The Language of the Other

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> The sound of the ph is not the same with that of the f, like in
> the European languages (Van der Kemp)[1].

It is possible to account for intellectuals both in terms of their contributions to knowledge and as subjects of knowledge. However, one can challenge the narrative of ascendancy, progress and historical continuity that often accompanies the fable of individual genius or secular sainthood[2] by asking what conditions of possibility enabled an intellectual to produce a particular knowledge (and no other) at a particular time. This is a question of the 'positive unconscious' and 'historical *a priori*' of knowledge production. This article aims to focus this problematic onto J.T. van der Kemp's language research in South Africa (1799-1800). He stands as one of the founders of South African indigenous language studies. The challenge is to position his research in terms of the discourse on language prevalent at the time.

In this task I enlist the categories advanced in Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* in order to assess this perspective on the historical study of texts and the epistemic positioning of intellectuals[3]. And, even though *The Order of Things* attracted its own fair share of criticism[4], it

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[1] LMS I S 1800:443.

[2] Cf. Johnson (1988) for a conservative and critical approach to this notion and Jennings (1997:64ff) on the Jacobin - rightist binary.

[3] My argument for the usefulness of Foucault in the analysis of colonialism runs counter to that of Kazanjian (1998) and, on the aesthetic - epistemic binary (cf. Carroll 1987), I follow the rationale of the latter.

[4] The general historical approach of *The Order of Things* drew criticism on mainly two fronts (Macey 1993:169-179). In the context of the ascendancy of Marxism in France and especially the political role of the Communist Party at the time, Foucault was criticised for denigrating Marx's analyses in favour of Ricardo's. In the process, he dismissed notions central to Marxism such as the 'contradictions between the forces and relations of production' and the 'class struggle'.

nevertheless stands as a significant historicising of the (human) sciences of the West[5]. Foucault's 'archaeological' exposition of the epistemes[6] of resemblance, representation and finitude provides one set of parameters within which Van der Kemp's texts on language and his references to the language of the other may be studied as to their conditions of possibility.

Equivalent to the distinctions between the Renaissance, the Classical Age (Rationalism) and Modernity, Foucault argued that the main interpretive and knowledge producing metaphors which characterise each of these epistemes are those of 'resemblance', 'representation', and 'time'. In the episteme of *resemblance*, the world is seen as an infinite domain of things in which science and magic, rational and esoteric knowledge, reason and the spiritual are all related in a variety of ways (Foucault 1982:17-45). The episteme of *representation* did away with resemblance, distinguished between reason and chimera, illusion or appearance, characterised the world in terms of sense data (things), and integrated it with representation. As such, it opened the way for the establishing of three distinct but related fields of study, viz. natural history, the analysis of wealth or value, and general grammar. These sciences shared the primacy representation played in their analytical procedures—the comparing of identities and differences through measurement and order. This event marks the dawn of the method of proof by comparison, the possibility of establishing a comprehensive finite encyclopaedia of nature, complete enumeration, the identification of the critical, judging and discriminating activity of the mind, and the separation of history and science. The dominance of writing in nature disappears and in its stead, arose a semiotics of the sign—finding its being in substance, its form in

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[5] Concerning the position of the intellectual, the second criticism came from Sartre who as intellectual, has carved out a role for himself in the French intellectual scene. Foucault distinguished his approach from Sartre's as that between a focus on 'system' (as in the sciences) and 'meaning' (humanism). Sartre (together with de Beauvior, Le Bon and others), therefore, criticised Foucault for erecting a new ideology against Marxian humanism.

[6] The 'episteme' is a term coined to capture the notion of the '"science of the archive" of a given period'. It is the *positive unconscious* of knowledge: a level that eludes the consciousness of the scientist and yet is part of scientific discourse ...'. This level of analysis allows for the study of sciences (or disciplines) in terms of the common rules they employ 'to define the objects proper to their own study, to form their concepts, to build their theories'. 'In any given culture and at any given moment, there is only one episteme that defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge, whether expressed in a theory or silently invested in a practice' (Foucault 1982:xif,168).

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the relation to the thing it transparently refers to or names, and its consistency in both primitive designation and conventional arbitrariness (Foucault 1982:46-76).

The episteme of *time* broke the dominant perception of representation, separated pure forms of knowledge and pure (empirical and concrete) science, and introduced an internal time-dimension to things. Whereas classifying systems of thought sought their utopia in the primitive beginnings of things, it is now dialectically and teleologically sought in their end. This transformation, however derived from an event which simultaneously constituted the sciences of biology, economics, and philology amongst others. Philology appeared when history was introduced to language to separate language families according to their internal structural differences, when phonetics and sound became primary objects of analysis separated off from the theory of the sign and writing, when roots themselves became the primary objects of study together with their inflected time dimensions, and when the studying of the historical kinship and evolution of languages became the objective of linguistics. In all these disciplines this new order of time derives from the introduction of history to empirical science. Each discipline had its own density and depths, its own internal history, objectivity, and laws. The loss of representational being in language was compensated for by the fact that it had to remain the medium of scientific expression, that it became an object of study in itself with exegesis its excess (e.g. by Marx, Nietzsche and Freud), and that it constituted literature: the untamed word (Foucault 1982:250-302).

My hypothesis is that Van der Kemp's textual remains can be usefully historicised in terms of the age of representation (since c.1660) and, maybe, the transition to modernity (c.1800-1810)[7]. The challenge is to describe those perceptions in eighteenth-century language studies which made it possible for Van der Kemp to write these texts and produce this knowledge. The method is comparative[8]; to compare statements in the texts with their significance in epistemic

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[7]   Cf. Foucault (1982:57). If we follow Foucault (1982:236ff,282) by positioning even the Ideologues still in the age of representation, with Schlegel (1808), Bopp (1816) and Grimm (1818) providing the conditions of the new episteme, then Van der Kemp's attempts at breaking with it, may nevertheless indicate that his texts too, still formed part of this episteme. The best candidate for arguing that Van der Kemp was part of the transition to the episteme of time, comes from his rules for 'sound'. However, these rules too, did not include a sense of time as would happen with the arrival of the age of finitude (cf. Foucault 1982:235f; also the important exposition by Deleuze 1988:124-132).

[8]   Foucault's (1982:x) approach compared the three sciences of natural history, the analysis of wealth and language to the philosophy of the classical episteme.

equivalents of the time (whether Van der Kemp had direct access to these sources or not), and to comparatively account for the epistemic significance[9] of Van der Kemp's two principle texts: *Specimen of the Caffra Language* and *Vocabulary of the Caffra Language* ([1800] 1804:442-446; 447-458)[10]. In order to analyse the significance of Van der Kemp's work within general or universal grammar and the emergence of comparative grammar, I first reflect on the significance philosophy and the classical languages had for Van der Kemp. This is followed by a study of Van der Kemp's South African writings, paying attention to 'the language of thought', 'isiXhosa and universality', 'being and naming', 'the primitive', 'the writing of sound', and the importance of the teaching of 'reading and writing'.

philosophy and the classical languages

Van der Kemp attended the Latin (Erasmian) School in Rotterdam (1757-1760) and then moved to Dordrecht (1761-1763), pursuing a particular focus on classical languages, especially Greek. He concluded his basic schooling with an oration on Julius Caesar[11]. Intending to become a medical doctor, he mostly focused his university studies on Philosophy and Medicine, taking all his subjects in Latin at the Album Studiosorum, University of Leyden (1763-1767). In the process, he became disillusioned with the medical sciences—because they were not scientific enough—started to profess deism, and dropped out of university in his fourth year. He joined the army and committed himself to the 'study of militarism' from Latin and German sources. During his years in the army (1767-1780), he lived a 'debauched life'[12] and continued his interest in philosophy. He published a Latin text (1775) on 'the rational discrimination of good and evil' in which he combined a rational theological

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[9] The question with regard to Van der Kemp's texts is therefore two-fold—to compare them with both this philosophy (representation) and the language studies of the time. And, since *Madness and Civilisation* (1982a) focused on 'difference' and *The Order of Things* on resemblance, sameness and identity (cf. Foucault 1998:282ff), the aim is to discover the degree 'similitude' played a role in Van der Kemp's thought.

[10]   The abbreviations *Specimen* (1800) and *Vocabulary* (1800) are used in this article to refer to these two texts.

[11]   '*Jurene an injuria C. Julius Caesar interfectus guerit?*'

[12]   Enklaar (1982:5ff, 11) feels that whether this way of life was influenced by the early romantic social ideals of Rousseau, fashionable at the time with Dutch intellectuals, remains an open question'. Cf. Sassen (1959) on the influence of Rousseau on Dutch academia at the time.

system with a cosmological one[13]. Assuming all humanity to have a tendency towards evil, he argued that it is only through Descartes' 'first principles' that rational knowledge of God is possible. When he continued and completed his medical studies in Edinburgh (1780-1782), he published two further studies in Latin—one on the pre-Socratic, Parmenides (1781)[14], and the other, his dissertation in medicine (1782)[15]. The Parmenides text mainly drew on Leibniz and deistically aimed at arguing for the independent existence of God and a cosmos which does not share any commonalities with the divine.

