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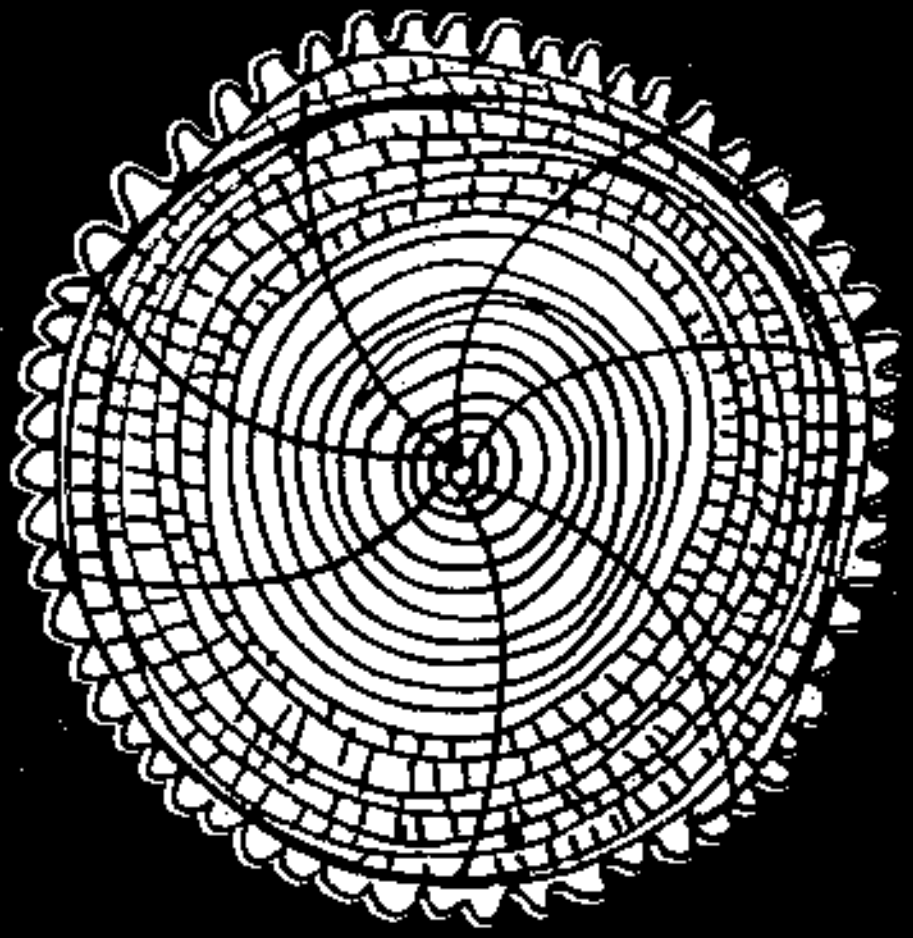

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Introduction

Johannes A. Smit

M. van Wyk Smith provides an overview of the historical role the two kinds of Ethiopia played in Western thought's thetoric representation of Africa. As heuristic, descriptive device in the context of masculinist representation, he argues, the fictive power of myth creates a cognitive schema through which men of letters accounted for their experiences of Africa. More generally, myth may point to the way in which people account for their experience of the new and unknown.

Commentating on the significance power and mythological shortcomings for intercultural exchange, Willie Kriger argues that Bleek's contribution in the fields of Mythology and Comparative Linguistics derived from his appreciation of the contribution of modern German Philology by the brothers Grimm. Rooted in an atmosphere of romantic anti-authoritarian and characteristic tradition of scholarship, his methods, insights, blinds and values impacted on the reception of /Xam texts and traditions. Kriger suggests that this issue be further explored as it concerns concepts of text-design and *Erlebniszusammenhang*.

Focusing on the atmosphere of uncertainty, of mobility and of hybridity which seems to pervade academia, Hennette Roos points to the importance of interdisciplinarity, processes of creolization and the local focus in South African texts addressing transculturation. She argues that aspects of genealogy, cultural differences, visions, fractions and the arts form constitutive motivational clusters which bear witness to the predominance of literary transculturalism. The question, moreover, is why there is a specific image, that of the Bushman, which should suddenly 'emerge' such a conspicuous popularity.

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

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

Arguing that Evans's variation portrayals of himself as colonial informant on indigenous peoples were aimed at procuring a land grant in colonial Natal, J.U. Jacobs compellingly reveals aberrations of his life writing that are wider contrast of nineteenth century literature. She refers to the emergence of travel writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century and the latter's literary depiction was determined by a dichotomy between 'Culture and the Savages'. Note the analogue possibility of local communities. This is developed much further with Evans's furnishings not departing from the fact that he stood in a category of his own.

Arguing that Pringle's Africa representation bore the nature of sign of distinction, Chris Brooks, in turn, the father of taxonomy, Nick Mansfield shows that his aesthetics was an instance of the classical epistemeresentpire. Not drawing on the mediating mythology of Adamastor, his complication of complex systems under the aegis of 'the conjugal bond' between man, nature, culture and resemblance in his poems never embodies colonial's 'imperialist epistemological frame for ordering the world' which is, in this case, articulated in the 'season of the Enlightenment', the 'spirit of progress, revival and romanticism'.

Different from the usual focus on myths and romantic ideas from Africa, Anne Oosthuizen explores the importance of Jordan's ideas about men and women in his *Tales from Southern Africa*. She points out that South African literature is dangerously or unhealthily detached from the non-literate. They who appreciate for mythopoeia as it engages 'universals' as well as 'mysteries'. She illustrates the importance of the socially pertinent themes in these stories, especially as they engage the overcoming of social crises.

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

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

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

Carli Coetzee argues that even though conservative fictions only use part of the past to construct fictions of fiction for today, they often also contain more illusory and more 'progressive' elements. These are sometimes at odds with expectations of an unspoken political singularity of purpose. As an illustration she examines the work of the Afrikaans writer C.M. van den Heever, placing his farm novels within the larger context of the debate about the evolution of what he regarded as the spirit of the nation.

Focusing on Conrad, Schreiner and Coetzee, R.J. Bellstar explores the significance the gardens as locus has for their ideological and conceptual frameworks. To various degrees, he argues, all three writers directly or indirectly expose the injustice of colonial-patriarchal discourses successfully to counter, distort or pervert the meaning ascribed to that which they define as Other. For Coetzee, Schreiner and Conrad also critique the discourses which determine power and signification in society.

Positioning her focus on problematic issues related to 1960, Jo Marie Claassen points to a conference at Fort Hare in which black and white participated on equal terms. She argues that this conference's focus on 'Christianity in Action' provides possibilities in South Africa which were silenced in its aftermath.

For her sociolinguistic case study, Vanjoo Thaver-Bonnighausen compares social stratification experienced in Udupi (India) and South African Telugu (SATe) respectively. In the context of various historical, socio and economic factors and drawing on research data, she argues that the tensions determined by social stratification – castes not only carries differences are present in and continued by regional dialects. This results both downward and upward socio-economic mobility. Comparatively, the hold on the caste system by South African Indians has disappeared. Even so, she found that social stratification based on caste is still evident in speech.

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

Reflecting on the role 'Empire and Resistance' play in teaching postcolonial literatures in the undergraduate curriculum in tertiary education Dan Ojo-Ade well engages the questions, 1) how to develop an appropriate reading with the literature of the colonial scene and its aftermath that does not rest back on misleading dichotomies; and 2) why one should bother with the literature of the encounter at all? Why should one not simply deconstruct the canon altogether and teach an entirely Afrocentric curriculum? Between the extremes of an exclusive focus on either a historical, localised understanding and a linguistic-language-writing or a myopic focus on superficial globalism, he argues, is the overlap of 'cultural poetics', i.e. an approach departing from a rhetoric of contact.

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

In her review of *Jock, Darwin, Spencer*, Nancy Brooks reads this discourse within post-colonial studies and asks whether it as well as this discourse are not jeopardised by acts of geographical and historical bridging, erasing disciplinary boundaries, e.g. geography and history. Before she can find 'travel' has become a critical explanatory concept in contemporary cultural theory she argues that the permeabilization of literary theories in this manner makes for worthwhile theoretical contributions.

The Ethiopia Metaphor: A Dialectic Myth of Africa

M. van Wyk Smith

'Myths solve nothing, arrange nothing', claims Frans Peeye in his novel, *Die Man from Onderwey* ('Note to the Reader'). But since he is mainly writing fiction about Africa he may be forgiven for such a careless attitude to myth. By way of contrast, the eminent American historian of Ancient Egypt, Barry Kemp, who has to handle myth rather more circumspectly:

> All people's know-why or raw data—their everyday 'working knowledge'—is thoroughly cultural in style and in its underlying structure. We can not allow this to distract us from the reality of myth as something real, for it is an irresistible force of the human mind. (Kemp 1989:6)

It is this elusive power of myth that shall concern us here, and myth not only as itself a fabric of knowledge or a cultural artefact that organises the world in a particular way, but more especially as a heuristic device, a way of actually processing our experience of the new and unknown in such a manner that we can begin to understand. I want to suggest that certain myths that initially seem above all to perpetuate untruths, may because of their dialectic structure actually encourage investigation and debate, and may thus even help us to see what otherwise might not have been seen at all.

I am in the broadest sense concerned with Europe's (or the West's) organising myths of Africa, and in particular I want to look at the Mediterranean and later European mythology surrounding a place—or indeed various places—called 'Ethiopia'. In the first part of the paper I shall attempt a rapid and even impressionistic sketch of what the ancient, classical, medieval and Renaissance world of Mediterranean culture understood by the term 'Ethiopia'. I shall follow this with a rapidly brief look at what happened to this concept of 'Ethiopia' once Europe had established contact in the early sixteenth century with what was later to be the 'real' Ethiopia of Abyssinia I hope to consider, finally, what relevance all this may have for our understanding of the historical representations of southern Africa and its inhabitants from the sixteenth century onwards.

The most important point to make about Europe's Ethiopian myth is that from the very beginning it had a binary, dialectic structure. According to Homer (*Odyssey*

1.22.24) the Ethiopians were 'the farthermost of men', and were divided into two groups living 'where Hyperion sets and where he rises'. In the *Odyssey* they are the favourites of Poseidon; in the *Iliad* (1.423–4) they are visited by Zeus and all the gods, as they are called the 'blameless' (or 'noble') Ethiopians. A similar reference in Book 23 (205–7) seems to endow the Aethiopians with the immortality of the gods, or at least with long lives. That Homer's approach by forceful Atlantic sea-way may have led us originally to the actual kingdom of Kush in Upper Nubia, of which record also exists in the Old Testament, and that its legendary reputation was successively taken over by the even more remote kingdoms of Meroe in the northern Sudan, Aksum in what is now northern Ethiopia, and later the Solomonic empire of Abyssinia, have been extensively argued (Thompson 1968, 1989; Van Wyk Smith 1986; Munro-Hay 1991), and shall not detain us further for the moment.

Homer's suggestion that there were two Ethiopias ensured the longevity and procreative powers of his myth, and allows us to speak not merely of an Ethiopian myth but of a dialectic metaphor or discourse of Ethiopia, an explanatory economy that would take on a life of its own. Homer made no distinction between his Orientalis and Hesperian Ethiopians, but Herodotus, in attempting to turn mythology into anthropology, did just that. In reviewing Xerxes's army in Book 7 of the *Histories*, he refers to the 'eastern Ethiopians' as Indians with 'straight hair', while his 'western Ethiopians' are Nubians and others 'who came from the regions above Egypt' and 'are more woolly haired than any other people in the world' (7.69–70). Earlier he refers to a 'great city called Meroe, which is said to be the capital of these other Ethiopians' (2.29), stating

> where the south wind blows the people are ... the country called Ethiopia. The last inhabited land in that direction ... [and] the men are tallest, handsomest and longest-lived [and] worship only the gods. (3.114)

Here was the stuff of debate and argument, a Derridean *différance* that would over the centuries seek resolution in various realities while developing into an ever more broadly dichotomised ethnography of Africa. Herodotus's attempt to explicate Homer's distinction as one between Indians and Africans found few successors. Actual Greek contact with Meroe after Herodotus's time and the development there of an African culture strongly influenced by the classical world, followed by the extensive exploration of the Red Sea coasts and inner North East Africa under the Ptolemies (Burstein 1989; Shinnie 1967), gave currency to a purely African division of the Ethiopians. The Kushite and Meroitic Ethiopians became the tall, noble and long-lived eastern Ethiopians of Homer's myth, while the nomadic pastoralists, hunters of Nilotic and negroic origin, became the 'other' or 'western' Ethiopians of the Hamitic paradigm (Reem 1992:59–65).

What was at first merely a schematic geographical distinction and then a rough ethnographic one soon became an essentially evaluative one. Agatharchides of Cnidus, whose work on the Erythraean (or Red) Sea provides us with the first extensive review of the information about inner North-East Africa available by the second century BC, limited the term 'Aethiopian' strictly to the Meroitic Nubians, perceived by him as a highly civilized race in contrast to all the peoples around them. As Burstein puts it, Agatharchides 'made Meroe the centre of Greek interest in the Sudan for the rest of antiquity' (Agatharchides 1989:7). He also put into common currency prototypical descriptions of the primitive non-Ethiopians:

> They always live without clothes, and as they have sexual relations with their women in common, they cannot properly consider the children who are born their own or their offspring. (5.52)

The terms used here are diagnostic and became standard tropes in the late-classical, medieval and Renaissance literature of primitivism.

Writing about a century after Agatharchides, Diodorus Siculus likewise set the former's scientific distinction between Ethiopians and other Africans, and identified the Meroitic Ethiopians as Homer's 'faultless men' – the first to be taught to worship the gods who 'from all time ... have enjoyed a state of freedom and of peace one with another' (3.2.3). Even more importantly for the later mythography of Africa, Diodorus regarded these Ethiopians as 'the first of all men' (3.2.1) and the origin of Egyptian civilization. Further, he articulated what Martin Bernal believes was an ancient Egyptian and Greek tradition, namely that the sources of Dynastic Egypt were essentially African and had first taken shape in Upper Egypt and Nubia, a view confirmed by much recent scholarship (Adams 1977; Bernal 1987; Hoffman 1980). The classical tradition of a noble and originally eastern Ethiopia in due course blended readily with a late patristic, medieval, and early Renaissance Christian myth that the Nile was in fact the Gihon of the Book of Genesis, flowing from paradise (Van Wyk Smith 1986). Ethiopia thus became the location of the earthly paradise, a tradition which in turn inspired or at least encouraged the later myth of Prester John's African Christian utopia, and finds expression in a pervasive cartographic tradition from the thirteenth century onwards which depicts the terrestrial paradise as located in east or southern Africa (Van Wyk Smith 1966, 1988a, 1988b).

If Diodorus exaggerated the noble Ethiopians in one direction, he did the same for his 'savage Ethiopians'. Characterising from Agatharchides's ethnography of specific peoples, he describes the 'great many other tribes of the Ethiopians' as 'naturally savage and display[ing] the nature of a wild beast'. They are 'black in colour and have flat noses and woolly hair'. They have 'no settled abodes' and cultivate 'none of the grain-

fices of civilized life as these are found among the rest of mankind'. They go naked or in animal skins, have their wives and children in common, and sleep where night finds them (3.8.1–5). None of this is new to us, largely because at almost the same time that Diodorus was so, Lucretius produced his paradigmatic description of the primitive life in Book 5 of the *De rerum natura* (5.1011–1090), which specifically invoked the features of nakedness, poor speech for the lack of it, the communality of wives and children and the absence of fixed abodes as the mark of the primitive. What had started with Agatharchides as a relatively innocuous ethnography of a particular group of African people now became and remained for many centuries – indeed, up to our own time – a fully-fledged discourse or schema for representing the other. Lucretius' primitivism has been extensively discussed (Davenport & Boas 1935; Burstein 1980), and I do not wish to rake the ashes further here, except to stress that as a trope of the primitive, along with the ethnography of the 'savage Ethiopian' on which it is based, it was always only one half of a dialectic paradigm that also included the 'noble Ethiopian', thus constituting a broad discursive range for European depiction of and debate about the people of Africa.

What this means is that Europe's discourse of Africa was never merely a matter of representing Africa and Africans as simply and irredeemably 'other', as cultural binarists inspired by Foucault and Said have tried to tell us. That it was not so can easily be demonstrated from the record. If we pursue the motif of the 'savage Ethiopian' down the West Coast of Africa, for instance, examining its shaping influence on the European encounter with those parts, it is surprising, at first glance, to see how late John Matthews's (1788–1791) *infra* notes assume adumbrates the whole record:

> Trace the manners of the natives, the whole extent of Africa from Cape Cantin to the Cape of Good Hope, and you find a constant and almost regular gradation in the scale of understanding, till the wretched Caffres sink nearly below the Ourang Outang.

There are, however, a number of comments to be made about this statement, apart, of course, from expressing abhorrence at its offensiveness. The most pertinent argument to be brought against it is that precisely because such views were seen to deviate from ancient stock perceptions of the 'savage Ethiopian', they were constantly challenged by European observers who, also, in the dialectically constituted nature of the European response to Africa, invoked either personal experience or the myth of the 'noble Ethiopian' – or a mixture of both, in order to project a quite different image of West Africa. Olfert Dapper describing Benin in the late seventeenth century, or William Snelgrave, Michel Adanson, Jean Baptiste Labat and P.D. Wadström describing Whydah, Dahomey, Senegal and other parts of Guinea in the eighteenth century, are just a few of the names one can invoke for more carefully nuanced ethnographies of

West Africa (Van Wyk Smith 1990). Thomas Winterbottom, for instance, writing in 1803 about several years of experience in Sierra Leone, specifically declares:

> the thick lips, flat nose, and particularly the woolly hair of negroes, circumstances on which the advocates for distinct races of mankind have laid so much stress, as of great importance (1.19).

He went on to a personal testimony which, though cast in the progressivist assumptions of the Enlightenment, nevertheless explicitly resists the pressure of stereotypes:

> In describing the disposition of natives who have so rarely had an opportunity of displaying their character with any degree of freedom, I am aware that I run the risk of being considered as the apologist of vice, and the panegyrist of barbarism. In describing the disposition of natives who have so rarely had an opportunity of displaying their character with any degree of freedom, observers are too apt to be led astray by many actions of kindness or of injury, and to decide upon their character with too little reflection as well as examination. Thus to one people they attribute virtues too sublime to be consistent with human frailty and depravity, while others they censure of vices altogether inconsistent with their small progress in civilization. ... If my testimony can aid in placing the character of the Africans in a more just and favourable point of view, it will only be a grateful though inadequate return for many acts of kindness received at their hands (Winterbottom 1803: 2.209–211).

A further point to be made about the John Matthews passage quoted earlier, and one which will take me forward to the next part of my argument, is that 'the wretched Caffre' he refers to was, of course, not the Xhosa and other Bantu-speaking peoples of southern Africa to whom this offensive term came to be applied from the nineteenth century onwards, but the Khoi or so-called Hottentots. Indeed, it was the Khoi who as last came to bear the full brunt of the 'savage Ethiopian' tradition. Deprived almost from the moment of first contact with Europeans on the terms of Lucretian primitivism derived from Agatharchides – woolly hair, flat noses, clucking speech or speechlessness, nakedness, communality of wives and children, and homelessness – the Khoi became living avatars of the absolutely 'other' in European ethnography: in the words of Father Guy Tachard who visited the Cape in 1685,

> The south point of Africa is no less remote from Europe, than the manners of its inhabitants are different from ours (Tachard 1686: 67).

Yet even this excessive othering by no means signals a mere vilifying discourse. Precisely because the stock description of the Khoi was recognised as the derivative ideological caricature that it was, more careful observers could and did attempt to form altogether much more compassionate and complex ethnographies of the Khoi. Key figures in

this regard were Olfert Dapper, Peter Kolben, François le Vaillant, John Barrow, and the latter's illustrator, Samuel Daniell, as I have argued before (Van Wyk Smith 1992).

The history of the eastern or 'noble' half of the myth or trope of the two Ethiopias has had a career at least as protean and persistent as that of the 'savage Ethiopia'. A full account of it would have to examine the tradition of a Christian Ethiopia as preserved in Mediterranean Europe, from the time of the conversion of the Kingdom of Axum in the fourth century (Munro-Hay 1991) down to the emergence of the Prester John myth in the late Crusades and its attachment to Abyssinian Ethiopia (Slessarev 1959). Such an examination would show that Edward Gibbon's famous conclusion that after the Islamic conquest of North Africa, 'encompassed on all sides, the Ethiopians slept near a thousand years, forgetful of the world, by whom they were forgotten' (Gibbon 1870:2, 488), only to be reawakened by the Portuguese in the early sixteenth century, will not hold. Christian or Abyssinian Ethiopia was never really 'lost' or 'forgotten', either as an actual place or as the subject of myth. The steady, if limited, exchange of information on the Mediterranean network of trade and pilgrimage, much increased at the time of the Crusades and culminating in the appearance of several Ethiopian embassies at various European courts from the thirteenth century onwards (Doresse 1957:1.230-234; Buckingham 1966), meant that the Portuguese had quite a shrewd idea of what they were looking for. Furthermore, the patristic tradition of biblical exegesis had endowed texts such as Genesis 2.13, which describes the paradisal Gihon as 'the same ... that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia', or Psalm 68:31, which prophesied that 'Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hand unto God', with a symbolic import that ensured the continued mystic presence of the 'noble Ethiopia' in the European mind (Kloppers 1979).

Nor did the enigmatic Ethiopia or 'noble' Africans, the site of paradise and the empire of Prester John, dissolve once Abyssinian Ethiopia began to be opened up to the West. On the contrary, it can be shown that Abyssinia was at first vastly inflated both in the European consciousness and on European maps of Africa of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Ravenstein 1959; Skelton 1961). In a paper which examines the relationship between the Jesuit Jerome Lobo's description of Abyssinia in the early seventeenth century and Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas*, I have previously surveyed several centuries of utopian debate about the country. In this literature the dominant theme was how to reconcile the fabulous land of classical and early Christian repute with factual place descriptions by navigators, explorers, and missionaries (Van Wyk Smith 1994). The resultant mythographic pressure is well summed up in Job Ludolf's complaint, expressed after he had read much of what had ever been written about Ethiopia:

> Others there are, who to waste idle hours, and designing some fabulous inventions, to represent the pattern of a sort of imaginary commonwealth, have chosen Ethiopia for the subject of their discourse, believing they could not more pleasantly romance, or more safely license themselves to fasten improbabilities upon any other country (Ludolf 1684:1-2).

Ludolf cites as two major offenders the evidently fictitious Giangiro Bararti, whose *Late Travels ... into the Remote Country of the Abyssines* (1670) may well have provided the source of Rasselas's 'happy valley' (Kolb 1978:13), and Luis de Urreta, who was described by Samuel Purchas as 'a Spanish friar and liar' and about whose history of Ethiopia (1610) Purchas remarked 'I know not whether his book ... hath more lies or lines' (Purchas 1625/1905:7.412). Ludolf could have mentioned several other works and more were to appear after his time, such as Simon Berington's *Memoirs of Signor Gaudentio di Lucca* (1737) and the pseudonymous Drake Morris's *Travels* (1755), both of which invoke a utopian Ethiopia, and, of course, Dr Johnson's *Rasselas* (1759).

Merely to dismiss such works as at best moral or political allegories set in an exotic site or, at worst, foolish fabrications misses an important point. Their choice of Ethiopia is not accidental, but is evidence of the continued interest in and debates surrounding the location and identity of the 'noble Ethiopia' of classical literature. Such works are part of the fall-out of much more serious debates about the origin and nature of African polities and complex political structures that obviously did not conform to the alternative 'savage Ethiopia' paradigm. So, for instance, James Bruce's most remarkable *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile in the Years 1768-1773* (1790), while constituting the first serious and extended first-hand description of Abyssinia in English, grappled with the actualities of Ethiopian custom, court and culture even as Bruce also developed a bizarre historical theory to explain how the Ethiopians of Axum, ancestors to the people he met, could have founded first Meroe and then the glories of Dynastic Egypt. That Bruce was completely on the wrong track does not diminish the seriousness of his enquiries or his willingness to explain African realities in terms of indigenous rather than external dynamics.

Nor did such endeavours to square myth with actuality come to an end during the final European opening up and scramble for Africa. W.G.L. Randles showed long ago (1959) how the Shona culture of Mashonaland was depicted in terms strongly reminiscent of Prester John's Ethiopia by writers from Joao de Barros onwards, not only to compensate for the rapidly diminishing status of Abyssinian Ethiopia, but also as a way of romanticizing a complex Bantu polity. At the time of the British Abyssinian Campaign of 1868 it was once again the ancient myth of a 'noble Ethiopia' and the Solomonic succession of Ethiopian kings that was invoked to explain the charismatic power of King Theodore II over both his subjects and foreign observers (Hotter 1868; Stanley 1874:270; Matthew 1947:188). John Buchan tapped into the same tradition for the enigmatic protagonist and apocalyptic theme of his political romance, *Prester John* (1910), set in the Eastern Transvaal. The myth suffuses the African re-

manors of Rider Haggard, and it inspired the enormous international interest which the coronation of Haile Selassie attracted in 1930, as evidenced by Evelyn Waugh's attempt to demythologise it in *Remote People* (1931). Moreover, it lies at the root of the millenarian and internationalist Rastafarian movement which the same event brought into being. Until well into the twentieth century Abyssinian Ethiopia has commonly been described as an archaic, patriarchal world frozen in biblical time. David Matthew detected 'aspects of the Christian world in Abyssinia which seems to suggest not so much Byzantium as the late Middle Ages' (1947:176). As late as 1972 Duncan Forbes thought that

> this undoubtedly is the Christian Church as it was: as it was before the Reformation: as it was in Byzantine times (Forbes 1972:152).

is confirmed and capped by one of the most eminent living Western authorities on Ethiopia, Edward Ullendorff, who describes a land 'forcefully reminiscent of the Old Testament world' in every respect (Ullendorff 1968:3). But perhaps the most sensational contemporary manifestation of the lasting power of the myth of a 'noble Ethiopia' is the tragic recent history of Rwanda, where part of the trouble between Hutu and Tutsi stems from a tradition, actively promoted by nineteenth-century missionary anthropology, that the Tutsi were not of Central African or Bantu origin but formed a Hamitic aristocracy of Ethiopian origin (De Waal 1994). That myth could have such terrible results may condemn it, but does not discountenance the myth. On the contrary, its power and hence the need to take it seriously as only deconstruct and the more devastatingly.

The aspect of the dialectical trope of two contrastive Ethiopias in the early colonial mythography of southern Africa is not difficult to demonstrate. One can begin with the Adamastor episode in Canto v of Camoes's *Lusiads* (1572), where it is clear that Camoes confronts Da Gama's encounter with Adamastor as a rite of passage, a transition from the 'savage Ethiopia' of one part of the tradition to the 'noble Ethiopia' of the other (Van Wyk Smith 1988a). This is obvious from the careful flanking of the Adamastor episode by two strongly different encounters with the Khoi, the western one with the dull treacherous, the eastern idyllic and pastoral. Further evidence is to be found in the standard southern African topography of early Portuguese cosmography with which Camoes would have been familiar, according to which the Cape of Good Hope marked the southern limit of the boundary between Africa and Asia. According, for instance, to Duarte Pacheco Pereira, whose *Esmeraldo de situ orbis*, compiled between 1505 and 1508, was the first complete pilot or *roteiro* of the Portuguese sea route to India, the Nile was the dividing line between Africa and Asia. This was an ancient idea, but what was new was that Pereira placed the Mountains of the Moon, Ptolemy's sources of the Nile, at the Cape, and then argued:

> ... that this promontory of Africa comes to an end in the Ocean, and is divided from Asia, from this point the boundary of Africa runs due north following the course of the Nile, through the midst of the Indies as [into the land of] ... to furnish on the Sea of Egypt (Pereira 1937:155).

Many early maps of Africa show this massively elongated Nile, and the myth of a southern African Nile source related with David Livingstone, who died in what is now Zambia looking for it (Livingstone 1874), and the Voortrekkers, who gave Nylstroom its name because that is what they thought it was.

Such a bizarre reading of southern African geography only makes sense if we acknowledge the power of the myth of two Ethiopians and assume a presupposition on the part of early writers that in southern Africa would be found an interface between two radically different Ethiopias or Africas such as once existed between the 'noble Libyopians' of Kush, Meroe and Axum and the 'primitive Libyopians' of the Sudan. Such a distinction is exactly what emerges from early southern African ethnography. As I have already indicated, the Khoi were persistently identified as the primitives of classical record. It was not accidental that by the end of the eighteenth century, when Jacques Boucaut sought a Biring analogy to distinguish the Galla of Somalia and southern Ethiopia from the 'true' Ethiopians he should have found it in the Khoi: the Galla 'greatly resemble the Hottentots' (Bruce 1813 3:249). By contrast, the Nguni peoples became candidates for the role of 'noble Ethiopians' almost from the moment they were first encountered. In the very year that Bruce published his *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (1790), a reviewer of Francois le Vaillant's South African *Travels* surmised that the Xhosa were 'Cushites':

> We strongly suspect that they have emigrated from Abyssinia ... and if we do not admit of their being Cushites we may at least derive their actions from the emigrations of Solomon, perhaps the colonists of the country (*Critical Rev.* 1790:47).

A few years later John Barrow produced an Ethnology of Khoi, San and Xhosa which confirmed these analogies and became canonical for much of the nineteenth century. Of the San he wrote: 'The sketch nearest drawn by Dioscorus Siculus, of some of the Ethiopian nations, agrees exactly with that of the Bosjesmans' (1801:1:259). The task to rehabilitate centuries of vilification of the Khoi, 'the many ridiculous and false relations by which the public have been abused' (1:152), but found the power of myth hard to combat. The Xhosa, however, walk straight out of the pages of Herodotus:

> The men ... were the finest figures I ever beheld: they were tall, robust, and muscular: their habit of life had indeed a firmness of carriage, and an open, manly manner, which, added to the good nature that overspread their features, viewed from a due

> to be equally a confusion of fear, suspicion and treachery. A young man about twenty, of six feet four inches high, was one of the finest figures that perhaps was [sic] ever created. He was a perfect Hercules: and a cast from his body would not have disgraced the pedestal of Diana's deity in the Farnese palace. Many of them had indeed very much the appearance of bronze figures (Barrow 1801:1 169).

Similar descriptions and heroic illustrations to support them can be found in the work of Samuel Daniell and Ludwig Alberti, and in George French Angas's famous lithographs, *The Kaffirs Illustrated* (1849).

The encounter between white and black on the Eastern Cape frontier did not, of course, remain a merely aesthetic one as the nineteenth century wore on. However, as a more antithetical and complex perception of the Xhosa developed among white observers, the paradigm of the 'noble Ethiopian' was simply transferred to the Zulu. Dan Wylie (1995) has demonstrated conclusively the excessively constructed nature of the white image of Shaka Zulu, and the extent to which it drew, right from the start, on classical and Renaissance iconology, involving figures from Saturn and Polyphemus to Adamastor. What is furthermore remarkable is the correspondence of many early representations of the Zulu to those of Meroitic Ethiopians. Here, for instance, is C.H. Calderwood writing up a group of 13 Zulus whom he and his father had taken to exhibit in London:

> The Zulus are a fine, handsome race, bold, fearless, and commanding in appearance ... In shape tall, robust, and athletic, good humoured, frank and pleasing in manner; and with a dignity of carriage and an openness of eye indicative to the beholder of manliness, courage and natural independence (Calderwood 1853:179).

We are approaching here, of course, the broader, persistent and complex myth of the Zulus as a proud warrior people, about which I do not wish to say any more than that it was variously bolstered by allusions to a northern or Ethiopian source of or influence for Zulu culture. The belief crops up in Hugh Malleneux Walmsley's *Natural Curiosities of Zululand* (1869). His 'Zululand' is in fact the Manicaland of Monomotapa and Great Zimbabwe fame. Egyptian and Ethiopian avatars shadow Haggard's manipulation of the Zulu in his Africa romances, while Charles Barter's ambitious epic poem, *Stray Memories of Natal and Zululand* (1891), feels constrained to oppose widespread 'Suggestions of a northern clime' (87) in accounts of Zulu origins. What lies beneath such beliefs seems to be a substructural blending of anthropology, history and myth, a schematic attempt to make sense of the great Nguni migrations. That there was a long, slow movement of Bantu-speaking peoples from east to southern Africa is now generally acknowledged, as is the fact that, in Monica Wilson's words, the

> Nguni show marked similarities in economy, local grouping, law, ritual, and symbolism with the cattle people of the Sudan, Uganda and Kenya borderlands (Wilson 1969:122).

The possibility of a strange confluence here of myth and scholarship brings me to a conclusion.

I would suggest that in the vast body of Western or European or early white colonial writing on Africa, the Ethiopia metaphor, the dialectic myth of two kinds of Ethiopia, constitutes a perceptual grid that has revealed new dimensions at least as often as it may have encouraged obfuscation. The persistence of this binarist construction of African difference demonstrates the need for myths that do not merely explain, but actually provide the discursive mechanisms for explanation and rebuttal. I believe that the Ethiopia metaphor provided a cognitive scheme through which (and perhaps only through which) non-Africans could articulate their responses to people whose alleged perceived as very different from themselves. Although the polarising thrust of the paradigm of a 'savage' and a 'noble' Ethiopia encouraged excessively 'natural' views of African people often enough, its very excessiveness also generated debate and discussion, while its range could both elicit and accommodate comparative appraisal. Unless we assume that there is an essential African which must either be wholly captured by or wholly escape non-African discourses, we must accept the facilitating power of myth in cross-cultural representation. The question that is not whether the mythic perceptions that Europeans brought to bear on their encounter with Africans were 'right' or 'wrong' or 'good' or 'bad', or should have been different, but whether any meaningful engagement at all could have taken place without such explanatory mythographic goals in position.

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Wilhelm Heinrich Immanuel Bleek (1827-1875): His Contribution to the Study of Southern African Cultures[1]

Walter Köppe

Jakob Grimm (1785-1863) and his brother Wilhelm (1786-1859) have become a household name through their collection of fairy tales (1812 & 1815 Vols. I & II), they are the foundation for modern Germanic Philology through their research in the fields of Mythology and Comparative Linguistics, which resulted in among others two volumes of *Deutsche Sagen* (German Sagas), a *Deutsche Grammatik* (German Grammar) and the first three volumes of the thirty two volumes strong *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (German Dictionary) completed in 1960—in much the same way Wilhelm Heinrich Immanuel Bleek has made an opening for the study of African Languages and Literature. Born into a family of scholars at a time when Goethe (1749–1832) and Hegel (1770–1831) were still alive, a contemporary of Marx (1818–1883) and Darwin (1809–1882), with first hand experience of the German Revolution of 1848 in Berlin, where he first 'politicked' with Jakob Grimm who was then delegated to the first but short lived German Parliament in Frankfurt—he was formed in his methods, thoughts, ideals and values by a socially founded democratic tradition of scholarship. This is the first of a series of papers examining these roots through Bleek's early publications as well as unpublished documents with the aim of highlighting a significant intercultural exchange between Europe and Southern Africa in the nineteenth century, the extent and importance of which is only being fully realised now.

My own interest in Wilhelm Heinrich Bleek the philologist, was created through my interest in medieval literature. I thought it fascinating to study the minds of people of a world some 500 years old, simply by reading their literature—treatises, epics, poetry, romances ... and I say 'simply' because a good many pieces of this literature, especially the romances, are so very enjoyably readable — to me that is, and they are easy to understand — in terms of their own structure which they are not shy to hide

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Medieval romances I would call mythological fairy tales, the unveiling element between the mythological and the fairy tale being the ferment of christianity in its various substitutions. Through the presence of Christ's love, blood and redemption and its substitution through courtly love, jousting and rewards, the heroic tale of old is folded and transformed into something new: the tale is split into two; two heroes, Parzival and Gawain, dividing the same path into two different ways of adventures with one sanctification in the end only. The mythological/heroic and the fairy tale/neo-/modern hold apart and in balance.

Not so simple or coarse is the task of approximating the partorient mindset of those people, some 800 years ago, the emotional postures of their producing and reproducing such literatures and how they were meant to perhaps facilitate them as mindsetting tools. But that might after all be the trivial a question within post-laws of postmodernity where there is no apparent coast for retrology.

Through further exploration into the realm of fairy tales proper – I'm grateful within the context of Germanic philology and there in the first instance relating to the collection of folk lore material by Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm – I came upon the equally famous collection of Southern African Folklore: *Specimens of Bushmen Folklore* collected by W.H.I. Bleek, Ph.D. and L.C. Lloyd, edited by the latter. London 1911. In paging through, two texts held my initial attention and have subsequently never failed to touch me. I quote from the translation into English. The first text of Bleek & Lloyd's *Specimens* is called 'Kitchie's Capture and Journey to Cape Town'. (first Account given in May 1871):

> I came from (my place), I came (here), when I came from my place, when I was eating a springbok. The Kafir took me, he bound my arms. () We (that is, I and my son, with my daughter's husband, we were three, when we were bound opposite to (?) the wagon, while the wagon stood still. We went away bound to the Magistrate; we went to talk with him; we remained with him.
>
> We were in the jail. We put our legs into the stocks. The Kotannas came to us, when our legs were in the stocks; we were stretched out (?) in the stocks. The Kotannas came, and put their legs into the stocks; they sleep, while their legs were in the stocks. They were in the house of prison (?). While we were eating the Magistrate's sheep, the Kotannas came to eat. We all ate, I, we and the Kotannas.
>
> We went; we ate sheep on the way. () while we were running to Victoria; our wives ate their sheep on the way, as they came to Victoria.
>
> We came to (at) Cape-as-in-Victoria, while we worked at the road. We filled stones with our chests, we rolled great stones. We again () worked with earth. We carried earth, we (?) the earth was upon the man's barrow. We turned earth, we loaded the wagon with earth, we pushed it. Other people walked along. We were pushing the wagon's wheels; we were pushing; we pounced () down (the earth, we pushed it back. We (again) loaded it, we and the Kotannas. () the Kotannas were carrying the murdered-

> one. Other people (i.e. first one) were with the Kotannas; they were also carrying earth, while the earth was upon the headbarrow. They again came to (at) the burial barrow with earth.
>
> We again (as I've already said) bound to the wagon's barrow, we walked along, while we were fastened to the waggon's man, as we came to Beaufort, while the sun was hot. They (our arms) were set free in the road. We got tobacco from the Magistrate. We walked, going along, with sheep's bones. We came into Beaufort jail. The rain fell upon us, while we were in () Beaufort jail.
>
> Early the next morning, our arms were made fast, we were bound. We splashed into the water; we splashed, passing through the water in the river bed. We walked upon the road, as we followed the waggon, while the waggon went first. We walked upon the road, as we followed the waggon, while the waggon went first. We walked, following the waggon, being bound, until we, being bound, came to the Breakwater. () On the way, we ate sheep as we came to the Breakwater; we came to (at) Cape Town.
>
> () A white man looks to meet the man in the night. We early saw the train; the train ran, bringing us to the Cape. We came to the Cape (as at home) when we were tired, we and the Kotannas; we lay down to sleep at noon.

My first reading is thereby [illegible] masked by a reading evoked and remembered on Paul Celan's *Todtnauberg* (1952):

> *Schwarze Milch der Frühe wir trinken sie abends*
> *wir trinken sie mittags und morgens wir trinken sie nachts*
> *wir trinken und trinken*
> *wir schaufeln ein Grab in den Lüften da liegt man nicht eng*
> *Ein Mann wohnt im Haus der spielt mit den Schlangen der schreibt*
> *der schreibt wenn es dunkelt nach Deutschland dein goldenes Haar Margarete*
> *er schreibt es und tritt vor das Haus und es blitzen die Sterne er pfeift seine Rüden herbei*
> *er pfeift seine Juden hervor läßt schaufeln ein Grab in die Erde*
> *er befiehlt uns spielt auf nun zum Tanz*
> *Schwarze Milch der Frühe wir trinken dich nachts*
> *wir trinken dich mittags und morgens wir trinken dich abends*
> *wir trinken und trinken (...)*
>
> Black milk of dawn we drink her at dusk
> we drink her at midday and morning we drink her at night
> we drink her and drink
> we are digging a grave in the sky one does not lie tight there
> A man stays in the house who plays with the snakes who writes
> who writes when it darkens to Germany your golden hair Margarete
> he writes it and steps out of the house and the stars are glistening he whistles for his dogs
> he whistles for his Jews for them to dig a grave in the earth

> He commands us let's fiddle for a dance
> Black milk of dusk we drink you at night
> we drink you in the morning and at midday we drink you at night
> we drink and drink (...)

I think it is the simplicity of rhythm, the naive but pleasing flow and ebbing of words, the vastness of a final meaning that I experience here and this experience has a ring of truthfulness to it and I think it is because of its non-proclamation of truth. This text induced experience suggests to me a particular reality which is present in the text but not entirely; which is there within myself but not exclusively there either; nor does it exist within the speaker's mind alone—it is a shared reality which can only become real when and while it is shared. It is a reality in waiting. A reality which will become true if it is not invoked again and again and will simply fall away and be replaced by other realities if not invoked again and again.

My second reading takes /Kabbo's account of capture and journey to be literature and, well, a piece of as much as mythological as of a fairy tale nature. Why? There is a feeling of weariness with the hero, a feeling of strength, of focus and directedness. There is a hero to begin with. And there he is following a path set out for him, to be followed, for him to see as if it was his real life — which it is as much as it is not — because his world and the world of these adventures do not coincide, they are not really the same, even though they are very much what they are: centuries, experiences, hard labour .... How the two are brought together one does not know: the element of strangeness living estranged from one's place in a way ultimately purposeful, yet beyond the hero's own reasoning —that is fairy tale stuff, that is mythological material because it contains duplicity, the otherness, the other side of that that does happen and it points towards an end, an end that will become the long ending of a new tale — in other words: my second reading of /Kabbo's 'Capture and Journey to Cape Town' takes it for me into the frame of listening to a medieval romance.

The second text I want to quote from Bleek/Lloyd's *Specimens* is *//Kabbo's Journey in the Railway Train (Long Mosebury to Cape Town and back.)*

> I have said to her that the train (the wagon) is fine. I call it only a fine train. We two sat in (it, we (?) and a black woman.)
>
> A woman did seize my arm; she drew me aside, because I should have fallen, therefore she drew me in. I sat beside a black man; his face was black; his mouth (was) also black, for they are black.
>
> White men are those whose faces are red, (?) for they are handsome. The black man, he is ugly, thus his mouth is black, for his face is black. The black man then asked me, 'Where do you come from?' I came to the white man; I come from his place'. The black man asked me, 'What is its name?' (?) I said to the black man, 'My place is the Bitterputs'

This text strikes me because of its final statement: 'My place is the Bitterputs'. Listening/reading/remembering with a (post-)19th century European literally conditioned mind, this one sentence alone is richly connotated with associations of epic qualities: 'The Bitterputs', the 'Brixton Prison' of Bleek, the 'Robben Island' of today ... that is epic stuff.

I have so far treated these texts quite literally as narratives. I have also set aside, in the words of Hélène van Vuuren (1994:69)

> our task to romanticize on with the so-called originality of the Bleek & Lloyd collection because these texts have been preserved in a 'pristine' state in the Western sense.

Apart from the many questions raised by Hélène van Vuuren as to for instance Wilhelm Bleek's steps in transcribing the spoken Bushman dialect and then translating it into English — which by the way he had started to learn in 1848 while studying in Berlin[7], or the artificiality of the narrative context, to which the Bushmen narrators had to go (colonial) — apart from these and related issues within the context of the 'project' of 'reconstruction of the /Xam's oral tradition' (Van Vuuren 1994:62) I would like to focus for a moment on three aspects: the concept of text, the idea of origin and the question of *Erkenntnisinteresse*. The term *Erkenntnisinteresse* — a rather instantly used term in academic writing in Germany from the late 1960s through the 1970s — is meant to indicate a socially responsible *raison d'être* of the creation of a researcher's project: to what end the research is undertaken and who in the community would be served by the ensuing knowledge: those already in power or those wanting to liberate themselves from ignorance. The greatest form of course was one—within the South African developments of today—might again be: to be aware of political power play. Bleek himself was a keen political observer. His letters from Berlin, written during the revolution of 1848 to his parents in Bonn, show the analytical mind of an actively participating observer (see note 5). Throughout his rather short life, Bleek has repeatedly considered this aspect of *Erkenntnisinteresse*. I am very interested in contextualising this particular aspect from the point of scientific reasoning at the same time I cope with the romantic notion of a collective tradition, the body still partially intact in bits and pieces of fairy tales but dying out and rapidly being replaced by a culture of objectified production, then the idea of evolution as natural (re)search for origins and sources: the sources of rivers, of peoples and their cultures.

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[7] Bleek's letters to his parents, written mainly from Berlin and Frankfurt, c. 1848–1850. (C.U.L. Library: The Bleek Collection, sign. G.U.L.C.6)

the origins of language, of history, eventually of mankind. I quote from an author in *The Cape Monthly Magazine* Vol. IX September 1874:129) 'On Inquiries into Australian Aboriginal Folk'lore':

> I consider it my duty to put aside for a time but, to me, very important work of a comparative Grammar of the South African languages, and try to rescue, while it was still possible, something of the language and literature of this dying out nation. The result of these researches, undertaken under the auspices of the Government of this Colony, has exceeded my most sanguine expectations, although we have as yet gathered only to a small extent the rich mine of Bushman traditional literature.

The second aspect, the idea of origin, needs to be explored. Fresh evidence has just been produced in that respect, as to civilisations that had flourished long before our time and having disappeared virtually without a trace[1]. That in turn points to the direction of a third aspect. I want to touch upon briefly the idea of text. Thus we will have to abandon the more traditional ideas about texts as documents, having an origin or and a specific format. We also might then have to abandon the more traditional ways of interpreting what there will have been a text in the old format. I am partially and very tentatively pointing toward interdisciplinary research in the field of cognitive science and brain research in particular. To give but one simple example, nerve endings of brain cells in the newly born need constant stimulation to connect and become active. Repetition becomes the very base of our laying the pathways in the neural network for the acquisition of knowledge. The physiological and the intellectual are mutually interlocked. From repetition to memesis, via shift, this *différance*, might well be the swing of poetry, a rhythmical reaching out and returning, the mythical moving of the spirit upon the face of the waters. Text as a written document would then be a script, notation, musical score, cryptogram. And reading such a text could in fact amount to nothing more than reading out numbers. I want to think in the direction of liberating the text from academic constraints and forcing it so that, in the words of /Han|kass'o

> [...] that I may (!) sing, listen to the stories which yonder come (?), which are stories which come from a distance. /Han|kass'o explains that a story is like the wind. it comes from a place, quakes, and we feel it'. [...] Then I shall get hold of a story from them, because they (the stories) float out from a distance while the sun feels (?) a little warm, while I feel that I must altogether visit that I may be talking with them, my fellow men (Bleek/Lloyd 1911:301).

[1] I am referring to Graham Hancock, Fingerprints of the Gods. A Quest for the Beginning and the End (1995). Of the few traces left of earlier civilisations, some are presumably kept in my fatherland Iran.

When I analyse very closely W.H.I. Bleek's work in relation to the work of Wilhelm and Jakob Grimm in subject matter, in method and in that particular German spirit of the time, which is romantic, anti-intellectualist, quite fiercely democratic and deeply in love with the philological journeys into medieval times and all manners mythological, I began to think it worthwhile to explore those roots, traditions, sentiments, theories of origin and evolution of languages and cultures – but not, and that, I think, could make such a research so interesting, not in the direction of past European History, but to explore an African Culture, storing in its powerful texts of the mind to survive over thousands of years and to assess the changes, the damages, the adaptations and the challenges that have occurred and still have to be faced vis-a-vis a culture of different dimensions, strength and power.

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'Moon, Man, Women, Bushmen: Reconciling the Irreconcilable?'

Henriette Roos

A direct impulse for the paper I am presenting today[1], was my reading of some of the contributions to the third issue of *Alternation* (2.1:1995). That the journal published by the CSSALL so demonstrably encourages ongoing research and dialogue in the field of its specific interest, must bear testimony to the relevance and validity of both the Centre and the journal in present day South African culture and scholarship.

In the introduction by Smit (1995:1-4), as well as the writings of Meintjes (1995:16-36), Meintjes (1995:37-45) and the book review by Van Wyngaard (1995:151-154), certain key words and themes linked not only the essays written by the individually inscribed authors, but also encapsulated, as it seemed to me, the pervasive atmosphere of uncertainty, complexity and multiplicity (amongst [literary] scholars) when discussing notions of aesthetics, value, power, knowledge, feminism, nationalism, history and racism. To paraphrase Smit's introductory paragraph: Are in themselves these essays demonstrated that in present day South Africa, the study of the notions listed above, is indeed following an 'interdisciplinary route unfolding' through processes of interaction and 'at ultimately focus[sing] on the local'. To quote again (paraphrase Smit):

> A few of these key words and common notions raised, from the case on which the articles of my own arguments is constructed, arguments relating to the phenomenon of fragmentation in South African texts published during the past decade. These notions concern aspects of genealogy, cultural differences, history, feminism and literary form. My argument is that exactly these notions form a motivational cluster which [contextualises] the phenomenon of literary fragmentation, and that they are motivations directly related to some ideological discussions in South Africa today.

What I have identified as instances of 'literary transculturalism' came to my notice as part of a greater research project currently in process, namely the effort of rewriting Afrikaans literary history within the context of an encompassing Southern African literary whole. During my readings, a significant number of reptile scenarios, themes and devices appeared across a wide spectrum of texts written in Afrikaans and English and (according to older literary historians, they are also present in Black indigenous writing) during the last decade, but specifically during the past five years. In a paper read at the ICLA conference in 1994 and recently published (Roos 1995), I proposed that amongst others, the heightened occurrence of translations from one South African language into another, the novel which presents 'personal history as part of the documentation of the greater South African story', the 'exorcist mode', the interest in orature and the publication of verbal narratives, and the renaissance of folklore and fairy tales, are common signs that speak of a marked transcultural movement in South African literature today. As a demonstration of this phenomenon, I went into greater detail to show how one of these themes, namely that of the exterminated world of the Bushman, has been assimilated, appropriated and transformed in modern day texts. That several of the essays in the above mentioned *Alternation* concentrate on aspects of this same issue, indicates that these statements were not entirely subjective.

Since then, my initial interest which led mainly to the descriptive 'what' I had seen as a 'literary event', has broadened to include the question of WHY this specific image should suddenly 'enjoy' such a conspicuous position. Especially in the case of Afrikaans writing, but also with reference to most 'White' writing, there seems to be a rather paradoxical regard for a world that has become all but totally extinct, physically and culturally, precisely through the annihilating disregard shown to that world in earlier times by White colonists. And in a more academic context, the clearing for of the extent and range of this particular assimilation of an 'indigenous' ancient African world also offers new perspectives on the question of the genealogy and cultural boundaries of specifically Afrikaans literature.

Regarding the notions of 'genealogy' and 'cultural boundaries', their inherent multiplicity of meaning, and the almost self evident result of uncertainty which follows any dialogue about, or analyses of, their function in textual studies, must be emphasised. In the first place, I see the current interest in genealogy not as a simple search for origins, but rather stems from a renewed realisation and the experience that the past lives in the present. Foucault (1977:142) wrote that

> what is found at the beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity.

and

> the search for descent is not the erecting of foundations: on the contrary, it disturbs what was previously considered immobile; it shatters what was imagined consistent with itself.

In the same vein the second concept, that of cultural difference/boundary, does not so much refer to a state of established difference, as to

> articulating the difference between representations of social life without suppressing the space of incommensurable meanings and judgements that are produced within the process of cultural negotiation (Bhabha 1990:313-314).

But then also, continues Bhabha,

> in the restless drive for cultural translation, hybrid sites of meaning-production develop in the language of culture which suggests that the similitude of the *sign* as it plays across cultural sites must not obscure the fact that repetition of the sign is in each specific social context, both different and differential.

In this particular instance the symbol, which I shall call the 'Bushman-*motif*' for the purposes of this paper, is a multifaceted one, referring to the world of the Bushman, that nomadic group of hardy hunter-foragers who were the earliest known inhabitants of Southern Africa, and who left not only a countryside filled with marvellous rock-paintings and engravings, but, before they were exterminated by White settlers, also left some glimpses of their mores we can be known. Some of those 'cultural sites' and 'social practices' as they are manifested textually, the different repetitions of the sign, and a hypothetical motivation for those differentials, are what I would like to discuss here today.

From the list of texts given as references, the diverse nature of the relevant sites and the recent date of their production can be deduced. Popular fiction, prize-winning novels, docunovels, scientific reports, collections of poetry, autobiographies, art exhibitions, philosophical treatises, children's stories, books for coffee tables are included—a veritable postmodernistic 'cultural stew'. And as is to be expected in a postmodernistic space, defining the literary/critical boundaries between genres, meaning and intertextual reading a dilemma proved to be very difficult when discussing these texts.

Perhaps one may impose a self-styled order by referring in the first place to the essentially oral nature of Bushman narratives, and the manner in which this characteristic has been presented in the writings mentioned on my list. The prime source of Bushman folklore preserved for Western consumption, is the famed collection by Bleek and Lloyd from 1911. A paper read at the 1995 OSSAL conference (Koppe 1995), gave a detailed account of the subsequent influence of that early text. I would like to draw attention to the diverse nature of my list of modern day analogues. The most reputable probably is the 1998 collection by Megan Biesele of oral narratives from the Ju|'hoan people living in Namibia and Botswana. The author, a famed anthropologist, presents her 'translations' as faithful renderings of transcripted performances; the work is the result of years of scientific research, illustrated with photographs and maps, the style precise and erudite. Also presenting itself as a recording of Bushman narratives,

is the glossy publication by Coral Fourie (1991). But this is a book of a different order: the 'transcriptions' are accompanied by stylised drawings of the numerous narrators and highly decorative illustrations done by the editor, interspaced by lyrical, often cloyingly sentimental 'quotes' from what is called 'Bushman songs'. And yet, both collections reveal an explicitly feminist tone, letting the spotlight fall on female narratives, emphasising the pivotal role of women in the Bushmen society, focussing on narrations concerning menstrual rites, childbirth, and the (feminine) image of the moon. The third analogous text is of a completely different genre; this is the collection of poetry by Stephen Watson, titled *The return of the moon* (1991). Here the well known poet rewrites the Bleek transcriptions, saying in

> living the words of the narrators to life once more, and in such a way that they might continue to speak for those who are alive in the last decades of the twentieth century (Watson 1991:11).

A remarkably similar mood is created in the work of the Afrikaans poet Petra Müller. In a collection of poems published in 1987, she uses images from the world of the Bushmen, and especially the myth of the returning moon, to speak of the mortality of man. Speaking in this vein, one must also mention one of the most known Afrikaans novels of 1993, *Kanferbos Testament* by Estelle Viljoen. In her story of transformation and intervention, the moon as a recurring, portentous image, one of the central characters is the shamanistic homeopatic healer Willie who once was saved from certain death by a small group of Bushmen, and the narrative mood is decidedly feminist, commenting tellingly on the power games that men play.

Displacement, dispossession and the conflict of race and gender form a second group of 'social practices'. One important category is made up of scholarly research reports mainly by scholars in Anthropology and the Social sciences. The range here stretches from the analytical and ethnologically sound *Hunters and herders of Southern Africa* (1992) by Alan Barnard (1992) to the riveting and passionately written description of what may be seen as ethnocide, Robert J. Gordon's *The Bushman myth. The making of a Namibian underclass* (1992). This latter work makes good use of state and church documents, photographs, analyses of movies, museum exhibits and other 'Western' depictions of the Bushman people. Gordon stunningly represents his theory that the focus on the 'difference' between and messianic alterity of colonist and Bushman, promised the nature of the white man's discourse on Bushmen and the life-belief that they must disappear from the face of the earth. But a second and sometimes just as interesting category is that made up by fictional works. *Die laaste van die Boesmanne*, a short novel by Dolf van Niekerk, depicts the growing enmity between a desperate white farmer and a Bushman who suddenly appears on the drought stricken

farm, looking for ancient engravings as a proof that the land rightfully belonged to his forbears. Their struggle forms the central plot line, simultaneously incorporating topical situations like land restitution and primeval shamanistic experiences. Set in much earlier times, both Geoffrey Haresnape (*Thaliomoor* 1990) and Karel Schoeman (*Hoerikwaggo* 1994) touch on similar themes. Schoeman's prize winning work is the story of a dying old woman, recalling her spiritual life on a lonely farm. Some fragments of her talk refer to the callous dispossession of land belonging to Bushmen. In Haresnape's novel, the narrative form is that of an oral report by a woman of ill repute, a social outcast, describing the last decadent days of a nineteenth century rural community during which also the few remaining members of a Bushmen clan were hunted down. But this is also an intensely lyrical text, and in the narrator's final song of salvation images from Bushmen myths interminglе with allusions to Christ. The repeated references here to the moon, linked to the occult, and the idea that the characters, by means of naming people, animals and plants, can attain mystic dimensions, also occur in the previously mentioned book by Viljoen.

Bushman narratives concerning the transformation of people into animals and *vice versa* and the ominous part played by the moon in this magical world, have for a long time been regarded from a Western perspective as subject matter for children's tales. Especially in the Afrikaans literary tradition, fragments and adaptations of the Bushman world readily found its way in stories written for young readers and as Van Wyngaard (1994) indicates, even the Van Wielligh collections of folklore intended for the adult reader, were judged as too simplistic to be included in the literary canon. The two small books recently published by Hannelie du Preez, *Kgalagadi Tales* (1994, 1995) present this conventional view of the Bushman as primitive child, only half human, at its stereotypical best. In her patronising "word to parents and teachers", the author claims that these stories are

> truly primitive ... in the style and spirit of the Bushman ... and children serve to them a kaross for which trackers are at no pains to tan.

Just how widespread the acceptance of this viewpoint may be, can be indicated by the fact that these booklets with their clumsy illustrations, were translated into sixteen different African and European languages and sold/are selling very well. But claims as to the childlike quality of the Bushmen would can not always be taken at face value. One of the most revered texts of classic Afrikaans literature, *Dawid-stories* by Eugène Marais, is a collection of four lyrical tales preceded by a strikingly misleading foreword in which the author describes his writings as tales of little meaning, childlike, literally translated from stories told by old Bushmen. And then he confronts his reader with some extremely complex and sophisticated narratives, in which the authentic depiction of the harsh African veld, a world of thought and images and transmogrification, becomes a stunning indigenous manifestation of the nineteenth century symbolist mode. This structural 'exploitation' was repeated, and in my view extremely effectively, in John Miles' docunovel *Kruisik tot die dorpie* (1991). The real but still unsolved murder of a young black policeman by his fellow officers, who feared that he would inform on their involvement in their operative death squads, is reported by Miles as resulting in structural patterns typical of the Bushman oral art, but also with explicit references to characters, episodes and even specific phrases taken from the Bushman stories 'edited' in 1927 by Marais (Roos 1993).

In popular fiction the symbol and its different signs have become very noticeable in the last few years. Two authors seem to dominate this trend. Piet van Rooyen won the competition run by the glossy magazine *Die Kat* in 1993 for his novel *Die vyeboom* (1994), a tale of animals, the hunt and shamanistic hallucinations. The main character, a Namibian Bushman incongruously called Paul Chaplin, uses his remarkable knowledge of his people's traditional way of life to act as a policeman and spy for white farmers. The very topical question of divided loyalties and lost identity forms the central theme, but is treated in a rather superficial way. Even less convincing is Wessel Kruger's *Twee van die Kalahari* (1994), which humiliatingly writes the prejudice of the primitive, animalistic nature of the Bushman world. In both cases the authors have also published autobiographical texts, in which references to their fictional characters and events abound. The most interesting is Van Rooyen's *Agter 'n vlooi aan* (1995): not only is the real life person of Paul Chaplin extensively described, but the author's personal involvement with the Ju|'hoansi people of Nyae-Nyae, his dealings with the world famous Marshall foundation and Megan Biesele and his matter of fact style create an unexpected but credible linkage with other textual sites.

I do think that even this cursory review demonstrates how, by its pervasive presence in such differing texts, the Bushman motif makes it possible for notions of aesthetics, power, culture, history, feminism and racism to be explored. This exploration must take cognisance that nowadays there is a great and world-wide interest in folkart and folklore, in rural crafts, in meeting with different cultures. The introductory essay to *Contested images*, a collection of scientific reports on Rock art research edited by Dowson and Lewis-Williams (1994:3-18), stresses the "remarkable power of [this art to arrest the attention of the modern viewer]". This very fact was demonstrated by an impressive exhibition of ancient rock art paintings and engravings, together with modern day popular crafts, held in Rotterdam in the Netherlands at the beginning of 1994, and called "The return of the moon. Bushmen art from the Kalahari".

The textual power of the Bushman motif may partly lie in such a nostalgic longing for a bygone world; in modern man's often innately naturalistic wish to "return to nature". Andrew Smith (Dowson & Lewis-Williams 1994:359) cynically refers to the Bushmen as the

> original ecology is. They are presented as an admonition to those who degrade the environment today. This is a comfortable view to prevent any colonials because it provides ammunition for which the Bushmen can be admired but which, at the same time, removes them from the political arena. It reduces the guilt of the European nation by placing the blame squarely on the inevitable destruction of the environment consequent upon colonial expansion. The shooting out of game and the decimation of Bushman communities become closely related, even in cause. Not unfortunately nor unaware, Mr.

