbabwe and Britain. This war strengthened Zanu PF’s resolve to reclaim land on one hand and the Labour Party’s determination to thwart it.

Chung (2006) observes that in 2000 the government organized and embarked on compulsory seizure of white owned farms primarily as a punishment for supporting the opposition. The land seizures turned violent as self-styled commanders of farm invasions such as Chenjerai “Hitler” Hunzvi, Joseph Chinotimba and Bigboy Chitoro rose to prominence with the government’s blessing to take the law into their own hands. Many white farmers lost their property without compensation as they tried to appeal to the courts, which the government was in the process of purging. Those legal practitioners such as Chief Justice Antony Gubbay suspected of being sympathetic to the white farmer and/or had any links with Britain and the MDC were systematically dismissed and in some cases forced to resign. This was the beginning of the third and final phase of the struggle dubbed “The Third Chimurenga”³ (Blair, 2005: 289).

In the hope of stopping the land distribution exercise, the international community led by an aggrieved colonial master, Britain, supported the MDC, which did not seem to have a clear policy on any political matter (Magaisa, 2005: 2). The state used the involvement of Britain and other Western countries to generate a conspiracy theory and called upon every citizen to protect the country’s sovereignty and territorial integrity (Blair, 2005: 132). The government argued that the country was under siege from the former colonial master, Britain, and its ally the MDC who was seen as Tony Blair’s puppet. Propaganda based on selective nationalism was put into full swing. (Raftopoulos, 2003: 28). This selective nationalism tried to create political requirements for a fixed black identity based on post-colonial theory. Raftopoulos (2003) highlights three facets, which were central to this identity. It entailed the

³ Chimurenga is a shona word that means liberation war.

acceptance of an indigenous authoritarian nationalism based on claims of loyalty and national sovereignty. It also required one to maintain a monopoly claim over the commitment to radical redistribution and lastly one had to be a radical pan-Africanist, an anti-colonialist and an anti-imperialist critique of the West (Raftopoulos, 2003: 29).

However, this did not win popular support as the people of Zimbabwe came close to electing the MDC into government in the heavily disputed election results of 2000 and 2002. In a bid to protect itself from the opposition, the government promulgated controversial laws such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and Access to Information and Protection of Property Act (AIPPA) and introduced a national youth training programme with base stations in rural areas. Blair (2005) argues that these base stations were laboratories for Zanu PF shock troops, which ensured the eradication of those, deemed to be enemies of the state. Blair (2005) further argues that through the clandestine activities of these base stations, people were terrorised into submission. Voicing an independent opinion became a hazardous occupation. Members of the public were arrested, imprisoned, tortured and even killed for allegedly insulting the office of the president (Meldrum, 2004; Daily News 2002).

On the other hand, the MDC did very little to better its fortunes. It made uninformed international alliances⁴, which allowed Britain to hijack the people's struggle. Furthermore the MDC made ill-informed decisions during election campaigns. The party found itself involved in national executive squabbles on pertinent issues. As a result they misread people's call for political change as a call for the respect for human rights (Magaisa, 2006: 1). This placed the MDC on the same pedestal with social pressure groups. The people, especially urban dwellers, had put so much hope in the MDC as the next government. There was nothing attractive about MDC to the electorate other than the people's desire for political change. The MDC mistook their popularity for sound political, economic and social policies. Thus Magaisa (2006) rightly observes that MDC's lack of a sound strategy and the ability to make decisions when dealing with the ruling party turned the party into a revolution that lost its cause.

⁴ Morgan Tsvangirai, the leader of the Movement for Democratic Change, was on trial for treason after enlisting the help of Ari Ben-Menashe to campaign for the presidential elections in 2002. Menashe turned out to be a Zanu PF ally.

Given the composition of MDC a split of interests was inevitable. In 2006, the party split into two, there-by ceasing to be a potential political threat.

Today Zimbabweans have fallen victim to the government's politically conceived programmes such as the Land Reform programme and the internationally condemned Operation Murambatsvina⁵ in 2005. The Land Reform programme has resulted in the collapse of the agricultural sector, which forms the basis of the country's economy (Raftopoulos, 2003: 34). The standard of living has plummeted and continues to do so, to unimaginable proportions with inflation hitting an all time high of over one thousand percent. Once the breadbasket of Africa; Zimbabwe has now been dubbed the empty basket of Africa. According to the United Nations (2005) report, approximately three million Zimbabweans face starvation if correctional land reform measures are not put in place. Operation Murambatsvina has left a trail of destruction in the modern history of government fighting against its own people. Millions have been displaced, millions left homeless with thousands of children deprived of their right to education (Zimbabwe Human Rights, 2006: 86). Hence the people of Zimbabwe have appropriately called it Operation Murambavanhu meaning the government has rejected the will of the people and the people. POSA and AIPPA have robbed the people of freedom of expression and the right to be informed. Anybody assumed to be in violation of these acts is considered in the words of Raftopoulos:

.... [a] sell-outs to the white enemy at home and to Zimbabwe's former colonial master abroad (Britain) or the West in general and accused of sabotaging the final phase of the nationalist and anti-colonial revolution the so called Third Chimurenga. Such traitors are being systematically denied the right to citizenship, freedom of expression, protection under the law, access to land or, in other cases, access to food (2003: 25).

Determined to hold on to power, the government has sabotaged and closed down the independent press such as *The Daily News* in 2003 and *The Tribune* in 2004 (Blair, 2005: 163). It has withdrawn citizenship from Zimbabwean journalists such as Trevor

⁵ In 2005 the government embarked on a country clean up exercise that saw the demotion of all in formal buildings, whether or not they were well built.

Ncube⁶, and expelled foreign journalists such as Andrew Meldrum (2004) and David Blair (2005). Furthermore it has introduced bureaucratic delays on the issuing of passports, identity cards and birth certificates in order to frustrate those who intend to look for greener pastures outside Zimbabwe. Non-Governmental Organisations such as Care International, which offered aid to deprived communities, have been attacked and closed down while dialogue has been shunned with renowned statesmen such as Koffi Annan and Nelson Mandela (Chimhete, 2005: 2). The theatre has not been spared either. Plays such as *Super Patriots and Morons* (2003) deemed to be politically incorrect have been banned. Theatre directors have been detained and released without charge. In 2006 *The Standard* newspaper reported that Count Mhlanga, a prominent Zimbabwean producer/director was arrested for producing a play that was politically incorrect. This has narrowly limited citizens' participatory space and robbed them of their rights and protection by the state. In a nutshell Zimbabweans have been denied their citizenship. Therefore, what better issues can a theatre tackle other than those pertinent to the rights and lives of the people and what better name can that theatre have other than Citizen Theatre?

Being away from home is not immunity to its horrors. Its apparitions harangue Zimbabweans living abroad especially when their identity surfaces while having an innocent conversation with strangers. Their patronage camouflaged as sympathy, their interest, which exposes their ignorance, their simplistic interpretation of the Zimbabwean situation and proposed solution, is a testimony of Zanu PF's mastery of the politics of deception. I realize, as do many others that the Zimbabwean problem is easy to describe but few of us have ventured to explore ideas on what needs to be done. I have always been asked why we as Zimbabweans do not get rid of the government. The issue is not why but rather how. There seems to be a unanimous agreement on the need for change. Even certain sections of Zanu PF are now clandestinely clamouring for change (*Mail and Guardian*, 2007). However, a strategy to achieve this seems to be elusive. Some of my foreign friends have speculated on the possibility of a bloody revolution. The political stability experienced in the SADC region makes such a possibility very remote. Furthermore historian T.O. Ranger (2005) writing on the contribution of the Shona people during the First Chimurenga,

⁶ Trevor Ncube is the editor of the Mail and Guardian. The registrar general withdrew his Zimbabwean citizenship following the discovery that his father was of Zambian origin. He has since appealed and won against the decision at the Zimbabwe High court see the Mail and Guardian January 18, 2007.

has recounted how the Shona people, who constitute seventy five percent of the population, have always been a peace loving people. As for the other group the Ndebele, who constitute twenty percent of the population, it has been argued that their experience in early 1980s during the infamous Operation Gukurahundi⁷ was good enough to deter them from any future confrontation with the Zanu PF government (Meredith, 2002: 44).

Academics, politicians, entrepreneurs, civic societies and many others, have applied their minds to the question of how, but have failed to come up with anything convincing. I do not intend to belittle the various efforts that have been made by different people and organizations in different fields in addressing the Zimbabwean question and that I offer a better one. In fact, I intend to make my contribution on the spectrum of possibilities while acknowledging other previous and current efforts. I view all those working tirelessly to make Zimbabwe better as part of a relay team. Citizen Theatre is my personal contribution towards the relay.

1.2 Propaganda and Structures of Power

There is a need to examine the nature of Zanu PF's power and what sustains it before any solution can be proposed. It is out of this analysis that I had developed my theory for Citizen Theatre. The title of this thesis is, "*Challenging the Structures of Power: An introduction to Citizen Theatre*". I consider challenging the structures of power as an indispensable role of theatre in any country or between human relationships, where the legitimacy of those who possess power is not ascertained and/or marred by controversy. Thus power relations are of paramount importance in Citizen Theatre.

In order to challenge the structures of power it is imperative that one understands the source of that power. Citizen Theatre's primary objective is to create an awareness of the source of any corrupt political structure and expose possibilities of challenging it. Challenging structures of power, in this case political power is not simply an exercise limited to election periods. There are other peaceful ways of challenging these

⁷ In 1983 the government embarked on a military operation in Matebeleland province, an area predominantly occupied by the Ndebele people, in a bid to wipe away terrorists activities believed to be linked to PF Zapu. This operation was code named Gukurahundi. Gukurahundi is the rain that clears the chaff after harvest. The result was wide spread massacre of innocent civilians. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace has produced a well documented account of these atrocities in their book *Breaking the Silence* (1990)

structures, methods that only become apparent when such structures are scrutinized. However, structures of power work hand in hand with propaganda. One cannot exist without the other. In Zimbabwe propaganda based on patriotic narrative known as patriotic history has been re-awakened. Thus a careful examination of this propaganda and the structures of power are imperative.

1.2.1 The Re-birth of Patriotic History

Zimbabwe was born out of the second liberation struggle, which drew its inspiration from the first uprising dubbed the First Chimurenga in 1896. In order to encourage young men to join the second struggle for independence, which commenced in 1964, leaders of the struggle developed propaganda that presented the Second Chimurenga as a continuation of the First Chimurenga. They identified repossession of land as the purpose of the struggle and Britain being the common enemy of both epochs. Using political propaganda, the guerrilla leaders were able to convince the people that the fallen heroes of the First Chimurenga had been reincarnated in them; hence they were mere instruments at the service of the nation (Beach, 1990). Thus their actions were only accountable to the fallen heroes of the First Chimurenga. They called upon every black Zimbabwean to rally behind them as a sign of solidarity and patriotism. This was a popular philosophy that won the acclaim of many black Zimbabweans culminating in the defeat of the Smith regime.

Faced by stiff opposition, twenty years after this victory, the ruling party has decided to fall back on this propaganda, by introducing the so-called final phase of the struggle the - Third Chimurenga, characterized by expropriation of land and violation of the rule of law (Ranger, 2004: 189). The Third Chimurenga is viewed as a continuation of the First and Second Chimurenga as to garner popular support. Once again the land issue is central to this struggle, Britain is the usual enemy and farm invaders are only accountable to the fallen heroes. Only those who support this ideology and/or have war veteran credentials are allowed to be part of the final phase of the struggle. Critics such as T. O. Ranger have argued that this manipulation of history has given birth to “patriotic history” (2004: 179).

Patriotic history is based on what Primorac and Muponde terms “patriotic narrative” (2004: 2). Patriotic narrative conceives time as linear and space as sharply divided.

Time here, is in constant progression merely divided by different historical epochs, which neatly fall into each other. It is upon this worldview that patriotic history is conceived. Sylvester defines patriotic history as one that:

...builds on and departs from previous nationalist narratives through a series of omissions, additions and simplifications. It attempts to fix socially produced meanings by designating the possession of land as the sole source of African well-being, lost with the arrival of white settlers and now irrevocably reinstated (2003: 35).

Primorac and Muponde (2004) further explain that, “as a discursive construct, ‘patriotic’ history is [...] both neatly symmetrical and curiously familiar, present struggles echo past ones and future goals magnify past victories (2). It is in this context that Zanu PF propaganda can be understood. The Third Chimurenga is built on the first and second Chimurenga. Chung (2006) admits how Zanu PF has omitted and ridiculed the contribution of other gallant sons of Zimbabwe such as Herbert Chipeto assassinated in March 1975, James Chikerema, Ndabanigi Sithole and Joshua Nkomo, all founding members of the liberation struggle, while individuals such as Robert Mugabe and Simon Muzenda have been glorified.

There is a strong relationship between patriotic history and realism. Copley (2001) argues that realism is informed by narrative, which gives it its mimetic fashion. Hence he observes that realism “is a matter of narratorial voice, of telling, often in a quite didactic fashion [...] the narratorial voice not only tells the reader what to think about the history and politics but it actually orders events, choosing to narrate some and omit others. This depends on the device known as “the omniscient narrator” (Copley, 2001: 100). The omniscient narrator presents an autonomous monologue whose omnipotent voice speaks down to its presumed unenlightened audience. The narrator is the only repository and qualified deliverer of such history. This shuts down the possibilities of thinking outside the box. Hence patriotic history can be viewed as a new form of realism, which Zimbabwe has been subjected to.

In Zimbabwe only Zanu PF has the right to the historical truth of Zimbabwe. History books that vary from patriotic history have been systematically removed from schools and the public (Ranger, 2004: 187). Ministers and former liberation fighters such as historian Stan Mudenge and Enias Chingwedere have taken it upon themselves to re-write Zimbabwean history. According to Ranger (2004) Mudenge and Chingwedere

have taken it upon themselves to order Zimbabwe's historical events and define elements necessary for inclusion while simultaneously imposing their points of view on the reader.

Under patriotic narrative, space is sharply divided into inside space and outside space (Primorac and Muponde, 2004). Areas where patriotic narrative enjoys more support have been regarded, as inside space while areas where it does not enjoy popular support have been termed outside space. Furthermore, inside space is considered authentic space in that it does not have any influence from other sources other than the ruling party. The reverse is also true to outside space. In Zimbabwe the rural space is seen as the inside space that is more authentic than the urban space, whose predominantly young enlightened residence are considered to be under the influence of Britain. At the same time Britain is seen as an unauthentic outside space that has influenced and hence unauthenticated the urban space. Thus rural areas have been cut off from urban areas in as much as urban areas have been cut off from rural areas there-by creating a blind relationship between the two spaces. This has led Primorac and Muponde (2004) to refer to Zimbabwean historical moment as blind. Such blindness discourages interaction, unity and capacity building in the country.

However, propaganda can only be sustained if there are supportive structures put in place. Hence the ruling party has re-defined the existing structures of power to support its propaganda.

1.2.2 Structures of Power

In 2006, I came across an article by Alex Magaisa (2006) entitled "*Challenging Zanu PF's Structures of Power*". It introduced me to Susan Strange's (1999) model of structure of power to which Magaisa (2006) referred in an attempt to address the Zimbabwean question. It is Susan Strange's (1999) Model as articulated by Magaisa (2006) that I found very useful and influential in my quest for a theatre that addresses the current crisis. Magaisa (2006) emphasized the need to understand the source of power in order to challenge it effectively. He therefore applied the Strange Model as a way of understanding Zanu PF's power.

Strange (1999) argues that there are four key sources of power namely Production, Finance, Security and Knowledge. These structures are not mutually exclusive but are dependent on each other even though the security structure also sustains all the other structures. Applied to government, a combination of these structures maintains the political structure, which is of particular interest to this study.