Van der Kemp practised as medical doctor until 1791 when he lost his belief in the efficacy of medicine, left medical practice and decided to concentrate on philosophy and the comparative study of languages. After his wife and daughter died and his subsequent conversion experience, Van der Kemp planned to continue these studies, focusing on Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac and Ethiopian[16]. He also embarked on the writing of a Commentary on Romans (1799-1802)[17]. This commentary comprised of a Dutch translation of the text, a paraphrase, and a verse by verse exegetical and dogmatic exposition drawing on Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac. The latter sections also contain comparisons with Syriac, Latin, French, and Lutheran Bible translations and a variety of mainly Platonic philosophical works. He continued working on the fourth volume of the commentary in South Africa after his arrival as first London Missionary Society President in Africa, requesting a Syriac Lexicon from Holland in 1803[18].

From this brief overview, it is evident that Van der Kemp enjoyed a

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[13]   *Tentamen Theologiae Dunatoscopicae Dei existentiam et adtributa, nec non generaliorem universi naturam ex consideratione ejus, quod possibile est, deducendi methodum tradentis, et materiam ordine Geometrico dispositam.*

[14]   *Parmenides, sive de stabiliendis per adplicationem principiorum dunatoscopico- rum ad res sensu, et experientia cognoscendas scientiae cosmologicae fundamentis.*

[15]   *Dissertatio Medica, exhibens cogitationes physiologicas de vita et vivicatione materiae humanum corpus constituentis.*

[16]   Cf. Enklaar (1988:33). Even though Van der Kemp held Latin in some esteem— especially with regard to natural history—it was the more 'original' or 'primitive' languages which counted as more important for him in terms of universal grammar.

[17]   *De Theodicée van Paulus, of de Rechvaardigheid Gods door het Euangelium uit het Geloof, aangetoond tot Geloof, in eenige Aanmerkingen op dezelfs Brief aan de Romeinen, met eene nieuwe Vertaling en Paraphrase.*

[18]   This volume was completed at Bethelsdorp and sent to his publisher in Holland in 1804 but never published. Enklaar (1988:173) inspected it and found it 'faded and barely decipherable'.

classical education and that he also constructively contributed to the scholarship of his time, mostly in Latin. In epistemic context, we can surmise that he probably shared assumptions and practices related to Rousseau's romanticism, Descartes' first principles, neo-platonic and deistic perceptions of God and nature (the infinite and finite), Leibniz's optimistic theodicee argument[19], and the comparative study of languages. Concerning the latter, Van der Kemp's interest in the comparative study of the classical languages—especially Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, and Syriac[20]—may indicate that he shared with fellow scholars the notion that Hebrew or Arabic[21] were closest in approximating the original and most primitive language prevalent in eighteenth century language studies (cf. Aarsleff 1982:65). Van der Kemp placed a prime on the importance of Latin; not only studying and writing in Latin but also taking fellow missionaries Kicherer, Edwards and Edmond for daily Latin lessons prior to their leaving London for South Africa in 1798 (cf. Enklaar 1988:65). He also reports that, while their ship docked at the Cape Verde Islands en route to the Cape, he not only 'conversed' in Latin but also 'was happy to leave with a [Capuchin Monk] a Latin translation of the New Testament'[22]. The significance of Latin was that it not only constituted the universal language in which philosophers, religious and medical scholars published their work—making it the universal European language for scholarly discourse—but that it was also the (universal) language Linnaeus chose for the scientific naming of plants and animals in natural history (cf. Sassen 1959). Moreover, Van der Kemp's general interest in education is also evident from his 1807 letter to the LMS from Bethelsdorp in which he requests:

> Theological and Ecclesiastical works; Geographical and Travels; Description of Arts and Manufactures; Grammars and Dictionaries for instruction in Latin, Greek and Oriental languages; Classic authors, Greek

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[19] Van der Kemp opposed the optimism in this philosophy because, both during the deistic and conversionist phases of his life, he held to the view that universal sin entered the world through Adam (cf. LMS I CC 1797:357). Whereas he formerly thought that this universal sin could be addressed by a 'rational theological system' of the 'knowledge of God', he later changed this for the Pauline 'grace of God through faith in Christ', but still expounded in a rational, neo-platonic system.

[20] Apart from the importance these languages had for language scholars, Sanskrit and—with the expansion of trade during the latter half of the seventeenth-century—Chinese also became part of this list.

[21] For Leibniz (1956:296), Arabic 'characters of arithmatic' occupied this place because 'they better express the genesis of numbers'.

[22] LMS I VC 1798/1799:365.

and Latin; A good general Map of the world, particular maps, Celestial planisphere, a pair of Globes. Nor would I despise any writings on other branches: Natural History, Chemistry, Anatomy, Surgery, Midwifery, Philosophy (in Enklaar 1988:172).

For Van der Kemp, 'mission' was not only concerned with the 'souls' of people. It was an educational vehicle aimed at introducing people to universal knowledge. Latin was the medium which provided access to universal scholarship as well as the medium in which constructive contributions could be made[23]. And, as the list above indicates, a general interest in his own continued learning and the education of others in the sciences, were some of Van der Kemp's main objectives.

Van der Kemp's interest in languages in general and even an obscure Scottish dialect—which he must have mastered during his stay in Scotland (1780-1782)—also points to his interest in contributing to the comprehensive description of all known languages[24]. The rationale[25] for this perspective is that it would allow for

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[23] This interpretation corresponds to the general optimistic view of the desirability for and civilising effects of education. It was present in the cyclical historical view of the rise and fall of civilisations (cf. Vico [1725]1999 and Herder [1774]1891), in both religious and a-religious perspectives on education (Lessing [1780]1838 and the materialists) and in understandings of the education of the individual (Rousseau 1782). And, when scholars started to write in the vernacular (as in France and Germany)—for the education of the nation so to speak—it was still in a universalist and general paradigm. The focus on the vernacular had as aim its 'perfection' to the degree and in analogy to the classical (cf. Kristeva 1989:158f).

[24] Cf. Foucault's reference to Bachmeister's (1773) study which aimed at providing 'an abstract of all the languages of the (Russian) Empire'. This was, Foucault (1982:233) says, in response to 'those great confrontations between various languages that we see appearing at the end of the century—in some cases brought about by the pressure of political motives'. See too his reference to the Petersburg study that aimed at accounting for 279 languages—171 in Asia; 55 in Europe; 30 in Africa; and 23 in America. The first edition (1787) was followed by a second revised edition in four volumes (1790-1791).

[25] It is a well-known fact that philosophers and scientists in Europe regularly read reports of travellers and missionaries in the 'new world', also making the latter consciously writing to meet the interests of this audience (cf. Aarsleff 1982:161; Rousseau 1973:53). Van der Kemp have read the publications of Le Vaillant (1791-1798), Sparrman (1786), Barrow (1801-1804) and Van Reenen ([1803]1937); (cf. LMS I R 1800:433ff,463,464 and LMS I L1 1800:505 respectively). Lichtenstein (1810-1812:290-296) and Di Capelli (1803:98-100) visited him on the frontier.

the comprehensive articulation of languages as part of the general and universal encyclopaedia, similar to the tabulated categorisations of natural history. In addition to developing an alphabet (with rules of sound) for isiXhosa and an isiXhosa vocabulary for prospective missionaries, this activity also shows him aiming at constructively contributing towards this universality.

the language of thought

Concerning rationalism, and apart from his own deistic contributions to metaphysics, it is evident from his writings that Van der Kemp shared concepts and knowledge-systems constructs similar to those of the age of representation even after his conversion. This is evident when he says, neo-platonically, that people 'communicate ideas' to one another[26]; that acts of 'naming' which transparently referred to things or to their 'signification' were central to his academic endeavours[27], and that isiXhosa and Dutch words for things are referred to as 'names' the people 'call' such things[28]. isiXhosa words in his *Vocabulary* are also presented as 'names' with their English equivalents[29] and the table for his isiXhosa alphabet in *Specimen* is divided into the four groups: 'figure' (the letters of the alphabet); 'names' (isiXhosa words referred to); 'signification' (the English equivalent of such words); and 'the sound of the consonants' (comparing the pronunciation of the isiXhosa consonant with its equivalent in either English or Dutch). Moreover, Van der Kemp also uses concepts derived from the 'sign' for both gestural and written communication[30]. From this evidence, it appears as if Van der Kemp shared conceptual schemas concerning language central to the episteme of representation; principally the relationship between 'thought' (or the 'idea'), language, and the 'thing' named or signified and this episteme's semiotics[31].

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[26] LMS I SA 1799:409; TVDK 1801:495; EL1 1802:501f.
[27] LMS SA I 1799:400; LMS I TVDK 1800:418; LMS R 1800:432; LMS S 1800:442, 445; LMS I TVDK 1801:483,485,493f; LMS II AR 1804:239.
[28] E.g. LMS R 1800:432,433,434,435,436,438; LMS I S 1800:442,443; LMS I V 1800: 447; and especially LMS I Ve 1800:459f; LMS I Q 1800:460f; LMS I B 1800:463f; LMS I Ins 1800:464.
[29] LMS V 1800:447ff; LMS I Ve 1800:459f; LMS I Q 1800:460f; LMS I B 1800:463f; LMS I Ins 1800:464.
[30] LMS I TVDK 1801:483,485,493f; LMS II AR 1804:239. Cf. Aarsleff (1967:21f) on Warburton's ([1737/1741]1755) identification of such 'gestural' communication as the 'language of action' in his *Divine Legation if Moses*. Condillac (1798) followed Warburton and popularised this notion.
[31] Cf. Leibniz (1896:285ff). On Port-Royal, cf. Harris & Taylor 1989:94-109).