(As an aside: I must refer here to the text written by Coral Fourie. The production of this book abounds with ironies, especially in the context of Andrew Smith's words. Not only is it published by an elitist group named 'Fitzgerald', but according to the short biographical notes, many of the original oral performances were given at the Ohrigstad SADF base. Having had access to the subservient Bushmen soldiers stationed at this notorious military camp, the editor's credentials appear somewhat suspect.) But to return to the question of guilt: certainly also in a political sense the casting of Bushmen as characters in stories about racial conflict and the dispossession and restitution of land is an easy way of fictionalising contentious issues. After all, very few claimants to the disputed land are left. Gordon (1992:212-214) convincingly argues that the treatment of the Bushmen in Namibia anticipated the racial ideologies of Nazi Germany, not that forgetting or rationalising of colonial experience comes easier than in the case of the European holocaust. However, in many of the above mentioned texts the white man's guilt is the central concern. The final paragraph of *Die spoorsnyer* ends in a question: *'Wie sal die skrywer en die vreemde gesukkel weet?'* (Van Rooyen 1994:117). By touching on this sense of wrongdoing, even if it avoids the really topical, the narratives partake in the rewriting of the history of Southern Africa.

The markedly feminist mood displayed in so many of these texts may be seen as a different form of rewriting history. By accentuating that relationships of equality characterised these ancient societies, the struggle for gender equality in modern day life gains unexpected support. Biesele (1994:88) defines the nature of Bushman tales as 'organic pictures of the balance and interweaving of the powers of women and men'. Mysticism and the power of the subconscious are related notions in the reports on rock art research, through the retelling of oral narratives and even in the modern novels where only allusions to the Bushman motif appear, strong emphasis is placed on the spiritual, the unseen and the striving for a harmonious relationship between the everyday and the inner worlds.

Regarding much of what has been said, one may come to the conclusion that the present prominent position of the Bushman motif very loosely is just another fashionable trend. In describing the nature of so many displays of rock art in museums today, Andrew Smith also laments what he sees as the 'manipulation of "the Bushmen" in popular literature, advertising, land, the manufacture of souvenirs for tourists ...'

(Dowson & Lewis-Williams 1994:399). It is therefore noteworthy that on its back page blurb, the autobiography by Piet van Rooyen is approvingly compared to *A Year in Provence*, that tremendously popular and very trendy European fake.

I, however, would prefer to interpret the reappearance of this motif in a positive light. Megan Biesele (1994:47) states that

> stories play a part in managing and motivating social energies in a desirable way. ... stories are makers of sense ...

In a similar vein it may be argued that through these recurring images conventional boundaries are extended and overturn, the present literary activities are inspired by the cultural past, a reappraisal of a common, but long neglected heritage is done. Particularly in the case of Afrikaans literature where stories about and from the Bushman world have often been told, the latest crop does reveal a new attitude. Traditional perspectives about the genealogy and aesthetics of Afrikaans literature are challenged as what used to be peripheral now becomes prominent.

Whether only echoing it or hopefully in some instances ensuring it, these texts participate in a transcultural South African discourse about new beginnings, changing values, and broadened histories. Gordon (1992:220) concludes about the present scientific attitude that 'much of post 1980s Kalahari scholarship is emphasizing ... not difference but similarity and ... [is] strong integrationist overtones'. And in a literary context too, what may seem to be irreconcilable can be reconciled: stories are makers of sense.

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Noble Savage and Ignoble Savage: Changing Perceptions in the Early British Period

D.W. Lloyd

The responses by travellers and missionaries to the black peoples they encountered on the colonial borders of the Cape during the first years of the British occupation reveal an important shift from positive notions about blacks to perceptions of savagery which justify imperial expansion. Generally, other races are seen in terms of stereotypes which are projections of the European travelers' preoccupations. This is perhaps not surprising, because on the colonial frontier the travellers and missionaries encountered new peoples and situations. In the absence of detailed information about these peoples, the Europeans were forced back on themselves in order to provide a framework that could make sense of their experiences. In so doing they often created a construct - the 'Other' - everything that the European is not. As Frantz Fanon points out, reality is seen in Manichean terms in which the self and the Other are radically sundered (Fanon 1968:41).

From a Jungian perspective, the ignoble savage can be perceived in terms of a European shadow self, for it is an Other that "personifies everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about himself ... for instance, inferior character traits and other incompatible tendencies" (Storr 1983:221). However, ideals can also be projected on to the Other (Whitmont 1969:169). This could explain the origin of the idea of the noble savage.

After the Khoi in Table Bay attacked Vasco da Gama's party in 1499, the pre-Christian European view of these people was negative. Reports of the horrors suffered by Portuguese castaways further tarnished the image of southern Africa. It is not surprising, then, that Luis de Camoens chose to present a negative portrait of the Cape in his epic *The Lusiads* (1572). Adamastor, the guardian deity of the Cape, is presented as an ignoble savage. Stephen Gray comments on Adamastor:

> he is alternately evil and inflated, and seen always a barbarian ... his responses are essentially childish and they obey rather than satisfy needs: he is capable of love, but only cruelly

> ... he is likely to foment rebellion against those keeping cheating, but not as intelligent, so that his strength of arms is to be counteracted with superior ingenuity ... he represents heathen sin as well, will only be reclaimed by Christ (Gray 1979:97).

In short, Adamastor represents all that is dark and irrational, which has to be subjugated by the enlightened European spirit. This constituted the dominant stereotype of indigenous inhabitants of southern Africa for the next two hundred years.

After the Dutch, under the leadership of Jan van Riebeeck, established their station at the Cape, many European visitors arrived and commented on the Khoi. Perhaps the most influential narration of exploration before the first British occupation of the Cape was that of François le Vaillant (travelled 1781-84)[1]. Immense ideological changes had occurred in Europe since van Riebeeck's time, which enabled le Vaillant—a student of the French enlightenment—to entertain Rousseauesque ideas of escaping from the confines of European civilisation to be free to encounter uncontaminated nature[2]. He specifically wanted to meet mankind in a natural state for, like Rousseau, he believed that civilisation corrupted man and "in an uncivilized state man is naturally good" (le Vaillant 1790,II:124f). Of the Gonaqua people, whom he met on the western side of the Great Fish River he says:

> I had here an opportunity of admiring a free and brave people, who fear nothing but independence, never obey any impulse foreign to nature, and calculate only to destroy their imaginations, heart and body of unadulterate nature (II:4).

The predominant trait that is fine in the 'savage' is found in

> his beloved Narina. When he engages in a charming flirtation on the wooded banks of the Great Fish River, le Vaillant's material style is remarkable in southern African travel literature, as he frankly and sensuously portrays his love.

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1 In the Dutch period, the three narrations of exploration in southern Africa before le Vaillant's travels in the sub-continent are those of Peter Kolb (1719), Anders Sparrman (1775) and William Paterson (1789). In her examination of the writings of Kolb, Sparrman and Paterson, Marie Louise Pratt (1992:41-70) notes that Kolb, in his accounts of indigenous inhabitants, engages in dialogue which (like le Vaillant) gives a more benign discussion to his representations than that of Sparrman and Paterson, who were influenced by "Linnaeus' 1758 classification of humans" (Pratt 1992:45). Pratt argues that Sparrman and Paterson, unlike Kolb, saw the indigenous peoples of southern Africa as scientific abstractions, and, that seeing others as objects is a prelude to imperial domination. However, in that Kolb, like Sparrman, and Paterson presented indigenes as non-noble savages.

2 Peter Knox-Shaw (1984) on 'The Explorer and Views of Creation' discusses le Vaillant as a disciple of Rousseau.

For le Vaillant, the Xhosa are not noble savages. However, he was aware of atrocities committed by both Dutch commandos and Xhosa warriors in the First Frontier War that had ended only a year before his travels on the eastern borders of the colony. In attempting to justify the validity of his impressions he resorts to a trope which was to be adopted by numerous liberal-minded commentators that were concerned with the colonial frontiers. He complains that the Xhosa had been slandered by the Dutch border farmers in an attempt to justify their own rapacious actions to the colonial authorities. Colonial whites on the frontiers are seen as vicious, slothful and corrupt whereas blacks are innocent and preyed upon. Thus, if the Xhosa pillaged, burned farms and murdered some of the owners, it was only done in self-defence. Le Vaillant argues:

> What I have learned confirmed me in my opinion that the Caffres in general are a mild, less and peaceful people, but that having been continually oppressed, plundered and massacred by whites, they had found themselves reduced to the necessity of taking up arms in their own defence (le Vaillant 1796: 1).

He is 'convinced that they would be capable of daring me, attempting my life, or robbing me of my effects' (II: 26). However, the traveller has moments when he offers another construct of the Xhosa, which is illustrated by his reflections on the wreck of the *Grosvenor* off the Pondoland[5] coast:

> I was told that an English vessel had been shipwrecked on the Coast, but being driven ashore, a part of the crew had fallen into the hands of the Caffres, who had put them all to death, except a few women, whom they had carefully reserved for their own use (I: 306).

Survivors of the wreck mention suffering abuse, but no one was killed and no woman was raped[6]. Le Vaillant has given credence to an incident which portrays the Xhosa as viciously slaughtering helpless men and raping innocent women. His sympathy for the suffering victims involves him in a moment of conflict between his Rousseauesque ideals and his penchant for the exaggerations of eighteenth-century sentimentalism. In effect he dismisses the noble savage to pander to European fantasies about Adamastor.

Le Vaillant's contrary views arise from his perception of African and Africans as the Other. Where possible he projected his ideals onto the non-European peoples of southern Africa. However, in so doing he was interpreting Africans in terms of a Western ideology and making them serve the demands of that system of thought. But to deny the non-blacks the full humanity as they exist as ideological abstractions. This is why, it would appear, that, as demands diverge, layers of either can occasionally become figures of menace. Despite the contradictions in le Vaillant's depiction of the Xhosa, he nevertheless inaugurates a tendency of perceiving blacks (especially the Xhosa) on and beyond the colonial frontiers as noble savages. As in any trend there were exceptions, yet this perception of black peoples lasted well into the next century.

While le Vaillant's account of his journeys can be regarded as being in the confessional because he subjectively relates his experiences, the most important writer about the frontier, John Barrow, writes in a scientific, objective style that attempts to eliminate his presence in the text. This is not surprising, as he is a scientist collecting information about a colony that had, in 1795, been acquired by Britain. Barrow's most striking encounters with the people of southern Africa occur during his first journey to and beyond the eastern frontier in 1797. Because of his scientific brief, he seldom depicts direct action or subjective interaction but, instead, as Marie Louise Pratt has pointed out, he offers his readers anthropological sketches:

> The portrait of manners and customs is a naturalizing discourse whose work it is to easily difference, to fix the Other in a timeless present where all [its] actions are repetitions of 'his' normal habits ... He is a set *always* easily comprehended only a list of features (Pratt 1985: 127).

As a result of Barrow's scientific approach both blacks and whites are reduced to ethnographical specimens – abstract ideas, not subjects possessing their own individuality. For him, individuals exist only as anonymous members of groups which have essential and unchanging characteristics. If the ethnographical portrait is to be scientifically valuable it must be seen as objective, hence references to the subjective are eliminated. The observer functions as a recording mechanism, a transmitter of information. This information, because it is objective and, hence 'true', can declare the real nature of the Other. The Other becomes 'fixed' in a stable set of norms. This is specially important on the colonial frontier where the traveller encounters other peoples who have to be accommodated within a given system of thought, thus rendering that which is strange more comprehensible.

Although Barrow is severely critical of le Vaillant's sentimental approach to Africa, the scientist persists with the Free Dream's stereotypes. Thus, the further Boers are 'monsters of sin and sloth', whereas the Xhosa are 'fixed' as noble savages[7]. His most eloquent description of the tribesmen is:

[5] The people inhabiting the Pondoland coast were not, in a narrow definition, Xhosa, but Pondo. As a stranger in a strange land, le Vaillant understandably conflated the two very closely related peoples and presented to Europe a stratified zone of violence.

[6] Percival R. Kirby in his *True Story of the Wreck of the Grosvenor* (1960: 131).

[7] J.M. Coetzee in 'Idleness in South Africa' from *White Writing* (1988: 30) comments mainly in relation to Boer 'sloth'. Concerning the Xhosa, Coetzee (1988: 32) mentions how the Spartan simplicity of the Xhosa lifestyle and their consequent 'freedom from the more debilitating aspects of civilization' are ideals 'the British public school system would later try to reproduce'.

> There is perhaps no nation on earth, even collectively, that can produce an finer race of men as the Kaffers: they are tall, stout, muscular, well-made figures. They are exempt, indeed, from many of those causes that, in more civilized societies contribute to impede the growth of the body. Their diet is simple; their exercise of a salubrity rather, than any is neither interrupted nor encumbered by clothing; the air they breathe is pure; their rest is not disturbed by violent love, nor their minds filled by jealousy, they are free from the licentious appetites which frequently more proceed from a depraved imagination than a natural want: their frame is neither shaken nor enervated by the use of fermenting liquors, which they are not acquainted with: they eat when hungry and sleep when nature demands. (Barrow 1801:204ff).

Barrow uses the generic portrait of the Xhosa in the above passage to argue that civilisation produces a way of life which impedes the growth of the body to its full potential, disturbs the mind and depraves the spirit: whereas if a man lives in accordance with nature, he fully develops his physical aspects, has a pure imagination and is balanced emotionally. Coming from a Britain undergoing an industrial revolution which caused hundreds of thousands to labour in abject poverty, live in slums, malnourished and pacified by huge quantities of penny gin, it is not surprising that Barrow saw Xhosa life as idyllic[6].

The plight of the working poor also generated a revivalist Evangelical movement, spear-headed by John Wesley (1703-1791). The Evangelicals not only attempted to minister to the needs of the poor in England, but they also sent missionaries to Africa. Thus, about the time that Barrow was encountering his Xhosa, missionaries were already arriving at the Cape. The Evangelicals were also partly responsible for the liberal movements in British politics which led to the abolition of the slave trade in 1807.

Thomas Pringle, one of the more remarkable writers of the early British period, was deeply stirred by the Christian revival and political liberalism. Numerous poems such as 'The Bushman', 'The Hottentot' and 'The Captive of Camalie' all stress the wrongs done to the indigenous population from a liberal Christian point of view. Pringle's major prose work is *Narrative of a Residence in South Africa* (published in 1835 as the second part of Pringle's writings about southern Africa, with the overall title, *African Sketches*). The *Narrative* can be divided into three sections. In the first, Pringle attempts to come to terms with his new environment as well as the frontier Boers. In the second, he is in Cape Town where he clashes with the governor, Lord Charles Somerset, about the freedom of the press. After this explosive altercation, Pringle no longer relies on his Christian and liberal sentiments and a polemical strain

[6] Barrow knew all about hard labour. His parents belonged to the rural poor and in order to gain an education he worked as a clerk in an iron foundry in Liverpool (Lloyd 1970:16).

emerges in his writing. In the third section of his narrative, he returns to the frontier and is fully prepared to champion the Xhosa as noble savage oppressed by exploitative whites.

One of the expressions of Pringle's sense of the noble savage occurs in his journey from the frontier to Cape Town. The ideas of justice and humanity are outraged when in a Bezuidenhout gun a 'diminutive savage' (Pringle 1835:168) – actually a Xhosa youth who

> was truly a model of juvenile beauty – and the mild, yet manly expression of his fine black eyes and ingenuous open brow, bespoke confidence and good will at first sight (Pringle 1835:169f).

In the gaol, we are presented with a contrast between a vision of colonial oppression, attested to by the vile conditions prevailing, and an embodiment of the grace and fortitude of the oppressed. Like Barrow, Pringle stresses physical perfection, candour and calmness of spirit. The trope is continued as Pringle subsequently argues that, while the youth did commit a crime, he was forced into it by the murderous attitudes and actions of the frontier Boers (120). Hence, as with Barrow, the Boers are ready to blame for the situation.

In the last section of the Narrative, Pringle is similarly outraged by the British authorities' treatment of Maqoma, the 20 regent of the Xhosa nation. After outlining the sufferings of the innocent and noble Xhosa, he concludes with what could be called his credo:

> Let us open our arms cordially to embrace the black tribes of southern Africa as MEN and BROTHERS. Let us enter upon a noble career of conquest. Let us subdue savage Africa by JUSTICE and KINDNESS and the talisman of CHRISTIAN TRUTH. Let us thus go forth to extend the moral influence, and, if thought to be desirable, the territorial boundary of our Colony, and it becomes an Empire (Pringle 1835:479).

There can be no doubt about the sincerity of Pringle's liberal Christian sentiments: he regards blacks both as men and brothers. However, the imperial rhetoric somewhat contradicts his noble vision, for imperial subjects are seldom the equals of their rulers. By projecting ideals of justice and Christian truth onto the Xhosa, he has made of them a talisman—a symbol—not actual people who may have their own ideas about life, belief and action.

Although Pringle's ideals continued to be promulgated by men such as Rev. Dr John Phillips during the 1830s, the tradition of the noble savage was a dying one (Fairchild 1928:303). Because slavery in the Empire had been freed in 1834, some of

the imperials in representing blacks and Khoi as wronged innocents was diminished. More importantly, the sufferings of British soldiers and settlers during the 1845 Frontier War helped in the eclipse of the tradition. It is difficult to expound one's opponents' nobility if one is at the receiving end of the assegai. Another factor contributing to the demise of the noble savage stereotype was the Mfecane Wars that raged for approximately a decade on the Highveld as a result of the expansion of the Zulu empire and the depredations of people such as the Griquas, who possessed firearms[7].

One of the best-known examples of Mfecane violence occurred in 1824, when Rev. John Moffat's mission at Kuruman was threatened by the Matlatees[8], a people displaced by the Mfecane. He called on the Griquas to help him. The Griquas defeated the invaders, and after the battle Moffat reported that Bechuana (Tswana) tribesmen attacked Matlatee women and children:

> When the enemy wounded many of the females were cut behind, who perceiving mercy was shown to them by the Griquas, ... called out 'I am a woman, I am a woman'!
>
> But this touching appeal had no effect on the hearts of the relentless savages (the Bechuana), who now rushed upon them ... butchering in cold blood, the helpless women and children, and bearing with them but as trophies, the heads from the bodies for the sake of some paltry ornament (Thompson [1827]1967: 139-140).

From Moffat's account of the situation of the sub-continent, a picture emerges of a land plunged into pointless violence, where life is nasty, brutish and short. There is scarcely a place of noble savages. The conclusion can easily be drawn that it is the task of the humane European to rescue the benighted African from his plight. Indeed, this provided a rationale for subsequent imperialistic policies[9].

[7] The exact cause, even the existence, of the Mfecane has been debated (Eldredge 1991:1-21); however, modern thinking is not relevant concerning the impact Thompson's 1827 account of the battle (see next paragraph) may have had on the contemporary readership. Although this is a second-hand report, related to Thompson by Moffat, I have chosen it to represent something of the prevailing attitudes in the colony at that time because Moffat's own account was only published in 1842. Thus, Thompson's version of the battle would have had a powerful impact on British stereotypes of indigenous peoples in the region.

[8] The Matlatees were named after their Queen Regent, MaNtatisi. They are more correctly named the Tlokwa, who were displaced from the north-eastern Orange Free State (Bethlehem area) by the refugees from imperial Zulu expansion. (For a discussion of the effects of the Mfecane see Elphick and Giliomee 1989:521-582.)

[9] Patrick Brantlinger (1985:167) maintains that negative attitudes towards central and west Africans crystallised in the 1840s - a little later than in southern Africa.

Moffat's influence was great because in 1829 Mzilikazi, king of the Matabele, declared that all travellers had to proceed via Kuruman in their northward journeys. One of the more important guests at Kuruman was William Cornwallis Harris, who hunted on the Highveld plateau during the mid-1850s. Because he was primarily interested in big game, his reports about people tend to be laconic; however, his descriptions of wasted villages and whitening bones are all the more powerful for their terseness[10]. Perhaps the most influential traveller to pass through Kuruman was David Livingstone, later Moffat's son-in-law. Livingstone's principal aim was to save Africans from the horrifying effects of the Arab slave trade. In his *Missionary Travels and Researches in Southern Africa* (1857), he argues that the introduction of Christianity would give Africans the moral strength to resist slavery; greater economic prosperity would undermine the practice and enable the people to be 'possessed of firearms' which would discourage the attacks of slavers (Livingstone 1857:675). Prosperity would be achieved by 'encouraging the Africans to cultivate for our markets' (675). Furthermore,

> by the production of the raw materials for our manufactories, African and English interests will become more closely linked than heretofore, but both countries will eventually be benefited, and that the cause of Freedom throughout the world will in some measure be promoted by it.

His aim is somewhat similar to those of Pringle's 'creed', even if Livingstone lays greater stress on the Victorian notion of material progress. Like Pringle, he does not quite fully appreciate that Africa can only be a junior partner in an imperial venture, indeed, the exploited partner. However, unlike Pringle, Livingstone does not represent Africans as noble savages, but brutalised savages in need of redemption as well as moral, material and cultural 'elevation' (673).

Yet, Livingstone does not portray blacks as universally savage or actively ignoble; this representation emerges in the contemporary colonial novel about southern Africa, which did not have to be tied to facts in the same way as the travelogues. In *The Missions, or Scenes in Africa* (1845), by Captain Frederick Marryat, R.N. hero, Alexander Wilmot, searches for an aunt just after the wreck of the 'Grosvenor', and, while some perceptions of blacks are inexcusable, Alexander's real thoughts about 'Caffres' emerge when he discovers his aunt had died: 'you don't know ... what a load has been

[10] Northern (1961:145) deals with Moffat's relationship with the Matabele king.

[11] Harris (1838:298) mentions 'scientifically' examining the crania of Bechuanan remains. The impression that I have is that he was not heartless as the Moffat had simply been too busy ravaged as decomposing corpses on the Highveld.

removed from any moral' because 'he [his great-uncle] has no grandchildren living the life of a heathen and knowing no God' (Marryat 1845,I:319). Obviously, living the life of a savage is worse than death itself. Accounts of black cruelty, derived from Moffat's description of the slaughter of the Mantatees, further endorse the idea of black savagery. The Xhosa are also guilty of atrocities for when the Mantatees flee eastward, they 'may be said to have been exterminated, for the Caffres (Xhosa) spared neither man, woman, or child .... their destruction was horrible' (II:71).

The stereotype of the savage, whose life was nasty and brutish, had by the 1850s and 70s become so entrenched that R.M. Ballantyne, author of *The Coral Island*, could, in his novel about southern Africa, *The Settler and the Savage* (1877), safely assume the endorsement of his metropolitan audience when he characterizes Hintza, the paramount chief of the Xhosa, as a man who 'possessed in a high degree all the vices of the savage—implacable, avaricious, cunning, and cruel' (Ballantyne 1877:304). The novel is silent about any possible 'virtues' of the savage.

Forty years previously Pringle had vehemently defended the Xhosa as now they wear the mask of Adamastor, as do other black peoples of the sub-continent. The transformation of the indigenous peoples from noble savage to ignoble savage is complete.

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Hunter, Trader and Explorer? The Unvarnished Reminiscences of H.F. Fynn

J. Pridmore

At the time of Farewell's trading expedition to Port Natal in 1824[1], English writing was fairly well established in the context of the Cape Colony (Ross 1993:192-204). From the beginning of the nineteenth century, a specific genre of travel writing had emerged in the Cape and when the first writers began to describe European activity in the interior, they followed the dominant patterns established by this framework (Pratt 1992:58-69). Broadly speaking, the kinds of literary depiction that had evolved by the 1820s were based on the essential differences between Europeans and indigenous people and during the 1830s, this Cape colonial discourse crystallised into what Crais has termed a dichotomy between 'Empire and the Savages' (Crais 1992:125-131).

Utilising Fynn: Early Writing on Natal 1830-1850.

In January 1829, two Cape travellers, Alexander Cowie and Benjamin Green, crossed the Mzimvubu river and proceeded to Fynn's *factory* on the Mzimkhulu where they were hosted for a few days. Fynn escorted them to Dingane who provided them with supplies and permission to harvest ivory from *ivori* under his jurisdiction on their way to Delagoa Bay where they planned to open further trading networks. The expedition was unsuccessful and on their return journey in April 1829 they contracted malaria and died from the disease (Leverton 1989:176). A 'Hottentot' servant of Fynn's had accompanied the ill-fated expedition and he returned with their travel notes which Fynn then forwarded to J.C. Chase, a prominent eastern Cape colonist (Kirby 1968:190-193) who then constructed an official report for the colonial office (Kirby n.d.:184). Chase realised that Fynn was an important source of information on the interior and in December 1829 he wrote to him requesting written material on indigenous peoples in the Port Natal hinterland and historical information on Shaka[2].

[1] My paper to the Southern African Society for Eighteenth Century Studies Conference, 27-30 September 1995 (University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg), aimed to explore the literary context of Fynn's early Cape description to 1834.

[2] NAFP 1.1. Chase to Fynn, 10 December 1829. This abbreviation (NAFP) is used throughout to refer to 'Natal Archives, Fynn Papers'.

Although Chase did not utilise this material until he published his book on Natal in 1843, his contact with Fynn in 1829 marked the beginning of a trend in using Fynn as a source for written depictions of the Natal region. From 1831, Robert Godlonton, the eastern Cape landowner and politician and editor of the settler-founded paper, *The Grahamstown Journal* (Le Cordeur 1981:64) relied heavily on Fynn for both letters and editorials on Natal. The gist of the Fynn-based material which appeared in *The Grahamstown Journal* was clearly biased towards Europeans and contained derogatory remarks about the 'hostile disposition' of indigenous peoples[3]. English officials like Andrew Smith and traders like James Collis also sent reports based on information which they obtained from Fynn to Godlonton's paper[4]. In 1835, Godlonton published his own narrative of the frontier conflict of that year and used material which he had gleaned from Fynn to substantiate his argument for the necessity of immediate official British rule over inherently anarchical African societies to the north of the Cape Colony. Shaka and Dingane being instances of the kind of 'violent disposition' displayed by local rulers (Godlonton [1835]1965:1-61).

Godlonton was not the first Cape merchant who realised the significance value of negative depiction in order to encourage official British involvement in Port Natal and its valuable commercial hinterland. As early as 1832, Nathaniel Isaacs, a trading acquaintance of Fynn, had written his now infamous letter in which he pointed out the importance of portraying the Zulu as 'bloodthirsty' so that the British authorities would realise the necessity for colonial control in Natal[5]. Although based in St Helena and West Africa from the 1830s, Isaacs continued to urge Fynn to publish, repeatedly stressing the utility of published works in persuading the government to formally annex Natal[6]. In his own book, published in 1836, Isaacs idealistically constructed Shaka as the worst kind of tyrant (Wylie 1991:70-91) and depicted his atrocities as the excessive actions of a psychopath (Wylie 1992a:410-418). Fynn's work ([1836]1936:30-71, 79), Fynn was the perfect counterpart to Shaka and he carefully juxtaposed the two individuals as the representatives of civilised humanity and sub-human savagery.

J.C. Chase, in the meantime, had continued to obtain material from Fynn and

[3] See for example, *The Grahamstown Journal* 12 August 1831, 27 September 1832, 29 November 1832, 17 June 1834, 7 August 1834.

[4] *The Grahamstown Journal* 15 June 1832, 28 June 1832, 24 August 1832, 26 September 1832, 22 November 1832.

[5] NAFP 1.10. Isaacs to Fynn, December 1832.

[6] NAFP 1.12. Isaacs to Fynn, 20 June 1836; 12th Isaacs to Fynn, 7 September 1840.

ing the 1850s and during the 1840s, realising that this information was valuable in arguing for Shaka's association he published his collection of manuscripts as *The Natal Papers* (Chase 1968). Included in this publication was a lengthy description of Shaka, probably originally obtained from Fynn, not similar to that in Isaacs' 1836 book. Chase denigrated Shaka in the most negative terms, portraying him as a 'South African Attila' who had been responsible for the death of one million people (Chase 1968:20). Unlike Isaacs, however, he did not deploy Fynn as counterpart to Shaka and instead used Fynn as a dependable source on the 'History of the tribes' and their helpless positions as fugitives in the wasteland which had resulted from Shaka's atrocities. For Chase, Fynn's evidence of the traders' actions in providing patronage for these people under their collective 'chieftainship' was written, and therefore indisputable proof, that the communities in Natal were in urgent need of the benefits offered by British rule (Chase 1969:94). Chase's publication represented the beginnings of an official 'settler' historiography of the Natal region (Smith 1988:59ff), just as Donald Moodie's work *The Record* had marked the onset of a general South African historiography between 1838 and 1841 (Ross 1993:102f). By the time of the official annexation of Natal in 1843, there already existed a considerable literature on the region's past, many accounts being based directly or indirectly on Fynn's earliest observations in the 1830s.

Colonial Natal 1850-1855: Contextualising the Fynn Text

Upon his return to Natal in 1852 as a colonial official, Fynn was well established as an accepted authority on the region. In 1850 Bishop Gray, on a reconnaissance trip to Natal had consulted Fynn for information on the African people in Natal[5]. Gray based his own ideas on Fynn on the images propagated by Isaacs and Chase that Fynn had been a 'chief' over refugees in Port Natal (Gray 1850:88-102). This notion of Fynn as someone who had had intimate knowledge of the indigenous communities in Natal, was, by the 1850s, a widely accepted concept and it was important in providing a basis for the way in which he was viewed in the colony. In 1852 Fynn's supposed knowledge of tribal lore a position as an interpreter for Pine's commission on land distribution in Natal and his 'evidence' on Shaka's 'devastation' of the region[6] became the foundation for the European history of the colony which emerged during the 1850s (Wright 1989:213).

[4] NAP: I.6. Grant to Fynn, 14 November 1834

[5] NAP: 2.219: Gray to Fynn, 26 March 1850; 2.132. Gray to Fynn, 27 May 1850.

[6] *Proceedings and Report of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Past and Present State of the Tribes in the Districts of Natal.* 1853 pp. 5f

By the mid-1850s, Fynn was not only an acknowledged source of historical information[7], but was also as a Resident Magistrate, a respectable member of colonial society[8]. This was in a sense a continuation of his role as an official in the Cape colony during the 1830s and 1840s and was in marked contrast to his early career at Port Natal. At the time of the traders' initial settlement at Port Natal, the process of 'going native' was to a large degree accepted by colonial reporters as an act freely elected by isolated Europeans who found themselves among indigenous people[9]. In 1832, Godlonton reported in the *Grahamstown Journal* that Fynn and his fellow traders at Port Natal were 'placed (like Robinson Crusoe) out of reach of humanity and its laws'[10]. A notable example of Fynn's partial assimilation into Zulu society was Isaacs' description in his 1836 publication where he portrayed Fynn as practically naked and hardly recognisable as a European (Isaacs 1936:95).

However, during the course of the century the idea of 'going native' became increasingly repugnant to Europeans (Stocker 1975:3), as notions of separate races and inherent differences became more clearly defined in colonial society (Collis 1994:6). By the 1850s, when Fynn constructed his reminiscences, travellers in Natal who met him were pointing out that his living 'completely as a native' was 'probably more from necessity than choice' (Speir 1965:95). By the end of the nineteenth century, individuals who did not know Fynn as a magistrate in Natal in the 1850s were placing him in an established colonial setting and depicted him as a European who had distinct authority over the blacks under his jurisdiction[11]. George Russell, for instance, remembered Fynn administering flogging sentences without so much as looking up from his snuff box. Local Africans who were given these punishments would then 'respectfully' greet Fynn with the title *Inkosi* before leaving his magistrates' office (Russell 1899:171).

Fynn's position as a magistrate in Natal made him an invaluable link between colonial and African society. Officials, settlers and missionaries all viewed him as a source of knowledge on indigenous people[12]. John William Colenso, appointed by Bishop Gray as Natal's first Anglican bishop in 1853, toured the colony in 1854, and, despite his condemnation of colonial attitudes (Etherington 1992:201), he recognised

[7] *The Natal Mercury* 14 April 1863, 21 April 1863, 28 April 1863.

[8] NAP: 3.209: Lanyon Circular to Fynn, 29 July 1853

[9] *Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser* 6 January 1826

[10] *The Grahamstown Journal* 2 August 1862.

[11] See for example: Webb & Wright (1976:277)

[12] NAP: 3.219: Daniel Ludlow to Fynn, 21 October 1856; 3.222. Shepstone to Fynn, 2 January 1857.

Fynn as someone who was as 'well acquainted with the natives' as Shaka (Colenso 1855:216). Fynn's unique knowledge was, for Colenso, that of an expert on the Shakan period and he borrowed Fynn's written notes for his own publication[7] which included material on Shaka's 'continual ravages' on the Natal region (Colenso 1855:x-x), and his behaviour following Nandi's death (Colenso 1855:225-227), accurately recorded by Fynn who was an eye witness to these events (Colenso 1855:216). Colenso also used the information he obtained from Fynn for his 1856 Zulu language publication on the people living in the Natal region prior to and during the reign of Shaka (Colenso 1856:12-2n).

Colonial Natal 1855-1860: Producing the Fynn Text

In 1856, Robert Struthers replaced Robert Moreland as Fynn's clerk and interpreter (Chase 1972:146). Struthers had spent the four years prior to this appointment trading and hunting in Zululand (Struthers 1991:11-3n). As a competent speaker of Zulu, Fynn had no need of an interpreter and later evidence given by Fynn's son to James Stuart suggests that Struthers' main task was secretarial and that he in fact assisted Fynn in collating and writing up his notes during 1858 and 1859[8]. Although Struthers' own hunting and trading reminiscences were not published during his lifetime, his career in Zululand from 1853 to 1896 had been successful and he had made considerable profits during this period (Struthers 1991:15).

Although hunting and trading in the Natal/Zululand region had changed considerably in the period between Fynn's activities in the 1820s and Struthers' trips in the 1850s, it is possible to view Fynn's writing as part of a general nineteenth century 'hunter-trader' literature. Hunting in Southern Africa had, particularly in terms of large game like elephant, moved beyond the Cape by the 1820s as the 'elephant frontier' was pushed beyond the borders of the colony (McKenzie 1988:62). As more European hunters ventured into the interior, the 'hunting journal' became a well established genre in Victorian imperial literature[9]. Stephen Gray has described these hunting texts as a genre which 'epitomizes the pioneering, frontier-type experience' (Gray 1979:97). While Fynn may have recorded the earliest instance of European elephant hunting from Port Natal, this activity was well established in the region by the time that Struthers

[7] NAPP 6,60: Colenso to Pynn, Durban, 23 March 1860

[8] K. Ba. Campbell Africana Library, Fynn Family Papers, File no. 20104, Extract no. 4, Notes on the Life of H. Fynn, dictated to James Stuart by Fynn junior, December 1906, p. 8

[9] Natal's examples are Harris (1844 [1969]), Drummond (1875)

trained to work on Fynn's manuscripts in the 1850s[10]. Fynn's description of a European-sized elephant bull in which sixteen elephant were killed (Stuart & Malcolm 1950:120) pales into insignificance when compared with Struthers' journal where two or three elephant were shot on an almost daily basis (Struthers 1991:39-30).

Oral evidence collected by James Stuart in the early twentieth century points to an increase in elephant hunting in Natal from the 1820s, resulting in European instigated ivory trade from Port Natal (Webb & Wright 1979:141). Fynn, said one informant, was 'the greatest ivory trader' (Webb & Wright 1979:112f). However, archaeological evidence suggests that Farewell's ivory trade from Port Natal, although important, did not occur on any significant scale (Hedges 1978:232-234). Archaeological evidence has pointed to the predominance of Delagoa Bay rather than Port Natal in relation to the 1840s (Hall 1987:126), several years after Fynn left Natal in 1834. Fynn's comment that 'Shaka's consternation was great' on being shown European firearms in action (Stuart & Malcolm 1950:176) is difficult to conceptualise in the context of regular trade with Europeans through Delagoa Bay. Even during the 1850s, when the Natal-Zululand firearms trade was well established, Struthers noted that it was relatively simple for Mpande to obtain arms and ammunition from Delagoa (Struthers 1991:475). Oral evidence from King Cetshwayo in the 1880s suggests that Fynn and the Europeans were important in providing trade goods like blankets rather than firearms (Webb & Wright 1979:91). A final point on the trade issue is Julian Cobbing's argument for Fynn's participation in the east coast slave trade (Cobbing 1992:15-17). This remains contested and there is no coherent material in Fynn's writing to either support or negate this proposition (Hamilton 1993:42-45).

Fynn, like other Victorian writers on Africa, depicted himself as one of the earliest European visitors to the interior, reporting that on one occasion he sent African carriers in advance of his party to a local homestead 'to guard against causing too great a surprise to the people on entering their Kraal, for we were deemed to be the first Europeans who had paid them a visit' (Stuart & Malcolm 1950:173). An early writer of nineteenth century literature on Africa, he was one of the majority of literate recorders who viewed the continent 'from a narrow European perspective' (Davidson 1964:167). By the 1850s, travellers' accounts had become a curious blend of reality and fiction often based on a weapon of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (Knox-Shaw 1987:1430) and there is no reason to see Fynn's (or Struthers') particular travellers' tale as an exception to this trend. Fynn's statement that

[9] Examples of hunting expeditions to Natal are Webb (1990:169-173), Burnett & Craig (1991:19-31)

[10] Laverton 1981:17, Campbell to Bell, 10 October 1878.

> Taking my kafir interpreter, Frederick, with me, I walked round to the head of the bay in search of relics, but we came across none, though we found several footprints (Stuart & Malcolm 1950:60).

contains the main elements in Defoe's novel—the loyal 'Man Friday', the unclothed heads and the suggestive footprints (Pratt 1989:135-139).

Fynn's account also reflected the 'alien' African continent which J.M. Coetzee and other scholars have described (Coetzee 1988:chapter 1; Wade 1993:1-2). This has been a consistent theme from the early 1800 and there is a continuity between, for instance, Barrow's conceptualisation of the 'savage' and innately hostile Cape indigenous communities (Barrow 1802:28) to Burton's 'pallid and sickly green' east African landscape (Burton [1856] 1962:129) and Mostert's Cape Point which he describes as a place of 'the greatest loneliness on earth' (Mostert 1992:5). Fynn's description of the Delagoa Bay hinterland as a place where

> fevers and ague prevail owing to the humidity of the air, the wind bringing with it noxious vapours rising from extensive swamps (Stuart & Malcolm 1950:47),

can be viewed as belonging to the same category.

In sharp contrast to the inhospitable south-east African environment were Europeans' reports of the treatment they received from local communities. Fynn described in some detail the way in which a 'native doctor and several women' successfully treated him for malaria (Webb & Wright 1978:421). He also noted that even people that tried to treat Europeans with suspicion, would never refuse to feed a hungry traveller (Webb & Wright 1978:107). Although later travellers were able to rely on missionary stations for medical care, hunter-traders during the 1830s also mentioned Zulu hospitality. W.C. Humphreys, for instance, on his journey through Mpande's kingdom in 1851, noted that an important headman, Nongalaza ka Ndaba, was 'exceedingly kind' to him (Prideaux 1993:12).

Another thread in Fynn's narrative is his discovery of the wreck of the *Grosvenor*, an East Indiaman shipwrecked on the east coast in 1782 (Stuart and Malcolm 1950:100). Although there had been information available on this wreck from the *Grosvenor*'s survivors since the eighteenth century (Kirby 1953), Fynn stressed his own role in identifying the site of the remains. Images of castaways were evident in Cape-based literature from the seventeenth century (Vigne [1748-1993][1], and the 'discovery' of shipwrecks has remained a fairly common theme in writing on white exploration of the interior (Becker 1985:90-100).

[1] The narrative was written between 1680 and 1689.

Although much of Fynn's writing can be seen as part of a general nineteenth century literature on the South African interior, encompassing a number of European attitudes towards Africa, there is much truth in James Stuart's remark that Fynn stood in a 'category of his own' (Stuart & Malcolm 1950:ix). It was Fynn's (or Smythers') particular vacillating tone that made the Fynn *Diary* into what Cobbing has termed 'the greatest publishing disaster' in South African literature (Cobbing 1988:520). I have elsewhere dealt with the question of Fynn's personal motives in constructing his journal in order to obtain a land grant in colonial Natal (Prideaux 1992:224-226). It was these motives which led him to construct specific images of his own role in Shaka's presence, and these images were produced in the context of colonial Natal in the 1850s.

Although not published until 1888, specific ideas in the Fynn text, for instance that of Fynn's doctoring Shaka were particularly well received by colonial readers as they dovetailed in with white settlers' own perception of their imperial role (Denoon 1988:121-126). Similarly, Fynn's negative depiction of Shaka found fertile ground in the developing historiography of Natal (Wylie forthcoming)[2]. It is these assumptions which have led to the widespread abuse of Fynn as a supposedly authoritative source, particularly since the publication of *The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn* in 1950 (Prideaux 1994:60-72). A comparative approach within the wide context of nineteenth century literature on the Natal region seems to offer a more informed perspective.

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[2] I am grateful to Dan Wylie for shared discussion on the draft of this paper.

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Pringle: The Aesthetics of Empire

Nick Meihuizen

With *Don Quixote*, according to Michel Foucault in *The Order of Things*, 'writing has ceased to be the prose of the world' (Foucault 1974:47) as it was in the Renaissance, when there is an unchallenged continuity between signs and things, or words and world.

> Books, serving quite simply and thus become once more the language of books to the exact extent to which they reveal the marks, natures, and forms (Foucault 1974:47).

This type of resemblance, so clearly understood by the deluded hero, is 'not destruction, but connection'. This distinction prompts the observation that language 'now possesses new powers, and powers pertaining to it alone' (Foucault 1974:47). In the second part of the novel, Don Quixote is clearly recognisable to certain people who have read the first part, as he himself becomes his own text.

> Don Quixote's [sic] is not the relation of the words to the world but the relation, secret and central, which has woven between themselves by virtue of signs. The subtle relation of epic exploits has become the representative power of language (Foucault 1974:47).

As we will see in more detail in this essay, words in Pringle cannot be treated in relation to the lived-world of his readers; end-rhymes are needed to secure them on the understanding, they are not necessarily continuous with the world.

Thus, as Foucault points out, cognitive emphasis shifts from the value of resemblance to that of difference. On the basis of this emphasis on difference, on distinctness, and the 'nominalism' it entails, a new conception of figuration or *aisthesis* comes into being. The modifications involved that affect knowledge include an emphasis on analysis rather than analogy; a displacement of resemblance by comparison (which implies an analysis of aspects of things) and representation (as in the case of *Don Quixote*, where romances are clearly seen to be so many words, as are, by extension, the exploits of the knight himself). A final epistemological modification is the displacement of the infinite play of similitudes by the possibility, at least, of a com-

plete enumeration in the form of a table (such as the tables of genera and species developed by the natural historians).

It is too simplistic to maintain that Classical rationalism made nature more mechanical and calculable. There was a mechanistic flair (offered, for a relatively short period of the last half of the seventeenth century), 'a theoretical model to certain fields of knowledge (such as medicine or physiology)' (Foucault 1974:56). There was also a mathematicising tendency, 'constant and continuous in the case of astronomy and part of physics', but only sporadic in other areas. But, according to Foucault, these tendencies should not be confused with the relation Classical knowledge bears to the *mathesis*, or the 'universal science of measurement and order' (Foucault 1974:47), which implies qualitative ordering as opposed to the merely quantitative ordering of metaphysics. The ordering of elements in a system depends upon an analysis of that system, and qualitative analysis uses a system of symbols, algebra, as an instrument.

If 'genesis' is now freed from the world, simultaneity, although generally rejected, still plays its part, as no relation or order between two elements can be 'accomplished' unless some degree of resemblance occasions their comparison (Foucault 1974:67). Resemblance and signs now respond to one another in a new way. Once the purveyor of precise marks, similitude is 'now the multifarious, shifting, unstable basis upon which knowledge can establish, in its relations, its measurements, and its identities' (Foucault 1974:68). From this base, comparisons can be drawn, through a process of analysis, which culminates in an ordered table of elements.

The goal of Classical knowledge is to achieve the *mathesis* in its wide sense as a general science of order, though it is false. The table is

> a simultaneous system according to which the representations express their proximity and their distance, their kind, affinity and their significative links and thereby the network which constitutes knowledge; makes present their kinship and calculates the relations of order within a parameter 'are'. In this manner the rules of identities and differences may be drawn up (Foucault 1974:72).

As Mary Louise Pratt points out in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, the prime example of such totalising classificatory systems was Carl Linné, more commonly known as Linnaeus. His *Systema Naturae* comprised,

> a descriptive system designed to classify all the plants on the earth, known and unknown, according to the characteristics of their reproductive parts. Twenty-four (and later twenty-six) basic configurations of stamens, pistils, and so forth were identified and then set out according to the letters of the alphabet. Four additional visual parameters completed the taxonomy: number, form, position, and relative size (Pratt 1992:34).

The two poles of the genera, *natures* are taxonomia, the qualitative ordering of complex natures, such as in the work of Linnaeus, and its quantitative counterpart, *mathesis*, in its narrower sense as the ordering of simple natures, which are subject to an algebraic method of analysis. Genetic analysis, or simply, genesis, is at the basis of both the above.

Both human nature and nature are resolved in the notion of genesis. They guarantee 'the reciprocal bond' between imagination as property of human nature, and resemblance as effect of nature. Human nature mobilises the imagination, which, if the source of disorder and vague resemblance, restores order by duplicating representations. It reminds us of the present significance of the same representations experienced in the past. Nature mobilises 'shifting resemblances and the vague murmur of similitudes', thereby, prior to any order resembling itself (Foucault 1974:70). On this basis, analysis follows two directions. On the one hand, we find an analysis that forms

> a universal and concise table of comparisons: the analysis of expression, of resemblance, of presentation, of memory, of all that involuntary intelligence which, even without the mediation of the image, is one

This corresponds to an extent with the analytic of imagination, where the linear 'interim' in representation is transformed into a 'simultaneous space'. On the other hand, we find the analysis that tells of the resemblance between things prior to the 'plural redistribution of their unordered similitudes'. This corresponds roughly with the analysis of nature,

> including the *faculties*, those wonders that confuse the tabulation of beings and scatter it into a series of representations that vaguely and from a distance, inscribable one another (Foucault 1974:69).

In short,

> nature and human nature, with the general ontology implied by the *episteme*, permit the reconciliation of resemblance and imagination but prevent a foundation on them, makes possible, all the empirical sciences of order (Foucault 1974:77).

The remainder of this essay will attempt to cast light on Pringle's attitude to empire, by indicating his relationship with the Classical *episteme*. If he is morally involved in the subject, South Africa, he tempers this involvement with a type of *taxonomia*. Foucault's analysis points to the compatibility of such a *taxonomia* with the imaginative sensibility, or with that access to simultaneities and informing perceptions prior to artistic creation.

If we consider the table pages of Pringle's *Poems Illustrative of South Africa* (1889), we get a clear impression of the tabulatory nature of his project, as hinted in his title. Exotic people, strange experiences, animals and places are offered, as in a catalogue.

> Song of the Wild Bushman
> The Caravan
> The Kloof
> Evening Reflections
> The Lion Hunt
> The Lion and the Ox
> The Hottentot
> The Caffer
> The Bushman
> Slavery
> Camaschoek
> Genadendal (Pringle 1889: iv–v).

Reading the poems we find details drawn from life, 'illustrative' of the life around Pringle, and widely inclusive, considering the flora and fauna recounted in his poems. Thus, in place of a meliorating mythology with figures such as Adamastor, which would stress a continuum of resemblance between Europe and Africa, Africa is, to the best of the poet's abilities, presented in terms of its own distinctness, as this is expressed in the differences of its parts. Africa is not anything like Scotland, the locals are nothing like British shepherds. A sense of analytic discontinuative exactitude is evidenced too in Pringle's notes to his poems, which suggests that he takes this tabulating seriously. Even from the table of contents, then, we obtain a distinct impression of what Pratt (1992: 9) calls 'the emergence of natural history as a structure of knowledge, and the monarchising of centre and interior, as opposed to maritime, exploration', characteristic of the new *epistemes* or unconsciously assumed *epistemological frame for ordering the world*. Pratt sees these changes as inaugurating a totalising *Weltanschauung* of the world, and as thus being instructive of perhaps the most ambitious phase of imperialism. Even to be arrogant site to imperialism, as Pringle is, is not to escape the gaze of one's own 'imperial eyes', which 'look out and possess', if only by means of an unwitting-seeming process of tabulation (Pratt 1992: 9).

The poems comprise the first part of his *African Sketches*, published in 1834. The second part is titled *Narrative of a Residence in South Africa*. Pringle in his notes sometimes refers the reader to this *Narrative*, which then supplements the other notes, and like them, sets up a dialogue with the poetry, creating a circle of representation, where signs refer primarily to other signs. Anything unusual, and because of his desire

to record so much there are many instances of such talk, finds definition in his notes and the *Narrative*. Also, and it is this which helps inform his strongly moral relation to an ever expanding empire, Pringle's use of has recourse to infinity, he believes that Christianity is the basis of eternal perfectibility. Hence we find a concern with the religious dimension of empire, albeit qualified by an awareness of hypocrisy and abuse not at all evident, for example, in Cannon's consideration of Christianity. By Roy Campbell's time this religious dimension has been dissipated by the analytic or attitude, or materialism traced to its logical (and discomforting) extremes. Where Campbell must strive to re-establish a sacral relationship with infinity, Pringle must strive against the contamination of infinity by the baser aspects of empire.

The Pringle family arrived in South Africa in 1820, as part of Britain's move to secure the Cape (which she had taken over from the Dutch in 1806) from marauding blacks. The role of the emigrating settlers was conceived in classic imperial terms by the Governor of the Cape, Lord Somerset:

> The rationale, and notably Lord Somerset, the Governor, steeped in the classics, the only training in sociology then available, thought in terms of the Roman Wall, the legions being in fact military settlements, but regimental warriors (Lewis 1971: 161).

But this colonial attitude was perhaps something of a conceptual vassal. Robinson, Gallagher and Denny, in *Africa and the Victorians* (1981), state that colonial expansion 'was not essentially a matter of empire but of private commercial and cultural influences'. They continue:

> Exertions of power and colonial rule might be needed in some places to provide opportunity and to protect. But empire is not to be thought of as an auxiliary, or in the same way as the liberal state at home. The main engine of expansion was enterprise. Its momentum was attributed to the free energies and aspirations of myriad individual Britons in search of profitable opportunity (Robinson, Gallagher & Denny 1981: 1).

If this is so, particularly from mid-Victorian times on, the idea of empire still formed a backdrop to individual enterprise, with this difference from preceding eras, the emphasis, in shifting from state to individual, heightens the sense of constitutive finitude that begins to dominate awareness from the early nineteenth century. As committed as Pringle is to 'Home', his reformist tendencies, for example, go against the grain of

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[1] Paul Kennedy, in 'Continuity and Discontinuity in British Imperialism 1815–1914', notes '... during the half-century after 1815 the empire expanded by an average of about 60,000 square miles per annum' (Eldridge 1984: 29).

local authority, representative of the state. Thus, the freedom of the press, which Pringle advocated, might soon lead to a lowering of public morale. And so Pringle finds himself standing for individual rights, which are not necessarily commensurate with the good of the state.

Ernest Pereira and Michael Chapman, in their introduction to *African Poems of Thomas Pringle*, indicate Pringle's divided sensibility in a way that gives emphasis to the thrust of the present essay:

> Inheriting the cause of the Enlightenment while retaining the spirit of religious revivalism and romantic idealism, Pringle was ... to be attacked by the Governor of the Cape, Lord Charles Somerset, not only for his 'wrongful' personalities, but for his revolutionary (Jacobin) sympathies (Pringle 1989:xv).

The 'reason of the Enlightenment' implies the Classical *episteme*. I would suggest that this *episteme* is never far from Pringle's perception; indeed, perhaps his African experience contributes to the sense of distinctiveness attached to it. Like Cameron's stay, Pringle's stay in Africa is of limited duration, some six years; he often brings to Africa a very different frame of reference, but appears having embraced something more of Africa than Cameron was able to do. Does this make him more susceptible to the world around him than does that of the colonialist? Is the Classical *episteme* better suited to a more reflexive consideration of empire than the Renaissance *episteme*? One suspects that its advertising tendency leads to a greater regard for specifics and particulars, which might have escaped attention when similitudes hold sway. Thus the 'spirit of religious revivalism and romantic idealism' perhaps goes hand in hand with the 'reason of the Enlightenment' in Pringle's case.

Pringle's *Poems Illustrative of Southern Africa* has as one of its epigraphs lines from a choric lay sonnet by Spenser (1970:4.2), which, however appropriate to all the contrasting (if unconscious) sway of a linguistic imperium, a sway at odds with Pringle's political sentiments. It is unlikely that Pringle ever considered the political implications involved[7] as late as 1928, with the publication of Professor Bentley's *Spenser*

[7] Peter (1990:44–53) distinguishes between the empiricisms of Kolb and naturalists Sparrman and Paterson, notes an increasing emphasis on the difference between Khoisan culture and the European paradigm in the Lichtenstein writings, for Kolb, Khoikhoi culture seemed to exist continuously with European culture.

[8] As George Nadel and Perry Curtis (1964:9), in the Introduction to *Imperialism and Colonialism* (1964), note that 'Because of the existence of Treasure ... the English were not actively interested in the colonizing process'. Most like Raleigh at times in whether *Sir Bentley* or *Queen* had gained valuable experience in the technique of planting colonies on hostile soil through attempts to plant the Lost'.

on Ireland, and, to fact, for many years after, Spenser's 'creative and polemical writings' were 'treated as discrete entities' (Carey in Coughlan 1996:9).

> Rude Rymes, the which a maiste Muse did weave
> In savadge wyse, to Scots dame to Mount,
> And rudely wrought in an vnlearned loome (Pringle 1989:1).

Lear the other epigraph (in Latin), from Lucretius, refers to the Pierian realm of the Muses (Lucretius 1951:94), also tells of the continuing sway of a linguistic imperium and its trappings, which Pringle clearly considers to be benign as do the Romantics, whose politics were similar to Pringle's. Cowper, Shelley, Keats, Thomas Taylor and Blake all have all much in classical culture, but would never be excluded the imperial expansionism with which it is invariably linked in Cameron's. But that Pringle travels to the outposts of the empire *'locos nullius ante trita solo'* ('where no foot has ever trod before'; Lucretius 1951:5th without any initial misgivings regarding the rights of the settler to do so, suggests that he yet participates in the mind-set of the imperialist. Of course, he is soon to qualify his participation in aspects of this mind-set, voiced in the pronouncements of a local representative of empire such as Lord Somerset, who apparently, did all he could to prevent Pringle from succeeding in the colony (Pringle 1989:xxxi).

Virtually all of Pringle's poems exhibit aspects of a tabulating tendency. Typically in his tabulations he evokes *taxonomia* (the logically structured ordering of complex natures, such as in the work of Linnaeus); and he evokes genesis for ordering based on a simultaneity linked to resemblances perceptible in nature and the mind through agencies other than logic, such as superficial similarity and memory). Although one cannot really isolate taxonomia and genesis, it is convenient to group poems according to which type of analytical perspective, in my view, predominates. Thus, of the first type we might include his most famous poem, 'Afar in the Desert', very popular in the nineteenth-century, when it was, of course, extravagantly praised by no less a figure than Coleridge, who declares it 'among the two or three most perfect lyric Poems in our Language' (in Pringle 1989:80). We might also include 'Song of the Wild Bushman', 'The Caravan', and 'The Kosa'. Of the second type, we find 'Evening Ramble', 'An Emigrant's Song', and 'A Noon-day Dream'. Space dictates that I deal only with a representative poem of the first type, 'Afar in the Desert'.

'Afar in the Desert' builds upon discrimination and combination, but is not without recourse to the play of memory. Thus, in the first stanza the strangeness of the experience is offset by traces of 'the Past', which lead to a comparison between past and present, not also, by the end of stanza two, an eventual distinct sublimeness, suitable for recounting the strangeness of the experience.

> Afar in the Desert I love to ride,
> With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side.
> When the sorrows of life the soul oppress,
> And, sick of the present, I long for the past;
> When the eye is suffused with regretful tears,
> From the fond recollections of former years (I. 1-6).

He refers specifically to Scotland, his principal key of comparison:

> And my Native Land – whose magic name
> Thrills to the heart like electric flame,
> The scenes of my childhood, the haunts of my prime,
> All the passions and powers of that rapturous time
> When the feelings were young and the world was new,
> Like the fresh bowers of Eden unfolding to view (I. 15-19).

And yet, apart from the vivid 'electric flame', Scotland is conditioned by vague generality and cliché. Perkins and Chapman observe that Pringle was inclined to be journalistic in his attitudes towards writing (Pringle 1989:xxii), often never moving beyond a surface facility. However, he is provoked at times by his African experience to set aside cliché, and turn to new signs, beyond the reassuring murmuring of repetition and convention which often plagues his verse[4]. Thus the third stanza of 'Afar in the Desert' takes on a uniqueness of its own, where linguistic resemblance (in words from the old country, such as 'fragrant' and 'green') vies with the distinctiveness of the fauna, arrayed in a sequence that does little more than enumerate. But this table suggests the simultaneity of experience in the African wild, which is not constrained by narrational history or the larger 'historical' sequence of epic narrative, say, and verges on science (Pringle is philologically scrupulous in his use of diacritical marks, for example). The table yet conveys immediate perception:

> And in the Desert I love to ride,
> With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side.
> Away – away from the dwellings of men,
> By the wild deer's haunt, by the buffalo's glen,
> By valleys remote where the oribi plays,
> Where the hartebeest, the gnu, and the quagga unite,
> And the blesbok and eland untainted by art
> By the streams of unknown lands enchantingly wild rove;

[4] Let it be granted, however, that Pringle deliberately cultivated a *'very simple* style' (Pringle 1966:77).

> Where the elephant browses in peace in his wood,
> And the river-horse gambols unscared in the flood,
> And the mighty rhinoceros wanders at will
> In the vlei where the wild-ass is drinking his fill (II. 41-52).

It is in conjunction with this stanza that we might first consider Pringle's notes. Again, a discriminative exactitude is apparent:

> The *Oribi* is termed by Lichtenstein the *Antilope Pygmea*, but it is not the same as the *Maam-bok* of the Colonists, or the *Ipun* of the Caffers, an animal from nine to twelve inches in height, which is, I believe, the true *Antilope Pygmaea*. *Oribi* is the Hottentot name of an antelope somewhat resembling the steenbok (*A. Rupestris*), but rather larger, and of a darker brown colour (Pringle 1966:82).

The note has no bearing on the impression conveyed by the poem. It is concerned with classification, and seeks to place its subject in the proper niche in the conceptual grid. In a sense, the *Oribi* in the poem becomes displaced by this grid, or table, which takes on a greater significance than the living creature, emphasising the present contrarity of representation. Similar notes are found dealing with the Cape Gazelle, Hartebeest, Kúdú, and Eland. The name of this last beast draws from Pringle a disparaging observation regarding inexactitude in the application of a conceptual grid; he in fact criticises a type of complacent reliance on resemblance:

> The name of *Elend*, or *Elk*, has been applied to this animal by the Colonists, from some fancied resemblance to the elk of Europe in the same sense as many other names of animals have been misapplied (Pringle 1966:84).

The following stanzas convey a similar impression of simultaneity; there is nothing much else remarkable in them, although perhaps stanza four is more successful at imparting the distinctiveness of the animals.

> Afar in the Desert I love to ride,
> With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side:
> When the brown Karroo, where the bleating cry
> Of the springbok's flocks sounds plaintively;
> And the timorous quagga's shrill whistling neigh
> Is heard by the fountain at twilight grey;
> Where the zebra wantonly tosses his mane,
> With wild hoof spurning the red plain;
> And the fleet ostrich over the waste
> Speeds like a horseman who travels in haste,

> Up to where the mane of Pegasus,
> Where she and her mate have scorched their nest,
> Far hid from the pitiless murderer's view
> In the pathless depths of the parched Karroo (ll. 33-66)

Pringle's main recovering the quagga for use of his search for a 'natural sign', which he establishes through a combination of words, if not all natural in origin (and 'neigh' surely is), then certainly having onomatopoeic value:

> The cry of the *Groogo Quacum* and *noogha*, or *quacha*, is very different from that of either the horse or ass, and I have endeavoured to express its peculiar characteristic in the above line (Pringle 1969:84).

While he assumes the ability of language to relate to the world, he must yet offer guidelines as to the pronunciation of his subject's name.

The concluding stanza suggests a temporal relation to infinity to be derived from the selflessness and loneliness of the desert; this is the point to which the simultaneity of the table has been leading us, and it is something of a climax, reinforcing simultaneity by evoking the infinite dimension of the divine, while at the same time employing Genesis and teleology:

> And here, while the night-wind sighs,
> And the stars look bright in the midnight sky,
> As I sit apart by the desert stone,
> Like Elijah at Horeb's cave alone,
> A still small voice comes through the wild
> (Like a Father comforting his fretful Child),
> Which fanishes bitterness, wrath, and fear,
> Saying- 'MAN IS DISTANT, BUT GOD IS NEAR!'