Production Structure can simply be understood as the Marxist theory where power is in the hands of those who control the means of production. Magaisa explains that, “the ones that decide the mode of production and control production levels necessarily have the power over those with an interest in accessing the means and items of production” (2006: 2). Hence the base controls the superstructure. Therefore it follows that Zimbabwe being an agrarian state, the destruction of the agricultural sector and expulsion of white commercial farmers by Zanu PF was a well-calculated move in defining this structure of power. Since white commercial farmers dominated the agricultural sector, they inherently controlled the means of production and had power to influence the political structure. Thus Zanu PF saw it necessary to repossess land so that they could control the means of production while simultaneously retaining power.

Magaisa (2006) argues that the Finance Structure can be generally defined as control over finance. It involves the control and availability of credit and other facilities necessary for production. It can be best understood in the old adage that he who has money has power. With the IMF and World Bank withdrawing financial support from Zimbabwe, Zanu PF has spread its control over the financial sector through the central bank, The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe. Under the cloak of temporary “operations”, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe has become “the principal source of finance for industry and agriculture” through institutions such as Zimbabwe Allied Banking Group (ZABG) owned by the government while sidelining private owned banks (Magaisa, 2006: 3). This has given Zanu PF control over all financial matters. Corporate entities and urbane individuals in business are forced to succumb to Zanu PF power if they are to receive financial assistance.

The Knowledge Structure is one of the two most important structures relevant in explaining Zanu PF power. This structure plays a pivotal role maintaining Zanu PF’s propaganda of patriotic history. Knowledge enriches the mind and therefore controls

behaviour of individuals. He who controls knowledge has the power to withhold certain kinds of knowledge from people there-by keeping them in ignorance or feeding them certain kinds of information that favour the controller. Thus Magaisa (2006) points out that those who are able to define and control the development of knowledge, and access and disseminate knowledge have important structural power. Zanu PF has taken control of syllabi of key subjects that teach liberation history and is increasing attempts to take control of private education. Re-education programmes and national training services are all part of Zanu PF's attempts to control knowledge. The more often the ideas are repeated the more they become a daily vocabulary and a part of life.

The Security Structure is undoubtedly the most important of all structures of power. This is not necessarily a universal phenomenon but it is true to Zimbabwe. Magaisa (2006) observes that given the historical circumstances of Zimbabwe's birth, characterized by a protracted liberation struggle, it is not surprising that the centre of power lies in the security structure. It can be used to coerce obedience and compliance, as was the deployment of the notorious Fifth Brigade in Matabeleland (*Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace*, 1995). Magaisa (2006) argue that the most visible manifestation of Zanu PF's power arising from this structure was the announcement by the uniformed security chiefs, just before the Presidential election in 2002, that they would only support a leader who had participated in the liberation struggle.

However the most important role of this structure is that of enforcing other structures. It enforced the production structure as witnessed by white farmers' forced removals and Zanu PF's reluctance to enforce the rule of law during farm invasions (Blair 2005: 101). The arrests and imprisonments of those considered to act outside the financial structure is a reinforcement of finance structure. The security structure has been called upon to ensure the acceptance of patriotic history (*The Standard*, 2004). Thus the police closure of the independent press - *The Daily News*; cracked down on teachers not teaching the prescribed syllabus and the closing down of private education institutions under the guise of over-charging tuition fees are all evidence of the role of the security structure in Zimbabwe (*The Daily News*, 2003).

However these structures are not invincible. While Zanu PF has control over all these structures of power, the people are not without power. Looking at each structure Magaisa (2006) points out possible ways of challenging each structure. Challenging the production structure takes on board the tried and tested method expounded by Karl Marx (1848). Marx (1848) argued that the people have power to control the means of production by withdrawing their labour through mass stayaways, strikes, sit-ins, go slows and any other such actions. However, this does not seem to have any effect on Zanu PF power because withdrawing labour does not have an effect on a structure that does not have any meaningful production. Thus challenging the production structure in Zimbabwe, with the hope to empower the citizens, is not feasible; other structures have to be considered.

Magaisa (2006) argues that it is possible to challenge the financial structure by creating a parallel financial structure. Zimbabweans have already embarked on this in their pursuit for survival. The parallel foreign currency market is one such move where the people are in control of their own finances. Furthermore he argues that the people can withdraw keeping their savings within the banking system. By so doing they starve the government of the resources needed to control them. Participation in parallel market and saving money out of the banking system is a sign of mass withdrawal of consent, not only to the established financial structure, but the entire political structure. It is a rebellion in its own right. Zimbabwean citizens are already doing it but are they fully aware of its implications? They need to be aware of it in order to pursue it to its logical conclusion.

The knowledge structure is only effective where there is an effective dissemination strategy. In Zimbabwe these strategies include the radio, television, newspapers and magazines, which are mainly controlled by Zanu PF. Magaisa (2006) observes that these media institutions need revenue in order to survive and such revenue comes from citizens who make up the advertisers and subscribers of various media. By refusing to subscribe, purchase and or advertise in state controlled media, the people exercise their power over the structure and intensify the rebellion. The question is, are the people aware of this strategy? Magaisa (2006) dismisses the argument that people buy newspaper for sports or classifieds not as a show of support for the newspaper's political affiliation. It is sells that count as this keeps the newspaper in business.

However a question of great importance is: Can the people challenge the security structure? Magaisa (2006) argues that even though this is the most influential and powerful structure, it can be challenged.

Since everyone requires security, those in control of security have power over those who need it. But power to protect can also mean power to withdraw protection [...] (Magaisa, 2006: 4).

Given the Zimbabwean history, this power resides in the hands of the service chiefs, as indicated earlier. Magaisa (2006) observes that in order to neutralise this power the opposition parties need to form alliances with the some members of this service. One of the main proponents of this strategy is the former information minister Jonathan Moyo (2006) in a widely criticised article entitled, *The Third Way*. In this article Moyo (2006) points out that a synergy of top Zanu PF leaders and the opposition political leader can bring the desired change in Zimbabwe. However, this strategy seems to suggest that the people have no power over the security structure. According to Magaisa (2006) security ceases to be relevant if the people meant for it reject it. A case in point is when residents of Chitungwiza, Budiriro and Dzivaresekwa attacked anyone believed to be a member of the security forces in 2000 (*The Daily News*, 2000). In response to attacks by youth militias in the rural areas and commercial farms, some communities formed security committees that protected their compounds (Blair, 2005: 119). By so doing the people were challenging the security structure.

However, challenging a security structure does not necessarily mean a direct violent confrontation. Given that it is the citizens who sustain the security structure, it therefore follows to reason that it is within our power to change the political structure. It is the moral obligation of every citizen to enlighten those who sustain the security structure on their role in subjugating the fellow citizens. However, the question is, are the citizens aware of this responsibility? There is not much evidence to support this awareness. There is a need to employ a strategy that reaches as many citizens as possible.

In order to influence the largest audience with their ideas, Magaisa (2006), Moyo (2006) and many others have resorted to write for newspapers, and other electronic

media. However, not everyone is privileged enough to have access to these forms of media. Magaisa (2006) expresses his despair at how,

some brilliant pieces of work that members of the public should ordinarily read [are] packed and stored away in thick academic journals in the vast libraries or sites accessible only on payment of huge sums and used occasionally by students to write essays and pass exams, after which they gather dust on the library shelves (2006: 1).

It is at this juncture that Citizen Theatre comes in to fill this void.

Academic writing creates a barrier between knowledge and its intended targets. This is contrary to theatre, which is the most human interactive form, of all arts (Boal, 1979). While people have to visit libraries and other such institutions, theatre has the discretion of either visiting the people or allowing the people to come to it. It is upon this principle that Citizen Theatre is built. Depending on the prevailing environment, Citizen Theatre can be visited or visit the people, there-by bridging the gap. Thus, I seek to go beyond where academic writings have gone, by theatrically concretising ideas in a way that enables the spectator to know the reality of his own social and political condition and take charge of it. It is through far reaching social and political transformation that disenfranchised Zimbabweans will be able to enjoy and exercise their citizenry rights. It is in this respect that Citizen Theatre shares similar underlying aims as Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed. However Citizen Theatre is fundamentally different in terms of practice as will be elucidated.

CHAPTER 2

This chapter explores the meaning of the term citizen and how it is employed in this context. I proceed to explore the theory and practice of Bertolt Brecht and Augusto Boal as a way of identifying elements that influenced Citizen Theatre. I further define and explore my beliefs surrounding theatre with specific reference to Citizen Theatre.

2.1 Citizen?

Before defining Citizen Theatre I need to shed some light on the meaning and application of the term citizen in this research. There is no consensus about the content and meaning of the term citizen. It is not my intention in this paper to unearth an authentic definition but to offer a working definition relevant to my quest. According to Adedrian (1998), the original sense of the term meant, “the resident of a city” (212). However, due to the creation of states the term acquired multiple meanings. Thus the Oxford Dictionary (2005) defines a citizen as “an inhabitant, a city dweller, civilian, resident and a voter” (1367).

Realising the difficulty associated by the term Oommen (1997) defines it through its concept – citizenship. He calls it an individual identity that allows participation, realisation and protection of individual rights (Oommen, 1997: 229). This is realised by way of belonging to a piece of land where the individual resides. The idea of belonging to a territory is very crucial for one to be considered a citizen. Taking a similar approach Oyelaram (1997) defines citizenship as, “both a legal status conferred on individual members of a polity and the existential experience of such individuals regardless of *de facto* national identity” (89). Oyelaram’s (1997) definition amply covers the broad spectrum of citizenship, which can be divided into two categories namely; acquired citizenship and birthright citizenship. The first category is heavily contested as requirements for inclusion vary from country to country. The second category has been universally accepted and enshrined in the Declaration of Human Rights as a mark of citizenship. It is this form of citizenship that I shall refer to as citizenship in the context of Citizen Theatre.

Though terms of citizenship have been universally accepted, the concept has been manipulated by different states to suit their respective aims. This can be best

understood by briefly discussing the term “state”. Oommen (1998) defines the state as, “an entity that is endowed with political sovereignty over a clearly defined area and that consists of citizens whose terminal loyalty is to the state. [This entity] has monopoly over the use of legitimate force” (223). Two points are worth noting in this definition. Firstly, the state controls the use of force and, secondly, the citizens have unquestionable loyalty to the state. Ideally the state’s use of force is based on the legitimacy given to it by the citizen. Based on this legitimacy the state acts as an impartial arbiter between citizens. Such a state is considered a democratic state as Oommen (1998) explains:

A democratic state ought to be [...] a collective of citizens who enjoy judicial equality in the territory of the state irrespective of their having identities based on race, religion, language, class or gender (1998: 225)

However, Robertson (2004) argues that where the state’s legitimacy is questionable the state is most likely to use force in order to coerce its citizens into submission. This gives the state a free reign to confer different forms of identities resulting in different forms of citizenship.

In light of this Amkpa (2004), talking about postcolonial desires in Africa, postulates two types of citizenship that the state can confer and proposes an ideal third type. These are “formal citizenship”, “informal citizenship” and “non-formal citizenship” respectively. Amkpa (2004) defines “formal citizenship” as a type of citizenship that empowers individuals with cultural capital that allows them to determine the terms of the society in which they live. By cultural capital he means class, gender, ethnicity and religion. This can exclude and include individuals from enjoying their citizenry rights depending on which cultural capital the state applies. Where individuals get excluded they become, “informal citizens” (Amkpa, 2004: 10). Thus Amkpa (2004) defines “informal citizenship” as that which “gives people the right to live in a particular society but denies them the cultural and political capital needed to narrate their local space and politics” (2004: 10). Amkpa (2004) proposes another form of citizenship which he terms “non-formal citizenship” (10). He defines it as follows:

Non-formal citizenship is a fluid hybrid sense of self that seeks subjectivity and agency in a variety of local and global contexts. It rejects deterministic definitions of identity (such as working class, elite e.t.c) in favour of multiplicity. Its very flexibility facilitates coalition

building and empowers it to engage and contest authoritarian power across the spectrum of locations". (2004: 10)

Amkpa (2004) argues for "non- formal citizenship" as an ideal type of citizenship that is not determined by fixed group identities but a conscious self-awareness of the plurality and dynamism of the global world. For him, postcolonial Africa is a combination of western and post-independent modernities, which need to be synchronised in order to come up with a flexible and non-conformist identity that will inform "non-formal citizenship" (Amkpa, 2004: 11). It is a definition that I find relevant to my understanding of citizenship. It empowers the individual to go into self-discovery and take charge of his destiny. It understands the complexity of postcolonial, post-independent Africa. Thus some semblance can be made between my initial definition of citizen and the concept of citizen as proposed by Amkpa (2004). A citizen is one who belongs to a territory where he was born or has existential experience of that territory. This equips him with the cultural and political capital that is informed by a fluid and hybrid sense of overlapping modernities, which allow him to recognise and determine what he is entitled. It is in this context that the term citizen is used in Citizen Theatre.

2.2 Shifting the sands...Defining territory.

[...] we cannot recognise the new until we understand the old and the new cannot exist without the old (Sanjoy Ganguly, 2004:234).

There is a range of discourse that can be used to facilitate the alleviation of the deprived masses from oppression. Theatrical practices based on discourses such as socialism, Freirian development theory, Christianity, Schechner's ideas on the arts, black liberation theory, Hinduism and so on, have been well documented in Richard Boon and Jane Plastow's (ed) book *Theatre and Empowerment* (2004), Haedicke and Nellhaus' (ed), *Performing Democracy* (2001) and many other books. Such theatrical practices have manifested into various forms of theatre such as Community Theatre, Popular Theatre, The Epic Theatre, Theatre of the Oppressed, to name but a few. These have been collectively termed Peoples Theatre (Bradly and McComick, 1979). Citizen Theatre, which undoubtedly falls under this category, has been influenced by some of the theatre forms found in this category. Of particular interest are Bertolt Brecht's (1964) Epic Theatre and Augusto Boal's (1979) Theatre of the Oppressed.

While acknowledging how the works of Bertolt Brecht and Augusto Boal have influenced my conceptual thinking, I need to reiterate that Citizen Theatre is neither Epic Theatre nor Theatre of the Oppressed. It is my encounter with the works of these two twentieth century theatre innovators that inspires Citizen Theatre.

When I began my quest into Citizen Theatre I realised that my thinking was inclined towards Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (TO). The way Boal (1979) argued about the relationship between theatre and politics, how he penetrated the psyche of the spect-actor through his *Rainbow of Desire* (1995) left a permanent impression on me. However, given the current situation in Zimbabwe, I found TO practically problematic. If TO was developed as a direct response to an oppressive political system, why did it seem so difficult to practise it in a country where all the trappings of oppression were present? With this question began my enquiry into TO and I soon realised that one cannot talk about Boal without talking about Brecht who had an influence on Boal.

Bertolt Brecht, a twentieth century dramatist, was a theatre innovator who argued strongly against mainstream theatre. Often misunderstood, Brecht's theory and practice of the Epic Theatre has been far and wide with contemporary practitioners applying his various techniques to suit their specific needs (Kleber, 1990). On the other hand, Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, by far the more articulate of the two, has found expression in different forms and in different parts of the world.

Brecht and Boal were both influenced by Karl Marx's theory of dialectical materialism. While Brecht was undoubtedly a Marxist, even though he never admitted being a member of the German Communist Party (Visser, 1990), Boal has always denied being labelled a Marxist. Brecht reasoned that "for theatre to be unpolitical means to ally itself with the ruling party" (Brooker 2000: 132). In his introduction to Theatre of the Oppressed, Boal argues that "all theatre is necessarily political [...] those who try to separate theatre from politics lead us into error" (1979: Foreword). This argument is based on the Marxist theory of base and superstructure, which Babbage (2004) discussing Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed explains as follows:

All cultural expressions and institutions of a society (superstructure) - manifested for example in law, the arts, religion and morality and

indeed politics - are contingent upon and determined by the underlying economic organization (the base/infrastructure) (2004: 39).

