

Recently Reviewed South African Life Writing Publications

IV

Reviews Editor: Judith Little Coullie

List of Publications Consulted

All publications, save those South African, are, unless otherwise indicated, with **

Most prices are quoted in South African Rands.

Reviews which were originally published in Afrikaans are marked with * and have been translated into English by Judith Little Coullie.

Tijdschrift Boek-Publikasie Noord

African Review of Books

Cape Times

Die Burger

Four Daily

Il Nido (Il Nido) (Ed. del nido nido)

The Herald

Mail & Guardian

Rechtspraak

*Quarterly Bulletin of the National
Library of South Africa*

Requiem

Sunday Dispatch

Sonderland

The Star

The Sunday Independent

The Witness

The Times

Wagenaar's Poet

Abrahamson, A.B.

The African Clan Wars. Paul Clingman. Johannesburg: Penguín, 2004. 240pp.
R 40

This book traces the wonderful and difficult life of the Haham, the Abrahamsen, from his boyhood in Bulawayo as the son of Polish Jews who emigrated to Africa at the beginning of the 19th century, to escape the pogroms and discrimination against Jews, to his eventual settlement in South Africa.

His political career, which began in the age of 51 in 1903, saw him rise to become a minister in the government of Edgar Whitehead in what was then Southern Rhodesia. He was elected and paragoned throughout his life.

Referring to the breaking of the space barrier as a great advance for mankind, Abrahamson told the H.Q. in Geneva in 1962: "The moon can wait, but social justice cannot tarry."

His story, rich in anecdote, political intrigue and travel, is also a fascinating historical record of the erosion of colonial rule and the emergence of the African nationalism which led to independent Zimbabwe.

Unnamed reviewer. *Sowetan*. June 30 2004: 20.

Accone, Darryl

All Under Heaven: The Story of a Chinese Family in South Africa. Darryl Accone. Cape Town: David Philip/New Africa Books, 2004. 283 pp. R149.95.

All Under Heaven is the poetic name that the Chinese nation used to describe itself. It is thus a fitting title for a book that lovingly chronicles three generations of an extended Chinese family. Accone, one of the children of the last generation, has used the symbols of the four elements to divide his book into readable chunks: Sky describes the old country; Sea takes us through the transient periods; Earth finds the family settling; and Fire sees them through the refining horror of the worst of South Africa's apartheid years. The resilience of the family is at once humbling and uplifting. We are reminded that prejudice is a universal failing—Accone describes Chinese anti-Eurasian sentiment as unflinchingly as the larger horror of institutionalised racism. This book is fascinating.

Kelly Vos. *Saturday Dispatch*. July 3 2004: 4.

Baker, Florence

The Stolen Woman: Florence Baker's Extraordinary Life from the Harem to the Heart of Africa. Pat Shipman. London: Random House, 2004. 428pp. R150.

The life of Florence Baker would put lead in the pencil of any biographer. Orphaned at four, she was raised in an Ottoman harem. At the age of fourteen, she was taken to auction to be sold as a white slave. But fate had

other place for him. Attending the auction was the maid-servant, Fanny Bishop, and her companion, "young Baker, a handsome, sturdy, English Victorian widower. Despite the difference in age, Sam Baker and Florence fell in love and he smuggled her out of the Ottoman territory in his carriage. Together, they travelled in search of the source of the White Nile, which Sam Baker named Lake Albert N'yanza. Although Florence was shunned in England as a loose woman (and Queen Victoria refused to receive her at court), Sam was knighted for their expedition.

"All biography is ultimately fiction," wrote Ian Chapman. "I consider it my job to portray the deeper truth of [Florence Baker's] character and to reveal unexploited perspectives . . . that can be conveyed by most books." In this Chapman succeeds admirably, occasional Americanisms notwithstanding.

Caroline Henry, *The Sunday Independent*, July 4 2004: 16.

Barnard, Christian

Celebrity Surgeon: Christian Barnard—A Life. Chris Logan. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2004. 140pp. R169.95.

Perhaps the most extraordinary aspect of the world's first heart transplant was the 2.5-hour argument the three South African surgeons had as to how much of himself would need to be removed to remove the donor's heart. The donor's heart was described "beating dead" but after the last organ taken all the weightier his heart continued beating for at least another twelve minutes. The doctor who insisted that they wait until the F&O was not eventually accepted.

The post-operation argument is one of many revolutions and insights in an objective and highly readable biography of the world's first heart transplant surgeon. Chris Barnard was complex and contradictory, and this was as apparent in his treatment of people as in his politics. In the late 1960s and early 1970s he was accused of apartheid, comparing Afrikaner Nationalists to Marx, but then later defended South Africa's policies and even published a propaganda book which described "apartheid as good" as national suicide. Later still, he supported the opposition Democratic Party.

John Scott, *Flight Times*, November 16 2003: 16.

Unlikely Forgiveness is a fascinating read. Toppas interviewed more than 100 people to gain the insight he did, including Bernard's first wife, Karen Solomon, and his daughter Doreen. The book is a serious look at an astonishing event—the world's first heart transplant—that happened in Cape Town largely because of one man's determination. The book is no hagiography, and Bernard is portrayed as a man, with all.

Vivian Heller, *Cape Argus*, November 14 2003, 12.

Bernard, Doreen

For, From and Life with Father. Doreen Bernard. Cape Town: Pindar Books, 2004. 343pp. R150.

This is the first book of champion water skier and daughter of pioneering heart surgeon, Chris Bernard, simultaneously published in English and in Afrikaans. In this warm and funny book, Doreen tells it like it is – about life in the Bernard family as they coped with the pressures and losses that befall them, about the painful intrusions into privacy that were the flip-side of fame, about her relationship and true friendship and the astonishing power of family. An unflinching and courageously forthright storyteller with a wicked wit, Doreen has woven a moving account of her sometimes painful but ultimately uplifting parental journey. It is unapologetic and honest with touch on all.

Unrated reviewer, *Franses Nieuw, Journal of Oranje*, 31 2003, 1.

For, From and Life with Father is not well written; the book is surely in need of a good editor. But it provides interesting details about one of South Africa's most famous men, and that of his extended family, and in the more cynical among us, is a reminder of the redemptive qualities of love, loyalty and devotion.

Vivian Heller, *Cape Argus*, November 14 2003, 12

This is one of the most shamelessly honest books I have ever read. And it is not only the sheer honesty about her life that Doreen shares with her readers.

it is also less brutal, no-nonsense style. Herdon's story is no more about the confusion of being famous heart surgeon Chris Bernard's daughter, as it is about being in the spotlight as a champion water-skiier, and then a fat girl. The sense of being a daughter doing the right thing, in the right way to unite a family and bury a man who loved many, was loved by many and disliked by many, is conveyed eloquently in *First, Father and Last with Father*. In this book she pays tribute to her father and shares her vision of what it is to be human, and a very good and joyful vision it is.

Jonathan Crocker, Cape Times, December 2 2003: 7.

Herdon's book is utterly charming and delightful, although, at times, appallingly written. Some sentences are absolute disasters, non-acquaintances abound, she leaves no idea of a target cover to which and against which she writes quite regularly. Thankfully, the publishers saw fit to leave it that way. The end result is a book that you hear, rather than read. This biography is great (but a book doesn't need to be immediately written to be an unforgettable read).

Katy Church *The Star* (Cape Town) 11 May 04: 8

Cassidy, Michael

African Herald: Awele Owele, London: Mowbray Books, 2002. 302pp. R170.00

Michael Cassidy was born in Johannesburg in 1936. Forty-two years ago, he started *African Herald* with the aim of spreading the Christian gospel to all corners of Africa. Biographer, Awele Owele, repays the reader from the very beginning of this inspiring biography of a dedicated Christian who has helped to win millions over to Christ and also helped to lead many of the starving masses. At the conclusion of the book Michael states that it continues to be an overwhelming privilege in his life to be in the work of evangelism, adding: "If God has called you to preach, do not stop to be a king."

Cyrus Smith, Pretoria News, July 19 2004: 8

Diooy, William

Book Review. William Diooy. Cape Town: Kwana Books, 2004. 287 pp. R120.

Very occasionally, a book comes along that is so stunningly resonant in concept, and so compelling a read, that it leaves one with what scientists call an "aha moment". *Book Review* is our long "aha moment".

On the surface it is the story of a boy's trip down the Orange (Oranje) River in South Africa that Diooy and two companions undertook. Woven into the narrative is an exquisite web of character, and vivid descriptions. But it is in what starts as a subtext and rapidly becomes the main text that the real power of this book lies. Diooy uses the river as a metaphor for his interaction with a search for "enjoyment" (in sportland terminology) identity. He weaves into his tale the wrangings of a host of subtextures, feminism, nationalism, capitalism, post-apartheid, and others, to trace the history of this race, and region and of the origins of the "coloured" people.