[1] His interest in natural language is also evidenced in a poem *for* 'Dora' in Reuben', where the cry of the monkey and the monkey as, 'Where – how there – where there – where?' the noise of the beast, 'Prepare, for, fame a bear, from-fame-a-bear-ish!' His originary language is apparent in indigenous tongues in one of the conclusions of the poem (two others).

> Now think, little dear, as you sit at your tea,
> *'Super-a-sweet-a-lip! super-a-bread!'*
> Where are a Honey-Bird, who is the Bee?—
> Alas! the poor Negro—who suffers for thee
> In the slave-cultured Islands far over the sea,
> Crying, *'Caramba ah chicka! Affie Mocha!'* (Pringle 1989:88)

The Missionary simplicity of the final line belies an expression of the antithesis of the 'universal science of measurement and order' (Foucault 1974:56), where we find, so to speak, the terms of a qualitative equation: physical absence is countered by spiritual presence. The formulaic neatness of the statement reflects scientific exactitude, but the sentiment expressed is one of being alienated from human existence, and by implication, the rationalising centre of the *mathesis*. The imaginative move here is characteristic. Pringle, the calculator of empire, must also calculate a religious dimension counter to the imperial logic, while at the same time, as the former role, so clearly a part of it.

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A.C. Jordan's *Tales from Southern Africa*

Annie Gagiano

Jordan's 1940 novel *Ingqumbo Yemkhovu* (translated into English in 1980 as *The Wrath of the Ancestors*) has a place of honour in Xhosa literature. Not at all as well known is his 1973 collection, *Tales from Southern Africa* (Jordan 1973a), which he wrote in English. In the collection of essays which appeared in the same year (*Towards an African Literature*—Jordan 1973b), Jordan himself wrote that 'the English-speaking world knows far less about [the tales about men and women] ... [than about] myths and moral stories' from Africa (Jordan 1973b:4) and he suggested that

> the cultural world is looking for just these and other traditional artistic possessions of which South Africa itself has not become aware (Jordan 1973b:14).

In 1990 Noverino Canonici wrote that 'the folktale had lost ... permeating not only literary forms, but all forms of life' (Canonici 1990:128), though unwittingly acknowledging many signs of the decline of this cultural resource (Canonici 1990: 134-136,140ff). If it is true that 'cultural identities are formed and informed by a nation's literature' (Morrison 1992:19), the various strands of South African literature may be thought of as dangerously or unhealthily detached from the awareness of those who are non-literate (known to be a large majority of South Africans). Renewed interest in and use of our folktale resources may be one way of bridging this gap. For, as Isidore Okpewho insists, 'the mythopoeic fancy ... concerns itself with the entire spectrum of the social universe' and he recognises its engagement with what he calls 'actualities' as well as 'mysteries' (Okpewho 1983:114).[1] In the following brief discussion of Jordan's *Tales* (Jordan 1973a) I shall demonstrate how wide ranging and socially pertinent the themes of these stories are.

Without presuming to know the principle(s) in terms of which Jordan selected

[1] In *The Special Use Is to Make a Tale that is Told*, Isabel Hofmeyr concludes: 'oral literature quite literally forces scholars to lift their eyes from the page ... one not only has to confront context as a very material reality, one also confronts anew the complex links between text, performance and the world' (Hofmeyr 1994:151).

the thirteen *Tales* included in the collection, this reading finds in his re-tellings of these traditional stories a discernible focus on processes of social adjustment, especially in the overcoming of social crises. In his work *Myth in Africa*, Isidore Okpewho (1983:69) suggests that

> the more 'poetic' a tale is, the greater is its measure of multifaceted play and thus its availability for exploring larger cultural or existential (as opposed to experimental) issues.

Jordan's Tales do not merely embrace reaffirmations of 'custom', but perhaps challenges to, enlargements and adaptations of 'custom' itself. It is also evident that this author's interest lies more in the discovery or employment of 'internal' mechanisms of adjustment to pressures or threats to the societies which he shows us, than in celebrations of military or muscular force. Confirmation of this tendency is the preponderance of female protagonists in these *Tales*, whether in heroic or in socially transgressive roles (and frequently transgression itself precipitates heroism). The argument of this essay is that Jordan's *Tales from Southern Africa* can be fruitfully read as a composite portrait of societies capable of achieving vital adjustments in response to a variety of challenges.

A good place to begin this brief introduction to Jordan's *Tales* (most of which seem to have been told to him by women—by 'the widow, Nofalli', by his great aunt and by an unnamed 'woman from Qumbu' (Jordan 1973a:xvii) - from the 'Foreword' by Z. Pallo Jordan) is with the last one in the collection: a hilarious 'Parliament of Fowls' story in which all the birds of the world come together in enormously orderly

> [a Scheub (cf. Jordan 1973a:10,13,17) in his 'Introduction', reiterates that 'the narratives ... were not chosen by A.C. Jordan so much as recast by him'. The most fundamental way in which this is true is in the skeletal outlines' to complicate for the devices (gesture, tone, audience participation, etc.) at the disposal of the oral performer of the story.

> [b In a section of his 'general' Introduction to Jordan's *Tales*, Scheub (Jordan 1973a:9) writes that the 'moral basis [of the Xhosa stories tradition] pertains about the need of an ordered society, a stable and harmonious community ... this moral economy ... [assumes] movement from [impure society through purification and into a healthy social order. This odyssey is often portrayed by means of a dramatic enactment of the male and female initiation rites, and usually finds its metaphorical perfection in symbols of nature].

> [c] I am alluding to the fourteenth century English poem by Geoffrey Chaucer which many scholars assume may contain disguised allusions to contemporary politics although the contemporary subject is mostly love. Chukwuma Chiasole, in a paper called 'Orality and Narratives: The Art of Story Telling', delivered at the December 1991 'New Nation Writers' Conference, indicates that 'A general objection was that [the] animal characters in the stories [are] unreal when we are in the society but ... to be pointed out without causing embarrassment by directly accusing anybody—another good reason for using devices' (p. 3).

fashion to choose a leader according to the (apparently) perfectly sensible and appropriate criterion of which of them can stay on the air the longest. The story, in Jordan's handling of it, becomes a brilliantly satirical anecdote exposing the extent to which a combination of power-hunger, complexity and obduracy can turn a really hierarchical and bureaucratically-organised structure into a nightmare of competing political groupings and legalistically incomprehensible contestations: Grass Warbler hitches an undeserved ride on the majestic Eagle's back and flutters and flips about in the air from then on, shortly after Eagle's return to the earth, with consequent argument, counter-argument, intrigue and scapegoating and display of barbarous power-politics. Although this story is formally one of those animal fables along the pattern of 'Why such-and-such a creature behaves in such-and-such a fashion' (like the two previous *tales* in the collection: 'Why the Owls Crows at Dawn', 260-262, and 'Why the Hippo Has a Stumpy Tail', 263-265), Jordan's 'Choosing a King' (266)—in its comparative length and in the delightful, strong vividness of its portrayal of individual bird 'characters' in recognisable political roles—is undeniably a cautionary tale as enjoyable as it is powerfully educational. Is it incidental that this one story has no female characters?

The tale which Jordan places first in the collection (15-31) is called 'The Turban'—which refers to a woman's headscarf or *doek*. It is a moving, delicately-told story of marital love gone wrong, faintly like Shakespeare's *Othello*, but in like that play in the degree of emphasis Jordan places on the larger familial and social context of the tragedy. The story features a younger wife, devotedly loved despite her childlessness. The husband has children by his older wife and an intense love for the younger woman that he resists pressure even from her own family that he take a second wife to 'compensate' for her barrenness. When both wives gather money for an expedition, the younger, other woman saves some for her children and her husband. Expecting that his childless wife will have saved even more of the delicacy for him, the husband is so appalled to find that she failed to keep him any that he gives her a slow whipping, on his horse, kills her. Any remaining sympathy for this man (compromised by his constancy, impetuosity or harshness) is seriously undermined when he proceeds literally to cover up his deed by stealthily burying the dead woman and her belongings before setting out towards her people where both he and she are expected at the wedding festival. As Scheub writes,

> It is his ability to continue with life almost as if nothing has happened, that leaves the story with much of its bizarre irony and which simultaneously, cruelly underscores the love that refuses to die (Jordan 1972a:16).

A favourite with her people, she is nevertheless summoned from dancing and ritually, wordlessly executed by them when an eerie little bird, a 'form' of the dead wife's

rurban, reveals his guilt to them. But the story is put in a realm beyond affirmation of custom[3] when it ends with the dead man's arm rising to press the woman's turban to his heart. Fascinatingly, the story indicates the unusual intensity of this passion as recognised by this society, as both destructive (and punished when it goes awry) and yet finally, poignantly beyond the reach of the customary, outliving even its own protagonists. The tale is a fascinating introduction to a group of stories of the type usually taken to have the principal purpose of unambiguously affirming social cohesion and time-tried habits.

A tale that at Jordan's telling foregrounds domesticity by showing its disruption and eventual restitution is called 'Dennie and Demazane' (34-54) after the boy-and-girl twins who are its chief protagonists. The first part of the story is the well-known 'grass bird' episode in which the hero who undoes the field-clearing labours of the parents is captured by the father and ransoms itself in exchange by yielding a mast to his family in a time of general drought. Under peer pressure the twin children break the father's rule of secrecy and the bird escapes. Terrified of parental punishment, the twins flee into the bush and shelter and set up their own version of domestic coziness in the 'Rock-of-two-holes', only to encounter a cannibal (or Zimi—shown whom they escape when a mother-bird, reassuring them that they are loved and longed for at home, lures them home to a reception of their mother's best kaross. One might see this story as portraying a restoration to civil ordinariness and social and familial harmony.

Yet it is noticeable that adventurousness is portrayed as admirable; although it cannot (that the arrow-bird is lost, the children return home from their escapade, it is shown to have been enriching. Like other tales in the collection, this story foregrounds unusual and transgressive conduct without merely warning of the inevitability of disaster.

A story with a similar pattern of a family break-up and eventual reconstitution is called 'Nomalobadi and the Mondu-Makhasana' (155-177)[4]. The first part of the girl Nomalobadi's life takes place in a village where drought and consequent starvation have killed all the children except herself and her two brothers. Jealous of the younger brother's bigger portions, the elder kills him and is himself put to death when his sister reveals the fact. The eeriness and stress of the situation is indicated also in the surrealist detail that everyone here has earlier stepped speaking. The sense of doom is intensified when the news of the sibling murder leads the other sister to kill one another—as if that murder has a weird sense final sustaining ideal. Social breakdown culminates in yet is offset by the parents' decision to send Nomalobadi off to her paternal uncle while they set fire to themselves and their homestead. Nomalobadi, the sole

[3] Here I disagree strongly with Scheub, who considers that 'the narrative thus becomes an affirmation of traditional over-zealous emotion' (Jordan 1972a:17).

[4] Compare the *Nowete* Scheub stories on pp. 347–351 of his book (Scheub 1969).

survival of the clan/ed community, fails to obey her mother's final injunction to look neither back nor to left or right. Because of this failure her life is invaded and her role as her uncle's homestead usurped by the nearly-human but repulsive Mbulu-Makhasana (perhaps a 'reincarnation' of the elder brother's jealous greed?). The infiltration of the family by this new form of anti-social greed is abruptly stopped when its unconventional naivety is exposed in a public ritual contest: the Mbulu-Makhasana's middle and bottom-up tail bursts out and yanks her into a mouth of milk. But, not even then as the envy of this anti-human creature finally defeated, for a pumpkin plant grows right/garishly out of the Mbulu-Makhasana's grave and the fruit attacks Nomabhaci while she is being prepared for womanhood. Once again Jordan's telling of the story emphasizes not only a need for perpetual vigilance, but for courage, meticulous care and social cooperation.

The tale of 'Sangangxaxa and the Ogres' (199–216) similarly portrays the rescue story of a rescue — and here, too, its success is not the sole achievement of the dashing border-hero, but comes about partly due to the resolution, spirit and intelligence of both his abducted twin sister and her little half-caste daughter, with the reunion of the three as a family group rounding off and crowning the story (215–216), after the defeat of the ogres.

The tale called 'Siyanda and Siqandana' (229–237) is a well known story of sibling rivalry that turns murderous. Nevertheless, Jordan's telling intensifies the perspicacity in especially two respects: by portraying the brothers as unusually close and loyal in their tenderly mutual attachment and by the strongly poignant portrayal of the way the beautiful white cow arouses the more outwardly elder brother's envious desire and greed. It is unmistakably a musician's talent which juxtaposes (the younger) Siqandana's spontaneous and joyous hymn to the loveliness of the white cow (227; given in both Xhosa and English versions) with the guilt-ridden, nervy, fevered musings of the elder brother about this cow (230). (After he has abandoned his sibling to probable death in order to steal it.) The 'happy ending' is deeply shadowed by the earlier bad betrayal and the grief (and dismay?) it causes both father and brother. What happens is as fate and contained by the wilds community, from which Siyanda expels himself by flight in pleading retribution.

A more troubling and eerie story of social transgression and exclusion is the one called 'The Woman and the Mighty Bird' (241–248), a tale with distinct emphasis on a male power structure in the society depicted here and with little by way of individualising characterisation. The story is starkly told: there is, we are informed, a powerful taboo against going into 'the depths of the forest'

> [t]he depths were greatly feared by the whole community, and though no one ever gave the reason why, the women were constantly warned by the men never to go anywhere near the tall trees (241).

The woman of the title is, we are told, 'beautiful' and 'young' (241) and the only wife among the women who, when during a long spell of cold sufficient wood is harder to find, decides to risk going into 'the depths', where she finds many handfuls of ready-cut wood, guarded by a fearsome and huge bird — 'the mighty bird/Of manifold windpipe and manifold dewlap' (243), as he announces himself in a song. He allows her to take a bundle of wood on condition that she promises never to say to 'those of Ndelu' (245) — i.e. her husband's family—that she has seen him (the bird being described in emphatically male terms: 'a big tall man'; 'a great body'; 'a giant bull'—242). She does this three times; her husband grows predictably suspicious and when he threatens to kill her unless she tells the truth, she admits to having seen the giant bird—who then surges up to the house, causing the husband to faint in a fright, and swallowing the woman before 'proceed[ing] to the depths of the forest' (248). If the function of this story is merely to endorse a patriarchal social and familial structure, as Scheub suggests (238–240), there are nevertheless oddities and ambiguities in the temporary duration of a sexual pact between the woman and the giant bird and also its initial benefit this brings. The woman is, as has been said, barely individualised, though the pattern of her conduct seems to indicate that she represents maybe (indeed, 'female') untrustworthiness and its rightful punishment. Yet the bird does not seem to have any sense of alliance with the human male, the woman's taboo-upholding, disciplinarian husband. Perhaps the story can be read as obliquely recognising the unacknowledged or unacknowledgeable danger of female adultery in a society that caters for male polygamy (even though this husband has only one wife). This story is mysterious in Jordan's handling of it and, if the woman comes across as sly and manipulative, the husband is evidently harsh and unforgiving: amongst all the tales this is also the one in which there is least evidence of social mediation.

The story called 'The King of the Waters' (179–191) forms an interesting counterpart to the 'Mighty Bird' story; Jordan first introduces the ostensible, male hero, the renowned hunter (179), namely Tshaka, who is denied a desperately needed drink by the women of a spring. 'The King of the Waters' relents when Tshaka promises him 'the most beautiful of [his sisters-in-law's] wife' (181). This peremptory, though life-saving decision is reported when he gets home:

> [b]ut everyone, including the beautiful princess, felt that his was the only offer Tshaka could have made in the circumstance. So they awaited the coming of the King of the Waters (182).

Though no-one knows in what shape he will appear, Nxwaguamba, the 'King of the Waters' (182), eventually appears from a cyclone in the form of an inordinately big snake. He takes up his place as a 'burden round [the] body' of the princess, 'resting[

his head on her breasts and gazing hungrily into her eyes' (183) – an evidently prurious and erotic, but threatening and alien presence. The young woman (to whom the whole focus of the tale now shifts) also betakes herself to 'her mother's people, far over the mountains'.[7] As she travels, carrying the python, she expresses her loneliness and distress in song, to which the snake replies, also in song, proclaiming his worthiness: as Jordan puts it, they journey 'singing pride at each other' (188). On arrival the princess pretends sexual and social capitulation on the pretext of needing time to beautify herself. She confers with her maternal uncle and his wife to make a plan to save herself. Jordan vividly conveys the shuddering stress of the situation for this young woman, who yet manages to steel herself to execute the family plot. She gives back to the snake so well oiled that, when invited to embrace her, the creature slips down repeatedly and is stunned – she can then go out and lock the door before the hut is burnt down with the python in it. She is nevertheless not declared free and ready to return home until she can handle the skin of the snake with casual fearlessness, needing to take it back as a washing vessel, for her brothers – a ritual indicative of her promotion – steps affirmed by her courage and assurance in overcoming lingering fears. A delightfully ironic touch at the end is Tfilako's belligerent posture and fierce declaration to 'save' the sister who has already extricated herself from the evils of "The King of the Waters": the closing song echoes that of Tfilako and his hunters at the beginning (181), but changes it to praise on the defeat of the snake, largely his sister's victory[8], which is sung of as a ceremonial achievement (191).

Scheub tends to see all the tales as validations of custom, my reading discerns both validation and interrogation of (some) customary practices in Jordan's telling of the stories. The tale called 'Sishamba-nge Nyanga' ('She-who walks by-moonlight' 269–296) shows how custom can function to validate the abuse or neglect of exceptionally valuable individuals – a wife is neglected for supposed barrenness, but is capable of giving birth to a daughter of matchless beauty; Sikhamba npe-Nyanga should not be subjected to the customarily honoured but haggingly selfish demands of a witch-ogre old woman and, as a result of which the whole community (including her own small baby) temporarily loses her. This, too, then, is a story of restitution after loss and exclusion and it shows the need to be flexible, also about 'time-honoured' customs: here, too, a young girl (the *mpolwe* – 256) is the unobtrusively daring saviour figure of the tale.

[7] Like Nomzhadi in 'Nomzhadi and the Mbulo-Mzibasana' (Jordan 1973a: 155–177).

[8] Despite the 'feminine' gender of the leaves of the aloe and its opening, Jordan makes it clear that 'the princess' is also enraged, sounding 'Tfilako's sister' (190) to the end.

The two stories which by their unusually lengthy and detailed unfolding achieve the central position in the collection are placed back to back. They are called 'The Maidens of Bhakubha' (57–98) and 'The Story of Nomvasevo' (108–152) and in both the female protagonists are the main focus of attention and reflect profoundly communal values after social breakdown.

In the land of Bhakubha the princess, the youngest member of a large group of (about two dozen) maidens, is so charming and so much a favourite that she is affectionately nicknamed Nomtha-we-Langa (i.e. 'Mother-of-the-Sunbeam'). The girls spend their days together and delight especially in swimming in the pools of the river which separates their kingdom from the neighbouring one. They make teasing but 'courteous acquaintance with the young men of that kingdom, whose prince Sidlokolo picks the young princess as the loveliest amongst her peers during a playful yet ominous encounter. After first moustruction the lively young princess is, however, obliged to 'undergo custom' (69) during a period of social isolation. Mischievously, she plays truant in order to join her friends on one of their picnic outings and she discovers the underworld named 'Tulange bay' (81) for them on swim. In. Just as they intend leaving this pool to return home, they discover that a slimy monster has stealthily put on their clothes so that they are obliged to beg him to allow them to retrieve their clothing. This creature, too, is explicitly male and described as gazing lovely at each maiden as she makes her request. Princess Nomtha-we-Langa alone, the last of the maidens, resolutely refuses until she eventually 'screwed her face and so shaped it that it looked as ugly as the monster's' (86), mocking and defying him—to which he retaliates by burning her in the night. This transforms her into a monstrous version of herself (while the 'Slimy One' (65) itself disappears). The wilfulness and disobedience of the Princess have 'been outraged' but the effects also reach far beyond herself: the story fascinates because it moves beyond the trivial task of retribution to the difficulties of restitution.

Besides indicating the protective effects of sexual schooling which members of this culture are required to undergo, Jordan's telling of the story exhibits the far-reaching social consequences of this crisis and the wide-spread and socially cooperative effort required to solve it. The story portrays two societies remarkable for the degree to which their members generously accept responsibility both for themselves and for others (see especially Jordan's depiction of the deliberations of the Bhakubha council on pp. 70–74). The author heightens one's sense of enthusiastic social production of human dwellings and renewed compacts, compensation for human weaknesses and lapses. The social sophistication exhibited here is demonstrated in the way culprits are not simply expelled or ostracised: a type of containment is still operative. Jordan is evidently fascinated by and interests the reader in the courtesies of the many human interchanges he depicts. The maidens of Bhakubha are indeed sent into exile, but are

given respectable shelter by Prince Sidlokolo of the neighbouring kingdom, while he himself sets out to fight the monster and to find the princess who has herself been sent away to an outpost—it seems, partly to punish and partly to protect her from ridicule by her own failure (in Jordan's vivid formulation, 'Sidlokolo and the youths of his age group ... resolved to get themselves fully involved in this matter' (74). The situation is nevertheless subtly entangled and difficult. No monster rises from the pool to the prince's repeated challenges, as if to emphasise the atypical nature of the threat confronted in this story—almost as if to show up the shallowness imagining of the typical 'rescuing prince' tale where the monster is defeated in battle or through guile. Before setting out to find Nomsa-we-Langa, Sidlokolo is warned by one of the grandmother guardians of the princess that 'a rare kind, a deeper kind of bravery' is required by this situation: 'this is bravery to bear agony' (78). He must promise not to try to see her in her altered state. When he and his braves eventually locate her, he is twice overcome with melancholy. For her part, the princess has to endure the bleakness of her isolation as well as her sadness with dignity.

> She never sees anyone ... The days seem ever so little and long and slow, all covered with grey eyes made of boredom, it reaches out to receive the food ... She walks in and out, to and fro, to and fro ... Thinking about home, thinking about the other girls (Jordan 1973a: 82)

She has been ostracised, but her deed caused the expulsion of many other women. Watching from afar the outpost where the princess is kept, the prince and his companions see a strange, towering wall of white (sample) milk that has welled up out of an earth pit and 'just as the first sunbeam of the morning struck it' (92), Nomsa-we-Langa plunges into it and with great joy recovers her own shape. Predictably, she and the prince marry soon after the other maidens are returned home (many of them also marrying young men of the adjoining kingdom). But far more than a superficial happy ever-after fairy tale, Jordan has drawn the lines of a social growth process possible only in a healthy and flexibly complex society. Although the miracle of her healing may be regarded as a lucky accident, there is a sense in which it is the culmination of the many caring, tactful and committed efforts made by those in the story who love Nomsa-we-Langa: the restoration of the princess rising 'like the milk well'—from their courage and determination to contribute mutually towards the healing of the disrupted community. Something of the complexity of the achievement is recognised in the charming speech of the chief counsellor at the prince's court: 'All your fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers at this meeting', he tells the prince, 'envy you this great deed' (96), although he takes neither monster nor enemies.

Scheub's introductory commentary on the last story deals with it this essay.

'The Story of Nomsakazo'[4] (108–152; Scheub's comments 99–107), is interesting and useful. This is also a tale of a maiden and of her maturing as it affects the fate of a whole nation, but this young woman, whose very name brutally marks the slaying of men in the battle which took place on the day of her birth (109), is distinctly less pleasant and more obviously spoilt than the princess in the preceding story. Intoxicated by the victory on his daughter's birthday (in a battle which establishes him indisputably as the most powerful ruler of the region through the defeat of his closest rival), her father the king rashly vows to mark her maturity by bringing her 'as many cattle as to darken the sun' (110). His is indeed a distinctly warlike, rapacious society—a point subtly criticised by the tone and terminology of Jordan's opening description (e.g. 108–109).

When Nomsakazo duly comes of age, successive offerings of cattle are all met by her smile of contempt (112), necessitating greater and greater devastation of surrounding communities to gain enough cattle. Eventually the scouring warriors encounter an extremely strange, huge creature, Maphanda (or 'Year-of-the-Nodules'), who is strikingly described as 'a hump most of the earth itself' (113). Showing no respect for 'great, towering nature'[5], they raid his abundant herds of cattle. At last Nomsakazo's satisfied, the feasting which follows leaves 'thousands of carcasses rotting on the plains' (115). This excess continues until the time for her 'coming out' first occurs—but then Maphanda arrives to take Nomsakazo away in exchange for his raided cattle. Her father's military might cannot save her. Maphanda first humbles and disciplines her to his own peremptory ways and then deposits her in a cave for their mutual keep. She is, she discovers, in the country of one-legged cannibals named the Mbongu-ndlebe[6]. Her beauty saves her from being eaten by them and yet upon she becomes a king's pampered darling until she is so repulsively fat that they decide to eat her instead. But she prays for rain, and three times the five is put out, the third time killing the old cannibal king. Now the Mbongu-ndlebe wear her and let her go.

In hunger and hardship she makes her way home,

> begging for food ... among people whose goodness had been slaughtered ... homes destroyed ... to this ... hatred, by her father's warriors, to satisfy her father's vanity and lust for war (1973a: 30)

[4] A Zulu version of this tale (with an English translation) is recorded in the Callaway collection (Callaway 1868: 151–210).

[5] Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, v. 3. 98.

[6] Scheub points out (Jordan 1973a: 100) the irony that these are men who formerly exiled by Nomsakazo's people because their cannibalism was considered disgusting and abominable: these 'same good people have now become more degraded than the cannibals!'

in words which by their bleakness and doom like rhythm hammer home the cost of Nomxakazo's and her father's ugly self indulgence.

She eventually reaches her new wretched home, to be told by her mother that 'death has entered this land' (133). So appalled is she now that she asks: 'Who am I that anybody should pity me?' (135)— and that moment of deep self abnegation begins her recovery and that of her people. If we think of truth and reconciliation in a shattered land, this tale portrays the slow, humbling process needed to soften the previously mighty before repentance can begin.

In the meantime the son of the rival king whom her father defeated decides that, although he wants this most beautiful young woman for himself, he will deliberately humiliate her father by not going through the obligatory marital formalities—also an arrogant illustration of excessive privilege. Nomxakazo is magically entered and thus kidnapped. In this she asserts herself and redefines the situation by consenting to go to the prince. The abduction becomes a state visit; she so impresses her would-be captors that one of the prince's old counsellors is moved to declare:

> She has the heart of a human, she has a liver. She is alive in the head. She ... seems to go back to her people still a maiden—since she ... left us only the strong roads to go by—the roads of our forefathers (Jordan 1973a:148).

Not surprisingly, her return home becomes the occasion for a formal proposal of marriage with much pride-taking in cattle. Now her own people choose that place and named she will be 'a mother to all homeless wanderers' (152). Her role has inverted: from the destructive daughter she has changed to the saving parent and leader.

Unlike the typical fairy-tale with its focus on personal or perhaps also familial happiness, this author stresses the social, 'national' dimensions of the story. Jordan's telling embellishes and vitalises a story in which devastation among nations and the internal rot of greed are overcome in a process of social restructuring[6], by the end of the story, representatives of both societies participate together in the re-achieved courtesies of 'feasting and reioicing', then 'sing[ing]' now lots of 'friendly' people (152). The 'Calloway version' or recording of the story (Calloway 1868:18–217) includes

[6] Some critics (Jordan 1973a:109) see it as follows: 'The odyssey leads her to a concept of custom which has as its purpose human relations based on respect and made beautiful through "love". In his Foreword, V. Pallo Jordan (1973a:v) characterizes the aim of the traditional rules as 'the reconciliation of parties rather than the interpretation of points of law'. He also suggests that A.C. Jordan (in Pallo Jordan) 'sought to transform the tale into a great collective symbol around which the African people could be mobilized for social and political change' (Jordan 1973a:xxxiv). It seems particularly inappropriate of the folklorist Richard M. Dorson (in the introductory editorial essay, 'Africa and the Folklorist', to the volume *African Folklore* (Dorson 1972:50), to single out A.C. Jordan as one of those who 'lose sight of the contemporaneity of folklore'.

ably brief on its depictions of what in Jordan's version becomes the reconstitution of social relations—depicted in full and subtle detail. Earlier, the prince had told Nomxakazo: 'We thank you for making humans of us' (140). She has also redeemed and rehumanised her own broken people.

Jordan's *Tales* have no ring of nostalgia. If they commemorate and celebrate a proud and complex African civilisation to dispel the blind condescension of European racism, they do also point towards what a combination of peoples in this land must rediscover and regain in their own rites of passage towards mutual recognition. Those *Tales from Southern Africa* exhibit the hard-won achievements of communities beset by threats from outside as well as from within, constantly driven to redefine humanness. I conclude by citing Toni Morrison:

> The imagination has practical work to do. It heals and invents remedies, which are ideas to future readings as well as contemporary uses. It implies a shareable world and an endless if flexible language. ... Living in the nature of people who decided that their world view would contain legends, ceremonies, taboos and anathemas for devastating racial expansion, powers as singular as 'landscape for a writer', how stunning is the achievement of those who have searched for and found a shareable language for the words to say it (Morrison 1992:xii).

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The South African War and the Russian Public

Apollon Davidson and
Irina Filatova

> Public opinion in Russia is national law and nothing else.
>
> T. B. Macaulay

> I know where there is more wisdom than found in Napoleon, Voltaire, or all the ministers present and to come – in public opinion.
>
> Talleyrand

> Church services are held in President Kruger's honour. Orchestras in public places are asked to play 'The Boer anthem' and when they do they have to mean it [under] article.
>
> Reported in St Petersburg magazine in 1900.

> The Boers and everything that is in any way connected with them now attract the interest of all sections of the public. In a first class railway carriage, I have spoken publishers, and in a cabman's [sic] we hear one and the same conversation about the Boers and the Boer War.

Meanwhile an anonymous Russian author, calling himself Boerophile, in a pamphlet 'In Relief to the Boers!' published in St. Petersburg in 1900[1].

This prompted such a pitch of Boer mania that another Russian author sounded an almost plaintive note: 'Wherever you go these days, you hear the same story—the Boers, the Boers, and only the Boers'[2].

[1] *Zhurnal dlia vsekh*, 1900, No. 1.

[2] *Boerofil. Vyzvano dlia nastoiashchego momenta chuvstvom pravdy i vsekh tekhnicheskie obstoiatelstva anglo-burskago voiskovo stolknoveniia* (Boerophile. *In Relief of the Boers! The reasons for and events of the War. The possible results of the Anglo-Boer conflict*). St. Petersburg, 1900, p. 22.

[3] *Burye i ikh pobeditel* (*The Boers and the Britishers*). St. Petersburg, 1900, p. 3.

Literary Russia and the Anglo-Boer War

This was hardly an uncommon observation for in truth at the turn of the century the Boers were at the height of fashion in Russia. Pictures of the Boer soldiers and officers and of President Kruger and his generals appeared in virtually every illustrated magazine on a regular basis. Thousands of articles and many books and booklets were published about the Boers and the Anglo-Boer War not only in the big cities of the Russian Empire (such as St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, Warsaw, Tashkent, Yekaterinoslav, Odessa, Vilnius, Tiflis—now Tbilisi), but even in towns as small as Borisoglebsk—a place not easily found on a map.

The volume of these publications was enormous. In Georgia alone, for example, there were so many of them that a special study, "The Reflection of the Anglo-Boer War in the Georgian Media", could be undertaken several decades later.[1] So in what way the public demand for news of the Boers and their challenge to the British Empire that many magazines and publishers not normally given to coverage of international affairs hastened to get on the bandwagon. Among the publishers to carry such articles were, for example, such ordinary enterprises as the Printers of the Staff of the Separate Gendarme Corps, the Printers of the Turkestan Military District and the Printers of the Boer Children's Home.

The overwhelming majority of these publications, irrespective of their quality, were outspokenly pro-Boer. Even the titles were often so partisan that it was hardly necessary to read the text. *Why We Should Wish Victory to the Boers: The Transvaal. The History of an Self-Governing under British Domination; The Boers: The Fight for Freedom*.

It is impossible to tell how many translations of Boer literature appeared in Russia at this time. Hundreds of journals and magazines were published in St. Petersburg, Moscow and provincial towns and nearly all of them were interested in the Anglo-Boer War. No bibliography of these publications exists and a systematic search for translations, let alone general publications about the war, could take years. We have looked through many periodicals of the beginning of the century and discovered dozens of literary translations.

One would hardly have expected to find a large survey of Boer songs and poetry in Russian at the beginning of the century, yet there exists an article entitled "The Poetry of the Boers"[2], published in Russia in 1901 which had been translated from a

[1] V. B. Dundua "Anglo-burskaia voina i ee otrazhenie v gruzinskoi pressе" ("The Anglo-Boer War and its Reflection in the Georgian Media") (in Georgian). In: *Trudy Tbilisskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta*. Vol. 37. Tbilisi, 1948, p. 99-126.

[2] Vera Berg. "Burskaia lirika" ("Lyric Poetry of the Boers"). *Mirskoe slovo* 27(10—9(11 1901, No. 9(11).

volume of collected Boer poetry published in Amsterdam in 1898. No full texts were reproduced and the poems were anonymous since the Amsterdam volume did not give the names of the authors, yet the fact remains that as early as 1901 the Russians could read Boer poetry. The national anthems of both the Boer republics were published by many Russian newspapers and journals in prose and verse form[3]. Pamphlets, pictures were also available[4].

Boer prose has come to Russia even earlier. In 1900 one of the most popular Russian journals published Lucie Swan's story, "For the Motherland"[5]. The plot of this sensational melodrama rested on the notion that Paul Kruger, in anticipation of war with England, spent huge sums of state money purchasing arms in Europe without informing the government or the Volksraad. The missing funds have to be accounted for, and Kruger persuades a clerk in the Finance Ministry to declare that he should publically take responsibility and confess to having squandered the money.

> You must put up with the idea that you will be considered a thief until such time that we can make our secret public and everybody sees that you are a hero.

Kruger tells him.

Letters and first-hand accounts by Boer fighters appeared frequently in Russian literary periodicals. Their stories were unique and always by chance in one way or another. One Boer, taken prisoner by the British, related his dramatic escape from the prisoners' camp when he hid himself among the bodies of his dead comrades that were to be taken outside the camp to be buried[6]. Another, an officer from the Ladysmith district, wrote of how both the Boers and the British while not making a formal truce, spontaneously ceased fire during the 1899 Christmas night[7].

[3] For example, *Pravoslavnyi Sobesednik* 1899/1900, No. 3, p. 48,50.

[4] For example, *Gimn burov. Burskoe pesnopenie. Znamia Transvaalia. (The Anthem of the Boers. The Orange-Coloured Banner of the Transvaal)*. St. Petersburg, 1900.

[5] Lucie Swan. "Za rodinu! Rasskaz iz nedavnego proshlogo Transvaali." ("For the Motherland! The story from the recent past of the Transvaal"). *Niva* 1900, No. 27, p. 518.

[6] Vera Berg. "Zhivoi sredi trupov. Neobyknovennoe begstvo iz anglyiskogo plena" ("Alive among the Dead. The extraordinary escape of a Boer from British captivity"). *Rus' nedelia* 4 (17) May 1902, No. 0597.

[7] "Rozhdestvo vo pole v Ledismite. Iz pisma transvaalskogo ofitsera" ("Christmas in a Ladysmith. From the letter of a Transvaal officer"). *Russkiy vestnik* 1899, No. 3(3.

Several books by Boer political leaders were published in Russia. The first of these, *A Century of Wrong*[1] and Piet Joubert's 'Message to Queen Victoria' appeared in 1900[2]. General Christiaan De Wet's memoirs were published in St. Petersburg in two different translations, both from the Dutch, with Pastor Gillot contributing a preface and commentary to the first translation and supplementing it with additional material. This first translation ran through three editions in 1903 and 1904[3] and the second translation was published twice in 1903 and 1906[4]. Kruger's memoirs were also translated into Russian in 1903[5]. As these publication dates attest, the Russian public's fascination with the Boers considerably outlasted their defeat in the war.

It is hardly surprising that notes by Villebois Mareuil, the Commander of the European Legion, should have been published in Russian in 1902[6] but it is, on the face of it, far more surprising that in the same year the Russian translation of Arthur Conan Doyle's strong statement of the British imperial case, *The War in South Africa*, should have appeared[7]. This latter publication did not, however, derive from any lar-

[1] *Stoletie otsyprestitsovki. Sbornik materialov po anglo-burskoi voine v Yuzhnoi Afrike* (*A Century of Wrong. Collected materials on the Anglo Boer War in South Africa*). Vol. 1 St. Petersburg, 1900.

[2] *Poslanie vozzvanie ego svyatosty prezidenta Transvalskoi respubliki gospodu Gladstonu, glavnomu ministru velikobritanskogo pravitel'stva* (*Message of the President of the Transvaal, A History of its suffering under British domination, Message of the Commander in Chief General Joubert to the British Government*). St. Petersburg, 1900.

[3] Christiaan De Wet, *Borba burov s anglichan. Vospominaniia burskogo generala Kh. De Vet* (*The Struggle of the Boers against England. Memoirs by the Boer General C. De Wet. Translated from the Dutch original by Yo. N. Pelenkin. Preface, commentary and appendix by Pastor Gillot*). St. Petersburg, 1st and 2nd ed. —1903, 3d ed. —1903.

[4] C. De Wet, *borba za svobodu. Vosp-aniia burskogo generala Kh. De Vet o trekhletnei voine burov s anglichanami* (*C. De Wet, The Freedom Fight. Memoirs of the three years of the Boers' war against the English. Translated by I. Yakunov*). St. Petersburg, 1st ed.—1903, 2nd ed. —1903.

[5] *Memuary Krugera* (*Kruger's Memoirs*). Reprinted in the magazine *Vremennyy rasskaz*, 1903.

[6] [De Villebois Mareuil], *Anglo-transvaal'skaia voina. Zapiski burskogo generala Villua de Mareil* (*The Anglo-Transvaal War. Notes by the Boer General de Villebois Mareuil*). Translated from French, St. Petersburg, 1902.

[7] Arthur Conan Doyle, *Voina v Yuzhnoi Afrike, ee prichiny i ofitsial'nye otchety* (*The War in South Africa: Its Cause and Conduct*). Translated from English. Odessa, 1903.

ised demand for a less partisanly pro-Boer text. The publication of Conan Doyle's book was subsidised by the British who must have regarded with some alarm the (possible political implications of the Russian public's pro Boer passion. But even so the publisher could be only found in Odessa, not in Moscow or St. Petersburg.

Among the Russian intelligentsia the British faced an uphill task. This was true even with the greatest figure of all. Leo Tolstoy, despite his pacifist convictions which might have been expected to preclude him from taking position for either of the protagonists, TolstoY followed the events in South Africa closely and made copious notes about them which he then published under the title *About the Transvaal War*. Just how profoundly this bothered his household was with these distant events is evident from the frequency with which his wife, Sofia Andreievna, mentions the subject in her diary. Although Tolstoy was the main proponent of non violence of his time, his attitude to this war seems to have been a special case. This is evident from the account by a reporter from one of the St. Petersburg papers who visited Tolstoy at the beginning of 1900:

> The Count was not willing to discuss his works, but as soon as the Transvaal and the Anglo-Transvaal war were mentioned the great old man became animated. His eyes glittered.
>
> 'You know what point I've reached?' he said. 'Upon reading a paper every morning, I passionately wish to read that the Boers have beaten the British'[8].

Another interlocutor related a similar conversation with Tolstoy:

> 'I know', he said, as a apologise for betraying his moral, religious principles, 'that I should not rejoice at the victories of the Boers or grieve about their defeats; after all they kill the English soldiers too. But I cannot help it. I am glad when I read about the defeats of the British, it cheers my soul'[9].

The majority of popular Russian writers of the time shared Tolstoy's attitude. Mamin-Sibiriak strongly denounced the British in his story about the war, 'Bee'. Aleksander Kuprin entitled his Boer war story, 'The Murderers'[10] the title applying only to the British, of course. Nikolai Karazin published several stories about the war, all highly condemnatory of the British while Vladimir Gilliarovsky published a similarly engagé poem 'Thoughts of a Boer Prisoner'[11].

[8] *Novoie vremia*, 10 January 1900.

[9] V.A. Posse, 'L.N. Tolstoy kak chelovek. Iz vospominanii' ('L. N. Tolstoy as a Person. From the Memoirs'). In *Golos minuvshego stoletiia*, 17 November 1940.

[10] *Odesskie novosti*, 1 January 1901.

[11] *Russkoie slovo*, 29 December 1901.

The war re-animated the interest of the Russian public in the South African novels of Rider Haggard, Jules Verne, Mayne Reid, Louis Boussenard and other European writers, leading to print runs for these novels which were immense for that time. Particularly popular were the novels *Power Mortis—the Young Boer from the Transvaal*, by the German writer, August Niemann, and *Captain Darnford* by Louis Boussenard.

For several years the Anglo-Boer War became the favourite subject of Russian cheap popular fiction. One such offering, *For the Brave! Russian Volunteers in the Transvaal*, appeared as early as 1900, the author choosing the pseudonym, 'Boerphile'[5]. The most popular of these popular publications was *Rose Burgher, the Boer Heroine, or the Gold Prospectors in the Transvaal*[6], a novel published in series, one booklet in a coloured cover every week. The genre of serialised fiction was thoroughly in vogue in Russia at the time. There were endless series about Sherlock Holmes—imitations of Conan Doyle's stories, and series about Nick Carter, Nat Pinkerton and the Russian detective Kolyshkin were very widely read, even by those who loved or their quality. At the turn of the century these serialised novels clearly filled the entertainment space in society which is now filled by popular TV series and 'soaps'.

The booklets were produced by different authors, some of them not without a literary talent, but for the most part they were targeting people without sophisticated literary tastes ultimately calling the manner in which the booklets were written. The names of the authors were never mentioned perhaps because there were too many of them or because they were various writers who wrote these works for money but did not want to be associated with this kind of literature. In any case it was impossible to find out who actually wrote the *Rose Burgher* series.

The plot of *Rose Burgher* is more intricate (although certainly more artificial) than those of Dumas' novels. It revolves around Cecil Rhodes, his second wife—in the past a poor adventurer—and her daughter the Boer heroine, Rose Burgher. The heroes find themselves in the richest houses of Cape Town and Johannesburg, in the trenches of the Anglo-Boer War, in the deserted mines and on 'death islands'. They fly in balloons, sail ships and get caught in shipwrecks. However, even this novel did not consist of sheer nonsense; many historical realities and personalities were reproduced correctly. The authors must have read dozens of books and articles about South Africa, and certainly not only in Russian. And the style and manner ensured that the reader,

[5] Boerfil. *Za Burov! Russkie dobrovol'tsy v Transvaale [For the Boers! Russian Volunteers in the Transvaal]*. Moscow, 1900.

[6] *Roza Burger, burskaia geroinia. Ili zolotoiskateli v Transvaale. Roman iz anglo-burskoi voiny [Rose Burgher, the Boer Heroine, or the Gold Prospectors in the Transvaal. A Novel from the Anglo-Boer War]*. St. Petersburg, 1902.

most likely a youth in his early teens, would wait with a sinking heart for the next Wednesday or Thursday or Sunday, when he would rush to the nearest book shop or news stand to pay 5 kopecks for yet another issue of *Rose Burgher*[7].

The Pro-Boer Craze

Writers, journalists, publishers and other representatives of literary circles were not the only group of Russian society to contribute to the pro-Boer sentiment. There were many other participants in and propagators of the pro Boer campaign each with their inflections and contributions to the general cause.

Churches collected donations for the Boers. Albums, icons, books, luxury editions of the Bible and gramophone records with Russian poems and songs about the Boers were all sent to the Transvaal. Several streets in Russian towns were renamed in honour of the Boers. In Kharkov the City Council was official to name three new streets Transvaalskaia, Joubertovskaia, and Krugerovskaia[8] while Russian Mennonites[9] named two of their villages after Pretoria, one in Orenburg near the Ural Mountains, the other on the Terek river in the Caucasus[10].

After news of Cronje's imprisonment reached Russia a russian campaign was organised to collect donations for a gift for him. The gift, a huge two metre high porphyry cup of traditional Russian design, decorated with silver oak leaf, symbols and bunches, was despatched to South Africa only at the war's end together with huge lists containing several thousand signatures of Russian well-wishers. After many adventures it finally arrived in the Transvaal only in 1903.

The cup was symbolic. Such huge cups, known as bratinas, were used at community ceremonies for communal libations—every military regiment, for example, had a bratina. The bratina was poured into it and then the whole community fraternity, members of a club etc. imbibed their portions by small cups which, when not in use, hung along the sides of the bratina. A bratina signified unity and brotherhood.

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[7] Eighty years after, the Russian *Rose Burgher* was written by a well known South African writer Sadie Gordimer published the novel *Burgher's Daughter*. The main character of the novel was daughter of a Boer communist, Rose Burgher.

[8] *Russkie vedomosti*, 9 December 1899.

[9] The Mennonites are a sect of Protestant Christians widely spread in Holland, Germany, France, Switzerland, the USA and several other countries.

[10] *The Mennonite Historian* (Canada) vol. XX, No. 3, September, 1994, p. 1. We are grateful to Professor C. C. Saunders of the University of Cape Town for this reference.

the word itself (deriving from 'brat'—'brother' in Russian)[47].

Theatres and circuses tried to catch the public mood. The programme of the St. Petersburg Circus, for example, was based on South African events, and the programme of the Moscow City Circus was entitled *At the heights of the Dragon Mountains, or the War between the British and the Boers*[48].

Business also contributed to the craze and certainly benefited from it. Children played with new toys which ridiculed John Bull and picturesquely glorified the Boers. Restaurants, inns and cafés were given South African names and their interiors redecorated accordingly. An inn known as 'The Pretoria' was opened in St. Petersburg near Ekaterinoslavsky railway station which served the line leading to the upper class suburb. Even in the small provincial town as Kozlov an inn known as 'The Transvaal' was said to be 'doing well'.

Politicians could not but feel the mood. One member of the Moscow City Duma Council wrote in his memoirs:

> During the Anglo-Boer War all the Councillors were united in their admiration of the Boers and their sympathy for the Boers. The names of Kruger and Botha could constantly be heard. Events involving the Boers, primarily actions at Ladysmith or Mafeking, were above lines of party interests for the Councillors. Like the problem of buying the city horse cars line ... The elected members of the Duma rubbed together to order a wonderful gold goblet, which was sent as a gift to the Commander of the Boer army[49].

Central to pro-Boer activities in Russia was the Dutch Committee for the Relief of the Wounded Boers, formed in the first days of the war and active throughout the war from its headquarters on St. Petersburg's main street, Nevsky Prospect. A number of eminent people served on the Committee including the St. Petersburg aristocrat, Count P.A. Heiden, the Minister of the St. Petersburg French community, F. Coulon, and three big businessmen, G. Heyse, U. Kruys and Van der Pals. The Head of the Committee was Pastor Hendrik C. Tot, the Minister of St. Petersburg's Dutch community, who was constantly in touch with Dr. Leyds' mission in the Hague.

[47] Some of the Russian presents and souvenirs, the finest among them, are now exhibited in the Museum of Culture and History in Pretoria. The Victoria cup with the centre-piece for the bowl with 200 long lists of signatures, beautifully decorated with water-colour paintings, next to it. Several books that were among the presents are housed in the Stellenbosch University library.

[48] *Moskovskie vedomosti*, 19 February (3 March) 1900, Kurier, 1900, Nos. 44-51.

[49] N. I. Astrov, *Vospominaniia* (Memoirs), Paris, 194

The Committee issued regular information bulletins and addressed repeated appeals to the Russian people, starting in October 1899 with an appeal for donations for the Boer wounded. 70 thousand roubles were collected (a very large sum for the time) in only a month, the money being used to send a combined Russian-Dutch hospital (the Russo-Dutch Ambulance) of 40 beds, to South Africa. By December the donations exceeded 100 thousand roubles, giving the Ambulance enough funds for six months. Including return tickets for the staff, and the public were informed that doctors and nurses from Amsterdam and St. Petersburg were already on their way to South Africa.

Estimates of total donations raised vary slightly according to the sources used, but concur on the general level of the figures. The Moscow newspaper, *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, estimated that in all the Committee had collected 162, 947 roubles during the war, with 117, 300 roubles spent on the Russo-Dutch Ambulance plus 'widows' and orphans' allowances. A further 18, 245 roubles were handed in to the Russian Credit Bank which had opened its own Russian Boer Fund for the restoration of ruined Boer households[50].

The Committee appealed to the leading actors, actors, musicians, composers, writers and other public figures of St. Petersburg to donate their portraits, pictures, autographs, paintings and drawings for the cause. This was how one of the best known gifts to the Boers, the album *St. Petersburg—the Transvaal*, came into existence. The album was luxuriously published and contained reproductions of paintings by Repin, Roerich, Makovsky and other world famous Russian artists, as well as portraits and pictures of ballet dancers, opera singers and actors, many of these celebrities supplementing their gifts with warm wishes of success to the Boers. The album—a copy of which is housed today in the Stellenbosch University library—also included keydocuments of the Committee, together with pictures of its members, and portraits of Presidents Kruger and Steyn, the Ambassador of the Transvaal in Europe, Dr. Leyds and the General Consul of the Orange Republic in Europe, Hendrik Mellet[51].

The Russian Right Contribution to the Boer Cause

The Russian public connected its sevelop the Boer struggle against the British as a battle

[50] *Moskovskie vedomosti*, 13 March 1904, No. 74.

[51] *Sankt Peterburg—Transvaal. Izdanie Gollandskogo komiteta dlia okazaniia pomoshchi ranenym burram (St. Petersburg—Transvaal. Published by the Dutch Committee for the Relief of the Wounded Boers)*, St. Petersburg, 1900.

between David and Goliath, but there was often little sympathy beyond that. For, strange though it may seem, the Boer cause found sympathisers both among the opponents of the Russian monarchy and absolutism and among staunch Monarchists.

Russian officialdom played a very active part in the pro-Boer campaign. The Anglo-Boer War was seen by the pro-regime circles, not only because it weakened Britain, Russia's main rival, but because it served conservative domestic interests as well. Loud expressions of compassion for the suffering of a foreign people distracted public attention from the issue of social and political inequalities at home. Moreover, the war served to strengthen chauvinistic trends in the Russian society, a society in which only a permanent state of excited nationalism appeared to hold out any prospect of overcoming the tensions stemming from deep social divisions.

In February 1900 the Trinity-Sergiev Monastery sent a gonfalon, religious banner, 'sanctified at the relic of St. Sergy' to the Boers. The fathers thought of sending 'that a relic covered the remains of the Saint' as well but 'in view of the dangers on the way' the air was stored in one of St. Petersburg cathedrals until the end of the war[1]. This generosity towards the republican Boers did not become a liberal consciousness among the leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church. At the same time that this gift was being made the Church was excommunicating Leo Tolstoy and declaring him to be the anti-Christ.

Conservative journalists and writers took pleasure in stressing similarities between the Russians and the Boers, some of them fairly far-reached, for the Boers were taken to exemplify many of the values that the government wanted to inculcate in the Russian people: single-mindedness, patriarchal devotion to family and community values, fanatical religiosity and cavalry to the vices of the 'depraved' West. For this kind of mentality was thought to be less susceptible to 'alien' ideas stemming from the Western democracies.

'The Boers have much in common with the Russians', wrote the most influential Monarchist newspaper, *Novoye Vremia*, at the outset of the war.

> First, they, as well as the Russians, are a predominantly agricultural people, and, just as we are, in the extensive cultivation period. The Transvaal is now suffering from the invasion of foreign capitalists, just as Russia. The Transvaal uitlanders who are the cause of the war, can be safely compared to the American, Belgian and Jewish capitalists who overrun our country[2].

[1] *Moskovskiye vedomosti*, 70 (22) February 1900; *Novoye vremia*, 12 (24) February, 1900.

[2] *Novoye vremia*, 29 October (11 November) 1899.

Another writer in the same newspaper argued: 'We have a lot in common with them (the Boers). They are muzhiks, fighting against gold-mining capitalists'[3].

'A Mennonite is a taciturn, reserved "Boer"', wrote a Mennonite writer, author of the most authoritative book on Russian Mennonites, 'apart from the fact that he does not use guns or cannons ...'. This author was to publish a complete history of Russian Mennonites under the title From the World of the Russian Boers or Mennonites[4].

'The Boers look like our Cossacks', wrote a Russian author M. Protasov. 'They are:

> tall and perfectly built. They are physically very strong, have remarkable endurance and are, indeed, indefatigable. An open face with large fine curly dark brown hair and a light brown beard and moustache, kind thoughtful blue eyes—such is the appearance of the Boer'[5].

The religiosity of the Boers was always stressed by conservative Russian writers as one of the main features of their character.

> The Boer professes Reformation teaching ... In the Bible he is the only faithful friend, to whom he turns for comfort in his sorrows, from whom he receives instructions and to whom he prays. This deep Christian faith, which leaves even his enemies, the British, in a state of dumb and reverent amazement.

wrote Protasov[6].

The conservative *Novoye Vremia* summed up this view.

> The righteous religious fanatics, who have decided to shed their blood to defend the freedom of their hallowed fatherland, have risen to the level of the sacred Boer[7], that our country from time immemorial—God and legend—is England. That is why all the hopes the Boers can have are Southern[8].

[3] Ibid, 2 (15) October, 1899.

[4] *Mennonite Historian*, op. cit, p. 2.

[5] M. Protasov, *Bury i anglichane* (*The Boers and the British*), St. Petersburg, 1900, p. 20, 27.

[6] M. Protasov. Op. cit., p. 26.

[7] Rus – the Russian state before the 17th century.

[8] *Novoye vremia*, 16 October 1899, No. 8490.

Glorification of the Boers went hand in hand with abuse of the British. 'The heroic Boer endeavours to protect his independence from the greedy Brit[1]', as one of *Novoe Vremia*'s writers put it. In the ideology of monarchist publications liberalism was always associated with greed and conservatism with honesty. Conservatism was good, liberalism bad. Comparisons between the two, in a manner that was invariably unfavourable to the British, was a stable topic in the pages of the Russian monarchist press. Virtually every day one could read something like 'The liberal self-interested Brit ... could not stand against the persistent and stubborn resistance of the honest and conservative Boer[2]', or

> The Boer is content to live his family, alien to party struggle and any liberal reparte[e] ... They are accustomed to strict discipline, and the elder is a born and undisputed leader of his family.

The juxtaposition of conservative virtue and liberal viciousness was situated in a global context.

> The deep historical meaning of this war is the fight, patriotism ... the patriarchal family, primeval, virtuous purity, iron discipline and complete lack of so-called modern civilisation have today proved to such an invincible force, such a rampart, before which ... even the seemingly unbeatable British began to turn tail.

wrote one conservative Moscow newspaper[3].

Such perspectives fitted easily into the assumption that Russian conservatism was actually carrying the flag of all the forces of progress. As one of the editorials of the *Moscow Vedomosti* asserted,

> A war has been waged persistently against Britain on the territory of the Asian continent. We wage the struggle not only for ourselves, but for humanity. We fight for the safety of the human race, for the spiritual essence of the Anglo-Saxon race[4].

[1] *Novoe vremia*, 7 (19) October, 1899.

[2] *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik*, 27 February (11 March) 1900.

[3] *Moskovskie vedomosti*, 27 February (11 March) 1900.

[4] *Novoe vremia*, 13 (25) October, 1899.

The loathing of Russian conservatives for this perfidious liberal super-power was visible even in the titles of their books and pamphlets of the time about Britain: *British Policy as a Source of World Tragedies, The Decline of British Political and Military Power, Colossus on Clay Feet, On the question of the British military superiority*, etc.

Some of these publications could claim a degree of respectability but there were many that fed the Russian public with cheap and vulgar propaganda. The South African pamphlet by S.I. Glebov (pseudonym—Gindrich) was one of many examples. Glebov was something of a phenomenon who wrote on any readable topic he could lay his hands on—in 1900 alone he published about a dozen pamphlets on such burning issues as *Beat St. Petersburg and the Hygiene of Head-Wear. The book useful for each and everyone. Hygiene of Life, or how to live hundreds of years*, and so on.

Such an author could not fail to tackle the Anglo-Boer War. In his pamphlet about it Glebov dealt with England in the most abusive manner he could. 'Perfidious England', he wrote, 'is a trading country, and its conscience is of the same nature'. 'We understand the feeling of loathing inspired by Cain', he declared. The Boers, on the contrary, were all 'Orthodox Christians, and generally a very God-loving nation'[1].

In the eyes of Russian conservatives all means were good means when employed in the noble cause of opposition to the cruel West.

> It is much more appropriate to put hands with Attila Mamai[2] and Genghis Khan and lead them against Europe than to fight for those who deeply hate us and try to destroy us by hook or by crook.

wrote the *Novoe Vremia*[3].

Monarchist papers tried to present this massive pro-Boer campaign as a spontaneous upsurge of the popular emotion amongst ordinary Russians. This was only partially true. Thus, Moscow's and other conservative newspapers were the most active collectors of donations for the Boer cause: the *Moscow Vedomosti* collected 20 thousand roubles; the *Spasskie-Peterburgskiie Vedomosti*, 10 thousand roubles; the *Peterburgskii Vestnik*, 6 thousand roubles; and the *Moskovskoe Vedomosti*, 5 thousand roubles. The majority of donors were clerks, traders, officers and clergymen; that is,

[1] S.I. Glebov (Gindrich), *Novyi Napoleon iz vostochnoi Frantsuzii v Anglii, 1899-1900 (New Napoleon from the South African War between the Transvaal and England, 1899-1900)*, St. Petersburg, 1899.

[2] Mamai—one of the Tatar invaders of Russia in the 14th c.

[3] *Novoe vremia*, 5 (18) December, 1899.

the same social strata who constituted the membership of the Dutch Committee for the Relief to the Wounded Boers. In the end even Gillot himself had to admit that only very seldom the donations were received from ordinary people[6].

But pro-Boer propaganda had an undoubtful mass appeal. For the Russian chauvinistic interpretation of the Anglo-Boer War was not merely the creation of a narrow layer of politically conscious Monarchists, but was nourished by mass perceptions of a more general nature. This is in this respect worth mentioning a curious document housed in one of the Russian archives. An anonymous letter addressed to the Foreign Minister, Vasilyi Nikolayevich Lamsdorff, and forwarded from his office to the Police Department. The letter, sent from Moscow some time in spring 1901, was the work of several people (there are several different handy at least some of whom were clearly semi-literate, for the rules of grammar spelling are mostly ignored, phrases are cut in the middle and many words are unfinished)[7]

Thus one anonymous writer pleads:

> For two and a half years of the heroic struggle of the Boers, our Government has been indifferent, and even by diplomatic means has not protected the poor unarmed Boers. But be assured that we are Your executioners to remove the Transvaal Ambassador, D. Pauncefote, during the first week of the Lent, and to accept the tormented Boers under your protection.

Another petitioner (in a different hand) writes:

> Don't you see that Boers are attacked [illegible] by British impudence, the second year already [illegible]—AD, IF you do not sympathise with the Boers at least a bit, and do not take any measures to defend the oppressed, then take care, we'll show you what for. We'll be convicted anyway, but we'll send you to the other world. You might think that this is empty, but there is absolutely nothing empty here. Remember, that your kings and tsaritsas, etc. were gathered to their fathers. There will be a place for you too in the burial vault. Of course, you will not believe this letter and will regard it as a joke, but it does not matter.
>
> Remember Russia at the Berlin Congress in 1878, when Beaconsfield and Salisbury joined at us. What got did they have to show, and to break the San Stefano treaty.

[6] A.L. Vitchinevsky "Anglo-burskaia voina v otsenke russkoi periodicheskoi pechati (Russian Media about the Anglo-Boer War)", in: *Uchenopie zapiski Permskovo Gosudarstvennovo Universiteta*, Perm, vyp. 5, 1962.

[7] Gosudarstvenny Arkhiv Rossiisko Federatsii (State Archive of the Russian Federation), Fond 102 (Police Department), 1901, file 1, lists 14-15.

> now is it not possible to show them, just make a sad face over the loss of the human number, if only you do not want to dance to the British tune, if you don't – you have only to say a word, and everything will be there. Why have you no reserves. Pass them to us! If you do not receive Mr. Layds, you have only yourself to thank for the result's Missions.

Yet another writer exclaims:

> Who would have thought that such an obscure land could for one and a half years fight against the colossus; i.e. David against Goliath, they are fighting for the right cause, and if you allow them to be wiped out from the earth ... (The letter is cut at this point.)

One wonders who were all these Drunken students? Intelligent, but no less drunken criminals? The authors certainly read newspapers for all the newspaper clichés are there – the reference to the 'offensive' Beaconsfield and Salisbury and the San Stefano treaty, the call for a 'demonstration' on the Indian border, the sacred belief in the military might of Mother Russia – just say a word, and 'everything will be there' and at the same time some quite revolutionary sounding threats to the government. Whoever the authors were, one feels sure that it was such human material as this which constituted the backbone of Russian chauvinism, the Black Hundreds.