Babbage (2004) further explains that it does not necessarily follow that the base exerts pressure on the superstructure but the superstructure in some way influences the base when it comes to ideological concerns. Hence Marx and Engles reasoned that cultural expressions and institutions of a society cannot change the course of history by themselves (Babbage, 2004), a position embraced by Bertolt Brecht, Augusto Boal and myself.

Brecht and Boal detested the Aristotelian drama and the manner in which it made the audience identify with the hero to the point of self-oblivion. Brecht argued that the resulting feeling of pity and fear, led to an emotional catharsis that prevented the audience from reasoning (Willet, 1964: 120). Such a theatre was best suited for exploitative Nazi Germany, in the case of Brecht, and oppressive Brazil, in the case of Boal. For Brecht this theatre was further entrenched by the twentieth century philosophers such as Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution, Albert Einstein with his theory of relativity and August Comte with his theory of positivism (Brooker, 2000).

Brecht argued that twentieth century philosophers had interpreted the world into unchangeable absolutes and it was the duty of theatre to go beyond these interpretations and change the world (Brooker, 2000). Therefore his domain was critically the domain of consciousness and ideology, aiming at explaining the causes of development, by dividing rather than unifying his audience and in so doing transform ideas and attitudes. He aimed his theatre to be a clinical dispassionate mode of analysis that would allow the spectator not just to stimulate but examine emotions (Brooker, 2000).

Brecht argued that the aim of Epic Theatre is estrangement or “*verfremdung*” (Willet 1964: 156). The emphasis is on reason and objectivity rather than emotion. It calls for a type of critical detachment by way of forcing the audience to distance itself from the stage and contemplate on the events of the play. Thus he introduced an episodic plot structure, which contained little cause and effect between scene and had cumulative character development. He focused on cruel action, harsh and realistic scenes and a linear plot structure with no climax and denouement. He further alienated the actor

from his role and the audience itself, historicised events making each scene complete in itself and used digital technology such as slides and videos. This was meant to prevent illusion and provoke the audience into reforming society by challenging common ideologies.

On the other hand Boal (1995) argued that the world was divided into two groups of people; the oppressors who controlled the means of production – the base; and the oppressed whose lives were governed by the oppressor. While Brecht (1964) wanted to encourage critical thinking, Boal (1979) aimed at encouraging action through what he termed “rehearsals for a revolution” (127). Tracing the history of theatre Boal (1979) observes that, “the ruling classes strive to take permanent hold of the theatre and utilize it as a tool for domination” (Foreword). Therefore, if the oppressed are to be emancipated, they need to take charge of the oppressor’s means of oppression, the theatre, not simply as the audience but both the audience and the actor. The oppressed becomes an active participant in choosing the content and the actual making of the piece of theatre thereby realizing his social condition while experiencing the dramatic action, what is termed “simultaneously dramaturgy” (Babbage, 2004: 40). He called his theatre, Theatre of the Oppressed with the Newspaper Theatre in 1971 as its earliest manifestation. However it was with Forum Theatre in 1973 that Boal (1979) drew closer to his proposed theory.

With Forum Theatre, Boal (1979) abolished the separation between the audience and the actor and came up with the term “spect-actor” (130). Everyone is a spectator and an actor in Forum Theatre as they are responsible for determining content, how it will be presented as well as taking part in the actual performance. The group has to reach an autonomous decision on the solution to the problem even though Boal argues that a good debate is better than an agreement (Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz, 1994). For Boal (1972) theatre cannot afford to be radical only in content but both in the process and form. He argues in the words of Paulo Freire that, “trusting the people is the indispensable pre-occupation for revolutionary change” (26).

From Brecht and Boal, I embrace certain elements and refute others. I have found Brecht relevant in determining structure for Citizen Theatre, while Boal is useful in the theatre making process. I have found the requirements of TO problematic to implement in a country like Zimbabwe. For instance Boal requires participation from

all those witnessing the theatrical experience (Babbage, 2004). This is not easy to achieve as Babbage (2004) observes:

For many spectators the phrase 'audience participation' suggests the very opposite of freedom; it is not passivity as much as fear - of failure and ridicule - which has taught them to avoid the front row. After all spectators have learnt from past experiences that invitations to participate are manipulative or tokenistic, suspicion is entirely justified (2004: 41 - 42).

However, having made these interesting observations Babbage (2004) concedes to Boal's submission that "this difficulty will be overcome if there is solidarity - and hence trust - among all those present at the theatrical event" (42). This complicates rather than simplifies the problem. Trust is not an event but a process. Levels of success vary depending on place, time and situation. My experience with Zimbabwe is that trust is elusive. Zimbabweans have a strong sense of insecurity, which transcends the geographical boundaries of Zimbabwe. Many Zimbabweans living in and outside the country cannot have a meaningful discussion without suspecting each other of spying for the government. Hence, nobody trusts anyone, yet it is upon these principles of trust and discussion that TO is built.

Boal's (1979) title, *Theatre of the Oppressed* is prejudicial in that it always assumes that participants are oppressed people and need to realize this and emancipate themselves. Applied to the group of popular educator that Lib Spry was working with in Canada, it failed to pass the test. Spry (1994) chronicles how it was difficult for a group of popular educators, who were predominantly white middle class, to identify themselves as belonging to any of the two polarities. She had to use new terminology such "structures of power" in order to facilitate the workshop (Spry, 1994: 83). This demonstrates the limitations of the word "oppression". Even Boal himself initially found it difficult to comprehend the term during his early years of TO practice in Europe (David and O'Sullivan, 2000). He just could not figure out how issues such as loneliness and alienation could be addressed as oppression (Babbage 2004). Furthermore, the title presupposes segregation of the perpetrator who should be an active and equal participant in solving the problem. Thus it marks boundaries for inclusion in as much as it excludes others. It creates a contesting binary which limits the possibilities of co-operation between the two polarities.

Citizen Theatre does not separate between the state and its people, the oppressor and the oppressed, the haves and the have not. First and foremost everyone is a citizen who enjoys the same entitlements. However, where there are human relationships there is bound to be someone who has some influence and hence exercise control over the other. Thus citizens are divided into two broad categories namely: the rulers and the ruled. While championing the concerns of the ruled Citizen Theatre reasons that the ruled can also become the ruler in other circumstances. Thus this distinction varies with circumstances. However in this context the rulers are understood as the political leaders with political authority over the mass. On the other hand the ruled refers to the majority of the people those without political authority. Thus the terms “rulers” and “authorities” are used interchangeably, in the same way the terms the “ruled” and the “people” are used.

Since entitlements are at the centre of Citizen Theatre, it is therefore befitting that the words “oppression”, “oppressor” and “oppressed” are banished from Citizen Theatre and replaced by “deprivation”. “Deprive” as a word has notions of being “robbed, denied, removed, withdrawn and dispossessed” (Oxford Dictionary, 2005: 1987). It does not necessarily follow that those who go through this experience are oppressed and the perpetrators are the oppressors. Thus, the term “deprivation” takes centre stage. Citizen Theatre’s preoccupation is the achievement of one’s entitlements when they are being deprived. It seeks to empower and liberate the individual against all forms of deprivation.

Just like Boal (1979) I acknowledge that all human activities are political. The way people think and behave is determined by the political structure. Social and economic deprivations are all by-products of a corrupt political structure. This is in line with the Marxist theory of base and superstructure. Citizen Theatre seeks to challenge the base because it wields more power than the superstructure. Theatre cannot afford to deal with the consequence of such activities; it should rather tackle the root cause. Those who use it otherwise try to lead us into error and in the words of Boal (1979) this “is a political attitude” (Foreword).

A corrupt base is like a fish rotting from its head, a tree besieged by earthworms and rotting from within. One cannot cut off a drying branch and claim to have animated the tree. This is the dilemma of most People’s Theatre projects. With reference to a

TO project conducted in Romania Ioana Szeman (2005) demonstrates how TO reinforced oppression when the facilitators were too scared to challenge the main structures of deprivation after discovering what she terms “nested oppression” (252). In nested oppression an individual is both oppressed and exercises some oppression over others. Dambudzo Marechera (1979), one of Zimbabwe’s most prolific writers calls it, reversed aggression. In his novella, *The House of Hunger* (1979), Marechera articulates how a husband who is frustrated by the political system beats his wife, the wife beats the child, the child beats the cat and the cat jumps through the window. Addressing the root cause of the problem, which is the political structure, can only solve this cause and effect situation.

While Boal (1979) took theatre from political authorities he did not liberate it. By choosing not to challenge the source, his approach falls short of total emancipation. Thus in any given society where legitimacy of political authority is not established, challenging the citizens to realise the necessity of legitimate authority becomes the preoccupation of the theatre. Illegitimate authority deprives citizens of their entitlements and ability to narrate their local space and relate to the global world there-by robbing them of their citizenship. Therefore while all forms of entitlements are of paramount importance, the right to choose authorities is the indispensable entitlements of a citizen. Challenging the base creates, “[...] at every level in society, a political space [...] where people can question their social norms, politics, economics, values and culture. [Only then can they] question themselves and there begins the search for an alternative” (Ganguly, 2004: 254). Theatre should create that space and enable a search for an alternative. Thus Citizen Theatre challenges the structures of power in relation to citizens’ entitlements.

Theatre should not brainwash but rather, in the words of Femi Osofisan, bring “obvious truth into the clear light of the day in opposition to states, which wish to obscure the truth about oppression in order to continue their domination of the people,” (1998: 5). However, Osofisan (1998) believes that this can be achieved through propaganda. I concur with Osofisan’s (1998) aim but I do not share his means of achieving this. Theatre should not seek to create dogma or propaganda. I admit that it is difficult for theatre to be free from dogma and propaganda but it is retrogressive to embark on it deliberately. Where this happens, theatre stoops to the level of the

system it is trying to change. Theatre should remain above the system in order to create alternatives.

Thus with Citizen Theatre I envisage a theatre that is conversant with the Zimbabwean situation. It is a theatre that protects its audience while subjecting them to the reality of their situation so as to stimulate action. The actor is a raised mirror of the citizens that reflects characters, ideas and attitudes. The actor does not necessarily change the world of play for the world of play is different from the real world, he rather points at the folly of the citizen in a way that suggest possibilities of change. In order for an actor to effectively highlight possible ways of emancipation they need to free themselves from their psychological fears and physical limitations. Through Boal's *Rainbow of Desire* (1995) Citizen Theatre psychologically prepares the actor for the risk involved by exorcising "the cops in the head" (Boal, 1995: 55). Since citizens are wittingly or unwittingly responsible for perpetuating unfavourable structures of power, Citizen Theatre enables the actor to realise this condition before embarking on his role. This brings truth in the open and makes the actor more informed and effective.

CHAPTER 3

This chapter explores the relationship between theory and practice of Citizen Theatre. It maps out practical elements on which my thesis production was built. In 1936 Brecht argued for “a new theatre [...] adequate to the new subject matter – the great themes of our times” (Brooker, 143: 132). Being the Marxist he was Brecht understood that change was the only constant and theatre had to constantly adapt to such changes. It is in this context that Citizen Theatre has been developed to address the new subject matter of the current Zimbabwean question. Colleagues such as Leonard Matsa, Dylan Wilson-Max and Raisedon Baya have already begun writing and performing politically motivated plays such as *Rags and Garbage* (2002), *Victims and Witnesses* (2003) *Super Patriots and Morons* (2003) and *All Systems Out of Order* (2005). However, the successes of these works have been limited given that they were performed to predominantly elitist audiences. Some of these plays have been commercialised thus making the theatre inaccessible to the general public. Times are hard and furthermore Zimbabweans do not have a theatre going culture; thus any theatre hoping to make a difference should be prepared to adapt to these conditions.

3.1 The Aesthetic Qualities of Citizen Theatre

Citizen Theatre is a theatre concept that is founded on the rejection of patriotic narrative. In as much as Brecht founded his Epic theatre on refuting Realism, Citizen Theatre rejects a new realism based on patriotic narrative. Notions of who we are cannot be defined through a linear, historical narrative. Zimbabwe’s post-independence generation is informed by global and local contexts and, colonial and postcolonial modernities. Where these notions meet is a territory of hybridity and fluidity, where identity is not fixed and positions are constantly changing. It is a place of betweenness where post-colonial modernities overlap. Such a place allows openness, tolerance, and the generation of multiple perspectives relevant for the creation of a democratic society. Thus Citizen Theatre is not linear but episodic in structure. Where possible it seeks to be non-climatic as to disengage audience’s emotions. Each act exists as a complete whole and presents a different talking point. Talking points represent different views of a particular issue, theme or character. This allows the generation of discussion amongst the audience.

Every act ends with a dramatic disruption, for various reasons. Given the current political climate in Zimbabwe, outlined above, disruption of performances by organs of state is anticipated. Thus in order to combat itself against this likelihood Citizen Theatre employs perambulatory techniques that will see different sections of the play being performed at different venues. It is equally for this reason that an episodic structure is used, such that in the event of disruption the audience will go away having captured the essence of the play. Secondly, disruptions have become a part of life in Zimbabwe. The non-availability of basic commodities, destruction of people's houses, and invasion of private homes by official thugs is all evidence of disruption of life. Thus disruption of acts mimics the political situation while equally challenging the lineal notion of events perpetrated by patriotic history. Furthermore it allows the audience to get into what Boal (1995) terms "the stop and think mode" (55). By abruptly stopping the performance I give the audience a chance to digest and discuss what they have just seen before watching another episode. These gaps allow the audience to formulate ideas about the next episode only to be confronted by an entirely different scenario. This disturbs the audience while taking away the element of predictability, which calls for constant engagement on the part of the audience. The curiosity created by these different acts allows the audience to understand the essence of the play.

However, similar as it might seem, to Brecht's alienation, the object is not to alienate but allow the audience to breathe and reflect on the play. I believe that knowledge without passion is sterile. Thus, I do not believe that any theatre can successfully run away from emotions. Even Boal (1995) later on conceded and spoke about the different forms of catharsis the spect-actor would go through. In order to engage the mind Citizen Theatre makes use of satire. Merchant (1972), speaking about the incongruity theory of humour, has argued that comedy applies to the mind. In order for the audience to laugh at weird behaviour, they ought to know the normal behaviour, which is only achieved by applying the mind. Satire as I shall argue later, challenges the audience in this respect. Thus each act critically engages the mind of the audience while the disruptions provide relief moments where they can reflect on the action. It is a space where reason and emotions can meet. In this way Citizen Theatre goes beyond the "stop and think mode" to the "stop, think and act mode".

In Citizen Theatre time is not linear. Linearity of time subjects us to historical *déjà vu*. We risk conjuring moments in our history, which incapacitate action. This is the case with most Zimbabwean citizens. The use of patriotic history by the ruling party has made those working towards change feel as though it is a lost cause – the, if-Zanu PF-did-it-before-then-it-can-do-it-again, syndrome. Anthony Chenells (2004) observes, “In Zimbabwe, minor and major histories have swapped places and probably will swap again” (92). Such interpretations seem to suggest that our situation is determined by fate. This favours the status quo as it takes away the citizens’ will power. Hence Citizen Theatre departs from the notion of using history to reconstruct identity; in fact it caricatures history so as to emphasize current realities. Time stops as the audience is confronted with the obnoxious and brutal reality of life, which leaves an impression long after the theatrical event.