The idealist understanding of language dates back to John Locke who borrowed some of his insights from Descartes[32]. Fundamental to the classical conception of language is that it functions to ascribe names to things. Acts of naming meant representing the 'being' of things. Scientifically, the naming of things universally meant articulating them in grids and tables in terms of their identities and differences. Since both philosophy and science, however, derive from language, the 'being' of things captured in the name and their distribution over the table did not exclude one another. The thing represented in the name was that name, and the name captured in the table that thing, rendering the relationship between name and thing representationally transparent (cf. Foucault 1982:65,82). As for the nature of truth, Locke distinguished between 'verbal truth' and 'real truth' with the former not articulated with nature and therefore not acceptable as 'knowledge'. This view is present in his argument that 'real Truth is about Ideas agreeing to things' (Locke 1689:357; cf. also Harris & Taylor 1989:110-121):

> Yet it may not be amiss here again to consider that, though our words signify nothing but our ideas, yet being designed by them to signify things, the truth they contain when put into propositions will be only verbal, when they stand for ideas in the mind that have not an agreement with the reality of things. And therefore truth as well as knowledge may well come under the distinction of verbal and real; that being only verbal truth, wherein terms are joined according to the agreement or disagreement of the ideas they stand for, without regarding whether our ideas are such as really have, or are capable of having, an existence in nature. But then it is they contain real truth, when these signs are joined as our ideas agree; and when our ideas are such as we know are capable of having an existence in nature; which in substances we cannot know but by knowing that such have existed[33].

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[32] Cf. especially Descartes' (1637:229) definition of 'ideas', dating from 1670—twenty years before Locke's book. Here he says: 'By the word idea I understand that form of any thought, by the immediate perception of which I am conscious of that same thought; so that I can express nothing in words, when I understand what I say, without making it certain, by this alone, that I possess the idea of the thing that is signified by these words'.

[33] Cf. Book III in Locke (1977:256ff) for further elaboration on the issues addressed here. See Kristeva (1989:160f) on how semiotics was re-introduced in the study of language. Nearly two centuries later—but then a protagonist of philology—Max Müller (1864:334-337) still referred to Locke's expositions with approval.

Despite differences of opinion, detail and further developments, this perception was shared among philosophers and language scholars of the late seventeenth and eighteenth century[34]. Van der Kemp appears to conform to the broad outline of this tradition[35].

The most concise exposition of Locke's various observations concerning the 'sign', comes from his categorising of the 'division of the sciences' into 'physica' (or 'natural philosophy'), 'practica' (or 'ethics') and 'semeiotike' (or 'the doctrine of signs'). Here, 'semiotics' is explained in terms of his exposition of the articulation of ideas, things and words (cf. Locke 1689:443). Semiotics was the main heading for the study of 'logic' and language in the eighteenth century, and Van der Kemp not only studied logic in his undergraduate years but also, later in his life, it was this subject which drew his attention away from medicine and medical practice. The semiotic shaped his focus on philosophy and the study of languages. I now turn to the question of how this episteme shaped his interpretation of isiXhosa.

isiXhosa and universality

Van der Kemp's interest in the languages of the eastern Cape frontier involved much more than the study of language for mission purposes. The intended outcome was to contribute to the universal study of languages (influenced by the universality inherent in natural history) which included the comparative study of all known languages (likewise influenced by the significance of the table as analytical instrument in natural history). In his description of conditions at the Cape Van der Kemp suggests that the LMS directors should consider sending missionaries to

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[34] Berkeley (1710:57-63) criticised Locke's 'abstract ideas' in so far as language and names may have more than one signified and that ideas are not perfectly communicated from one mind to another. For Hume (1739:2), Locke's understanding was too wide 'in making it stand for all our perceptions'. In his explication of the origin of language Smith (1762:7) draws similar relations between 'substance', 'substantives', 'objects', 'signs' and 'ideas'. They all, however, still worked in the same framework. Cf. also Rousseau's (1762) use of 'ideas' in his 'Preface' to *Emile*.

[35] Cf. also Lichtenstein's (1810-12:473-500) six page introduction to his isiXhosa Vocabulary in his 'Appendix': 'Remarks upon the Language of the Koosas, accompanied by a Vocabulary of their Words'. In this section he uses similar phrases and expressions—e.g. the relationship between the 'ideas' and 'words' of a language; the 'combinations and inflexions' 'through which people arrive at a reciprocal exchange of ideas'; and the 'signs of language'.

Madagascar. If they did indeed decide to embark on such an enterprise, the missionaries could come to Cape Town to learn Malagasy languages:

> At the Cape they will find sufficient opportunity to be perfectly instructed in the Madagascar languages. Mr. Truter, member of the judicial court of this town, lived in Madagascar, and will always be ready to inform our Directors of particulars necessary for [such prospective missionaries] to know[36].

This is one instance where there is reference to the acquiring of another language (and other 'particulars') for missionary purposes. But this interest in acquiring the other's language went much further.

For September 22, 1799, the third day after having met Ngqika for the first time—Van der Kemp reports that 'the king visited, and instructed us in the [isiXhosa] language' and for the sixth day—September 25, 1799—that Ngqika again 'instructed me in his language' after having 'received his messengers from the theatre of war, and heard their reports in our tent'[37]. On May 2, 1800 he started receiving instruction in the Gonaka language from Piet Prinslo and two of his Khoi companions[38]. One year and three months later he reports in his journals (July 29, 1801) that he had decided to establish a mission for the Khoi rather than the Xhosa.

Drawing on typically eighteenth-century language analysis, his text *Specimen* constitutes the beginnings—or 'birth'—of indigenous language analysis in South Africa. If one has to put a date to it, then it must be the year 1800 or even more specifically, the day he reports that he, now, 'taught [Ngqika] the [isiXhosa] alphabet': April 23, 1800. When Ngqika visited Van der Kemp on April 23 1800, he not only attended Van der Kemp's catechism for the children, but Van der Kemp also 'taught Ngqika the [isiXhosa] alphabet'. This event was precipitated by Ngqika requesting Van der Kemp to instruct him in isiXhosa, on February 8, 1800. On this occasion Van der Kemp promised to do so, once he had 'attained his language', which we may assume he had already achieved to some degree by April 23, 1800[39]. By this time he must have worked out his isiXhosa alphabet at least.

Van der Kemp was not just interested in the acquisition of indigenous languages but also in teaching indigenous people either Dutch or English, and his interest here, again, reveals his primary focus on the alphabet. For his entry for June

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[36] LMS I VC 1799:369.
[37] LMS I FA 1799:386f.
[38] LMS I TVDK 1800:418.
[39] LMS I TVDK 1800:416,414.

11, 1800, he mentions that he taught one of Captain Tagga's Khoi the Dutch alphabet[40] and promised an English spelling book to William, one of the English deserters (February 20, 1801). For June 24, 1801, he writes that he and Read had printed four hundred copies of a 'spelling table' for the instruction of the children in the school at Graaff Reinet[41], and, accompanying their settlement at Botha's Place (March 7, 1802), he reports the printing of a 'spelling book containing 3138 monosyllables'[42]. From an archival perspective, Van der Kemp's endeavour to learn the other's language[43] went beyond the purposes of communication or missionising. It came about due to the exigencies of more general epistemic conditions, that of general grammar. These derive from what Foucault saw as the representational significance of 'rhetorical' and 'grammar' studies. With regard to 'rhetoric', it is not tropes[44] but the 'figure' and the 'monosyllable' which indicated spatiality for Van der Kemp in his *Specimen*. 'Figure', here stood for the consonants in the table where he distinguished between 'figure', 'name', 'signification' and 'sound of the consonants'. The monosyllables indicated the units of language. In this sense Van der Kemp's *Specimen*—with its alphabet, rules, and comparisons of sound—

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[40] LMS I TVDK 1800:419.

[41] LMS I TVDK 1801:475,481.

[42] LMS II EJBP 1802/1803:82. This 'spelling table' and especially the 'spelling book containing 3138 monosyllables' must have been in the Khoi (or Namaqua) language since he switched his objective to establish a mission among the Xhosa for the Khoi on July 29 1801 already. Moreover, there is no evidence that there were any significant numbers of isiXhosa in his group both at Graaff-Reinet and Botha's Place.

[43] So far I have not been able to find extant copies of either the 'spelling table' or the 'spelling book' of 'monosyllables'. The same is true for Van der Kemp's catechism in Khoi—*Tzitzika Thuickwedi miko Khwekhwenama—Principles of the word of God for the Nama speaking nation* (LMS II AR 1804:239). If these texts could be found, they would be significant not only for their contents but also for their historical value, since it appears that the first printed text in South Africa was Van der Kemp's *BRIEF van het ZENDELINGS GENOOTSCHAP te LONDEN ...*, printed on his arrival in Cape Town in 1799 (cf. Bradlow 1971).