Social-Democratic and Liberal Response

Many opponents of Russian tsarism felt that the Boer republics stood for democracy against Europe's most powerful monarchy. Others denounced Britain for what they saw as yet another act of imperialist aggression in the colonial partition of the world. Among the latter was the young and still obscure Vladimir Illich Ulyanov (Lenin) whose article on the war was published in the first issue of the Iskra, the organ of the Russian Social Democrats, in 1900. Although Lenin denounced the role of British capitalists in the war, as did the Russian conservatives, his vision of the Boers and of the South African conflict sharply differed from theirs.

The democratic perception of the South African situation in Russia was shaped by one overwhelming influence from South Africa – that of Olive Schreiner.

Even those who have made a special study of Olive Schreiner's work and its influence seem to be unaware of her huge and early popularity in Russia. Ruth First and Ann Scott established a list of translations of Schreiner's works into every possible language in the world, including Czech, Ukrainian and Esperanto, but do not mention

a single Russian translation[4] – and yet there were scores of them.

In 1895, for example, Russian translations of Schreiner's story, 'A Dream of Wild Bees', and of her novel, *The Story of an African Farm*, were published in one of the leading Russian literary journals, *Vestnik Inostrannoi Literatury*[5]. 'Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland' was published in the same journal in 1897, in a few months after it appeared in English[6]; and this was only the first of many editions. Her short stories, 'Dream Life and Real Life', were also published in Russian at the end of the last century, and some of these were incorporated into an essay about Olive Schreiner written by the young (and then unknown) Maxim Gorky[7].

With the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War, the tempo of publication of Olive Schreiner's work quickened. Her writings appeared in such leading journals and magazines as *Niva*, *Russkaia Mysl*, *Zhurnal Dlia Vsekh*, *Literaturnie Vechera*, *Zhivopisnoe Obozrenie*, *Novy Vek*, *Mir Bozhy* and *Istoricheskie Bulgarizmy*. In 1900 the *Dream Life and Real Life* stories were published as a book, and in 1904 a second edition appeared[8]. Newspapers and magazines kept their readers informed about events in Olive Schreiner's life and her comments on a variety of subjects and political issues.

Russian literary critics heaped praise on Schreiner, one of them even comparing 'Peter Halket' to Leo Tolstoi's novels[9], while another thought that Schreiner's 'rebellious fantasies are sometimes reminiscent of Dante'[10]. 'Dream Life and Real Life' was praised for employing 'poetic images composing the core issues of humanity'[11], and some Russian writers even believed that Schreiner possessed a gift of prophecy and sometimes called her 'the Cape Cassandra'. What made a particular impression was that she had warned not only of the possibility of the Anglo-Boer War but also of its disastrous consequences. In this connection one magazine even compared her to Jesus Christ.

[4] Ruth First, Anne Scott, *Olive Schreiner*, London: André Deutsch, 1980, p. 371-376.

[5] *Vestnik Inostrannoi Literatury* September-December, 1895.

[6] *Niva*, October, 1897.

[7] M. Gorky, 'Alfyord, Olivi Shreiner' ('Olive Schreiner's Allegories'), *Nizhegorodskiy Listok* No. 56, 26 February 1896.

[8] Olive Schreiner, *Grezy i Deistvitelnost* (*Dream Life and Real Life*), St. Petersburg, 1900, 1904.

[9] *Russkaia Mysl*, August 1900, p. 277.

[10] *Vestnik Inostrannoi Literatury*, October 1897, p. 21-27.

[11] *Zhurnal dlia Vsekh*, June, 1900, p. 286.

self: 'She too preached in the desert'[15].

For the majority of Russian readers Olive Schreiner's novels and stories constituted their first discovery of South African realities. They had read novels about South Africa before but all of these had been written by European authors who had never visited the country and used it only as scenic background for romantic adventure stories. Schreiner's realistic approach was a real eye-opener, as even the first Russian critical essay about her was to admit[16].

Even more important was the democratic nature of Schreiner's interpretation of South African problems, with its strong resonance for emancipatory circles of Russian intelligentsia. Indeed, among democratic Russian intellectuals not only was Schreiner considered the greatest authority on South African problems and her positions often quoted[17], but effectively they adopted her view of South African and of many general problems pertaining to the South African situation (race, gender, colonialism, etc.). They saw Schreiner's descriptions of race discrimination and of the position of Africans as a reflection of the position of their own 'illiterate and deprived compatriots'[18].

No wonder that Schreiner's vision of the Anglo-Boer War was accepted by Russian democratic intellectuals as their own. Ironically, her book about the war, *An English South African's View of the Situation*, was never translated into Russian, but it was extensively quoted and attracted considerable attention among the reading public. Her stand against the British invasion of the Boer republics turned her into such a heroine in Russia that Russian newspapers frequently published her pictures (many style those of the bearded Boer fighters and leaders, while journalists wrote romanticized versions of her suffering under the British authorities during the war[19].

Although the side of the pro-Boer sentiment revealed strongly among the democratically minded Russian intellectuals but there were dissenting voices. For a start, the excesses of pro-Boer propaganda did not remain unchallenged. Students of St. Petersburg University wrote that

[15] *Mir Bozhy*, October, 1901, p. 41-42.

[16] *Vestnik Inostrannoi Literatury*, October 1897, p. 19.

[17] See, for example, V. Lesevich, 'Olivia Shreiner i ee proizvedenia' ('Olive Schreiner and Her Writings'), *Russkoe Bogatstvo*, 1901, Book VIII.

[18] See, for example, *Zhurnal dlia vsekh*, June 1900, p. 767-768.

[19] See, for example, 'Oliva Shreiner' ('Olive Schreiner'), *Mir Bozhy*, October 1901, Part two, p. 4.

> We all feel sincerely and deeply for the Boers as fighters for independence and freedom. However, we have closer and more crying needs . . . Can we, indeed dare we forget the hundreds of thousands of our own compatriots who are starving in three southern provinces, and that only an intervention is coming from Constantinople as well?[*]

Several prominent Russian intellectuals denounced anti-British hysteria. In his book *Three Conversations* the influential philosopher, Vladimir Soloviov sharply rejected militant anti-British propaganda and defended Britain and its culture. Even Tolstoy, despite his admitted pro-Boer stance, was worried by the fact that more often than not Russian sympathy for the Boers went hand in hand with hatred of the British.

The liberal *Vestnik Evropy* was unimpressed by the pro-Boer craze and wrote: "We have enough of our own business and troubles of all kinds"[*], a view echoed by the Narodnik paper *Nedelia*[*]. Social Democrats were more categorical:

> Are Comrades asleep! Why worry about the Boers? Think about your own people. Look at what is going on in Russia! there is famine there![*]

Peterburgskie Vedomosti went even further and attempted to debunk the sacred subject itself:

> Our Editorial Board is often criticised for lack of sympathy for the Boers. What are we supposed to sympathise with? With the fact that they beat and have always beaten the Negroes? That they own slaves and use them as working cattle? That they deny these individuals or natives even the right to be considered human beings? That, living overseas, they do not use the land and do not allow others to use it, like a dog in the manger? . . . Think about it, we know an awful lot about these 'poor' Boers. Just about their neighbours, the Kaffirs, the Bechuanas, the Hottentots, and about others, even less! . . . really, this passionate love which has so suddenly overwhelmed them, can one say really is their enemy?[*]

Strangely, even the Printers of the Staff of the Separate Gendarme Corps published an anonymous and clever pro-British book, *The Anglo-Boer War and the Russian Press*, written, perhaps, by an Englishman[*].

However, despite reservations, Russian society was seldom as united as it was in its sympathy for the Boers. The majority of both the right and the left, the conservatives and the liberals, the republicans, the Social Democrats and the Monarchists were pro-Boer and anti-British.

[*] *Kolokol* 6 November 1899.

[*] *Vestnik Evropy* No. 1, 1900, p. 285.

[*] *Nedelia* No. 44, 1900, p. 1403-1404.

[*] *Zhizn* No. 12, 1899, p. 330.

[*] *Peterburgskie Vedomosti* No. 32, 1900, p. 352-353.

The Distant Echo

Russian involvement in the Anglo-Boer War and the emotional engagement of the Russian public with the Boer cause was, no doubt, a phenomenon in Russian history as much as it was a factor on the international arena. It has become an integral part of Russia's nostalgic image of itself at the turn of the century and inspired it for many decades to come.

Five decades after the Anglo-Boer War Konstantin Paustovsky, one of the best Russian writers of the twentieth century, wrote:

> We the children were shocked by the war. We hated the British and felt sorry for the chivalrous Boers who fought for their independence. We knew and cared little about the opposite side of the world . . . We were carried away by Pieter Maritz, a Young Boer from the Transvaal.[*]

In 1961 a well known writer Ilya Ehrenburg wrote that when the war broke out he first "wrote a letter to the bearded President Kruger" and then, having stolen ten roubles from his mother, "set off to the theatre of war". He was soon caught and returned home[*].

Don Aminado (pseudonym of Aminad Shpoliansky, a Russian émigré journalist and writer) a schoolboy at the time of the war, also went "to help the Boers" together with several friends. They too did not get far, of course[*].

[*] Printers' *Anglo-burskaia voina i russkaia pressa (The Anglo-Boer War and the Russian Press: Selections)*. Printers of the Staff of the Separate Corps of Gendarms, St. Petersburg, 1900.

[*] Konstantin Paustovsky *Dalekie gody. Povest o iunosti (Remote Years. A story of my childhood and youth)*. Moscow-Leningrad, 1946, p. 45-46.

[*] Ilya Ehrenburg *Liudi, gody, zhizn (People. Years. Life)*. First and second books. Moscow, Sovetskiy Pisatel Publishers, 1961, p. 27.

[*] Don Aminado *Poezdka na tot svet (The Train on the Third Track)*. New York, 1951, p. 45-52.

Those who were a little younger played their Anglo-Boer wars in their own yards. There was usually a small problem: nobody wanted to be British. 'It was a Boer war when we played in the streets of our village and at the school courtyard', wrote Samuil Marshak, a well known poet and a brilliant translator of the English poetry into Russian[7].

Writer Anastasia Tsvetaeva recalled that she and her sister Marina who was to become famous poet, used up all the stock of paper in the house on drawings of the Boers and Queen Victoria. The Boers in these pictures looked very lively, while the Queen was, on the contrary, quite unattractive, small, fat, with a repulsive big nose and an ugly crown[8].

Anna Akhmatova, the greatest Russian poet of the twentieth century, mentioned the Boers in one of her poems as part of her image of the beginning of the century:

> Anxiety and gloomy ...
> Are Boers with rifles?[9]

All his life Roman Shamovich Sef, St. Petersburg military historian, kept the most precious treasure of his childhood, a memorial Boer war medal with President Kruger's portrait.

A Russian folk song about Transvaal which appeared at the beginning of the century and began with the words 'Transvaal, Transvaal, my country, you are all in flames!' has survived throughout the Soviet era and is remembered even today.

In 1948 Soviet poet Mikhail Isakovsky wrote a poem around it, expressing, perhaps, the feelings of many Russians[10]:

> Transvaal, Transvaal, my country ...
> How did it get
> To Sanders' fear,
> How did it enter a peasant home? ...
>
> I hardly even knew then
> At twelve

[7] Sergei Marshak, *Sochineniya v chetyrekh tomakh* (*Collected Works in Four Volumes*), Vol. 4, Moscow, 1963, p. 526.

[8] Anastasia Tsvetaeva, 'Iz proshlogo' ('From the Past'), *Novy mir*, 1966, No. 1, p. 81.

[9] Anna Akhmatova, *Beg vremeni* (*The Running of Time*), Leningrad, 1965, p. 388.

[10] Mikhail Isakovsky, *Stikhi poslevoennykh let* (*Poems of the Last Years*), Moscow, 1952.

> Where is Transvaal was,
> And whether it existed or not
>
> You would see me
> In my native Smolensk land,
> I followed me
> Along the quiet village streets
>
> And I understood its part.
> I knew that me,
> I repeated: 'Transvaal, Transvaal!'
> And my voice trembled ...
>
> I was singing out my anger and my sorrow
> With the words of that song,
> I repeated: 'Transvaal, Transvaal!'
> But I thought of the other country
>
> About the one with whom
> My life was tied forever
>
> Transvaal, Transvaal! — I knew
> Many beautiful words.
> But the tender this song
> As my first love ...

At the end of the 1970s the song was quoted again in a poem about the fate of the Russian revolutionaries' first exile. It went:

> Beyond Okhta, beyond Okhta on the Vyborg Side[11]
> Yesterday's soldiers sang about the war
> Snow-storm dangles over the chimneys, the sunset burns
> in the window
> Transvaal, Transvaal, my country, you are all in flames.
>
> Workers return from their work, beyond Okhta the sun
> is pouring,
> And a lepidus voyager turns the handle of his street organ,
> begging for coins ...

[11] Okhta and Vyborg Sides — workers' districts of St. Petersburg.

Or be still the pictures of dead soldiers are covered
with dust.
Transvaal, Transvaal, my country, you are all in flames

Carriages, barracks, dog carts, and widow's cheese-cloth
coziness
And the coupons are exchanged for bread in the morning.
Through years and partings, things, it aches to me
Transvaal, Transvaal, my country, you are in flames![1]

The Anglo-Boer War must have touched upon some vital nerve in the Russian society if it proved to be so important to so many different people and has been remembered for so many decades. We still have to understand what it was that made the Russians during the Soviet era feel so nostalgic about it.

In the history of relations between Russia and South Africa there were two most important periods of direct contact, direct link. The first was the Russian involvement in the Anglo-Boer War and the second, the Soviet ties with the ANC and SACP. Politically and ideologically the two seem to be complete antitheses – yet they are closely interconnected: the second would not take place without the foundation laid by the first.

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[1] *Pesni o russkikh dobrovol'tsakh, ikhnyaya Sud'ba i Podvigi v Anglo-Burskoi Voine. Sbornik*. Paris, Yunost Press, 1973, p. 71-72.

Nation, Narration and Cultural Translation: *Heart Of Darkness* and *Mhudi*

Myrtle Hooper

Preamble

Since this paper was written originally some four years ago, it seems relevant to supply a little of its history. My interest in Rhobin came about somewhat fortuitously as a result of research into the concept of 'cultural translation', a concept which has become rather more current, and perhaps, rather more respectable, now, than it was at that time. Again, the quest which preceded my discovery both of the concept and of Rhabhe was motivated by a need for a theory that would provide ways of reading metropolitan, mainstream, canonical, European texts side by side with local texts. This need had its roots in my teaching context, being 'white', teaching 'white' and 'black' literature at a 'black' institution to 'black' students demanded the formulation of at least pedagogical reasons for selecting texts for study, and it seemed important then, as now, to step back a little from the more pressing hegemonies of, on the one hand, *apartheid* and the 'South African situation', and, on the other, questions of aesthetic value which still seemed to permeate the English academy. The two texts which proved most productive of such formulations, and which, I confess, I drummed up, were *Heart of Darkness* and *Mhudi*. At the time it seemed an innovative manoeuvre to couple and compare them and this paper represents the most theoretically developed articulation of the concerns that motivated the manoeuvre. The paper was prepared originally for the 1993 Conference of the European Association of Commonwealth Languages and Literature Studies, which had the distinction of being the first conference I'd been to abroad in the company of a number of South African colleagues. The paper is itself already a rewriting of earlier ideas and this re-presentation offers me an opportunity to test the currency of the theoretical positions I struck then: the somewhat self-conscious sense of writing back, critically and theoretically, to the European centre which had at last graciously overcome the cultural boycott and opened its cultural and academic arms to us.

****

In his 1990 critical collection, Homi K. Bhabha made the theoretical move of coupling the concepts of nation and narration: a coupling which I've tried to complicate by adding the concept of cultural translation. While it is not my intention here to examine the interaction of Bhabha's theoretical explorations, I briefly summarise points that emerge in his introduction to the book and in his contribution to it. Though problematic, this ethnographic concept, I say above, constitutes an interesting paradigm case of the relations between nation and narration and can be fruitfully studied in terms of *Heart of Darkness* and *Ithaka*.

Bhabha's emphasis, in the first place, is on 'nation' as an idea, as a discursive and cultural construct, as in his words, 'a system of cultural signification ... the representation of social life rather than the discipline of social polity' (Bhabha 1990:3f). His theoretical move of studying the nation through its narrative address is thus one which 'does not merely draw attention to its language and rhetoric. It also attempts to alter the conceptual object itself ... to recognise the "performative" in language in the narratives of the nation' (Bhabha 1990:3).

In the second place, the 'incomplete significance' that characterises the 'address to the nation as narration' has the effect of turning 'boundaries and limits into the in-between spaces through which the meanings of cultural and political authority are negotiated' (Bhabha 1990:4). It is in such 'in-between spaces' that new critical and theoretical bases are developing. Says Bhabha (1990:6):

> It is when the western canon comes to an end, in Conrad's famous phrase, at the edge of the dark corners of the earth, that we can begin to explore new places from which to write histories of modernity and to rewrite theories of narration.

If we grant with Bhabha, therefore, that 'English is no longer an English language', then we should also recognise the 'post-colonial and neo-colonial conditions as alternative positions from which to speak [across] East and West', and the crises that ensue, in such conditions, of dealing professionally with local situations that are themselves defined as liminal and borderline. (Bhabha 1990:6)

Commenting on the authority of postcolonial positions, Bhabha comes to a tantalising and somewhat paradoxical conclusion. He says,

> there are those who have not yet found their nations amongst them – the Palestinians and the Black South Africans. It is only in the making of his book we were unable to add Salman Rushdie to that list. These unresolved questions remain to remind us, in some form or other, of what need not be true for the rest of us too: 'When did we become a people?' 'When do we stop being one?' Or are we in the process of becoming one? What do these questions have to do with our articulate relationships with each other and with others? (Bhabha 1990:1)

The questions are Said's, and they are close to represent what Bhabha thinks must be the problematic of nationness for 'Palestinians and Black South Africans'. The paradox of which Bhabha appears unaware is the alterity of the 'us them' relationship thus engendered, an alterity which might become apparent if we recall the traditional preference in Africa of linguistic formulations such as *ubuntu*, or the ways in which, in African society, the naming of an individual can reflect the renewal of the community. An anecdote from Bessie Head (1981:xii) describes an instance of such naming:

> *Ikgabeng* means 'Now we are people'. The grandparents had been the grandchildren of the family for a long time. Then a young grand-daughter married and gave birth to a son. This caused joy and relief to the grandparents. They exclaimed: '*Ikgabeng*. Now we are people again'.

The reservation might justifiably be expressed that it is precisely this 'nationness' that has been lost to 'Black South Africans', but it is a reservation that would emerge oddly from the pen of one who is not, I suspect, in a position to advance it with the kind of justified moral authority he has himself advocated. It would also emerge oddly from the pen of one who has asserted that:

> The 'other' is never outside or beyond us; it emerges forcibly within our discourse when we think we speak most intimately and indigenously between ourselves. (Bhabha 1990:4)

It is not my purpose simply to quibble with Bhabha when I am in substantial agreement with him. Instead I am appropriating for my own use the post-colonial spaces to which he gives theoretical recognition. And yet the audacity with which I advance my metaphor is a major point one, since it draws on the ethnographic claim of 'being there' (the term is one coined by Clifford Geertz in his 1988 study *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*), the claim of dealing, on a daily basis, in my own 'local situation', with the 'Black South Africans' who have, in Bhabha's reading, 'not yet found their nation'. It is this situation that directs my interest to Bhabha, and motivates both the theoretical exploration of cultural translation and the comparative application that follows.

Bhabha's full length contribution to his collection is an article, 'DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation', and it is in this article that I find terms in which to construe my situation: in the recognition of 'the cultural construction of nationness as a form of social and textual affiliation' (Bhabha 1990:292f), and in the argument, by

> attributing the paradox of [the metaphors of nation] – the transgressive strategies of the scene of writing – to the discursive process which can perform what Said describes as the act of narrative reinvention.

To adopt these terms is explicitly to declare my allegiances in relation to being a white South African teacher of black students. I am one who is convinced of the need to recognise the linguistic and the cultural interfaces that characterise postcolonial realities of much literature in English (and in other languages as well).

The ethnographic bias of these allegiances might already be apparent. Before exploring their correlation to the concept of cultural translation it seems apposite to give attention to Bhabha's own consideration of the ethnographic model which might be seen as informing colonial power. In his earlier paper, published in 1986 and entitled 'The Other Question: Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism', Bhabha offers an analysis of such power that works towards an understanding of 'the processes of subjectification made possible (and plausible) through stereotypical discourse' (Bhabha 1986:149). In this analysis he asserts that [the] -

> predominant strategic function [of colonial discourse] is the creation of a space for a 'subject people' through the production of knowledges in terms of which surveillance is exercised and a recognizable form of pleasure/unpleasure is incited (Bhabha 1986:154).

'Colonial power', he says a little later,

> produces its effects as a fixed reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible. It resembles a form of narrative in which the metonymy and stereotype [or, as Spivak suggests, catachresis] and through other tropes) it employs a system of representation, a regime of truth, that is articulated similar to realism. (Bhabha 1986:156).

If the production of an 'other' which is 'entirely knowable and visible' is a recognisable feature of colonial power, it is also strikingly characteristic of traditional ethnographic practice. Recognising this, we should recognise also the perilous susceptibility of conceptions of otherness to a spirit of ethnocentrism (and its ugly sister racism) in any study which insists on cross-cultural difference.

This connection notwithstanding, there remain important reasons why literary studies should retain – or develop – an interest in the sphere of ethnography. Not least among these is the 'substantial theoretical upheaval which the discipline has undergone, in response to postmodern suspicions of grand narratives and reflexive explorations of the literary nature of the narrative conventions of the ethnographer'.

Indeed it would be doing Bhabha himself an injustice to oversimplify his appreciation of ethnography. He speaks, in the article in *Nation and Narration* to which I have already referred, of the 'narrative splitting of the subject of identification [that] is borne out in Levi-Strauss' description of the ethnographic act', a description which Bhabha (1990:301) summarises as follows:

> The ethnographic requires that the locus of knowledge—the total social fact – must be appropriated from the outside like a thing, but, like a thing, which comprises within itself the subjective understanding of the indigenous. The transposition of this process into the language of the outsider's grasp—this entry into the realm of the symbolic or representation/signification – then makes the social fact 'three-dimensional'. For ethnography demands that the subject has to split itself into object and subject in the process of identifying its field of knowledge, the ethnographic object is constituted 'by dint of the subject's capacity for indefinite self-objectification (without ever quite abolishing itself as subject) for projecting outside itself ever-diminishing fragments of itself'.

If it was Bhabha's contention earlier that the address to nation as narration attempts to alter the conceptual object itself, it seems fair to register the ways in which revisionist ethnography has done so too (and here I draw a distinction between it and the traditional ethnographic practice which might be seen as constituting a mode for colonial power). A major figure in such revisioning is James Clifford who, in a collection entitled *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, makes the assertion that ethnographic writings should be recognised as fictions, in the dual senses of having been made and having been made up (Clifford 1986:6). He speaks in particular of reflexive accounts which

> have the effect of transforming the 'cultural' and 'social' from an observable reality, or history, or unity of typical behaviors to be described or interpreted) into a speaking subject, who sees as well as is seen, who makes, as well as probes, back. In this view of ethnography the proper referent of any account is not represented 'world', but the enactive encounter of discourses. But the principle of this critical production goes well beyond the more or less artful problematics of 'factual' encounters. It creates cultural interpretations in many sorts of rhetorical contexts, and it obliges writers to find diverse ways of rendering negotiated realities as truth-subjective, powerladen, and incomplete. In this view, 'culture' is always relational, an interpretation of communicative processes that exist, historically, between subjects in relations of power (Clifford 1986:14).

Rather than the objectification of the self which Bhabha, following Levi-Strauss, recognises as characterising ethnography, Clifford's version is a subjectification of the object of study, a deliberate recuperation of the autonomy and intransitivity of the language-culture systems being studied, and, in traditional parlance, being translated.

It has not been my intention to apply the concept of cultural translation to narration. I am following the initiative of Robert Hampson in a study entitled *Heroic*

of Darkness and the Speech that Cannot be Silenced' (1990), which is in its turn a response to the contrast Clifford draws between Conrad and the anthropologist Malinowski. Yet Tiffin, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989:56) in recognizing

> cross-culturality as the potential termination point of an apparently endless human history of conquest and domination justified by the myth of group 'purity', and as the basis on which the post-colonial world can be stabilized

we might get some sense of the productivity of the concept of narration as cultural translation.

The use I am making of the concept here is two-fold. First, I wish to take up Ba Isari's contention that 'Black South African[s] by reflecting on the ways in which the act of cultural translation that takes place in Joseph Conrad's 1902 novella *Heart of Darkness* is reversed in the 1930 novel *Mhudi*, which has been identified as the first novel in English by a Black South African. Subsequently, I wish to position myself, in the terms Bhabha (1990:209) advocates, as a 'secular interpreter', as a 'translator of "the discontinuities of texts and discourses across cultures"'.

It has been my concern elsewhere to offer readings of *Heart of Darkness* and *Mhudi* which seek to reveal their respective alignments on 'two sides of Empire' (Hooper 1992), and which seek to contrast the respective treatment given in them to 'metaphors of darkness' and 'the interior africa' (Hooper 1993). I will here restrict myself to the positioning of the respective narratives as acts of cultural translation: that is, in relation to the communities which they evoke and in relation to the Empire of their day.

In the article referred to already, Robert Hampson draws attention to the pressures of and strains which are brought to bear on Marlow's act of narration. Citing Benita Parry, Hampson (1990:26) reminds us that Conrad's

> original contemporaneous readers were the subscribers to *Blackwood's* and *New Reviews*, an audience still secure in the conviction that they were members of an invincible imperial power and a superior race.

It is Hampson's (1990:30) own observation that,

> Conrad shows an understanding of the pressure to which he was exposing his narrative with his audience. Marlow's relation with his audience, like the readership of *Blackwood's Magazine*, is made up of men in the colonial service also.

Marlow's narrative of Africa is thus predicated on the imperial language culture system which he shares with his auditors. As Talal Asad (in Hamnson 1990:20) points out

> When anthropologists return to their countries they must write up 'their people' and they must do so in the conventions of representation already circumscribed ... by their discipline, its national life, and wider society.

Asad has elsewhere drawn attention to the relative power of languages out of which and into which translation occurs. In the first place by citing Walter Benjamin's injunction that the translator should (though doesn't often) allow his or her own language to be 'powerfully affected by the foreign tongue', and in the second by insisting that the translator's *language* is not always willing to 'subject itself to this transforming power'. He says,

> I translate, stationed at a variously solution of the language because I want to translate text that in my judgement something the translator cannot determine by individual activity (any more than the individual speaker can affect the evolution of his or her language)—but is governed by institutionally defined power relations between the languages/domains of the encounter. It is not likely because the languages of Third World societies ... (including, of course, the societies that social anthropology's have traditionally studied—are 'weaker' in relation to Western languages (and today, especially to English). They are more likely to submit to forcible transformation in the translation process than the other way around (Asad 1986:157).

Complicating the picture Asad offers is the fact that the allegiances of the 'translator' are rather more complex than that. David Kunene, for example, who is a native born Black South African, and whose first-language is Zulu, describes the difficulties he experienced in translating the Sesotho text *Chaka* into English. Despite an initial decision that his 'first loyalty was to the original', in the end, he tells us, 'I split my loyalty virtually equally between the donor language and the recipient language' (Kunene 1981:xxi). The reason he offers is that,

> The translator comes as a kind of cultural go-between who perceives his good services to pass on, as best he can, the benefits of one culture to the practitioners of the 'other' culture (Kunene 1981:xlix).

From these problems—the authority of medium and the allegiances of the translator—it should be apparent how significant is the question of 'for whom' the translation is made. Unlike criticism, Asad (1986:156,159) points out, which, in order to be responsible, 'must always be addressed to someone with an interest in', a cultural translation is addressed to 'a very specific audience, which is wanting to read about another mode of life'. And unlike history and translation which is 'faced with a specific piece of discourse produced within the society studied', the challenge confronting cultural

translation is the 'meaning implicit in a range of practices' (Asad 1986:16), the silences that must be responded to and interpreted.

It is perhaps the respective responses to silence that most crucially distinguish the narratives of *Heart of Darkness* and *Mhudi*. As Chinua Achebe (1978) has claimed in a biting critique of Conrad's novel, Africa serves merely as a setting or backdrop for the story that is Kurtz (as Seidel 1985:86 has put it), and the Africans are effectively silent. The focus of my interest has been the African woman in Conrad's text, and particularly the iconic mode in which she is represented. The African woman in Plaatje's text, by contrast, is the central character around whom the narrative coheres, and a woman who is defined, in large measure, by her voice. Deriving its power from the community which sanctions it, Mhudi's voice is nevertheless a distinctly individual one, and one which the reveals both the concerns and the communal positioning of her writer.

Unlike the complicated frame which characterises Conrad's text, the narrative strategy which Plaatje adopts is relatively straightforward: predominantly omniscient with a brief first-person recapitulation given to Mhudi in Chapter 5. The critical attempt to read the novel as the narrative of 'Ha'a-Crown', the grandson of the protagonists, is rendered most obviously problematic by the 'padded Victorian style' of which Plaatje has been accused (by Jankovic Sekoto, amongst others, cited in Couzens 1978a) because, in combination with a sophisticated incorporation of images, symbols and structural devices gleaned from oral tradition, it reveals the writer's location at the interface between two demanding language-culture systems. Unlike Mutlow who represents an alien culture for an audience of initiates in the language he shares with them, Plaatje is representing his 'own' culture for an 'alien' audience in the 'alien' language.

As the first Black South African to write a novel in English, Plaatje thus stands as a perfect illustration of the concatenation of the concepts of nation and narration which concerned Bhabha. A founder member of the South African Native National Congress, Plaatje travelled across both to England and America to plead for their non-cession at a time when extremely punitive legislative measures were being enacted against his people. His cross-cultural work in English, then, (made, as Tim Couzens 1978b:61 has it, without class), can clearly be understood in terms of his desire to represent their cause.

It should also be understood in terms of the two 'objects' Plaatje specifies in his Preface to the Original Edition:

> (...) to interpret in a sympathetic public the pulse of 'the back of the Native mind', and (2) with the readers' money, to collect and print for Bantu Schools Sechuana folklore, which, with the spread of European ideas, are fast being forgotten (Plaatje 1978:21).

The potential loss of his cultural heritage was plainly a keen experience for Plaatje. And yet the problems that confront him in his narrative endeavour are endemic to its cultural translation because it comes so close to the ethnographic act of salvage which James Clifford (1986:112f) denounces thus:

> Ethnography's disappearing object is, then, in significant degree, a theoretical construct that my appropriate (and practice) salvage ethnography as it was historically. The other is lost in disaggregating time and space, but saved in the text. The recognition and interpretation of fragile cultures is also a mission of an essentially unquestionable witness to an authenticity. (Moreover, since the 'true' culture can always vanish, the salvaged version cannot be easily refuted.)

In Plaatje's concern with the preservation of oral culture against the inroads of British colonialism, we must, furthermore, recognise two paradoxes. On the one hand, the translation of oral culture takes place into the medium that is threatening it. On the other, in inscribing traditional stories Plaatje is effectively abrogating many of the functions they would have had in an oral culture, not least of which is the dehumanisation of access. This act of cultural preservation, then, impacts back upon the culture it is seeking to preserve because he is translating it for an alien readership. In this regard, Plaatje is very like the character he writes: estranged out of the community of oral culture by his education, by his use of English, and particularly by his act of inscription. The voice he creates is an implicated voice, a hybrid voice characterised by the syncretism which Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989: 80) recognise as the 'condition within which post-colonial societies operate'.

Yet simply in addition to that voice he allows Mhudi, Plaatje succeeds in incorporating multiple language-culture systems into his text, his achievement might be seen as approximating the kind of polyphony which has been recognised and advocated by revisionist ethnographers. In Clifford's (1986:15) words, again:

> As Bakhtin ... has shown, cultural processes (such as the writing of any complex represented discursive space (that of ethnography or the nineteenth century realist novel). Many voices clamour for expression.

Again, 'as written versions based on fieldwork, these accounts are clearly no longer the story, but a story among stories' (Clifford 1986: 99).

The questions with which, in conclusion, I would like to return to Bhabha are these: whose nation? In whose language? For which readers? Given the authority I have claimed for my position as a postcolonial critic and reader, it is perhaps apposite to emphasise the subjectivity of this reading: the texts I have chosen to exemplify processes of cultural translation are English texts because I am English-speaking, my

interest in Bhabha's comment is motivated by my experience as a white South African, of black South Africans. The difference each of which I write are not those of alterity, but those of multiplicity, and the nationness of which I am myself conscious arises in the complexly discerned discursive spaces of dialogical processes. I hope these are spaces which Bhabha's Un-self would deem worthy to explore.

****

This is the point at which the original paper ended. I would, now, like to return to the bracketing comments with which this version of it began. Because, looking at the paper with older eyes which have witnessed some changes in the interim, (of both a social political and an academic nature), it seems curiously incomplete. I have, subsequently, made further studies using the terms outlined above, of Mofolo's *Chaka*, of Lessing's *Grass is Singing* and Rooke's *Grove of Flower Trees*, even of Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K*. Part of my efforts have been directed at incorporating a theory of reading and readership into the paradigm of narration as cultural translation, and in doing so I have drawn on Nkosi's concept of cross-border readers who are interpellated by the texts they read and which read them. I have also been conscious, within the defined field of Conrad studies, for example, of the incursions and reclamations that are being mounted by critics and scholars abroad. One cannot simply revert to the pre-Said's cry of 'hands off our lit'—tempting as this response might be. Yet despite my awareness of the proliferation of postcolonial theory (with which I admit somewhat vainly to keep up), one of the reasons I feel I speak with more authority now than I did at the time I made these explorations is, perhaps paradoxically, the confidence of concreteness in the more positive sense. To writers, critics and theoreticians abroad who would speak on behalf of the South Africans, black and white, who 'live' their nation', it is much easier in 1997 than it was in 1993 to retort, 'No they haven't! Haven't you heard ...? Haven't you read ...?'

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The Afrikaans Farm Novel and Idealised Sons: C.M. van den Heever's Farm Novels as Narratives of the Nation

Carli Coetzee

In this paper I argue that in conservative fictions of nation-building, fictions that are often assumed to make only affirmative use of the particular past they seek to remember and construct, there can be found contradictory and more subtly 'progressive' elements. These are sometimes at odds with expectations of an unsophisticated singularity of purpose. As an illustration I examine the work of the Afrikaans writer C.M. van den Heever, placing his farm novels within the larger context of his ideas about the evolution of what he regards as the spirit or the nation (*Die Afrikaanse geestesgesteldheid*, or the Afrikaans ideal).

I take up some of the issues raised in J.M. Coetzee's discussion of Van den Heever's work in his *White Writing* (1988) (without which my own would not have been possible), but direct my attention differently. Whereas Coetzee reads Van den Heever's novels as fictions of the attainment of a particular kind of consciousness, namely the anti-individual consciousness that allows the farmer to imagine himself part of a collective and timeless birthright to the farm owned beyond question, I read these texts as fictions of the *Wording* of individual relations to the nation, in a continuum and evolutionary succession from the forefathers. Coetzee's reading stresses the tendency in the novels to hagiographise the forefathers and their ways.

I aim to point out how Van den Heever desires to show the new generation of 'Afrikaner' men (and, to some extent, women, as I argue in my paper) the ways in which they ought to differ from their predecessors.

The farm novel, the past and idealised patriarchy

With the publication of Coetzee's *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa*, the South African farm novel was re-evaluated and theoretical interest in the genre reactivated. Coetzee, making use of some of the insights of the critical literature on the German *Bauernroman* (Zimmermann 1975, Schweizer 1976), pays attention to

the ideological content of ostensibly innocent fictions of the land written by white South African writers. Central to his reading of South African (white) pastoral is his view of the farm novel as

> essentially conservative; it looks back, usually in a spirit of nostalgia, to the calm and security of the farm as a way of life mediate between the wilderness of the veld to the one and the wilderness of the new cities, it holds up the image of the continuance of an exemplary age when the garden of Eden existed outside history (Coetzee 1988:4)

Coetzee's reading of especially the Afrikaans farm novels of the 1930s focuses on the 'retrospective gaze' which locates the ideal of the nation's wholeness in the time of the forefathers. Coetzee's reading of the farm novels pretends to endorse a 'suppressed "outside" history' (Coetzee 1988:11); time in these novels is the cyclical time of the farm and the family, of unbroken succession and choiceless fate. The farming family, in Coetzee's reading, functions as a structure that divests it of movement and development into the patterns of nature and the seasons, since the individual farmer relinquishes individuality in order to be absorbed into what Coetzee sees as 'a pure collective, tribal/familial form of consciousness' (Coetzee 1988:4).

The value of this argument lies in its foregrounding of the ideological underpinnings of white pastoral in South Africa, that is the attempt to provide a 'transcendental justification for ownership of the land' (Coetzee 1988: 66). A similar move towards revealing a conceptual ideological design or programme can be discerned in the critical literature on the German farm novel of the 1920s and 1930s, most notably in the work of Gerhard Schweizer (1976) and Peter Zimmermann (1975).

Coetzee regards as one of the chief ways through which the farm novel achieves its ideological goal (an attempt to naturalise white ownership of the land) the particular way of depicting the forefathers. In the novels, he argues, one sees

> efforts to buttress Afrikaner patriarchalism in a manner that a weighted significance should be attached to the acts of the founding fathers, to re-imagine their legacy and perpetuating their values. Thus we find the ancestors hagiographised as men and women of utmost strength, fortitude, and faith, and instituted as the originators of lineages (Afr. *families*). The farms they carved out of the wilds, or in many cases reclaimed from neglect, become the seats to which their lineages are mystically bound (Coetzee 1988:83)

Each generation, argues Coetzee, must re-establish its natural right to the farm; the individual farmer needs to learn to see himself as an embodiment of all those who have gone before him and whose responsibility towards the land he perpetuates. Thus, in Coetzee's reading, the realisation of the self as the 'transitory embodiment of a lineage' is tied to a particular kind of experience of the land that, in Van den Heever's

fiction, is available only in familiar Afrikaans (Coetzee 1988:87). At the heart of Van den Heever's farm novels, Coetzee argues, is the transition from (false and limited) individual consciousness to true and timeless, because cyclical/ linear consciousness. In this state the farmer sees the reclaiming of his farm revealed to him, a meaning that is supposedly revealed to each new husband/ farmer who proves his worthiness of the name and land of his forefathers.

This reading relies on the notion of cyclically lived time the family name but is passed on from father to son/s. Presumably, then, the revelation of the farm as source of meaning and anti-individual identity must be part of the experience of every generation. Van der Heever's work, contrary to the expectations of a genre that characteristically supports conservative political programmes and the maintenance of patriarchally dominated family life, exhibits what seems like a liberalising tendency in this regard. Instead of harking after an ordered and happier time in the past, these novels attempt their critique of the present through a presentation of an imagined future. In many of Van den Heever's farm novels the transformative experience is located in the present generation, which is contrasted favourably with the unconscious and animal-like existence of the forefathers. Van den Heever's texts do not contain simply the contradictions that are the effect of an attempt at ideological blinding. His aim is not to 'cover and to evade' the instability of the period; instead he wishes to explain and direct the changing fortunes of the nation.

It is to this aspect of Van den Heever's work – my reading of which deviates from Coetzee's – that I now turn.

The Afrikaans idea

Van der Heever's fictional work of the late 1920s and 1930s, is self-consciously concerned with the creation of the new Afrikaans nation, represented in the novels by farming families, especially by the sons who distinguish themselves from their fathers by being more consciously aware of their relationship with the land. The novels are thus, as Coetzee also suggests, narratives through which *Afrikaner* (male) identity is presented as having its foundation in a mystified ownership of the land. The consciousness of this new generation of sons differs significantly from that of their forebears, however, who are shown living in a state of unconsciousness. In his investigation of the 'Afrikaans' farmer and relations within the Afrikaans nation-family, Van den Heever emphasises the evolution, rather than persistence, of the content of the Afrikaans idea.

The transformation that Van den Heever's works are concerned with is, then, not one that occurs for each generation, but one that is part of the experience of a particular group. It follows, too, that this group includes all Afrikaners, and not only the farmers among them—the farm stands metonymically for land as the farmer stands for the Afrikaner.

The family in Van den Heever's farm novels

In the novels written during the late 1920s and 1930s, Van den Heever develops some of the ideas related to his theory of the Afrikaans idea by means of sons who are born into a lineage which owns the land, but who are initially unconscious of their true connection with it. The young farmer's relationship to the land is somewhat potentially shared by all the male members of the lineage, but Van der Heever is interested in showing how the new generation is more consciously 'Afrikaans' than their forefathers. Most of his novels deal with the conflict between the generations, yet more than the relationship between father and son/s is at stake, since Van den Heever aims to show how the new generation will improve on what has gone before. In many of these novels, set in a time roughly contemporaneous with their composition in the 1920s and 1930s, it is stated that farms have been in the family since the 1700s—an ordinary moment seemingly beyond interrogation (Van den Heever 1928:99; 1930:69; 1935:178).

Van den Heever's farm novels are ostensibly naive in legitimate ownership of the land, and in this sense they share the conservative impulse that characterises the farm-novel generally. What is interesting in his work, however, is his concern with improving on the values and ways of the fathers. The nation he wishes to contribute to is one in which land is valued highly; yet he chooses to do this by developing a new farmer type who is gentler than the stern patriarchs of the past.

With one notable and fairly late (1944) exception, Van den Heever avoids the issue of unconsciousness in his narratives. Coetzee has shown that the novels 'display a developing engagement with the problem' of consciousness (Coetzee 1988:58). One reason for Van den Heever's avoidance of the figure of the unconscious forefathers is of course the problematics of depicting a consciousness that does not articulate itself. When he does choose to write about the unconscious period in the history of the *volk*, a time when the founding fathers are supposed to have lived in an harmonious relationship with the land, however, Van den Heever is faced with one of the implications of the Afrikaans idea, namely its construction of aggressively acquisitive claims on the land as basis for Afrikaner national language and spirit. Van den Heever wishes, J.M. Coetzee has suggested, to preserve in his farm novels a putative

> organic mode of consciousness belonging to a people who, from sibling generation after generation on the family farm, have divested themselves of individuality and become embodiments of an enduring bloodline stretching into the mythic past (Coetzee 1988:6).

This blood/line connecting the generations is traced through the patriarchal name which fathers bestow on the sons, who must prove themselves worthy of it. Crucial to the propagation of the name and the 'blood' is thus the begetting of sons who can perpetuate the lineage. Likening the farm novel's end to that of the romantic novel of marriage, Coetzee argues that the attainment of lineal consciousness, and the awareness of one's status as husband to the land, is its desired 'consummation' (Coetzee 1988:101). The appropriate end to the farm novel shows the individual farmer's conscious entrance into the line of husband farmers who have been wedded unambiguously to the land of the ancestors (Coetzee 1988:86).

While the forefathers were unfailingly wedded to the land, Van den Heever shows that they lived unaware of their erotic sacred bond with the ancestral farm. Many of Van den Heever's novels are concerned with the moment when this relationship is brought to consciousness. The moment, one of the myths of the Afrikaans national idea. He shows how, in the unconscious (pre-less Afrikaans) stage of the nation-family's existence, relations within the family, like the relationship between the farmer and his land, remained undervalued because unarticulated. The new generation of farmers he creates are more benevolent rulers over their households and accept the ties of blood that bind families together. In this way authority within the household can be legitimated, and through it the right to ownership of the land. The threat to the propagation of lineal consciousness is thus significantly located in the farming family's relations among themselves, and the wider world is relegated to a position of relative unimportance.

In the plots he provides for the previous generations, Van den Heever shows that ties of blood, most often expressions of the love of mothers, were sometimes disrespected. The patriarchs are often concerned with profit, and to this end they own land, both the land and their kin. In the narratives that ends with the marriage between a farmer and his land, there is no position for women other than as bearers of the next generation of sons, who carry the name of the father. Women have to leave the farm of their fathers and take on the name of another farm's bloodline. Here they have to earn their rightful position within the family, but Van den Heever shows some of these women exhausted and ignored as the husband-farmers misguidedly undervalue the organic unit that is the family and its land.

Van den Heever's plots of the attainment of lineal consciousness by the men of farming families, if read as narratives of the growing awareness of these men as members of the familial nation, also seem to be concerned with accommodating mothers and daughters – who are present in their role as carriers of 'blood' rather than power – in the new Afrikaner family-nation. The new generation of Afrikaners will include, and respect the contributions of both men and women, those excluded during the earlier phase of Afrikaner identity, it is suggested, were the women members of the family itself. In a number of his novels, and most significantly in *Laat vrugte*, Van den

Heever presents, critically, the position of mothers in the previous generations. In the eyes of mothers, he writes, one sees

> die far melancholy about things that have remained unclear, about an early, passionate adventure, when, far and big, the heart went to pick the pure flower of love (Van den Heever 1939:25)

The flower metaphor is more explicitly applied to the early dreams of a farm girl in another passage, where the destroying force is identified as the unsympathetic farming men of this 'ox-like'[4] generation (Van den Heever 1939:26):

> Yes, the years have taught her, they have cut more sharply and restrictively across her life, with heavy, thick-soled boots they have trampled on her existence, they have crossed her dreams like footsteps on, like spadework, merely covering the thoroughway, they have pushed everything away, down, lower, towards the earth. And now she has only her body, her mother's body that has been pulled down by the years, and her dreams lie trampled on the ground like a flower on the ploughed field, where it does not belong, where the practical things, hard deeds, reign alone and he rest is rubbish (Van den Heever 1939:69)[5]

For this generation of men, all shows of emotion are regarded as 'womanly weakness'[6] to be countered if one wants to retain mastery. The animal-like fathers treat members of their own families as – in a revealing set of nomenclatures – 'servant' (Van den Heever 1926:8) and 'slave' (Van den Heever 1939:59).[7] In *Longs die grootpad* Hansie learns about the purifying value of suffering from his mother (Van den Heever

[3] Die vere weerkend oor dinge wat onbegrepe sy, oor 'n vroeë, liefdesavontuur, as die hart ver en hoog die suiwer bloem van die liefde gaan plok het

[4] beesagtige.

[5] Ja, die jare het haar geleer, dit het skerper en vaster oor haar lewe heen gesny, dit het met swaar, dikseolskoene oor haar bestaan gestap, dit het oor haar drome soos voetslae, soos spitwerk net oor die deurgang verspeel, weggevee, dit het alles weggedruk onderlangs, af, aarde toe. En nou het sy nog net haar liggaam, haar moederliggaam wat afgeboul is deur die jare, en haar drome le weggetrap op die grond soos 'n bloem op die geploegde land, waar dit nie tuishoort nie, waar die praktiese dinge, harde dade die enigste is en die res bog

[6] vroulike weekheid

[7] bediende, slaaf.

1938:51), and marries a woman with the same name as his mother, an indication that not only the patriarchal name and values will be carried on in the next generation. Henning in *Laat vrugte* is said to have the gentle eyes of his mother (Van den Heever 1969?:90) and grows up to value her and to sympathise with her sorrow.

The value attached to Afrikaner women as carriers of blood, and the need to include these women in the nation, can be read as a reaction to certain external influences, most notably the opportunities open to young women in the cities. Hofmeyr notes that the city's employment profile favoured the entrance of young women into the labour market. The young women who were sent to the city in order to help support their families not only were in a position to question parental authority, but some ended up marrying non-Afrikaner white men (Hofmeyr 1987:100).

An even greater threat to the maintenance of pure Afrikaner womanhood was that posed by the 'army of the daughters of the new [Afrikaner] proletariat roaming the white market' in Johannesburg (Van Onselen 1982:146). In *Langs die grenspad* a daughter returns to her father's farm after the entrance of an augustave stepmother, her ruin and eventual suicide in Durban is emblematic of the destruction of Afrikaner womanhood by the city. Van den Heever's farm novels emphasise the centrality of Afrikaner women (as mothers) to the views of the farming family; this contribution refers metonymically to the role of women as the carriers of the values and 'blood' of the nation. When education for women is advocated in the novels, this is motivated as necessary in order to deserve and assist a husband (Van den Heever 1928:20,143). In *Oorwinning* a 'feminist' character and the views she expresses are clearly marked as unacceptable by her anglicised name ('Daisy'), her use of English words and the fact that she smokes (Van den Heever 1930:67). In *Groei* the Tennis student reads books on the position of women, as well as 'erotic' literature – an association that is intended to show the unwholesomeness of pro-Afrikaans approach to the woman question (Van den Heever 1933:75).

The farm novel as a narrative through which the Afrikaans nation is imagined as a community of interlocking families in this respect differs little from the way that other nations have invented themselves. Presenting the family as the organic unit within which relations need to be reformulated significantly locates important tensions within the 'nation' itself, rather than between the Afrikaans nation-family and other 'nations' which may lay claim to the land. Writing at a time when authority within the Afrikaner family seemed threatened by the possibility of economic and social independence for urbanised Afrikaner women, Van den Heever is most concerned to include women, and Afrikaner daughters especially, in his reimagined nation. Thus the protagonists of the farm novels characteristically learn to respect ties of blood, a value shown being upheld by, as well as being represented by, farming women.

The new generation of farmers, conscious of their Afrikaans identity, are often presented as more 'feminine' than the forefathers. Not only do they show respect for the values of mothers, but they are often educated, and hence able to formulate and interpret Afrikaans views. The stern patriarchs of the novels are not simply hagiographised for their strength, fortitude and faith (Coetzee 1988:83); they are shown to represent the outdated shape of the Afrikaans ideal. One reason for the choice of intellectual men as carriers and interpreters of the values of the nation may well be Van den Heever's concern to legitimate his own position as an intellectual articulating the ideals of the *volk*. The novels also reveal that, for members of the reinvented nation, intellectual abilities will be at least as important as physical strength. Through characters like Hansie in *Langs die grenspad*, who returns to the farm where his predecessors are said to live unconsciously, like plants (Van den Heever 1938:178), Van den Heever develops the possibility of a new ideal of (intellectual) masculinity in contrast with the somehow destructive patriarchy identified with the previous generations.

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Gardening in 'Other Countries': Schoeman, Coetzee, Conrad

R.J. Balfour

Both Karel Schoeman and J.M. Coetzee make use in their writings of the garden as a postcolonial trope. Joseph Conrad's (1912) short story 'A Smile of Fortune', written almost a century earlier, also makes use of the garden as a trope, but the ideological and conceptual framework employed by Conrad differs considerably from the work of the latter novelists. Although Schoeman in *Another Country* ([1984][1991]) has been accused of a lack of moral commitment, the novel in fact contains a sustained debate centred on the ability of a European language (and consequently its community of users) successfully to accommodate itself to Africa. Coetzee's novel *Life and Times of Michael K* (1983) evidences the alienating and destructive nature of ideological encampments. The novel enunciates the hope for, and possibility of, a new type of relationship with the African land, whose sustaining value as mother of all things is reaffirmed by K's labour. Conrad's short story 'A Smile of Fortune' (1912) examines the problematic nature of a discourse which is predicated upon difference. All three writers directly or indirectly expose the inability of colonial-patriarchal discourses successfully to contain, distort or pervert) the meaning ascribed to that which they define as Other.

In all three texts, that which is defined as Other by the dominating discourse falls beyond the semblance of cultivation. The garden is not only an attempt to translate the landscape into understanding, but is also an attempt to create a binary system of significance. In other words, the garden as a sign is an attempt by colonial patriarchal discourses to establish a sense of Self as garden, by which the Other as desert or wilderness may be known. Paradoxically this very attempt to establish Self and Other through the landscape is problematic. For, as I shall demonstrate, attempts to generate signification appear to result in the generation of meanings antithetical to those intended by the grand narratives and binaries of patriarchy and racism.

I shall refer to Saussure's ([1915]1988:10) understanding of the signifier and signified in his lecture, 'The Nature of the Linguistic Sign' as well as to Lacan's ([1957][1988:80) development of that position in 'The Insistence of the Letter in the Unconscious', and will locate the three different gardens within the 'language/is

course' of postcolonial literature using the three texts cited above. Further to this I shall locate each landscape discussed within suitable literary antecedents. By drawing on the metaphoric and metonymic meanings gardens have had within certain other literary genres, Schreiner, Conrad and Coetzee are Conrad problematise as well as chart the re-articulation of the trope of the garden, familiar in medieval and Renaissance texts, into colonial and postcolonial texts as a space and an topos.

A language community occurs where the members of a group are agreed upon the transmission of meanings through language. As Saussure (1915:8) says, 'the meaning of a word exists by virtue of a kind of contract agreed upon between members of a community'. This contractual agreement through language upon the purpose and significance of the European presence in South Africa is examined by Schreiner through her rendition of the lives and lifestyles of the succeeding waves of colonists in Bloemfontein. *Another Country* (1991) is therefore concerned with the European colonial implantation into South Africa. The novel contrasts Vesta's journey to 'awareness of *Other* centres of *Self*' with the fear and inability of a colonial community to allow for such an awareness (Lee [1971]1985:248; e.a.).

While the coloniser is prepared to penetrate and exploit another space, the colonial community allows for no reciprocity in its relationship with the land that sustains it. Coetzee (1988) in *White Writing* discusses the preoccupation white South African writers have with a landscape that escapes containment within their language. According to Coetzee, the conceptual and linguistic framework of the colonists suited the landscape of Europe with its vertical as opposed to horizontal plains. South Africa with its vast plateaus of desert scrub and long grasses and flat crowned savannah trees demanded of the European eye, aesthetics and linguistic *repertoire*, considerable adjustments. It was this challenge to accommodate the land within a suitable conceptual and linguistic framework that colonists mostly sought to deny. By preferring to re-cast South Africa through existing ideological and linguistic lenses, the colonists became prone to traverses, anxieties and difficulties with themselves and the land, evident in the art and literature of the colonial period.

An example of a realist, although it is not set in South Africa, is Conrad's 'A Smile of Fortune' (1912). This narrative illustrates the colonist's problem of accommodating the landscape to his expectations *vis-à-vis* his treatment of the garden, the place of women in colonial society, and the representation of subjugated races. The gardens of *Another Country* (1991) which are located in South Africa, are the symbolic embodiment of the limitations of language used by Europeans in the context of colonial Bloemfontein—a spring of flowers. The colonist's seeking to belong, and problem with articulating the experience of belonging in Africa, is evidenced in the ambiguous physicality of 'literary gardens'.

In other words, by refusing to acknowledge that which predated their arrival,

the colonists establish a contradiction within their psyches. There is a refusal to recognise the inevitable process of hybridisation that accompanies cultural translocation into another context. This contradiction defines their existence against the elements instead of their accommodation to those elements. The garden as a concept is ambiguous because it is of necessity a manifestation of cross-cultural formation (in every sense), and yet is viewed by the colonists as a bastion behind and within which to protect against the encroaching forces of an alien land. A change of ideological optic might result in the view of the garden as a gift from the land to the community in need of nurturing. But then such a view would subsume the binaries that characterise colonial discourse and would make nonsense of notions of Self and Other.

In Conrad's short story 'A Smile of Fortune' (1912), the younger Jacobus, a ship chandler and owner of an enchanting garden, is ostracised by a community whose values are based upon the false binaries of Self and Other. Jacobus' eldest brother, also known as Jacobus, has sown his wild seed across the island, creating a labour force of ill-treated mulattos, the treatment and placement of whom are inexplicable in the conceptual framework of the colonist. But the younger Jacobus however, a result of his degrading infatuation with a travelling circus woman— who returns to marry him whilst nevertheless bearing him a child—continues to suffer condemnation by the island's 'decayed French aristocracy' for his transgression of *apartheid* convention. The willful creation of a mulatto caste is therefore not as problematic for this community as the birth of a white child out of wedlock.

The colonial communities of Bloemfontein in *Another Country* (1991) and of the tropical Isle in 'A Smile of Fortune' (1912), share the refusal to acknowledge the Other, who may be a bastard, an indigene or a mulatto. Their refusal is belied by the fact that their gardens, the spaces which sustain them, are themselves products of cross fertilisation. The 'shared agreement' Saussure spoke of connoting, the meaning of the word, formed here discourse, is predicated upon racial and gender binaries which are as possessive as they are alienating. Schreiner's gardens —those of Tant' Em, the German Jewish storekeeper, and van der Walt are prime examples—are never merely ornamental. Their function is that of the Biblical garden which sustains survival, possession of the land and phases in 'Keeping' Europe alive ... in the heart of Africa' (Schreiner 1991:8), as Mr. Hirsch states, is a defensive stance against the emptiness and consequent incomprehensibility of the land. This perception of emptiness is false. The emptiness is really an idea of self that is based upon false binaries, which as part of a larger discourse, that of patriarchy and racism, is imposed upon the land. The garden in such a scheme becomes a means of defence against an existential insecurity. Mrs. Hirsch, returning to the garden, says her husband 'conjured it out of nothing' (Schreiner 1991:32). The semiology of the garden encompasses all that is opposite to the wilderness (the space, or the nothingness) that Mrs. Hirsch fears. It is

order against chaos, shade against sunlight, survival against starvation, knowing against the unknowable and/or unknown. As Gaylard (1989:2) claims in her discussion of *Another Country* (1990):

> The concept of 'White experience' is able only to convey meaning insofar as it denies and excludes its dangerous links with 'Black experience'.

Hirsch's garden, like that of Mrs. van der Vliet, ripples with the sound of voices: the mistress and the servants, the former fearful and suspicious of the land, the latter in service of the transplanted values of the deferred Centre, which may be the Kassel or Delft the European left behind (Jacobs 1995:5).

Ironically the 'nothing' Mrs. Hirsch speaks of, which is the wildness of Africa, implies a sign, as Saussure would suggest, that cannot be possessed, a space that cannot be translated into understanding. It is everything that falls beyond the 'knowing' of the garden. Later Mrs. Hirsch speaks of the gardens flourishing as a 'provisional victory' against a country described as 'an enemy, an inimical being' (Schoeman 1991:53).

The land, to which is ascribed the status of Other, is able to — and in the story of Versluis does—reclaim its own. With his use of High Dutch, fastidious habits and bourgeois values, Versluis is the epitome of one who distinguishes between self and other. In the person of Gelmers, the unsophisticated rural Dutchman, who is also suffering from tuberculosis, Versluis meets his *Doppelgänger*. The realisation that within the system of fine discriminations (whether based upon language, race or class) there can be no escape[1] is for with the ultimate Other, Death, is what changes Versluis. To live and die in peace he must abandon the assumptions, values and perceptions of the white colonial community in Bloemfontein. The land as signifier within their discourse is able to elude control of, and finally undermine the dominating discourse. Ultimately we are led to believe that the land has reclaimed its own, in the person of the terminally ill Versluis:

> the unknown land grew familiar and the person passing through could no longer even remember that he had intended to travel for just half way along the route you discovered with some surprise that the journey had been completed, the destination already reached (Schoeman 1991:311).

Versluis goes out to the land alone, and yet not alone, he is 'embraced' and 'absorbed' as its own. A complete shift in perspective is evidenced here, now Africa becomes the

[1] Regtig, oor blanke ervaring, die agter met beskerm is oor die ou se wanrig die sy onderspoedige verbeelding met sweet ervaring uitslaat . . .

which is associated with Self and Europe becomes that which is Other and unknown (Balfour 1995:8).

The postcolonial debate around the trope of gardening recognises that the garden forms part of the semiology of colonial discourse (it is not for nothing that Jan van Riebeeck writes in his diaries of the need to 'plant gardens' for the replenishment of V.O.C. ships). In Coetzee's (1983) novel, *Life and Times of Michael K*, the garden is located within the same semiology, but employed to a different purpose. K's garden becomes an anti-rhetorical sign, an undermining and futile negation of the sterile sandy soils of the Cape Town municipal gardens in which he worked before leaving with his mother. In 'A Smile of Fortune' (1912) the garden lies within a coalescence of discourses which evidence patriarchal and colonial strains. Saussure (1915:10) refers to the 'linguistic sign as not a link between a concept and a name, but between a concept and a sound pattern'. The 'sound' garden is a concept which implies reference to the whole discourse of colonisation. The signifier (garden) is the word whose sign is embodied in the oasis-like symbol apparently captive in an alien and wild space, and whose signification is the discourse which establishes itself in opposition to that depicted as Alien or Other.

Nowhere is this better demonstrated than in Coetzee's first novel *Dusklands* (1974), which in this context is used to illuminate the value and difference of K's garden in comparison to the others. Eugene Dawn, strategist and mythologist, announces the abolition of Man's relationship with mother earth. Dawn's proposal, sinisterly similar to Kurtz's 'exterminate the brutes', and reminiscent of Nazism's 'final solution', insists on the complete sterilisation and poisoning of the Vietnamese 'earth'. Not only is his repugnance against the soils of the (Mother) soil revealed in his treatise, but more importantly in his understanding of his sexuality:

> My life . . . has become a continual battle to keep my poise of mind against her (his wife's) hysterical assaults and the pressures of my enemy body (Coetzee 1974:8: ellipsis).

Finally, Dawn's belief is encapsulated in his advocacy of the Alien's myth:

> We have the capacity to breed out of our own head . . . our future belongs not to the earth but to the stars (Coetzee 1974:21).