This book is very readable, immensely entertaining, and offers future

Tony Weaver. *Cape Town*. October 15 2004: 9.

Duff, Diana

Letters from the City: From Ireland to Africa. Cape Town: Southern Cross, 2003. 14 + 304pp. R110.

Diana Duff recounts her childhood in Ireland, on the estate of her grandparents, and her years in Kenya where she was 18, and then, after married, to Dar es Salaam and then to apartheid Johannesburg in the 1960s. She recalls much of her past with clarity, vivid detail and with passion. This is an absorbing narrative that has the richness and depth of a fine novel to the full.

Robyn Hendry. *The Herald*.

Diana Duff's heart-warming tale takes in the anachronistic eccentricities of Ireland, the vibrant, yet brutal, life of Kenya and the domination of apartheid South Africa over more than 60 years. Duff writes brilliantly of the Kenyan

conflict between the Mau Mau and the British. One of the touching stories in this book is that of six-year-old Nico, Duff's domestic assistant's child, a black child in apartheid South Africa who somehow manages to attend school with white children. However, I did have problems with early parts of the book: she includes a lot of historically inaccurate, misleading sepia-tinted nonsense about the "Oirish". But once you get to the parts about sun-drenched Kenya and stunning South Africa, you'll not put this book down.

Peter Cardwell. *Cape Argus*. October 10 2003: 15.

Du Preez, Max

Pale Native: Memories of a Renegade Reporter. Max du Preez. Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2003. 286 pp. R204.

The memoir of South African reporter, Max Du Preez, is not only about his identity and his complicated relationship to his Afrikaner "tribe" whom he claims to hate and love and not understand. It is also about his achievements, for instance his editorship of the anti-apartheid Afrikaans newspaper, *Vrye Weekblad*, and his investigative work for State television, the SABC. There are no compromises for the journalist who was once loved by the Mandela government, but later considered a menace by that of Thabo Mbeki. His account of his accomplishments and conflicts is compelling; less interesting is his fixation on the superficial differences between blacks and whites and his reiteration of events that often relies on the inclusion of tracts of previously published columns by Du Preez and about Du Preez.

Tanya Jonker-Bryce. *Daily Dispatch*. October 10, 2003: 14.

"El Negro"

The Return of El Negro. Caitlin Davies. Johannesburg: Penguin, 2003. 260 pp. R140.

The author, Caitlin Davies, follows the fate of the remains of an early 19th century African man, perhaps a Tswana, who came to be known as El Negro. She outlines what evidence she can track down to identify El Negro's movements before he was placed on exhibition in Banyoles, Spain and then

wrote the letters to have her remains repatriated to Holsworthy. In this wonderful, quirky book, Davies muses over how people have used, abused, protected or terrorised animals (as regulated by human creation).

J. Brooke Sparrow. *The Sunday Independent*, September 12 2004: 18.

Emmink, Betty L.

An Autobiography: Our Journey to America. Betty L. Emmink. Boston. Privately published, 2000. 327pp. Price not available.

Emmink writes through her memories of ethnographical papers, beginning with her Jewish grandfather's story (he left Czarist Russia for Lithuania, then Britain and finally South Africa) and then moving on to her own formative years in Durban, South Africa. Her turning point in her life came in 1941 when she was just 16: her acceptance of God in her life ushered in an itinerant life committed to missionary work, mostly in southern Africa. Emmink offers some overview of apartheid South Africa and the ways in which this impacted on missionary work. She was critical of the system but admits that cowardice prevented her from taking any pro-actively anti-apartheid action.

The book is recommended if shows how a Christian life of self-sacrifice can be fulfilling, but also how hard it can be.

Gillian Partridge and Judith Tanya Coville. *Alter-Nations* 10 (2), 2003: 148-154.

Ghandi, Mahatma

Ghandi in his Time and Ours: The Global Legacy of his Ideas. David Hardiman. Picamarintshorp: University of Natal Press, 2003. 118pp. R155.

Of the many books written about Mahatma Ghandi, this is considered to be one of the very best. It covers almost every aspect of the life of Ghandi and his influence on the world and many of its leaders. He was the creator of a cultural style of politics based on a large vision of an alternative society which believed in mutual respect, lack of exploitation, non-violence, and ecological harmony. Mahatma devoted a number of pages to Ghandi's story

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in South Africa and his influence on Nelson Mandela. While the book covers a wide field and repeats well-known facts (albeit in an interesting manner), it also includes a lesser known aspect of Ghandi's views on celibacy and discusses the fact that Ghandi was himself influenced by the writings of Tolstoy.

Cyrus Smith. *Pretoria News*. June 28 2004: 6.

Greef, Jack

A Greater Share of Honour. Jack Greef. Alberton: Galago, 2001. 172pp. R143.

Written by a much-decorated member of 1 Reconnaissance Regiment of apartheid South Africa's Special Forces, this is another example of "bush war writing". Although the identities of some of the participants are hidden, the book does have value: it provides detail of Pretoria's incursions into southern Africa and the extent to which operations—attributed at the time to UNITA (in Angola) and RENAMO (in Mozambique)—were in fact South African. The book also throws light on the mid-1970s invasion of Angola (an event still poorly documented in spite of its historical importance), and on joint operations between Rhodesia and South Africa on the Mozambican Glaza front, the history of small infiltration teams in Zambia and the link between special operations and game ranging.

The author takes a generally unrepentant approach to this history, arguing that all operations were militarily justified but he makes a frank admission: "There were no victors in [the bush] war. We all lost some way or the other".

The text, which should have been better edited, is a useful representative addition to a collection of southern African history and politics, and essential to any literary history.

Christopher Mett. *African Book Publishing Record*, Vol. xxx, No. 1. 2004: 33-43.

Hastings, Beatrice (Emily Alice Beatrice Haigh)

Beatrice Hastings: A Literary Life. Stephen Gray. London: Viking Penguin, 2004. 730 pp. R184.

By the end of Gray's biography of Margaret Hastings, she emerges as one of the most remarkable women of letters of the last century. Hastings pops up in a character in works by Dickens, Wells, Maude Jacob, Apollinaire, Katherine Mansfield and, especially, in biography of the latter end of Murdochism. Hastings' lover during the 1930s. A large part of Gray's purpose is to counter the many distortions and ill-informed accounts of Hastings that are readily available.

I can only locate a handful of slips in this stunningly well-researched and insightful biography.

Chloe Gordon, *The Country Independent* October 10 2004 1A

It is not often that you can endorse the conclusion that publishers choose for their book covers, but this biography is a notable exception. When Margaret Hirdale with *Margaret Hastings: "A Woman's Letters"* approached with her scholarly passion she does not exaggerate. What Stephen Gray has done in this meticulous study is to retrieve from obscurity a distinctive literary talent and an intriguing personality. One of the main strengths of this biography is the way in which, at every turn of fortune in Hastings' life, Gray handles it: a wonderfully sensitive reader through individual questions, Gray demonstrates that she was a fine writer whose work deserves to be saved from oblivion.

Shirley Knecht, *Midwest Translation online*, (<http://www.chicagowriters.org/midwesttranslation/2004/2004winter.html>) (October 8 2004) eq

Jacobs, Haydn

Confessions of a Gambler Haydn Jacobs. Cape Town: Kwana Books, 2003. 240 pp. R110.

Confessions of a Gambler is a pinwheel romp. The trials and tribulations of a Cape-town Madam woman who takes to gambling her a dash to make her heart-wrenching, eye-opening, and just plain fun. It's the perfect read for people who take risks when they don't go any other way.

Glenn Feldman, *PureLush*, January 2004 117

Jaffer, Zubaida

Our Johannesburg. Zubaida Jaffer. Cape Town: Kwela Books: 2007. 104 pp. R124

When former Cape Times (South Africa) journalist was 22, she was detained under the apartheid government's draconian security laws, detained and drugged. Five years later she was detained again, but this time she was pregnant, and this was exploited by the security policeman who told her that unless she talked she would have to drink a chemical concoction which would kill her baby. Jaffer bravely deals with her personal struggle against apartheid: the struggles of motherhood; marriage as an activist and then a painful divorce; her relationship with her parents, her Muslim faith, and then her collapse with depression.

Harry Mark: Cape Times August 17/2014: 4

Jaffer's book is a useful corrective to widespread cynicism about anti-apartheid activists, looking from the now-communist city – Johannesburg, in South Africa about people using what are called "struggle credentials" to enrich themselves illegitimately. In a low-key tone, Jaffer describes the writers' struggle of many ordinary people, the paid a heavy price and were left with empty years. The power of Jaffer's book lies in the honest confrontation of intimate choices and fears.

