Introduction

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M. van Wyk Smith provides an overview of the historical role the two kinds of Ethiopia played in Western thought's dialectic representation of Africa. As heuristic discursive device in the context of transcultural representation, he argues, the 'elusive power of myth' creates a cognitive scheme through which non-Africans accounted for their experience of Africa. More generally, myth may prove to be the way in which people account for their experience of the new and unknown.

Commenting on the significance poetic and mythological thinking may have for intercultural exchange, Walter Köppe argues that Bleek's contribution in the fields of Mythology and Comparative Linguistics derived from his appreciation of the contribution to modern Germanic Philology by the brothers Grimm. Fostered in an atmosphere of a romantic, anti-authoritarian and democratic tradition of scholarship, his methods, thoughts, ideals and values impacted on his transcription of //Kabbo's narrations. Köppe suggests that this may be further explored as it concerns concepts of text, origin and *Erkenntnisinteresse*.

Focusing on the atmosphere of uncertainty, complexity and multiplicity which seems to pervade academia, Henriette Roos points to the importance of interdisciplinarity, processes of interaction and the local focus in South African texts addressing transculturalism. She argues that aspects of genealogy, cultural differences, history, feminism and literary form, constitute a motivational cluster which contextualises the phenomenon of literary transculturalism. The question, however, is why there is a specific image, that of the Bushman, which should suddenly 'enjoy' such a conspicuous popularity.

D. Lloyd argues that the shift from noble to ignoble savage arose from travellers' and missionaries' encounter with new peoples and new situations in the context of a development of justificatory discourse for imperial expansion during the first years of the British occupation. In the absence of detailed information about African peoples, the Europeans were forced back on themselves in order to provide a framework that could make sense of their experiences. In so doing they created a construct modelled after the Adamastor discourse. He refers to views by Barrow, Le Vaillant, Thomas Pringle,

John Moffat, David Livingstone and R.M. Ballantyne.

Arguing that Fynn's varnished portrayals of himself as colonial informant on indigenous peoples were aimed at procuring a land grant in colonial Natal, J. Pridmore comparatively reads elements of his life within the wider context of nineteenth century literature. She refers to the emergence of travel writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century and the fact that its literary depiction was determined by a dichotomy between 'Empire and the Savages'. Notwithstanding the hospitality of local communities, this trend developed unchallenged with Fynn's 'varnishings' not detracting from the fact that he stood in a 'category of his own'.

Arguing that Pringle shifts representation from the natural sign to distinction, difference, analysis, the table and taxonomy, Nick Meihuizen shows that his aesthetics was an aesthetics of the classical episteme/empire. Not drawing on the mediating mythology of Adamastor, his simplification of complex systems under the aegis of 'the reciprocal bond' between imagination (artistic creation) and resemblance in his poems nevertheless exhibits the imperialist epistemological frame for ordering the world—which in his case, articulated the 'reason of the Enlightenment', the 'spirit of religious revivalism and romantic idealism'.

Different from the usual focus on myths and animal stories from Africa, Annie Gagiano explores the importance of Jordan's tales about men and women in his *Tales from Southern Africa*. She points out that South African literature is dangerously or unhealthily detached from the non-literate—they who appreciate the mythopoeic as it engages 'actualities' as well as 'mysteries'. She illustrates the importance of the socially pertinent themes in these stories, especially as they engage the overcoming of social crises.

Exploring perceptions of the Anglo-Boer War among the Russian public, Apollon Davidson and Irina Filatova point to portrayals of Boer soldiers, officers and the then President and overview various kinds of literature produced in the process. So insatiable was the public demand for news of the Boers and their challenge to the British Empire that many magazines and publishers not normally covering of international affairs hastened to get on the bandwagon. Important is that the two historical links between Russians and South Africa, first with the Boers and secondly via the ANC are vital links in both countries' histories.

In view of racial difference in the teaching context Myrtle Hooper engages *Heart of Darkness* and *Mhudi* concerning 'cultural translation'. Important is how language and

rhetoric are articulated on the conceptual object (nation). The production of an 'other' which is 'entirely knowable and visible' is a recognisable feature of colonial power and ethnographic practice. The challenge for cultural translation is to confront implicit meaning and silences in practices.

Carli Coetzee argues that even though conservative fictions only use particular pasts to construct fictions of nation-building, they often also contain contradictory and more subtle 'progressive' elements. These are sometimes at odds with expectations of an unsophisticated singularity of purpose. As an illustration she examines the work of the Afrikaans writer C.M. van den Heever, placing his farm novels within the larger context of his ideas about the evolution of what he regarded as the spirit of the nation.

Focusing on Conrad, Schoeman and Coetzee, R.J. Balfour explores the significance the garden as trope has for their ideological and conceptual frameworks. To various degrees, he argues, all three writers directly or indirectly expose the inability of colonial-patriarchal discourses successfully to contain, (distort or pervert) the meaning ascribed to that which they define as Other. Like Conrad, Schoeman and Coetzee also critique the discourses which determine power and signification in society.

Positioning her focus on problematic issues related to 1930, Jo-Marie Claassen points to a conference at Fort Hare in which black and white participated on equal terms. She argues that this conference's focus on 'Christianity in Action', provided possibilities in South Africa which were silenced in its aftermath.

For her sociolinguistic case study, Varijakshi Prabhakaran compares social stratification evidenced in Idian (ITe) and South African Telugu (STe) respectively. In the context of various historical, social and economic factors and drawing on research data, she argues that ITe remains determined by social stratification—castes and sub-castes differences are present in and continued by regional dialects. This restricts both downward and upward socio-economic mobility. Comparatively, the hold of the caste system on South African Indians has disappeared. Even so, she found that social stratification based on caste is still evident in speech.

Examining press witchcraft discourses in 1988-1989 on the eve of the Liberian civil war, Louise M. Bourgault overviews the press' preoccupation with the paranormal, the creation of a Liberian politico-religious symbol system and the collapsing of the Head of State's authority into this powerful symbolism. These are elements, she argues, which may provide a better understanding of the nature of Liberian culture and the civil war.

Referring to the role 'Empire and Response' play in teaching postcolonial literatures in the undergraduate curriculum in tertiary education David Attwell engages the questions, 1) how to develop a curriculum dealing with the literature of the colonial scene and its aftermath that does not fall back on misleading dichotomies; and 2) why one should bother with the literature of the encounter at all? Why should one not simply decolonise the canon altogether and teach an entirely Afrocentric curriculum? Between the extremes of an exclusive focus on either a historical, localised understanding and indigenous-language writing or a myopic focus on superficial globalism, he argues, in the context of 'cultural poetics', for an approach departing from a rhetoric of contact.

Pointing to various evaluations of Rider Haggard's conservative influence on romance, Lindy Stiebel researches the use of landscape in the work of South African writers who claimed to have been influenced by Haggard, as well as in aspects of twentieth century popular culture in South Africa. She mainly focuses on nostalgic discourse.

In her review of *Text, Theory, Space*, Shirley Brooks positions its discourse within post-colonial studies and asks whether it as well as this discourse are not iconoclastic acts of geographical and historical bridging, effacing disciplinary boundaries, e.g. geography and history. Pointing out that 'space' has become a central explanatory concept in contemporary social theory she argues that the participation of literary theorists in this endeavour makes for welcome (theoretical) contributions.