The horrific outcome of Dawn's internalisation of that myth is portrayed in his subsequent breakdown and his mutilation of his sons effectively. Dawn becomes a fragmented and self-alienated being, the Christian figure who devours his own seed. In effect his text portrays the consequences of betrayal of the relationship between earth and humankind.

Reading the sign through its possibilities of signification enables the reader to find her path in the enigma, as Gerwel (1988:76) observes, a question which refers to the assumptions and fears that surround and seek to know that sign: "the inimical being" (the untamed wilderness). Critically this realisation brings forward the acknowledgement that within the discourse of binaries, possession is also dispossession, inclusion can also mean exclusion and potentially, Self may well mean Other.

The *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983) re-affirms that bond between the soil and the life it brings forth. Here the ashes of his mother and the sustenance of the soil affirm K's life, both physically and spiritually, between the fences of competing discourses. Coetzee implies a perpetual state of conflict between these two discourses: while we are aware of the discourse of oppression, the discourse *of* resistance forms a powerful, but implied presence in the novel. Both discourses define the soil as a subject and sign to be known, possessed and regulated. Lacan's discussion of the signifier and the signified when applied to our analysis is particularly helpful as it makes the problematic nature of the garden as sign less resistant to interpretation. "There is", he suggests, "a perpetual sliding of the signified under the signifier" (Lacan [1957]1988:87). If Hirsch's garden in *Another Country* (1991) is the European interpretation and translation of Africa as well as embodying colonial discourse, then it may also be validly claimed that the symbolic act of gardening becomes metonymic of the act of naming. In other words cultivation becomes the physical embodiment of a language's attempt to affix a single meaning to the land, thereby coming to 'know' it. This is clearly not the case in *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983), where K's relationship with the land is not one of overlordship, but rather of symbiosis.

In fact what Lacan (1988:85) views as the signifier's incursion into the signified makes the question of the very place of that signifier in reality. Mrs Visagie's objection to K's use of the "prove's good" and therefore temporary nature of the garden and its ability in collusion with the land to defy its European interpretation comes to mind. If meaning is contingent, then this is evidenced in K's garden which is initially unrecognised as a garden by the opposing discourses of the State and the Resistance fighters. K's answers to the soldiers' interrogations as to the nature and purpose of his plot are remarkable for their ability to elude communal definition of the factions who criss-cross the former Visagie lands:

> "I'm not what you think", he said, "I was sleeping and you woke me. That's all." They [the soldiers] gave no sign of understanding (Coetzee 1983:127).

The crucial lesson K must learn, and does learn on the Visagie farm, is not to become accustomed to possessing the land (as in colonial capitalist discourse would have it). "Whatever I have to mend for, it is not to live as the Visagies lived ... the worst mis-

take", he says (Coetzee 1983:98). Unwilling to become the 'kaffir', and thus possession of the Visagie's discourse, K abandons the land and the seedlings. He must learn to become a sign, like the land. And the land, which freely intrudes on and recedes from K's garden, is like the very fluidity of language itself: it remains elusive and resistant to a discourse of binaries, and its real are abstract fences which attempt containment.

It is to such a discourse of binaries that resistant writing succumbed, as Ndebele (1984[1990]:47) notes, when it allowed itself to be overdetermined by the need to oppose apartheid. By continuing to relate and protest against the horror and spectacle of South African history, without being able to imagine and articulate a more humane alternative, this type of writing, as described by Ndebele, became stained and stunted. And *Michael K* represents an effort to be non-binary, non oppositional and yet to articulate that alternative.

The sustaining irony of Coetzee's novel is that within the discourse of the State, the opulent gardens of Schoeman's *Another Country* (1991) have become detention-camps herding in the homeless surplus populations of South Africa – a grim reminder of the bantustan system. Nadine Gordimer (1994:183) in her article "The Idea of Gardening" claims that in *Michael K*, "freedom is defined negatively: it is to be out of all the camps at the same time", but this is not the point Coetzee makes regarding the insidious nature of ideological camps. These camps destroy those within and seek to destroy those without.

K actually finds himself in the space or transfer, as Lacan terms it, between signifier and signified, and Coetzee positions the text within that space. Gramsci's term *interregnum*, may be another way of identifying the space into which Coetzee inserts his text. The *interregnum*, identified by Gordimer as the late period of the Apartheid state's decline, evidences the spasmodic death of one era, while the other, as yet unidentified, struggles to be born. *Michael K* chronicles the change of eras in South Africa. In the painful and bloodied process of negotiating the emergence of a new discourse the "incessant sliding" of the signified under the signifier takes place. This is suggested in the text by the fact that in the past, the Visagie lands and gardens symbolised the possession of the land by colonial discourse, which Othered people like K. The sign, or land, rejects this signification and eventually plays host to resistance fighters, army absconders and soldiers alike. More appropriately it sustains the likes of K, a voluntary outcast between the fences. As a space between competing discourses the land is vital to the process of both.

Concurrently Coetzee implies a connection between the *interregnum* and its significance for the writer, all or crippled by the tensions of power or marginalised to the point of insignificance. K's narrative exists in the corridors between camps. He is screened between the discourses the camps represent. One has only to think of the

soldiers' harassment of K, their attempts to extract information and thereby extinguish resistance to state dominion. Or alternatively there are the attempts of the district doctor to elicit K's story, hoping for a place for himself (and for K in the as yet uncertain future).

If Coetzee located *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983) in the future, in an *interregnum* between eras, did Schreiner not for comparable reasons position his narrative a century before the successive years of Emergency and Isolation? If one text portrays the birth and the other the death of an epoch, both essentially with similar recognitions and concerns, how can Schreiner's *Another Country* (1991) be dismissed by de Jong as irrelevant and lacking in social commitment? Not only does *Another Country* (1991) demonstrate the inherent self destructiveness of colonial discourse, but also the potential of those 'between the fences' to anticipate an alternative which acknowledges that real belonging must mean the collapse of artificial binaries which alienate people from each other and the land.

Adele Sobel, the crippled sister of the young Lutheran pastor in Blaauwfontein, and guide to Veraus' awakening soul, is one who refuses the inappropriate European colonial translation of the African landscape. Marginalised in the community because of her deformity and gender, she nevertheless sees the need 'to give the silence a voice' (Schreiner 1991:200) on its own terms and not through the use of German or High Dutch which she views as 'irrelevant (if not damaging) to the South African landscape. The cultivation of flowers, the neatly tended vegetable rows and swept pathways of Bloem's and van der Vliet's gardens may appear initially to be innocuous in themselves. But their meanings is belied by the incipient patriarchal discourse of exploitation, possession and contempt for the space into which these communities transplanted themselves. Valerie Smith is not re-creating the landscape to reflect one's own discourse, but is rather allowing oneself to be re-created by and through a new context without being compromised by the 'cultural baggage and arrogance' of the coloured centre.

Conrad's short story 'A Smile of Fortune' (1912) although in many ways dissimilar to the two South African texts, is included here because its portrayal of the garden powerfully evidences the collusion of the dominant discourses of this century: patriarchy and colonialism. Dryer (1988:4,3) in her essay 'Woman as Sign in the South African Colonial Enterprise' shows that the purpose and place of the woman within patriarchal discourse is 'to perpetuate the (racial) divisions of colonial' discourse'. 'A Smile of Fortune' (1912) also provides a particularly good example of the 'signifier's' ability to elude any attempt at fixing signification.

A young captain approaches an island identified as 'the pearl of the ocean' in reading to trade with the merchant Jacobus and becomes mistakenly involved with the younger of the two brothers, the ship chandler. Conrad conflates the metaphor of

the pearl used to identify the island with the promise of commercial wealth. Later the 'pearl' becomes synonymous with Alice, Jacobus' daughter, born out of wedlock, whose fate is the embodiment of his disgrace, and who is associated always with her father's magnificent garden. Alice is a child of a union which is disgraceful to the decayed French aristocracy because it represents a possibility which menaces them: that of the illegitimate but racially 'pure' offspring of the ruling caste. Her father, accepting and mindful of the aristocracy's judgement, sequesters Alice in his garden, thereby preventing her socialisation in human and routine company. By agreeing with their verdict on his infatuation, Jacobus develops in Alice the mistrustful, suspicious and deprived person that she is. Alice becomes the external manifestation of the deformity Jacobus perceives in himself.

Her slatternly appearance—ill-fitting, flimsy wrapper, soiled shoes and unruly mass of hair—owes itself to Jacobus' self-disgust. She is at once a contrast to, and product of the old garden which she inhabits. The garden's allure and beauty is betrayed by and owed to her presence. Conrad opposes the significance ascribed to Alice by the community which seeks to discard her. At times she offers the reader poignant insight into the person she might have become, but for the maiming discourse of her father. The garden owes its luxuriance to Jacobus' wealth which is gained from speculative trade in the Pacific area. It begins to assume the accumulated meaning of the metaphors of corrupt commercial gain, the seductive woman and the seducer of the young man. These are potentially three linked signifieds for the signifier, the garden.

Lacan's (1988:89) definition of a metaphor is illuminating in regarding the multiple significations Alice comes to bear within her impassioning garden:

> The metaphor's creative spark springs from two gardens, one of which has taken the place of the other in the signifying chain, the hidden signification there remaining present through its metonymic relation to the rest of the chain.

It follows from this that if the garden is the synonym of the colonial enterprise, it may also potentially be a symbol of the female's gratification in patriarchal discourse. Dryer terms woman 'an object of exchange' within colonial discourse, she is the means and site of mediation between cultures, or in this case discourses. the pearl of great price is the promise of wealth and the possession of the female. In describing the garden, the young man sees Alice as synonymous with the space she occupies:

> it was magnificent ... smooth green lawns and a gorgeous mass of flowers and displayed around a basin of dark water framed in marble ... see Alice's foot on ...

> as if watching the vision of some regent passing through the garden in the deep rich glow of light and the splendour of flowers

According to Foucault (1986:24) the garden may also be constructed as a heterotopian site because it evidences the presence of conflicting discourses in society. Heterotopias, says Foucault, are 'capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible' (Foucault 1986:25). The garden in 'A Smile of Fortune' (1912) is the discourse within which Alice is held captive, and is simultaneously the space from which she captivates and damns the proponents of that discourse, her father and the young captain.

Conrad's garden is a paradise which becomes desolation, a sign which eludes capture and hints the would-be possessor. There is no doubt that Joseph Conrad is drawing upon the literary genre of the medieval courtly romance. Alice may be contrasted to the Rose at the centre of the enclosed garden in Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun's *The Romance of the Rose* (fc.1277[1962]). The allegory of the courtly romance is equally present in Edmund Spenser's poem *The Faerie Queene* (1600). Book II Canto XII of this poem, where the meaning of the rose receives sinister extension, details the destruction of Acrasia's "Bower of Blisse" by the intrepid Sir Guyon. Although the knight-hero must also undergo a series of trials, as in *The Romance of the Rose*, Spenser allegorises the quest by transforming the "rose" (Bk II Canto XII:74[1]). Acrasia, although seemingly pure, and surrounded by a flower of roses and flowers, is nevertheless the seductress (II. XII.77). Her real purpose, as the agent of evil, is to transform goodly knights into slaves of their sexual appetites. Jacobus similarly, and perhaps more perversely than Spenser's Acrasia, uses the lure of his daughter as an instrument, (and not an agent) to capture the young captain through his appetite for wealth and sex.

Alice in 'A Smile of Fortune' (1912) like Acrasia, is 'imprisoned' by her bower. The sustaining irony of her situation is that she is the product of her father's unrestrained sexual appetite. In effect she is his lure to the garden, the price of which is nearly figured by Conrad in the *guinea*-sovereigns with which the young man acquires a cargo of rotting potatoes, which he in turn sells to the traders at Port Phillip Heads where the hinterlands are afflicted by a famine. This act evidences the young man's slide into corruption.

Coetzee's discussion of Girard's triangular forms of desire in *Doubling the Point* (Attwell 1992:74) elucidates for us the sign called Alice. The captain's idealism and benevolence signals "the spirit of covetousness" within him. It is the repressive Jacobus who manipulates that "spirit" hoping to escape from his own shame. By extending commercial and other favours to the captain, Jacobus hopes that he will be able to rid himself of Alice. This would have the consequence of removing the material embodiment of his disgrace in the eyes of the island aristocracy, thereby bringing about his reconciliation with them. Clearly Jacobus conceives of no responsibility towards Alice, she is a cast-off from a time best not remembered.

The subject, here the young captain, yields, according to Conrad, his autonomy to the sign for riches as Girard terms it). Alice. Jacobus manipulates the captain's desire to possess the "pearl" and allows for the conflation of Alice with the desired outcome of commercial success. But Alice is possessed already, not only by her garden, but by implication by her father. She becomes the intended "object" of a very real "exchange" whose consequences is alluded to via the space she occupies.

> The garden was one mass of bloom, like a cemetery of flowers ... the sweet incense fully over the extinction of light ... only wreaths of heavy scent passed like wandering souls ... like evil spirits sigh (Conrad 1912:60)

The young captain, aware of the "ignoble transaction", begins to see the garden as the site of treachery, Alice the prisoner unable, refusing to be removed to what she perceives to be another prison. Further to this, the young man is repulsed by his attraction to what Alice represents to him, which is the sexual relationship of a human animal to a master. This insight is finally what appals the narrator and reader about Jacobus. Alice, in turn, realises that by choosing to remain in the garden and interpreting the status her father reserved for her, she avoids any further degradation at his hands. The rose would effectively be the only human(e) choice available to her, signifies the sign's refusal to be used either as sign or as object of exchange.

> The sign always is some material object created by the will, whether of the individual or of Society, that its essential nature (Saussure 1915:9)

Alice, unwilling to become another signifier in someone else's sign-system, remains prisoner to her garden and Jacobus to his dream. Finally the exchange which Jacobus has wished to bring about does not take place. Critically Conrad appears to acknowledge that the attempt of patriarchal-coloured discourse to determine the place of woman as a "Sign" results in the obliteration of any signification.

If men are viewed as bearers of civilisation and women as the occupants of baser stations associated with the "natural", as Di Leo (1992:459) mentions, then Conrad certainly problematises that role, showing that through its "dehumanisation of the oppressed" as Sartre puts it, Patriarchy damns its victims and achievers, depriving both of the autonomy of choice.

Finally, the narratives of Coetzee and Schoeman. Conrad's narrative is unable to imagine an accommodation with that which is defined as Other by the dominating

discourses. It is unable to imagine an alternative means of constructing that world. The fictional narrator, the young man, jaded by his experience, returns home to England where commercial transactions and sexuality are regulated and policed by society and the law. Jacobus, his daughter, and by implication the entire island's population of mulattos and enfeebled aristocrats remain petrified within self annihilating discourses, encoached in the garden.

By choosing the garden as a site of transfer between discourses, all three narratives effectively prevent dominating discourses (and interpretations) from de limiting the boundaries of signification, thereby reserving for themselves areas of unknowing or what Naipaul (1964:32) refers to as 'steps of darkness'. Like Conrad, Schoeman and Coetzee also critique the discourses which determine power and signification in society. But as their texts are postcolonial, they demonstrate an acute awareness of the fragmentary nature of discourses and thus. These narratives foreground the ability of hidden voices to circumvent, re-interpret and overturn seemingly transparent ways of representing the land and its relationship with succeeding generations of migrant peoples.

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A Conference that Could Have Changed our World: Fort Hare 1930

Jo-Marie Claassen

Introduction

The year 1930 was momentous in South African history. The country was, like the rest of the world, slowly recovering from the ravages of the depression, but it was beset by many problems. News reports of the time reflect the concerns addressed by conference after conference: labour problems and the conditions of poor whites[1]. 'Race relations' referred to the relationship between Afrikaans and English speakers. Relationships between black and white were termed the 'native question'. In this era the ANC, under leadership of Dr. A.B. Xuma, was concerned with the same thing, but its conferences were almost exclusively attended by black members, to such a degree that *Die Burger* of 12 July 1930, while reporting in almost neutral terms on ANC meeting held at Worcester in the Boland, thought it worthwhile to mention the fact of a lone white female in the audience (*Die Burger* 12/7/1930:8).

In such climate a multiracial conference, in which black and white participated on equal terms, was held at Fort Hare under the auspices of the then all-black 'Students' Christian Association of South Africa' (apparently, however, on the initiative of its 'native branch' only). The assembly, held from 27 June to 3 July 1930, was termed the 'Bantu-European Students' Conference' and speakers were drawn from all walks of South African academic life, with guest speakers also bringing greetings from the Indian, British and American Student Christian movements.

Although the conference was by its very nature Christian, and a great part of the program was devoted to religious exercises of varying kinds[2], the theme of the conference was 'Christianity in Action'. This 'action' was to be the final solutions to racial conflict through the economic upliftment of black South Africans. If the spirit of the conference had been allowed to take root in South African society as a whole, the history of the subsequent sixty-two years might have been very different. However, its religious aspects were brushed aside, its egalitarian proposals were ignored by the political establishment of the Hertzog era, and its social arrangements were made the object of a witch hunt which effectively ended all such contact for more than half a century. Worse, the practical combination of religion and politics practised within an egalitarian setting was seized upon as virtually anarchic. As will be shown below, it was made clear that in future white Christian students' interpretation of equality before God as reaching into the sports field and the dining room would not be tolerated by the white establishment.

Most participants at this historic meeting are long since dead, or, due to old age, they are no longer able to give a lucid report of all aspects of the matter. I have, however, been fortunate to obtain a copy of the programme of the conference (Figure 1), as well as a formal photograph of all participants (Figure 2), and a pre-conference document entitled 'Introduction to Conference Topics' edited by Max Yergan, the black American who had been one of the prime movers of the conference. It has been easy enough to look up newspaper reports of the era, as well as to follow the subsequent debate in Church publications of the time. I have decided to concentrate on the reportage in *Die Burger*, as the mouthpiece of the Afrikaner establishment, and of *Die Kerkbode*, as embodying the official policies of the Dutch Reformed Church of the time. Together these reflect the reactions of the 'coloniser' to a combined effect of his own 'youth wing' and that of the 'coloured' in a unique chapter of the 'encounter-discourse'. The oral testimony of my mother, now 90, who was involved indirectly in preparation for the event, and of my aunt, who died in 1998 and who actually was a delegate, has been invaluable[3]. The reminiscences of some of the other participants, and reflections on the conference in the autumn-tinted biographies of others have also afforded certain insights (Brookes-Yarwa, Beyers 1967). What follows is, however, in the main a reflection of the shifts of focus in the conference, as these could be gleaned from the daily and weekly publications referred to above.

Preparation

There had been a great deal of preparation beforehand. A letter to *Die Burger* of July 21 1930 attests to the build-up of publicity before the event. Three years previously a smaller conference, on a much smaller scale, had been held at the Lovedale Institute. According to one of my oral sources (Taaske), the success of this small conference[4]

[1] *Die Burger* of 16 July 1930 reported on a high profile conference held at Pretoria which could come to no concrete proposals for the upliftment of poor whites, but had called for Church and State to co-operate.

[2] An average of 54 minutes per day for the week's duration was spent on devotional exercises. Topics discussed on the first four days were almost exclusively religious.

[3] They are Mrs C.E. Taaske and Miss M.D. Bosloff, both of Cape Town. Miss Bosloff was at the time of the 1930 conference travelling secretary for schools of the SCA. References to their oral narratives will be given by means of their surnames.

[4] A contingent from the Western Cape travelled to Fort Hare by train to attend (Taaske).

arranged by Rev. Willem Couralie, then of Stellenbosch, and Rev. A. Cardeross Grant, warden of St. Matthew's College, at the end of September 1927, had led to a decision to hold over the larger meeting. Yet even this conference had not been the first of its kind. Brookes (1933:16) refers to a series, held at different venues, starting with an initiative of the Dutch Reformed Church in 1923, and repeated in 1925 under the auspices of the so-called 'Joint Councils'. In January 1927 the JRC again convened a meeting of black and white leaders (Brookes 1933:16).

White students participating in the September 1927 conference had included seven young men from Stellenbosch, almost all from the (Dutch Reformed) Theological Seminary, six young ladies from Huguenot College at Wellington (at that time a liberal arts college for women falling under the University of South Africa) and one young lady from the University of Cape Town. The heartiness, friendship and mutual enrichment experienced by these young Rolanders and the Xhosa-speaking students at Fort Hare led to further student co-operation (Latsky). In February 1929 the Joint Councils held a leaders' conference in Cape Town with twenty-seven black and eighty-two white delegates, 'which evolved a programme of action, sane, liberal and practical, but in no way a justification of the Communist movement' (Brookes 1933:16).

So, the winter conference of 1930 was the sixth in a series. From an open letter addressed after the event to both *Die Kerkbode* and *Die Burger* by the then President of the SCA, Professor H.P. Cruse of Stellenbosch, and its General Secretary, Fred Lickorish[6], it is clear that the main initiative for this larger conference had come from the 'Native Section' (sic) of the Students' Christian Association, under the leadership of Max Yergan, who had been the driving force behind the establishment of this section eight years previously. The scope of the conference, as planned, was ambitious, encompassing the whole of its serving local membership (at both the 'Native Colleges of South Africa' – now Fort Hare – and the Lovedale Institute), that is, 130 black students, as well as fifty-three white students from all other South African universities[7]. Other interested persons made up the total of three hundred and forty-four

[5] Brookes (1933:17) explains these as co-operative bodies operating in individual towns on which black and white representatives met to 'serve as a rallying point [for] public opinion on race questions'. From this developed the Institute of Race Relations.

[6] October 1, 1930.

[7] Brookes (1933:17) lists the Universities of Cape Town, Stellenbosch, Witwatersrand, the University Colleges of Transvaal (now UP), Natal, Rhodes, Grey (now UOFS) and Huguenot, the Theological Institute of Wellington and St. Paul's Theological College, and the Bellevue and Bloemfontein Normal Colleges. Six of these were 'wholly or largely Afrikaans medium' (*Ibid.*). From a description found in December 1930 by the Natal Executive, it appears that the invitation had been extended by mail only (*Die Burger* 23/12/1930).

delegates (sixty-nine black, eighty-seven white 'senior visitors', many of them academics from various South African universities, and five overseas visitors (Brookes 1933:17). A wide spectrum of political figures had been invited, but it appears that not all came. In particular, apart from the brilliant and liberally minded Cape Parliamentarian, Jannie Hofmeyr, none of the Government had responded to the invitation to join the discussions.

Social Arrangements

Preparation by the local organisers had been almost ludicrously sensitive to current white prejudices and South African mores: one whole floor had been set aside for the white visitors, beds had been fitted with new cotton ticking mattresses, all clad with fresh grass. White delegates were expected to bring their own pillows, sheets and blankets. Separate dining facilities were provided for, but it is to the credit of the visiting students that they chose to sit at unsegregated tables, initially, as one young delegate candidly confessed, from curiosity, but, after the first day, from interest and friendship (*Die Burger* 10/9/1930). The 'formal' photograph of the delegates (Figure 2) shows clearly the relaxed attitude of all – something not to be wondered at in a normal society, but for the South Africa of the 1930s, remarkable in the extreme. Delegates are grouped according to age and gender, not racial appearance. My second oral source, Miss Bosheff, appears as the furthest to the right of a group of women in the second row from the rear, standing next to a local delegate, whose arms are folded before him[8]. The seated figures (third row from the front) are clearly the senior delegates, and here, too, there is clearly no social discrimination.

The seven day programme was very full, but Monday afternoon, the fourth afternoon of the conference, was set aside for relaxation. At the 'Sports meeting' all the individual events (a team event pillow fight, foot races, long jump, and, for the ladies, a potato-and-spoon race) were won by black students. White students from the northern and southern universities organised a rugby 'intervarsity', and some bold spirits then decided on an 'International' match (letter from W. Wessels in *Die Burger* 10/9/1930; Brooks 1933:17). Of this match more below.

Max Yergan had prepared a pre-conference document, which, as he explained in its foreword, was aimed at providing information on "the general line that would be taken at the conference", to sharpen issues as preparation for intelligent discussion and to suggest questions for such discussion, and to suggest books for preparatory reading. He saw the conference as "living evidence of ... a spirit ... dissatisfied with a world where false gods are worshipped ..." (Yergan 1930:Foreword). Clearly the conference was aimed at effecting a change in the attitudes of whites and the conditions of

[8] Her eyes and memory had both failed her to such an extent at the time of writing so that I was reluctant to ask her to identify any of the major figures.

blacks in South Africa, but this change was envisaged as the fruit of a spiritual bequeathing and of the discovery of European spiritual values. Yorgan's Introduction (1930) does not contain all the papers to be read at the conference, and also has three papers which did not form part of the final programme. One, by the Bishop of Bloemfontein (Carey in Yorgan 1930), had a spiritual content, and two were on economic and social problems of black people (Ross & Henderson in Yorgan 1930). Also, judging from small discrepancies between the titles of papers printed in this document, and those printed in the programme of the conference (see Figure 1), some speakers had adapted their papers between the printing and their delivery at the conference[9].

In spite of Government non-response, the programme (Figure 1) lists an impressive array of high-powered speakers: the opening address by the Cape M.P. had been preceded by welcoming speeches from the local magistrate, the mayor (presumably of the town of Alice), the principals of the Lovedale Institute and the 'South African Native College'. Fraternal greetings were delivered from student movements in Ceylon, Great Britain and the United States. The Chairman of the World's Student Christian Federation, Francis P. Miller, chaired the conference, and was one of the first speakers, with as his topic, trends in student thought world wide. Clerics, both white and black, from throughout South Africa, led devotional topics—a Presbyterian minister from Pretoria, two theological professors from Stellenbosch, the President and ex-President of the Methodist Church in South Africa, the moderator of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, ministers from Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg and Lovedale, and also laymen with theological leanings[10].

[9] Although he titles still slightly, the topics appear to concern in the case of printed articles and talks by Shepherd, Pim, Phillips, Ballinger and Brookes, all 1930. Cf. Figure 1. Only Oswin Bull's written paper and oral topic appear to differ widely, but as both are spiritual matters, we did not pursue the topic further.

[10] Some read papers on spiritual matters, others led devotional periods. See Figure 1. The names, in order, are: Rev. A. Cardross Grant, Warden of St. Matthew's College; Rev. E. Mauri Carr, St. Andrew's, Pretoria, who was a leading figure in the Moral Rearmament Movement (the so-called 'Oxford Group') and had been Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of S.A.; Prof. A.M.K. Cumaraswamy, Trinity College, Ceylon; John Ramsbotham, Cambridge, England; George D. Haynes, New York (an American black, perhaps, but not certainly the same person who later became UNESCO chairman for Educational Reconstruction—*Who's Who* 1952); R.H.W. Shepherd, chaplain and director of publications at the Lovedale Institute, author of several hundred pamphlets and books, and later modern critic of the Church of Scotland, rather conservative thinker, according to Bowers (1987:750); Prof. H.B. Cruse, Stellenbosch; SCA Vice-President, Rev. Allen Lee, President, Methodists of S.A.; Dr. D. Mouraes, DRC student chaplain and great enthusiast for missions; Rev. Isaiah N. Nowana, Pietermaritzburg; Rev. G.H.P. Jacques, Ex-President, Methodist Church S.A.; Max Yergan, SCA Organizer; Rev. W. Mpamba, Moderator, Bantu Presbyterian Church; Govan Buti Lyman.

Not all the clerical speakers devoted themselves to 'theological topics'. On Monday, June 30th, the fourth day of the conference, delegates, no doubt inspired by three days of spiritual fare and fraternal communication, turned their attention to the practical application of the spiritual call to practise justice and equity in society. The first speaker on social issues was the Rev. Ray E. Phillips of Johannesburg[11], whose paper on 'Conditions among Urban Bantu' had appeared in the Introduction as 'Bantu Urban Social Conditions' (Phillips in Yorgan 1930:9-25). Talks were for the most part paired, and the complement of Phillips' paper was a talk by Mrs Charlotte Maxeke of Johannesburg on 'Social conditions among Bantu women and girls'[12]. For the remainder of the conference, speakers were from a similar background, except at the periods set aside for devotions.

The list of 'secular' speakers reads like a 'who's who' of the later South African Liberal Party and the early executive of the ANC. Some of the black speakers were lesser-known, apparently local dignitaries, such as Mr. T. Makiwane of the Transkeian Agricultural Department, who, while painting a checquered picture of African rural life, pleaded for more land for the people. He was paired with W.G. Bennie, former Chief Inspector of Native Schools, to talk on 'Bantu Rural Life'. Presumably their talks would have complemented the papers by Ross and Henderson (in Yorgan 1930). Of these, Ross had made the important point (in Yorgan 1930:10) that black labourers' wages were often very low by employers who erroneously assumed that black people were supported by subsistence farming and market-work only to cater for luxuries'. Henderson's paper (in Yorgan 1930:18-21) was an extract from an address held before the 'General Missionary Conference of S.A.' (not dated). In it, he quoted figures from the Native Census of 1875 that showed that, in the present era, economically speaking, blacks were losing ground.

[11] A missionary of the American Board Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Congregational Church), who started both the Helping Hand for Native Girls Organization and the Bantu Men's Social Centre. The Institute for Race Relations was constituted at this house in 1929. His book, *The Bantu are Coming* appeared in 1930 (Bowers 1987:620).

[12] See Figure 2 (2nd row from front, just to the left of the middle of the row), a luxurious lady in black.

[13] He was grandson of the missionary genius John Bennie, known as the 'father of Xhosa literature', and son of John Agnell Bennie, free Church of Scotland minister at Lovedale. He later initiated the teaching of Xhosa at the University of Cape Town, and from 1930 on was involved in producing Xhosa literature for young people. He also revised the orthography of the Xhosa Bible, which was published posthumously (Boyers 1987:520).

> A family of six was spending in 1925 an average of £8.18s on blankets and articles of apparel. In 1925, when the cost of these articles had increased greatly, it was spending only £ 3s.3d., which gives 7s.2½d. per individual (Henderson in Yergan 1930:19)

Henderson also stressed the imperative for religious workers to concern themselves with economic objectives, and to place their expertise at the disposal of those non-religious organisations who were working to improve economic conditions, even at the risk of conceding the credit for it to the secular body. For him, the Church should function 'seven days a week' in social and educational upliftment programmes (in Yergan 1930:20).

The call for an equitable economic order had further been addressed in the Introduction (Yergan 1930:16ff) by Howard Pim, a chartered accountant who was a noted philanthropist and a Quaker lay worker among boys in Johannesburg. His philanthropic interests were wide ranging. He was one of the founders of the Joint Councils movement, a former vice-mayor of Johannesburg, a nature lover, member of the Council of Fort Hare. His major concerns were the upliftment of the destitute and the criminal (Beyers 1987,V:650f). His talk would have followed the same lines. (His paper, too, was supported by joint talks: by Miss Margaret Hodgson, of the History Department of Witwatersrand University, and by Professor D.D. Jabavu of Fort Hare. Miss Hodgson, who was also later to be a founder member of the Liberal Party of South Africa, was to achieve fame under her married name of Ballinger, as one of the four 'native representatives' in Parliament (Beyers 1987,V:26f). On this occasion her historical survey of parallels in labour enfranchisement in Britain and South Africa ended with a call for the recognition of black citizenship (*Die Burger* 2/7/1930:9). Her fellow speaker was the famous son of a famous father. D.D. Jabavu had been the first South African black to achieve a B.A. degree from the University of London. The refusal of the board of governors of Dale College, King Williamstown, in 1903, to accept him as student, had been one of the reasons why his father, John Tengo Jabavu, the educator and independent newspaper publisher, had led a campaign for the establishment of the 'South African Native College' at Fort Hare (Jabavu 1922:272-94). He had been the first academic appointee to this College (1915), and had followed his father's footsteps in the Classics, as well as in reaching out in Anthropology and African studies, if only by rummaging the Old World and the New (Beyers 1987-III:648; Mandela 1994:42,47).

We can guess the thrust of this session by examining Pim's paper (Yergan 1930:16f). In it he pointed out that a 1926 recommendation for a Commission to be appointed to carry out an economic survey of South African black people had not yet been obeyed, that such a commission would need to break new ground with regard to methods, and that its premise should be the economic unity of all, black and white,

under a common government in a single state, stressing that the 'predominance of the social over the economic aspects of human life should not be forgotten' (in Yergan 1930:16) and emphasising that black South Africans had an enormous capacity for development (in Yergan 1930:17). His call had been that the investigation preliminary to such an economic survey should proceed immediately. (From a report in *Die Burger* of 2 July it would appear that some of his points would not be acceptable today as propagating racial stereotypes and accepting discriminating practices as 'natural': a call for whites to bear the expense of pass law administration, and not to inflict its costs on *verstrikte naturelle* (frightened natives). A later report gives more of the content of this session, including Miss Hodgson's stress on the irrelevance of colour in what she reckoned should be seen as a class struggle. This report also emphasises Prof. Jabavu's call for: "Tax according to ability and allocation of land according to need" (*Die Burger* 7/7/1930:9).

The next topic clearly tied in with the previous one, and related to industrialisation. The co-secretary of the Johannesburg 'Joint Council of Europeans and Bantu', R.V. Selope Thema[14], added his voice to support a talk which had also appeared in printed form. The first speaker here was Miss Hodgson's future husband, William Ballinger, the Scottish-made Unionist and prominent socialist who was organising for the Industrial Commercial Union, the strongest black union in South Africa at the time[15]. He had himself been educated through the Workers' Educational Association in Scotland, and later acquired a bursary for study in Denmark. Apparently, he came to South Africa with the intention of instituting a similar educational system for the upliftment of workers in trade and industry. Beyers (1987,V:28) portrays him as having a somewhat abrasive personality. The paper first gives a short socialist-style theoretical overview of the flaws of the capitalist system, and proceeds to show how South

[14] A report was published soon after, and must already have been in existence, without its knowledge. Its principal thrust was the over-abundance of white labour and the under-supply of black labour. This is ascribed partly to the migratory (seasonal) nature of black labour, and the use of able-bodied men to do 'women's work' as domestics, a point also touched on by Mrs Mazeka (see below). The report advocates raising living standards of rural areas, employment of black women, and the deployment of black men in different areas, reallocating present jobs to whites (*Die Burger* 9/7/1930:7). To what degree this report influenced subsequent legislation is outside the scope of this paper.

[15] He was later (1935) to join with Dr. A.B. Xuma, and Z.R. Mahabane in founding the 'All-African Convention', which chose Prof. Jabavu as its president (Beyers 1987,V:955).

[16] *Die Burger* of 10 July 1930 reports with relish that the private funds must grant Mr. Ballinger's appointment had run out and that the I.C.U. had been bankrupt for some time. See Beyers (1987,V:28) on differences between Ballinger and Clements Kadalie of the I.C.U.

African blacks are thrust 'from feudalism to industrialism'. He lists, predictably, racial and tribal differences, legal and legislative bars, the lack of educational facilities and the lack of the franchise as the principle obstacles to the improvement of their conditions. The paper calls for a minimum living wage, and suggests questions for consideration, which range from the organisation of land put to be played by the unions, the need for the redistribution of land, the responsibility of students to enlighten 'their people' (presumably both black and white) about such matters, and the need for Labour Colleges and similar bodies (Hallinger in Yergan 1930:26).

Only two of the seven days of the conference were devoted to social and economic matters, and the final session on the second day was again 'devotional', but with a difference. Two speakers addressed the practical application of the delegates' faith to the burning issues at hand. The topic of 'The Racial Question in the Light of Christ's Teaching' was treated first by Dr. A.B. Xuma, the well known gynaecologist and obstetrician, member of the Joint Council in Johannesburg, and remarkable for the fact that in that same year the ANC had chosen him, a non-member, and in his absence, to join its executive (cf. Marchesi 1994:*passim*). According to Beyers (1987.V:990ff), Dr. Xuma's talk, entitled 'The Breach in the Bridge between white and black', compared circumstances of black people in South Africa with those in the U.S., and his conclusions were optimistic. *Die Burger* of 7 July comments on the speaker's passion, and sees as his major contribution his observation that not 'atheistic Communists' but the 'laws of the land' were turning the indigenous population into fertile soil for Communism to grow in.

Perhaps the most remarkable presentation at the conference was that of the second speaker in this session. It was more in the way of a confession than a scholarly paper. The printed version is predictably spiritual in its advocacy of Christian love and a search for truth in every person's attitude to 'the other' (Brookes in Yergan 1930:29-39), but on his own evidence Professor Edgar Brookes deviated from this to recount much of what he had ever written before on the topic of race relations (Brookes 1977:43-45). He was an English speaker from Natal, an economist at the Transvaal University College (now University of Pretoria) who, on his own evidence, had been so impressed by the Afrikaner 'struggle' to which he became exposed after his appointment at U.C., that he had argued in his doctoral thesis for 'rights for all' in the 'separate development' mould[14]. Such advocacy out of the mouth of an English-speaker had been manna from heaven for the Afrikaner establishment. The

[13] Also after the conference he communicated the ANC's claim for the future, which would include *inter alia* the abolition of the pass laws and the right of permanent urbanisation of many black citizens, where a free labour market would be encouraged (*Die Burger* 12/7/1930:3). He became its president again in 1940, led the Anti-Pass Law Campaign in 1944, and was arrested but not charged during the 'Treason Trial' affair of 1958 (Beyers 1987.V:695).

dissertation (Brookes 1924) had been published with funds made available by the Prime Minister J.B.M. Hertzog (Beyers 1987.V:998). Brookes had, however, after undertaking a visit to the American South, changed his attitude and was then further influenced by South African liberal political thinkers (who with him to added the Institute of Race Relations in 1929) and by Dr. J.N.J. Buchman of the Oxford Group. At the conference he now stood up officially to recant his own former thesis and to argue for economic integration (Brookes 1977:43-45)[15]:

> ... I took the opportunity of standing up and publicly repenting ... I remember I used the word 'I repent' – the doctrines of separate development set forth in my History of Native Policy seven years before. That now put a new load behind me for ever ... I had the courage to get up and make this public confession. I am glad I made it. It was leaving into cleanness.

For Brookes, this cleansing of the soul led to a lifetime of liberal activities and educational striving. His own personal catharsis helped him perhaps to understand the hope (although that many of the young white delegates had undergone in the first few days of togetherness, but it was perhaps also this catharsis that spelled the death knell of the proceedings, as will become clear below. For the moment it was sufficiently to quote *Die Burger* and his call for all students to commit themselves to a life of victory, also over prejudice, for white students to invite their black colleagues to a similar gathering, was conveyed without comment (*Die Burger* 5/7/1930:5).

Initial Reportage

Initial reportage in *Die Burger* appears fairly neutral, and was probably sent in by a delegate as 'correspondent'. The first report appeared on the Wednesday of the conference, reporting on the Monday's session on economics. Pim and Hellmann are neutrally reported, but Professor Jabavu's talk, which laid blame on politicians for fostering misunderstanding, and a call for government intervention in the form of 'labour bureaux', was given the greatest emphasis by being the subject of a triple heading: 'Politicians Taken to Task' / 'Native Leader's Outburst' / 'Discussions at Conference'[16].

[14] Also in 1930 he collaborated with J.H. Hofmeyr, Ronald Currey, H. Kenchington, Rheinallt Jones, D.L. Hasselt and Olive Schreiner on a book to celebrate 21 years of union. Brookes (1930:177,446) here was already liberal in its advocacy of an integrated economy, even if its approach may now be found to be unpalatably paternalistic.

[15] Die Periode (sic) Oxford/Natalleier se Gebalte/Bevorderings op Kontinente (*Die Burger* 2/7/1930:9).

The next day the newspaper gave its correspondent's fairly sober enthusiasm for the success of the conference, a (for the era) sensational twist by wrenching into a sub-heading the comment that 'Colour had been totally forgotten' (*Die Burger* 7/7/1950:6).

Die Burger next ran a much longer report, dated 7/7/1950, with a colourless triple headline giving the topic and thrust of the conference. It carried a resumé of several of the talks, among others, Pirie's, and short thumbnail sketches of some of the speakers, including Mrs Manyoke. Racist terminology is unselfconsciously applied to the venerable lady[6], but the report itself is obviously positively meant and shows appreciation for her mobility, good humour and intelligence. The reporter's assertion that the Tuesday of the conference had seen 'storm clouds appearing' is not borne out by the report itself, which is redolent with the obvious good humour that prevailed. This rather ingenuous report[7] manages to convey the general atmosphere and anyone who has experienced the weariness of a week-long conference will recognise the mood that lay behind the 'loud cheers' that greeted Professor Brookes, as the last speaker on the fifth day.

Coverage in the official organ of the Dutch Reformed Church (to which perhaps more than half the white student delegates belonged) was not long in forthcoming. The first report appeared on July 16, some two weeks after delegates had returned home, in the same edition of *Die Kerkbode* that carried a longer article on a schools' SCA conference held in June at Cradock, and apparently attended by white high school students only. The article on the Port Elizabeth conference, by Rev. J.W.L. (Jan) Hofmeyr, was the first in a series of six, running weekly from July 16 through August 20. These were wholly positive and, while purporting to give an overview of the entire proceedings, treated one topic each week, in turn. These were:

I Composition and Purpose: 'To Decide what Jesus would have Done' – how to Apply the Golden Rule';
II 'The Greatest Problem of our Time: 'How to Live in Peace with One Another';
III Greetings from the British, American and Indian Girls' Associations;
IV 'The De-tribalised Native (*sic*) in the Cities: A Call for Black Cities 'next to European (*sic*) Cities' (and grateful recognition for those already established, also an analysis of Mrs Maxeke's talk and approving report on her call for black-white women's unity);
V 'The Rural Native (*sic*), with Positive Report of Mr. Malliwane's (*sic*) Talk on Land Reform;
VI Means to Improve Race Relations: 'What Will be the Result of all this Discussion?'

This last section (*Die Kerkbode* 20/7/1950) gave a glowing account of barriers broken down, co-operation promised, friendships forged, penfriends and book-learning envisaged, determination of black and Afrikaner to learn each other's language, promises to eradicate prejudice and racist language, and appreciation for the need to recognise one another as fellow South Africans[8].

The outcry

Alas, except in the lives of some individuals perhaps[9], this good work and good will were soon undone. Already on July 17 the first negative rumbling appeared in the letter columns of *Die Burger*. 'Jong Afrikaner' from Apies Paal wrote, decrying 'so called professors' who were trying to remove the barriers between blacks and whites. Already, this first letter carries all the hallmarks of racist rhetoric: 'Would you sleeping with my sister', Palestine as the birth of the world, whence Ham moved into Africa and 'subservience, black "ingratitude" for white "mercy heaven"', the provision of unappreciated free education, 'a call to drive the white man into the sea'. Voortrekker independence, the *oorwon* (foreign) ignorance of those liberal professors, philanthropy without indulgence exercised by noble leaders of the past like George Grey, and a call for segregation. This writer sounds as if he had 'read the book'. The letter is a classic example of uninformed prejudice.

Ten days were to pass before the next letter was published, together with a reply from Professor B.B. Keet of Stellenbosch Theological Seminary, and F.J. Lichenberg, General Secretary of the SCA. It had clearly been held back until their reply could be prepared. The rhetoric of the correspondent is even more excessive. Another factor was involved, the writer accused *Die Burger* of having been led by the nose and of participating in the encouragement of 'ablutionary practices' such as hard

[6] Unacceptable in this day and age. Remarkably, when quoting speakers, the writer refers to 'young men' and 'girls', *jongeresse jong mans and meisies*, an uncommon practice at a time when pejorative racist terminology prevailed, in speakers unconsciousness, in most situations.

[7] The writer was narvey pleased that the black students had called for singing in Dutch (Afrikaans was not yet used), religious exercises at the finish.

[8] The matter enjoyed considerable coverage in other journals as well e.g. *Het Zendblad*, paper of the DR Mission, 15 July 1950), but I wish to keep to these two, in order to trace the nuances of establishment Afrikaner thought on the matter.

[9] *Die Burger* of 19 July reports a meeting of the inter-varsity 'Students' Parliament' where land reform was discussed. It is not possible to ascertain how many of these students had been influenced by the Port Elizabeth conference, but there does seem to have been a spirit of openness about the discussion, which may indicate positive influences.

spouts. Advocates of these things, he said, were clearly 'SAP supporters'[5]. The language of this letter does not bear repeating. The writer was afraid of the broadening influence of the conference, and reported in veiled language a schools' SCA meeting addressed by a returned delegate (his hints were clear enough to achieve near-identification of place, educational provenance and identity of this young zealot). His less than veiled references to Fort Hare College as institution, to Mr. Yergan as a black American and to the ideals of the Conference make disturbing reading, even after more than sixty-five years, as does his attack on the Students' Christian Association and its influence at white schools of his time. The reply was dignified and to the point:

> The tone of the diatribe is aimed at confusing the reading public. The SCA does not reply to anonymous accusations, but asks for the writer to come forward openly to discuss his opinions, and the present leadership does not allow itself to be influenced by such letters.

The reference to the SAP must have stung *Die Burger* to the quick. Four days later appeared a second leader editorial, entitled 'Playing with Fire' (*'n Gevaarlike Spel*). It chose as the object of its criticism Prof. Brookes' call for the desegregation of universities, as being the place where black and white should meet. It referred to the logical consequence, only to deny it, that desegregation of education would lead to interracial friendships: the editor of *Die Burger* reckoned that interracial antagonism would arise from perceptions of inequality of rights, but did not consider that this animosity could be ended by the awarding of equal rights. Segregation remained, also in and segregation was 'the only way to keep native students pacified'. The editor went on to question the wisdom of the annual uprising at the conference and ended with a flourished generalisation:

> The provocation created in a moment of thoughtless enthusiasm and in an artificial atmosphere, can easily have the result that the vital condition for the preservation of white civilisation in S.A. could be affected, to the eventual detriment of both whites and natives.

It left readers with the question whether it was safe to leave interracial consultation in the hands of persons 'prepared to play with fire'. Here, too, the rhetoric is

[5] The South African Party of Gen. Jannie Smuts were the senior political enemies of the National Party, of which *Die Burger* still is the official mouthpiece.

familiar and the top is unimpeachable, if the basic premises of the writer are not questioned, as we now do. Its influence on its readership was devastating.

The next letter-writer was less vitriolic than the first two. 'Questioner' (*Vraagsteller*) from Stellenbosch rose the Stellenbosch theologian Dr Pieters for querying without fear of 'Equalisation' (*Gelykstelling*) was a chimera that had been buried at Fort Hare. This obviously more educated (but less logical) writer quoted Dr. Diederichs[6] on the 'dangers' of equality as leading to 'bloody type extermination' and he launched a polished attack on Dr Pieters' 'death of a dictator' as meaning 'the end of the work' and as laying a new burden on ministers of the Church. This contrasted with Hertzog's 'admirable policy of segregation' and he called for a successor to take over when 'this hero weakened at last', as weaken he must in his position as 'sole political defender of South Africa'. The threads of his argument are difficult to distinguish, but the smoothness of his prose could have swayed many (*Die Burger* 12/7/1950).

Two days later the second leader editorial was again devoted to Fort Hare, and now *Die Burger* coined an alliterative phrase that was hereafter to be substituted for the official designation of the conference: *'n Flater van Fort Hare* ('A Blunder at Fort Hare'). Apparently Edgar Brookes had said in an interview with an Anglican Church journal:

> The white students were not segregated, but ate together, prayed together, played together, and studied the same food. It is good that this should be known. The students are aware that they have a vocation, but the rate of liberalism is burning high in our land.[7]

The editor went on to call upon the executive of the Students' Christian Association to clarify the issue 'in the interests of the Association itself'. This editorial is a marvel of insidious rhetoric: while *praeterito* 'it refuses to believe' (*Koerier nie gaan verskil die geringste*) that the Association approves of such 'social egalitarianism'. There is no real English equivalent available to convey the pejorative connotation of the Afrikaans *samewerkers* (perhaps 'fraternising, together'), a word loaded with a heavily negative

[6] Of later Bantu-education fame. He became notorious 'Bantu Education Act' of 1953. Brookes and Macaulay (1958:114) comment that the good work of the Booker Washington Tuskegee Institute, with its motto 'No race but equal', could spawn an Ulster Commission, perpetuating tribal and linguistic distinctions.

[7] *Die Burger* (14/8/1950), here translated from an Afrikaans translation of Brookes' words.

meeting, which was hereafter frequently to feature in the rhetoric[47].

As the Afrikaans saying goes: the fat was now in the fire—and it was not the 'fire of liberalism'. Brookes himself wrote, forty-seven years later,

> ... one afternoon there was a rugby football match between the whites and the Africans present. So far the Afrikaans-speaking world had reacted to the conference with growing uneasiness, but this was too much. For Calvinism, apartheid and rugby are the three pillars of Afrikanerdom. (Brookes 1977:45).

This is in hindsight. A scant three years after the event, when he delivered the Stokes-Phelps lectures at the University of Cape Town, he was more sanguine (1933:191):

> The chief articles of the charge against those responsible for the Conference were the common meals at which black and white students sat side by side, and fraternization on the playing fields. It may not even now be generally known that this process of 'non-segregation', as it has been happily termed, was a spontaneous act of the students themselves, who broke down the perhaps too timid arrangements for conventional segregation made by those responsible for the Conference[48].

This was borne out by the words of a student from the Missionary Institute at Wellington, W. Wessels, one of the few letter writers openly defending the matter. He gave a careful explanation of what Brookes called the 'too timid arrangements' and explained how it came about that he relinquished his original intention to "eat at a separate table". He described four categories of games, in all of which the black students beat the whites. His comment on the rugby match is revealing of a conventional attitude scarcely conceivable today:

All honour to Mr Howard Pim that he stopped a football match that had been arranged by the students between themselves[49].

Wessels stated that he himself disapproved of the interracial 'pillow fighting' event, as being a "woman's sport", but preferred to all other games of this nature occurring daily on farms, where black and white children played together[50]. Another participant, signing himself *Afrikaanderdrie* (Delagoa), writing on 11 September, told of participating in the long jump, but not the rugby.

It is clear that after 14 August *Die Burger* was on the warpath. The polemic continued on the letter pages with a series of defences and rebuttals[51] but the battle lines drawn on the editorial pages were now extended to the pages carrying news. A first informal letter by Professor H.P. Cruse, vice president of the Association, describing the conference and explaining its aims, conduct and results, was published on an inside news page (*Die Burger* 21/8/1930), with the comment that the executive of the SCA would be meeting in December only, after which a "code or conduct" (*Gedragsreëls*) would be announced. The implication was that a code was needed. In this time the enthusiastic and positive series of weekly reports by Lou Holmeyr in *Die Kerkbode* was just coming out, and that the journal on 27 August held a short comment on the fact that there had been some unhappiness about "small matters that some of us could not approve" (*Sekere dingetjies ... wat sommige van ons kan goedkeur nie*) but calling for appreciation for and a continuation of the newly positive attitude engendered by the conference. *Die Kerkbode* never did express itself more strongly, either for or against, the matter.

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[47] This editorial was questioned, and canceled in the editorial of the September edition of *Nasou*, the official journal of the National Union of South African Students, which appropriately quoted Leo Marx, and its saying 'Students are Revolting' (reported in *Die Burger* 29/9/1930), but by December the Nasou executive felt obliged to publish a disclaimer of any responsibility in the matter and to any opinion on it. This was reported in *Die Burger* of 23 December, and on the next day it carried a résumé of the comment by *Die Volksblad* (Bloemfontein) that Nasou had left the SCA "suddenly the worse", and relating the Pim Hare incident to what it considered as "equally serious" declaration by the Nasou 'Students' Parliament' in favour of "free love" (*Die Burger* 24/12/1930).

[48] Brookes (1933:191). The speaker continues with an interesting reminiscence: "Only in 1932 did a similar 'de-segregation' of a prominent Native leader take place on a South African football field, when Solomon, the captain of the renowned South African International Rugby Team."

[49] *Alle eer aan Mnr. Howard Pim toe dat hy 'n voetbal-wedstryd in sentraal Kaapland het weer gestel die laaste onderling tussen skoolseuns* (*Die Burger* 10/9/1930).

[50] This was severely criticised by 'Jong Afrikaner of Agter Paarl' in a diatribe since he which was based largely on the argument "die Kaffers sal dit nooit verwag", concluding up Piet Retief as example of gullibleness (*Die Burger* 15/9/1930).

[51] The Rev. W.S. Cruiskin of Grahamstown, who "has been there and seen no harm" (*Die Burger* 3/9/1930); D.F.B. te Boer o. Cape Town (*Die Burger* 3/9/1930) (see below); Oom Gedagtestelende (Queenstown) (*Die Burger* 12/9/1930); 'Jong Afrikaner' 'Young Afrikaner' (*Die Burger* 12/9/1930); S.S. van Zyl of Tafelstad, who considered the visit to students' tea-lodges as *'n verneder[ing]* or humiliation/degeneracy (*Die Burger* 3/9/1930); Fred Hattingh of Stellenbosch, who called on continued segregation as obedience to the commandment "honour thy father and mother", *Die Burger* (3/9/1930); G.D.J. Venter of Bloemfontein, who declared the Bible and the canons and Compromise of 1890 obnoxious (*Die Burger* 17/9/1930).

Retraction

On August 30 the SCA Executive met at Stellenbosch, and its declaration, signed by Prof. B.B. Keet, its President, and D.J. Bekker, its general secretary, was published as 'news' on page 7 of *Die Burger* of 11 September. A four-tiered headline appears innocuous:

> Rapporteleraar het was teenwoordig by Fort Hare-Kongres/Baie artikels het te berde gekom tydens besprekings/SCA-Uitvoerende antwoord/Dading kom toe na gunstige bespreking van sake[1]

The insidious question mark at the end of the last sub-heading immediately undercuts any impression of neutrality. Turning to the leader editorial of the same date, we find an alliterative flourish in its heading: *Die Kleiner Verpestlik*[2]. The editorial itself gave a deconstruction of the various arguments, and quoted the unfortunate Wessels' letter of the previous day, as indication of the corruption and decadence of the proceedings at Fort Hare. The leader's most positive point, and one with which modern readers can agree, is that the SCA declaration was too concerned to try to counter the newspaper's own earlier criticism by careful hedging and damage control. 'That is bad not been so bad, that life would go on as usual, the white students, we guess, could not have behaved differently, *given the circumstances*'. The SCA declaration *does* strike one as timid, and its last paragraph even went so far as to enjoin members to observe greater care in the future[3].

The leader editorial of the next day, September 12, continued the attack under the heading *Maatskaplike Segregasie* (social segregation). It called into question the polarisation of attitudes, decrying the kind of attitude that considers that there is no mid-way between racial hatred and indiscriminate fraternisation. It then went on to stigmatise as 'unchristian' the views expressed at Fort Hare as being examples of the latter extreme, which, it continued to caricature in strong terms, 'wrenching out of context' the words of the English missionary author Oldham to 'prove' that social integration was impossible and unacceptable. Here the editor was redefining the issue, setting his own parameters in a binary trap, and then pushing his opponents into the corner he wished to see them[4]. This rhetorical ploy was countered a fortnight later by Rev. D.F.B. de Beer of

[1] The dilemma glossed over: Afrikaans *i* and *y* are identically pronounced.

[2] Mrs Lacsky comments on this that the SCA was in the end fighting for its very survival and without such a retraction it would most probably have been forced to disband. This had been, under similar circumstances, some thirty-five years later.

[3] See de Kock (1975:650) for similar examples.

Cape Town, who quoted Oldham more fully, showing that Oldham's thrust had been to show the absolute imperative for Christians not to allow for barriers between man and man, (*Die Burger* 26/9/1930). On the whole, however, more letters were published condemning than defending the proceedings at Fort Hare.

By October 1, *Die Burger* had succeeded in persuading its readership (which included many members of Dutch Reformed Church councils). On the same day *Die Kerkbode* carried, and *Die Burger* reported, a repudiation of the conference by the Church Council of the Stellenbosch DRC. The statement called on the usual terms for the finding of solutions to racial conflict, affirmed its adherence to the missionary ideal, but 'feared that missionaries' work would have been harmed' by the events at Fort Hare. On 24 October *Die Burger* called a halt to further correspondence on the matter, with the publication of a defence of the conference by J.H. van Schalkwyk of Ermelo, who took the paper to task for its 'unchristian' spirit in its criticism of the event. This correspondent's arguments appear as typical of the time, and in some ways illiberal[5], but it is interesting, that *Die Burger* chose to close the potential on a relatively positive note.

Correspondence in *Die Kerkbode*, a weekly, continued longer, presumably also because its readership was geographically more widespread, and postal services were slow. A writer from Bethel Mission Station, Transvaal, in December 1930 questioned 'the ability of black and white truly to have understood one another, [as so few whites were] familiar with the African languages', an admirable sentiment, but clearly based on a total misconception of the linguistic and academic atmosphere at the 'black' University[6]. Another letter, published a week later, also from a missionary, from Sonar, Sudan, appears even more disturbing, reflecting, as it did, an extremely illiberal attitude. The writer quoted with approval the leader of *Die Burger* of 12 September and joined in its criticism of the declaration by the SCA Executive. He ended by calling for the DRC to take a stand[7].

[5] A veteran missionary, van Schalkwyk cannot have been affirmed to establish racial barriers for, on reasons of race, practical reasons, but he did argue for contact between white and black 'only on the side of academic research'. He admitted that Christianity could not justify segregation, but deplored the prominence Prof. Brookes had given to the social mixing 'which he derided a minor matter' (Van Schalkwyk). He stressed the need for the intelligentsia to meet, while pointing to 'grave serious evils'—immorality and miscegenation—where white also met with black (*Die Burger* 24/10/1930:11).

[6] Hendrik Hofmeyr (*Die Kerkbode* 12/12/1930).

[7] J.J.A. Matuschke (*Die Kerkbode* 19/12/1930). My research did not produce any further official declaration of the DRC. In *Die Kerkbode* of 11 February 1931 carried a report by Rev. T.D. Kotze, official students' chaplain of the DRC, on the spirit prevalent in the SCA Council meeting held at the Strand in December 1930, declaring himself satisfied with the attitudes of student participants.

This call had in part been answered by the Stellenbosch DR parish on October 1 1930. An official statement by the Sub Council of the SCA had, however, also been published. When the Council met in the Strand from 17 to 20 December 1930, the students were fully conscious of the weight of establishment disapproval that had been brought to bear. The chair of this meeting was the Professor Cruse who had been one of the participants. Our own imagination has been experienced pressure. Their declaration was published in *Die Kerkbode* of 4 February 1931: it ratified the October circular published by the Executive and added two resolutions: that it would in future be more careful of 'national feeling' (*volksgevoel*) and that it acknowledge 'the fact of existing racial differences' (*die feit van bestaande rasverskille*). With regard to this second resolution, it quoted a declaration by the Executive of the 'South African Native College Students' Christian Association', who, while restating their determination to work for social justice for all, and welcoming all offers of help or invitations from the white section of society, 'did not wish to insist on intimate social contact'[7]. Again one is left speechless at the fact with which the Black students accommodated the timidity of their white counterparts.

Conclusion

And so the new-found unity was dissipated. The men and women at this conference were in some cases the leaders, black and white, in intellectual thought and policies for the next three decades. Some, like Edgar Brookes and the Ballingers, went on to fulfil a calling to work for justice for all, others in the conference movement went on to less spectacular careers of service[8], but others, we can imagine, were scared off from any further attempt to overthrow the lines of discourse opened at the Conference. Only during the Sixties were similar attempts at interracial student contact explored by the SCA: and after the turmoil of these, what had been feared after Port Hope took place, and the unity of the Association was dissolved.

The leader editorial in *Die Burger* of 11 September 1930 had as its final clincher a rhetorical *adynaton*: would these white students, it asked, be holding a similar conference at Stellenbosch in the next year, to which Black students would be invited as their guests? On Saturday, 9 July 1995 while still working on this paper, as I came from my office in the Old Main Building of the University of Stellenbosch, my head

[7] *Die Burger* letter-writer W. Wessels had, in his justification of the proceedings, also given the curious information that Mr Marcelle based a belief in separate heavens for Black and white on her reading of John 14:2 (*Die Burger* 10/9/1930).

[8] Miss Brebner retired as head of Child Welfare in Cape Town in 1965, her sister devoted a life time, with her husband, ministering to the poor in St. Stephen's ORC, Cape Town.

dazed with disturbing phrases and images from the racism of most of the letters I had been reading, a rainbow throng of young people poured from the university theatre—they were attending a conference of the National Party Youth League. I could not help reflecting on the lost years[9].

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[9] This paper was delivered at the first conSALT Conference, Durban, September 1995. Thanks to the Department of Research Development, University of Stellenbosch, for financial support for a research assistant, and to Marianne Schneider for incomparable research assistance.

STUDENTS' CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
OF SOUTH AFRICA

Bantu-European Students' Conference

Fort Hare

27th June to 3rd July, 1930.

Programme of Conference.

(Subject to alteration if necessary)

N.B. Unless otherwise stated all meetings of the full conference will be held in the Hall of the Christian Union at Fort Hare.

Friday, June 27th

4.30 p.m.	Opening Ceremony of the new "Christian Union" (See special programme for full details).
6.00 p.m.	Supper
7.45 p.m.	AT LOVEDALE.
	OPENING OF CONFERENCE:
	(a) Welcome to Delegates and Visitors The Magistrate. The Mayor. The Principal of Lovedale. The Principal of the South African Native College.
	(b) Installation of the Chairman of the Conference
	(c) Opening Address, by Mr. J. H. Hofmeyr, M.P.
9.30-9.45 p.m.	Evening Devotions.