Raymond Suttner: The Sunday Independent (September 7) 2014: 18

Jardine, Bill

New Linn House: The Life and Times of Bill Jardine. Chris van Wyk. Johannesburg. Sile Publishers. 2014. 266pp. R179

People who make a significant difference in the life of a country are often ordinary men-on-the-street who see injustice being perpetrated and begin in a small way to fight back. The playing field between bigger and bigger and the work of these people has wider and wider impact. Such a man was South African, Bill Jardine. He started out as a fanatical rugby player and coach in the regional schools of Johannesburg, during the apartheid era when sport

was widely appreciated. Through his involvement in sport he moved into anti-apartheid activism, helping to smuggle funds into South Africa for the African National Congress.

Clare van Wyk is a writer rather than an historian, and there are a couple of historical inaccuracies. Van Wyk interviewed dozens of Sir Jardine's friends and family—and this anecdotal style of writing is lively and entertaining. More than 40 black and white pictures add to the enjoyment of the book.

Susan David, *The Herald*, February 4 2004: 4.

Jenkins, Tim

Inside Out: Escape from Robben Island. London: Hutchinson, 2003. 333 pp. H295.

On December 11 1979 three white activists—Tim Jenkins, Stephen Lee and Alex Munnichs—escaped from Pretoria Central Prison. They had been imprisoned for underground work on behalf of the African National Congress, and were the first and only activists to escape from the jail's "political" wing. First published in the 1980s and banned in South Africa, Jenkins's book has been updated to include his life in exile and return to South Africa. Vivid and peasy, it is well worth reading or rereading.

Anthony Ryan, *Mail & Guardian*, February 11 2004: 4.

2007

Knifeking the Czar: Travels with an African Soldier. Alexandra Puller. Johannesburg, Random, 2004. 304 pp. R142

This is the tale of a returned character called K who was a member of the Rhodesian Light Infantry, a unit of "highly trained white boys whose 'ball talk' and violent reputation were a source of pride for some white Rhodesians." It is a tale that grips you from the very first page and doesn't let go until long after you've put it down. What makes this book so utterly compelling is the sheer brutal honesty of it all. Puller makes no concessions to political correctness, reproducing her subject's racist terminology and

opening up the dark secrets and grief that lie beneath the scars of an empire (fiction).

Alan Field. *The Day*, September 23 2004: 8.

Scrubbing the Car is a lush take on the quest by white southern Africans to understand the dehumanization that racism dictated. When Fuller met K as her guards' form in Timbuktu, she was warned by her father that someone scrubbed (killed) the car. Undeterred, Fuller and K embark on a journey back into the dark past of the man who had allowed himself to become a dark recipient killing machine. Fuller's gift for description emerges by leaps in the dialogue and K's characteristically limited vocabulary. Fuller's shock is that racist colonialism destroyed identity, that identity itself for was – was a lie but it makes people understand death and therefore life.

Monica Thompson. *The Sunday Independent*, August 29 2004: 18.

This book takes on some serious issues. At times it seems an intended apology for (mostly white) former soldiers such as K, for the many appalling things done by them in the name of defending a lifestyle. Some of these are so extreme that this reader fervently hoped that some retribution was in store for K, but Fuller shows that he is merely a *scapegoat*, suffering in his own post-war trauma, neither absolved nor forgiven. Despite his newfound faith in the Almighty.

However, Fuller makes it plain that K and his men found life and the only ones in need of forgiveness, understanding and absolution. Clearly, she condemns herself, and by implication all the indifferent and propagandist but winning of Rhodesia, South Africa and good old England, to be as guilty as the soldiers who used the guns.

The writing of *Scrubbing the Car* links the necessary and consistent freshness of her first memoir, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*. Yet it's a great read.

Bar Rowland. *Mail & Guardian, Friday*, September 24 2004: 7.

Kathrada, Ahmed

Memoirs. Ahmed Kathrada: Cape Town: Africa World, 2004. 216 pp. R170.00.

The *Memoirs of South African Struggle Fighter*, Ahmed Kathrada, offers readers "a whole new, deeper level of the reality" of apartheid and liberation. In the experiences laid open in his life, "the solar plexus where the full impact is recorded is the Rivonia Trial and his resulting life sentence to Robben Island.... The depth and complexity of Kathrada's journey of 26 years of political imprisonment establish how this is, indeed, nothing less than 'the other life' that needs to be known of virtually all that matters in his.... If the unexamined life is not worth living, Kathrada's memory does not spare himself. He examines where he thinks he made mistakes, failed his high standards as leadership heavily others.... In the interest of the book, beyond the great testimony to his bravery, he clearly has reached that painful achievement, truth and reconciliation with himself."

Nadine Gordimer. *The Sunday Independent*, August 15 2004: 18.

Kathrada's story of his own struggle against apartheid and his observations of the other leading players in the struggle is as important and uplifting a piece of writing as Nelson Mandela's *The Long Walk to Freedom*. He recounts the hardships imposed upon black South Africans; his own humiliations started when he was a child: as there was no school for Indian children like him in his small town, the two classes might one day meet, dispatched to an Indian school in Johannesburg where he stayed with a distant aunt. He hardly ever has parents again.

In the liberation movement, Kathrada himself was not a leader, he was a worker bee, an organizer, one of those who get things done. He did, however, pay the same price as his more senior colleagues. The book is the most moving and informative book ever written on the struggle for freedom in South Africa.

Chris Hume. *Weekend Post*, September 25 2004: 11.

Keren-Krol, Shmuel

Mulik the Zulik. Shmuel Keren-Krol. Cape Town: Privately published, 2004. 232 pp. R150

Mulik the Zulik makes riveting, often shocking reading. It is about a lost and later a "bad" boy making good in Africa. The author was born in Pabrade, a *shtetl* in what was then Poland but is now Lithuania on an unknown date. Zulik is Russian for "naughty" and this is what he claims he was—and still is.

Keren's mother and six brothers and sisters were killed. As an orphan, he was shipped to Israel, later joining the army. His military career ended when he shot his first wife's lover. At the end of his jail term, he settled in South Africa and there built up a successful jewellery business.

There is something of the motivational hook style which creeps into the narrative, but on a deeper level, the author grapples with identity and cultural dislocation. His candour is unnerving.

Robyn Cohen. *Cape Times*. August 6 2004: 9.

Khuzwayo, Zazah

Never Been at Home. Zazah Khuzwayo. Claremont: David Philip, 2004. 154pp. R140.

A thought-provoking chronicle about battery and abuse, *Never Been at Home* is a disturbing record of the down-side of patriarchal culture. Khuzwayo highlights a culture where the breaking of rules is punishable by an accepted form of battery; where women are viewed as property legitimately "hought" with *lobola* (a Zulu word meaning, bride price). With classic gender stereotyping firmly entrenched in the South African psyche, African women—both rural and urban - remain disempowered by stringent mores. Khuzwayo's delivery is blunt, and her account of Zulu culture is one that we don't often have access to.

Jane Mayne. *Cape Times*. April 8 2004: 12.

That Zazah Khuzwayo - born in rural KwaZulu-Natal in the 1980s - retained sufficient sanity to write this book is testimony to her strength. She herself attributes her survival to her mother and sister whose love pulled her through. This account is full of anger. She rages not against her abusive father (whom she describes as "a pig"), but also against Zulu tradition and the Catholic Church, for fostering patriarchal dominance and the belief that to end a marriage, however, terrible, was wrong.

Though it is fluently written, the content makes this important autobiography difficult to read.

Jane Rosenthal. *Mail & Guardian: Friday*. April 30 - May 6 2004:2.

Krog, Antjie

A Change of Tongue. Johannesburg: Random, 2003. 376 pp. R180.

Poet/author/journalist/translator Antjie Krog manages, in this her new book, to blow one away on every level. Krog seems to span all the genres of writing, but also deals with the many intricacies of living in South Africa where a white woman criticising is seen as a racist—but if she didn't point out what she believed could be improved, she would be denying her own truth. It would, in fact, be a change of tongue for this forthright author. She has an illuminating way of capturing the emotional chaos that is part of the South African psyche. *A Change of Tongue* should have exactly the same impact as *Country of my Skull* and, fortunately, Antjie always takes it a step further—a blessing for both author and reader.

Diane de Beer. *Pretoria News: Interval*. October 27 2003: 3.

In *Country of my Skull* Krog held a mirror to South Africa's fragile, fragmented new society - *A Change of Tongue* is a reminder of how far South Africa has come, without travelling too far. Part biography, part small-town musings, it's a powerful albeit challenging look at where South Africa is, and where it's going. Highly recommended.

Unnamed reviewer. *Saturday Dispatch*. November 22 2003: 4.

In her acknowledgments, the narrator states that “the ‘I’ is seldom me” and earlier she quotes Anne Sexton: “I use the personal when I am applying a mask to my face.” Thus is the reader warned against simply equating the narrator with the author, alerting us to the fact that what we have here is not so much autobiography as auto-fiction in which known facts about her life are interwoven with fictional techniques.

Her theme is transformation, personal and political, and the role of language in this. This is a book that disturbs, that angers and becalms, that provokes tears and laughter. Krog’s book opens up a space for difference and community.