[44] The virtual absence of any reference to rhetoric in Van der Kemp's texts in distinction to 'grammar' and 'sound', means that, within representational thought, he linked up more with the Platonic strand of thinking (represented implicitly by Leibniz—cf. Loemker 1956:27) than with the Ciceronian (represented by Smith 1963 and the prevalence of the study of 'style' and 'belles lettres'—cf. Sassen 1959:220).

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contains the rudimentary conditions in terms of which he attempted to provide a relationship with universality[45]; a total representation of the Xhosa world for both his isiXhosa *Vocabulary* in terms of the internal order of isiXhosa rather than its historical dependency on other languages[46].

With regard to a link to universality, Van der Kemp's alphabet treated isiXhosa in the same way he would any other language, making it part of the universal attempt to study individual languages with regard to a common alphabetical system[47]. The same is true of his development of 'rules of sounds'. According to Foucault the universal attempt in the representational study of languages was to provide 'adequate signs for all representations ... and establish possible links between them':

> In so far as language can represent all representations it is ... the element of the universal. There must exist within it at least the possibility of a language that will gather into itself, between its words, the totality of the world, and inversely, the world as the totality of what is representable, must be able to become, in its totality, an Encyclopaedia (Foucault 1982:85).

On the possibility of providing a total representation of the Xhosa world, Van der Kemp's isiXhosa *Vocabulary* constitutes a comprehensive analysis of all possible kinds of 'names' in the language[48]. Representationally, the 'speech' present in this text 'orders' or analyses the order of the language. It links 'language and knowledge', thereby providing the possibility not only for learning to speak the language, but also of discovering 'the principles of the world's system or those of the human mind's operations' (Destutt de Tracy in Foucault 1982:86). Contrary to the Renaissance's preference for the text above language,

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[45] For the articulation of 'figure' with the common, universal writing system as well as with representational thought, see Warburton (in Derrida 1982:285).
[46] Cf. Foucault (1982:84-92). This latter approach would only arrive with Philology and 'finitude'. In representational thought, the greater attention to synchronicity rather than diachronicity was decisively influenced by natural history and its methodology of the analytical table—which was similar to the way in which 'language analyses' (cf. Foucault 1982:115).
[47] For this universality, see the quotation from the article 'Language' in the Encyclopédie (in Kristeva 1989:189-192).
[48] *Specimen* contains twenty-one sections, dividing into phenomena (which treat human beings as just one other category amongst others), the syntactical parts of isiXhosa and 'phrases'.

[i]n the Classical age, knowing and speaking are interwoven in the same fabric; in the case of both knowledge and language, it is a question of providing representation with the signs by means of which it can unfold itself in obedience to a necessary and visible order (Foucault 1982:88).

I would suggest that Van der Kemp's texts derive not only from the older general grammar but also from the comparative grammar that came into being during the latter part of the eighteenth century. Whereas the latter compared languages in order to discover 'peculiarly grammatical laws common to all linguistic domains' the former,

... does not attempt to define the laws of all languages, but to examine each particular language in turn, as a mode of the articulation of thought upon itself. In every language, taken in isolation, representation provides itself with 'characters'. General grammar is intended to define the system of identities and differences that these spontaneous characters presuppose and employ. It must establish the taxonomy of each language (Foucault 1982:91)[49].

Taken together *Specimen* and the *Vocabulary* along with Van der Kemp's other descriptions[50] constitute his contribution to general grammar. The goal was to open up the possibility for the Xhosa to become part of the universal order, and, vice versa, for this 'nation'[51] to be treated and viewed as one nation alongside all others

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[49] It is in this sense that Van der Kemp's reference to the 'oriental c, which in this language occurs, may be expressed by ng' ... as a 'character' must be understood—also showing that he viewed the other 'sounds' in isiXhosa in similar fashion. ('Character' was modelled after natural history—cf. below.)

[50] Including *Specimen* and *Vocabulary*, these descriptions are divided into sixteen sections, comprising the headings, 'Religion'; 'Customs'; 'Population'; 'Government'; 'Mode of living and means of subsistence'; 'Clothing'; 'The Nature of the Country'; 'Fossile Productions'; 'Vegetables'; 'Quadrupeds'; 'Birds'; 'Insects etc.'; 'History'; and 'Crimes and Punishments'.

[51] He described the isiXhosa world in the way in which he would describe that of any other 'nation', but also that, with regard to the Khoi—who by now have lost their land, government, and autonomy (cf. Elphick 1977)—he advocated that they be treated on an equal footing with the 'Christians', i.e. as English subjects (LMS I TVDK 1801:494).

universally speaking[52].

Under the theme of universality additional perspectives show the impact of natural history on Van der Kemp's understanding of language. With regard to this science he states explicitly,

> [Xhosaland] might be looked upon by a botanist as his paradise; but as I have no taste for that science, nor indeed for natural history in general, my knowledge of the characters of a few most obvious plants is too scanty to present you with them; nor do I suppose that you would look even upon a more complete collection as much interesting. When I first came into this country, I took down the characters of ten or twelve, and drew their figures, but want of time soon hindered me from going on. I observed, that though the pentandria class ...[53].

Despite this disclaimer, he nevertheless often refers to natural history 'names' (in Latin) and use descriptions derived from this universal science, using the notion that 'names' 'distinguish' or 'analyse' phenomena[54]. His *Vocabulary* starts off with the heading 'Names of Animals, and their Parts' and then treats 'Quadrupeds', 'Birds', 'Reptiles, Insects, etc.' and 'Parts of Animals'. The second section, 'Of Mankind', continues the previous and stands for 'Names of Mankind, and their Parts'. Moreover, humanity is treated as just one category amongst all the phenomena and is not installed at the top of the pyramid as would happen in the nineteenth century and later evolutionism. Therefore, despite his disclaimer—and related to especially the synchronic practices of the tabulating of observable phenomena 'and their parts'

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[52]   It needs to be noted that Lichtenstein got much of the information for his 'Appendix' as well as his information on isiXhosa and Xhosa history in 'Book Three' from Van der Kemp during the latter's year-long stay at Cape Town (1805-1806), and not as the 'Prefatory Note' states, from Van der Kemp's publications in the *Transactions of the London Missionary Society* (cf. Lichtenstein 1810-1812:296,478). Cf. also Lichtenstein's (1810-1812:360f,402,482,484,492,498) references to Van der Kemp, in some instances pointing out that all the information he presents comes from the missionary and always regarding him as a more reliable informant than Le Vaillant and Barrow. If this was the case, then Lichtenstein's understanding of the rationale for studying the other's language was certainly shared by Van der Kemp, showing that the latter's interest went beyond the mere developing of a medium for missionising purposes.

[53]   LMS R 1800:460.

[54]   LMS I Q 1800:462.

in natural history (cf. Foucault 1982:97)—it was the model of universality arising from both natural science and general grammar which provided the conditions of possibility for Van der Kemp's texts[55].

being and naming

Van der Kemp's texts abound with phrases like 'it is/was ...' plus an affirmation, negation or a description as well as phrases in the form, 'this is that'. Closely related are his use of expressions starting with 'I think ...' and his explanations of a 'cause' of a 'name' (including proper names). Moreover, his presentation of 'verbs' are either in the infinitive form ('to ...') or in the form 'it is ...'[56]. These all highlight the propositional form or the central importance the verb 'to be' had in representational thought. 'Being' had to do with truth and falsity, with the ability to 'judge' truth and error and compare evidence to arrive at the true relationship between idea, name and thing or fact. The importance of the verb 'to be' derived from the view that it was this verb which had language appear, making a distinction between the incoherent 'cries' in nature and the emergence of mutually understood communication (Foucault 1982:92-96). And, if primitivity was not the point of emergence, then, in

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[55] Leibniz's notion of 'universal language' (cf. footnote 91) had as complement, the developing of vernacular languages. The main rationale—and critical of scholastic philosophy which developed cumbersome 'technical terms' [in Latin]—was that the developing of a people's 'own tongue', would allow philosophical thought in 'popular terms'—'common people, and even women, have become able to judge ...' he says. Taking German as example, he says too, '[w]hoever wishes to retain or to twist Latin terms into German will not be philosophizing in German but in Latin' (Leibniz 1956:191-194). Furthermore, since this 'ethic' was to also impact on 'morals, politics and law', Leibniz's ethic can be said to underlie this focus on both the universal and the indigenous language. In his discussion of 'natural law', for example, he says: '*Justice* will therefore be the habit of loving others (or of seeking the good of others in itself and of taking delight in the good of others), as long as this can be done prudently (or as long as this is not a cause of greater pain)' (Leibniz 1956:194,214; e.i.o.). Since both the comparative study of language as well as the developing of isiXhosa are central to Van der Kemp's texts, this Leibnizian perspective—also since he was mostly influenced by the latter philosophically—I take to be the ethic which inspired him. This ethic—at least as it articulates with the vernacular—dates back to the time of Dante who purportedly was the first scholar in Europe to publish in an indigenous language.

[56] LMS I R 1800:432-468.

Lockean terms, the truth of the proposition contrasted with the merely 'verbal'.

