

EDITORIAL / REDAKSIONEEL

Of particular relevance to any journal situated in post-apartheid South Africa that attempts to offer a critical space for investigating our rapidly changing and hence, tenuous society, is Ntongela Masilela's article *Presence Africaine and the Emergence of African Film Criticism*. With extraordinary detail and insightful comment, Masilela situates the path of development taken by the journal *Presence Africaine* from its inception in 1947 to its demise in the early nineteen nineties against the background of colonial and post-colonial African cultural production. His focus is two-fold: First to trace the coalescing of African Film Criticism into a discipline within the academe in response to the extraordinary film texts that emerged out of post-colonial Africa with the work of Ousmane Sembene, Souleyman Cisse, and others, and second, to detail the importance of that critical activity to a greater understanding of those concepts which have animated scholars working in the area of post-colonial studies. An African aesthetics, "negritude," the issue of African identity, the recuperation of African histories, the cultural and intellectual products of the African diaspora, "Blackness," the traumas of colonialism, the reclaiming of representation, the questions confronting a national cinema – all of these and more found a voice in the pages of *Presence Africaine*, whose legacy continues on in contemporary scholarship on African/Black cinema. By revealing the complex relationships existing between criticism and production, between institutions and knowledge, and between the West and the rest, Masilela's article speaks most pointedly to the current situation facing film, and indeed all cultural production, in the the formation of a new South African public sphere.

For too long South Africa has been considered "a world apart," a case study unique unto itself. As Rob Nixon has pointed out, apartheid's reputation as an anomalous aberration encouraged this tendency with the result that many of the links and alliances with other discourses were ignored. However since the 1990's, considerations of South African culture and social life are no longer amenable to such intellectual isolationism. We must now trace the endless links between South African culture and other African cultures, and the world beyond. Masilela's impressive achievement is to have provided us with one such a tracing.

In her article, Melissa Steyn explores yet another set of tracings when she argues that the way in which intercultural competence has been conceptualised in communication studies needs to be reviewed in the light of more contemporary views of truth and knowledge, the nature of culture and of personhood. Perhaps we in South Africa need to realize too the truth contained in the post modern consciousness that "... all the world's a stage?"

Our next issue which will focus on the debates, the ideas, and the visions surrounding the reconstruction of South African national identity within the global, modern world will, we hope, provide us with another set of tracings.

Sonja Verwey & Lucia Saks