* Johann Rossouw. *Die Burger*. November 17 2003: 7.

Kruiper, Belinda

Kalahari Rain Song. Elana Bregin and Belinda Kruiper. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2004. 110pp. R145.

Apartheid South Africa has provided ample evidence of the truth of Napoleon’s dictum that history is written by the victors. If the majority of African people were marginalised, the Khoisan were almost pushed over the edge of historical consciousness. Now we’ve entered a new phase in which their remote, shadowy figures are moving into the foreground. Compelling us to question past assumptions, in *Kalahari Rain Song*, Belinda Kruiper tells us of her love for her husband, for his people, the Khomani Bushmen, and for the land they belong to. Because she is now accepted as one of them, her depiction of the Bushmen has none of the mystic gloss of a Laurens van der Post. The reality of people struggling not only for survival and for land but also for identity is far more complex, including profound spirituality on the one hand and the brute fact of drunkenness and abusive behaviour on the other.

It is a grippingly authentic account. Belinda Kruiper’s story is only one element: in the book there are also a number of powerful photographic studies of Bushmen life, a selection of Belinda’s poems, and representations of the art of her husband, Vekat Kruiper.

The whole is at once intellectually stimulating and aesthetically pleasing.

John Hope Franklin *Notes*, August 9 2004, 8.

Levin, Adam

The Wonder Years. Auburn: Main Clap-Town: Xanth, 2003. 223 pp. \$14.

Adam Levin's spirit-filled book—springs of West African marshes, of lost culture, of industry and entrepreneurial spirit—of happy and human myth is in some ways, humorous and ultimately engaging. Through his local narrative you realize that Africa is indeed watched, bloody, intriguing, locally but also mysterious, spiritually wealthy, and culturally diverse.

Thomas Macdonald, *Sunday Times*, December 14 2003: 6.

Lohengula, Peter and Kitty Jewell

Kitty and the Prince. New Shepherd: International, and Clap-Town: Transition Book, 2003. x + 276 pp. \$15.95

Kitty Jewell and Prince Peter Lohengula, respectively the middle class daughter of a mining magnate and a man who claimed to be the son of the Marakissa king, are the central figures in this book. Lohengula was in the care of the slave, *Nanny Bush Africa* this was a melodrama, such as was popular a century ago, based on historical events, but maintaining the tension of the book show with spectacular action. The story of the doomed marriage of Lohengula and Jewell is not the whole tale. The main fascination of this account lies in its depiction of popular entertainment and social history around 180 years ago. While Shepherd does not solve all of the mysteries, including exactly who his protagonists were, he has written an interesting piece of social history.

Margaret von Klomparen, *The Mail Review*, July 1 2003, 11.

The man who claimed to be Prince Peter Lohengula was part of *Savage South Africa* the spectacle, if highly representative, show which Frank Miller brought to Victorian England. In this account of the thwarted love affair between Lohengula and Canadian belle Kitty Jewell, historian Hen Shepherd traces the social responses to masquerade.

Loren Anthony. *Sunday Times*. September 21 2003:13.

Luyt, Louis

Walking Proud: The Louis Luyt Autobiography. Johannesburg: Don Nelson, 2003. 352 pp. R171.50.

This is the story how a very poor boy from the Karoo progressed to become one of the richest men in South Africa. Luyt tells of his involvement in the Information Scandal involving top Nationalist Party officials in the 1970s, his experiences as leader of the Transvaal Rugby Union and other episodes in a life that is almost larger than life-size. Having experienced extreme deprivation and denigration as a child, he becomes obsessed with ensuring that this never occurs again, for himself or his family. The personality that emerges is one of a hardheaded man who will brook no opposition. Some facts seem to be misrepresented, and in the end, this book leaves a bitter taste in one's mouth.

* Fritz Joubert. *Die Burger: Boekeblad*. December 22 2003: 7.

Machobane, J.J.

Drive out Hunger: The Story of J.J. Machobane of Lesotho. J.J.Machobane and Robert Berold. Johannesburg: Jacana, 2003. 110 pp. R120.

This co-written autobiography of J.J. Machobane covers the life of a man with a vision: the hungry being able to feed themselves. In the 1940s and 1950s in Lesotho, Machobane spent 13 years in isolation germinating various combinations of crops until he found a way to plant a hectare of land in such a way that it yielded crops all year round. Machobane, Berold says, developed permaculture long before it was called that, but he also had a uniquely African way of teaching and sharing his skills. Machobane's garden is above politics, it is a personal space to grow your own food and to sustain yourself. Nevertheless, due firstly to outgoing British rule and then the new Lesotho government, Machobane and the people applying his agricultural system were forced to go into hiding from the mid-1960s to the 1980s. Both governments were more interested in the people of Lesotho

(including) exportable harvests. Muchmore would not accept this when most of the populations were starving.

The book has a Zen-like quality; the rhythms make it sound like great literature; the twisted syntax make it sound like grass growing. The words make it sound real.

Nadine Beke. *This Day*, January 22 2004: 8.

Mandela, Winnie

Winnie Mandela: A Life. Anna Marie du Toit. London: Libra Press, 2003. 247 pp. £199.95

The author narrates Winnie Mandela's life from her birth in 1934 in the Transvaal through her student days in Johannesburg, her career as a social worker, her courshipping with Nelson Mandela, the protests of the 1960s and then Nelson's incarceration. In 1969, Winnie herself was detained for 17 months, leaving her 14 and 9 year old daughters without any parental care. In the 1970s, Winnie was first detained and then banished to a town in the Orange Free State. We learn of her arrangement from Nelson a few years after he was released in 1990.

One leaves this book wishing the story could have been happier. One wonders what Winnie would have been had she rejected Nelson's advances and had had her life to herself and her own. It is likely she would have been a terror to reckon with.

John Goodrich. *Goodman*, December 12 2003: 11

This second biography of Winnie Mandela is a sympathetic yet realistic look at the life of one of South Africa's most controversial figures. Her life was shadowed by the imprisonment of her husband, Nelson, and her own spells in prison. The author tells us that Nelson found her even after they separated with voluntary confinement "the most forbidding aspect of prison life"; Winnie was held in solitary confinement for 14 months. Then she was banished to Brandfort.

But, the author suggests, Winnie's physical and emotional torture turned into post-traumatic stress disorder. Back in Soweto, Winnie would

often wore black military-style jackets and made highly inflammatory statements, such as, "Together, hand in hand, with our boxes of matches and our umbrellas, we shall liberate this country." At the Truth and Reconciliation Commission she would again be implicated in the murder of 14-year-old Xoliso Ndlovu.

An interesting book that gives a human face to one of South Africa's more controversial women.

Chantal Maudry. *The Witness*. November 2009: X.

It is ten years since Fanny Colby's, *The Lady*, in sheer volume of detail made it an almost definitive biography of Winnie Madikizela Mandela. Colby barely appears in Du Preez Hendrich's footnote as she catches maximum condemnation. If she had informed her readers, perhaps it would become quite obvious that she took some quite liberty on Colby's text and on other standard works, those by Nancy Harrison, Nadine Moor and Madikizela Mandela herself. The Preez Hendrich has invented new facts and spread it concerning her narrative. Questioned that Madikizela Mandela has been unfairly treated by today's political leadership, she has accordingly been very selective in her use of sources. This biography presents the hunched Winnie as displaying unmitigated inability of spirit. Colby, on the other hand, spoke to people who lived in the town she was banished to and she talks of a community divided by Madikizela's Mandela's presence. Instead of any effort to establish the record of Madikizela's Mandela's culpability in the affairs of the Mandela United Football Club, Du Preez Hendrich merely recycles, without comment, the conclusions of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Winnie Mandela certainly merits serious consideration as a public figure but this book does not even begin to engage with her complexities as a tragic heroine.

Tom Lodge. *The Sunday Independent*. December 14 2003: 18.

Muskelin, Hugh

Still Craving: The Musical Journey of Hugh Muskelin. Hugh Muskelin and D. Michael Cheers. New York: Crown Publishers, 2004. 394pp. \$180.

This man-faced autobiography of gloriously unadorned South African trumpeter Hugh Masekela is a bitter-sweet musical journey through the anti-apartheid system, a struggle with addiction, hardship, bewilderment, wandering and tragedy. The story, told in breezy frank style, is divided into three parts. The first is entitled "Home" and is steeped growing up in apartheid South Africa, prior to Masekela's young man exile in the 1960s. In it he tells about his romantic relationship with "Mama Africa", Miriam Makeba, and how he became a musician. His first manager was courtesy of Louis Armstrong via Masekela's mentor, the anti-apartheid campaigner, Leroy Hubbardson. In the second part, called "The World", Masekela recounts an invitation to study music at the Manhattan School of Music, studying alongside with jazz greats like Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Harry Belafonte, Elia Krizberg and Marcus Garvey. While in exile, Masekela took into drug and alcohol abuse. He recorded over 30 albums and later converted the musical *Scapino* with Mikoylous Nymus. In the third part, "Africa", Masekela looks at his childhood and then returns home.