It was the appearance of the link between name and thing, and subject and predicate which constituted knowledge and language. The importance of this perception in representational thought explains why Van der Kemp did not bother to develop a syntax related to time and tense for isiXhosa. On this level, *Specimen* works only with the adjacency of syllables and monosyllables and the comparison of sounds, in terms of which 'tense' would not be anything more than an affix added to a monosyllable or a number of syllables. *Vocabulary*, again, treats only the syntactical parts of isiXhosa and, similarly, have the isiXhosa 'phrases' mostly in propositional form. According to Foucault (1982:96) this 'being in language' would be refracted when the 'purely grammatical' was founded and the proposition became nothing but a syntactical unit. If propositional thinking deriving from the verb 'to be' was central for Van der Kemp, the flipside is that the 'name' and the 'adjective' were too. I have noted that Van der Kemp's language usage in which acts of 'naming', the 'signification' of 'names', the relationship between a 'thing' (observed) and its 'name' or what it is 'called', were central to his academic endeavours. We also saw that the isiXhosa words in his *Vocabulary* are presented as 'names' with their English equivalents, and that the table for his isiXhosa *alphabet* in *Specimen* is divided into four groups: 'figure'; 'names'; 'signification'; and 'the sound of the consonants'. Thus Van der Kemp did not only construct the tools for his act of nomination (the alphabet), but nomination was also his central concern in reporting on his own acts of naming, acts of naming by the isiXhosa, and 'names' in Dutch or English. Adjectives mainly played a role of description and observation, representing the 'thing' in all its clarity and visibility in language.

If the propositional form allowed for the act of judging truth, then the name and the thing designated in the proposition were the *judicandum* and *judicatum* respectively. As such, names—proper names, substantives, but also all other parts of speech—had a meaning and truth element attached to them (cf. Foucault 1982:96-103). Horizontally, such names could be presented in analogy to natural history from the individual to the general (individual to species ... to genus ... to class) as in *Vocabulary* or vertically from substance to quality. In the vertical table, 'substance',

> ... distinguishes things that subsist by themselves from those—modifications, features, accidents, or characteristics—that one can never meet in an independent state: deep down substances; on the surface, qualities .... At their point of intersection stands the common noun; at one extremity the proper noun, at the other the adjective (Foucault 1982:98).

Van der Kemp's main focus on the 'name' is best understood in this sense of 'substance' rather than in terms of Locke's notion. However, as with Locke, Van der

Kemp's nominations do designate things existing in nature, and nature's being in language. His identification of 'adjectives' (which include colour) and 'qualities, dignities, etc.' (which include adjectives) in *Vocabulary*, 'customs' (which he recognises as being distributed throughout all his descriptions)[57], and 'manners'—all relate to surface, observation, and adjectival description. This practice, then, Van der Kemp shared with representational thought. But with regard to primitivity, he apparently had a different opinion[58].

the primitive

Foucault (1982:100-103) describes this difference over the status of the primitive as '*the point of heresy* that splits eighteenth century grammar'. This fissure came about due to the ascription of primitive values (or meanings) to even individual letters[59]. In Van der Kemp's text *Specimen*, letters of the alphabet are mainly referred to as

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[57] LMS I R 1800:434.

[58] This level of 'opinion' is the level of which Foucault held that, at archaeological level—in this case the episteme of representation—there was no distinction between scholars propagating one discourse in conflict with another. See his explanation of the distinction between 'physiocrat' and 'antiphysiocrat' as well as 'the model of knowledge' and 'the primacy of the subject' for example (Foucault 1982:200; 1979:28).

[59] Take for example Court de Gébelin who, to his 'perishable fame', claimed that 'labial contact, the easiest to bring into play, the gentlest, the most gracious, served to designate the first beings man comes to know, those who surround him and to whom he owes everything (papa; mama)' (Foucault 1982:102). He further argued that since 'the teeth are as firm as the lips are mobile and flexible', the 'intonations' coming from the latter 'are strong, sonorous, noisy'. It is through dental contact that the ideas behind verbs were supposed to be expressed—*tonner* (thunder); *retintir* (to resound), *étonner* (to astonish); but also *tambours* (drums); *timbales* (timpani) *trompettes* (trumpets). For Rousseau, vowels indicated primitive meanings in names—A for *possession* (*avoir*); E for *existence*; I for *puissance* (power); O for *étonnement* (astonishment); and U for *humidité* and *humeur* (mood). He distinguished between the forming of the singing vowels—speaking passions—and the rough consonants—representing human needs. And, influenced by climate, the gutturals of the Northern countries indicated hunger and cold; and the Southern languages, that of vowel languages 'born of early morning encounters between shepherds when the first fires of love were bursting from the pure crystal of the springs' (Foucault 1982:102f).

'figures', his 'sound' and 'rules' of the vowels mainly used for sound comparisons and his 'monosyllables' mainly to indicate 'composition, conjugation, and affixion'. There is not much evidence of the primitive designation of vowels or syllables in his texts—at least not in the senses of Gébelin and Rousseau. Nevertheless, the ideas and practices which related syllables and nomination were shared by these scholars. *Port-Royal* called these the 'accessory' words—like syllables, and letters—as present in *Specimen*'s alphabet and Van der Kemp's departure from the 'monosyllable' in his language education. On the monosyllable in isiXhosa, he reported:

> Monosyllables, and words of more than three syllables, are but few in this language: some however occur, as *le*, that—*pë*, give—*thoú*, it is gone— *Thokolóse*, Devil—*izandóudou*, check—*izibouba*, breast: but composition, conjugation, and affixion, increase the number of syllables beyond this number, e.g. *Izilimële*, pleiades—*diazönzile*, I did it—*inkvinkwanalame*, my sin—*Baokkatina*, our father, &c.[60].

This focus on the monosyllable derived from the view that it too—like nouns themselves—had a representational function, giving access to thought. This centrality was refracted with the founding of syntax and philology.

While there is no convincing evidence of primitive designation with regard to nomination deriving from the monosyllable in Van der Kemp's texts, there are signs of shared assumptions related to primitive designation. This comes from his references to proper names, the 'cry', and the sounds in language and the depicting of the Xhosa as 'passionate'. Shortly after his first meeting with Ngqika, Van der Kemp was given names by people—names which did not have a signified shared by all, because, it is explained, only the one who gave it, knew it. Hoby, the king's sister, called him 'Haniza!' (which she had introduced, though 'the king and the most part of the people called me Tink'hanna')[61]. In his entry for October 5, 1799, Van der Kemp also mentions that he observed that

> many of the people called my name T'Chefoe; and asking for the reason, they told me that I had already several names; that it was the custom among them, when they received some benefit of a friend, which excited their love and gratitude, to give him a *new* name, by which they expressed their feelings; that they knew not what T'Chefoe signified; and that he who

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[60] LMS I S 1800:446.

[61] LMS I SA 1799:396.

invented this new name only knew what he meant to express by it[62].

Van der Kemp also acquired other names. When he camped at the kraal of Khanja, son of Langa, he reports that, after prayer, Khanja 'repeated my four names Tink'hanna, Goboossi, Tabeka, Keleze! as sign of approbation, though he understood not a word of it'[63].

On June 22, 1799 Van der Kemp reported:

> We had a restless night, as the wolves, kwaggas, and other animals, disturbed our sleep, and more so, the perpetual barking of our dogs, mingled with the cries of our people[64].

The journal reports resound with the 'cry':

> Last night the wolves made such an uncommon noise as we had never heard before; some of them imitating the shrieks of women crying for assistance; others the cries of children, others the laughing of men. I, supposing that the cries proceeded from some [Xhosa] girls of Apollonia's kraal, who, being insulted by Valentine, called for help, ran to assist them; but their breaking out into the most horrid howlings (somewhat analogous to the notes which cats make in their nightly pursuits), convinced me of my mistake[65].

In addition to the proper name without signified and the cry, we also notice the importance of 'sound' in Van der Kemp's text *Specimen*. He makes a distinction between the sounds of the consonants and vowels, identifies one sound for each of the nineteen different consonants, develops two rules for the five vowels and their conjunctions and gives another eight rules comparatively explaining the sounds of the vowels and monosyllables. The following two references may serve as examples of Van der Kemp depicting the Xhosa and Khoi as 'passionate'.

It appears that Hoby attempted on a few occasions to come and sleep with Van der Kemp, but that he did not accept her[66]. More to the point, he reports that the evening after Ngqika married his third wife (October 3 1800), a similar incident took

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[62] LMS I SA 1799:400.
[63] LMS I TVDK 1800:418.
[64] LMS I JC 1799:375.
[65] LMS I SA 1799:403.
[66] LMS I SA 1800:396.

place. One of Ngqika's captains,

> ... came in with two girls, begging us to accept them, and to come with them and make merry with the king, and the rest of the company. This we [Van der Kemp and Edmond] declined[67].

With regard to Read's marriage to a Khoi woman, Van der Kemp reports on the Khoi's 'inconstancy' in their 'matrimonial connections', which, he says, ·subjects us to great irregularities'. This is further qualified:

> [W]e exhort, as much as possible, those who are still heathen, to abide with their wives, and not to leave or change them, as their custom is; and those who believe in Christ, we oblige with consent of the unbelieving moiety, publicly to bind themselves to each other in the inviolable ties of matrimony[68].

These four references indicate the role primitive designation played in knowledge (cf. Foucault 1982:104-110). The references to Van der Kemp's 'names' and the 'cries' of people and animals are examples of the assumption that these were not 'language' or 'signs' as yet. They are indications of the common animality[69] of all people prior to the emergence of a socially shared convention which established common assumptions with regard to meaning[70]. It is in this context that Rousseau asked the question as to what came first—the conventions on which signs depend or the community which make these conventions?