In as much as patriotic narratives divide space into two, Citizen Theatre equally divides space into two, private space and public space, and makes use of both spaces. Space is understood in terms of theatre houses built for performance as well as the actual space where performance takes place regardless of the venue. As theatre houses, private space is defined as the proscenium arch theatre, which is mainstream theatre. Public space is understood as alternative theatre places such as public squares, empty grounds, shopping centres, shopping malls, community halls, street corners and school halls. Within these different spaces there can be found private performance space and public performance space.

Definition of performance space is from the point of view of the ruled. Private space is space owned but not necessarily inhibited by authorities. It is authentic to the rulers in that it allows them freedom of expression. It is wide and allows self-indulgence in exercising power. On the other hand, it is tokenistic for the ruled in that they require justification to inhabit it. It is formal, ordered and rigid in that levels of respect for the ruler must always be observed even at the detriment of one’s freedom of expression. It is abusing as the ruler holds on to the status quo at all costs, which results in nested deprivation. Thus for the ruled it is a hypocritical, crazy world that goes against one’s will. Due to its formality, scenic design tends towards artistic kleptomania. Thus it employs exuberant lighting, sound effects and great care is taken on the set and costume. However it does not attempt to mirror life but create an authoritative and

suffocating atmosphere. Private space can have a linear structure but it does not have a climax, neither is it restricted by the cause and effects of events. It is through the rulers' excessive obsession with power versus how they abuse it that drama is achieved. In my thesis production I experimented with this space in Act 1.

The public space is owned but not necessarily inhabited by the ruled. It is liberating, wide, comfy and inviting as every citizen always finds his place. It is a place of freedom of expression, which manifests as unconscious rebellion. It is free from the ruler's clichés even though he can have influence over it. It is unauthentic to the rulers as they are always under public scrutiny. Thus rulers find themselves limited and subjected to a life of pretence and role-playing. From the ruler's point of view people's behaviour in this space is always chaotic and disordered. Hence the ruler finds "disorder" in "order". Stylistically it tends towards poor theatre. It makes use of the actor's voice and body and readily available objects to convey meaning. Sound, lighting and costume are reduced to bare necessities. Structurally it is a combination of different sequences knitted together in order to provide meaning. It does not follow the logic of time and place and audience is always the general public going about their day-to-day activities. Drama is created by the rulers attempt to bring "order" versus the citizen's will to live on their devices – "disorder". An attempt to mirror this space in my thesis production was found in Act 2.

Private space and public space always begin from the point of co-existence in a performance. However, throughout the play these spaces constantly attempt to swallow each other. This is best demonstrated by the invasion of space by individuals belonging to another space. Therefore, a single production of Citizen Theatre can make use of either or both, theatre houses and alternative theatre venues. Within these spaces, one can identify private space and public space, which eventually merge into a single unity. This is where mainstream theatre and alternative theatre meet.

The style of performance between the private space and the public space varies considerably. In the private space it is exaggerated, cartoon like characters. This serves to emphasize the lack of human compassion by leaders who worship power. It is devoid of emotions, a place where human life is not valued, making it an abnormal space. On the contrary the public space is very humane. It is jovial, free and full of human compassion. People feel for each other and are much more inclined to help.

Thus it makes use of the entire range of human emotions such as happiness and sadness, joy and pain, silly and serious. Thus the acting is more real and characters use the entire emotional range. However, it is not free from the inhumanity of the private space.

I concur with Soyinka (1998) when he makes the following observation:

Repression takes many forms, some quite subtle, and the tools of resistance must adapt to its very manifestation, which is nearly always unique. (1998: Foreword)

In my introduction to this paper, I defined the context in which Citizen Theatre has been conceived. Thus in the words of Femi Osofisan (1998); questioning the status quo “becomes a gamble with danger, unless formulated with special cunning [and] under such circumstances protection of those whom you work with becomes of paramount importance lest your actors become victims of official thugs” (11). To this end Citizen Theatre uses a combination of satire and parody. Most satirists firmly believe that satire can be used to confront and demystify the terror of the state.

Citizen Theatre uses satire to paint the comic yet brutal reality of life as lived by the citizens. Writing in “*The Messingkauf Dialogue*” between 1939 – 42 Brecht emphasized the importance of humour in the theatre (Bradly and McComick, 1979). He argued that if this quality was sacrificed theatre would never make contact with the people. Thus he concluded that, “a theatre that can’t be laughed in is a theatre to be laughed at. Humourless people are ridiculous” (Bradly and McComick, 1979: 89). I share a similar point of view.

Humour is an expression of freedom. Tracing the development of satire and political jokes, Larse (1980) observes that political jokes “have been in circulation throughout history in periods of stress and hardships, particularly in countries where authoritarian regimes suppress freedom of speech” (1). He further argues that such jokes are spread by the word of mouth and act as the *vox populi* of the silent majority. He quotes the French philosopher Henri Bergson to support the view that laughter is a means by which the “society avenges itself for the liberties taken away from it” (Larse, 1980: 1). That laughter is an intrinsic defence against tyranny is a popular held view. A satirist has poetic justice that allows them to point out, folly and get away with it.

Polland (1985) supports this argument by pointing out that the satirist is fully aware of how things are and what they ought to be. Cushioned by satire, the satirist is the perfect agent for bringing out truth in the open until the amendment of vice by criticised individuals. It is my submission that satire is not defence but attack against tyranny. It is upon this premise that satire is used in Citizen Theatre.

However, Larse's (1980) argument is true to Zimbabwe. Jokes about the failures of Zanu PF leadership are doing the rounds. Due to technological advancement this *vox populi* has not only been expressed through the word of mouth, but through the print and electronic media as well. It is this *vox populi* that informs the content of Citizen Theatre. Hence by using satire, Citizen Theatre speaks the language of the people. It identifies and liberates them, while defending the actor and attacking tyranny.

It presents figures and symbols of power as a way of demonstrating their ridiculous nature and what a deplorable and blind society result from them. Satirical figures and symbols of power are found both, off and on stage. This serves to demystify the visible and invisible elongated arm of the state while pointing at the citizen's role in propping up this structure of power. The intention is to reflect on the pitfalls and self-serving attitude of those entrusted with political responsibilities.

These are the elements that inform Citizen Theatre. In my thesis project, done in November 2006 at the University of Cape Town entitled *Quetropha*, I experimented with these elements with varying degrees of success.

CHAPTER 4

This chapter provides selected insights into the application of the concept of Citizen Theatre to my thesis production *Quetropha*. With *Quetropha* I tried to match theory with practice. As is expected in most cases, practices do not necessarily mirror the theory. How I tried to bridge this gap in a bid to achieve my goals is the subject of this chapter. I examine ways in which the process and production attempted to remain faithful to Citizen Theatre; and how the audience responded to the production. In line with the theory of Citizen Theatre, *Quetropha* was built around characters and situations, not story. This section, therefore, does not discuss the story but the challenges encountered during the process and performance of the play *Quetropha*.

4.1 Towards *Quetropha*

Embarking on my thesis project I was faced with numerous challenges. Working in one country trying to develop a theatre form useful in another, where conditions vary considerably, presented several challenges and practical questions. I was confronted with the issue of whether it was necessary to use Zimbabweans over South African actors. Furthermore, who was my targeted audience, South Africa or Zimbabwe? If the play *Quetropha* is a form of People's Theatre, done for the people and deriving its content from its people, did that entail going back to Zimbabwe to research and collect relevant material for my production? How was I going to reach my audience? Was I going to take the production to Zimbabwe? Theoretically it was clear in my head that I needed Zimbabwean actors and that I was targeting Zimbabwean audiences. Yet, practically, I only had access to South African actors to play to a predominantly South African audience. I wondered whether having South African actors would limit my intentions. Furthermore, given a strong South African audience, to what extent should this audience influence the project? If the audience becomes completely irrelevant how would I assess its success? Would this audience be drawn in to a dialogue and action relevant to Zimbabwe, after watching the play? I decided to discover answers to these questions to the playmaking process and the outcome of the performance.

My aim was to use the play *Quetropha* to highlight an awareness of Zimbabwe's flaunted political structure so as to encourage citizens to take charge of their lives. In

this pursuit I was fascinated by the striking relationship and resemblance between politics and religion. There is some truth to Marx's (1848) submission that religion is the opium of the oppressed. The fact that it has been used to oppress others, points at the strong relationship between religion and politics. Thus Sanjoy Ganguly (2004) observes that,

Religion can only be an ally of reactionary politics. Religion can also be a form of progressive politics and progressive political practice can also be religion. (2004: 223)

Politics and religion both claim the ultimate truth through the creation of personality cults, which require complete loyalty. Their members are required to live by the moral and philosophical dictates of the leader. Anything contrary is considered blasphemous. Adherents pursue their beliefs with passion and commitment. Thus Chitando (2005) looking at religious practices in Zimbabwe found it difficult to draw the line between religion and politics. The distinction became even much more blurred by religious leaders such as Reverend Obediah Musindo who referred to Robert Mugabe as a "black, political, economic Moses", while Arch Bishop Pius Ncube became a forerunner in criticizing Robert Mugabe (*The Standard*, 2006). This influenced my conceptual thinking for the play *Quetropha*.

In the current situation, Zimbabwe had become a community desperately seeking for the ultimate truth that will alleviate their circumstance. It was a congregation seeking salvation and eternal life from an inhuman and unholy, dark religion. The citizens were the congregation; the politicians, the owners and leaders of this religion. Armed with this interpretation I wanted to produce a play that highlighted the hypocrisy of politicians and how citizens, desperately trying to liberate themselves from such hypocritical influences, could explore different alternatives. I hoped to achieve this by using different characters and situations, and different performance spaces that suited and showed the marked differences between the wishes of politicians and those of the people. In order to connect this with my production concept I intended to include biblical nuances in the play so as to expose the rhetorical nature of politicians and to criticize their worship of power. Following from this premise, the play would borrow content from the people's political and religious beliefs.

4.2 *Quetropha* as Citizen Theatre

The title of the play production, *Quetropha*, was informed by the theme of the play – false hope. The prefix of the term *Quetropha*, “Que” is taken from the word “queuing” which now consumes most of Zimbabwean citizen’s time as they wait for basic commodities on days and sometimes even weeks on end. “Tropha” is derived from the term “jatropha”. Jatropha is a plant that makes bio-diesel. This plant was discovered in Zimbabwe and the government hailed it as a solution to the fuel woes affecting the country. Given the non-availability of financial resources needed to process the plant into fuel and the current brain drain, such statements could only be described as political rhetoric, which create false hope on the part of the citizens. Thus by implication the word *Quetropha* can simply be understood as “false hope”.

In the play everyone is caught in this illusion of false hope. The play operates through a series of juxtapositions of hope and despair. Rogue hopes that he will find an appropriate strategy to deal with the rats as to hanging on to power, yet his security forces cannot be trusted. Lieutenant has hopes of leading the country after Rogue, yet Rogue’s determination to hold on to power makes that seem very remote. The people hope that by ignoring their political plight and concentrating on survival their problems will go away, yet authorities put obstacles in their way. The citizens put their faith in King Arthur who turns out to be a cripple who cannot help himself. They put hope on a fellow citizen to topple Rogue forgetting that they also need to be active participants in order to make this a success. The audience hopes that Rogue will lose the fight but he emerges victorious. The audience hopes that the citizens will rise yet they run away. The challenge is for citizens not to take their situation for granted. It is a tough world, yet it is full of possibilities.

4.2.1 The Process

When I began the process I had a clear idea of where I wanted this production to go. While working on the floor I oriented my actors on the aims of the project. I brought in articles on Zimbabwe as a way of defining territory. I then tasked them to research Zimbabwe’s current economic, social and political situation. It was not so difficult for me to articulate my concept and style for Citizen Theatre because one of my two principal actors, Xolisa Kaphakati had taken part in a workshop I had conducted in

2005 in which I tried to define content and style for Citizen Theatre. Therefore using Boal's *Games for Actor and Non-Actors* (2002), we explored and identified our personal forms of deprivation. After identifying we proposed possible ways of dealing with these deprivations.

In subsequent rehearsals the actors brought their research to the floor. Given the way Zanu PF has closed Zimbabwe from the international community; the internet, newspapers and interviews with Zimbabweans living in South Africa became our main sources of information. It turned out one of the actors, Thato Cele, was staying with a Zimbabwean. The information that he got from his flatmate was relevant to our body of research. We ended up with an overwhelming number of stories on Zimbabwe, in both written and oral forms. We also gathered a staggering bulk of jokes told about the country. As a result there was no immediate need to go to Zimbabwe for research.

The collected stories could be broadly divided into two categories. There were stories that dealt with the citizens being deprived of their basic human rights by the state in the wake of Operation Murambatsvina. The actors could easily identify with the stories of forced removals. In fact, during the course of this production, one of the actors was briefly evicted for allegedly occupying a house illegal. Permanent eviction was stayed pending his appearance in court. This made the actors realise that they were not simply telling a Zimbabwean a story with universal implications, a story that all South Africans could identify with. This addressed my concerns on audience relationship with the content.

We had to identify a predominant theme from our resource material. Most of the stories expressed citizens in desperate situations after losing their means of livelihood. These stories fell into two categories: those that expressed and sympathised with the predicament of the citizens, and those that dismissed such predicaments and justified the actions of the authorities. The actors were concerned about the authenticity of some of the stories. Rather than getting my opinion on them, we chose three stories from both categories to improvise into performance, as a way of testing for authenticity as well as developing relevant content for the play. I believe that by

performing a story one is better placed to judge its truth. During the initial rehearsals⁸ Xolisa and Anele took turns in every story to play the agent of deprivation, what Boal (2002: 54) calls the “oppressor”. It emerged that one was powerful as a ruler and the other as the ruled. This helped to cast the play. After improvisation the actors agreed that strange as the events were they had all likelihood of happening.

We linked all the stories and came up with one situation and a set of characters for each category. We discovered that stories that supported the authorities were curiously similar and sounded like political rhetoric. Once again, actors could easily identify this with events in present day South Africa. Using political jargon in explaining the situation and never admitting to any wrong doing, these stories disregarded the plight of the ruled. The irony and sarcasm of these stories were exposed by the humane and anecdotal stories told by the ruled. It is out of this irony, sarcasm and rigidity that Act 1 acquired its structure and content. The unyielding yet retrogressive qualities of *Rogue* evolved from these stories.

Stories about the ruled were diverse. Driven by the desire to earn a living, these citizens were pro-active regardless of being victim of the situation. Their endurance and fighting spirit in the face of diversity complemented my production concept. Of particular interest was a story in *The Standard* (2006) about a man who sold roasted rats in order to sustain his family. This generated discussion on the merits and demerits of such an act as different interpretations emerged. The actors identified such activities as a rebellion. Thus the rats in the play were a symbol of people’s rebellion against the authority. These stories provided content and structure to Act 2.

The playmaking process made it easier for me to tie the play to my production concept. During rehearsals the stage manager recorded the entire process. I used this material to create a written script. During the script writing process I included biblical allusions to the play. For instance *Rogue* is referred to as “My Lord” and the “Black Moses.” King Arthur’s speech was reminiscent of God sending Moses to deliver the children of Israel. In order to maintain the connection with Zimbabwe I included words such as Chimurenga, MDC, IMF, Operation Murambatsvina, greetings such as

⁸ The rehearsal process briefly stopped after Xolisa’s family member passed away. Xolisa had to be replaced by Ntombinxolo.