Henry Martin, Windsor Post, August 28, 1994, 31

In this autobiography, Masekela's blaseful nonchalance sometimes lays him open to charges of lack of interest. There are several understated clues, and, conversely, clear replies. Here are, for instance, page unrequited claims like, "Even Hitler's Nazi machinery never equalled the timely response of the police force to discipline, in the swiftness with which black 'back-stoppers' was detected", and the claim that black miners' leaders were used by medical researchers. Also, solvency and silver editorial oversight abound.

But all of this comes under scrutiny in the light of his real intention primary (he seems to remember verbatim all conversations with Miles Davis, Marion Brando, Sam Klop, Nya Mchama and many others), the surface vagueness and direct circumstances of Masekela. Strongly, Masekela's life—an which seeds of distrust for journalists were planted by *Down* journalist, Lewis Black—is quadratically strong subject.

Michael Norman, Vancouver, August 17, 1994, 14

Mashinini, Tazewai

A Burning Hunger: One Family's Struggle Against Apartheid. Lydia Schreier. Translated Jonathan Cape, 2004. 451pp. R375

Thomas Mashinini was a student leader in the 1976 riots in South Africa. This account, written by a British correspondent for the *Wall Street Journal* and *Christian Science Monitor*, tells the remarkable story of black South Africa through the Mashinini family. It embraces just about every facet of the historical struggle and makes the point that if the Mashinini were the generals in the fight for black liberation, the Mashininis were the foot soldiers. Their story is one of imprisonment, torture, separation and loss. It is also a story of dignity, courage and strength in the face of appalling adversity. Readers will also get a glimpse of Tazewai's life in exile, and of his subsequent death of AIDS in Canada. The book also mentions that it is painful for his parents to watch the ANC government bury heroes in all manner of freedom fighters—except their son.

An Vintage City Press July 11 2004: 1

Meldrum, Andrew

Where We Have Hope: A Memoir of Zimbabwe. Andrew Meldrum. London: John Murray, 2004. 272pp. R270.

In *Where We Have Hope*, journalist Andrew Meldrum (who was deported from Zimbabwe in 2001) gives us a fascinating and first-hand account of his 23 years in Zimbabwe, a time in which he observed the nation decline from democracy to virtual dictatorship. He is not alone, in these depictions. Matters such as land reform and economic equality are real issues. The question that he raises is how to deal with them effectively—and here we could have done with much more analysis.

Beyond the repression, we see a different Zimbabwe through Meldrum's eyes, one of courageous journalists and lawyers, brave political analysts, brave MPs, an opposition movement that perished under increasing repression, and ordinary people who somehow manage to survive. It is such people who offer the hope of Meldrum's title.

Ambrose Ryan, Afric & Chameleon, Friday, July 10—August 5 2004: 1

Where We Have Hope is one of those rare books that achieves a symbiosis between personal experience and political fact and analysis. Written by American born journalist, Andrew Mikhom, part of the strength of this book is that Mikhom does not smother the core story for himself. The book is imbued by the desire of his friends, colleagues, and even enemies. If you want an update on what has happened in Zimbabwe your friends, the book will provide it.

I read *Where We Have Hope* in one night. It's a wonderful book that pays tribute to a country and a people.

Imvaho Umyaka, Cape Town, July / 2004: 1

Reviewed, Mmametshe

Hearing Visions, Seeing Voices. Mmametshe Motsa. Bellvue: Jacana, 2004. 89 pp. R140

It is difficult to slot this collection of writings and recollections into an existing genre as an inspirational journey, an engaging anthropological account, and a rallying cry for an alternative of African identity and tradition, it stands alone. Solidarity here black women's experiences have investigated in South Africa writing with such frankness and scope. This is a book that will speak to men and women who want to make sense of the "African Renaissance", the complexities of race-ethnic relationships, the violence of the state we live in, and the interplay between traditional African spirituality and modernity. *Hearing Visions, Seeing Voices* exponentially documents our glib epiphanies, and to gain from this book one must approach it with tolerance of a certain brand of earnestness.

Honorable Rose-Innes, Afric & Chameleon, August 6-12 2004: 37.

In *Hearing Visions, Seeing Voices* Motsa takes you on a journey of her life, how she dealt with the violence in her own identity, the pain she caused her son whilst going through the divorce and her decision to embrace her calling as a healer. The book is full of wisdom and compassion. The descriptions,

Her language, the pictures she paints of her experiences are very moving and this is a book that stays with you long after you have put it down.

Pamphla Koss, Saturday Dispatch, October 2 2004: 4.

Mugabe, Robert

Brothers under the Skin: Travel in Zimabwe Christopher Hope. London: Macmillan, 2004. 244 pp. R144

Brothers under the Skin is supposed to be a journey through and a meditation on (yourselves around the world), including Mugabe's. The underlying premise is that all dictatorships have similar traits. As Christopher Hope describes his many journeys in Zimbabwe, he comments on, among others, of the Soviet Union, East Germany, the former Yugoslavia and Vietnam, assessing their similarity to Mugabe's reign of terror. Sadly, what promises to be highly different, postmodernism from an obviously knowledgeable and talented writer ends up as a mishmash, albeit one with some value.

Newsweek, March 8 Canadian, Friday September 14 05, 2005: 10

Natani, Michael

Another Time in Yaka Michael Natani. Portsmouth, NJ: Friesen Publications, 2003. 178 pp. R249.00

There is a story of camaraderie in hard and good times between two of South Africa's best-known and best-loved Anglicans, Emeritus-Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Michael Natani, the former Bishop of Natal and then Dean in the Church of the Province of South Africa – a post that made him effectively the Archbishop's deputy. Working together during the tumultuous 1980s and beyond, the two were offered the opportunity to work with the great change that were at hand in South Africa under F.W. de Klerk's presidency. However, the great reason of the day was and what they sought is about it's about love, friendship, professionalism, and the hard and busy work of the parish, calling. This explains, perhaps, why it is not a dry and wooden text.

Peter Christopher, Goodwill's Mail, November 1997: 7

Pagel, Lucia

Comfort of the Heart. Lucia Pagel. Cape Town: David Phillip, 2003. 370 pp. R179

This memoir is really a story of longing and love with, as backdrop, the South African liberation struggle in its final moments, the transitional period, the summer 1994 elections and the first two years of the new democracy. It is a woman's story in a country dominated by men. It is an autobiography which conveys a sense of the hope, reality and then, the tragedy of a people and the journey of those who migrate between Europe and South Africa.

Lucy Goodrick, Guardian, November 11/2004: 77

This is an awful book. No matter how worthy, how sincere, French-Canadian Lucia Pagel's writing of her love affair with Ray Mankin in Africa isn't convincing. It's embarrassing. There is some history of the struggle and the new South Africa, but being an electronic media journalist doesn't make a writer André Malraux.

Beverley Rose Muller, Cape Argus, November 28 2003: 18.

Pinnock, Don

African Journeys. Don Pinnock. Cape Town: Double Day, 2003. 224 pp. R185.

Three unusual adventures will take readers into new worlds. Pinnock has a marvellous way with words and a restless spirit which takes him - by means of many different modes of transport - to strange places such as Tristan da Cunha (between South Africa and South America) where he has strange encounters.

Diana de Krom, Cape Town, March 2 2004: 40

What a charming book! In the striking and vivid photographs of Africa, from the dusty Karoo in South Africa to the lake of stars in Malawi, Don Pinnoch captures the essence of Africa, born out of a close love of the continent. Mr Collins, editor, tells us that this is a book of photographs. *African Journeys* tells the story of an unusual journey that includes tracing the footsteps of legendary missionary David Livingstone, canoeing across the Okavango Delta and travelling through the Enyame. The book develops a carefully picked, detailed and often humorous travel essay.

Torilyn Rait, *Saturday Dispatch*, March 6, 1994, p. 1

Platzje, Sol T.

Memorable Museum: The Life and Times of Sol T. Platzje. Museum Hall Foundation: Sol Platzje Educational Trust, 2003. Xvi + 314 pp. R265.

There is something inspiring, intriguing and remarkable, even today, about Sol Platzje: a largely self-taught man who establishes an international reputation as a journalist, interpreter, translator, writer, politician and statesman. He speaks several languages fluently, translated Shakespeare, collected African proverbs and folklores, collaborated on the first phonetic study of an African language and is a pioneer of Africa-language journalism—all this while he tirelessly defends the dwindling rights of African people in post-apartheid South Africa. Nevertheless, Platzje's work remains relatively unknown beyond a small circle of dedicated scholars.