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[67] LMS I SA 1800:398.

[68] LMS I AR 1803:166.

[69] Cf. especially Leibniz's (1956:199ff) discussion of the proposition, 'every man is an animal'. In the argument, he criticises Nizolius' inductive procedure—which leads him to the proposition, 'every animal is a man'—but affirms the first.

[70]   The complement of this view is that of the study of 'roots'. Apart from one comparison with regard to the similarity of one 'substantive' in Khoi and isiXhosa, there is no evidence that Van der Kemp attempted to study 'roots'. It appears as if he was more concerned with primary designation and convention and the adding of 'syllables' than root studies (cf. LMS I VC 1798/1799:370). Even so, Van der Kemp's identification of more than three thousand monosyllables in Khoi may be seen as equivalent to such root studies. Cf. also Foucault (1982:284) with regard to the distinction between the syllabic—e.g. Chinese—and root languages—e.g. Sanskrit.

Rousseau's point of departure was to show that many scholars make a mistake when putting forth arguments based on ideas derived from 'a state of society' and not 'a pure state of nature'. If the latter is the focus, he argued that there was only one possibility for the origin of languages—i.e. from 'the simple cry of nature' (Rousseau 1973:60)[71]. Van der Kemp's extensive development of 'sounds'— especially with regard to the vowels, dental and palatal clicks and diphtongs—and his references to possible intercourse refer to the assumption that the Xhosa and Khoi were seen as passionate. This thematic motif can be traced to Rousseau's distinction between the European languages and the languages of the South and East. The latter, he averred, were more primitive, more given to singing and passion whereas the former were more rational, rough and enslaved due to the civil forms of government and life. In his analysis, however, it was the Southern languages which were closer to nature[72].

the writing of sound

In *Specimen* Van der Kemp developed an alphabet for isiXhosa. Moreover, he distinguishes between the 'writing', 'sound' and 'pronunciation' of letters and monosyllables as well as developed a number of pronunciation and orthographic rules for especially the vowels. He introduced his 'Alphabet' by saying that '[isiXhosa], which is totally different from that of the [Khoi language], may be

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[71]   Rousseau (1973:60f) explains: 'But as this was excited only by a sort of instinct on urgent occasions, to implore assistance in case of danger, or relief in case of suffering, it could be of little use in the ordinary course of life, in which more moderate feelings prevail. When the ideas of men began to expand and multiply, and closer communication took place among them, they strove to invent more numerous signs and a more copious language. They multiplied the inflexions of the voice and added gestures, which are in their own nature more expressive, and depend less for their meaning on a prior determination. Visible and moveable objects were therefore expressed by gestures, and audible ones, by imitative sounds .... [with the latter replacing the former, when] men at length bethought themselves of substituting for them the articulate sounds of the voice, which, without bearing the same relation to any particular ideas, are better calculated to express them all, as conventional signs. Such an institution could be made by common consent, and must have been effected in a manner not very easy for men whose gross organs had not been accustomed to any such exercise'. Cf. also Rousseau ([1781]1998:11-17).

[72]   Rather than following Rousseau's argument from primitivity, it appears that Van der Kemp followed Leibniz's (1896:285ff) on language derived from community.

expressed in Writing by making use of the following Alphabets'. He also refers to the 'writing' of the palatal and dental 'clacks' as well as the 'lisping sound which sometimes affects the pronunciation of the *l* and *z*'. For this 'writing of sound', he also developed the following orthography[73].

(ˊ) Shews that the syllable above which it is placed, is to be pronounced with an accent.

(ˆ) Indicates that the consonant above which it is written is to be pronounc-ed with a certain circumvolution of the tongue, which only can be learned from the living voice; it is almost confined to the l, and z, as in Kǐ[3] oˉgo, the head, Loaenzˉeˊ, the sea.

(˜) Is the mark of a nearly silent letter, which is to be pronounced so short, as scarcely to be heard at all, as in Umfaˉzi, a woman.

(ˊ) Following a consonant, in the middle of a word, shows that consonant is to be pronounced by itself, as if it were animated by a moveable scheva.

(¹) Placed at the top of a letter indicates the labial clack of the tongue, e.g. khaka, cheese or thick milk.

(²) Denotes the dental clack, e.g. inn²ani, a little.

(³) Signifies the palatal clack, e.g. ing³oúla, the great Fish-river[74].

Following from the 'writing of sound' such writing provides the possibilities for correct pronunciation, which, again, is augmented by 'rules' for pronouncing especially the vowels, for example:

RULE 1.
All these vowels have their short sounds whenever a consonant follows immediately after them in the same syllable; in all other cases they are to be pronounced long.

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[73] Compare 'Jones' alphabet'; 'Müller's alphabet', the 'Missionary Alphabet' and the 'Church Missionary Alphabet' in Müller (1987:158f). So far, I have not been able to trace the institutional distinctions between the latter two alphabets, nor whether Van der Kemp's orthography was taken up or recognised by any institution. There is also no correspondence between these phonetic alphabets and Van der Kemp's semiotic and representationlly configured one. See further Hastings (1994:280) on the explosion of indigenous language studies in missionary circles in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Along with Van der Kemp's *Specimen* and *Vocabulary* (1800) Henry Brunton's *Grammar and Vocabulary of the Susoo Language* published in 1802, must count as firsts.

[74] LMS I S 1800:444f.

The ê sounds always like the English a in make, lady, &c. or ay, say.
The ë sounds always like the English a in spare, or the first e in where, there.
The ô sounds always like the English o in bone, stone, etc.
The ö sounds always like the English o in cloth, both, etc.
The sound of the English y and i, as in tide, is wanting in [isiXhosa][75].

What then is the significance of Van der Kemp's development of the isiXhosa alphabet?[76]

According to Condillac it is the alphabet which introduces people to 'reason'. Foucault (1982:112) summarises the argument as follows:

> With alphabetic writing, in fact, the history of men is entirely changed. They transcribe in space, not their ideas but sounds, and from those sounds they extract the common elements in order to form a small number of unique signs whose combination will enable them to form all possible syllables and words. Whereas symbolic writing, in attempting to spatialize representations themselves, obeys the confused law of similitudes, and causes language to slip out of the forms of reflective thought, alphabetical writing, by abandoning the attempt to draw the representation, transposes into its analysis of sounds the rules that are valid for reason itself. So that it does not matter that letters represent ideas, since they can be combined together in the same way as ideas, and ideas can be linked together and disjoined just like the letters of the alphabet.

Specimen fits this description. If the rationale for Van der Kemp's alphabet and the writing of sound—as well as his spelling table of more than three thousand monosyllables for the Khoi—were to introduce the Xhosa and Khoi to rational and reflective thought, the same is true for his elaborate 'rules' for the vowels and the monosyllables. If this is so, then the question arises as to the opposite of this 'reason' which he sought to inculcate in not only the Khoi and Xhosa but also all other

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[75] LMS I S 1800:444.
[76] Van der Kemp's alphabet is not a physiological alphabet nor a phonetic one (cf. Müller 1987:150-152 on what letters are made of, how they are made, and where they are made—physiology). Therefore, if one considers his sound orthography with its seven signs indicating different pronunciation formations and 'clacks', it has to be positioned more with assumptions similar to Rousseau's about the 'music' of speech (cf. Derrida 1982:192ff) than the physiology of speech or phonetics proper.

'illiterate' Dutch and English people beyond and on the frontier[77].

According to Foucault (1982:111), 'superstition' and 'credulity' shadow reason, and are integral to the dominant view of how writing developed among graphically-orientated peoples. There are three phases: 1) when a graphic people used writing to represent not the thing but one of its elements (synecdoche—e.g. a bow represents battle); 2) when a thing was related to the (habitual) circumstances or environment in which that thing was found in nature (metonymy—e.g. the all-seeing eye which resembles God); 3) when one thing resembled another in at least one of its (climactic) traits (catachresis—e.g. the crocodile's eyes resembling the rising sun). These explanations found this process and kind of writing wanting because of the fact that it eventually led to 'superstition'. Such people(s) forgot the origins from which writing emerged and then proceeded to transform original conventionalised language usage into first poetry, then tradition, and in time, superstition. Foucault (1982:111) says about these three figures that

> ... they became endowed, little by little, with poetic powers; their primary nominations become the starting points for long metaphors; these metaphors become progressively more complicated, and are soon so far from their points of origin that it is difficult to recall them. This is how superstitions arise whereby people believe that the sun is a crocodile, or that God is a great eye keeping watch on the world; it is also how esoteric forms of knowledge arise among those (the priests) who pass on the metaphors to their successors from generation to generation; and it is how allegorical discourse (so frequent in the most ancient literatures) comes into being, as well as the illusion that knowledge consists in understanding resemblances.