Saturday, June 28th

9.00-9.45 p.m.	Devotional Period led by the Rev. A. Cordeaux Grant (Warden of St. Matthew's College).
10.00-11.00 a.m.	Address: "The Revelation of God the Father." Rev. D. Macmillan, D.D. (of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Pretoria).
11.30-12.30 p.m.	Fraternal Greetings from the Indian, British and American Student Christian Movements Prof. A.M.K. Cumaraswamy (of Trinity College, Kandy, Ceylon). Mr. John Ramsbotham (of Cambridge University, England). Dr. George E. Haynes (of New York, U.S.A.).
1.00 p.m.	Dinner.
2.30-3.45 p.m.	Discussion of the morning address.
7.30-8.30 p.m.	Address: "The Unique Revelation of God in Christ." Rev. R.H.W. Shepherd (of Lovedale).
8.30-8.45 p.m.	Evening Devotions.

Sunday, June 29th

8.00-9.45 a.m.	A period on Bible Study, conducted by Professor H.P. Cruse (University of Stellenbosch).
10.00-10.30 a.m.	Communion Services as announced.
11.00-12.00 p.m.	Address: "What does God Require of the Individual?" Rev. Allen Lea (President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference of South Africa).
12.00 a.m.	Council & Staff meeting.
12.45 p.m.	Dinner.
3.30 p.m.	AT LOVEDALE. Dr. H.P. Cruse presiding. Address: "Present day Life and Thought amongst Students." Mr. Francis P. Miller (Chairman of the World's Student Christian Federation).
7.15 p.m.	AT LOVEDALE. Address: "The Christian Ideal for Human Society Today." Dr. George E. Haynes. (Secretary of the Federal Council of Churches of N. America.)
8.30 p.m.	Evening Devotions.

Monday, June 30th

9.00 a.m.	Devotional Period. Led by Dr D. Mostaert (Minister of the Dutch Reformed Church for work amongst students).
9.30-10.45 a.m.	Address: "Conditions among Zulu Bantu." Rev. Ray E. Phillips (of Johannesburg). Address: "Social Conditions among Bantu Women and Girls." Mrs. Charlotte Maxeke (of Johannesburg).
12.15-1.30 p.m.	Discussion of the above addresses in full conference.
1.45 p.m.	Dinner.
2.30 p.m.	Sports.
7.15 p.m.	Addresses: "Bantu Rural Life." Mr I. Malcomess (of the Transkeian Agricultural Department). Mr W.C. Bennie (formerly Chief Inspector of Native Schools). Discussion in Zulu and English.
9.15-9.45 p.m.	Evening Devotions.

Tuesday, July 1st

9.00 a.m.	Devotional Period. Led by the Rev. Edwin N. Newman (of Pietermaritzburg).
9.30-11.00 a.m.	Addresses: "An Industrial Destructive Order." Mr Howard Pim (of Johannesburg). Miss M.L. Hodgson (of the Witwatersrand University). Mr H.D.C. Jeanes (of Fort Hare).
11.30-1.00 p.m.	Address: "Industrial Education and the Bantu." Mr. S. Molepo Thema (of Secretary of the Johannesburg Joint Council of Europeans and Bantu).
1.15 p.m.	Dinner.
3.30-4.00 p.m.	Discussion of the morning's addresses in full conference and in groups. Mr W.G. Bennie (Convener of the I.C.C.).
7.45-9.15 p.m.	AT LOVEDALE. Address: "The Racial Question in the Light of Christ's Teachings." Dr A.B. Xuma (of Johannesburg). Prof. Edgar H. Brookes (of the Transvaal University College, Pretoria).
9.15-9.30 p.m.	Evening Devotions.

Wednesday, July 2nd

9.00 a.m.	Devotional Period. Led by the Rev. G.H.P. Jacques (Ex-President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference of South Africa).
9.30-10.00 a.m.	Business Meeting.
10.00-11.00 a.m.	Address: "The Witness of the Ages to God's Gift of Power." Mr Max Yergan (of the Students' Christian Association).
11.30-1.00 p.m.	Discussion: "How can students and others work for the Victory of God's Cause in the World?"
1.15 p.m.	Dinner.
6.45 p.m.	Address: "The Influence of Christ in the Life of a people." Prof. A.M.K. Cumaraswamy (of Ceylon).
9.15-9.30 p.m.	Evening Devotions.

Thursday, July 3rd

9.00 a.m.	Devotional Period. Led by the Rev. W. Mpamba (Moderator of the Bantu Presbyterian Church).
9.30-11.30 a.m.	Address: "The Law of Love." Mr Oswin Bull.
10.30-11.30 a.m.	Closing Period. Address: Mr Francis P. Miller (Chairman of Conference).

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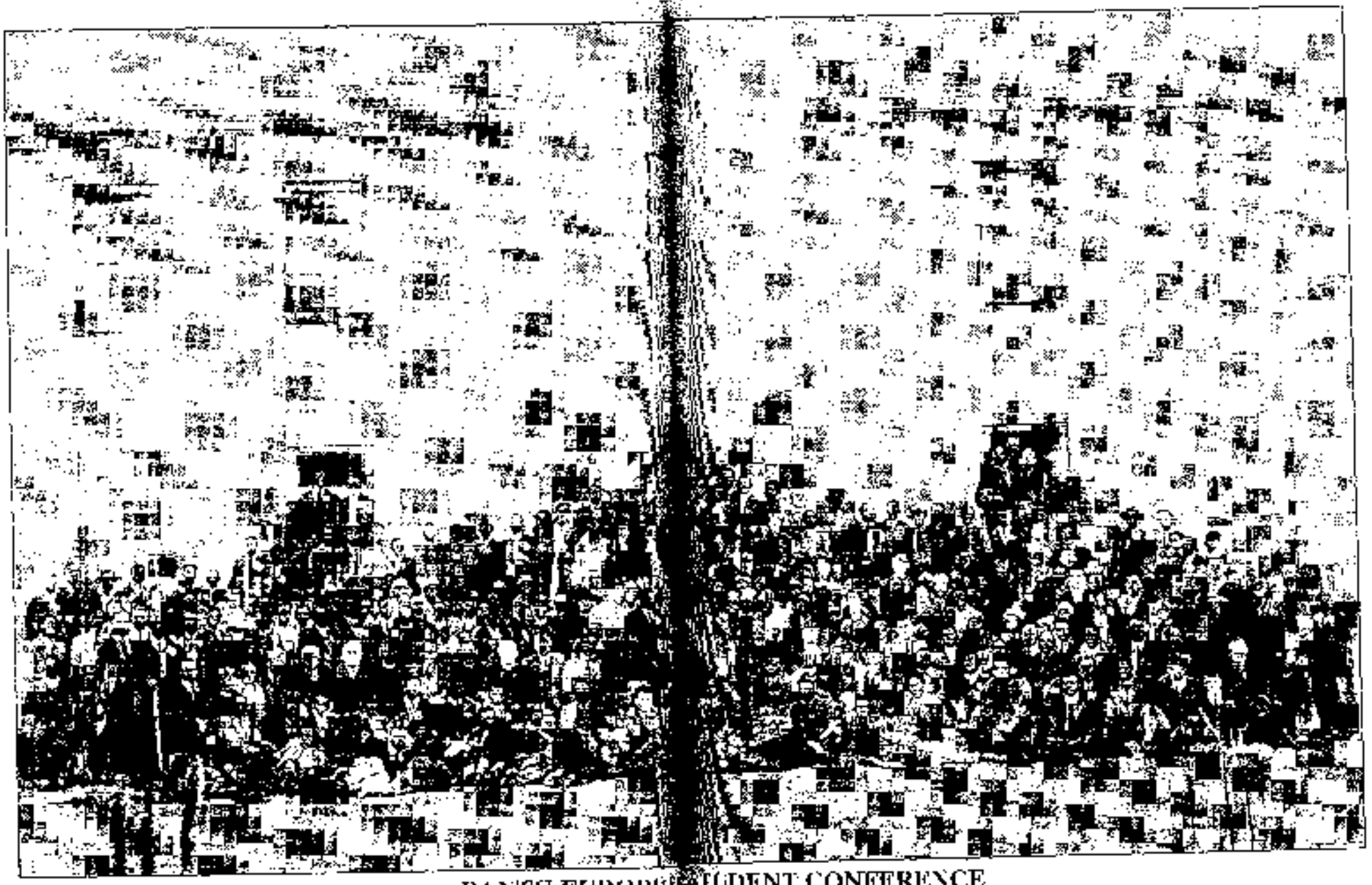

BANTU-EUROPEAN STUDENT CONFERENCE

HELD AT FORT HARE

June 27th–July 3rd, 1930.

Social Stratification in South African Telugu (Ste)—A Sociolinguistic Case Study

Vanjakshi Prabhakaran

1 Introduction

Various historians[1] have documented the socio-economic conditions which compelled the Indians to emigrate from nineteenth century British India. The main focus in such research was on the effects of British rule in India, e.g. the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. However Indian migration during the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries was not only the creation of British colonialism in India but also socio-economic conditions in diaspora areas controlled by the British. While the increase in land revenue, the deterioration of the handicraft industry, the wanting of crops, the scarcity of raw materials and famine together with the capitalistic system and oil territorial greed a weighty pushing influence on the decision of Indians to emigrate, many were lured away to satisfy labour market needs of the gradually expanding British capitalist plantation economy in other colonies. This is manifest in that the vast majority of Indians emigrated mainly to other British colonies, the exception being Suriname, then a Dutch colony.

The *Andhras* (as the Telugu-speakers are called) emigrated to Natal to work on the British-owned sugar plantations. The conditions, especially those created by the successive Company and Crown rules, under which Indian labour was shamelessly exploited in Natal are already documented (Prabhakaran 1992: 37–39). However, for the purposes of this article, a few may be mentioned.

The *Andhra* migration began with the export of indentured, contract or *coolie* (*cooly*) labour in the 1830s. This happened in the wake of the labour – Western capital confrontation concerning slave labour, the resulting labour needs created by the abolition of slavery in 1833—the emancipated former slaves refused to work under the same conditions for the same white employers—and the ever increasing expansion of British industry in the colonies. The labour scarcity threatened the British 'cash-crop' economy, e.g. sugar, rubber and coffee and plantocracy arose. This situation prompted the British to start recruiting Indian labour for which the *Andhras* formed a

[1] See Radhakrishna Rao (1933), Kondaji (1951), Bhana (1987), etc.

[2] See Chopra et al (1979) and Sarojini (1986).

part) under an indentured system.

As early as 1851 sugar cane proved quite lucrative in the colony of Natal. This created an even greater demand for cheap Indian labour. Labour was needed for the day-to-day weeding and fertilising of the sugar-cane fields and harvesting (Prabhakaran 1992:40). On the basis of the successes of the nearby Mauritian plantations – which heavily depended on cheap Indian labour—Natal plantation owners zealously sought to secure Indian labour. They pressurised the British government to procure Indian labour and the government in turn approached British India. The British Indian government agreed to send indentured labourers. The present day South African Telugu (STe) owes its existence to the importation of indentured *Andhras* from the districts of Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, Guntur, Krishna, East and West Godavari districts, Nellore and other districts of North Arcot of Madras Presidency (cf. Swan 1985 & Bhana 1987). Initially, they were to come and work in Natal for a three year contract period. Later, these contracts were changed to five years (Calpin 1949:6).

Although the British government passed a series of laws to protect the indentured labourers, many Indians became the miserable victims of their indentureship. Many were enticed by the deceptive persuasions of recruiters. *Andhras*, along with Tamil-speakers, were either lured by promises of an improved quality of life as indentured labourers or accepted the offer due to personal problems (Prabhakaran 1992:4–5). When the first steam packet, the *S.S.Truro*, docked in Natal on 16 November 1860 carrying 342 passengers, the first batch of *Andhras* arrived in the colony of Natal bringing their Telugu language and cultural norms and values with them.

According to the various documentations of the arrival and dispersion of Indians in Natal in general (Bhana 1987; Kuper 1960) and the *Andhras* in particular (Prabhakaran 1992), the latter were sectioned into 3 coastal belt from Port Shepstone on the South Coast to Kearsney on the North Coast. They were contracted to various leading employers such as Blackburn Central Sugar Company, Kearsney Estates, La Lucia and Mackie Nauk Estates, Natal Sugar Company, Natal Government Railways and Tongaat Estates.

When their initial indentureship contracts expired, many *Andhras* stayed on in areas such as Illovo, Esperanza, Umzinto, Congella Barracks, Stella Hill, Sea View, Puntans Hill and Clairwood. With the implementation of the Group Areas Acts (1950-1960), some of the prominent *Andhra* settlements such as Stella Hill, Sea View and Clairwood were uprooted. The *Andhras* were forced to move away from areas they have been inhabiting for nearly one hundred years. One hundred and thirty seven years after their arrival in South Africa, the present day *Andhras* are mostly scattered all over West Natal with a few thousand living in the provinces of Gauteng and the Western Cape. Although their actual numbers are not documented separately, the *Andhras* are a minority within the minority Indian community in South Africa.

Telugu and the Caste System in South Africa

Swan (1985:281-282) and Bhana (1987:79) demonstrate that the majority of the *Andhras* came from lower caste groups (see table 1) and from uneducated classes. They were recruited for their manual labour based on their physique rather than on their educational qualifications. Despite the fact that some of the immigrants could read and write Telugu, most did not have any 'formal' education in the Telugu language. With the exception of *Pandit* Varadachariyulu no other person has immigrated from the *Brahmin* class until recently. As Naidoo (1986:159) states, 'At no time did the country receive a truly representative cross-section of Indian society ...'.

Table 1- Distribution of Telugu castes[1] among Madras passengers -1860-1902 (percentages)

Castes	Total average	Traditional professions in India
balija	3,3	*chāṭāra* caste
bōya	0,3	hunter
chetty	0,3	merchant
rakkidibbhi	1,7	washer man
komatiligawaru	1,7	non-vegetarian merchant
gentil[2]	1,4	Telugu-speaker
malla	1,0	herdsman
kamma	0,9	agriculturist
kāpu	2,5	farmer
mudliyar	1,4	cobbler
mālā	2,3	pariah
paraiah	14,6	same as *mālā*
reddi	1,7	agriculturist
telugu[3]		0,7 Telugu-speaker[4]
uppara	1,3	a mining caste who are tank diggers
unknown (along with Tamils)	10,7	

(Bhana 1987:79)

[1] Telugu castes are separated from the Tamil castes. See table 6 for other Indian Telugu castes and their professions.

[2] *Gentil* (Gentoo) is not a caste. The Telugu-speakers were referred to as *Gentoos* by the Dutch.

[3] This could be the *Telaga* caste (oil monger).

In the state of Andhra Pradesh, India, the *gavara, kamma, reddi* and *kāpu* castes are considered as middle class castes. The remaining castes are considered lower castes.

Due to the confusion concerning the English terms or foreign culture of understanding, the meaning of the terms *varṇa* and *jāti*, 'caste' is not always understood correctly. This has lead to many different views. Mesthrie (1990:136-137) quotes Dutt's (1931:1) summary concerning caste as follows:

> Without attempting to analyse or appraise every feature it may be stated that the most apparent feature of the present day caste system are: the members of the different castes cannot have any social connections with any but persons of their own caste; that they are restricted, though not so rigid as in the matter of marriage, about the question of the caste eating and drinking with that of a different caste; that in many cases there are hereditary occupations for different castes; that there is some hierarchical gradation among the castes, the most recognized position being that of the *Brahmans* i.e. the top; that birth alone decides a man's connection with the caste for life, unless expulsion for violation of his caste rules, and that transition from one caste to another higher or low is not possible. The passage of the Sastras on caste is the central theme of the whole system.

Mesthrie (1990:137) lists the most frequently accepted characteristics of caste as endogamy[1], occupational specialisation[2], hierarchy[3], commensality and hereditary membership. Dutt correctly points out that marriage is usually confined to members of one's own caste groups and rules are followed concerning eating and drinking with other caste groups. It is the writer's personal observation that the Indian Telugu community rigidly follows the rules and prescriptions of the caste of one's birth. Despite one's individual ability or more accurate through education, or socio-economic status attained through occupation or society, this cannot be changed. A sub-group within a caste may try and

[1] Until 1970's endogamy (marrying within the same caste or tribe) was strictly followed by most of the Indians in South Africa. Endogamy is not strictly followed by most of the Telugu castes in the Andhra Pradesh, India.

[2] The caste system is based on a traditional occupation or specialisation such as a *barber* caste, the *dhōbi* as the washerman caste, the *mudliyar* caste as cobbler, and so on. However, this traditional occupation specialisation is not rigidly followed even in India in the present-day situation and was long forgotten by the Indian South Africans.

[3] The Indian caste system has a fourfold classification in which the *Brāhmans* occupy the top position, *Kshatriyas* (warriors) next, followed by *Vaishyas* (merchants) and finally *Shudras* (working class). There are also the *Harijans* or untouchables who occupy the bottom of the caste system.

attain higher socio-economic status. Even here, however, it will still belong to the same hierarchy (cf. Sivaraman Murty 1960).

Based on available shiplists at the University of Durban-Westville Documentation Centre, it was mainly the Telugu dialects of Eastern, Central and Southern India which found their way to South Africa. Various socio-economic factors such as intermarriage, Tamil numerical majority, the virtual absence of a separate *Andhra* identity and certain cultural reasons (the shared Dravidian heritage which influenced the creation of common religio-cultural practices among the *Andhras* and the Tamils) created the conditions whereby Tamil, being a dominant 'in group' (Indian) language to Telugu in South Africa, substantially influenced Telugu (Prabhakaran 1994a:68). Many immigrant Telugu-speakers became bilingual in Telugu-Tamil. In the process of the Andhra assimilation with the Tamils, later generations became either fluent or passive or semi-fluent bilinguals in both languages.

Due to this assimilation, the *Andhras* lost their separate identity. It gradually led to the erosion of their ethnic mother tongue (EMT). In addition, English exerted its influence on the *Andhras*. Due to its status as a *lingua franca*, it superseded Telugu and prompted them to learn English. Most shifted their EMT towards English. A small group of loyal *Andhras*, encouraged by the arrival of Sir Kurma Reddy, Second Agent-General (1929) and *Sri* Srinivasa Sastry (the Indian High Commissioner in South Africa, 1929-32) founded the *Andhra Mahai Sabha* of South Africa and are at present trying their utmost to maintain and retain the Telugu language.

Particularly since the mid 1950's, caste does not have the same function in the Indian South African situation. Kuper (1955) observes that by the middle of the twentieth century, the Indian population of South Africa did not maintain the rigid caste system anymore. After the first few decades in South Africa, it did not play an overtly important role anymore. Currently, it is not maintained and does not exert any influence on their socio-cultural life. However, many present-day Telugus remember their original caste backgrounds. Even so, as they are primarily from the upwardly mobile[5] in South Africa, the caste system does not have a rigid hold on their lives as in India. In interviews, while discussing their caste backgrounds, the Andhras did not register any feelings of inferiority. Although still aware of their caste background, they are not caste-conscious any more. This is conversant with Mesthrie's (1992:7) statement that, in general, caste-consciousness was reduced within one or two generations of the Indian emigration. It was not relevant to their daily life or in the struggle for their survival in an alien environment. A small group of people within the South African community, however, (e.g. the *Gomata Komatis*, the non-vegetarian merchant caste) still refer to

[5] The upward mobility of the Telugus in their caste system is discussed in the following sub-section 2.2.

themselves as *Gomatas* and maintain their distinct caste identity even in behavioural patterns and religio-cultural activities (cf. Prabhakaran 1995).

2 Indian Telugu (ITe) and SATe

In India, Telugu (one of the major Dravidian languages) is spoken in Andhra Pradesh which lies in the south of the central part of the Indian peninsula. This region has about 90 million Telugu speakers. Sanskrit scholars of ancient times named the speakers of Telugu *Andhras*. Telugu itself has a two-pronged development, one from the native Dravidian languages and the other from Sanskrit.

The origins of Telugu dates back to the second century BCE and has a long literary history going back to the eleventh century CE. Currently, Telugu is the only Dravidian language in India which shares its linguistic borders with five others: two are from the Dravidian group of languages (Tamil and Kannada) and three from the Indo-Aryan languages (Hindi, Marati and Oriya. Due to foreign invasions it was sporadically exposed to various other languages and cultures throughout the centuries. This brought about many linguistic changes and in time made it very assimilative in nature.

The present state of Andhra Pradesh, India, consists of twenty-four districts with four main Telugu dialects: the Northern, Southern, Eastern and Central dialects (cf. Prabhakaran 1996:119). However, since Telugu society in India is divided into sizeable number of castes and sub-castes, many more may be discerned. *Brahmin* speech contains such prosodic features as assimilation, retroflexion and affrication, as borrowed or re-borrowed from Sanskrit. Other caste speakers, who were traditionally not exposed to Sanskrit, substitute these prosodic features with those indigenous to the Telugu language. An individual educated in Telugu may then have two types of pronunciations: one that he/she has acquired because of education, i.e. pronouncing as per the spelling, and the other which is normal in his/her colloquial speech.

There exist many caste and even more sub-caste dialects in Andhra Pradesh. Since they lack some morphological and phonological features of Sanskritised Telugu, Telugu linguists usually do not regard them as standard dialects. In India, the form of educated speech of the Central region has become the norm for standard Telugu (cf. Krishnamurti 1976).

Outside Andhra Pradesh Telugu is spoken in various states of the Indian sub-continent as well as in other countries such as Mauritius, Malaysia, Singapore, Burma, Thailand and Fiji (mainly in the European countries, the United States of America, Canada, Australia and South Africa among others.

The Telugu language in South Africa is a separate dialect which developed on its own through contacts with South African languages such as English, Zulu, Fanagalo,

South African Tamil and Bhojpuri/Hindi. Due to the socio economic and political sanctions imposed by India and various other countries on South Africa during the apartheid years, STe speakers are not aware of the linguistic changes that have occurred in modern Telugu in India or elsewhere. Furthermore there was no immigration of any kind of Telugu language speakers from India after the indenture system ended in 1911 (except for a handful of priests and teachers who were imported before 1945). All these factors virtually meant that South African Telugu had no linguistic contacts with India.

On the question 'How far does the STe resemble the original Telugu dialects that were brought into the country?' (Prabhakaran 1996b:118-127) it can be demonstrated that STe is an amalgamation of various dialects which came with the immigrants. In time, it developed as a new dialect due to its contacts with other languages in South Africa.

3 Upward and Downward Social Mobilities—The *Andhra* Situation in South Africa

Over the one hundred and thirty seven years of its presence in South Africa, the socio economic development of the STe speaking community determined the fate of Telugu. During the long process of its evolution any society usually evolves to the good. With an increase in the quality of education and in general living conditions comes behavioural pattern change and upward social mobility. 'Progress' is rarely retrogressive. The sociolinguistic study conducted by Sivarama Murty in the district of Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh, India, on the social mobility of the *Velamas* at *Kasibugga* (see table 6) shows upward and downward mobility respectively. The study illustrates how lower caste *Andhras* (in this instance the *Velagas*) achieve social progressiveness due to education, literacy and economic development. On the contrary, mainly economic factors provoked retrogression among the *Velamas*. In the Indian South African context, change has been mainly progressive. Retrogression, however, can also be identified (mainly among immigrants – see sub section 6).

By the 1940s a new breed of educated *Andhras* (and all or Indians) called the 'new elites' were emerging. They were very aware of their caste hierarchy within the Indian community. These new elite *Andhras* clearly demonstrated an upward social mobility and as Maharaj (1992:11) comments,

> were liberated from their traditional roots in terms of their superior positions in the occupational hierarchy, made possible by the traditional educational qualifications.

During this process of evolutionary upward mobility, the lower caste *Andhras*

tried to imitate the upper middle caste *Andhras* by changing their names, surnames and life styles (see the following sub-sections for more details). At this stage there was no correlation between their original castes and their occupations. A lower caste person (say C13 or C14, for example, became an official priest in a Hindu temple and performed prayers and presided at weddings, has really functioning as a *Brāhmaṇa*. The rigid caste hierarchy became blurred. These changes led to the attrition of many caste terminologies, occurrence of semantic changes and finally contributed to the upward mobility of the Telugu (Indian) community in general (Mesthrie 1990:539-541, Prabhakaran 1994b, 1995b & 1996b).

Sivarama Murty (1980:360) demonstrates that it is possible that

> an upward mobility in a certain caste group contributes for the development of contrastively varied alternations in a linguistic system in between these groups due to literacy and the other contributing factors like prestige and power.

Downward mobility, however, does not exert an influence on a community in the immediate generation. It mainly affects future generations. The writer hypothesises that this statement of Sivarama Murty is applicable to the STe situation and differs in the STe situation. Especially with sociolinguistic aspects of STe (e.g. the social stratification revealed in the language and the way in which upward social mobility in the South African *Andhra* community affects language change in STe), substantiates this hypothesis. In the next sections, this hypothesis will be argued for in the contexts of upward mobility and the social stratification of STe with information gathered in fieldwork.

4 Methodology

Following Mesthrie (1991, 1992), the fieldwork comprised two main activities.

4.1 Questionnaire-based Interviews Eliciting Words and Sentences in Translation from English

Words known to have undergone change and reported to be diagnostic of (earlier) Telugu caste dialects, both regional and social were focused on. In addition, information was obtained from religio-cultural domains in which STe is mostly used today (Cf. Prabhakaran 1993; 1994 & 1995). Following Labov (1972), information was also collected from formal, informal, casual and STe speeches recorded on various occasions between 1989-1996 by the researcher and his research assistants. The quick questionnaire was administered to 80 chosen fluent (both *Tele* and *Vale* speakers), semi-fluent, and passive STe speakers of various generations.

4.2 Interviews

Interviews were conducted in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and Eastern Cape (especially in the former homeland, Transkei). These were useful in obtaining information on caste dialectic retention and change. The interviews were conducted with the help of two research assistants and some informal assistants (fluent STa speakers) who volunteered to help.

4.3 Interpretation

Since all raw data must be interpreted, and when not available, compared to existing analyses, a hermeneutical approach was used which included available data documented on caste dialects of Tel and research conducted among various Telugu dialects and class/caste variants in India.

5 Age, Sex, Generation and Caste Awareness of Interviewees

Details about the formal informants and the interviewees are presented in tables 2 through 5

Table 2—Age of the sample

Below 20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60+	Total
6	10	14	15	15	20	80

Table 3—Sex of the sample

Male	Female	Total
37	43	80

Table 4—Generation of the sample

G 1	G 2	G 3	G 4	G 5	Total
31	8	23	27	10	80

Key to generation :

G 1 = Immigrants to South Africa from India (Andhra Pradesh).

G 2 = First generation born in South Africa whose parents were born in India.

G 3 = Second generation born in South Africa whose parents were born in South Africa.

G 4 & G 5 = Third and fourth generations born in South Africa whose grandparents and great grandparents were born in South Africa

Table 5—Caste awareness of the sample

Aware of the caste background	18
Not aware of the caste background	62
Total	80

6 Social Stratification in STe

Various sociologists have worked on the problem of social stratification (Sahlins 1958, Kirchhoff 1955 and others). In the recent past, linguists have contemplated the role of 'social dialects' in linguistic change. Sociolinguists such as Labov (1966, 1970), Gumperz (1958), Klass (1980), Pandit (1972) and Bright and Ramanujan (1964) have put forward their hypotheses on the role of social dialects in linguistic change. In this paper I briefly evaluate the hypothesis advanced by Bright and Ramanujan (1964).

Bright and Ramanujan (1964:471) have proposed a hypothesis to account for the dynamics of linguistic change. This hypothesis is concerned with the role of 'caste dialects' in linguistic change. An earlier version of this hypothesis is as follows:

> In general, the *Brahman* dialect seems to show great innovation on the more sophisticated 'evaluative' change, whereas the non-*Brahman* dialect shows greater innovation in the less conscious type of change—those involving phonemic and morphological replacements (Bright & Ramanujan 1964:471).

Bright's hypothesis has another part which explains the bi-directionality of linguistic change in *Brahman* and non-*Brahman* dialects in term of the literary factor (Bright & Ramanujan 1964:478).

Until recently (cf. Mesthrie 1990, 1991 and 1992), little attention was paid to the social stratification present in the various South African languages (both indigenous and immigrant). This is especially true of the study of South African Indian languages. If the conspicuous presence of social stratification in Indian languages in South Africa and its caste influence on language are considered, this is surely a situation researchers will have to address.

Although Tel has attracted the attention of various sociolinguists (Dasappa 1974; Krishnamurti 1974; Rajakameswara 1983; Sankara Mahan Rao 1988; Sreekanta Murty 1979 and Venkateswara Sastry 1994 among others), trivial attention was given to the social stratification. Sreekanta Murty (1979 & 1980) and Venkateswara Sastry (1994) try to illustrate some of the open sociolinguistic variables in Tel. In this section my main aim is to present some sociolinguistic features which clearly mark the social dialects of the present day STa speakers.

Following Sivarama Murty (1979:92f), the author provides a random caste breakdown of a small village in *Srikakulam* district (in modern Andhra Pradesh, India). Representatives of most of these (except *Brahmans*) castes appear to have emigrated to South Africa (cf. Swan 1985:24 and Bhana 1987:79).

Table 6—Telugu castes and division in modern Andhra Pradesh (C1- C14[a])

No	Caste	Traditional occupation
C1	*brahmans*	(priest and pure vegetarian)
C2	*kalinji komati*	(vegetarian merchant)
C3	*gavara komati*	(non vegetarian merchant)
C4	*srikyan*	(a variety of *Naidu*)
C5	*kapu*	(a variety of *Naidu*)
C6	*velama*	(a variety of *Naidu*)
C7	*intinlu*	(gold smith)
C8	vasandlu	(carpenter)
C9	talakatti/telaga	(toddy-drawer)
C10	*pandam*	(vegetable vendor)
C11	*eta*	(basket maker)
C12	mangali	(barber)
C13	*rakali*	(washer man)
C14	mala	(untouchables)

Sivarama Murty (1979:96-98) classifies these 14 caste groups into four classes based on their social stratification as follows: Class 1 (C1, C4 and C7), Class 2 (C5-C6), Class 3 (C8-C10) and Class 4 (C11-C14). Being aware of the Telugu caste system and linguistic variables, the writer follows the same class division from C1 to C14.

The social stratification perceived in STe will be discussed under three categories viz. 1) address terms used by the speech community; 2) linguistic variables; and 3) other social variables noticed.

6.1 Address terms used

Address terms used by this speech community can be once again divided into three

[a]To facilitate easy reference, the following abbreviations are made in the text: C = Caste, HC = High Caste, MC = Middle Caste, LC = Low Caste, G1-G5 = Generation 1-5.

categories: 1) kinship terms; 2) third person pronouns (male and female); and 3) polite/impolite suffixes added to certain words.

6.1.1 Kinship terms used

In many Indian languages kinship terms are used among the members not only within the family and the caste but also in addressing members of other castes as well. STe is not an exception to this norm. Sivarama Murty (1979:95) observed this among Telugu speakers of a small village in the modern Andhra Pradesh state, India. He noted this across C2 to C8 and states that use of kinship terms across other castes is not common with C1 and is less frequent in C9-C14, the lower class. His findings also illustrate that C5 (*Kapus*) use kinship terms more frequently than any other community because they address the other four (C1-C4) communities with kinship terms. The reverse is very rare. In the STe social system, the immediate lower group (especially of the middle caste) tries to develop its relations with the immediate upper group. However, the upper groups do not like to develop such relations with lower caste. Thus the trend in STe is upward mobility rather than downward.

The following are the kinship terms used among the STe communities. The order indicates the relative frequency of the items used. In-group terms refer: 1) *amma* mother; 2) *nyna* father; 3) *nanna* father; 4) *akka* elder sister; 5) *tammudu* younger brother; 6) *anna* elder brother; 7) *bava* brother-in-law; 8) *vadina* sister-in-law; 9) *pedamma* mother's elder sister; 10) *pinnamma* mother's younger sister; 11) *pinnayya* father's younger brother; 12) *pedanayya* father's elder brother; 13) *tata* grandfather (both maternal and paternal); 14) *ayyamma* father's mother; 15) *annamma* mother's mother. It is imperative to state in this context that *Brahmans*, the upper caste, never address any other community with kinship terms. This is reserved for members of their own caste.

Mesthrie's work (1990:345-346) demonstrates that although a domain of kinship terms is susceptible to influence from the contact languages (English in KwaZulu-Natal), the South African Bhojpuri (SABH) retained many of its original kinship terms over the years. Similarly, many of the above mentioned kinship terms survived in STe, however, their usage is limited only within the family and not across the other castes. During interviews, almost 90% of the interviewees stated that they are aware of most of these kinship terms and use them only within their home and its close family domains.

During her stay in South Africa, the author has observed a few of the STe speakers of *Kamma*, *Kapu* and *Gavara* castes addressing the *Brahman* caste immigrants with kinship terms such as *amma*, *nanna*, *akka* and *anna* (displaying upward mo-

[illegible]. It is necessary to note in this context that they do not use the same terms with the local non-STe speakers who are not their relatives. These findings substantiate Sivarama Murty's notion that lower caste Telugus address upper caste Telugus with kinship terms in order to underscore their social situation. However, it is interesting to note that within a few years of their immigration, some of the *Brāhmaṇa* caste TTe speakers have changed and are addressing the STe speakers (although aware of the latter's lower caste status) as *amma*, *nānna*, *māma* and *anna*. This type of downward mobility is not possible in the TTe social situation. This is unique to the STe situation. Some of the present day *Brāhmaṇa* immigrants to South Africa are trying to develop their relations with the STe speakers and display a downward mobility, which is unusual among the TT community.

6.1.2 Third person pronouns used

In the Telugu language, third person pronouns are mainly used as reference terms. When a Telugu speaker (addresser) refers to states or reports about other persons (both male and female), he/she uses these pronouns. TTe has different degrees of politeness and impoliteness. This is present in the reciprocal determination of the use of certain pronouns and the caste/social stratification of the addresser. For example, the TTe speakers use terms expressing high degrees of politeness, viz. *(a)vāru*, *āvaru* and *aṭṭaru* to refer to male [illegible] to higher and middle caste Telugu speakers. They use *waḍḍA/waḍḍi* for lower caste people (see table 7). The middle caste TTe speakers use the terms *āyana*, *anaru* and *aṭṭagāḍu* for the higher, middle and lower caste groups respectively. However, lower caste refers to the middle and higher caste people as *aṭṭaru*, and use *vāḍu* to the equal caste people.

Table 7— Third person pronouns (referring to **male** persons)

Class	Terms used
Class 1	*vāru, āyana, anaru*
Class 2	*āyana, anaru*
Class 3	*kurra, anaru, aṭṭagāḍu (di)*
Class 4	*aṭṭagāḍu, waḍḍāḍu*
STe	*(a)ru, waḍḍāḍu* (commonly)
	āyana (by present immigrants only)

The pronouns used to refer to females exhibit social stratification in TTe too. The terms used by and for the higher caste Telugus to refer to female in the third person are: *āvidagāḍu* (very polite), *āme* (polite) and *adi* (impolite and intimate) (see table 8).

Table 8— Third person pronouns (referring to female)

Class	Terms used
Class 1	*avaḍu*
Class 2	*āvidagāḍu, āme*
Class 3	*āme, adi*
Class 4	*adi*
STe	*āme, adi* (always [illegible] derogatively)

Due to the choice of kinship terms and/or the third person pronouns used by an addresser, it is evident that an TTe referent can identify the caste status of the addresser. However, it is important to mention that educated middle and lower caste people tend to use higher caste terms in formal and careful speech.

The tables (tables 7 and 8) and the interpretation of the information clearly demonstrate that STe speakers exhibit social stratification in the use of third person pronouns and display both upward mobility and social stratification in the use of certain kinship terms.

6.1.3 Addressing —polite/impolite suffixes added (masculine)

Social stratification is also evident in the choice of use of other addressing suffixes added according to caste. Table 9 is self explanatory and illustrates the polite/impolite terms used by different caste groups of TTe and STe speakers. It is pertinent in this context to note that while using these suffixes, the TTe speaker is very cautious. The reason is that the use of a lower suffix for a high caste person is offensive. Inversely, to use a higher (very polite) suffix for a lower caste person indicates sarcasm. Due to a lack of caste consciousness amongst themselves, the STe native speaker does not observe such caution. This use of the wrong suffixes, often offends immigrant TTe speakers.

Table 9 - Addressing—polite/impolite terms used (masculine)

Castes	Class	terms used	Comments
Brāhmaṇa	caste 1	*emaṇḍi*	most polite form
Kāpu	class 2	*emaṇḍi, ēmi*	most polite, just polite
Yerukali	caste 3	*ēmaṇḍi, emay*	slightly polite
Mangali	caste 4	*bāḍu, aṇṇa, ra*	polite, slightly polite impolite
STe	(usually)	*emaṇḍi & rā*	slightly polite polite impolite also vocative

Although it is evident from the above table that the STe is closer to HC reflex in its general linguistic variables, it still reflects some features of HC variety in addressing others as *-aṇḍi & -andi* (almost every one uses these terms). However, the STe speakers use *-andi* only to address the Telugu teachers or the Telugu lecturer (at UDW). They use the term *amma* very frequently to address any woman or young girl. Many uneducated Telugu (as well as Tamil) speakers literally translate this term *amma* (mother) into 'mummy' and use it to address any woman of Indian background. Lastly, it is pertinent to note that not all the *Gavara, Kamma* and *Kāpu* caste people of STe exhibit the salient features of their caste illustrated above.

6.2 Linguistic features—social stratification

6.2.1 General linguistic features

Table 10 provides information regarding the general linguistic features observed in different caste groups of ITe and STe speakers of different generations. The features 1-4 are phonological features whereas the remaining two are morphological and general features respectively.

Table 10—General Linguistic variables in Telugu

	ITe				STe
	C1	C2	C3	C4	G1-G5
Retroflex ḷ,ṇ are phonemes	+	-			/-
Aspirated stops are available	+	-	-	-	-
ŋ is a phoneme		+	-	+	+
Initial vā becomes o	-			-	/+
Past suffix 'ninaru' 'he'	-	+		!	!
Use of *mīru* for 2nd p sing	-	-	-	-	-/+

(cf. Sivarama Murty 1979 : 94-96)

The above display how the social stratification and upward mobility of the STe community. It is mainly due to education, literacy and contact with Tamil. In ITe the retroflex ḷ,ṇ are phoneme only in class 1 (castes 1-4) and absent in other classes. The presence of two out of three (/l/ and /ṇ/) of the retroflex are found in STe speech contexts. Many of the present-day G3-G5 STe speakers who are bilingual and fluent in STe and South African Tamil (SAT) retain and maintain these retroflex due to Tamil domination on STe (cf. Prabhakaran 1994b). This retention of retroflex is a good example for upward mobility in STe.

The use of *mīru* for second person singular demonstrates an upward mobility due to education and literacy. Only the STe speakers who are educated in the Telugu language maintain this feature. Other STe speakers from G2-G5 do not display this feature in their speech context (both formal or informal). The remaining features (2-3) in the above table demonstrates social stratification in and MC and LC varieties.

Social stratification is reflected in the Telugu villages in Andhra Pradesh, India, in many other linguistic variables. Venkateswara Sastry (1994) has illustrated some of them present in different castes of modern Andhra Pradesh. Following Venkateswara Sastry (1994:315-319), STe can be compared with some of those linguistic variables as reflected in the Indian Telugu castes.

The table below clearly demonstrates that although STe speakers originally hailed from lower middle castes, they display both high and middle caste linguistic features and social stratification. Some of these features display upward mobility for example, word initial stress and regular vowel harmony, two usual linguistic variables witnessed in HC and which are totally absent in MC and LC are frequently witnessed in STe. Similarly, presence of the inclusive *iṭṭi* which is totally absent in lower caste speech patterns is occasionally present in STe (cf. Prabhakaran 1994a & 1994b). However, the presence of hyper forms, irregular vowel harmony, makes STe closer to MC and LC variation.

Table 11—**Other linguistic variables according to castes**

No	Features	HC	MC	STe
1	Word-initial /v/	+		+
2	Vowel harmony (regular)	+	-	+
3	Vowel harmony (irregular)	-	+	+
4	Final /u/ and/or /i/ deletion of unstressed syllables	+	+	
5	/s/ and/or /ʃ/ (regular)	+		-
6	Upper forms		+	+
7	Fricative variant (prolonged at the time of consonant release)	-	+	+
8	Presence of fricative /f/	+	+	+
9	Presence of /x/	+	+	-
10	Presence of /w/ in word-initial and medial position	-	-	-
11	/ɦ/ distinction	+		

Any sociolinguist with an awareness of Indian Telugu caste systems would easily differentiate between the high and low caste Telugu speakers. This is precisely because of the many phonemes, aspirations, retroflexion and allophones, intact as borrowed from the Sanskrit language. The middle and lower caste would not use them in their formal and informal speech. However, educated people in Telugu try to maintain two pronunciations in their speech. The one type of pronunciation is that acquired due to education, i.e. pronunciation as per spelling requirements in careful speech. The other type is normal in his/her colloquial speech. Table 12 and 13 illustrate some of the phonemic differences between the HC, MC and LC Telugu speakers and investigates caste differences within the STe context.

Table 12— **Phonetic difference between high and low caste Telugu speakers**

	High Caste	Middle and Low castes	STe	Gloss
/bh/	*[bhayamu(-i)]*	*[bayam]*	*[bayam]*	fear
/kh/	*[khacchi]*	*[kacchi] [e.mpu]*	*[kampa] [pacchipanta]*	murder
/kh/	*[mukhamu(-u)]*	*[mukam]*	*[mugaṁ]*	face/mouth
/th/	*[pa.tha]*	*[pa.ta]*	*[paata] [katha]*	pair
/ph/	*[phaṇiṁdra]*	*[paṇiṁdra]*	*[paṇiṁdra]*	famous Telugu singer
/ph/	*[me.phaṁ(-ṁ)]*	*[me.paṁ] [mabba]*	*[mabbu] [mbba]*	cloud
/dh/	*[dhanamu(-u)]*	*[danam]*	*[dhanam] [ndha]*	wealth/money

Table 13—**Other phonetic differences and caste variables**

Phoneme	Grapheme	Upper caste	Other castes	STe
/ṁ/	*ṁ*	–	+	+
/ṁ/	*ṁ*		+	+
/ṁ/	*ṁ*	–	-	+
/ɭ/	*ɭ*	-	+	+
/ɭ/	*ɭ*	–	-	+
/w/	*w*	-	-	-
/ʁ/	*ʁ*	–	-	+

6.2.2 Caste differentiation in Telugu lexis

Another area where social stratification (of class or caste) is evidenced in the Indian languages is in the use of lexical items. Various linguists (Misra 1980, Mesthrie 1990; Veeraiswara Sastry 1994; Labov 1966 among others) have claimed that use of certain lexis demonstrates the class/caste status of the speaker even though the speakers claim high caste status. Following Mesthrie (1990:340), certain Telugu lexis used by various castes of STe speakers and may be compared with STe

Table 14— Caste differentiation reflected in the use of Telugu lexis

Brāhmin caste (orthographic form)	Middle and lower[1] castes	STs	Class
a bātam	*antimaṭṭiṭṭaṭ*	*dīna*	death ceremony
bhojanam	*annamu/ōjo*	*kuka (mostly) annā (rarely)*	food
jalam	*mañchi/nīḷḷu/nīḷḷu*	*nīḷḷu (mostly) nīḷḷu (rarely)*	water
kuḍikāṭam	*ōṭṭapu*	*ōṭṭapu*	bath
sampūrṇam	*pa nīḷḷaṭ muṭṭi*	*muṭṭi*	completely
dustulu	*aṇḍamōḷu*	*dongalu*	mischievous
ēnugulu	*kōḍi*	*kōḍi*	clothes
prasādam	*aṇḍigam*	*aṇḍigam*	happy/auspicious
purugu	*kuṭuka*	*kuḍa*	son
pēraṇḍlu	*muṇḍamōḍi*	*mani/ōḍi*	grandson
dhūḷi	*dumma*	*dumma*	dust
dhairyam	*gaṭṭi/ōṭṭaṭa*	*ōṭṭaṭa*	courage/ wealth
kalyāṇam	*pōṭi kuṭṭi/peḷḷi*	*peḷḷi (mostly) peḷḷi (rarely)*	marriage/wedding
devuḍu/ḍam	*dēvuḍu*	*yēḍu*	god/-s
upādyāyuḍu	*guru*	*guru*	savior
vidhavā	*vaṭṭi vāmuḍu*	*muguḍi bōḍi*	widow

This table clearly demonstrates the social stratification in STs against upward social mobility.

6.3 Other social variables according to the castes

In the Telugu caste system, the caste and social stratification are also reflected in the *intiperu* (surnames) and names of the Telugu. Most of the Telugu castes have certain suffixes attached to surnames and names (see table 15). These serve to indicate caste

[1] The second term in the reference are of the LC variation.

status. In modern civilised and urbanised Telugu contexts, this practice is gradually disappearing. Many, too, have Sanskritised names (which may conceal the original caste system) and use these more often than their Telugu ones. Although similar circumstances are evident in STs situations, it is interesting that many of the present-day South African Telugu speakers still have names (with or without the knowledge of the caste background or significance attached to their name) which demonstrate social stratification and their caste background.

Table 15—Telugu caste name endings

No.	Castes	Names generally end in
1.	*brahmin*	*rāvu, murti, śarmā*
2.	*kōṭṭu kōmaṭi*	*rāvu, murti, ayya*
3.	*gavara kōmaṭi*	*rāvu, murti, ayya*
4.	*reḍḍy*	*dora, ravu, murti, ayya, amma*
5.	*kapu*	*naidu, rāju, ayya, amma*
6.	*velama*	*nāidu, rāju, ayya*
7.	*kuruba*	*dāsari, murty*
8	*mudaliyar*	*pottalu, pāḍi*
9.	*telaka*	*ayya*
10.	*pandara*	*ayya*
11.	*ēṭa*	*oḍa, gāḍu*
12.	*mangali*	*oḍa, gāḍu*
13.	*vakkali*	*oḍa, gāḍu*
14.	*mālā/mādiga*	*oḍa, vāḍu*
	STs names	*naiḍu/naiḍū, dāsari, ayya, ravu, rāju, gāḍu*

From the information obtained during interviews there is especially one good example of a Telugu family name (the original immigrant name was taken from the ship lists and was confirmed by the immigrant's grandson during an interview) which clearly demonstrates the social stratification and upward mobility of the Telugu castes in South Africa. The original immigrant was called *appigāḍu* who married from the *mādiga* caste (see the table above). His son was named *kōṭṭayya* (reflecting the upward mobility of their caste towards either *reḍḍy* or *kapu* (i.e. from C14 to C1 or C3). The grandson of the immigrant (the present-day STs speaker) is named *varaḍayya* (again indicating upward mobility towards the *rāju* (*Kshatriya*) caste (not present in the table above) which is a Sanskritised religious name.

grandfather	son	grandson
appigadu ---- -> *kochaapp*		> *varadarajulu*

The present-day *varadarajulu*'s son's name is *anilandra* (great grandson to the immigrant *appigadu*). Thus, generation by generation, upward mobility in the caste of the present-day SIe speakers are still taking place.

7 Summary and Conclusion

It is an accepted fact that language exhibits variation based on geographical and regional differences. The Indian linguists and grammarians have recognised this as early as the third century B.C.E. Social variation includes all kinds of differences in speech correlating with socio-economic class, caste, occupation and age. In Telugu social stratification is evident due to the availability of different caste, sub-castes and regional dialectical differences. Although the SIe speakers have long ago forgotten the caste system which their forefathers brought to the country and which the IIe speakers still follow rigidly, social stratification based on caste is still evident in their speech. The foregoing sub-sections demonstrate that to certain degrees and in some cases, it is still present. It also demonstrates upward social mobility. It has been argued that such stratification in SIe is present in phonology, morphology and in the use of certain lexis. The results, then, support Sivaraman Murty's (1980:360) research.

A few concluding comments concerning the downward mobility of the present-day immigrant IIe speakers in South Africa may be made.

Since the early 1980s, IIe speakers of various castes have immigrated to South Africa. They settled in the four former homelands and became citizens or residents of the Republic of South Africa after the constitution of the new democratic South Africa. These immigrants are all highly qualified 'technocrats' or 'professionals' and speak IIe as their home language. They came from HC and MC Telugu societies with one or two families from LC. Most of them arrived with young children (between the ages 2 and 6) and some families had children since then. In these communities the language shift towards English (cf. Prabhakaran 1995b) is taking place very fast and even monolingual immigrants (G1 or G2) are becoming bilingual (Telugu and English) and multilingual (Telugu, English and Afrikaans). Eleven children (five from HC and six from MC) from these families were used in the research. The following gradual linguistic changes in their speech patterns were documented.

1 The three retroflex consonants *ṭ,ḍ,ṇ* do not occur freely and the difference between *ṭ,ḍ,ṇ* is vague.

2 Polite and address terms for masculine and feminine are gradually disappearing

3 Aspiration is rarely found and almost absent in casual and informal speech. Hyper-corrections are evident in formal speech.

4 Kinship terms are restricted only to family members. This is significant, since none of the families included in the study have any relatives in South Africa.

5 Loss of caste terminologies among many other lexis is taking place.

These findings show variations in the present generation in some of the foreign born families. IIe is not spoken at home anymore. This profoundly reflects the speech and caste consciousness of the present younger (G1 or G2) generations. The reason for the downward mobility could be due to a lack of socio-economic status and power for immigrant IIe speakers in relation to the SIe speaking society. The IIe speakers do not enjoy any prestige due to their caste status or due to their educational qualifications. Thus, a downward mobility to the immigrant generation IIe speaker or in their immediate next generations born in South Africa is inevitable. These findings confirm Sivaraman Murty's hypothesis and demonstrates that the SIe situation is unique and different from the IIe situation. In the IIe situation, the downward mobility of HC spoken variety and an upward mobility of a LC towards a HC[1] are not possible. This is an important finding and needs further research. This may focus on a similar sociolinguistic study of the influence of social stratification and caste influences on Indian languages in India and those in South Africa.

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[1] As an example—one of the interviewees in formal IIe wrote that his father, in the 1940s during the first decade of the century, was a 'shit bucket carrier' and later became a priest of a Hindu temple.

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Occult Discourses in the Liberian Press Under Sam Doe: 1988-1989

Laurie M. Bourgault

Part I: Introduction

With talk of impeaching to spread over Liberia in the wake of flawed elections, it seems an excellent time to attempt to disentangle some of the causes of the horror of the past seven years. Indeed, many an observer has commented on the state of deep spiritual crisis which has pervaded Liberia throughout the 1990s[1]. This research examines press witchcraft discourses in 1988-1989, the period leading up to the Liberian civil war which began on Christmas eve 1989 and lasted almost until the election of War Lord Charles Taylor in July 1997.

Interest in this research, however, actually predates the civil war. The author's long held interest in witchcraft discourses in the African press is an aspect of African media studies which has been sorely neglected in the literature (Bourgault 1995:207-208). Her specific interest in this context is occult discourses, whetted largely by the remarkable prevalence of witchcraft stories in the Liberian press during 1988-1989[2]. Indeed, even the most cursory of glances at the press of this period reveals a decided preoccupation, some would say an obsession with the paranormal. An understanding of this predilection would surely shed light on the nature of Liberian culture and possibly help in understanding the civil war which was soon to follow.

A A Look at Liberian History

Liberia's 'modern' culture began with the establishment of the first colony of freed American slaves in 1822 at the mouth of the Mesurado River in what is today Liberia. In 1847, the Monrovia settlers issued a 'Declaration of Independence' from the Ameri-

[1] See Bassey, especially Preface, pp. xi-xv; Ellis (1995:165); Kpundeh (1998: 6-23); Diallo (1998:245).

[2] The author served as Chief of Party for the USAID supported Liberia Rural Communications Network from April 1988 to March 1989. For a discussion of this project, see Bourgault (1994). The project was provided with all newspaper editions of the daily press published during that time. This study was derived from the author's personal collection of the weekday newspapers which she judiciously collected from that period.

can Society and putatively became Black Africa's first independent and sovereign republic (Liebenow 1987:16). The early settlers, who generally settled in coastal areas of Liberia were joined by other groups: freed slaves from Barbados and human cargo from slaving ships captured on the high seas. Settler penetration into the interior of the country was piecemeal during the nineteenth century. And it would not be until the twentieth century that the tribes of the hinterland would be officially incorporated 'into the nation'.

The 150 year story of the relationship between the 'settlers' and the native 'aborigines' is a rather sorry and exploitative one in which the American Liberians reacted not to their African brothers' treatment not dissimilar to that which they had received in America. It is a story of deculturalized persons of African ancestry assuming overlordship of natives. The story includes the forced labor of ethnic Liberians, expropriation of their tribal lands, and the denial of their rights. The story of Liberia is also one of the gradual 'enfranchisement' the Liberian 'natives' or 'country people' of the interior by American-Liberians. Since the 1980 coup, this process has taken on a terribly violent dimension.

B The Creation of a Liberian Politico-Religious Symbol System

A study of witchcraft discourses in Liberia must begin with an overview of Liberian cosmology. Liberian popular cosmology is a pastiche of traditional African religio-cultural elements, bits of popularized Islam, and liberal doses of witchcraft and mainline Christianity filtered through waves of returning ex-slaves and European and American missionaries.

Traditional Secret Societies

The sixteen or so ethnic groups native to Liberia (Liebenow 1987:25) were organized spiritually and temporally into a variety of societies, most of their secrets, whose task was the maintenance of spiritual and temporal order. Probably the best known of these were the Poro and Sande complexes of the west and central Liberia. The Poro and Sande traditions are believed to have come south and west along with Mande speaking peoples during the 1700s from what is now Sierra Leone and Guinea. Les Poro (males) and its female counterpart (les Sande) are viewed by scholars as being particularly

[1] The nineteenth century saw a rapprochement between the American Liberians elites and the peoples of the hinterland. President Arthur Barclay, during his term (1904-1912) extended citizenship to the Liberian 'tribes', though they were not granted the full franchise until the Liberian civil war which began in 1990.

significant institutions because their spiritual authority (authority governing moral matters) is not tribal or pan ethnic, stretching across vastly half of Liberia and into parts of Guinea and Sierra Leone as well[4].

The Poro and Sande comprises functioned to socialize members, to maintain relations with the spirit world, and to maintain political and social order. Socialization of members involved complex rituals, in which terror, ingestion by spirits, and death were important metaphors[5]. The ritual metaphors taught important lessons, among them: the gravity of authority, the moral ambivalence of power, the clarity of social boundaries, and the exigencies of secrecy[6]. The terror which these rituals inspired demonstrated viscerally the depth of awe the society required of adherents, adherents who were sworn to secrecy under pain of severe punishment or death.

Bellman's much quoted work on the Poro, *The Language of Secrecy* (1984) informs us that the content of secrets actually was less important than the demonstration of their form. The maintenance of secrets (*ifa me 'yea saar nor talk it*) was largely a matter of shifting context. When and with whom secrets could be shared was all part of the mystery of the Poro. It could take a lifetime of learning to know how to sort out one's national context from the next. This is why the leaders of the Poro were professor old men. Members of the Poro were not to trifle with the society's powers, and they were not to trifle with its leadership.

According to Stitt (1992:37), ten of the sixteen Liberian ethnic groups constituted the Poro. Those that did not represented the most fragmentary forest groups (the Kruan-speaking peoples of the east and southeast). They were thought to each have their own parallel politico-spiritual institutions (Ellis 1995:187). Significantly, the Krahn, the group to which Samuel K. Doe belonged, also lacked the Poro organization. So did the Islamicized Mandingo group, whose people have been coming south from Guinea for the last few hundred years.

Of course the Poro and Sande together with the entire edifice of traditional religion in Liberia, if not in all of Africa, has been poorly understood. Colonial self justification and missionary myopia, combined with nineteenth century social darwinism to relegate African religion to the realm of savagery. This is an assignment

[4] A number of authors have discussed the Poro and Sande societies in some detail. See especially Bellman (1984). See also Stitt (1992:36-47) and Ellwood (1987:43-49).

[5] See Gay's 1975 novel *Red Dust on the Green Leaves*, which contains an account of the Poro initial ritual. See also Bellman (1984 Chapter 6).

[6] For a further discussion of the power of secrecy in Africa, see Ostien (1994:6).

[7] See Liebenow (1987:68-78), for a thoughtfully driven account of Liberia's ethnic groups.

from which African religion is finally emerging in the hazy sunset of modernism or the twilight of the twentieth century.

The Settlers, not unlike European colonialists elsewhere on the continent, were little interested in the people or the culture of the Liberian 'tribes' or 'country people' as they became known. Only in the early twentieth century was citizenship granted to the indigenous groups, and not until Tubman's Presidency (1944-1971) was the Poro recognized as an important politico-religious institution.

A politician of considerable acumen, William Tubman sought in the wake of World War II, to acquire foreign investment (to globalize) for the Liberian economy. To do so, he needed the cooperation (perhaps the cooptation) of powerful inland chiefs. Through shrewd negotiations of yet unsure, Tubman began to bring the Poro into the power structure of the Liberian government. His vaunted Open Door policy was a two pronged effort which delivered colonial 'country people' into the government while bringing the Poro under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Tubman further charged the ministry with the licensing of *Zoes* (ritual officers in the Poro), and he declared the Liberian president the head of all Poros (Liebenow 1987:84). He also initiated the process of appointing a Chief Zoe, ultimately responsible at the federal level for all matters pertaining to traditional ritual[8].

Secret societies not incorporated in the Poro, societies such as the Leopard and the Ballroom societies which wardare said to engage in murder and cannibalism, have long been banned in Liberia (Liebenow 1987:84). These were greatly feared by both indigenes and settlers alike.

Settler Cults

But the Americo-Liberians were not content to ban secret societies which they feared. Mindful, no doubt of the terrifying power of the unknown, the ruling settler classes developed their own: the secret Worshipful Grand Masters of the Masonic Order, the IBR, the United Brotherhood of Friendship, and the SMOTS, the Sisters of the Mystery Ten. Shrouded in mysterious rituals and sealed oaths, these societies were feared and hated by ordinary Liberian 'tribesmen', though successful indigenous Liberians were allowed to apply for membership in these groups.

In a monumental display of society power, Tubman commissioned the construction of a splendid Masonic temple on Mamba Point in Monrovia. The latest temple, a symbol of settler hegemony was sacked in the days following the coup of Samuel Doe and the People's Redemption Council (PRC) in 1980. Nevertheless, throughout the

[8] See Bellman (1984:22-28) for a more detailed account of the powers and the manner of organization of the Zoes.

1980s rumor and fear-mongering about the power of the secrets hovering over the ramshackle regimes of the Mason-edifice. Historian Gus Liebenow's remarks are telling in this context.

> Another test about with-it-ness in political overtones was also dealt a mortal blow at the time of the coup—the Masonic Order, which serves as a semi-religious, semi-political guardian of Whig privilege. One experienced observer, feeling the weeks following the coup in passing the Masonic Temple high above Mamba Point in Monrovia, 'The new yellow edifice stood silent, its windows and doors half ajar, the wrought iron gate around the courtyard standing half open, and not a soul was in sight or was that case for its well-manicured grounds. The temple appeared to be totally irrelevant to the new Liberian society. Yet at the same time, the vacated building seemed to pose the lingering menace of future vengeance that might be attributable by a Viola or a Mende fetishman to the wounded spirit protecting a desecrated grave of the Poro secret society. The Masonic Order's power may have been diminished, but few would risk acts by further abusing it (Liebenow 1987:202).

Liebenow's passage clearly sheds light on the sensitivity of Liberians to signs and metaphors within their culture.

Christianity

Throughout the 1800s, meanwhile, a Christian symbol system had been rooted into the political subsoil of the nation of Liberia.

Within a very short time after settlement in 1822, missionaries from Europe and America had begun coming to Liberia. By 1838, there were ten schools founded by church groups and staffed in most cases by Black settlers. Drawing from the rhetoric which emboldened U.S. settlers, the Liberian Republic's first President, President Joseph Jenkins Roberts talked of the 'manifest destiny' of the settlers to bring civilization to what were believed to be tribal heathens (Liebenow 1987:34). And not surprisingly, 'manifest destiny' came to have an important if unseemly economic underbelly. Missionary activity in the interior was discouraged by the settlers who charged the missionaries for six taxes on their missionary 'concessions'. In this way, missionaries to the Liberian interior participated in the settlers' colonial project in ways analogous to Christian missionaries elsewhere on the African continent. The latter, operating in the pleasant if not naive hope of colonial powers, often provided for native converts and subjects alike, an important ideological underpinning to corporate exploitation of virgin territories.

It is noteworthy in this context that missionaries in the country established printing presses in Liberia and published religious tracts and newspapers from the

1830s. Thus, early on, the Christian churches were involved in disseminating a Christian religious discourse that would help to create and then sustain a generalized Liberian culture, while producing English literacy.