In this book Museum Hall, who worked as curator at the Platzje Museum in Kimberley, South Africa, attempts to provide a popular account of Platzje's life. At times, Hall succeeds admirably in her attempt to draw Platzje's enormous output and varied interests into the confines of a single book: for instance, we get a real sense of the people with whom Platzje interacted in Kimberley. Unfortunately, the person and work of Platzje and period is not apparent throughout the text and, at times, the scholarship becomes sloppy. For instance, of the book are composed of verbatim quotes from Brian Williams's meticulous and scholarly biography and in some instances, Hall's choice of edition when discussing Platzje's work is troubling. Furthermore, Hall's text itself is in need of editing and proofreading; and several photographs are poorly reproduced. While this

book does cover all the bases, it often does so in a cursory fashion and with little enthusiasm.

Peter Mnjonye H. Mhlanga and Mphahlele Mphahlele (eds.)

"Machasi"

Reverend Woman of Her Night (Open Town: Kwana Books, 2003) 218pp. R150.

Offering a fictional look at the war trade in South Africa, Simon Mphahlele tells the story of Margaret (a.k.a. "Machasi") who becomes a prostitute at the age of 18 in order to save her family from poverty. This sobering tale of abusive husband, adulterous businessman, a traumatic stay in a psychiatric ward and a family torn apart by bureaucracy is told with a worked-out and remarkable depth.

Maria Mkhokhlo. *The African Book Publishing Record* 30 (7), 2004: 116.

Rhodes, Cecil John

Cecil Rhodes and his Times (Agincourt Publishers: Pretoria, 2002) 324pp. R150.00.

In this very different biography of the wealthy entrepreneur and imperialist, Cecil John Rhodes, Davidson studies Rhodes as both the product and personification of the greatest wealth in history. For the Rhodes, the acquisition of wealth was never enough. His ideal was always to establish an "African Empire" under the British flag.

Davidson describes the tragic course of Rhodes' political life and his growing ill health. Although Davidson does not give a psychoanalytic interpretation and brackets Rhodes' emotional life cautiously, he does introduce the reader to the main points regarding Rhodes' way of thinking and acting. Only those who are aware of historical biographies will be able to resist the attractions of this book.

"Tinus van Schoon. *Die Burger*, April 12 2004: 7.

Sachs, Albie

The First Journey of Albie Sachs. Albie Sachs (with commentary and introduction by Vanessa September). Johannesburg: Random House, 2004. 232 pp. R190.

South African Constitutional Court Justice Albie Sachs, was almost killed by a car bomb planted by agents of the apartheid regime in 1988. In this book Sachs pens a post-liberation diary of the journey he and his life partner, Vanessa September, went on in places of former exile (London, Belfast, Berlin, St Petersburg). The aim was for him to "move beyond disaster" (solitary confinement, detention, sleep deprivation, the car bomb) and so write about "joy experienced". In pursuing his sense of what Sachs refers to as *Leb! Leb! Leb!*, Sachs argues humbly but brilliantly he is too balanced, sensitive and self-deprecating (in a healthy way) to fail. He is also a remarkably shrewd and clear writer, and always this way.

This book is not only about Sachs's private life: the two parts are those where his experiences as an activist collide and interact with the world and other people, or where his recent journey and experiences are counterpointed by his memories of his earlier life.

The book could have been pruned here and there, and I found Vanessa September's commentaries increasingly predictable and also over-ingenious. But Sachs's voice is truly remarkable. He represents the sense of a certain generation of South African activist, thinker, writer, legal brain, loving and forgiving human being.

Jeremy Gooden, *The Star*, September 16-2004: 15.

Some authors have the knack of making almost anything and making it sound exciting simply by virtue of their ability to write. Albie Sachs is one such writer. In his earlier work, Sachs wrote of his imprisonment, of detention, exile and survival of an assassination attempt. This new book deals with his new political matter: Sachs's travels with his partner through Europe.

Although in content and emotional intensity these "diaries" do not match his earlier books, the manner holds attention by its sheer wit and quality of description. Characterisation is one of Sachs's strengths. He takes ordinary events and turns them into delightful portraits. And the contributions by September are mostly illuminating.

Audrey Fyfe, Mail & Observer, September 24-30 2004: 3.

This brave book is a tribute to ongoing pain and grief; it is also a remarkably good-to-read gallop through several of Europe's most beautiful cities, which were the main source of support for the struggle against apartheid South African freedom fighter, Allan Sharpe, in exile, for the most part, to maintain a debt-ridden, working - spirited chronicle around his own image: sometimes a "ridiclé", sometimes a "paradox". It is "the ridiclé of how to encourage support for the just without humiliating people to live in the shadow of its burdens". And "the great paradox of my generation was that we had fought with all our passion to create a housing society", one which is a "dream" "to apply to enjoy the company theory in life".

Hugh I swim, The Sunday Independent, October 3 2004: 18.

Sharp, Chrysal

In Pool Flight Chrysal Sharp: New York: Penguin, (2004) 200pp \$20

These tales of the experiences of Chrysal Sharp and her veterinary husband have resonated in their lives in two previous books, *They are my Neighbours*. Living in South Africa, in the Western Cape town of "Dolphin Bay", Sharp and her husband have some amazing relationships with some unforgettable animals. Sharp's writing style and narrative are positively charming. Her animals are as human as the people in her life and her descriptions of the beautiful scenery around "Dolphin Bay" are breathtaking. *In Pool Flight* is a must read for anyone who loves animals.

Samantha Barlow, Cape Times, January 16 2004: 7.

A new collection of Chrysal Sharp stories is seriously good and a real treat. If you are an oldophile you might shed a tear or two as she relates the stories behind some of the human creatures who come into her vet husband's surgery. However, the narrative is leavened with loads of light wit. Sharp has a wonderfully self-deprecating sense of humour and manages to avoid being "naïve", a trap that animal writers can all too easily fall into when they are so involved with their subjects – as Chrysal is obviously is.

All in all, just delightful.

William McAnish, *The Herald*, December 24 2003: 4.

Ntern, Irma

Remembering Irma—Irma Stern: A Memoir with Letters. Mona Berman Stern. London: Double Day, 2003. 124 pp. R174.

This account of the woman who has been referred to as "the supreme South African painter", Irma Stern, is based on 70 years of intimate letters from Stern to author Mona Berman's parents, as well as the personal memories of the author. The book reveals part of Stern's life few people know about, from the depths of despair to the heights of her triumph as an artist. What Berman has done skillfully is to put into context the difficulties experienced by Stern and the difficulties she sometimes caused for those around her. I loved the book from the moment I picked it up. It is like a family remembrance, and you get to see the pictures as well.

Annular Cooper, *Open Times*, September 17 2003: 1

The brilliant, willful Stern was one of the greatest Expressionist painters of her time. In her captivating "memoirs with letters", Berman describes with disarmingly frankness her childish resentment of Stern's extended visits to their home. More than anything else the artist, *Remembering Irma* also presents an intriguing portrait of a Jewish immigrant Jewish family, the one that has so enriched South Africa's history. My only complaint about this book is that there is not enough of it.

Michael Magwood, *Sunday Times*, 14/September 2003: 14

"Taffy"

See you in November: The Story of an SAS Assassin. Peter Ruff. Atherton, South Africa: Potlatch, 2003. 112pp. R124.

The title, *See you in November*, is from a well-placed try to outguess the movements of the Zimbabwean freedom fighter, Joshua Nkomo. This

employment record (as told to Peter Giff) of a British SAS soldier who served the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organisation was first published in 1985. Written in a "theatrical, cliché-filled style", this hard story of violence, manipulation and treachery in service of UNITA Rhodesia is not supported by references to any verifiable evidence.

The book is of interest in the record of a certain kind of approach to the travels of southern African spend allegedly in styling, etc. For this reason it should be in the libraries of institutions that expect to comprehensive coverage of southern African historiography.

John Morrow. *The African Book Publishing Record* 30 (2), 2004: 120.

Taylor, J.B.

Lucky Jim: Memoirs of a Randlord J.B. Taylor. Cape Town: Struik Books, 2003. 205 pp. R125.

First published in 1997, these intriguing memoirs of the pioneering South African mining entrepreneur tell, with gripping immediacy, of that rapacious breed of gold-hungry, ruthlessly racist, opportunistic, always flamboyant brigands – the self-serving Randlords. In this narrative, we are in the heartland of exploitation, actually facilitated colonization. We are among the perpetrators of apartheid. It is an absorbing historical portrait!

Alan Lipman. *The Sunday Independent*, August 3 2003: 18.

Lucky Jim offers a first-person account by one of the Randlords who knew both sides of the gold-mining equation in the old Transvaal Republic—Cliff Rhodes's crude exploitation on the one hand and president Paul Kruger's turn-based reputation on the other. Taylor's language reflects the rough and tumble of the frontier, mixes an almost untranslatable complex articulation of racism and imperialism, but is equally sprinkled with quaint Victorian expressions. In this sense, *Lucky Jim* is a time piece that shows South Africa at the advent of its industrial and racial order.