The problematic which arises here is that superstition, credulity and resemblance alienated from originary writing, and brought empirical reflection and reason to a

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[77] Apart from Van der Kemp's identification of nineteen 'sounds of the consonants', he also developed two *rules* distinguishing between 'long' and 'short' sounds of the vowels and eight additional rules for the vowels and monosyllables. This idea of a rule governed language—which indicates rational language and therefore rational thought—is also the context for Di Capelli's (1803:135) assertion that isiXhosa does indeed have 'rules', and that, even though it is quite 'arbitrary', the fact that it does display these rules, makes it a language (and a nation) already far 'developed' in 'civilization'. Moreover, Van der Kemp's elaborate focus on the identification of rules for vowels—which were regarded as the most suspect to change—confirms this perspective (cf. also Lichtenstein 1810-1812:173ff).

halt. This is compounded with the appearance of graphic writing because, as it is handed down from one generation to the next, the original representative significance of script was clouded by subsequent imagistic developments and overlays. Even worse, the learned (the priests and healers themselves) could only retain a 'superstitious respect' for the tradition and uncritically hand it on. In Classical scholarship, this was for many the distinguishing mark between 'East' and 'West', and also the context in which the politics of the figurative was seen to have faltered—in its exclusion or efacing of originary history.

Van der Kemp's arbitrarily developed alphabetic writing, his elaborate rules, and his *Vocabulary*—as representative of representational thinking—can be seen as attempting to counter such tendencies. These texts intended to pre-empt and do away with 'superstition' and 'credulity'. This credulity/ rational binary also accounts for Van der Kemp's introduction of his text (including the description of the 'customs' of the Xhosa as well as *Specimen* and *Vocabulary*) with an assessment of the 'Religion' of the Xhosa. This is the famous (or notorious) text in which he advances an argument concerning the fact that the Xhosa were both 'without religion' and 'credulous' and that 'credulity and unbelief go hand in hand, as well in [the eastern Cape] and in Europe'. Here he discusses the famous examples of 'witchcraft'; 'medical operations [which] are also for the greatest part magical'; the 'saluting' of the anchor near the Keiskamma; the 'man dressed in green' who appears during great thunder-storms; and the throwing of stones on graves[78]. This introduction on religion heads the whole text and frames his research.

To account for the song-orientated peoples, it was believed that alphabetic writing liberated people from superstition and those traditions which have forgotten the origins of words, their own primitive pictographic 'writing', and caused them to fall back into superstition. With the alphabetisisation of sounds, the history of people was changed from superstition to history, opening the way for a move from a superstitious tradition within one particular language to the universal rational domain where the work for the comprehensive encyclopaedia, the absolute table of all knowledge, and universal history was in the process of being conducted—and in which travellers, missionaries, and governance officials in the colonies participated. These perspectives shaped Van der Kemp's pedagogical insistence on the teaching of reading and writing too. Reading as well as writing were the first steps towards advancing the rationality of people or forming them into rational human beings—as the philosophers of the time understood reason as the ultimate human characteristic people share with God, or in neo-platonist terms, that God communicated to humanity. In this equation, to therefore introduce people to reading and writing, was

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[78]   LMS I R 1800:432-434.

divinely sanctioned—for both philosopher and missionary. Reason had a divine origin[79].

reading and writing

Van der Kemp's language teaching activities did not only relate to the proposition, nomination, primitive designation and writing. Prior to his meeting with Read, we learn that he taught 'reading and writing' in both isiXhosa and Dutch (December 17, 1799) at the place he shared with Buys across the Keiskamma[80]. For June 24, 1801, after meeting up with Read, he further reports that he and Read started to 'keep ... a reading and writing school for the instruction of the [Khoi]' (June 2, 1801) at Graaff Reinet[81]. In their 'Annual Report' for 1804, Van der Kemp and Read write:

> As there are several of the baptised, besides others among our people who understand no other language than [Khoi], we have drawn up and printed in that language, the outlines of the Christian religion in the form of a catechism, under the title of *Tzitzika Thuickwedi miko Khwekhwenama* (Principles of the words of God for the [Khoi])[82].

If they did this, then, obviously, they must have developed a system similar to that for isiXhosa—which included the 'writing of sound'—in Khoi. Such a 'grammar

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[79]   In analogy to this perspective, this is also the context of Van der Kemp's change from 'a scientific system of divinity' to 'an historical system of the ways of God with mankind, derived from Scripture'; the history of the passion account in the gospels; and his request for '[s]ome books of instructive histories' and a teacher who 'could teach reading and writing and to give instruction in the history of the Bible' (LMS I TVDK 1800:412; LMS I TVDK 1800:420; LMS II EL 1803:93). His general focus on history is further borne out by his attempt to trace the history of the Xhosa rulers (LMS I H 1800:464-467)—a common practice among the 'travellers'. Such requests indicate that Van der Kemp felt himself at a loss in his eastern Cape context. His 'scientific' approach did not have the optimistic results he thought it would have. But, he also did not have the 'historical' background to address a need he perceived. In many ways, this is a sensibility which has not been fulfilled—i.e. despite, as Foucault would say, the introduction of the history of finitude into the sciences.

[80]   LMS I SA 1799:410.

[81]   LMS I TVDK 1801:480; cf. also LMS II EL2 1804:152.

[82]   LMS II AR 1804:239.

book' would have been mastered first before the Khoi could have started to read the catechism[83]. In this regard, the 'little spelling book of 3138 monosyllables' Van der Kemp and Read 'printed' at Botha's Place in 1802 must have been for this purpose. This issue of reading and writing, however, would become a point of discontent between him and the frontier farmers, and later Janssens.

One of the complaints of the three hundred farmers who congregated and threatened to attack Graaff Reinet in June 1801, was that the missionaries were instructing the Khoi in reading, writing and religion, thereby elevating them to 'an equal footing with the Christians' (June 30, 1801)[84]. In his letter of April 6, 1803 to the Dutch Missionary Society, Van der Kemp also requested a printing press—after his was presumably lost or broken—and a teacher who 'could teach reading and writing and to give instruction in the history of the Bible' from Holland[85]. And in his letter of April 23, 1803, he reports on Governor Janssens' prohibition on the missionaries' education activities; that they would not be allowed to teach 'reading and writing, chiefly the latter'[86]. It is significant that he not only assumed that such prohibition had come about due to the request of the colonists (an 'illnatured people') —a fact borne out by other documents—but that it was explicitly to prevent the Khoi from being raised to 'an equal footing with the Christians'. It also appears that part of his face-to-face argument with Janssens about the prohibition of the teaching of writing must have included his argument that denying the Khoi access to writing would be 'unworthy of the rights of a free nation'[87]. Contrasted with Janssens' argument that the teaching of writing was 'not absolutely necessary in the commencement of [the Khoi's] cultivation'[88], it is evident that Van der Kemp's understanding had deeper roots within eighteenth-century philosophy and a far more 'scientific' representational rationale than the Governor's attempt to keep the Khoi in a state of illiteracy, making them fit for nothing but farm labour.

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[83]   This is important for the significance of Van der Kemp as intellectual, and in distinction to Le Vaillant (1791-1798), Barrow (1801-1804:173f), Alberti (1807:44-49), Di Capelli (1803:135-139) and Lichtenstein (1810-1812:478-500) who jotted down Khoikhoi and isiXhosa words and phrases mainly for the benefit of Europeans —travelers and scientists. Van der Kemp developed his alphabet for the benefit of the Khoi and isiXhosa themselves—i.e. in addition to doing so for the benefit of future missionaries.

[84]   LMS I TVDK 1801:482.

[85]   LMS II EL2 1803:94.

[86]   LMS II EL2 1803:94.

[87]   LMS II EL2 1803:94.

[88]   LMS II PJ 1805:236.

The background of the argument concerning Van der Kemp's alphabet and the writing of sound, and his commitment to teach all people writing, must be understood in the representational context of 'progress', 'civilisation or 'enlightenment'. Progress or 'civilization' was to start not with the transcription of traditional ideas into language—because they would be contaminated by 'superstition' as they had become dislodged from their primal representational origins—but with sounds. And this point showed not only the significance of *Specimen*'s focus on sounds, vowels and their representation in writing, but also Van der Kemp's critique of 'superstition'—both in South Africa and Europe—with which he introduced the sequence of texts in *Religion, Customs, Population, Government, Language, History, and Natural Productions of Caffraria*[89]. On Foucault's reconstruction of the argument of the time, the initial break with superstition came about only when people transcribed sounds into space. From these sounds, they then extracted common elements which formed a unique number of signs. From variable combinations of these signs, people then formed a variety of possible syllables and words. These written syllables and words in historical context, then, allowed for reflection on them. Most crucially, this reflection was seen to be of the form of the transposing of rules valid to reason, into these sounds. This effected the break with superstition, resemblance and, in a (neo-)platonic or even Lockean sense, with 'credulity'; a convincing explanation for the rationale behind the Van der Kemp texts.

What Van der Kemp then intended, was to engineer a break from 'superstition', with his texts on language[90] as well as his teaching. This break meant not only the establishing of a new rational beginning for isiXhosa—and therefore for the people—but also a beginning which would enable them to abandon their 'superstitious traditions' and attach themselves to their rational language, and also to 'rational religion' (in this context, Christianity). This assumption also underlies Van der Kemp's report that

[a] Mahometan Hindoo, called Damin, came to me, desiring to be instructed in reading and writing. I asked him whether he liked to be instructed in

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[89] LMS I R 1800:432ff.