*mangwanani*⁹, the washing of hands and legs after a long working day as well as political rituals and slogans. The actual work on the floor contributed some of the jokes told about queuing and waiting, the Zimbabwean dollar and the sheer desperation to skip the country in Act 2, and the arrogance of Zimbabwean leadership in Act 3. After writing, I always presented the script to the cast for discussion. Out of these discussions I would re-write again, making additions and subtractions, cutting and pasting as agreed by the entire cast. This gave the process some semblance of democracy.

However most of the work took place during the theatre making process. For instance the decision to move the audience from their seats was made during the playmaking process. This played an important role in establishing the required audience-actors relationship. Another element worth mentioning is the decision to have a suspected member of the much-feared Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), look identical to one of the actors who open Act 3. This was meant to demystify these officers by pointing out that they were just people like us. If the actor was really a CIO agent what then stopped him from making positive change to his people. At the same time it called on the audience not to relax as the agent could as well be amongst them.

Act 3 was my personal contribution on possible strategies, which could be used to effect change. My initial plan was to simply expose Zimbabwe's political system and how it had short changed the people. I did not want to prescribe a solution, as such a top down approach would be patronising. At the same time I could not just present without bringing in some insight into a possible solution. As a citizen of Zimbabwe I equally had a responsibility to present my proposed strategy. However, rather than dictate what needs to be done I decided to show what should not be done. Considering the main weakness to be a blind passion for change, I set out to show the pitfalls of such passion in face of the current crisis. In this way I hoped to generate discussion.

I made my intention known to the actors. Improvisation began on the various passionate forms of resistance. Given the history of and, South Africa's democratic nature most actors suggested mass protest and other such activities. I reminded the

⁹ A popular Shona greeting. It means good morning.

actors that these strategies had already been tried and failed. I needed an ending that would shock and disappoint the audience so that they would vow against being passive citizens. I thought that the ending could only be explored through the confrontation of the two opposing sides. I reasoned that if the strength of the people lies in their unity then the failure of an individual's attempt to change the system would make this apparent and generate debate. Furthermore, I reasoned that in realistic terms, the likelihood of an individual triumph against a system is very remote, yet it is such moments, which are cherished in the theatre. Thus, by disappointing the audience I hoped to generate discussion. As it turned out the strategy worked. The audience debated this outcome on the last day of the performance.

4.2.2 Style

Zimbabwe's current situation informed the style of *Quetropa*. Considering the experiences that other theatre practitioners were going through in Zimbabwe, there was a need to employ a style that would not expose the actors and audience to victimisation by the ruling party's official thugs. I needed a style that was not blunt yet direct to the point. I believe theatre should not mystify but demystify that which has been mystified. Thus there was a need to demystify the structures of power and the myth that citizens were without power.

However, there seemed to be a contradiction in my intentions. How was I going to be direct without being blunt? If being blunt did not seem to be an option, given the risks associated to it in Zimbabwe, how was I going to hide my real intention in a way that would allow only the audience to get the message? If the audience could get this message, was I to assume that the rulers were so silly to miss what the mass could see? However, it has to be appreciated that when dealing with a reactionary political system any slight move, no matter how well meant, is likely to evoke repression. Therefore, I decided to commit the answer to this question to the outcome of the production.

I saw satire as a style best suited to address these questions for a number of reasons. Firstly our research had provided a massive body of satirical jokes on Zimbabwe. As such it was a popular form of expression that most Zimbabweans identified with.

Secondly, I reasoned that satire would lift the play from the realm of reality while addressing my concerns. It would work very well in addressing the parochial nature of the stories authored by the government. Since the concept of Citizen Theatre emphasised character not story, I viewed satire as a good chance to explore stereotypes by emphasizing character traits. As a result characters in the play ended up being caricatures and the style was cartoon-like.

My intention was to use satire not as defence but attack on tyranny as supported by the three theories of laughter. Based on the Superiority Theory of laughter, Scott (2005) argues, “human beings are moved to laugh when presented with a person or situation they feel themselves to be intellectually, morally, and physically above” (131). Given that no one wants to be considered inferior, I hoped that the authorities would not admit their character presentation in *Quetropa* hence technically finding no basis for attacking the production, cast and crew. However the truth of this argument could not be ascertained during or after production because we were playing away from home. Following on Huchcheson’s (2005) Incongruity Theory of laughter I sought to juxtapose incompatible contrasts so as to enlighten folly in both the rulers and the ruled. This would protect the people from becoming susceptible to the wrath of the authorities. Freud’s (2005) Relief Theory would provide an outlet for the citizens to vent their frustration on the system. However, I was fully aware of the purging effect, which this could have on the audiences’ ability to act. Thus I decided to provide a twist at the end. I hoped this would allow the audience to come face to face with the reality of the situation forcing them to propose and embark on a practical solution.

Furthermore, I made a conscious decision to blur the distinction between the actors and the audience, the world of the play and the world of the theatre. Bringing the audience and actors together was meant to bring the audience closer to the world of play. This would make them feel equally responsible for the predicament of the people. I wanted the audience to be constantly reminded that they were watching drama. Thus, actors moved between the world of play and the world of the theatre where they directly addressed the audience during different point in the play. I felt this technique would also protect the actors from authorities in that they did not pretend to be representing a real world.

4.2.3 Characters

My chosen style and the nature of stories collected meant that the world of play and its characters would not be realistic. The play was set in a fictitious state of the Democratic State of Graceland; somewhere in Africa. Thus characters were not realistic. They were satirical figures close to the cartoon world. In a bid to achieve this, characters were divided into two categories: one-dimensional characters and faceless characters. These two categories were the antithesis of each other. This suited the concept of Citizen Theatre.

Rogue was constructed as a flat character, stereotypical of Africa's post-independent despots. The cast could easily identify this character with some of the well-known African statesmen. Having earlier on resolved that the play had universal implications, I had to fight against the temptation of putting popular Zimbabwean statesmen on stage. I wanted characters to have a universal interpretation. I felt this would also protect the actors from unwarranted criticism by the authorities. I asked the actors to bring their own interpretation to their characters. We then purged all attributes that we felt were personal and specific to particular statesmen. This allowed the actors to identify common traits associated by dictatorship, not only amongst dictators, but also even in themselves. This point was emphasized at the end of the play when characters identify some of the most prominent dictators in modern history as members of the audience. I was happy after the performance that the audience could identify Rogue's character traits with some common political figures in both South Africa and Zimbabwe. Thus I felt I had achieved my aim of addressing issues not assassinating characters.

Political sloganeering is one of the issues that emerged strongly from the material. The character of Lieutenant was moulded along these lines. The cast could easily relate this to events taking place in South Africa during this time. Of particular interest was the Jacob Zuma saga,¹⁰ which had split the ANC with different individuals, political and social groups sloganeering for their respective leaders. In

¹⁰ In 2006 Jacob Zuma was involved in a controversial rape trial that saw him being relieved of his duties as the vice president of South Africa. This did not go down well with his supporters who argued for a conspiracy theory against Zuma, see www.capetimes.co.za

both Zimbabwean and South African context those tasked with the duty to maintain the status quo, achieved it through parroting party dogma and official statements. These people lacked independent opinion and consequently independent identity. The character of Lieutenant was modelled along this observation. It had a complex twist in that Lieutenant secretly harboured ambitions to take over power from Rogue.

The security forces that guard the premise are equally stereotypes. In building these characters we used an article in *The Zimbabwe Independent* (2005) newspaper alleging that the Zimbabwean soldiers were under paid. Even though the article suggested that the soldiers might riot, it did not sound convincing enough. Further research on the matter revealed that the newspaper repudiated its story after the editor received a parcel with a bullet and a small note that said, "What is the meaning of this, Mr. Editor" (*The Zimbabwe Independent*, 2005). This was a typical example of the security structure playing its role. This influenced my decision to have an aborted rebellion towards the end of the play. Nonetheless the play highlighted the fact that the security officers felt unappreciated and they were slowly running out of patience. However, these characters cannot develop beyond discontent.

Characters in Act 2 were moulded along the various stories told about the predicament of the people. The act itself dealt with some of these predicaments as well as the citizen's unyielding spirit. It presented a cross section of people who, transformed during the course of the play from stereotypes to individuals as their ambitions changed. Therefore, unlike characters in Act 1, characters in Act 2 are capable of development. Unfortunately, their development is not for the best. Thus the emphasis of the first half of Act 2 was on community and the second half, which saw the emergence of political parties, looked at the emergence of individuals and their effect on the community. In the first half we had stock characters such as mother, father, young man, young woman, old man, bread seller and vendors. Initially their attitude was that of warmth and care towards one another until they realised, in the second half of the act, that the depleted resources were inadequate for their needs. That they allowed selfishness and ruthlessness to take over is a commentary on how corrupt structures of power can bring the worst out of people. The people's preoccupation with survival gave the characters an unyielding quality. However, it is worth noting that all their attempts were in vain. Every sequence in this act starts very

lively and hopeful and degenerates into fights amongst the citizens and no one achieves their goal. This is in line with the title and theme of play – false hope.

Mongie and King Arthur are typical examples of citizens who transformed from facelessness to individual identity. They, however, fail to become round characters and end up as stereotypes. They were constructed to mirror opposition politicians who have short-changed the struggle of the people. Their fight for control is reminiscent of the struggle for power between Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara¹¹ of the MDC. That King Arthur was in a wheel chair was a commentary actors derived from their research. It gave insights on the nature of leadership that emerged from the crisis, which made it easy for the security forces to coerce the citizens into disobedience.

4.2.4 Physical Structure

In line with my production concept, *Quetropa* was structured around three episodes, which took place in the statehouse, the public square and the boxing auditorium. I wanted these performance spaces to be physically apart. Act 1 represented the statehouse. The initial plan was to perform this act in the Hiddingh Hall. Act 2 represented the public square hence it was performed in the Arena Quad and Act 3 represented a neutral and fictional space. It was performed in the Arena Theatre.

In Act 1 I wanted the audience to sit around a long table and become part of the performance as central committee members of Rogue's party. This would highlight the audience's responsibility in propping up the system. Rogue would sit at the head of the table. Thus, the entire hall would constitute an acting space, there-by breaching the barrier between the actors and the audience. Behind Rogue would be a raised stage, designed as an altar, where his uniform and other revolutionary mementos would hang. This would emphasize the fact that he reminisced and worshipped the past. It was from this past that he also derived his power. However, I could not get the

¹¹ Following the introduction of the senate in the Zimbabwean parliament the MDC was split over the decision to participate in senate elections. The issue was taken to the national executive where the pro-senate faction won by a narrow margin of two votes. Morgan Tsvangirai as the party leader decided against the results. This caused the party to split between those for and against the senate. The pro-senate faction began calling itself Pro-democracy MDC, denounced Tsvangirai as their leader elected a new executive and invited Arthur Mutambara, who was not a party member at that time of elections, to be their new leader.

Hidding Hall because it was being used for the final year examinations; hence the Arena Theatre became the next best venue. I had to reconfigure my design to suit Act 1 and 3 and the idea of a long table was abandoned. This meant some changes on the design and actor-audience relationship for both Act 1 and Act 3

Since the Arena Theatre was going to serve two acts, I had to make strategic choices so as to accommodate them. This did not bring major shifts to my original plan. I designed a thrust stage for Act 1 and hoped to convert the area directly facing the audience into an audience space in Act 3. Therefore, I created two different levels so as to provide good audience sightlines. I decided to reduce my set to basic necessities to make it easier for transformation. Hence Act 1 only had a chair a white screen on which Rogue's uniform hung, guns hanging on the wall and Rogue's portrait. The plan was to bring in seats on this space during the first interval, there-by creating a theatre in the round for Act 3. However, as rehearsals progressed, I realised that I did not have enough manpower to effect the transformation within the interval. Thus the idea of moving seats was abandoned.

Through selective props, Act 1 attempted to represent the private space inhabited and owned by the rulers. The wall looked old and scruffy with huge holes on it. This represented a decaying political system. The chair with the Zimbabwe flag painted on it represented the country. The fact that only Rogue could sit on it shows how he treated the country as personal property. The guns that hung on the wall were Rogue's symbols of power that limited the citizen's freedom of expression inside this space. The uniform represented Rogue's past. It was part of his mementos showing how much he hangs on to the past. The regimentation experienced by the security forces gave the space its strict and formal character. Even Lieutenant could not break this rule. The stage was bare to emphasize on Zimbabwe's social, economic and political barrenness. The lack of any physical transformation on the space pointed to the rigidity and stagnation of the political system. The political system was sterile. Rats represented the citizens and Rogue was entirely justified to be sacred of them.

However, the design had its own limitations. It robbed me of the interaction between the audience and the actors as envisaged in the original plan. This could have gone a long way in criticising the role of citizens in this political structure. Due to the

distance that was created between the actors and the audience I realised I could not make the audience part of the system. Thus, I decided to go for the complete opposite, where the audience was at the mercy of the system. I tried to achieve this through the guards' menacing looks and their shuffling of audiences from their seats. The effect of this decision was confirmed by an audience member who confessed after the first day of performance that she had never been that scared before. However, there was nothing on this set that represented either the security officers or the citizens. Thus, the security officers could only find their place amongst the audience, emphasizing the point that they were part of the audience, the people.

With Act 2 I wanted a space that gave the impression of shopping centre. This would match the street theatre's style of performance in Zimbabwe. The audience would be informal, popping in to get a glimpse of the action and then proceeding with their shopping business. At one point I considered St George's Mall for this act but gave up the idea due to distance between the performance spaces. Thus the Arena Theatre quad became the next best thing.

As in Act 1 the design of Act 2 was meant to match the barrenness that Zimbabwe is facing in every aspect of life. This contributed to the theme of false hope as citizens moved from one fruitless escapade to another in a bid to earn a living. I wanted the audience to gather around the performance space in an informal fashion so as to foster a sense of community. However, due to the imminent rain I realised that the audience would not feel comfortable standing in the rain, especially where the rain itself is not part of the performance. Thus, I decide to have the audience under the roof there-by distancing them from the performance. This took away a close audience-actor relationship that I desired.

The painted tyres had strong implications to character relationships and theme. That each person in the community could get one of these tyres represented the idea of sharing. These tyres were used, as vending stalls showing that they also represent a source of livelihood contrary to patriotic history, which define livelihood in terms of the land. When put together they revealed colours of the national flag. The building up of one tall structure out of these tyres demonstrated the citizens' potential in nation building. The freedom with which citizens could engage in different activities and the

way this space could be easily transformed gave the space its informal qualities. This made it the authentic space, a non-formal space, a space for hybridity, where the past met with the present, the West with Africa, colonial with postcolonial and war veterans with “born frees”. Such non-specificity supported the notion of non-formal citizenship. The tyres also represented the diversity of ideas amongst citizens.

During the last day of performance this act sparked controversy. One Zimbabwean expressed his disappointment in that the play exposed Zimbabweans to contemptuous treatment by South Africans and other nationals. However, further discussion revealed that he was more embarrassed in its truth and his decision not to do anything about it. I felt that if the play could make people come to that realisation, it had succeeded because such realisations demanded action.

With Act 3, I did not want a space where Rogue nor the citizens enjoyed territorial advantage. This space needed to be designed in a way that evoked an element of entrapment so as to make it mandatory for both Rogue and the citizens to resolve the situation amicably. However, the possibility of Rogue meeting with the people on equal terms seemed very remote. Thus the set was unspecific shifting between a live television press conference and a wrestling ring. For me television and wrestling have elements of enactment. Most of the stuff we see on television is not real yet we suspend our disbelief and enjoy the show. Therefore, the lighting, sound and use of space were very theatrical. In this way I hoped that the audience would accept the possibility of a leader ordering the execution of foreign journalists in front view of the public and that a citizen could challenge a leader to battle.