Chandrar, *Library Weekly Digest*, September 6 2003, 4.

Turkington, Kate

Doing it with Doris. Kate Turkington. Johannesburg: Penguin, 2004. 254pp. R95.

In this memoir, Turkington reminisces about her mother, Doris, and recounts her own life journeys. Her mother, she says, was liberated before the term was invented and always encouraged to her daughters to accept no boundaries. Both mother and daughter believed that it is never too late to have an adventure. This is a book that inspires. Her enthusiasm is catching, her storytelling has you turning the pages, and when you have finished you will want to get out there and do it!

Diane de Beer. *The Star: Tonight.* June 17 2004: 9.

Van Houten, Gillian

The Way of the Leopard. Gillian van Houten. Claremont: Spearhead, 2003. 169pp. R165.

Animal-lovers of all ages will delight in this true-life account by one-time TV newsreader and photojournalist Gillian van Houten of how she reared, and eventually reintroduced into the wild, two orphaned leopard cubs at South Africa's Mpumalanga's Londolozi game reserve. Many of the anecdotes are humorous, and the scientific and personal observations interesting, but her attempts to analyse the twins' personalities—especially through the use of astrology—seem to be a bit fanciful.

Sheila Hadden. *The Herald.* May 19 2004: 6.

Van Wyk, Chris

Shirley, Goodness and Mercy. Chris van Wyk. Johannesburg: Picador Africa, 2004. 333pp. R162.

Chris van Wyk was born in Soweto, South Africa, in 1957 and grew up and still lives in the poor "coloured" suburb of Riverlea, Gauteng. His award-winning poems have been published in several countries and six years ago, he published his first novel. Van Wyk grew up in an apartheid world in

which he is not only poor, but is a second-class citizen. During the struggle years, he is awarded a couple of times and then a buston by the police. But he gets his reward in 1954, he gets the big wage in level of Nelson Mandela.

There and there, van Wyk has interspersed his childhood memoirs with his poems, and they slip into place like a hand in a glove, they are personal, tender, poignant. This is a wonderfully related childhood memoir.

Elizabeth Kees Miller, Cape Argus, July 17 2004: 10.

If you delight in stories of childhood and growing up you will delight in *Thirty Goodness and Mercy*. It's the tale of growing up in Johannesburg in the suburb of Riveria. It's an amazing sense of place and time that van Wyk brings to this delightful memoir that makes it a gemstone and shows many other books in this genre. Van Wyk's prose is wonderfully lyrical and, without resorting to maudlin sentiment or adjectival excess. Although it has documentary value pertaining to the years political change, the best thing I would want to do is reduce van Wyk's work to a microtype of "what it was like to grow up in a cultured township in the apartheid years." The book is simply too much of a joyful celebration of life. But it is a memoir that does give general access to a reality that has not been well-documented in the past.

That van Wyk's words are evoked from his writing, that he remembers his past in a way that makes you feel like you are stepping into his memoir, is repeated all over his work. A lovely book, well told and beautifully presented.

Jennifer Crocker, Cape Times, June 11 2004: 10.

This is a text in which self-deprecating humour and punning are let loose. Driven by an unceasing verbal dexterity in which everyday occurrences are transformed by spontaneous, anarchic wit; as if by magic, it reads like an outrageous, amusing gag. The writer's skill in making out and unifying his moments from his experience with a keen sense of the ludicrous, the absurd, the slight and the subversive, makes it read like a rich but mean game. Yet it is all pure narrative warmth.

The "magical" here is not the exotic, magical-religious variety of the mysticism of Latin American fathers. Van Wyk's magical realism is grounded in everyday experience gathered among the oppressed in a society hijacked by prejudice. His text speaks unflinchingly of the ugly realities of life in South Africa between the late 1970s to the early 1990s, but avoids the curdled staples of South African autobiographical writing. Most strikingly, it does not fabricate a narrative nor does it invent a fictional consciousness to give it literary gloss. In maintaining veracity, it assembles a random selection of incidents and colorful fragments to cohere marvelously by virtue of its authorized honesty. This is a notable act in itself.

Andrica Oliphant. The Sunday Independent, June 6 2004: 18.

Weinberg, Paul

Travelling Light. Paul Weinberg. Pretoria: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2004. 169 pp. R365.

One of South Africa's best photographers has launched this reflection of his 25-year journey from the 1970s. The photographic journey is presented as a lyrical narrative of 98 images, complemented by poetic observations from Weinberg's diaries. Most of the images are previously unpublished because they were taken at a time when there was no space for the ordinary.

Patricia Kumbakile. Starline, May 13 2004: 21.

This selection of photographs makes for an interesting retrospective of South Africa's toughest times during apartheid. The narrative he has chosen illustrates how successful apartheid was in creating a greater, quiet, distorted Weinberg has not overdone his subjects with meaning, but his work is intense; it draws you into his experience. Yet he is understated, which makes him the ordinary essential to his detailed narrative. The absence of super-effects and gimmicks reveals an honesty that reflects his poetic intellect. unvarying

Matthew Goniwe. The Mercury, Johannesburg, July 13 2004: 18.

Wende, Hamilton

Dispatch from the Edge: Images of War from Congo to Afghanistan
Hamilton Wende London: Viking, 2001 291 pp. £15

War correspondent Hamilton Wende takes the reader from the chaotic streets of Johannesburg in the former Zulu during the fall of one of Africa's most pillaging despots, Mphahlele Kere Mphahlele, in the Egyptian desert, where American soldiers await the go-ahead to invade neighbouring Iraq. Wende (who was born in the US but grew up in South Africa) shares his fears and frustrations of working as war correspondent. His style is thoughtful, elegant and written with simplicity, but its message is powerful and it brings to him the full horror of war at last through the eyes of a man, rather than the lens of a camera.

Lucas Erdwaks, *The Daily*, October 10, 1999.

Youngblood, Peter L.

Every Mind a Battlefield, Every Night a Nightmare: Unforgettable African Experiences Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2000, 347pp. R140

In this collection, Peter Youngblood looks back on a long and evidently interesting career as a foreign correspondent in Africa. He looks over his 23 stories culled from those experiences. There is no easy coherence here: the stories vary from very insights into the fraught married life of a foreign correspondent to highly influential moments of social and political revolutions and other upheavals all over the continent. But there are also quieter pieces. Some seem to be faithful accounts of Youngblood's own experiences, others are more fictionalised accounts of third person protagonists, often with a good deal of imaginative extrapolation.

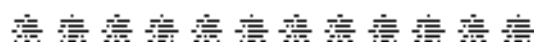
Youngblood does not think the hardest, the hardest, the toughest of reporting, but he sticks on there as the price paid for the conditions under which these people work. His book testifies, in a most engaging way, to a life of courage and patience. More importantly, it reflects a humanity sobered but not embittered by experiences so extreme as to be unthinkable for the rest of us only to now require.

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Michael Hryns. *The Sunday Independent*, December 21 2003: 17.

Younglingwe is in many ways the quintessential "old Africa hand" that the British media love to romanticise about. He has been there and there that. But in this wonderful collection of short stories, vignettes and novellas, he has chosen not to write his own history (he has been there too often, he says), but rather to tell 23 quirky stories from a long history of reporting. The result is a very good book, a cracker, in fact. It's a sizzling, quirky, very funny, very real and fairly accurate look at Africa.

Tom Weaver. *Capricorn*, December 12 2003: 7.



Multiple Subjects

AIDS victims in Africa

I Die, But the Memory Lives On: The World AIDS Crisis and the Memory Book Project Manning Marshall. London: Marshall Press, 2004. 170pp. ISBN

The Memory Book Project, which Marshall - a Swede with a conscience - supports, aims to keep alive the memories of parents who are dying of AIDS, for the children they leave behind. Marshall, an actor who works in Mozambique, travels to Uganda where he attempts to come to terms with the story on the epidemic. Here, he gets close to people who are living with AIDS, with their waiting and then their wasting stages. He records his impressions without judgement, but his approach is sympathetic despite the additional essays by Rachel Baggeby, the head of Christian Aid's HIV unit, and Anders Wijkman, a member of the European Parliament, with a useful weight to this slim, uneven volume.

Maureen Laurson. *The Sunday Independent*, September 19 2004: 18.

This is a wonderfully written book that looks at the constant tears, walking and hopes of people living with HIV/AIDS. The writer documents the lives

of people in Kampala, Uganda, who are living with this dreadful disease. He writes with appreciation for voluntary projects.

Noriphen Kora. *Saturday Dispatch*. September 18 2004: 7.