With a symbol system which privileged Christian culture came the native inferiority complex. In popular parlance and popular iconography, what was of American or Christian origin or Kwa (pronounced in the Kpelle - the largest ethno-linguistic group in the country with about 20% of the population) was good; what was from the 'country people' (Liberian English for ethnic Liberians) was bad[7]. Thus the generalized Liberian cultural formation was a Christian one skewed toward the more elitist Episcopal, Baptist and Methodist creeds. Indeed, the identification of members of the True Whig Party, which dominated Liberian politics from 1877 to 1980, with certain established American churches was clear. Tubman (1944-1971) was himself a Methodist minister, and his political speeches drew heavily from the Bible. Tolbert (1971-1980), Tubman's vice president and his successor, was the pastor of a Zion Baptist Church and also served as head of the Baptist World Alliance.

Syncretistic churches, of which there have long been a great number in Africa[8], also developed rapidly in Liberia. These were tolerated as long as they did not pose a threat to Whig hegemony.

Islam

Over the 150 years of American-Liberian rule, efforts were made to control the incursions of Islam into the Liberian territory. Missionaries were particularly encouraged to establish Christian beachheads in Liberia in the northwest at the part of the Mandé d'aspora (Liebenow 1987:31). Islam, as part of its own sweep downwards, nevertheless, it did in with Mandingo traders. They became known for their esoteric brands of magic (Bourgault 1988/1989, Ellis 1993:186) popularized 'folk' variants of Islam, all quite distance from middle eastern orthodoxy.

All of these beliefs fused into a generalized Liberian culture, one which was sustained in the popular press. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the many

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[7] For a history of the Liberian press, see Rogers (1988).

[8] See M. Sonia Davids's 1992 article 'To Be Kwii in Gondi Parish: Accounts of Resistance in a Kpelle Village'. See also Fox's (1991:91) article 'The Ambivalent Liberian Psychology' which states that Liberian culture is marked by negative self-images from 'American stereotypes of Africans as savage and uncivilized'.

[9] See Tonna (1977) and a reviewer's response in Hackett (1977:xi), and Hackett's (1987:237-241) Conclusion.

religious discourses which appeared in the Liberian press during the period covered by this investigation. This paper limits itself only to those discourses which make mention of the paranormal.

C Newspapers Surveyed

From a privately held collection of nearly a year's worth of week day Liberian daily newspapers, the author randomly selected the month of June 1988 as a source of stories on the occult which would serve to supply material for a more focused analytical read.[2] From this process, the following papers were included in the survey: *The Daily Observer*, the *Spectator*, the *Liberian Mirror*, the *Liberian Herald* (Catholic), and the *Standard*. All of the papers surveyed in this research were private or 'opposition' papers, as the state-run *New Liberian* had ceased publication or came out only infrequently during the 1988-1989 period when this author was collecting newspapers.

A careful examination of these papers revealed that accounts of the paranormal, stories concerning the paranormal or mentioning the paranormal occurred in at least one of the five published papers nearly every day. The *Liberian Herald*, the paper of the Catholic Church was the exception as no stories of this type were found within its pages during the period of time studied.

A central assumption of the subsequent discussion is the existence of an integral link between the narratives appearing in the Liberian press and the sort of arrangements and preoccupations of readers. Such assumptions have become commonplace in post-modern journalistic analyses which are sensitive to the rift between accounts in newspapers and the 'reality' they purport to depict. Post-modernism recognizes the role of audience as consumer in the shaping of newspaper articles which are more story like, more humanized, and more self-referenced (Luthar 1992:49). Such approaches have long been seen by the present author as infinitely more reasonable than the (vain) modernist search for accounts of the African press for such chimera as objectivity and an abstracted, distanced perspective. Drawing from Obiechina, Okpewho, and others, this author has described the role of the oral narrative in shaping the mass media including the written press in Africa (Bourgault 1987:211-236; Bourgault 1995:160-205).

The arguments presented herein are also enriched by those of Cameroonian scholar Achille Mbembe. Mbembe uses the African novel and the African press unashamedly to support and inform his work on political symbolism in what he calls the 'post-colony' (Mbembe 1992a:1-30). Mbembe defends this practice by noting the close kinship between the two. The 'site of functional reciprocity between narrativity and

[2] See Note 2 above.

temporality'. He adds that 'all human experience has a temporal quality and there is a direct link between lived temporality and the narrative act' (Mbembe 1992b:1341). Mbembe argues that a generation of African politicians have continued to conserve myths because the leadership clearly recognizes the informative power of these genres, together with the closeness with which they approximate the actual reality of political situations. Echoing Bellman's treatise on secrecy, moreover, Mbembe (1992b:1341) discusses censorship and refers in this context to a post-colonial culture 'of surveillance which privileges "acts of telling" (faire savoir) over secrecy (le faire taire)'.

Emmanuel Obiechina (1975:19-27) notes the similarity in style of newspapers and market literature in Nigeria, both of which are said to construct narratives constituting a 'pot-pourri' of stories derived from many sources: the Bible and Christian Catechisms, English literature, international news media, the popular cinema, but first and foremost, African folk tales.

Drawing from the above speculations on the text-like nature of many Africanists among them, the author treats the sample of the Liberian press studied herein as a text which promotes and sustains a discursive vision of Liberian society. She is not concerned with efforts to look behind the articles in a search for the 'accuracy' of the reporting or the 'real' account of events being described.[3]

For the purposes of this discussion articles have been grouped in a two-fold classification: A) stories of the occult involving no criminal proceedings, and B) stories of criminality and the occult.

Part II of the paper will describe and discuss the stories, informing the reader to the extent possible as to the emic meaning of the stories in the Liberian context. Where appropriate, it will venture tentatively into the realm of etic interpretation.

Part III will once again take up the question of Liberian political symbology in conjunction with the view of the press as social text. It will combine these views with additional aspects of Liberian history and politics together with an anthropological study of witchcraft. Through post-modern distancing, the study thus proposes to offer a tentative interpretation of Liberian press discourse on the occult.

To facilitate the discussion of the newspaper stories, the articles discussed below have been arbitrarily numbered 1-16.

Part II: The Stories

A The Occult In Non-Criminal Cases

The following six stories have been grouped together because all seem to share a relatively benign view of the occult or to narrate a somewhat amusing account of

[3] See Clifford Geertz's (1997:19-35) important and enlightening discussion on the paranormality of 'truth' in anthropological writing.

humanoid creation. A description of these articles follows.

Story 1, 'Bardolf vs Upset Cornerstone' appeared in the *Spectator* (June 3 1988:7), the typical sports page of most papers. The semi-stylised article speculates on the Liberian soccer team's (Bardolf's) ability to beat its Ghanaian (Cornerstone) opponents.

> Mighty Bardolf which was reported to have been in *secret camp* (sic) is expected to put up a hot fight against Cornerstone of the Ghanaian side is affectionately called

This story implies that team members have traveled to a sacred/powerful venue to obtain important 'medicines' (figuratively 'powers', literally 'poisons') which will enable them to win the match. This is a typical practice in competitive sports[9].

The author is surprised to not have uncovered more references to 'medicines in sports' within the period examined as the practice is said to be very common.

Stories 2 and 3 both run on page 8, the back pages of the *Daily Observer* (June 2 and June 7 1988). Story 2 is entitled 'Man Gives Birth to Twins', while Story 3 features the headline 'Yekepa Hospital Denies Twins Story'. Both were written by C.N. Kwanue. In the first account, a man has allegedly given birth to twins, a male and a female, the first of whom, the boy has died. According to 'eyewitnesses', so the story would have readers believe, the man and his spouse went to a healer because she failed to conceive a child. The healer reportedly gave the wife some medicine which the man seems to have taken by mistake. After he gave birth, the story continues, the man admitted to hospital officials, that he used medicines to transform himself into a woman, and to have sexual intercourse with men. Another hospital officials is alleged to have told the reporter that an operation was performed in order to make it possible for the man to give birth.

Clearly this story contains several different discourses on occult phenomena: the medicine potion, the man's initial, sexual transformation through witchcraft, the hospital's alleged performance of an emergency 'sex change' surgery, the birth of twins[10], and finally the death of the boy twin. Almost one week later, the *Daily Observer* ran the follow-up story (Story 3), race in the case of occult stories. 'Yekepa Hospital Denies Twins Story', Story 3, carries a quote of a European physician, Dr.

[9] A number of Liberian friends and specialists have remarked on the frequency of seeking 'powerful medicine' in order to gain an advantage in competitive sports. See also Allen's (1995:121-122) novel, for a fictionalised account of this practice.

[10] The birth of twins is certainly considered portentous in a number of traditional African cultures, including many Liberian ones. See Bourgault (1988/1989). See Also Gay's 1974 novel, *Red Foot in the Dawn Forest: A Kpelle Boy's Childhood*.

Leanert Reiner, who purportedly is responsible for the denial. Reiner, moreover, is reported to castigate hospital nurses for spreading stories. The article documents Dr. Reiner as also urging reporters to verify facts and to seek clarification before publishing. Clearly dissatisfied with Reiner's account, the reporter has solicited the opinion of a Liberian physician at a different hospital to inquire if such a birth were possible. The answer provided by this second physician clearly straddles two phenomenologies and is quite representative of the views of many educated Liberians.

> Dr. [illegible] explained that biologically it was not possible for a man to give birth to a child. But he said that on witchcraft is involved in Africa, it is indisputable that such may happen"

By seeking a quote from a Liberian doctor, the reporter is clearly trying to exculpate himself from a charge of unprofessionalism. Journalist Kwanue goes on to note that he has been called to the Observer headquarters to defend himself.

Story 4 is entitled 'Lightning Kills 60 year old Woman', by Mawoy Gunda. Run on page 1 of the Mirror, Story 4 served as the paper's lead story on June 7, 1988. The story details the death by electrocution of a woman in Nimba county. An account from her brother describes how he failed to rescue her. "The whole body was filled with electricity and each time I tried to save her I received powerful shocks." The story goes on to narrate that the deceased woman's home was subsequently burned to the face. The brother describes the 'whole episode' as 'very mysterious'.

Death by lightening is one of the many causes of death regarded in Liberian cosmology as a 'bad luck death'. This belief is widespread among many of the Liberian tribes. 'Bad luck' or inauspicious deaths are believed to be the result of witchcraft, 'secretly or unseen', i.e. the occult (Bourgault 1992:227). But in a curious circularity of logic, victims are often blamed for their fate. The logic employed herein is that those who delve in black magic will ultimately become its targets. So when a 'bad luck' death befalls a person, the person is seen as having dabbled in the occult. Victims of such inauspicious deaths do not receive proper funerals, for a proper funeral assures the continued participation of the deceased in the affairs of his or her living kinsmen. It is hoped that without a proper send off into the spirit world, the victim's spirit will travel far away and find other living beings to trouble. An alternative explanation of the woman's death could be that a relative of the victim has 'witched' her. The statements of the woman's brother, particularly the account of his attempted rescue, may be interpreted as a means of deflecting potential accusations of his complance or participation in his sister's 'bad luck' death.

A similar story, Story 5, 'Mysterious Death Grips Quails' by John Aggrey, tells of a sixty six year old man who collapsed and died while reading a letter to his relatives.

The article, which appeared in the *Standard* (June 21 1988:8), reports that the relatives were panic-stricken. We can assume they believe as the Liberian adage says, that 'No one dies for nothing'; a reference to the belief that death occurs because of causative human agents. Indeed the term 'mysterious death' is clearly code for allegations of witchcraft. Like the brother in Story 4, the relatives undoubtedly fear oncoming accusations of witchcraft. Alternatively, they may also fear becoming its next victims.

Story 6, bylined 'an reporter', tells of an encounter by a woman with a water spirit. Entitled 'Woman Dies After Speaking with Crawfish in Grand Bassa County', it appeared in the *Newsvision* (June 14 1988:8). This story tells of a fisherwoman who died soon after meeting 'a black fat ten-toored crawfish from the Mechlin River'. The woman is alleged to have narrated this event to her husband, shortly before her death, as the content of a recent dream. In the dream the crawfish accuses her of having caught all of his relatives and he has warned her that this would be the last time.

The black fat crawfish is undoubtedly some variant of a water spirit (in Kpelle, *lukalon*) which promises men or women success in their waking lives in exchange for a human life, sometimes that of a relative, sometimes their own. This spirit, like the more well known mammy water, eventually extracts its 'pound of flesh' for the deal made with it.

Mammy water myths have been explained as powerful warnings against excessive accumulation (Bastian 1993:129-166). Story 6 appears to recapture the same theme. For the oracle goes on to say that the 'lady' in question had become a successful trader, one who had built a large home from the proceeds of the sale of crawfish caught with hand-made baskets. But fish trapping in this manner is clearly a female role which precludes substantial occupation. Such work is thought unlikely to amass serious capital particularly by women. If at all, it could have become accumulable only in the wake of the spread of the money economy to the 'country people' in the post World War II era.

What can these stories mean? And what is their function? The snouts story is little more than a gossipy speculation on the Liberian female character. This mention of the occult is a mere throwaway aside. The twins story is a convoluted list of contradictory rumors. Its open-ended style invite comment and discussion, engaging readers to start their own discourses. Clearly the European doctor in Story 2 felt compelled to respond in a self-protective story. But his action only opened up the floor to more discussion, a response by a Liberian medical doctor. The twins' story seems to also be giving a moral lesson, castigating the father for his careless sexual practices and possibly warning against the dangers of homosexuality. Certainly the crawfish story provides a moral lesson. The twin-stealing and the latter stories provide cautionary messages. They remind the reader that danger abounds, that powerful forces are on the loose that can strike at any moment. They are accounts by reporters who obtained them from the persons directly implicated.

Stories 1-6 stylistically resemble tabloid stories in the western press. They operate to arouse the audience and to sustain a belief in popular witchcraft discourse. These stories are essentially open-ended with many unanswered questions, many unresolved details, and often with contradictory reports. Such articles make ideal pieces for group reading, where more literate members of African villages or neighborhoods read newspapers to the unschooled. The missing details will then be filled in by the listeners and will continue to circulate in the medium of 'pavement radio', as it is known in the francophone nations, *Radio Trottoir*. Eventually, they may resurface in the press again, transformed into new articles, new folktales for urban masses[7].

The above stories also stand out because they make no assertion of perpetrators, i.e. they contain neither direct nor veiled accusations of witchcraft. But a far greater number of press accounts treating the occult include accusations or allusions to criminal occult behavior on the part of the perpetrators. A number of these are detailed below.

B Criminality and the Occult

Stories 7 through 15 have been grouped together in this section because they share in common accounts of victimization, and an apparent or at least possible level of criminality. In all but one of these accounts, the perpetrators potentially face arrest or are actually being held pending trial. The vast majority appear to derive from 'beat reports' from the police, from the Ministry of Internal Affairs or from unnamed 'security forces'.

The beginning of Story 7, "'I Killed Seven Persons': Witch Confesses in a Church", sets the tone and mood of the articles which appear in this section.

> In the wake of the rising rate of witchcraft activities in the country, a man identified as Junior MacCarthy has revealed his own version in the killing of seven persons in the Lower Lofa area.

Story 7, written by D. Frederick Baye, appeared in the *Mirror* on June 28 1988:13. The article provides an account of a young man, Junior MacCarthy, who during an alleged religious conversion, confesses to participating in the killing, among six others, of a two year old baby. In the course of his confession, MacCarthy has named two conspirators, one of whom is the baby's mother. MacCarthy claims to have given up the pact when his colleagues asked him to give over his mother to the witches.

[7] For discussions of 'newspaper stories' on *Radio Trottoir*, see Ellis (1989), Nkanga (1993) and Bourgault (1995:201-206).

This story, with its sensational headline, is accompanied by a dramatic news photo of a pastor brandishing a large cross at the church where MacCarthy confessed.

Though the legal implications of the story are not treated in the article, those accused by MacCarthy will undoubtedly face investigation by officers from the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

A not by-now-familiar Story 8 involves an accusation of murder whose motive appears to stem from the threat of witchcraft. 'John Barry Charged with Murder', appeared in the tabloid *Spectator* (June 7 1988:8). This story deals with a father, John Barry, who has recently been charged with the murder of his 25 year old son, Samuel. The story goes on to provide an account from witnesses saying the two had quarreled after the father had refused to give the son money to support the younger man's girlfriend. The son threatened to 'fuck with him only' if his Dad did not give him the money. The son said he would kill his father and that 'nothing would come out of it'. This brief sounds very much as if the son had planned to use occult powers against his father, and thereby has caused his own death.

Story 9 by Victoria Newsom reports on the death of a man 'in the prime of life' and the subsequent arrest of his ex-wife/girlfriend in connection with his death. The article entitled 'Death in Girlfriend's Room', appeared in the *Daily Observer* (the premier paper) June 21, 1988, on the back page, page 8. The deceased apparently died in Monrovia with his ex-wife, Miss Barcon, who is also the mother of two of his children. His current wife and additional children (number unspecified) are reported to live in Buchanan. Another girlfriend, a neighbor of the ex-wife in Monrovia is also reported to be among the mourners, but she too, notes the article, has a child by the deceased. The article reports that the girl friend, Miss Barcon in whose room the man died, was 'arrested on suspicion', even though a later paragraph indicates that the pathologist who examined the body 'suspected no foul play'. One can only speculate that Miss Barcon has been accused of 'foul play' within the framework of 'African Science'. Indeed, as noted above, many Liberians believe that most deaths (except for death by 'old age') are caused by human agents. Once again the Liberian expression, 'no one dies for nothing' comes to mind in this context.

Both Story 8 and Story 9 contain decided elements of horror as they clearly implicate the occult in the commission of murder. Indeed tradition dictates that to kill one's kin is an abomination. Both of these stories also contain elements of the moral tale, warning that destructive lovers can cause rifts between kin. In Story 8 the girlfriend's financial needs led to deadly violence between Samuel Barry and his father John. In Story 9 the victim seems to have run afoul of a life which included two more different love interests.

Story 10 is on 'Alleged Witchcraft Girl Reveal Human Heart Palaver: Int. Affairs Probes'. Written by Edmond A. Sakpa, Story 10 appeared in the *Standard*

(Wednesday June 8 1988:1) with a continuation on page 6. It reports the investigation of a nine year old girl, Betsy Dargoh, accused of involvement in witchcraft. The story alleges she is accused by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of being a witch and put in the course of the proceedings against her she has accused two Internal Affairs Ministry workers, Cecilia Washington and Sarah Richards of being witches themselves. The accused, Miss Dargoh, is said to have admitted being involved in witchcraft against 'some hardworking Liberians'. But she has named conspirators Washington and Richards because they allegedly demanded that she deliver her mother to the witches' haven for murder. Betsy, having no relative other than her mother, is said to have resisted the witches. Cecilia and Sarah who in turn, 'beat her'. Cecilia and Sarah have rejected the allegations. 'They have asked to prove their innocence through a sassywood ordeal'.

In Liberian English, those who do harm to others in their dreams are called witches, or in Kpelle, sick people or with one utterance 1984:366). Liberians believe that when individuals go to sleep at night, their dream spirit may take over. In dreams, they may fly (travel) from place to place and cause harm. Witches are particularly keen to eat new victims. Participants in witch cult covens secure their membership and the 'night' power which comes with membership by delivering up their loved ones.

A variant on witch covens is the secret society mentioned above, named after a python animal, i.e. leopard society, also on society, a crocodile society, for example. There the activity appears to be similar. Participants meet one another in the world of 'dream, deliver up victims which the group may harm, kill, and sometimes 'eat' (actually or metaphorically).

Story 11, 'Vampires Invade Town', appeared with no byline in the *Daily Observer* (June 27 1988:8). Here the occult is heavily implied though not directly stated. Leopards, especially in a group, are extremely rare in Liberia, so this story seems to be an account of an attack by members of the leopard society. The description of the 'leopard invasion' however, belies the 'totem worldly' origin of the animals.

The elders in Duanpoe Town where the attack is alleged to have taken place explained that around the time of the incident, there was a heavy downpour of rain, and while the people were asleep, the 'leopards' began chasing domestic animals. The elders said there was nothing much they could do but run for their lives. They said that they heard what appeared to be the sound of a wild animal pounding on the door with

[9] A sassywood ordeal is a form of 'trial by' which involves the administration of a poison (potion, sassy wood, by a qualified 'we'. The innocent or not (as the case may be) is said to be only mildly affected or unaffected by the potion whereas the guilty are said to become severely ill or to die from the test. Many a forced confession has no doubt been extracted from terrified victims of ordeals. Another method of administering an ordeal is to touch the skin (sometimes the tongue) of the accused with a red hot machete.

is clear. No one was reported injured or physically attacked by the 'wild animals'.

The use of quotation marks by the *Observer* in this account makes it clear that the reporters are not to be seen as real animals. Moreover, anthropological descriptions of Leopard Society attacks describe 'leopard' behavior as curiously human (Bourgault 1988/1989). Clearly the villagers of Duempai Town are terrified.

Most of the elders who spoke to our correspondent said they had a sleepless night on June 15, and that in the morning, they saw footprints of what looked like the ones made by leopards. When they traced the footprints, they were led to a valley where skull of a sheep was found. The inhabitants there have appealed to authorities in Zor Gen to provide some protection for them against strange wild animals because they believe that the animals may one day come back.

The response of government officials to a reported incident of an illegal secret society is instructive in its inactivity.

There has been no official statement from the office of Nimba Superintendent, but an executive in the office of the superintendent concerned the report of the incident. However, the executive said no official position had been taken because 'our Zor-Gen Commissioner Norman has not written us in particular'.

The above stories 10 and 11 are different from those detailed below. In the above stories, there is no mention of body parts. The assumption is that the victims of wild man or Leopard Societies are killed and 'eaten' whole by the witches or 'leopards'. The following stories, which seem to occur rapidly succession in the Liberian press of the period under study, treat the subject of 'heartmen'. 'Heartmen' in the popular Liberian ontology refers to individuals who are said to trade in human body parts useful in the concocting of potions used to cause harm to others. An individual who seeks power over others or who would cause them harm may seek out the aid of a 'heartman'. This author has uncovered no mention of 'heartmen' in the anthropological literature. There is however, mention of secret societies falling outside the Poro which do trade in body parts. One such society is the Crocodile Society which drowns victims, secret cult leaving their bodies on the riverbanks often with parts removed. (Bourgault 1988/1989). The author suspects the cultural formation of heartman to be a modern transposition of beliefs from older secret societies.

The first 'heartman' story, Story 12 is entitled 'Father Arrested for Attempting to Sell Son for $2000'. The article is written by A. Bockai and appeared in Liberia's best paper of the era, the *Daily Observer* (June 16 1988:8). This article describes the arrest of a man from Guinea who is alleged to have come to Liberia to trade his son to a 'heartman' for the latter's use of the son's body parts. According to the report, security forces have arrested this man. How this individual came to be suspected of this heinous crime is not given, nor is any information provided on the man's response to the charges.

Yet another 'heartman' story, Story 13, "Ritual Killing" in Bassa - 7 Under Probe', describes the arrest by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of seven persons alleged to be involved in 'ritualistic killing'. Story 13, written by James K. Torkpa, appeared in the *Daily Observer* (June 22 1988:8). One victim's body, that of a three year old, is alleged to have been found along the banks of the Timbo River with these parts missing: penis, eyes, ears, tongue, nose, fingers, and front upper teeth. The story, which could equally be referring to a Crocodile Society murder, reports that 'the seven were apprehended last Friday when a traditional ordeal (see below and see Note 17) implicated them in the killing'. Information as to how or why this ordeal was held is not provided to the readers.

The next ritual murder story, Story 14, is entitled 'Mysterious Murder Hits Bensonville'. The story, written by Samuel H. Lavalie, appeared in the *Standard* (June 3 1988:1). The story provides an account of the discovery of the body of an elderly man with several parts missing, found wrapped in a sheet, hanging from a tree. The story written in an incomprehensive purple prose, contains a thick net of accusations of poor police work against the local police by a government official. These are followed by a set of protestations and counter claims from the defensively defensive newly appointed local police chief. The story clearly raises the specter of police (and other official) complicity in the murder of the old man. It suggests political disagreement surrounding the murder at high government levels.

Yet another 'heartman' story, one with no byline is Story 15, which appeared in the *Daily Observer* (June 9 1988:1). '11 Under Probe in Rivercess in Connection with Man's Death' reports that eleven persons are being investigated in connection with a ritual murder. The circularity of the discourse seems particularly evident in the text of this story.

> Confirming these reports, Rivercess County Attorney, Mr. Morris Kaba, said that the arrest of the 11 persons followed a ritual performed [an unnamed] exercise in the district by a cultural inspector (name not given). He said that the ritual performance stemmed from a recurring concern and pleas from some citizens who called on county officials to probe the death of their colleague.

A closer read suggests that powerful individuals are trying to frame certain officials for ritual murders and have engineered a divination to obtain information from the spirit world. The article continues in this vein.

> [Electrocution of 11 suspects] was based on citizen cries that the county official of the cultural inspector to perform the ritual, he said. Mr. Kaba added [as it was during the performance of the ritual, that the 11 persons, including a *senior district official* (e.s.), were implicated

A few paragraphs later, the article is more revealing of the apparent political nature of the story.

> In another development, Interior Affairs Minister Edward Nuckor has appointed Mr Wallace Joe as Acting Superintendent of Rivercess County. An Internal Affairs release issued yesterday said Minister Nuckor made the appointment to ensure a calm, tolerant and smooth administration of the County in the wake of the dismissal of Mr. Francis B.S. Horace by Dr. Samuel Kanyon Doe recently.

This report appears to link Doe and his patronage machine in accusations of ritual murder and closed sessions of divination.

It is noteworthy that none of the witchcraft, destruction, or ritual murder stories specifically mentions dreams, so it is unclear whether the alleged perpetrators are perceived to have committed these atrocities while asleep or awake. Indeed, oral discourse on witchcraft or 'sweaty business' typically fail to mention the dream aspect of the activity unless it is specifically prompted by the researcher (Bourgault 1988/1989).

Of course, from the point of view of witchcraft theory as social control, it matters little whether the perpetrators were awake or asleep. For being asleep is no excuse. Liberians generally believe that individuals make a choice to tap into the occult powers deep within them (Bourgault 1988/1989). Those who do fly around in their dreams have made a decision to do so. But there is a sense of ambivalence and contradiction in alleged promises. Believers also allow that it is possible to get 'tricked' into witchcraft inadvertently, i.e. by making a pact with a stranger who turns out to be 'somewhat ugly'. Witchcraft discourse is thus inherently conservative. It operates to encourage people not to be greedy lest others become jealous and resort to occult powers to get even. And witchcraft discourse also discourages jealousy because such feelings lead to 'bad dreams' wherein the jealous dreamer veers into illicit or immoral dream behavior (Gaschene 1997).

The ritual theft, heartmen, and ritual murder stories also appear to follow the classic witchcraft pattern of using powerless persons to corrupt them into maiming names (Evans 1974:665). They therefore have considerable political significance. Like Stories 5, 8, and 6 discussed in the first subsection, these stories are also cautionary tales. They inform readers that no one is safe. But they do more than that. By the sheer horror of their accounts, some of which are accompanied by gruesome photographs, they invite terror. Those, like Story 14 which castigate police or those which implicate ruling officials (Stories 11, 13, and 15) have a double function. They teach readers that authorities have proven themselves either powerless to aid victims or complicit in the

system of victimization. And most significantly the stories described in this subsection foster the mark of officialdom. They update readers on the day to day business of victimization, the latest targets of such practices, and the futility of fighting the occult. In so doing, these stories inform readers about who has power to regulate death, to operate in secret, and to use terror tactics.

It is noteworthy that the Doe regime was known for its recruitment of thugs to the ranks of the military and the police. The so-called Youth Wing of Doe's political party, the National Patriotic Front or NPFL, largely made up of unemployed youths, were particularly active after a 1985 coup attempt against the Doe regime (Lidelow 1987:259). Doe was also known for his appointment of barely literate members of his Krahn ethnic group to high government offices. Secrecy no doubt helped to cover up their inability to function professionally. And fear of unfathomable punishment no doubt helped to quell government critics.

Peter Geschiere notes, 'Power in Africa is a most suspect and indescribable'. And as Geschiere (1997:43) states, the crucial question about power is the myth of witchcraft itself: Who kills rightly and who kills wrongly? The reader of the Liberian press was left to ponder the answer.

One additional story in the sample touched on the occult in some fashion but was difficult to classify. Story 16, 'Soldier Chops Mask Man' is included here because it supplies a 'flying fetish' on the relationship of the Doe regime to the spirit world. Written by Moses T. Dingar Sr., Story 16 appeared in the *Standard* (June 5 1988/week page, p. 8). The story describes how a masked performer, a member of a cultural troop, was flagged by one of Doe's soldiers, after the mask 'masked dancer' broke a window on the soldier's vehicle.

This particular story cries out for some explanation. Liberians typically believe that spirits (usually ancestral) reside in a mask which is usually performed or 'danced'. Such masks are often referred to as 'devils' in Liberian English, though these spirits are not at all considered to represent an evil principle. Devils, these ancestors, however, are to be respected as well as feared because they are capable of both good and evil. Masks are considered particularly sacred (and flying) when they appear in Liberian villages or towns in conjunction with the enactment of a ritual. Because the mask in question was part of a cultural troop performing in Monrovia, the soldier who struck it probably did not consider it 'flying'. The action reported does represent enough of an obstruction so as to warrant the soldier's arrest. This is documented in the story. Such an event may be seen to be indicative of the arrogance and indiscipline of Doe's soldiers by the late 1980's. It is a testimony of the failure of that administration to fulfill its primary mandate to serve the 'country people' and to deliver them from the dated hegemony of the American-Liberian settlers.

Part III: Discussion

What can we make of the above collection of witchcraft discourses? A present observer of the African scene, *The Economist Print* reporter Blaine Harden supplies a commentary on witchcraft in modern Africa, which provides a useful starting point.

> [A] murders afflict modern Africa in a way that shopping mall and workplace murders affect the United States. Abhorrent, unpredictable, and mystical though the violence may be, it happens enough to be a symptom. In Africa as in America, old taboos, tradition, myth, and modern stress can twist behavior. Nursing a grudge and infected with the gun-toting American spirit, a Gabonese Rambo goes shopping for nameless enemies with an AK-47 assault rifle. Instead of a spiritual edge over his competition, a tradition-steeped, profit-crazed African businessman goes shopping for a juju murderer and a fresh head (Harden 1990:87).

Harden's comments, though relevant, must be particularized for Liberia. Witchcraft discourse in Liberia was undoubtedly far more than a business practice, however much enmeshed with government as business generally has been in Africa. In Liberia, witchcraft was even incorporated into the highest levels of government. And when Samuel Doe toppled the Americo-Liberian power structure, he severed the rather tenuous and albeit artificial politico-religious edifice. For a populace steeped in myth and magic, this had important consequences. Doe's actions created a vacuum in the politico-religious order.

As noted above, Tubman had reorganized the enormous politico-religious power of the state. He had attempted to regulate this power by putting it under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The ministry (under the close guidance of these patronage-ridden presidencies) had appointed a Chief Zoe. And serious accusations of witchcraft ultimately had come under federal level jurisdiction. Thus the federal government had become (at least in theory) the ultimate arbiter of matters of extraordinary law. In terms of Liberian politico-religious symbolism, the power over good and evil resided within the American Liberian ideo-religious symbologies: mainline Christianity, especially Baptist and Methodist conventions, and secret Masonic brotherhoods.

Doe's coup, complete with the smashing of the Masonic Temple, symbolically broke the politico-religious power structure. In the months that followed, it was as if bottled up spirit forces had begun to circulate. Doe himself was in need of 'spiritual power' both for protection and for political demonstration. And having broken the symbols of the past, according to Stephen Ellis, Doe had to improvise. Doe had the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier erected to the memory of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), and some say he sacrificed a nameless soldier and buried him below it (Ellis 1995:191).

Doe was known to search endlessly for 'strong (traditional) medicine' and to be continually looking for supernatural advisors (Ellis 1995:190). In Doe's attempts to consolidate his authority as well as his spiritual powers, he came to attend both Church and Mosque (Ellis 1995:190). In politics, he courted the Mandingo, a Muslim ethnic group. He reapproached the Poro and took the title of Samuel Kiahyon (Liebenow 1987:269). But since Doe's Krahn tribe is not part of the Poro edifice, his title taking was seen by Poro elders as nothing more than dabbling. And after 1985, Doe reauthorized the Freemasons.

As tensions increased throughout the 1980s, Liberia saw a great deal of religious ferment in Liberia. Islam made significant inroads. So did the name based syncretistic churches such as the Lenna Church, the Bassa Community Church, together with fundamentalist sects of all stripes. The Jimmy Swaggert Crusade came (even while Swaggert was embroiled in troubles in the U.S. for having been involved with Taiwanese call girls) and preached a revival. Swaggert even left his tents behind. These quickly became makeshift churches for itinerant Christian fundamentalist preachers who followed in Swaggert's wake. They gathered huge crowds with promises to 'bind the power of Satan' and to 'deliver adherents from the evils of witchcraft'. At that point, Satan did indeed need binding!

Eventually, of course, the mainline churches recovered in the 1980s and recovered from their initial cycle of exodus. But when they did, their umbrella organization, the Liberian Council of Churches began to preach a 'social gospel'. And churches often less themselves began to agitate for political change as Doe's rule got more arbitrary, more capricious, and more bloodthirsty.

All the while, Doe failed in his attempts to peddle Liberia's socio-mythical order. S. Byron Tarr's analysis of Doe is telling in this context.

> Doe controlled none of the auxiliary sources of power which enabled his predecessors to manipulate the authority relationships which both personalized and concentrated power in their hands. He was perceived as usurper whose hands were stained with blood. For example, unlike Tolbert, who was a Baptist pastor, or Tubman, a lay leader of the Methodists, Doe's efforts to join Tolbert's former church organization and the adjoining pastor Doe could not neutralize persons and institutional expressions that had sustained for the majority of Liberians a sense of African redemption and rejuvenation (Tarr 1991:76).

Ellis (1995:192) remarks that Doe himself was never able to commit to a spiritual order. Through he tried from all, none, it seems, would have him. And in the end they all turned against him.

There is nothing particularly unusual about an African Head of State (or any other) wrapping himself in powerful symbolism or even resorting to extra-temporal

cials. This is common political practice. What was different in Liberia however was the structural position of the people, i.e. its institutionalization at the highest level. Unlike the neighboring countries whose policies had been to outlaw witchcraft (Guinea for example[8]), or to treat it as a local matter (Nigeria and Cameroon[9]), the domain of the occult actually formed part of the official government. This gave any Liberian head of state the power to formally manipulate the occult. Doe's predecessors, Tubman and Tolbert, of course, had also enjoyed this power. But in keeping with the mainline tenets of an aura of proto-Bantu northern Protestant geniality, they had tended to de-emphasize this aspect of their 'True Whig' one-party states (Gillis 1995: 189). And what had been an exceptional story of witchcraft up to before 1980, became almost a ritual daily occurrence afterwards.

Doe played his symbolic cards with a vengeance, using 'ruy-ennous disappearances' to rid himself of his enemies. He also used arbitrary arrests and extra-legal trials (Liebow 1987:209). That the Doe regime should behave so aptly to witchcraft discourse only shows the extent to which he was a man of the people.

Survey results all of the stories provided in this paper are treated from Doe's craving for power as his right to control forces. Some of them clearly came from the people or from the reporters. For Doe and the Liberian people shared a common epistemology and a common symbol system.

According to Mbembe (1992a:4), who draws from Michael Bakhtin, 'the grotesque and the obscene are, above all, a matter of public life'. Mbembe's discussion of political symbolism in the post-colony, Francophone African politics, moreover, is applicable to the Liberian situation. Mbembe argues, for example, that the pastoral symbolism of eating, showing us Francophone Africa's Big Men. Mbembe notes that in cultures of scarcity, the politics of eating, especially over-abundant eating, takes on important gratification. Africa's Big Men, notably Eyadema of Togo, Mobutu of former Zaire, and Biya of Cameroon are not only metaphorically large, they are big in physique. To become that way, they are seen by their subjects as literally and metaphorically 'eating the state'. Indeed, former strongman of Zaire, Mobutu Sese Seko was 'fond of saying, *L'Etat c'est moi*[10] ('I am the state'[11]). All forms of proto-leaders had regular recourse to occult power (see Bourgault 1995:86).

[8] The Ivory was outlawed in Guinea by President Sekou Toure after the country's independence from France. Toure regarded the *Poro* as a 'rival' and 'threat to his power. See Bellman (1984:140).

[9] Geschiere (1997:173) writes that many African judicial experts are of the opinion that colonial legal structures which have inherited, particularly in the Anglophone countries, ignored the phenomenon of witchcraft and thus left serious holes in their legal systems. Geschiere's 1997 volume on witchcraft documents, among other issues, the beginning, in the 1990s, in Cameroon, of governmental level prosecutions of witchcraft.

Mbembe reminds us that African notions of witchcraft are rife with images of eating, so that witches and other enemies of the occult eat their victims. (Liberian rumor had that Doe ate Tolbert's heart after slaying him!) One needs only to examine photos of staff sergeant Samuel Doe from 1980 with those of a decade later to see just how much eating Doe did. By 1988 Doe's scrawny soldier's body had ballooned into corpulence, straining the vest buttons of his three-piece suit. And Doe's menacing, angular sergeant's jaw had filled into a bureaucrat's flaccid double chin!

Achille Mbembe's (1992a:3) very controversial work notes that

> the populace have internalized sadomasochistic epistemology to the point where they reproduce it themselves in all the everyday circumstances of daily life[12].

He writes that authoritarian symbolism trickles down to the common folk who then play these plays for grandeur in their own intimate circles: 'in cults, secret societies, ordinary practices, leisure activities, and modes of consumption, dress styles, theatrical devices, and the political economy of the body' (Mbembe 1992a:23).

Mbembe's work stresses the peasant's interest in the grotesque. He also notes that the subject of the post-colony displays a 'talent for play and a sense of fun which makes him *homo ludens* par excellence' (Mbembe 1992a:5). For Mbembe, the subject of the post colony, even oppressed, is ready at any instance, to turn officialdom into a joke. He is ready to parody and ready to mock at any moment. Mbembe adds further that it is this capacity *as homo ludens* (this capacity for play) that enables the colonized subject to switch identities quickly. And Victor Turner (1992: 150) adds that African life is taken up in constant role playing, facilitating a phenomenology which routinely eases the quick, shifting of loyalties following a change of government. Just where this author has argued that the nature of rural culture is also helpful in this regard (Bourgault 1995:198).

The peasant as *homo ludens*, par excellence, explains, according to Mbembe (1992a:15), why

> dictators can go to sleep at night lulled by visions of adulation and expect only to wake up the next morning to find their golden calves smashed and their table of lies overturned. The angry crowds of yesterday have become a mocking, absurd mob.

Perhaps Mbembe's remarks can serve as some sort of answer to the question Enoonyi asked about mobs jeering Doe in the early period of this decade's Liberian civil war.

[12] A July 1997 feature on Zairian music aired on National Public Radio recounted how members of rebel troops in Kinshasa, especially managers, had borrowed from the locutions of Mobutu in claiming important titles for themselves.

> Who are these people preaching and asking the man to step down? Are they not the same ones who, in 1980 when he toppled the American-Liberian regime, danced and marched for days and weeks and months, crying outrages to his person? ... Are they not the same people you and I have seen in solidarity marches pledging support to the man when ever he has crushed a coup? (Ellis 1993:197).

It should be recalled that the ruler of the post-colony is in the pay of the greater powers. This fact is well known among subjects. The ruler's preoccupations to grandeur and his neurotic use of a kind of comic opera orchestrated by the 'Big Man', his henchmen, and his public relations operatives. Peasants, all too familiar with the spending of years, recognize to varying degrees, that the post-colony is government by the use Governor's Gallic terminology) "simulacrum" (Mbembe 1992a:1).). But to openly contest the image of the state is to attack the government itself.

These facts explain why insults or criticisms of people in power, especially the head of state, are treated so harshly in the post- colony. Like the secrets of the Poro which many people know but cannot discuss, the 'simulacrum' is *ifa mo* - "you must not talk of". The real power the government has, then, is like that of the Zoes. The government has the power to enforce the 'doing of secrets'.

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Teaching Colonial Discourse in South Africa/South African Literature as Colonial Discourse[1]

David Attwell

'Utopian and Resistant' is probably the most popular formula for the teaching of postcolonial literatures in the English curriculum in tertiary education anywhere in the English-speaking world. Its seductive clarity cannot easily be dismissed, since any number of writers—as the well-marketed numbers amply demonstrate—have made productive use of the resilience of colonial textuality in shaping their work, both in writing back from a radically oppositional vantage point and in providing writings of colonial texts whose authority as the point of reference is not entirely questioned. The result is the plethora of courses in which *Heart of Darkness* is paired with *Things Fall Apart*, *Jane Eyre* with *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *Robinson Crusoe* with *Foe*, *Othello* with *Season of Migration to the North*, *The Tempest* with any number of possibilities, and so on[2].

But these courses and some of the surveys which service them radically foreclose the definitiveness of much postcolonial work to which Karin Barber (1995:3) and others have objected, namely 'that they block a properly historical, detailed understanding of any scene of colonial and post-independence literary production in Africa', by selecting and overemphasising

> the spheres of literary and cultural production—writers and creations in the English language—and [by treating] this small area of expressive activity as if it were a whole culture or even a whole global 'colonial experience'.

Barber is particularly concerned about the effacement of indigenous language writing in this paradigm, and the notion of the postcolonial with which it is often associated,

[1] This essay was originally written for a panel on the teaching of African literatures at the annual conference of the African Literature Association, 'Migrating Worlds and Words: Pan-Africanism Revisited' held at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, in March 1996.

[2] In this essay I do not address the merits of trying to teach postcolonial theory to undergraduates. I simply assume that most readers would already be aware of the absurdity of such an undertaking,

for it entails a series of deletions—traditional/modern, oral/written, past-oriented/contemporary, local/international, and so forth—from which whole areas of expressive culture are made to disappear. The disappeared include the ongoing reinvention of oral traditions in the light of modern experience, as Barber (1995:12) puts it, that

> huge domain of semi-urban, semi-written contemporary popular culture, in which oral formats migrate through print, theatre, and electronic media in a network of allusions which creates a wide range of 'literary' expression within the reach of the semi-literate second-leavers who make up the majority of the constituency for African classes.

The essay goes on to address this misgiving in an absorbing examination of the work of several contemporary writers of Yoruba fiction whose theme is the anomie of urban poverty in Nigeria.

Barber's timely critique, however, brings the potential for over-emphasis in the other direction. For instance, in his encouragement of her article in the editorial preface to the issue of *Research in African Literatures* in which it appears, Abiola Irele (1995:2) says Barber's refined sense of context enables her

> to provide a demonstration of the environment for local literary expression and its productivity by pressures internal to the society from which it emerges [...].

It would seem logical to affirm the antithesis to the myopia of superficial globalism in this way, that is, to affirm, as the alternative to what Barber (1995:4) calls postcolonialism's 'theoretical lockout' of indigenous language expression, the epistemological privilege of the local. But this is really a false opposition. Despite her rhetorical claims, for example, Barber's own discussion of Yoruba language writing reveal that it would be quite wrong to assert an unqualified notion of autonomy. Fagunwa, she tells us, was

> a cultural borrower par excellence, a Christian convert, a cultural nationalist who celebrates Yoruba culture in the name of the 'African race', who pays very little attachment to the Yoruba readers to whom he addresses his books (Barber 1995:10).

She also tells us that post-Independence literary competitions for indigenous language writing continue a tradition started by the Church Missionary Society (Barber 1995:15); that Yoruba writers

> reworked great works of English literature as transmitted through the schools system, [and] read imported popular literature from America such as detective stories and romances (Barber 1995:16).

and that Okediji's *Aróso Àrán*, which she discusses as an exemplary text, makes use of 'chromatic emblems of consciousness and a feverish, dreamlike, at times almost surreal imagination' – a narrative mode Barber (1995: 17) herself describes as 'modernist'. It is clear that while Barber (1995: 16) claims to affirm autonomy – 'specific cultural agendas defined and expressed in local terms' – her actual analysis constructs Yoruba-language writing as a complex mode of cultural translation, in which the literary resources of disparate cultures are transformed in the formation of a new expressive culture.

One of the explicit treatments of cultural translation in recent years is, of course, Mary Louise Pratt's (1992) *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. Pratt (1992: 4) writes about 'contact zones' as 'spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination'. The notion of 'contact' foregrounds

> the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed by diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination. A contact perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats relations … not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices … (Pratt 1992: 7).

The reference to contact here is not altogether satisfactory, unless Pratt is alluding to the fact that apartheid was indeed an attempt to manage such closeness by throwing into reverse the history of interaction and domination that modernity had brought to train. Cultural translation is a function of contact, and if, as Barber unwittingly shows, the term is applicable to the development of Yoruba-language fiction, how much more relevant it must be to South African literatures which are the product of a long history of various struggles over the means of representation amongst indigene and settler, settler and colonist, and settler and settler – a history not altogether shared by Nigeria. Indeed, so decisive has this history been in South Africa that literary histories have conventionally tended to privilege black English-language writing as the true bearer of resistance over and above polygenous-language writing which has still not wholly overcome its historical patronage by mission-school and government presses.

To return to questions of pedagogy: how then does one develop a curriculum dealing with the literature of the colonial scene and its aftermath that does not fall back on misleading dichotomies? Before answering that question, I shall deal with what for some might be the prior one: why bother with the literature of the encounter at all? Why not simply decolonise the canon altogether and teach an entirely Afrocentric curriculum? I am not suggesting for a minute that courses in the literature of the encounter should substitute for courses in African or diaspora literatures. But I am suggesting that properly conceived, they are a necessary adjunct to such courses. Teaching the literature of the colonial encounter could entail an analysis of how literariness and literary value are established and negotiated in cultures which have been, and continue to be, subject to colonial intrusion. The broader 'cultural studies' turn referring to none could serve as a necessary caution to the rethinking entrenchment of literary forms whose diffusion was a function of the civilising mission (de Kock 1994: 54). The point would also be to draw students into an understanding of the many layered cultural transactions that have lead to the formation of a 'national' literature (I would not want to argue that the textual emphasis here excludes consideration of authors: that subject deserves full and separate treatment.) It almost goes without saying that I am saying (and have I supported Barber's position) that the sweeping generalisations of the 'Empire and Response' formula ought to be counterbalanced, if not replaced, by an engagement with the specifics of a particular literary and historical context.

Pratt's work begins to delineate what we might informally call the rhetorics of contact. I shall extrapolate from two such rhetorics: 'anti-conquest' which entails

> strategies of representation whereby European subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony;

'frequently, in travel and exploration writings these strategies of innocence are constituted in relation to older imperial rhetorics' (Pratt 1992: 7). 'Autoethnographic' writing entails

> instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that engage with the colonizer's own terms … autoethnographic texts are those the others construct in response to or in dialogue with those metropolitan representations … [They] are not, then, what are usually thought of as 'authentic' or autochthonous forms of self-representation … Rather, they 'involve] partial collaboration with and appropriation of the idioms of the conqueror … [and they are typically] addressed both to metropolitan readers and to literate members of the speaker's own social group, and [are] to be received very differently by each. Often such texts constitute a group's point of entry into metropolitan or state culture (Pratt 1992: 7).

One may use these terms as the starting point for a course or syllabus, recognising that while they do not wholly escape the self/other binarism, they certainly complicate it and lead eventually to its erasure in the proposition that the colonial scene entails a continuum of transculturation which includes all the expressive cultures which feel the impact of the encounter in a given context, in other words, one recognises points of origin, but only in order to observe that nothing is left unchanged in a historical process which ceaselessly throws up new expressive forms. To put this in curricu-

for texts, one might begin by selecting a wide range of nineteenth century materials, including but not limited to the literary, which introduce the imperial rhetorics to which anti-conquest writing is a response. I have found visual texts the most economical way of doing this: the orientalist paintings of North African subjects by Géricault, Delacroix and Renoir, for instance, and landscape paintings of the South African interior by Samuel Daniell, T.H. Fripp and Charles Harris. Visual imagery dramatises effectively the imperious 'roving eye' of the explorer, the tension between foregrounded, organised space and backgrounded, disorganised/threatening space, and the replication of perceptual models drawn from European contexts. After this visual material one might begin a discussion of anti-conquest, using extracts from John Barrow's *Travels* (1806)— discussed by Pratt herself—but also a work such as Catherine Parr's *Alone among the Zulus* (1866). Students might be expected to identify the particular 'strategies of innocence' at work in such texts. Barrow's narrative is particularly useful in enhancing Pratt's analysis, to show that the strategies of innocence are both more marked and more overtly tied to the feminine subject position. The end point of this process might be an analysis of Thomas Pringle's and Roy Campbell's ethnographic poems (which are heavily anthologised and which could easily be recontextualised). Pringle's ambivalence, for instance, becomes more apparent to students if it is understood as anti-conquest. Consider the following stanzas from 'Makanna's Gathering' (Pringle 1970:48):

> Wake, Amakosa, wake!
> And arm yourselves for war!
> As on its wings the forest shakes,
> Hear a sound from afar.
> Is it not thunder in the sky
> Nor Fire's roar upon the hill,
> But the voice of HIM who is on high,
> And it is His spirit in will!
>
> He calls on all the youth,
> Bold sons of Kabalbo,
> To sweep the White race from the earth,
> And drive them to the sea.
> The sea, which heaved them up at first,
> For Amakosa's curse and bane,
> Howls for its property the most,
> To swallow them again.

Recent commentators on this poem refer to it as helping to inculcate a tradition of protest poetry by 'cultivating a pseudo personal in order to advocate retaliation by the Xhosa

against the injustices of British colonial incursions' (Pringle 1989:xxiv). But this is misleading. In his *African Sketches*, Pringle's tone in discussing the career of Nxele ('Makanna') is entirely unsympathetic; indeed, the apocalyptic prophecies and rousing rhetoric are presented as a dangerous charade by a power-hungry lesser chief (appended to Pringle 1970:141-143). Students could be asked to resolve the anomaly: why does Pringle seem to extend support to 'Makanna' in the poem, only to withdraw it in the historical memoir? The notion of anti-conquest enables a most helpful sense of this, as one student put it to me:

> Thomas Pringle chose to write 'Makanna's Gathering' from the Xhosa or colonial subject's point of view *because* by the time he wrote the poem, Nxele's challenge had already been crushed.

Pringle's representation of aspects of Xhosa cosmology in the poem – as in the fanatical reverence for Chianga, or the anthropomorphism of the sea as the terrible mother who will swallow the White Man she once disgorged on the shore – enables the settler imagination to become awakened to a full apprehension of surrounding dangers. The ethnographic sonnets, 'The Hottentot', 'The Bushman' and 'The Caffer' encode a certain ambivalence: secure in the tradition of ethnographic reportage, they offer a critique of settler morality from within, thus humanising, indeed 'civilising' settler intolerance. Recognising this ambivalence is surely more valuable than attempting to position Pringle as the founder of a line of oppositional discourse. Anti-conquest provides a convenient explanation of it, enabling students to see it as a quintessentially settler mode which facilitates partial adjustment to the colonial environment while ensuring a position of privilege. At the level of cultural poetics, one could point out that the aesthetic mode of a poem like 'Makanna's Gathering' – the distancing of immediate reference – makes possible a safe area of imaginative apprehension for the settler consciousness as it struggles to come to terms with the frontier; the detached, ironic quality of the aesthetic, in this context, helps to secure the historical position.

A suitable selection of autochthonographic writing would have to begin, perhaps predictably, with the work of Tiyo Soga. The point here would be to show that there are different Sogas, beginning with the well known, post-Enlightenment Soga, the contemporary of Edward Blyden, proclaiming in the *Kingwilliamstown Gazette* the ordinary Xhosa human subject's right to the discourse of rights[1] – a useful corrective to the prevalent opinion, amongst many students, that pan Africanism was born in the

[1] Soga (1983:175, 182) published this statement as 'Delusion'. Since Soga and this passage in particular have received substantial critical attention recently, I have not quoted the relevant passage. See de Kock (1994; 1996) and Attwell (1997).

1960s and that it involves an assertion of 'tradition'. Students (not to mention some public figures in South Africa) could usefully be shown that pan-Africanism also has roots in the French and American revolutions, that it is a Black diasporic phenomenon acting reciprocally on African political consciousness by appropriating the discourse of Reason. That Soga also had another rhetoric, which was written in Xhosa—exemplifying Pratt's point that autobiographic writing is 'heterogeneous at the receiving end'. Here (in translation) is part of the passage in which Soga welcomes the first issue of the Lovedale mission's Xhosa language newspaper, *Indaba*:

> So it is, right follows day! Greetings Mr Editor! We hear that you will be opening and publishing events. Is this true? So we are to have a national newspaper! The news we have sought inside our huts. This is really welcome news. We Xhosas are a people which enjoys conversation. The sense of well-being among us is to hear something new. When a man who has things to relate comes to a home a meal is cooked in a tall pot because the people want him to eat to his satisfaction so that the happiness which is the result of a good meal will open his heart and the story parts will flow. As soon as that happens there will be a stream of news flowing out of the mouth ... (Soga 1966:151).

Whereas the first Soga brought an Afrocentric consciousness into a detached, Enlightenment mode of European textuality, here the situation is reversed. There he brings textuality into a realm of Xhosa orality and develops a narrativising voice which mimics oral discourse. However, Soga's (1983:151) attitude to orality is ambivalent, because despite the enthusiasm of the opening paragraph, later he is suspicious:

> One advantage we shall reap with the coming of this journal is that we will be established (so) that the people now will get the truth about the affairs of the nation. As people who are always hungry for news often we find ourselves a piece of discovery under the guise of relating genuine facts. We are led with half truths by travellers who pass near our huts.

The chief advantage of the journal for Soga (1983:152), however, is that it will become

> a beautiful vessel for preserving the stories, fables, legends, customs, anecdotes, and history of the tribes. The activities in the nation are more than cattle, savory or field. A subscriber to the journal should preserve the copies of successive editions of *Indaba* and at the end of the year make a bound volume of them. These annual volumes in course of time will become a mine of information and wisdom which will be a precious inheritance for generations of growing children.

Here autoethnography, as folklore and oral history, appears as the instrument whereby a living orality is transformed into literate tradition, which in turn helps to consolidate

a certain national consciousness, the ultimate purpose of which is to consecrate modernity. Autoethnography is here shown as cultural brokerage.

The differences between Soga's English- and Xhosa-language writing might lead to an examination of the choices—with their attendant risks and opportunities—that writers of autoethnography face, given their interstitial positions as products of missionary schooling. Over schematically (in pedagogic shorthand), these choices can be said to involve either entering the traditions of the colonial culture and adapting its forms and genres to new concerns, or activating indigenous traditions and adapting them to changed historical circumstances and performative situations. The first choice has the advantage of engaging the hegemonic culture on what is the language of power, though it entails the risks of allowing that culture to dominate to the point that the autoethnographer is unable to establish a position of authority, or isolating the writer from possibly the most desirable audience. The second choice has the advantage of speaking from a position of strength, ancestral wisdom, but it entails the risk of not being understood or even taken seriously by those in positions of cultural authority.

One sees these strategies with their successes and failures being played out in the work of early black South African poets. In 1906, in response to the Bambatha Rebellion, there appeared in the Durban newspaper *Ilanga Lase Natal* a spate of poems, some of them published anonymously, which dealt partly with the efforts of Zulu poets to recreate the Shaka tradition of seventy years earlier. This traditionalism fired the imagination of some of the literate elite who used the occasion to reflect on the state of Zulu and African society and nation in the idiom in which they had been schooled, an idiom permeated by Romantic and Victorian models. Thus Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey' appears in 'Amagqunyane's Soliloquy':

> And o'er the grand old hillsopes wide,
> High guarded o'er its fairest lines by you,
> Blue mountain range, now on, for ever abide
> My kin hath chased the striped head and slain
> And roasted on the spit and ate, and ate.
> Oh Kings could eat no more (Couzens & Patel 1982:39).

Not all of this writing is amusing; at times, the negotiation of subject positions is acute and poignant. In the same poem we have a transculturated, literate voice taking on a putatively pre-modern persona in order to critique the 'Christian' episteme through imagery of contrasting landscapes:

> In yonder vale he's planted it's
> Kraal marked everywhere with all the newer
> Crew. I hate this not unnatural paths, his

Clove-filled apples, oranges and hot walls ...
My home is at the
Vast horizon, wide, my couch is earth, my
Blanket of God stars ... (Cetiwe & Patel 1982:66).

The final triumph of this negotiation comes when the poet affirms an Africanist spirituality, engaging with Christianity but reserving the right to express it on his own terms:

> To me as the Westerman brings
> a Book which tells
> Of many a mystery yet unknown to mine,
> I may not read the hazy mazes of
> His mind around nik'wa'i read earth and sky
> And men can see and it all prove true in hours
> Not yet arrived that His Eternal One
> is One' or greater than our own Great Ritual,
> Then will I do Him homage and serve Him,
> And in the manner he had fashioned me.
> *Inkatha* (Cetiwe & Patel 1982:30).

The arsenal of the native biographer strategies mentioned earlier—that of activating traditional forms and adapting them to meet new challenges—is demonstrably more confident and effective than the first. Of many available possibilities one might use translations from the well known Xhosa language poets S.E.K. Mqhayi and S.E.K. Jolobe. The former's praise poem to the Prince of Wales—which he delivered on the occasion of the prince's visit to the country in 1925—ironises its praise names to the point where there can be little mistaking Mqhayi's intentions ('body-that-smokes', and 'scourge of the nation') and lacks hard emotions about orientalism's contradictions (the bible and the bottle, the missionary and the soldier [Chapman & Dangor 1982:345]). Similarly, Jolobe's 'The Making of a Servant' is a powerful allegory of subjugation and resistance, written in an idiom in which there is no cultural anxiety:

> I am no longer told how it feels
> To be choked by a yoke rope
> Because I have seen it for myself in the chained ox.
> The blindness has left my eyes. I have become aware,
> *I have seen the making of a servant*
> *in the young yoke ox* (Chapman & Dangor 1982:39).

As the narrative of the ox's subjugation reaches its point of climax through the poem, so a countervailing voice, through direct interpolations and the refrain, intensifies in its articulation of defiance. This double movement—along with other factors such as

the regularity of the stanza—suggests that this is not, as first, a poem constructed purely on autochthonous lines; evoking oral modes, it is crafted as a written text which sustains repeated readings. To return to the theme of a cultural poetics, aesthetic literacy is, in this context, reinscribed as an instrument once more at the service of African nationalism.

As a corrective to the possible impression that the emphasis on rhetorical strategies is in some degree ahistorical, I have found it useful to teach two consecutive passages dealing with the subject of circumcision rites in the Eastern Cape. The first is by John Henderson Soga, from his pathbreaking *The Ama Xosa: Life and Customs* (1931), and the second is from Nelson Mandela's autobiography (1994). J.H. Soga writes dispassionate ethnography, reconstructing the activities and songs of the *ntsuku ete* as timeless formulations that have intrinsic historical value. By contrast, after describing the initiation procedures he experienced, Mandela recalls an elderly chief haranguing the new initiates, and telling them that while they thought they were now men, they were in fact subservient to the State, and that until liberation was achieved the rite meant very little. The younger Mandela's disappointment is contrasted with the mature Mandela's retrospective agreement with the position taken by the chief. Mandela's text subjects autoethnography both to the circumstantive memories of a venturing Western autobiography (the assertion that Mandela's book turns its back on the European autobiographical tradition is at best only partially true), and to a profoundly historical understanding of the changing meaning of tradition under oppression. Interestingly, J.H. Soga's neutral version was written at virtually the exact historical moment when Mandela was undergoing the rite, although the controversial complexity is erased from the earlier account.

I hope I have demonstrated some of the possibilities for allowing the notion of cultural translation to facilitate a wide-ranging discussion of rhetorical strategies that evolve during the early phases of a colonial literary culture. The strategies discussed here develop in more complex forms later in South African literatures, but this analysis enables students to identify a range of strategies comparatively, with the emphasis on their mutual, interactive development. If there is a 'new South Africa' agenda here, geared towards unassimilable heterogeneous discourses, so be it, but I do claim that this approach at least de-emphasises the construction of a homogeneous national tradition. It also makes pedagogic sense, at this point in our history, not to construct South African literature as a field of competing canons and traditions, but rather as theatre of activity in which various expressive modes are deployed to secure cultural authority, with varying degrees of success.

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The Return of the Lost City: The Hybrid Legacy of Rider Haggard's African Romances

Lindy Stiebel

> In a strange, oblique way the last eighty-five years of South African fiction can [sic] be an extensive footnote to Rider Haggard. We had to wait until 1972 before we got a serious 'literary' novel about explorers [Poignant's *The Centre of the World*]. His allegorical battle of love and hate, light and dark, energy and entropy, the cry of the emotional soul for release from rational anguish – we are still writing it. His work is visionary, focusing on the primordial experience (Macdonald & Christie 1977:350).