4.2.5 Plot Structure

With *Quetropa* I never intended to tell a story but present characters and situations. As a result the play did not have a linear plot structure. The acts were completely divorced from each other and could be watched and understood independently. Act 1 was character based as it satirized the obsession with power and exposed the folly of unwittingly sustaining such a structure. It depicted the cunning and ruthlessness of those in power. Emphasis was on what drives these characters.

While linearity was used in Act 1 and 3 it was deliberately juxtaposed with the non-linearity of Act 2, which depicted citizens creating “order” from the authorities’ perceived “disorder”. Act 1 was non-climatic in line with Brecht’s (2005) argument of alienation. I did not want the audience to feel for the people but be appalled by Rogue’s behaviour and attitude. Thus besides very rare occasions of questioning Rogue’s actions, the guards had nothing to offer besides sustaining the security structure. I hoped to provoke the audience into questioning the security officers’ unjustified behaviour. I made Act 3 climactic but with a disappointing ending in order to trigger critical thinking which would generate discussion amongst the audiences. One lady observed after the performance that the scene would make security forces feel uncomfortable. Asked about her personal response to it she only said she is glad she is not in their shoes.

Act 2 was situation based. It dealt with peoples desire to be free and be able to live life to its fullest. It criticized people’s lack of unity and foresight in applying the right strategy and making alliances. The act was deliberately disjointed, presenting different episodes and possible ways that the citizens were trying to make a difference in their lives. These actions constituted a rebellion by themselves. By presenting these actions, I hoped to enlighten the citizens on their power. Their final defeat was a result of their ignorance of their power. Using Lieutenant as an example the act demonstrated that citizens with hidden agendas jeopardise the struggle.

Time was treated differently in Act 1 and 3, and Act 2. In Act 1 time was treated in a logical manner. It was set in the present day and went back to the past through the flashback technique. The beginning was a flash back of the good old days where the security structure was completely obedient. This obedience was gradually lost but was not necessarily linked to the near rebellion in Act 3. Act 1 took us back to the First and Second Chimurenga as a way of mimicking patriotic history. It ended by declaring the Third Chimurenga as to emphasize its patriotic narrative structure. Act 3 was equally logical but the events were meant to challenge the audience. It is not everyday that a citizen could challenge the president in front view of other citizens.

The second act used time differently. It was not chronological but psychological in that there was a preoccupation with survival not time. Time was not an object. Thus, it

leapt fast without any explanation. The emphasis was on the different activities as the people tried to survive. Therefore, their sense of time could simply be understood as a sense of urgency.

4.3 Reflections

The play *Quetropha* was performed at the Hiddingh Campus on the 16th of September to the 18th of September. Due to changes in the production dates¹² and the imminent closure of University of Cape Town, from which student productions draw their audiences, audience attendance was below expectations. However, it was encouraging to discover that a reasonable number of Zimbabweans attended the last day of the show. This went a long way in assessing the success of the production.

There is a limitation as to what theatre can do. The ability to acknowledge these limitations is an inspiration for future work. I realised that judging the success of this project mainly depended on the mechanism available for follow up. Follow-up strategies are not only limited to questionnaires, interviews or post-performance discussion, but can go as far as future productions. Working on something like Citizen Theatre one needs to put on more productions in order to judge its success. While questions, interviews and such other methods can go along way in developing and assessing the impact of Citizen Theatre, no better assessment can assail mass participation in determining structures of power. This can vary from participating in elections to the ensuring of the availability of relevant structures to monitor such processes right up to the creation of checks and balances for those empowered by the people. However for a one off production like *Quetropha* one has to rely on the feedback they receive from the audience.

I had not anticipated the need for a post-performance discussion because I expected Zimbabwean audiences to be afraid of expressing their views in public. While this might have been true in other circumstances, I was proved wrong with this production. The Zimbabwean audiences that came to watch the final performance waited and insisted on meeting the director and the cast. We had a fruitful discussion out of which came some of the comments mentioned above.

¹² This was a result of the withdrawal of Xolisa from the production.

I believe that a few reasons contributed to this development. Firstly, South Africa just like any other country where Zimbabweans have taken refuge is a safe haven for Zimbabweans. While they may not completely feel at ease discussing politics in foreign countries there is a chance of such discussions taking place where conditions are conducive. I felt South Africa provides such conditions. Furthermore, I believe that the nature of the group made it easier for them to open up. The audience seemed like small groups of friends. Thus, there was already an element of trust amongst them. In addition, the fact that few South Africans took part in the discussion removed the subject from Zimbabwe to universal. The audience was encouraged by the production as one lady admitted that it took great courage for anyone to present this kind of theatre. I would like to believe that the courage shown by the cast and crew when motivated the audience to share its views without fear. I later realised that it could have been a good idea to allocate time for post-performance discussion.

I also realised that Citizen Theatre did not necessarily need to be performed to Zimbabweans and in Zimbabwe. Some of the best theatre forms such as Theatre of the Oppressed were developed outside their intended countries. They were only accepted in their respective countries while at a well-advanced stage. South Africa provides a platform on which all citizens of Zimbabwe can debate the Zimbabwean question, which allows the development of Citizen Theatre. That the actors and other South African audiences could find parallels to the current South African situation points at the possible relevance of this theatre form to different nation groups. One South African pointed out that he was afraid that what was happening in Zimbabwe would happen in South Africa. Thus the play was a wake up call for him.

While the impact of *Quetropha* could be assessed through post performance discussion, there is a need to put in place strategies that enables the assessment of the impact of Citizen Theatre in places like Zimbabwe where open discussion is problematic. This is one of my future challenges. Furthermore, the potential of Citizen Theatre cannot be measured by a single performance. The situation in Zimbabwe was born out of a process that dates back to several decades. Citizen Theatre needs to go through a rigorous and endless process of perfection to suit the ever-changing conditions.

4.4 Conclusion

Two years ago I set out a task of identifying and developing a form of theatre that would address the Zimbabwean question. Such a theatre would emancipate the people of Zimbabwe, while enabling me to exercise my citizenry obligations in the process. Prior to this task I had watched the work that other Zimbabweans theatre practitioners were doing. I was impressed by their work but I always felt that I could do more. I wanted to go beyond mere criticism of the political system as in *Super Patriots and Morons* (2003), beyond the mere wit and presentation of *Victims and Witnesses* (2002). Rather than the audience coming out of the theatre impressed by the cunning and wit of the theatre I wanted, just like Brecht, the audience to leave feeling challenged, a challenge that would lead to action. I wanted them to re-examine themselves and act to change their circumstances.

Looking back at the projects I have done since I joined the University of Cape Town, I can say I have travelled in leaps and bounds towards this goal. My theory and practise developed and improved with each project I did¹³. The form in which Citizen Theatre is at the moment is not very far away from my intentions. A theatre that raises consciousness amongst deprived citizens needs to take account of the circumstances that inform this situation. These circumstances play a crucial role in determining the nature of that theatre. Thus, I would like to argue that mixing mainstream theatre with alternative theatre seems to work for Citizen Theatre. It creates a theatre that sits between the rulers and the ruled, a hybrid theatre that takes cognisance of our postcolonial modernities while championing our citizenry rights. Furthermore, I would like to argue that such a theatre cannot be limited to a particular national group as parallels can be easily drawn between different nations.

In conclusion I wish to state that Citizen Theatre does not seek change for the sake of change. It aims for meaningful change that empowers citizens so as to bring progress to any dying nation; it is non-partisan and is not designed to assist in power politics or topple different regimes in the world. It is not on anyone's side but on the side of the citizens, it is not on every citizen's side but on the side of those citizens that support

¹³ Before embarking on *Quetropha*, I had done a minor project, *Green Bomba* (2005), and a medium project, *Of aches and Curves* (2006). These projects contributed towards the production of *Quetropha*, both in form and content.

progress through the generation of multiple perspectives. Citizen Theatre does not wish to mystify the current situation in Zimbabwe but demystify it. Furthermore, I need to emphasize that theatre cannot effect change on its own. It can help in creating a platform form on which that change can evolve. I do not pretend that I have discovered the perfect formula for this theatre, thus I do not claim Citizen Theatre to be best theatre form to inspire citizens around the world. Perhaps as my quest continues I will discover in the words of Sanjoy Ganguly (2005) that, “it is not until you reach the top of the hill that you realise that yours was not the only way” (224).

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APPENDIX A

QUE-TROPHA

ACT ONE

Scene 1

Four security officers walk in looking around for any subservient elements that might cause trouble. Satisfied that the place is safe they stand on attention as Commander Rogue led by Lieutenant, march in. Rogue struggles to keep his composure. What follows is a ceremonial regimentation, which culminates into a national anthem. Black out.

Lights come up. Lieutenant is putting on his uniform getting ready to go to work. He is singing to himself then suddenly realizes the audience for the first time.

Lieut: Good morning oh, sorry good evening ladies and gentleman, comrades and friends. Welcome to the Democratic State of Graceland. Some call it Queue-wait not because it has any similarities with the oil rich state of Kuwait but because people in this state spends most of their time queuing and waiting - a product of-course of the third Chimurenga. In the background is Commander Rogue. *Lights fall on Rogue busy dozing off on his presidential chair in the statehouse. It takes a Central Intelligence Officer to jolt Rogue to reality. Three security officers guard the three entrances that lead to the statehouse.* The Lion of the Land, our black Moses who delivered the people from the wilderness into the land of milk and honey and back again. Now we live in the rubicon, any action that man takes commits him into taking further action. Ladies and gentleman, welcome to the games politicians play with our lives. *A rat runs between Rogue's legs. His face registers shock and fear as he jolts to consciousness.*

Rogue: Lieutenant *coughs* Lieutenant! I want you in my office.

Lieut: Duty calls.

All the security officers stand on attention. Lieutenant rushes into the office. The security guards relax.

Lieut: Is everything okay Sir?

Rogue: No, the state house is falling apart. First, it is the floor, then the wine tastes sour and now I am under attack.

Lieut: What? *He spins around the room looking for the enemy.* There is no one here Sir?

Rogue: You fool; it's these rats from this tribe of depressed bipeds, which have invaded my state house. *Suddenly he realises that Lieutenant is not standing on attention.* Where is your military respect soldier?

Lieut: I am sorry Sir I thought it's an emergency.

Rogue: Does that give you the right to disrespect a superior officer?

Lieut: I am sorry Sir!

Rogue signals him to go out. Lieutenant obliges and walks out thereby catching the security officers off their guard. Lieutenant's penetrating look scares them. Silent tension. As Lieutenant marches back into the statehouse, the security officers giggle and relax, making dismissive gestures to him. Lieutenant salutes Rogue with much vigour and determination.

Lieut: At your disposal, Sir!

Rogue: I was on the verge of conquering the entire Africa when these rats robbed me of victory by disturbing my dream.

Lieut: Well I am sorry about that, but it's not only the state house Sir, the entire state is infested.

Rogue: I don't care about the entire state. Look my uniform, my stick and my boots, oh my departed spirits of hondo!¹⁴

Lieut: *(hesitantly)* And your hat too.

Rogue: What. *He examines the barrette with total disgust.* You puppets of bankrupt foreign ideology. Haven't you got enough? *He runs around the room desperately then inspects his barrette one more time. This unnerves the Lieutenant.* Oh my revolutionary emblem. Doesn't a gallant son of the soil deserve some peace and quite in the sunset of his life? Those gnawing and squirming sounds of demonstration are ruining my sanity.

A silent tension ensues as Rogue sits, completely worried. This makes the Lieutenant feel very uncomfortable. He tries to make an impression. Frustration is crippling in amongst the guards. One officer whistles to the other. One security officer frowns while the other gives a warning look. The first two officers don't think much of the other officer.

Lieut: Not everyone who puts you in shit is dangerous Sir. *Pause.* This is what we have been waiting for - some action.

Rogue: *Unmoved.* Look Lieutenant I am now too old for action. Many of my peers are now enjoying their retirement.

Lieut: *Cautiously maneuvering.* Yes but they did not bow out with pride and honour. This is a chance for you to consolidate POWER reassert yourself as the healer and deliverer of the nation.

¹⁴ Shona word, which means war.

Rogue stares at him indifferently.

Rogue: Now, hasn't my history been good enough?

Lieut: Of-course not Sir, but things have changed a generation that spends most of it's time watching western movies, surfing the internet and playing video games has emerged. They know more about Britain and America than they do about our history, our struggle and most importantly you Sir.

Rogue looks worried by this argument. His face registers serious concern as his suspicion is elevated. Lieutenant shuffles his feet uncomfortably.

Rogue: *Threateningly.* Are you suggesting that I am now a spent force?

Lieut: *Quickly and flatteringly* No, no, no Sir. You are indispensable. All you need is to maintain your *personalata* built on that history.

Suddenly huge rat runs across the stage.

Rogue: Look out.

Rogue jumps to the chair as Lieutenant hides. The Lieutenant's face registers terrible freight. The security officers gather for a quick consultation. One suggests that the big man is dead. They listen. Silence. They are about to celebrate when voices are heard from the statehouse. They rush to their stations.

Lieut: *Fearful.* What was that?

Rogue: A rat. *With sudden frenzy.* You must do something!

Lieut: Oh ..! *Confused and scared.* Oh! I am so sorry Sir. Ah.... you want me to kill it

Rogue: No I want you to feed it and keep it warm with my royal coat. Of-course I want it dead.

Lieutenant cringes fearfully and freezes for a while. When Rogue turns to face him one more time he quickly tries to brave himself. He hunts for the rat, as Rogue holds on to his stick ready to strike. Once again the rat crosses the room and for the first time Lieutenant sees it. There is another wave of commotion. Rogue is infuriated.

Rogue: You are pathetic. Didn't you take an oath to take a bullet for me? *Lieutenant nods fearfully.* Yet you take cover at the slightest hint of danger like a cockroach.

Lieutenant is lost of words as he stares in the rat's wake completely mesmerized.

Lieut: That is not a rat my Lord.

Rogue: *Sarcastically.* Oh so all that ranting was coming from someone who does not know what we are up against?

Lieut: No Sir. It's just that this rat is different from the ones out there.

Rogue: *Warningly.* How so?

Lieut: It is a huge red rat. *They stare at each other.* A hybrid – a combination of black traitor rats and white neo-colonial rats supported by British money and American intelligence.

Silent tension.

Rogue: *Considers for a while then slowly revealing a ridiculous smile.* In that case, you were right Lieutenant. The rat is a worthy opponent, a perfect opportunity to continue with the struggle. Round one: The first Chimurenga¹⁵. *An enactment of the first Chimurenga.* Round Two: We mastered the art of war. *An enactment of the second Chimurenga.* Queen begged for our signatures to save her kith and keen. Now we set the stage for round three – consolidating the gains of independence. But first, we need to deal with this one rat inside my statehouse. *War-like.* Bring in the police rattrap.

A police officer rushes in the office, salutes to Rogue then a small and half-hearted salute is offered to Lieutenant. Lieutenant inspects the police officer loathsomely.

Lieut: Its too small for its Movement for Democratic Change¹⁶ height.

Thinking he has lost his job, the police officer looks completely shattered. He pleads with Rogue but Rogue pays no attention to him. The officer turns to Lieutenant who gives him a sarcastic smile of pleasure before signaling him to leave. The officer does not move.

Lieut: *Pushing him out.* Go back to your station officer.

Rogue: So bring in the, Korean trained Gukurahundi¹⁷ cat.

A soldier crawls towards Lieutenant. Lieutenant stops him with his boot callously.

Lieut: Its tactics are too old fashion for the rat's National Constitution Assembly¹⁸ energy. *He signals the soldier out. The soldier looks at Lieutenant then at Rogue slowly kneeling and appealing for his intervention but Rogue looks away.*

Soldier: *With uncertainty.* Hey Mr. President, it's me Cde Danger. Have you forgotten me Your Highness? We were comrades and friends in the struggle.