Citizens of Johannesburg

Johannesburg Portraits: From Isaac Phillips to Sibongile Khumalo. Mike Alfred. Harburg, South Africa: Kyness Press, 2004. 141 pp. R169.00

Johannesburg Portraits is a series of 10 succinct biographies intended, according to the author, "for an encyclopaedic, indigenous input for those who wish to learn more about the city of Johannesburg and some of its citizens". Alfred's range is broad and eclectic, and includes a female Rastafarian, political activists, writers, artists, a musical family, an Africanist-archaeologist and a handsome high profile celebrity. *Portraits* is a comfortable weekend read (pp) with pertinent and engaging, well laid, but never shallow, pen portraits of the subjects and a sense of the times and environment in which they lived, worked and struggled.

Mike Berger. *Cape Times*. September 12 2003: 7.

Herman, Bonnie and Olda Mcher

The Peace War: A True Story of Love and Survival in World War II (Volume 1) Herman. Johannesburg: David Philip, 2004. 121 pp. R150

Talented young South African pianist, Olda Mcher, and the young doctor, Herman Herman, met in Johannesburg in the 1940s. Then, in 1949, Olda and her mother Ida visited to London so that Olda could take up a music scholarship at the Royal Academy. In August 1949, on her summer break from her music studies, they went to visit relatives in England. However, they were caught up in Hitler's Holocaust: Olda and her mother were taken to Ravensbrück, Germany's primary women's camp. At the time, Olda had messages from the letters of the loyal Herman, who was now a captain in the South African army fighting in North Africa. Later, Herman was taken to PoW. Amazingly, they met in Egypt and married, returning to South Africa and enjoying nearly 50 years of married life together.

The narration is at times a tad overblown but this does not hamper an extraordinary story.

Caroline Hurry. *The Sunday Independent*. February 15 2004: 18.

Journalists

Something to Write Home About. Claude Colart and Sahn Venter. Bellvue: Jacana, 2004. 279pp. R200.

This collection of pieces from a wide variety of journalists and correspondents focuses on telling the story of getting the story. It gives an alternative, often very personalised and sometimes indulgent view of conflict the world over. But it makes an interesting read, and you will certainly learn things that you didn't know before. The collection is something to dip into rather than to read in one go. The Foreword is by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. He describes the stories as "deeply moving" written by "wonderful, sensitive human beings".

Jennifer Crocker. *Cape Times*. June 8 2004: 7.

Modern information technologies have given us almost boundless access to information, yet these same technologies mean that there is a danger of information overload; also, many can remain secure in their comfort zones and wish away the harsh realities on their screen with a mere flick of their remote control. Sometimes, images appear so unreal that the viewer feels as though this is a fiction. Then, too, the images repeat themselves day after day on different channels until the ways of the world seem both monotonous and also hopeless. Furthermore, the journalists at times seem so detached and anaesthetised to the reality around them, that one imagines them as civilised visitors to rather strange, unfamiliar, barbaric and exotic worlds. This increases the viewer's alienation from the vents taking place and often serves to reinforce a notion of the "backwardness" of people in the developing world.

Given all of this, *Something to Write Home About* is a breath of fresh air. The journalists in writing about their experiences in working in war zones or places very different from their own do try to empathise and can

bring out the very real humanity of the people they meet and work with. They make meaning out of seemingly absurd situations, or understand their inability to make meaning. They capture the banality of evil that is often left out of memoirs. The stories take us around the world. All the royalties from this book go to the special fund of two of the journalists who were killed.

David Goodman, *Goodman Times* 21/08/04 12

"Where, Harry and Jack Rubin?"

People who Have Gotten From Afar David Goodman, Johannesburg, Panther Africa, 2004. 181pp. R150.

This story takes upon itself to depict, however complex and dense, but it deals with real events and real people, even if the names have been changed to protect the innocent – or even the guilty. *People who Have Gotten From Afar* is a funny, poignant story which chronicles the lives and circumstances of a pair of retail furniture dealers in southern Johannesburg.

Goodman has upon a great, thick book tale, in which he examines the inventive criminals who prey on Rubin and Shur, searches for a psychological dimension for this crime, and then places the "blame" for this growing criminal activity on the collapse of the apartheid structure, that had held crime and its perpetrators in a strong grip.

But this is a story with a hole in the centre. Shur and Rubin's furniture empire relies on its profits on its offering of more credit to customers. By offering to people who have the money or who can get a bank loan, they cheat and up paying much higher rates. In effect, it can be argued, the real business of the Shur/Rubin empire isn't furniture at all. It is not bank credit. Cohen does not consider this aspect.

T. Kuredo, *Opinion: The Sunday Independent* 29/01/04 18

The author of this book, a South African living in London, examines his country's crime wave through the story of Harry Shur and Jack Rubin, partners in a small chain of furniture stores in Johannesburg. They and their stores are subjected to every kind of acquisitive criminality, from fraud to

smash and grab and armed robbery. Despite this and their ages (77 and 68), the two partners have decided to soldier on. While it is alarming to read of such widespread criminality, it is correspondingly uplifting to read of people who refuse the blandishments of dishonesty.

The author lets all the characters, including the thieves, speak in their own voices and tell their own stories. David Cohen's prose is easy to read. The book could easily have been unrelentingly gloomy, but it is an inspiring testimony to the human spirit.

Anthony Daniels. *The Herald*. March 24 2004: 8.

South African women: anti-apartheid activists

Strike a Woman Strike a Rock: Fighting for Freedom in South Africa. Barbara Huttmacher Maclean. Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 2004. 339 pp. R220.

Strike a Woman Strike a Rock is a powerful collection of narratives: life stories, love stories and death stories, of the women of all race groups who, often behind the scenes, made a stand against the apartheid state. The American author takes the title from the slogan, 'Wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo, adopted by the ANC's Women's League when they marched to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 in protest against the law which would force women to carry passes. If there is one criticism of this book it is in the detail - incorrect spelling of place names and misspelling of Afrikaans words—however, the content is gripping.

Lisa MacLeod, *African Review of Books*. (<http://www.africanreviewofbooks.com/Reviews/maclean0409.html>) September 17 2004: np.

South African Women: Careers

Inspirational Women at Work. Lisel Erasmus-Kritzingcr. Pretoria: Lapa, 2003. 490pp. R210.

This compilation of interviews is an empowering handbook, a groundbreaking guide to success. The author says that the women - all of whom are South Africans, representing a cross-section in terms of geography, age,

cultural background, personal experience and identity have in common their tenacity, caring and optimism and all are achievers who are making a difference in the lives of other women and in South Africa as a whole. The simplicity of the response to the interview questions proves to them own words.

Easy to navigate, the book is divided into sections taking you through many aspects of business. Each chapter starts with a summary section which you can use to take yourself forward. I found particularly helpful the section, "taking it a step further" where strategic skills are identified for self-empowerment within the discipline discussed. In addition, a list of resource books gives you more options for improvement.

With a foreword by George Marshall and several endorsements from Oprah Winfrey, Irene Charney, Albertine Swale and Yvonne Johnson the author says that the world can learn a lot from the stories of these women.

Beryl Eichenberger, *Cape Times*, April 2 2004: 12.

Travel Writers, South Africa

The Wind Maken Dunes: Four Centuries of Travel in South Africa. Ron Macdonald. Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2004. 170 pp. R750

Macdonald's anthology includes attractive as well as disturbing extracts and anecdotes by travellers, explorers, scientists, missionaries, people of film, naturalists, missionaries and indigenous peoples. This is not a one-off read, but rather a book to dip into selectively. Macdonald helpfully gives introductions to each author and the context in which the extract was written.

M.B. (Full name not given) *Quarterly Bulletin of the National Library of South Africa*, Vol. 54, No. 1, January--March 2004: 19-40

This collection of travel writings by writers who visited South Africa between 1482 and 1980 demonstrates just how weightful the accounts of ordinary travellers can appear to readers a hundred years or so later. This anthology is a valuable and readable asset for collections of literature, although the absence of an index is troubling.

"Pictor Maelm. *Napporn: Booka*. March 14 2004: 17.

Twelve South African children

The Story of my Life: South Africa seen through the eyes of ten children. Han Tann. *Ngap: Ngap: Kwaka: Kwaka*. 2003: 140pp. H115

This is a most unusual and wonderful book. Twelve South African children, aged between ten and thirteen, tell their stories. They wrote the reader into their homes and schools to see their daily lives. These children from all over South Africa, are from different cultural backgrounds, speak different languages and have different religious beliefs. They are the epitome of the rainbow nation.

The compiler, Han Tann, a professional photographer, in collaboration with Annet van der Merwe of Kwaka Books compiled a list of children all chosen by someone in their communities. Each provided each child with a camera and instructions on how to use it. They had to keep a diary and write down what they had photographed over three months. All the photographs are reproduced as they were taken by the children and the captions and short family histories were also written by them. Each chapter begins with a brief description of the region or town in which each child lives, written by Annet van der Merwe.

The book is beautifully produced. The design of this book suits the beauty and high quality of the pictures. It is highly recommended for public library collections, schools and as a model for other countries, regions and towns to emulate and think about.

Cécile Langer. *African Book Publishing Record*, Vol. xxi, No. 2, 2003: 125.