[90] Cf. Di Capelli's (1803:135) suggestion on the relationship between religion and how the level of religious development can be read off from a language: 'Het zoude veelicht belangryk genoeg zyn uit deze vocabulaire licht te scheppen nopens de godsdienstige vorderingen en stelzels dezer natie, dan dit zoude my te wydluftig zyn' ('It would be too demanding to enlighten someone on the religious development and systems of this nation from this vocabulary ...— a.t.).

[isiXhosa] or ... Dutch. He answered, that his only object was to know God and his word, and that he, therefore, wished to be instructed in that language which I should think most conducive to this end. I then took him into the Dutch class[91].

Such strategies formed part of the rationale behind the universal encyclopaedia. This is captured in Foucault's (1982:112) explanation—derived from Condillac and Smith—that

... it does not matter that letters do not represent ideas, since they can be combined together in the same way as ideas, and ideas can be linked together and disjoined just like the letters of the alphabet. The disruption of the exact parallelism between representation and graphic signs makes it possible to bring language, even written language, as a totality, into the general domain of analysis, thus allowing the progress of writing and that of thought to provide each other with mutual support. The same graphic signs can break down all new words, and hand on each new discovery, as soon as it is made, without fear of its being forgotten; the same alphabet can be used to transcribe different languages, and thus to convey the ideas of one people to another[92].

This process which brings about the spatialisation of language—especially as it is engineered—constituted the conditions of possibility for 'progress' because it allowed analysis and reflection, i.e. fabrication of rules in space. Even so, this historicisation of 'progress' was understood by some not as 'development' in time

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[91] LMS TVDK 1800:412. On how languages differ with regard to how people think, cf. Condillac in Harris and Taylor (1989:122-137; also Aarsleff 1974:93-156).

[92] Cf. Di Capelli (1803:135) on how meaning in a language is communicated by its words—allowing for the view that language is the prime medium through which significant in another culture can be accessed: 'Ik heb dus een veel nauwkeuriger en meer uytgebreyde verzameling van woorden kunnen maken ... omdat men er woorden voor beteekenissen in zal vinden, die vry zonderling zyn, uythoofde de zelfe ten bydrage kunnen strekken tot dat de trap van vernuft en eenigsints beschaafde denkbeelden dezer Natie. Is het byvoorbeeld niet bewys van opgeklaarde geest ...' (I could have made a more copious and elaborate collection of words ... because you will find here meanings for words which are quite unique and which can contribute towards assessing the level of skill and civilised imagination of this nation. For example, is it not a confirmation of an enlightened spirit ...— a.t.).

but as the recovery of primal origins—not merely of each individual people but ultimately of the human race[93] (following Jacob Boehme, the 'Adamic Language' or *'Natursprache'* in Leibniz 1956:340)[94]. By others, including Van der Kemp, 'progress' was understood in the sense of 'development', 'civilization', and 'enlightenment' and that the mastery of reading and writing formed a crucial nexus in this process.

conclusion
No intellectual functions in a vacuum, and we are always conditioned by an episteme. Every epoch has its 'positive unconscious' and 'historical a priori' of knowledge. For Van der Kemp, the situation was not different. His rationalist philosophical education and writings ensured that he remained an intellectual determined by representational thought even after his religious conversion. He saw his researches in South Africa as contributions to general grammar but also to early comparative language studies. In addition to his various journal reports on language,

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[93] Cf. Derrida's (1982:291-295) study of Rousseau's parallel distinctions between the three systems of writing, forms of social organisation, and types of passion as well as his critical articulation of the alphabet with civil society and negative views on writing—especially Leibniz's idea of the universal mathematical language—in *Emile*.
[94] An even clearer example comes from Leibniz (1956:340) when, in 1679, he referred to the notions of 'the Adamic language' or 'Natursprache', saying that it would be 'some kind of language or universal characteristic by which all concepts and things can be put into beautiful *order*, and with whose help different nations might communicate their thoughts and each read in his own language what another has written in his ...' (e.a.). This 'thought' was also the basis of his *Dissertation on the Art of Combinations* (1666) which he said derived from the thought to develop 'a kind of alphabet of human thoughts ... and that everything can be discovered and judged by a comparison of the letters of this alphabet and an analysis of the words made from them' (Leibniz 1956:342). This interest in the variety of languages which may contribute towards the one universal language, remained one of his life-long interests. More than thirty years later, Leibniz (1956:1063) wrote in a letter of 1714 that he would like 'to create a kind of universal symbolistic [*spécieuse générale*] in which all truths of reason would be reduced to a kind of calculus. At the same time this could be a kind of universal language or writing, though infinitely different from all such languages which have thus far been proposed, for the characters and the words themselves would give direction to reason ...'.

his texts *Specimen* and *Vocabulary* are prime examples of both comparative grammar and comparative language studies. However, his sound comparisons of isiXhosa with Dutch, French, English, Greek, Hebrew and Chinese, and the fact that he developed his alphabet for isiXhosa and a spelling book with more than three thousand monosyllables for Khoi, clearly show that his attention to language was not merely determined by the episteme of his time. He challenged orthodoxies and authorities and followed his own unique path.

Concerning Van der Kemp's attention to sound, the rules he developed for the vowels, the monosyllable and the writing of sound, two concluding inferences can be made.

Firstly, these rules and comparisons (of sound and monosyllables) were not merely for the benefit of future missionaries who intended to study isiXhosa. It was part and parcel of a rational and rationalising agenda. Similar to the view that people become more 'civilised' when they attend to their 'ideas', that they acquire the habit of consciously 'reflecting' on their ideas, and develop skills to communicate their ideas (through speech as well as writing), the rules and sound comparisons showed isiXhosa to belong to the rational languages of the world. As indicated, these views are also present in the writings of travellers who were in contact with him in South Africa.

Secondly, the rationale for Van der Kemp introducing his text *Religion—An Account of the Religion, Customs, Population, Government, Language, History, and National Productions of Caffraria* with a section on the question whether a 'nation' can be both 'superstitious' or 'credulous' and 'without religion' (in Africa and in Europe), is that this is the context in which Van der Kemp's rational approach had to affect change—'progress' and 'civilization'. *Specimen* and *Vocabulary* and especially his attention to sound, the rules he developed for the vowels, the monosyllable and the writing of sound—and that he taught all these to Khoi, Xhosa, Dutch and English in their different languages—had an equally rational, 'civilising' aim.

Despite the fact that there is a host of evidence that we can position Van der Kemp within the eighteenth century episteme, on the level of opinion, it appears that, to some degree, he did not share all the assumptions related to primitive designation. One side of the dividing line of this 'point of heresy' shared key assumptions with Rousseau; that even each syllable of a language carries a primitive significance, and that writing is a degradation of primeval presence. Independent of whether Janssens as Batavian Governor and Commander in Chief shared Rousseauan presuppositions or not, and irrespective of whether it was also this fissure which separated his views (for not allowing the teaching of writing) from Van der Kemp's, the latter's opinion appears to be in direct opposition to Rousseau.

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And, even though this perception shared assumptions with Rousseau concerning primitive designation, it differed fundamentally in being allied to an optimistic belief in the rational education of people, especially through the study of language and the teaching of writing.

Yet I would caution against having Van der Kemp stand as a beacon of non-alliance, confrontational truth, irrepressible justice and an unqualified identification with and facilitation of the aspirations of peoples of African descent. His function and legacy are more ambivalent—as, of course, is ours. At a level different from Foucault's epistemic archive, at the level of opinion, the question remains open as to the nature, quality, and formative (if not epistemic) effects of our own more modest intellectual endeavour. In his order of similitude, Van der Kemp, it appears, had a clear notion of his.

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Abbreviations of the Writings of J.T. van der Kemp

Texts from the *Transactions of the London Missionary Society. Volume I.*
London: London Missionary Society.

B—'Birds'—in *Religion*

CC—*The Conversion and Call of Dr. Vanderkemp to the Missionary Work*

EJBP—*Extracts from the Journals of Dr. Vanderkemp and Mr. Read, after their Settlement at Bota's Place*

FA—*First Attempt to Enter Caffraria*

H—'History'—in *Religion*

Ins—'Insects, &c.'—in *Religion*

JC—*Journey to Caffraland*

L1—*Letters of Van der Kemp* in 1800.

PJ—*Proclamation of 1905 by Governor John William Janssens*

Q—'Quadrupeds'—in *Religion*

Religion—*An Account of the Religion, Customs, Population, Government, Language, History, and National Productions of Caffraria. By Dr. Vanderkemp.*

R—'Religion'—in *Religion*

S or *Specimen*—*Specimen of the Caffra Language*—in *Religion*

SA—*Second Attempt to Enter Caffraria in the year 1800*

TVDK 1800—*Transactions of Dr. Vanderkemp, in the year 1800*

TVDK 1801—*Transactions of Dr. Vanderkemp, in the year 1801*

VC—*Voyage to the Cape*

Ve—'Vegetables' in *Religion*

Vo or *Vocabulary*—*Vocabulary of the Caffra Language*—in *Religion*

Texts from the *Transactions of the London Missionary Society. Volume II.*
London: London Missionary Society.

AR 1803—*Annual Report of the Missionaries at Bethelsdorp, South Africa, for the year 1803, From the Missionaries Vanderkemp and Read.*

AR 1804—*Annual Report of the Missionary Establishment Bethelsdorp, Near Algoa Bay, South Africa. For the year 1804.*

EL2—*Extracts from Letters of Van der Kemp from Transactions II.*