Rogue signals him out. Soldier does not believe this. Slowly he crawls backwards as he makes his exit. Lieutenant enjoys this.

¹⁵ This was the first war of liberation between the British settlers on one side and the Ndebele and the Shona on the other side. It took place between 1894 and 1896.

¹⁶ A pan on Zimbabwe's main opposition party is known as the Movement for Democratic Change.

¹⁷ Ibid pp 6

¹⁸ A non-governmental organization formed to put pressure on Zanu PF to implement constitutional reform.

Rogue: So what we need is a C. I. O. rat killer.

A Central Intelligent Officer moves forward and looks at the audience menacingly. Lieutenant approaches him then covers his nose as if the officer smells.

Lieut: *Shaking his head.* Commander this rat has the nose of an Independent Press. It will smell pesticide while miles away.

Rogue: So you mean to say this rat can't be destroyed?

Lieutenant nods his head slowly and apologetically. A moment of silence as hopelessness and despair creeps on the commander. The security officers whisper at each other expressing their disappointment over their treatment.

Lieut: *Cautiously.* Commander, I think you know... we Eh ...you know we need outside assistance. *Rogue looks at him thoughtfully. Lieutenant interprets that as permission to explain.* Like the IMF¹⁹ cat fighters with Commonwealth speed World Bank tiger teeth and...

Rogue: *Angrily.* Shut up you intellectually challenged brother living in the Rhodie shadow. How dare are you pander to the whims of gay gangsters asking them to come and defile me my palace, take my land and rape my women? Don't you know that they crave, feed and fatten on human tragedies. *Stares at him furiously. Lieutenant is completely shattered.*

Lieut: I am sorry Sir.

Rogue: This is a war and I can't afford to be surrounded by anybody weak.

Lieut: You can count on me Sir.

Rogue: Good! *Pause.* Bring in the Zhing-zhong²⁰ armed cat.

Lieut: *Still apprehensive and fearful.* I am afraid my Lord the cat expired after chasing a rat for a hundred meters.

Rogue: *Surprised.* What!

Lieut: Yes Sir the cat was meant to run short distance only.

Rogue is surprised but lets it pass.

Rogue: Okay, bring in the fong kong²¹ bulldog.

Lieut: It's for outside use only.

¹⁹ A pan on International Monetary Fund

²⁰ Derogatory term for Chinese produced goods

²¹ Zimbabwean slang equivalent to zhing-zhong.

Rogue contemplates for a while then collapse in his chair resignedly. Once again, he is incomplete despair. This silence arrests the attention of the guards outside. They wander what is going on inside. One of them suggests that the big man has died of a heart attack and supports his argument by relating an incident in which Rogue is said to have collapsed after having sex with his wife. The chat is cut short as conversation in the statehouse resumes. They listen while gathered at the entrance.

Lieut: *With a ridiculous smile.* Can I bring you a new uniform Sir? *Rogue does not respond, as he seems consumed by sheer desperation. Lieutenant is on a desperate roller coaster to impress him.* You know Sir the situation is not as bad as it seems. We are not the first country in history to face this challenge. *Pause.* May be.... what we need is.... tolerance Sir a way of living in peace and harmony with these rats.

The last statement upsets Rogue.

Rogue: Are you going out of your mind? You want me to stand by and watch this pestilence create anarchy and destroy what I fought for? *Silence as he stares at him warningly.* If you have nothing meaningful to say, zip up. Even a fool is considered wise if he keeps his mouth shut.

The guards giggle as they enjoy Rogue's verbal insults on Lieutenant.

Long silence. The guards continue to chat inaudibly.

Lieut: Don't worry Sir everything will be all right.

Rogue: *Exploding.* Any ideas?

Lieutenant is not immediately aware that Rogue is staring at him, when he eventually does; he tries to give the impression of someone in deep thought.

Lieut: Well.... Well.... Well I can't think of anything Sir.

Silence Rogue looks desperate.

Rogue: Bring in the military. *The guards rush to their stations.*

Lieut: *Hesitantly.* Did you say the military, Sir?

Rogue: Yes, do you have any problem with that Lieutenant?

Lieut: *Quickly.* Oh no Sir but....

Rogue: But what? *He stares at him threateningly. Lieutenant does not have the courage to face his superior.* I asked you a question Lieutenant.

Lieut: Well...It's just that... I think you were righteh...

Rogue: *Clapping his hands.* Congratulations Lieutenant. *Sarcastically.* Suddenly you can think. Now I can relax and let you do the thinking. *He sits down and folds his hands.*

Lieut: No I didn't mean it that way Sir. *Trying to flatter him.* I can never be as brilliant as you are Sir. You are a genius a warrior and a strategist. *Pause.* But even a warrior needs to rest Sir. May be its a good idea to retire, Sir.

Rogue breaks into laughter and Lieutenant joins in uncomfortably. He knows that he has pressed the wrong button.

Rogue: You're so full of contradiction Lieutenant. Moments ago you drowned me on my retirement bed with your plea of help, now you want me banished into solitude.

Lieut: Not really Sir. *Cautiously.* I will take care of business for you.

Rogue: How?

Silence as Lieutenant considers.

Lieut: *Brainstorming for an impressive answer.* Well Sir... eh ... you know...I'll talk to the people... may be the elderly or.... consult a spirit medium. Our ancestors may be angry and they have sent us these rats to punish us, just like what God did to Pharaoh.

Rogue: *Thoughtfully.* Now why must the spirits be angry with me? Uhn? Why must they be angry with their own son who championed their struggle to its logical conclusion? Didn't I suffer the most, sleeping in bush in those rainy, cold winter nights, just for my people to be free? Now you have the courage to compare me to Pharaoh.

Lieut: *Terrified.* No Sir what I meant is our people no longer appease the living dead. They have been taken by christianity and that is an abomination you need to reprimand.

Rogue: *Impatiently.* Lieutenant, have you suddenly become a spirit medium? *Silence.* This is no place to daydream.

Lieut: Yes Sir, forgive me for that moment of weakness.

Rogue: Weakness?

Lieut: Oh no I meant forgive me for that moment of wickedness.

Silence ensues as they walk around the room thoughtfully. Once again, the guards do another round of rumour. Suddenly an idea strikes Lieutenant.

Lieut: *With excitement.* Youth guilds!

Rogue: *Startled.* What!

Lieut: We need youth guilds Sir.

Rogue: *Unconvinced.* What do you mean?

Lieut: Permission to be elaborate before getting to the point.

Rogue: Granted.

Lieut: The answer to our problem lies in our youths Sir.

Two youths get on stage playfully. Peep behind the wall to find Mrs Dhlamini doing her washing. They take out a catapult and hit her bum. She screams and insults the youths. A teacher punishes the youths by beating.

Lieut: Hitler youth! When Adolf Hitler took power in Germany he introduced what was known as the Hitler youth. It was a compulsory youth militia that required every youth to save the fatherland. *The youths are recruited into Hitler youth.* It became a resource base for his European campaigns and a major reason for him to be considered a great man of all times. *The youths salute.* We need to call upon youths from their districts to rally behind the great leader, the Lord of war in defending the fatherland. *Pause.* Then we will exterminate these rats to the dustbin of history. Given the unemployment rate will have killed two birds with one stone. *The youths disperse.*

Lieutenant looks at his superior expecting a compliment.

Rogue: *Laughs.* I knew you would rise to the occasion. However, let me provoke you further, the country has a serious budget deficit and a runaway inflation how do we pay these youths?

Lieut: The same way Hitler did. We call it national service.

Rogue: Brilliant idea.

Lieut: Then we will need I.M.F...

Rogue: *Abruptly.* There you go again. Tell me, are you intellectually challenged or sometimes you just refuse to think?

Lieut: No Sir I mean Information Minister of Farm invasions, a war cat.*Pause* Some one like me, to lead the rat invasion.

Rogue: Excellent Lieutenant.

Lieut: Thank you Sir.

Rogue: Now we need a strategy.

Lieut: I already have one.

Rogue: Impressive. *Pause.* Lieutenant, you are on a fast track thinking mode.

Lieutenant: *Excitedly.* Permission to be elaborate? *Rogue nods as Lieutenant addresses the audience.* Our intelligence tells us that these rats have been manufactured in foreign laboratories and sent here to Africa to destabilize black governments just like they did with HIV/AIDS, Ebola, cyclone Eline and all the other natural disasters. Their objective is one to exploit our land. How? Well, being Minister of State I am not at liberty to express myself frankly on this subject, in fact on any subject what so ever, but let me just say that's for us to know and for you to find out. *He turns to the Commander who looks at him nodding his head with satisfaction.* Here is our strategy, our famous Schelifen Plan - Operation Murambatsvina. *Pointing at the map.* This is the most troubled part of the city. Now we will need five youth militia units code named Mossolin, Castrol, Hitler and Amin and a stand-by unit Mabhuto. This is how it will work... *Music takes over as Lieutenant continues to explain his plan to the commander, by the time the music ends we catch Lieutenant's last words.* After this Operation Murambatsvina, the city will look like this.

Rogue: *Ecstatic.* Magnificent. Lieutenant, with this kind of work, you're putting yourself closer to the top job. When I will eventually decide to become a silent partner in the matters of the state, I will certainly consider you first.

Lieutenant smiles with excitement. Silence.

Rogue: *Thoughtfully.* Now your Operation Murambatsvina as you call it seems to require a lot of manpower, are you quite confident that these youths will be forthcoming.

Lieut: *Uneasy.* Jah Sir that is something I missed.

Rogue: Of-course you will need to be a genius like me to think about it. But for your inadequate effort I promote you to the rank of a Major.

Lieut: *Going down to kiss his shoes.* Oh thank you Sir!

Rogue enjoys it for a while.

Rogue: Now bring me the constitution. We need to do everything by the book.

Lieut: Of-course Sir. *He brings the constitution puts his hand on the book then makes an oath.* On my honour, I promised to do my best for the commander, to serve him not the enemy. I will take an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. I swear to revenge for my leader bitterly, unceasingly and mercilessly on the enemy. I swear by Commander Rogue or death.

Rogue: Well I didn't need it for that.

Lieut: Oh really? So, what was this for?

Rogue: Look and learn soldier. Chapter 19.5

Lieutenant opens the constitution.

Lieut: National Service Act. National Service Act.

Rogue: Section 4.

Lieut: I am sorry Sir I can't read it.

Rogue: That is a direct order Lieutenant. Chapter 19.5, Section 4.

Lieutenant struggles to read the section. He changes into different positions, putting on reading glasses, takes out a magnifying glass but to no avail. Finally, he gives up.

Lieut: I am sorry Sir but the Lancaster House²² document has been defiled.

Rogue: *Turning to face Lieut.* What!

Lieut: *Showing him the constitution.* A combination of old age and fast tract rat invasion.

Rogue: *Coming to inspect.* Oh my God! I need paper, pen and glue.

Lieutenant is not sure what the Commander wants to do. The security guards quickly form a table. A series of cutting and pasting of the constitution follows. Lieutenant looks at the entire exercise with a mixture of surprise and excitement Rogue looks at document admiring his handwork.

Rogue: Perfect. *Handing the document to Lieutenant.* Attention! *The guards jump to attention* Read the Constitution in front of the Commander, Chapter 19.5 Section 4.

Lieutenant opens the constitution. His face registers surprise. The security guards become curious. They whisper at Lieutenant and amongst themselves. Lieutenant does not respond to them.

Rogue: Read out the constitution Lieutenant!

Dead silence. Lieutenant silently creeps to the audience to seek assistance in reading the constitution.. Meanwhile the security guards are getting curious and restless.

Guard 1: What is he doing?

Every time a guard speaks, Lieutenant casts a threatening eye at him.

Rogue: Are you tongue tight soldier?

²² A pan on the Zimbabwean constitution drawn at the Lancaster House Conference in 1979.

Lieut: No Sir.

Guard 2: I told you he can't read.

Rogue: Have you lost your reading ability soldier?

Lieut: No Sir.

Guard 3: Let me read it Sir.

Rogue looks at the guard warningly. The guard cringes.

Rogue: Then don't make me repeat the order lest I call a court marshal.

Lieut: Well it now reads as Emergence National Service act.

Rogue: *Irritated.* Of-course you silly moron. I have just amended it.

All Guards: What? *The guards protest.*

Rogue: Quite! *Silence.* Amendment 1.

Lieut: The Emergency National Act. *With every amendment, the Lieutenant knocks down the guards one by one.*

Rogue: Amendment 2.

Lieut: Access to Lies and Printing them Act.

Rogue: Amendment 3

Lieut: Public Outrage and Sabotage Act.

Rogue: Amendment 4.

Lieut: Land Invasion Act.

Rogue: Amendment 5, my personal favourite.

Lieut: The Presidential Powers Act. *He rounds up all the guards and tie them together.* This is an act of genius, superhuman ability never been witnessed before. I think this call for a celebration Sir.

Lieutenant helps Rogue from his coat.

Rogue: To what shall we dedicate this?

Lieut: To freedom, peace and justice.

Rogue: Brilliant lieutenant.

Lieutenant gives Rogue his gun pulls his chair towards the edge of the stage. Rogue stands on it wielding his gun powerfully. Some music!

Lieut: Yes Sir. He assumes the role of choirmaster as the guards start singing.

Slow fade to black.

Act 2

Old tyres are scattered around the stage. The area is demarcated like a crime scene. Two members of an acting troop enter the stage from opposite sides ready to perform only to discover that their set has been destroyed. They move cautiously looking very worried.

Mongie: What happened here? *Silence.* I thought were supposed to perform.

Welsh: So did I.

Silence.

Mongie: Who did this to our set?

Welsh: *After a moment's thought.* You know I saw someone who looked like a CIO²³ walking around this area a while ago.

Mongie: How did he look like?

Welsh give a description that matches him. Mongie moves around him then stares at him thoughtfully.

Mongie: You know what, for the safety of these people, I think we should cancel the show. *Addressing the audience.* Ladies and gentlemen the show has been...

Welsh cover Mongie's mouth before he can finish then whispers something in his ears. He pulls him away from the audience as they have an indiscernible argument. Finally they agree to continue with the show.

Both: *singing.* We goin' have some fun, we goin' have some fun.

Moggie: I am Mo...

Welsh: *Pushing him away.* I am Welsh the scum.

Mongie: I am Mongie the juggler. *Welsh keep on repeating Mongie's last words in a ridiculous fashion.*

Welsh: We are the MDC. *Mongie steps on his foot.* Sorry, we are the NTC.

Mongie: Which stands for?

Welsh: The National Theatre Company.

Mongie: Welcome to the true African Circus, where we give you a true success story, of how one African country, rose from being the greatest Agricultural exporter, to be the greatest human exporter. We hope you have some fun.

²³ Central Intelligent Officer who works for the state.

Welsh whistle as to signal the other members of the company to join in. Members of the troupe emerge from behind the audience. They sing and dance as they dissolve into different characters.

The bread sequence.

A woman with a baby strapped behind her back is waiting for bread outside the supermarket. A gentleman dressed for work arrives and they form a queue. A young lady arrives with a guy who is trying to ask her out. They join the queue. At first the attitude is that of patience and optimism slowly they become restless with the baby crying and the gentleman constantly glancing at his watch. This develops into long faces of despair as they leave the queue and assume different postures of frustration. An old man arrives and joins the waiting. Suddenly a young man appears behind one pile of tyres and announces that bread has arrived. There is commotion as everyone rushes towards the stall. The old man has to pull dirty tricks in order to be in the lead but before he gets to the bread a politician buys all the bread through the back door. It is announced that bread is finished. The people vent their frustrations by raiding the supermarket. Each one of them leaves with a tyre.

The market place.

The tyres are transformed into vendors selling an assortment of vegetables. No one comes to buy the goods and one by one the vendors change their products to inconsequential goods such as matches and carrots. Once again no one buys them. Out of frustration they begin illegal foreign currency exchange. One lady is ridiculed for trying to sell the Zimbabwean dollar. Ironically every one ends up selling it. They try to sell it to the audience but it does not work. Slowly they give up.

Escaping attempt

Frustrated by their trade they one by one join a queue to get passports. Once again hope turns to despair as they are told that the issuing of passports has been delayed by two years. They desperately approach the audience looking for alternative ways of getting passports.

Citizens Speak out

Suddenly there is wide a scream that stops the action. Citizen 1 picks up a tyre and puts it at the centre.

Cit 1: The workers are tired.

Everyone follows a similar fashion so that at the end there is a pile of tyres.

Cit 2: The academics are tired.

Cit 3: The church is tired.

Cit 4: The youths are tired.

Cit 5: Even the elders are tired.

Cit 6: And the NGOs are tired.

Formation of the Party

They all go for a clandestine meeting in which they agree to form an opposition party. Citizen 1, a representative of workers is chosen to lead the party. They sit the leader at the top of the pile then dance around chanting slogans with an open hand.

Cit 1: Workers need a living wage – and the right to join unions of their choice and to participate in determining policies that affect their lives.

Cit 2: We the employers need sound economic policies that do not scare the investor.

Cit 3: We the academics need sound educational and funding policy.

Cit 4: We religious institutions want a morally upright leadership.

Cit 5: We just want food and jobs; the security officers should stop harassing us.

Cit 6: Everyone wants human rights have to be observed.

All: *(Coming together)* The people have spoken!

Disruption of the opposition

Suddenly a war vet arrives. They brave themselves as he inspects the gathering loathsomely.

War Vet: Well, in 1964 we went to war so that we can repossess our land. Yet twenty years after independence, 90% of our agriculturally productive land still remains in the hands of a privileged few. *To the group* What you need is land?

There is massive protest as he destroys the pile. He looks at them threatening. No one has the guts to challenge him thus the protest quickly die into conformity. He begins toyi-toying with a revolutionary song and the people join in begrudgingly.

British intervention

A British representative is not happy at all. He draws Citizen 1 to the side and offers him some money. Citizen 1 takes his tyre and puts it back at the centre then begins to lure other citizens to withdraw from the toyi-toyi and reform their party. One by one they leave until the war veteran exits alone. Once again they sit Citizen 1 at the top. Pleased by his handy-work the British rep begins articulating through party leader.

British Rep: This is not the act of a civilized country. The political leadership is bankrupt and the policies pursued are economically illiterate. Justice, truth and reconciliation should prevail! Fundamental human rights should be observed! The rights of white farmers have to be observed.

Power Struggle

The last part of the speech sends the group into protest against their leader. They pull him down as each one of them takes their tyre. For a while there is commotion, as everyone wants his/her tyre at the top.

Cit 2: STOP! We need order.

He re-arranges the tyres in away that leave his tyre at the top. The leader is not happy with that.

Leader: You have no right.

Cit 2: Neither do you!

Leader: I have the mandate of the people.

Cit 2: Not any more. Ladies and Gentlemen, I present you to his royal Majesty King Arthur.

The arrival of King Arthur

The cast helps Citizen 1 to put on a red robe and a crown. He is driven on a wheel chair. The people come out to meet the king. The tyres are transformed into a red carpet and the remaining make up a raised platform on to which Arthur ascends.

Arthur: The Lord came to me in a smoke while amongst the shepards of Thabo Mbeki.

Voice Over: Behold you're standing on holy ground. I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Graceland. I have heard them cry out because of their slave drivers and I am concerned about their suffering.

Arthur: So I have come down to rescue you from the land of the Egyptians and to bring you out of that land into a good gracious land, a land flowing with milk and honey. I will be your sacrifice on condition that you exalt me.

Everyone knells on all fours as chorus the following in praise:

Citizens: We thank you King Arthur .We praise you for your sacrifice. We celebrate you for courage. We glorify you for love. We exalt you for being a hero.

Arthur: *Pompously.* I am compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithful, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet I do not leave the guilty unpunished, I punish the children and their children for the sins of their father to the third and fourth generation.

Citizens: Thy will be done now and eventual when you lead.

Arthur: I have a plan to smite the wicked, to smite Rogue and his group of Baal prophets. The King reveals himself in mysterious ways. All those who support the red rats shall paint their doors in red and on that day I shall pass over you.

The disruption.

There is ululation and celebration, which is short by the sound of machine gun. Everyone goes into hiding. A war veteran walks in.

War vet: This gathering is not sanctioned by any of our security forces. It is therefore illegal. We will not allow a nefarious coalition of black puppet and white racists to destabilize this country. This country was created by blood. I died for this country, I killed for this country and I can do it once again. Now disperse.

They actors slowly creep from hiding and plead with the audience to move to back into the Arena.

Act 3

Rogue's military uniform hangs upstage left as it was in the first act. Lieutenant walks in briskly looking for a lit spot. A comedy of errors between him and the stage manager ensues as he misses the lit spot.

Lieut: Can I have some fucken lights shi-i-i-i-i-i-i-t. *Lights fall on him and he feels embarrassed. He puts his finger over his mouth as if to signal the audience to be quite.* Shiiiiiii. *Pause.* Okay is everything set? *He looks around searchingly.* Where is the camera?

Voice Over: Right in front of you Sir.

Lieut: Oh, thank you. *Pause.* Now remember everything we have rehearsed. Let's make this look real.

Voice Over: Lieutenant the commander has arrived.

Lieut: Okay everybody stand by. Remember we rehearsed this all we need it to make it look real to our audiences. Camera, sound and lights, don't fuck up this time. Let's make the big man look good, feel good and talk good. Now 5, 4, 3, 2, 1... *Addressing the audience* Ladies and gentlemen, comrades and friends today is a special night where we get to meet our leader, Commander Rogue ahead of The Great Selection contest where he will battle it out with the opposition for this, *Pointing to a crown, which is slowly lowered and left dangling above their head but out of reach,* the King of Kings title. Your leader Commander Rogue requested this interview so that you get to know his manifesto and what he intends to do for this great country, only if you return him to power. Something I am confident you will. Now ladies and gentlemen lets give it up for the one and only African leader, Commander Rogue.

A security officer walks in and surveys the area then gives clearance using his walkie-talkie. Rogue enters. He is dressed in a black gown carrying a huge black book in one hand and his walking stick in the other.

Lieut: Commander, welcome. It is a privilege to have Your Excellence at our show.

Rogue: Thank you.

Lieut: To our audience members when we open this discuss to the floor please feel free to ask any question too dear to your heart. *Turning to the commander.* My first question your highness, you have just turned 120 years and people seem to think that you're now too old do battle and you should perhaps retire.

Rogue: Don't let my appearance fool you. I am still as young as a youth. *Laughs.*

Lieut: Yes I can see. Now, critics have argued that the country is facing huge problems and the situation is ripe for change. *Pause.* How do you managed to maintain the status quo?

Rogue: First of all I run a country of citizens not critics. Secondly what the so-called critics call problems I view them as challenges. And challenges are good. They shape character.

Lieut: But some citizens think that you are becoming paranoid by blaming everything on rats, which do not exist.

Rogue: That is nonsense. Look around you. What do you see?

Lieut: *Excitedly supportive.* I see succe.... *He is cut off as citizens shout discreetly.*

Cit 1: Unemployment.

Cit 2: Fuel shortage.

Cit 1: Foreign currency shortage.

Cit 2: Political violence.

Cit 1: Hungry children.

The lieutenant is taken by surprise as the citizens take over. The people temporarily unnerve rogue.

Rogue: *To lieutenant.* What is going on here?

Lieu: *Trying to contain the panic* I am sorry sir.

Rogue: *Aside to Lieutenant.* You didn't tell me this was going to happen.

Lieut: Don't worry I can deal with it Sir. *To the audience.* Can we have some order please! Now we all know who is behind all this? *Pause.* RATS!

Cit 2: Which rats?

Rogue: *Regaining his composure.* By rats I mean all the anti- Rogue movements out there, which shall remain unmentioned even though they know themselves, the likes of Britain, America, IMF, EU, Commonwealth, The Congress of Churches, the NCA, Amnesty International, Crises Coalition, the puppet Movement for Democratic Rats and everyone who means us ill.

Cit 2: So you admit that there is a problem.

Lieut: This is not your time yet; otherwise I will have you thrown out. *Pause.* I would like to open the floor to the international organizations and foreign media.

There are indiscernible murmurs of protest from the citizens.

Lieut: Quiet. *Pointing to a man in the audience.* Yes.

I.P: I am from the Independent Press. Do you accept freedom of press and the right to be informed?

Lieut: Ah sorry but His Excellent is not taken those kinds of questions.

Rogue: *To Lieutenant.* No let me answer that. You see Mr. I call it the right to protect my people from pink lies paddled by foreign media and the likes of you.

I.P: But the people have the right to be informed.

Rogue: Ah excuse me Sir but are you accredited?

I.P: Yes sir.

Rogue: I don't think so. *He clicks his finger and the guards drag him out as he protest.* We will not tolerate such arrogance from ill-informed journalist.

Lieut: We will take our next question. *Pointing at I.M.F.* Yes

I.M.F: I am from the ACCREDITED I.M.F. *He shows his badge.* We the I.M.F would like to find out if you have a strategy to deal with the economic crisis.

Rogue: Of-course there is. As the longest serving and oldest President in the continent I drafted a manual for all would be African Presidents entitled "No Easy Walk to Black Rule". *He shows the book to the audience.* This book documents the ten commandments of how to run a black country.

I.M.F: Does that address the economic crisis without needing outside assistance?

Rogue: Who said we need help? It is for people like you that we find ourselves in this situation.

I.M.F: Will you answer the question...?

Rogue: Mr. I.M.F which country are you from?

I.M.F: *Hesitantly.* America.

Rogue: A country of thieves and robbers. *He clicks his finger. The security guards drag the man out and quickly return.* Let's hear from genuine citizens of this country.

Cit 2: *Hesitantly* Mr. Commander.

Rogue: Yes. *Looking around for the owner of the voice.* Oh please come closer I am here for you. *An elderly man looking fragile and tired appears. He walks to Rogue with hesitation.* What is your question old one?

Cit 2: Can I have food for my children?

Rogue: Of-course what's stopping you!

Cit 2: The food is unavailable and expensive.

Rogue: Well, it's not like you people are starving. You simply can't afford your staple food. So I have a piece of advice for you and all the millions out there, if you can't have bread, have cake. *He laughs arrogantly and the lieutenant joins in supportively.*

Cit 1: Excuse me Your highness.

Rogue: Yes youngman, come closer to papa.

Cit 1: *Moving forward.* We do not have money.

Rogue: Young man you are still young. Why don't you join our youth national service training programme?

Cit 1: With all respect the great one, what I need is a job and being able to look after myself.

Rogue: But you know it is government policy to give jobs to grandaunts from the service. *Pause.* Be wise if you can't beat them join them.

Cit 2: But there are no jobs Sir. Not even in the government!

Rogue: I am surprised that as a senior citizen of this country you are still paddling lies. Unemployment rate has dropped by 5%...

Cit 1: To 80%!

Lieut: It is still a drop young man.

Cit 2: Even though it is a result of illegal migration to other countries?

Rogue: I don't call it illegal migration but rather a foreign expansion of our work force. *Sarcastically.* You are not the only ones. Cecil John Rhodes and his fortune seekers did it.

Cit 1: But we are running away from economic hardships?

Rogue: What hardships. You people never cease to amaze me. You run away to foreign lands where you do demeaning jobs of all sorts instead of serving your nation. *Arrogantly.* Tell you what I will be doing an international tour where I would like to give each one of these perverts one hundred US dollars and encourage them to come home.

Cit 1: Why not inject that money into the economy. This country does not have any fuel.

Rogue: Young man, why don't you go and sit in the middle of the street and see if a car won't hit you?

Cit 1: Our neighbors think we are becoming an unnecessary burden on them.

Rogue: That is an unfounded claim. Many of these countries have benefited from my policies. Where it not for me our citizens would not be occupying key economic positions in these countries. Yet they call us burdensome when we're actually helping them. Don't they champion African Renaissance, African Union, and the Commonwealth?*(Frustrated)* That is why I say fuck the commonwealth, the world is not common anywhere.

Cit 2: Please Sir refrain from such language our children are watching.

Rogue: Oh you find me offensive. I also find you offensive for finding me offensive.

There is commotion as citizens start protesting calling for food, jobs, houses e.t.c. Rogue stands up and stares at the audience menacingly.

Rogue: *with finality.* I need to define the parameters of this interview. The use of the following words has been outlawed with immediate effect: Old age, dictator, acute shortage, economic crisis, illegal land invasion, fuel shortage, foreign currency, unemployment, political violence, rigging elections, war veteran and constitutional amendment. *Pause.* Violation of this rule will be tantamount to insulting the office of the Commander, which carries a death sentence. *Pause as he look around for dissention. He is satisfied.* Now what was your question?

Everyone looks stunned. Citizens start whispering amongst themselves. Rogue and Lieutenant look around searchingly. Citizen 1 gathers some courage.

Cit 1: I think we have heard this for too long.

Rogue: *Arrogantly.* Are you challenging my authority? *Pause.* Security, arrest this traitor!

Cit 1: Wait! You call yourself a man yet you depend so much on your security. How about you and me, one on one right now! *The crowd cheers aging Rogue to take the challenge.* Are you scared?

Rogue: I am not scared of anyone. You want to fight, let's fight. *Rogue takes off his gown as the fight begins. As they fight the following dialogue ensues.*

Cit 1: The people of this country will not allow you to keep on breaking the law.

Rogue: Which law? A law, which promotes injustice in society, a law that enforces unjust, is not in compliance with the rule of law.

Cit 1: So you mean we should tear up the constitution

Rogue: On my terms, yes!

Cit 1: What gives you the right?

Rogue: I belong to a generation, which brought fundamental revolutionary changes not through the law, but through the barrel of a gun unlike you, a traitor who's CV does not fill half a page. *Pause.* This country was created by blood.

Cit 1: If you think with your brains rather than your blood you will realize that it is not only important to attain victory for democracy but to retain it too.

Rogue: That is why we are now amending our patriotic laws of the game. We would like to show the whole world that we are not as strong-headed as our country's detractors AND traitors want the world to believe.

Cit 1: Why don't you talk to us?

Rogue: Why talk to a nefarious coalition of black puppets and white racists. I would rather talk to their master.

Rogue wins. His fans celebrate the victory by bringing in a ladder and slowly help Rogue to climb top of it. The two fans immediately transforms into the ordinary citizens, they protest by trying to pull him down but he kicks them off. Lieutenant tries to climb the ladder with him but he is kicked off too. Rogue nears the top of the ladder everyone on the floor transforms into citizens and start protesting. Rogue reaches for the crown puts it on and declares himself the winner but his words are swallowed by the mass protesting beneath the ladder.

Rogue: *Pointing the gun to the audience* SHUT UP!

They citizens are about to run to the audience when they realize a strange figure in the audience. Slowly house lights come up and they start scrutinizing the audience. They are alarmed by their discovery. Some of the greatest dictators of all times are part of the audience. These include likes of Hitler, Mussolini, Idi Amin, Mobhuto Seseseko, Fidel Castro and Kumuzi Banda. They are shocked and terrified they scream making for the exit. The house lights fade leaving a spot light on Rogue. Rogue begins to laugh triumphantly as lights fade.

The End