Although the above extract from Macdonald and Christie's unpublished work *Dream Life and Real Life* will make some hackles rise, there is an element of truth in the observation it makes. Though Rider Haggard's influence on successive British romance writers and colonial civil servants is well known, his profound influence on South African writers is less well documented. C.S. Lewis (1984:128) in an essay written in the 1950s entitled 'The Mythopoeic Gift of Rider Haggard' asked why '[o]bstinately, scandalously Haggard continues to be read and re-read'. He came to the conclusion that Haggard's continued popularity rested 'on an appeal well above high-water mark' derived from a 'great myth' (Lewis 1984:131) that Haggard had developed in his African romances. While noting Haggard's influence on South African literature, most South African academics have been less positive. They see him primarily as a conservative, imperialist writer and have not always noted his contradictory, complex position on central ideological positions of his age.

Stephen Gray (1979:111) sees Haggard as part of a 'boys' adventure story' lineage stretching from Captain Marryat and R.M. Ballantyne, through Buchan and Sapper/Oppie, to Wilbur Smith. Since they all 'conform so rigidly to established patterns', he judges that it would be a 'tedious business' to discuss them separately. Though Haggard certainly used the formulaic adventure model, his interest lies in the manner in which he projected doubts about his age and person onto the imaginative geography he constructed in these romances, and in this sense he is not as straightforward a 'journalist' writer as Gray seems to imply. Paul Rich (1984:155), in an essay entitled 'Romance and the Development of the South African Novel' which discusses Jose as

some length, together with novels by Buchan, Paton, Gordimer and Coetzee, notes the durability of Haggard as a romance writer and writes:

> such archetypal formulae remain deeply embedded within the South African literary experience and it may, indeed, take generations of writers living before the nostalgia for the pastoral and mythic is finally driven from the heart.

It seems that, as Rich points out, nostalgia is a particularly powerful force in what might be called the 'Haggard legacy' in South African letters. More pointedly, while South Africa has undergone profound changes in the twentieth century — historically, politically, economically, socially — to which, in Said's terms (1978), the manifest level of discourse bears witness, there remains a barely changing latent level of nostalgic discourse about Africa. In terms of landscape, that is evident in an ongoing tradition of romance adventure tales, the lineage of which Gray outlines. It seems that Haggard captured not only the *Zeitgeist* of his age in his African romances, but also for succeeding generations of South African writers and readers he left a legacy of nostalgia for a kind of Africa, cast forever in amber — a mythical Africa that is echoed particularly in the geographies of his successors. The more the manifest level of discourse has changed, the more the latent nostalgic desire for Haggard's 'safe and secret' (Haggard 1949/1962) African spaces has survived. At the end of the twentieth century with South Africa profoundly politically altered, with violence on the increase and the urban jungle harbouring more than a metaphor, perhaps it is no wonder that Wilbur Smith, billed by many as Haggard's current successor, is the world's biggest popular seller with over a hundred million sales to his credit (Smith 1997/72).

This article will trace a strand of this 'Haggard legacy' in twentieth century South African romance literature — especially as regards use of landscape. I focus on the role of nostalgia in the depiction of South African topography in the texts of Sol Plaatje, Stuart Cloete and Wilbur Smith — South African writers who claim to have been influenced by Haggard. It is in the work of these writers that the latent level of nostalgic discourse is loudest. I shall also consider aspects of twentieth century popular culture in South Africa that show evidence of Haggard's influence.

For a full discussion of Haggard's influence on and contextualisation between contemporary writers and later of the twentieth century, see Klinger (1984:109–119). One writer I may not consider in the chapter as he falls somewhat outside the sequence established, but whom I shall briefly mention here is Laurens van der Post, whose closest link with Haggard was a similar belief in Africa as representing a primitive and vital phase of the European psyche with which the European had to come to terms to progress. Hammond and Jablow (1970:146) single him out as one 'who has given the most vivid portrayals of Africa and the Africans since Haggard. He has recaptured the wonder of the African of the early explorers'. Etherington (1984:114) sees Van der Post as illustrating 'another way in which Haggard's influence has echoed down the corridors of twentieth century fiction'.

1 Sol Plaatje: *Mhudi* (1930)

The leap from Haggard, specifically in *Nada the Lily* (1892) to Sol Plaatje's *Mhudi* (1930) which was hailed as the first novel written in English by a black African, is not as big as it may superficially seem to be. For a start, Plaatje, in a letter to Silas Molema dated August 1920, described *Mhudi* as

> a novel — a love story, for the canons of romances, but based on historical facts — with plenty of love, superstition, and imaginations worked in between ... wars. Just like the style of Rider Haggard when he writes about Zulus (quoted in Cornwells 1993:32)[1].

Chrisman further draws the two writers together by noting that they 'mark either end of the colonial trajectory in black South Africa', since Haggard's *Zulu Dawn* was written during a time of full British control over Zululand and Plaatje's *Mhudi* came at the end of an era of British imperialism in South Africa. Both were sympathetic to a pro-imperial British position but anti-Boer; both used the historical romance form for a novel set during the period of the Mfecane (Chrisman 1992:44).

Mhudi, though published in 1930, was written closer to 1917 when Plaatje published his *Native Life in South Africa*, a scathing attack on the Natives' Land Act of 1913, a law which restricted blacks to being wage labourers, unable to own or rent their own land outside the Reserves. For Haggard, who wrote in a letter to Sir Bartle Frere, 'The natives are the real heirs to the soil and surely should have protection and consideration ...' (quoted in Peacock 1993:51) this would surely have also seemed a cruel, exploitative step to take. *Mhudi* tells the story of the displacement in the 1830s of the pastoralist Barolong people by the forces of Mzilikazi, their later ill advised joining of forces with the Boers who had trekked up from the Cape and their subsequent victory over Mzilikazi who was forced to retreat to present day Zimbabwe where he founded the Matabele nation. The narrative is seen through the lovers Mhudi and Ra Thupa, Barolong refugees who shelter in the wilderness where they have a child, after which they join up with others of their clan at Thaba Nchu, behind the Boers, and fight Mzilikazi's army, finally trekking off into the sunset in a Boer wagon given to them to start afresh at Thaba Nchu. Plaatje said in his preface that he wanted 'to interpret to the reading public one phase of "The Back of the Native mind"' (Plaatje 1975:17)—as Haggard (1949:x) had wished in *Nada the Lily* to 'think with the mind and speak with the voice of a Zulu of the old régime'. Couzens (in Plaatje 1975:13) interprets Plaatje as intending in *Mhudi* to launch

[1] Also quoted in Chrisman (1992:141). Both Cornwells and Chrisman give their sources as Willan, B. 1984. *Sol Plaatje: South African Nationalist, 1876–1932*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. p. 254.

> as a form of traditional custom as well as a corrective view on history. ... [and] also a topical shock on the injustice of land devastation in South Africa in 1917 ... The novel, in other words, is a storm attack on the descendants of those who were welcomed to the land and helped by their hosts to drive out those who threatened it.

It is in the nostalgic depiction of traditional custom and interdependence of people and land that Plaatje most echoes Haggard, in my view, and it is on this small, specific area of overlap between the two that I shall focus.

Plaatje evokes in *Mhudi* "a veritable green world of romantic pastoral" (Cunnison 1992:159). In describing the communities' old ways of the Bechuana tribes in the central Transvaal and Kalahari regions, Plaatje writes:

> In this domain they led their patriarchal life under their several chiefs who owed no allegiance to any king or emperor. They raised their native corn which satisfied their simple wants, and when not engaged in hunting or in pastoral duties, the pastimes whiled away. Two days in turning skins or sewing magnificent karosses. They also smelted iron and manufactured useful implements which today would be pronounced very crude by their semi-westernized descendants.
>
> Cattle breeding was the main man's calling, and hunting a national or leisure. Their cattle, under careful management, ran almost wild and multiplied as prolifically as the wild animals of the veld. Work was of a pastoral nature, for mother earth yielded her bounties and the master soil provided ample sustenance for man and beast (Plaatje 1975:21).

Similarly, Haggard (1949:20) evokes in the opening pages of *Nada the Lily* a pastoral idyll based on an agrarian society at peace, prior to its destruction by Chaka some years hence:

> Before the Zulus were a people—for Zulu began at the beginning—I was born of the Langeni tribe. Our tribe lived in a beautiful open country; the Boers whom we call the Amaboona, are there now, they tell me. My father, Makedama, was chief of the tribe, and his kraal was built on the crest of a hill. ... One evening, when I was still little, standing as high as a man's elbow only, I went out with my mother below the outer kraal to see the cows drawn in. My mother was very fond of these cows, and there was one with a white face that would follow her about. She carried my little sister Baleka riding on her hip; Baleka was a baby then. We walked till we met the boy driving in the cows. My mother called the white-faced cow and gave it maize leaves which she had brought with her. Then the boys went on with the cattle, but the white-faced cow stopped by my mother .... My mother sat down on the grass and nursed her baby, while I played round her, and the cow grazed.

Both the passages from *Mhudi* and *Nada the Lily* sound the same elegiac note - both societies described would shortly be crushed: the Langeni by Chaka, the Barolong by Mzilikazi who broke away from Chaka; in both books the spaces thus vacated by the defeated peoples would be overrun by the Boers. In both books too, the 'wilderness' in its nurturing guise, offers the chief protagonists succour and shelter. Mhudi and Ra-Thaga find a hiding place in 'an untenanted wilderness' (Plaatje 1975:63) in which Ra-Thaga is able 'to regard himself as a king reigning in his own kingdom, "with" the animals of the valley as his wealth' (Plaatje 1975:52). In the 'monarch-of-all-I-survey' convention, he is able to climb a tree next to the hut they have built and 'survey the land in every direction and see what was going on, at least between his home and the horizon' (Plaatje 1975:53). Unusually for the convention, Mhudi who is shown as extremely wise and brave is also given a bird's eye view scene:

> One day, I decided to walk along the stony slope to the summit of a kopjie at the far end of the range. My limbs being much better in spite of the abiding stiffness, I could pick my way much more easily over the rocks. I could 'tell what part of the world that was, but when I reached the summit a wider stretch of country was exposed to view and the sight of the outer world fascinated me immensely. Emerging from my limited outlook of many days in the ravine, where only the music of the birds could reach my ears, the sight of the extensive landscape was like being born afresh. The succession of woods and clearings, depressions and rising ground, with now and then the gambols of a frisky troop of goats among the distant trees, where the woods were less dense, refreshed me, for I had never seen the world in such perfection. ... I enjoyed the refreshing view for a time, although haunted by fear and loneliness; then I retraced my steps and wended back towards the ravine where there was food and water (Plaatje 1975:37).

The vistas afforded to both Ra-Thaga and Mhudi are more circumscribed than those typical of Haggard's texts. Ra-Thaga cannot see the world lying before him like a map as can Quatermain in *King Solomon's Mines*, but 'at least between his home and the horizon' the view is clear; Mhudi acknowledges her 'limited outlook' as she is in hiding, and though she enjoys the 'perfection' of her 'refreshing view' from the hill-top, she remains 'haunted by fear and loneliness'—sentiments usually absent from the more confident, masculinist position of earlier imperialist texts. This is not surprising, given the imminent break-up of the pastoral edenic world they had once inhabited. What Plaatje conveys is a sense of historical forces closing in, leaving a latent desire for the unfettered, 'Africa as paradise' whose occupants live in harmony with the land. It is a

> vision of a paradise destroyed by a combination of warring white tribes and Zulus, [which] bears some remarkable similarities to parts of the Imperialist vision of pan-African war (Darlington 1981:16).

However, despite the gathering storm clouds, Plaatje manages to end *Mhudi* on a more representative note than does Haggard in *Nada the Lily* which ends in a 'genocidal orgy' (Christian 1992:166). In this way, Christian suggests that Plaatje follows the more positive pattern more faithfully than Haggard, for the ending in *Mhudi*, in which Mhudi and Ra'Binga leave the Boers to begin a new life and Mzilikazi and Commando are reunited in the birth of an heir, marks a new cycle of life. It is a new cycle temporarily, however, by caution, aware as Plaatje was of the difficulties for black man in South Africa was to lose from 'his betrayed people' (1975:107) as the Divers—similarly described by Haggard.

2 The 'potboiler' legacy: Stuart Cloete and Wilbur Smith

A rather critical analysis of *Mhudi* states that

> the novel shows only that Plaatje was capable of writing a potboiler in order to raise money for a more important set of projects [to collect and print Bechuana folk-tales] and that his really serious effort had gone into *Native Life in South Africa* (Chrisman, Robinson, Mansemmat 1980:61).

Despite any imperfections *Mhudi* might have[1], it is certainly not a potboiler. For Haggard's legacy in that vein in South African literature, we must turn to the novels of Stuart Cloete and Wilbur Smith. Cloete (1975:106) who quite candidly described himself as 'by my own definition a first-class second-class writer – neither highbrow nor lowbrow', was born in England in 1897, the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Born into an upper middle-class family of South African origin, Cloete's formative years were spent in England and France, where his childhood reading included Kipling, Captain Marryat, Sir Gilbert Parker and Haggard, whose works 'were the literary milk on my boyhood from which I have never been weaned' (quoted in Cohen 1960:23[2]). Given these literary influences, it was perhaps inevitable that, as Rabkin

[1] Cousins (in Plaatje 1975:10) calls some readers' criticisms of Plaatje's style as being 'at best unsympathetic', 'at worst surreptitious' judgement. He discusses the difficulties a black writer of the time would have had in placing a work with a publisher aware of a reading public 'who could see no value in things black and who considered... slavish imitation of the whites' (Cousins in Plaatje 1975:12). Furthermore, Cousins (in Plaatje 1975:31) points out that Plaatje as linguist would have been sensitive to nuances of language as witnessed in the humour which 'lies just below the surface' of Plaatje's style.

(1978:39) remarks on discussing South African literature, 'Cloete's own works can be described as seeds of that same now extinct imperial flower, still flourishing in the last of all colonial gardens'. Perhaps it was this disenchantment with an increasingly changing colonialised Europe that led Cloete to seek for new opportunities in South Africa; his interpretation of the novel's links to a nostalgia for the wide-open spaces of his forebears.

> South Africa was in my blood. I had been brought up on stories of hunting lion and elephant, of Kaffir wars ... The vast horizons made me want to act on a large and ride towards it. I wanted to hunt, to camp under the stars, to sink myself into it. Much of this was, of course, due to the way I had been brought up with stories of Africa, to what I had read – Rider Haggard, Livingstone's Travels, Du Chaillu, Selous and the works of other explorers. But I think it went deeper than that. It was in my blood as well as my brain. My family, father and son, had been here about 300 years ... We were not newcomers who had wrongly taken land from other people as the American settlers had taken it from the Indians (Cloete 1976a:77).

He managed a ranch in a very isolated part of the Transvaal bushveld eventually buying his own farm, Constantia, near Irene. Of Constantia, which in its name most graphically and faithfully recalls its ancient, grander Cape namesake quite removed from the aridity of the Transvaal scrub, Cloete wrote: 'It was, though I did not know it then, the place where I saw the Africa about which, later, I was to spend my life writing' (Cloete 1973:107). It was *here* that his writing career got its start after he showed a few of his short stories to a visiting friend, Annie Robertson (*Joan Knipfunnel Peoples*), who in turn showed them to Sarah Gertrude Millin among others – all of whom said he had some talent. Cloete sold up and returned to England to devote himself to writing. His breakthrough came with *Turning Wheels* (1937), a book the task of reading which he acknowledges delayed him 'as I killed the ox' (Cloete 1973:179), but which nevertheless was chosen in the United States as 'Book of the Month' ensuring its success and his future career as a writer.

The Africa that Cloete describes is not nostalgically the 'Africa as paradise' familiar to readers, but it is an Eden won at great cost, drenched in blood, and burdened with growing fears of the black man, resulting in a pervasive racism. *Turning Wheels* carries the weighty bitterness of an author who has just missed the imperial boat and feels cheated of his birthright. It is the story of Hendrik van den Berg and his followers who leave the Cape Colony in 1836 on the Great Trek northwards to search, literally, for Hendrik's vision of paradise, which they find in Nylstroom (nowadays spelt Nylstroom) in the Transvaal. Unlike Haggard who generally idolised the Boers, Cloete depicts them as

> the noble Noble Savage, the suitable inhabitants of Africa's spacious paradises ... Love of liberty, as Cloete puts it, mingles in their search for the earthly paradise and lifts it above the mere greed for crops and herds (Howe 1971:125).

Though Cloete invests the Zulus with some degree of noble savagery

> They were elephants that trampled those who opposed them. They were lions who ripped up and destroyed. They were Zulus: their glory was indented (Cloete 1967:312)

—they are generally seen *en masse* as a barbaric and animal-like menace to the individualised, heroic Boers. After a Zulu attack on Nylstroom, Cloete writes:

> The lands too, were devastated. Here was warfare again let loose. Here was the result of taking land from the natives and thinking that those who came down from their mountain fastness to store and trade, or even to work, were tame (Cloete 1967:243)

The phrase 'taking land from the natives' seems, incidentally, to contradict Cloete's proud assertion that his forebears had not 'taken land from other people' previously quoted. Cloete's frequently disparaging and generally downright racist attitude to blacks in his novels and others leads Tucker (1967:205) to assert that Cloete "is the descendant of Rider Haggard, with this important distinction: he denigrates the black warrior, whereas Haggard idealized him".

Despite the slip recorded above where he acknowledges the 'natives' prior ownership of land, South Africa is generally seen by Cloete as empty and Africa in general as "a dark continent" (Cloete n.d.:9)—"by and large this was a new and empty country washed clean of life by the spears of the Zulu impis" (Cloete n.d.:20). *Reign of Glory* (1963), a "big novel ... painted on the immense canvas of the South African veld" as the blurb tells the reader, and set at the time of the Anglo-Boer wars, confirms the 'empty land' possibility:

> Pretoria was where civilisation ended in Africa. In one direction, to the south, were roads, officials, towns—Cape Town, the ocean, and Europe. In the other, scattered farms like their own Grootplaas, and then nothing. It was true that the President had built a railroad to Delagoa Bay so that the republic would have an access to the sea that was not English. But it was an empty land the track ran through, a wilderness of low veld, and many had died of fever in its construction. (Cloete 1974:21)

The imperialist's enthusiasm for new, wide open spaces is tempered by the knowledge of how hard-won are the small settlements established in the vastness and, with the

hindsight of empire's decline, there is a recognition of how ephemeral these enclaves were. Cloete carries the strain of imperialist and Boer aspirations in South Africa, and while he could reluctantly accept the decline of British imperialism in Africa, in this novel he pins his hopes on white Boer survival in South Africa. This dream is defeated by a combination of Zulu might and "the slow wearing down of disease and even the outside pressure of the wilds ... forcing them always into a smaller circle ..." (Cloete 1967:314). Overtaken as Cloete's dreams of Africa were by the harsh realities of history, his African novels keep alight the nostalgic latent lure of desire for a vast, empty, fertile Africa but he has lost Haggard's idealism and his contradictory complex position on Africa; instead, using crude tools, Cloete overlays Haggard's love-soluble maps with parish, prurient nightmare.

Wilbur Smith is the current reigning "modern Rider Haggard" (Johnson in Smith 1995). He was born in 1933 in Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia, of British parents from Brighton who bought a maize farm on the Kafue River, near Mazabuka. His British roots however held firm, despite an African childhood. Smith (1978a) maintains: "All my tradition is British, and if there ever had to be a choice for me, I would have to go with my British antecedents". Some of these British roots include an education at Michaelhouse, and a reading diet of Rider Haggard supported with other boys' adventure classics (Smith n.d.:4).

Starting off his working career as a tax inspector for the Inland Revenue department in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, Smith wrote *When the Lion Feeds* (1964) which, though rejected by seventeen publishers, finally saw the light of day and changed its author's career path entirely. This novel begins the saga, set in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, of the Courtney family in South Africa. Like his novels which were to follow with disciplined regularity, it uses "the 'Haggard' recipe larded with adult sex [which] provides Wilbur Smith with his international best-seller fare: 'real' lions, safaris and seductions, big game, game women, in Africa where the approved politics are thoroughly conservative" (Chapman 1996:131). Always adamant that he writes to entertain rather than instruct—cf. *Reign* (1987) Smith (1988:10f) commented "It's not a political thriller and I'm no message writer ... The thought of doing [a] belle[s] one gives me goose-pimples"—Smith has however consistently raised the ire of leftist academics by his wilful manipulation of history to suit his novels' political ends. Hattaries (1986:4) reviewing *Rage* remarks that:

> Smith still sees Africa through the eyes of Rider Haggard, and his African characters speak in pseudo-biblical tones borrowed from *King Solomon's Mines*. More dangerously, their pronouncements sometimes intertwine innocently with those of other neo-colonial black leaders. Fact and fiction enter into conflict.

Rape is particularly apposite as an example of fact and fiction 'intermingling' set in the politically volatile context of the 1950s and 1960s in South Africa. It includes known historical figures such as Nelson Mandela, Verwoerd, Malan and Schlebusch together with a thinly disguised Joe Slovo (Joe Cicero) and Winnie Mandela (Vicky Gama). It covers the sharpeville events of the Defiance Campaign, Sharpeville and the formation of Umkonto we Sizwe and Poqo. There is nothing intrinsically unusual in these roaring adventure tales are set against a verifiable historical backdrop – but what needles critics about Smith is his manipulation of historical events, his occasional alteration of historical sequence and characters to suit his own conservative political agenda. In the 'Author's Note' placed ingenuously after the last page of this long novel, Smith (1987) disingenuously writes:

> Once again I have taken some small liberties with the timetable of history, in particular the date on which *Umkhonto we Sizwe* and *Poqo* movement is born. I hope that you, the reader, will forgive me for the sake of the narrative.

He is seen as an apologist for apartheid South Africa in his novels written during that time and, given the immense popularity of his books (as previously mentioned and in countless editions and translations):

> ... it seems very probable that in the English-speaking world outside Africa Wilbur Smith is having, via his fiction, a greater formative influence on the popular conception of African prehistory, and of South African society, history and politics in particular, than any other single individual' (Margaza-Brown 1990:134-135).

The work which most reveals Haggard and which draws on the lost white civilisation theme most strongly is Smith's early novel *The Sunbird* (1972). 'Derived from the work of H. Rider Haggard' (Sutherland 1996:229). The story concerns the discovery of the Lost City of the Kalahari somewhere in Botswana by archaeologist Ben Kazin and his assistant Conrad Stuyvesant. This Carthaginian empire was based on gold mining over 2,000 years ago. Overall that is left are traces of the ruins, hidden treasure and the legend of

> a race of tall-skinned gold-haired warriors from across the sea, who mined the gold, enslaved the indigenous tribes, built walled cities and then died for hundreds of years before vanishing almost without trace (Smith 1974:21).

Cousens (1982:47) remarks on the similarities between *She* and *The Sunbird*:

> The whole plot of *The Sunbird*, like *She*, is based on the idea of reincarnation, of the great civilisation of the past. In Haggard's case Greek (actually not really Egyptian) Kallikrates recalled 'the Greek' to show his ruler status, Ayesha is more closely Egyptian in concept, as is Kôr]. In Smith's Carthaginian, grandly destroyed with only the ruins left, tended by a degenerate mass of blacks ... Thus *The Sunbird* is a reincarnation itself—it is a reincarnation of Rider Haggard's writing nearly 100 years before.

There is no Ayesha in *The Sunbird* but there is a similar attempt in both books to imagine an ancient white civilisation in the heart of Africa. There is evidence that both before and after writing *The Sunbird*, Smith was preoccupied with this question. In a review of this novel, Smith is quoted as saying:

> It is fashionable now to believe that Zimbabwe was built by Africans without outside influence – it is becoming a political/archaeological creation but I don't set out to prove or disprove their theory ... I leave the question open (Smith 1972a:17).

This is a little disingenuous as he goes on both in this article and in another to discuss archaeological ruins at Delphi in Greece which he felt confirmed his 'white built' theory in *The Sunbird*:

> It was a tremendous hunger-finding discovery for me and a budding writer in Greece refused to Zimbabwe, has given me exciting ideas and raising Pericles' credence (Smith 1972b:28).

Targett (1990:198) points out that far from remaining outside the political debate in archaeological circles current in Rhodesia during the 1960s and 1970s, Smith in *The Sunbird* launches

> a general accusation at large through the book that archaeologists are blind or scornful in dealing with Black National Culture blinkered in accept the technological Mediterranean colonists.

The Rhodesia Front of course sided with this opinion of Great Zimbabwe's origins, as it was in their interest to portray Rhodesia's main tourist icons as white in origin, thus justifying their own political existence.

In Haggard's *She*, the lost civilisation of Kôr collapses with Ayesha's demise, but in Smith's twentieth century incarnation of *She* it is a black slave who escapes across the Zambezi returning with a guerilla band who 'burns about the Lost City's downfall'. However, Cousens (1982:49) is correct when he observes that, unlike Hag-

gard who 'represents expanding British Imperialism' and its contradictions. 'Smith contains the tensions of South African imperialism'. Though the Lost City of *She Knows!* still, its ancient origins can cause a small frisson in modern day readers, a just little of Kôr and its mistress Ayesha's mythical power. As Africa on a manifest level is made more and more known and knowable, so does the quest for a lost white civilisation in Africa become harder to sustain (though not less desirable on a latent level). In the 1990s, for Haggard legacy on this score is reduced to the ghoxy theme park of the Lost City and its Palace located in what was the apartheid homeland state of Bophuthatswana.

3 The 'popular culture' legacy: The Lost City and Indiana Jones

If ever one had to look for an example of a postmodern geographical and architectural site in South Africa, then The Lost City, located within the physical space known as Sun City, would be a good one to cite. For—in true postmodern fashion, it is self-reflexive, self-parodying, and intertextual. The Lost City, opened in 1992, is a 'made geography', entered in the form of 'a postmodern architectural dream' (Hall 1995:176)—it is a $500 million hotel complex set amidst fake sculptured rocks, hills, man-planted rain forests, a crested dam, an artificial seaside complete with surfable waves and beach sand, a bridge which has a simulated earthquake every evening at dusk so that it trembles and shudders, and a synthetic underwater river through which an electrically generated tidal current flows. The brainchild of Sol Kerzner, known as the 'Sun King' given his status as chairman of Sun International Resorts. The Lost City in an ersatz manner draws on the well-worn discourse of Africa, together with that discourse's historical antecedents and successors—the narratives of early explorers to Africa, the adventure stories of the late nineteenth century (especially those of Haggard), the spectacular World Fairs and Exhibitions of Haggard's day, the blood soaked dangerous Africa of Cloete's pioneers, the novels of Wilbur Smith, the evergreen if worn myth of 'Africa as paradise', and simultaneously as a heart of darkness.

Each hotel room in each of Sun City's four hotels, of which The Palace of The Lost City is one, has an information file on the resort which includes the narrative/s/ myth of 'The Lost City. It is a generic synopsis of any number of Haggard's novels which, as Pocock (1993:241) suggests, 'could be seen as the inspiration of The Lost City pleasure resort'. The 'legend', as the narrativising myth is called, begins 'A long time ago', which recalls the 'Once upon a time' entry into the world of fairytale, and then proceeds to outline a formulaic conservative European bed time story of Africa, with a happy ending. In essence, it describes the story of 'the Ancient Ones' who were 'a nomadic tribe from Northern Africa' (thus sturdier and whiter than their southern, darker brethren, it implies, as such narratives always did) who settled in the Valley of

the Sun 'attracted by the fertility of the land and the perfection of the climate'. This was for centuries a Haggardian 'safe and secret' place, as the exotic city with its Palace was sited in a "secluded valley which was shaped by an ancient volcanic crater". However, one day a strong volcanic eruption destroyed this settlement, and the benevolent dictator-king and his family escaped 'borne to safety on the backs of the silent kudus'. Though the royal family returned, the Palace decayed and was finally deserted, but its fame lived on however in 'the imaginations of explorers', one of whom apparently is Sol Kerzner:

> Almost three hundred years after the great earthquake, in the last decade of the twentieth century, an expedition came upon the sacred horde and its ruins. The leader of the expedition saw the crumbled towers, the heaps of stone and pieces of carvings, in the still majestic palace and the remains of the surrounding village, a legacy of untold value, silvered with age. He dedicated himself to restoring The Lost City to its [sic] original splendour (hotel information sheet, The Lost City at Sun City)

The authors of this late twentieth century version of the fairytale, 'Africa as lost white civilisation in deepest, darkest Africa', are Kimberley, Allison, Gori and Wong, international resort designers based in California, whose 'brief was to create a fantasy Africa' (Murray 1996:156), in much the same way as they had created a fantasy America in EuroDisney. The legend they created in The Lost City is deliberately derivative, referring to similar older romantic narratives, thus the legend can be exotic yet familiar to its visitors. It should give its consumers a sense of *déjà vu*, and yet an equal sense of wonder at how well *afresh* the old Africa myth has been, literally, constructed. From the harsh realities of poverty stricken former Bophuthatswana, once ruled by the apartheid puppet Lucas Mangope, Kerzner lets rise like a phoenix the promise of treasure, a new Africa, an ancient (constructed) cultural heritage, all in keeping with the new South Africa freshly emerging from its dark political past with Mandela at its head. As Haggard created for his jaded, urban audience the promise of a new start elsewhere in Africa, so does Kerzner provide a new African theme park in the political and natural wilderness. One could even say that some of the tensions of the imperialist age which found their expression in Haggard's fictional African topography can also be seen in The Lost City yet they have lost their subtlety and have become banal and self-conscious: the golf course clubhouse constructed à la Great Zimbabwe has no mystery about its origins— the buildings are black labourers hired temporarily by white owned multinational conglomerates, the building plans drawn up in America, the empire builder a late capitalist entrepreneur who has 'dedicated himself' to making money in a spectacular fashion. The range of possible interpretations and manifestations of latent discourse about Africa has been even further diminished.

> The world has one role for Africa—as a destiny for other people's expeditions, and as the home of 'dark forces'. Rider Haggard, Wilbur Smith, and Sol Kerzner have all seen this point—not have become wealthy (Hall 1995:195).

While I would argue that Haggard had a far more complex vision of Africa than either Cleave, Smith or Kerzner, I would agree that it is this monofocal view of Africa that pertains in the popular imagination.

Sol Kerzner has literally cashed in on this fixed romantic mythology surrounding Africa and has been appropriately enough pictured by the media through characters-formations already popularized by the genre of adventure-romance, such as capitalist and cultural visionary, working-class boy makes good, and sexually and financially driven male hero (Murray 1996:159). Both Hall and Murray find links between the media images of Kerzner as metaphorical 'Sun King' who 'discovers' The Lost City at Sun City, and Lauren Stuyvesant in Wilbur Smith's *The Sunbird* who discovers the Lost City of the Kalahari, a man who is "building a chain of luxury vacation hotels across the islands of the Indian Ocean: Comoros, Seychelles, Madagascar, ten of them" (Smith 1979:209), and who with his "golden curly head, his sun-bronzed features" (Smith 1979:24) appears as a literal sun King. Kerzner has also been compared to the maverick adventurer Indiana Jones of the popular adventure films, and it is film as a medium for translating Haggard into a modern idiom that I shall briefly consider before concluding this discussion on Haggard's legacy.

The Indiana Jones figure character who combines intelligence with unconventionality and humour in his daring exploits in exotic locations, including Africa, has later been seen as a latter day derivation of Haggard's Quatermain—Cawelti (1994:7), in a review of Pascoe's biography of Haggard, remarks "Allan Quatermain lives on in Indiana Jones and, perhaps even in bits of Crocodile Dundee". The 1985 Hollywood version of *King Solomon's Mines*, starring Richard Chamberlain and Sharon Stone and filmed in Zimbabwe, was described as "an Indiana Jones type adventure yarn with loads of fun and action" (quoted in Murray 1996:161). Murray makes the useful point that for many contemporary film goers, the original Haggard romance of the film's title would be unknown except as hearsay or a long ago childhood tale, hence the need for intertextual, comparative referencing to "explain" the film in more up to date fashion.

> In terms of a broader contemporary cinematic adventure genre which could be said to include Steven Spielberg's *Indiana Jones* epics, and *Romancing the Stone* and *The Jewel of the Nile*' (Murray 1996:161).

In the case of *King Solomon's Mines* though, which has never been out of print, and which has had five film versions made of it thus far, the story (or idea behind it) has

lingered on, albeit with some alterations. The 1950 version of *King Solomon's Mines*, shot in Kenya and starring Stewart Granger as Quatermain replaces the character of Curtis with that of a woman (Deborah Kerr) looking for her husband. This, incidentally, has been one of the most telling alterations to Haggard's original tale—Haggard could imagine a love/sexual relationship between black and white though he suppresses it eventually, but almost one hundred years later Hollywood apparently couldn't. The Good/Evil white/black relationship in *King Solomon's Mines* was replayed in the 1936 Gaumont British production and the 1950 and 1985 Hollywood productions by a white/white love interest, which makes for interesting speculation on the progress of race relations in the West, and on what layouts box office sales in the twentieth century. Davis comments on these changes in relation to the 1950 version, which stars Paul Robeson as Umbopa, who is thus made to sing as well, that "it is interesting to see what has become of it (the book, *King Solomon's Mines*)" for not only has the racial composition of the love interest been altered, but there is also a "shift in emphasis from a quest for a missing brother to the quest for diamonds in the film" (Davis 1996:147).

What such films have done is to re-make and re-create through technological wizardry an image of Africa, its landscape and peoples which is disturbingly fervent and nostalgically for others—familiar. Despite some of the changes to the manifest discourse (the technology to capture images of Africa more advanced, the language/imagery, the latent discourse of desire juxtaposed with fear is relatively unchanged: Africa in all the film versions of *King Solomon's Mines* is still a place where one can be tested to the limit, experience adventure, capture treasure (now in the form of money-generating celluloid images) and be threatened by half-naked savages, intriguing and dangerous like the landscape used as backdrop.

Conclusion

What I have tried to show is that Haggard's legacy has been far reaching in this century and continues to be displayed even in quite divergent forms (or real from the original texts. What this speaks of primarily is the enduring power of a discourse which Haggard tapped into, with its fixed dreams and fears of Africa and related frequently through the use of landscape, which in the more popular cultural manifestations blurs people and landscape into one equation. The appeal of adventure, particularly Haggard's romance recipe, in a geographical world where there are few secrets left as seen in cultural forms as diverse as Wilbur Smith's novels and the non-fictional books and films of the National Geographic Society. In its late twentieth century manifestations as theme park site or the set for a slapstick movie star adventurer, the Haggard legacy has been diminished and degraded to the level of watered down commercial pap. It has lost much with the complexities and occasional subtleties of the original Haggard to-

pography, which, though it in turn built on the images of Africa that earlier explorers had taken back to Europe, achieved a fresh power that captured the imagination of his age

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An Act of Bridging?

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Review Article
Text, Theory, Space:
Land, Literature and History in South Africa and Australia
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In Rob Nixon's contribution to the volume collection, *Text, Theory, Space: Land, Literature and History in South Africa and Australia*, the writer Bessie Head is described as having been engaged in an 'iconoclastic act of geographical and historical bridging' (p. 252). In thinking about the collection as a whole, I have framed this a troubled phrase. Can the publication of *Text, Theory, Space* itself be said to constitute such an act? Is post-colonial studies itself not perhaps an 'iconoclastic act of geographical and historical bridging'? And if it is, what is the new purview of the older disciplines that are gestured at in the phrase — that is, geography and history? Does post-colonial studies represent a meltdown of disciplinary boundaries, or is it more akin to a conversation between disciplines? How are these issues played out in the pages of the volume under review?

The project which emerged in the wake of the publication of Edward Said's (1978) book *Orientalism* — that of revisiting, reassessing, and theorising the imperial and colonial experience which has shaped and continues to shape many of our societies — is necessarily an inclusive project. The post-colonial focus pulls together in new configurations concerns that used to be the exigent material of particular academic disciplines. For example, because of the need to revisit the history of imperialism, scholars other than historians of the nineteenth century are now interested in this period. Similarly, people other than human geographers are now paying serious attention to space. Post-Foucault, it is widely recognised that mechanisms of spatial control are central to mechanisms of social control. Scholars like Said (1993) have pointed out that imperialism itself was an act of geographical violence which necessitated the control of space. More broadly, the plethora of new studies on space and spatial identities suggests that 'space' has become a central explanatory concept in contemporary social theory.

These new concerns are reflected in the key words included in the title and subtitle of the volume under review. Thus one finds the word 'history' in the sub-title of a book described as an 'unprecedented, landmark text in post-colonial criticism and theory' (inside cover) — a book in which the majority of contributors turn out to be, not historians, but literary theorists, or at least scholars of literature. Similarly, 'space' and 'land' are important markers in the title and sub-title of the volume. But these concepts, like 'place' and 'landscape', are traditional concerns of human geographers and have engaged them for many years. Clearly, others are now interested in and working with these ideas too. The disciplines, historical geographers and cultural geographers whose work has traditionally focused on the intersections between history and geography in particular places, have been joined by a plethora of other voices.

This renewed interest, both theoretical and empirical, in the spatial and temporal nature of human experience, is all to the good. It should be welcomed rather than defended against by those of us trained in disciplines which have traditionally been centred on this problematic. For sub-disciplines like historical geography, which has tended to be empirically rich but theoretically poor, the injection of theory which accompanies the foray into post-colonial studies is an exciting development, long overdue.

However, I would argue that the melting pot approach is neither desirable nor practicable. Rather like polka-dot underpants, disciplinary territories tend to show through. This is a good thing: post-colonial studies can only be strengthened by the input of people who are sensitised to historical specificity, or who have thought deeply about space, place, and landscape. If I have a criticism of the collection *Text, Theory, Space*, it is that the little of this background — too few of the dots — show through. Despite the promise of the title, the editors have invited mainly literary theorists to contribute. Out of a total of sixteen contributors, it appears that only five are historians and, more troubling, only one (Sophie Watson) is a geographer.

This would not be an irremediable situation if writers showed themselves aware of work done in other disciplines. The footnotes of some scholars inclined to literary studies show that a genuinely inter-disciplinary conversation has taken place. For example, David Bunn's fascinating paper on the Natal Anglicist William Campbell, who created and then maintained a private pronunciation, reveals a close reading of work by both historians and cultural geographers. Bunn's work consequently has a historical depth and sensitivity to spatial politics that is missing in some of the other contributions. Nhlanhla Maake, for example, writing on the changing politics of national symbols in South Africa over the course of the twentieth century, bypasses a rich historiography to offer a simple history text. Thus while some contributors have come close to achieving a real bridging in their work, others have been less successful

The remainder of the review considers the extent to which a cross-disciplinary conversation has taken place in this volume, and suggests ways in which 'post-colonial studies' has been, or could be, strengthened by an engagement with history and geography.

History and Colonial Comparisons

The editors of *Text, Theory, Space* should be congratulated on having attempted a comparative task which is risky, even daring. One of the obvious strengths of post-colonial studies is that it encourages comparisons between different contexts in which similar politics of conquest have been played out; between spaces in which the colonial experience has been roughly similar. For an English-speaking community of scholars, the spaces of the British settler colonies are an obvious focus. Thus the collection represents movement towards another kind of historical and geographical bridging, that between the past and scholarly traditions of Australia and South Africa. (It is worth noting that this volume can usefully be compared to another recently published comparative study focusing on South Africa and Australia, this time with an environmental focus – an edited collection entitled *Borders and Empire: Environmental History of Settler Societies*. (See Griffiths & Robin 1997.)

This bridging has not really happened before. At one level, it is puzzling, as Gillian Whitlock points out, that so

> little attention has been paid by the settler states/invader territories of Canada, South Africa and Australia to the 'White Dominions' were actively important to imperialist thinking in Britain in the late nineteenth century (p. 65)

Whitlock suggests that the task has perhaps been avoided for political and strategic reasons. She is fully alert to the danger that in subverting political strategies used, for example, in Commonwealth literary studies which deliberately focused on processes of decolonisation rather than on the experience of colonial settler societies, one might inadvertently be repeating the initial act of silencing by rehabilitating the voice of the coloniser. Some of the contributors to this volume, including Whitlock herself, seek to avoid this trap by paying particular attention to the voices of white women, who were both part of and yet distinct from the 'masculine' colonial endeavour. The focus on women and the ambiguities of their gendered position in the colonial order, reflected in papers by Kerryn Goldsworthy, Michelle Adler, Kate Darian-Smith and Gillian Whitlock, is an important strength of *Text, Theory, Space*.

However, the danger I wish to highlight – one which links to my concern about the possible enclosedness of disciplines in post-colonial studies – is that of glossing

differences between societies, of making broad generalisations about very different places. This is a danger to which historians perhaps are particularly alert. The papers in the volume which attempt a direct comparison between Australian and South African experiences (Gillian Whitlock, Liz Gunner, and Terence Ranger) are located on the knife edge of this tension and are therefore most aware of it.

All three of these contributors handle this issue well. Liz Gunner is properly tentative about stretching comparisons between indigenous oral traditions across continents, from Zulu oral tradition to Anglo poetry: she places a question mark after the subtitle of the section of her paper which raises the possibility of 'cross resonances' (p. 195). Gillian Whitlock notes that one needs to proceed with caution when attempting to incorporate South Africa into comparative post-colonial frameworks (Unlike Australia, South Africa is apparently only recently being looked at in this way, presumably because prior to the transition to democracy many overseas scholars felt it inappropriate to do research here.) The danger, as Whitlock says it, is that post-colonial scholars become

> readers of the 'text out there', turning to the 'new' South Africa to prove what we already know, seeking (and finding) evidence which justifies theories produced elsewhere (p. 68)

Terence Ranger's piece, which compares the symbolic history of two famous rock formations, the Matopos in Zimbabwe and Uluru (the former Ayers Rock) in Australia, is perhaps most sensitive to the dangers of comparison and is self-conscious in examining them. As an historian, Ranger is able to view the differences between the two places partly in terms of historiography – a perspective often missing elsewhere in the collection. In a fascinating reflection on the construction of academic knowledge, Ranger describes his thought process in researching and preparing the article. First, he was struck by the similarities between the two places. Later, he became increasingly aware of the differences. In particular, the history of the Matopos seemed far more dynamic than that of Uluru. There was an actively remembered black history and a much more active white history associated with the Matopos, whereas Uluru appeared to be associated with an ahistoric, dream-like, Aboriginal past. Ranger came to the conclusion that these differences were differences in the *way that history had been written*, rather than in the histories themselves, and was able to caution the reader about this disparity in scholarly traditions. Interestingly, Ranger cites the work of a cultural geographer, Phillip Clarke, when suggesting how a more contested and dynamic view of Aboriginal relationships to the land could emerge (p. 164).

The only objection one could make to Terence Ranger's piece is that it is not set in South Africa, but in another southern African space, namely Zimbabwe. The

title of the volume does specify South Africa, and one wonders why the editors did not broaden the title to 'Southern Africa', or alternatively include work by historians and historical geographers who are working on similar topics in South Africa itself.

Geography and Colonial Spaces

The bridging which has taken place in *Text, Theory, Space* between post-colonial studies and recent work in geography, is less impressive. This is disappointing because, at first glance, this bridging appears to be one of the most important contributions that the collection has to make. Geographical concepts like space, land, and so on are privileged in the title as well as in the description by the editors of what the book is about—in their words, issues of 'land, space and cultural identity in South Africa and Australia' (p. 2). Spatial metaphors are predominate in the categories under which the papers are analysed. Thus Part One is 'Defining the South'; Part Two is 'Claiming Lands, Creating Identities, Making Nations'; and Part Three is 'Borders, Boundaries, Open Spaces'.

Unfortunately, these categories do not work particularly well. The papers seem to be rather randomly inserted into the different sections. One wonders why the fascinating papers on women and travel are found in 'Defining the South', for example, and are not flagged more clearly under a specific heading. (Why, for that matter, is Davis Bunn's paper on the setting up of a private game reserve part of 'Defining the South'?) The second section in particular becomes something of a hold-all, with seven papers grouped together in a way which obscures the real compatibility between some of them. For example, Tony Birch's excellent analysis of the attempted renaming of the Grampians National Park in Australia resonates strongly with Ranger's writing on conflicts over heritage, space and place.

This randomness may reflect a wider failure to engage seriously with geographic concepts. Certainly the promise of a focus on space, suggested by the section headings as well as by the title and the editors' introduction, is not fulfilled. If the 'complex interactions between space and power' (p. 9) are a dominant theme in the collection, why do so few papers focus on issues which are being explored in contemporary geography? Why are the technologies of spatial control through which empires were actually established, so conspicuous by their absence?

I am thinking, for example, of work on mapping as an exercise in spatial control. Tony Birch is one of the few contributors who mentions the power of maps. Birch's references is to J.B. Harley's (1988, 1992) work on maps and control. (Due to an editorial oversight, Harley is mistakenly rendered as Hartley.) In attempting to understand the contemporary histories and claims to the landscape being played out in the contemporary landscape, Birch also takes seriously some of Paul Carter's (1987) earlier work on 'spatial history'. This work looked at how, through mapping and surveying of what had been constructed as an empty social space, 'the land was ordered and labelled, becoming a colonial possession' (p. 180). Birch revisits the role of Mitchell, a figure about whom Carter also wrote in *The Road to Botany Bay* (1987). Mitchell was the colonial surveyor who mapped the area in which Birch is interested, and he shows how through mapping, Mitchell gave the land a new, British history, expunging the histories of indigenous people.

Birch also points out that mapping is closely allied to naming, as the names that places were given on maps inscribed the landscape with new identities. Generally these identities were recognisably British. Even when indigenous place names were used, this did not represent any kind of lingering resistance, but rather the unquestioned authority of the imperial power to appropriate the indigenous and turn it into something 'quaint' (p. 177).

Before leaving the mapping issue, it is worth noting the absence of any actual map, deconstructed or otherwise, in *Text, Theory, Space*.

Another, related disappointment is the failure of most contributors to take seriously spatial concepts and practices which centrally shaped the experience of colonised peoples and, indirectly, that of their colonisers. An excellent example is the idea of the 'reserve' – a term which epitomises British efforts to control and order the conquered environment. Reserves were created not only for animals, as discussed by Davis Bunn in his paper, but also for people. In South Africa, the spatial division of land which created the 'native reserves' in the nineteenth century formed the basis for the apartheid policy of spatial separation and the core of the bantustan system (Welsh 1971; Christopher 1994). In other parts of the former British empire, indigenous people continue to live in 'reservations'. Both David Bunn and Liz Gunner refer to Aldous Huxley's (1933[1977]:37,115) metaphorical *Regress to Reservation* in *Brave New World*, but this is the closest one gets to a discussion of reserves. The word does not appear in the otherwise quite useful index.

Geographers *are* presently engaging in comparative work within a broadly post-colonial frame. Recent examples of such work include the 1994 collection *Geography and Empire* edited by Anne Godlewska and Neil Smith, as well as a similar collection edited by Hetherington, Bell and Butlin (1995). Contributors to these volumes are attempting to come to terms with the history of their own discipline, which is of course closely associated with the building of empires. Geographers provided support through their role as cartographers and by providing a 'scientific' rationale for environmentally based ideologies of racial superiority current at the time (see Livingstone 1992).

In the Australian context, the geographer Jane Jacobs has recently published a book entitled *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City*, which looks at spaces she 'somewhat unfashionably refers to as the "real" geographies of colonialism and'

postcolonialism' (Jacobs 1996:3). In her book, Jacobs takes seriously the ways in which British imperialism carved its way through space and uses this understanding to analyse the current spatialised cultural politics of post-colonial Australia, including current anxieties around land claims. (It is interesting to note that, in the South African material included in *Text, Theory, Space* there are very few references to the current land reform process despite the promised focus on 'land'. This may be a function of the fact that the papers emerged from a conference and thus were prepared some time before the Department of Land Affairs' land reform programme got underway.)

Perhaps the reason that Jacobs is not referenced in *Text, Theory, Space* is that the two books appeared contemporaneously. Equally, and more problematically, it could be a function of the fact that scholars working in a literary studies disciplinary tradition are simply unaware of related work in geography. It is unfortunate that the conversation which could have taken place between disciplines in *Text, Theory, Space* has not really occurred.

As already noted, the only explicitly geographical paper in the book is an urban planning paper by Sophie Watson. Watson's piece is located within recent planning literature, which attempts a reconsideration of the modernist assumptions of urban planning. Watson concludes her analysis of planning for multi-culturalism in Sydney by stating that 'planning has to break out from its rational, comprehensive straitjacket and formulate new possibilities' (p. 214). This is an important contribution, but represents only a small part of the broad spectrum of contemporary geographical work that might have enriched a volume on post-colonial spaces.

Conclusion: Iconoclasm and Anxiety

What the volume *Text, Theory, Space* does bring out beautifully is the anxious underbelly of colonial power. The triumphalist narratives of a rampant imperialism are balanced, in several of the papers, by the eruption of suppressed or displaced fears on the part of participants in the colonial project. This theme is less fully explored for the South African case, and would present a fascinating direction for further work. In the Australian material, the theme of underlying anxiety is quite well developed. For example, in Paul Carter's piece, a suppressed fear of 'groundlessness' manifests itself in the Victorian psyche through fascination with spiritualism. In Sue Rowley's chapter, bush-induced madness overtakes those who try to inhabit the land they have apparently claimed and domesticated.

These concerns resonate with Jane Jacobs' analysis of the controversy over the old brewery site on the Swan River in Perth. (It is interesting to note that Tony Birch also refers to this case, albeit to make a different point. See p. 178.) In claiming the old brewery site as a sacred space, an Aboriginal group destabilised the apparently solid ground beneath the feet of the white citizens of Perth. Jacobs shows how the

> uncanny appearance of an . . . unknowable Aboriginal sacred in the secular space of the city of Perth set in train anxious politics of reconciliation (Jacobs 1996:130, see also Gelder & Jacobs 1995).

This is a theme which could usefully be explored in the current context of land reform in South Africa.

Moving away from the familiar is always anxiety-provoking. To return to the phrase with which I began this review, anxiety is implicit in the 'iconoclastic act of bridging' which participation in the project of post-colonial studies requires. One is being stretched beyond the comfort of disciplinary traditions and boundaries. But this tension and anxiety ought to be productive. While not losing sight of the strengths of (and differences between) disciplines, the mid-1990s seem to be presenting us with a moment of engagement, a moment when the potential for cross-disciplinary conversations is almost unlimited. The collection *Text, Theory, Space*, while representing an important beginning, still feels like a rather one-sided conversation. It is up to historians, geographers and literary theorists to engage with one another, to confront and deepen the conversation.

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Book Reviews

On the Mfecane Aftermath

The Mfecane Aftermath:
Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History
by Carolyn Hamilton
Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1995, 492 pp.
ISBN: 1-86814-257-3

Reviewed by Keith Breckenridge
University of Natal

Historians love to fight. The reasons for this had not been put more for all that clear. Henry Kissinger would have us believe that it is the insignificance of academic fights that makes them so bitter, and frequent. With more justice I might agree with Mark Antrobus (a formidable Natal and Springbok rugby lock forward) who recently explained that aggression motivates when all the other incentives (money, power, love) have dissipated. Whatever the cynic argues, one makes for the best kind of scholarship. And few debates in southern African historiography have been as bad tempered, or proved as productive, and interesting, as the controversy that erupted around Julian Cobbing's claim that the narrative of the expansion of the Shaka Kingdom in the 1820s was an invented "alibi" for colonial dispossession[1]. Much of the richness of this debate has been captured by the anthology edited by Carolyn Hamilton entitled *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History*.

In broad terms, Cobbing was arguing for a complete reappraisal of nineteenth century Southern African history. He rejected the widely accepted idea that the Shaka state had sent shock waves of violence across the subcontinent in the 1820s, and pointed an accusing finger at the earliest forms of colonial power. In the place of northern

[1] Julian Cobbing, 'The Mfecane as an Alibi: Thoughts Upon Dithakong and Mbolompo' *Journal of African History* 29 (1988) 487–519.

Nguni harmony as the eye of the Mfecane hurricane. Cobbing offered three external sources of violence: the Portuguese slave trade from Delagoa Bay, Griqua and Barotseni raiders on the northern Cape, and the invasions of British settlers and troops on the eastern Cape. In every case he stressed that it was a search for forced labourers by the representatives of the emerging colonial state that prompted the systemic violence of the 1820s.

In *The Mfecane Aftermath* most of the details of Cobbing's sweeping critique have been undone by the careful historical research of a number of Delagoa scholars. Yet the substance of his claim—that it was a colonial search for labour that encouraged regional violence—remains intact. Only raiding across the northern Cape frontier—of Cobbing's three 'external sources' of conflict—has survived historical scrutiny with any measure of integrity, but that has been enough to prompt the revision of the early nineteenth century history of southern Africa. Several scholars have re-opened research into pre-Shaka trade and slavery, and begun to re-examine the Great Trek as a search for forced labour[1].

The significance of this volume does not rest entirely upon the future of the Cobbing debate. It has also brought to light new forms of historical investigation, and a set of interdisciplinary studies which may open research into the eighteenth and nineteenth century of southern Africa (a field that was looking decidedly comatose if not completely dead). Thus we have tentative but interesting studies of the unusual scenes of conflict depicted in rock art from the Caledon Valley, and a provocative and historically unsatisfying resumé of the archaeology of subterranean villages from the north-western Transvaal that also date from the 1820s. In both these cases the evidence remains tantalisingly beyond the reach of a straightforward historical analysis.

The Mfecane aftermath also presents a good selection of 'new historiographical' approaches. Dan Wylie examines a rich collection of colonial historical texts on the subject of the Shaka state, and identifies a powerful common desire to debase and 'assassinate the character' of the king. Carolyn Hamilton's innovative study of the layers of ideas that (mostly colonial) individuals and institutions have produced about Shaka since the 1820s goes a long way towards resolving the conundrum of the clearly

[1] See Elizabeth Eldredge's 'Sources of Conflict in Southern Africa c. 1800-1830: The "Mfecane" Reconsidered' (p. 126-150), for a convincing refutation of extensive slave raiding from Delagoa Bay before 1823; Jeff Peires, 'Matiwane's Road to Mbolompo: A Reprieve for the Mfecane?' (p. 222-236) for a defence of the migration of the Ngwane and the insignificance of slave-raiding during the battle of Mbolompo; and Eldredge's 'Sources of Conflict' (p. 139-150) and Guy Thompson, 'The Battle of Dithakong and "Mfecane" Theory' (p. 395-416) for well researched rejections of Cobbing's interpretation of the Battle of Dithakong.

[2] Elizabeth Eldredge and Fred Morton (eds.), *Slavery in South Africa: Captive Labor on the Dutch Frontier*, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press (1994).

unreliable evidence offered to us by these sources. In a similarly textual vein, Norman Etherington seeks to identify a set of common narrative structures in the workings of the history of the Mfecane and the Great Trek. The tensions between these different papers also suggest that there are important limits on the capacity of external textual analysis to resolve the most pressing political questions of historical debate[2].

Whatever the individual shortcomings of the papers in this anthology—many of which bear the unmistakable signs of being preliminary conference papers—the Cobbing thesis, the gathering that Hamilton organised at Wits in September 1991 to discuss it, and *The Mfecane Aftermath* have managed to return scholarly attention to the history of the early nineteenth century. This can be clearly seen in the numbers of young scholars pursuing dissertations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of the Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. Ultimately, however, it remains true that there is a powerful circularity at work here, and until we extend the range of African sources on this period we are unlikely to escape the 'blind alley, grubbing for colonialists behind every dirt bin'[3].

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[1] Dan Wylie, 'Language and Assassination: Cultural Negotiations in White Writers' Portrayal of Shaka and the Zulu'; Carolyn Hamilton, '"The Character and Objects of Shaka": A Reconsideration of the Making of Shaka as Mfecane Motor'; Norman Etherington, 'Old Wine in New Bottles: The Persistence of Narrative Structures in the Historiography of the Mfecane and the Great Trek'.

[2] See Peires, 'Matiwane's Road' (p. 239).

De Weg naar Monomotapa: Post-Colonial Studies and Dutch Literature in South Africa

De Weg naar Monomotapa
by Siegfried Huigen.
Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996. 217 pp.
ISBN 90 5356 228-1

Reviewed by Johan van Wyk
(Sta.A.U.)

A fact that is often ignored in South African literary history is the 270 year long (1652-1925) contribution of Dutch to this history. Dutch is the oldest and the longest written language in South Africa. Siegfried Huigen's *De weg naar Monomotapa* brings this literature, and its importance for colonial discourse theory back into focus. The subtitle (in translation) reads: 'Dutch representations of the geographical, historical and social realities in South Africa'. It is unfortunate that this important text is not also available in English.

The focus is on 'representations' of aspects of the South African reality through intensive research of prior events, using selected texts as the starting point. As an exploration of 'representation' and the institutional sites which determine to some extent the form and content of representation it relates to Foucault, especially *The Order of Things*. Representation implies not only the real, but the real looked at from a particular political ideology and context. Jan van Riebeeck's arrival at the Cape in 1652 is variously represented as a great event for the expansion of Christianity and civilisation, or as the beginning of suffering and oppression in different ideological contexts.

According to Huigen, who is a lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch, his interest in South African Dutch literature developed from his discovery of the 'first poet' (vanity poet), Pieter de Neyn, who operated at the Cape in the period 1672 to 1674. This was the beginning of his discovery of a goldmine of material at the

South African Library and Archives in Cape Town, as well as in the Stellenbosch University Library. One has a feeling that there might even be more undiscovered material in the Netherlands.

In the introduction Huigen explores the relationship between over-hundred-century interest in Dutch literature, and Afrikaner nationalism. Afrikaans literary historians struggled with the question of whether the Dutch texts produced in South Africa should be part of the Afrikaans literary history. He refers to the contributions of Elizabeth Conradie (the two volume *Hollandse skrywers van Suid Afrika*), Gerrit Bosman's *Zuid Afrika in de letterkunde* (1916) which is the oldest South African literary history and F.C.L. Bosman's *Drama en toneel in Suid-Afrika* (1928), a detailed description of the institutions, theatre companies, theatres and development of drama in South Africa (again covering all the South African languages).

Conradie argued that the Dutch texts should be part of Afrikaans literature, not because of its linguistic form, but because of the shared 'volksiel' (national soul) that is manifest in these texts. Huigen refers to the derivation of the notion of a 'national soul' from philosophers such as Montesquieu, Hume, Herder and Hegel. Taine promulgated this concept by making literature the voice of this national soul. Interestingly a similar struggle to define a South African English literature was evident in articles such as R.D.A. Hoernle's 'Kan ons van 'n "Engelse letterkunde" in Suid-Afrika praat' (from *Jaarboek van die Afrikaanse Skrywersvereniging* 1936, p. 92-98). These debates must be seen in the context of the shifting significance of the concept Afrikaner in this period. Up to about 1960 the concept Afrikaans did not primarily refer to someone whose language was Afrikaans, but to a person subscribing to Hertzog's anti-colonial slogan of 'South Africa first'. The 'soul' in these discourses refers to this identification with South Africa as homeland, and such an identification was at that time essential to a definition of a South African literature. The emergence of a strong Afrikaans literature at the beginning of the century, with its roots strongly in the South African soil, contributed to this particular approach to the South African literary identity.

Dutch colonial literature loses its importance for Afrikaans literary scholars after the Second World War due modernist aesthetics. When Dutch is studied it is the post war period in the experimental and modern tradition from the Netherlands rather than the colonial literature.

The book consists of five main chapters. Chapter one explores the representations of the interior of South Africa in the period 1652 to 1686. In this chapter Huigen very subtly deconstructs Said's *Orientalism* and the idea that European representations of the peoples on other continents were not really determined by an experience of reality, but by long existing prejudices. He states that when exploring colonial discourses it is interesting to explore observations of empirical reality that contradicts existing discourse, and the condition under which this become possible. Huigen's thesis

shows that ideas do change through the experience of reality. There is an important difference between those texts based on direct experience and those reporting from secondary sources. Plagiarising of previous representations was an established tradition in this period.

In the seventeenth century a myth of fabulously rich civilisations in the interior of South Africa was prevalent and the Dutch were obsessed with discovering these. They sent a number of expeditions to find this empire of Monomotapa. They had to meticulously record their observations of their journeys into the interior. Each expedition though was disillusioned with the discursive stereotype. What they encountered were Nguniqua pastoralists who were not at that different from the Khoikhoi at the Cape. (These expeditions though missed the cities such as Zimbabwe which at that time had considerable big populations and were involved in iron smelting and trade with the Portuguese.) Huigens makes an interesting contribution by elaborating on the prescriptions of the Dutch East India Company on how the journals should be constructed in terms of a daily report on the geographic position of the expedition, and the careful collection of geographic, ethnographic, commercial and political information. He links these directives to the genre of *ars apodemica* or the systematic presentation of observations when travelling. Huigens also makes the point that if representations are only determined by existing discourses, and if reality plays no role, it would be impossible to criticise any discourse, because it would be impossible to determine which discourse contains the truth. What would make Said's discourse more truthful than that which he writes about?

In chapter 2 he contextualises Jan de Marre's lengthy praise-poem to the Cape, 'Tafereel voor de Caabde Goede Hoop' as a representation in which the representation of the Cape is determined by a classical conception of order which were prevalent in 18th century Europe, rather than from a specific colonial ideology of power. The poem is about the dichotomy of 'order' replacing 'chaos' with colonial settlement through a process of cultivation.

In chapter 3 Maeni Borcherd's depiction of precolonial Khoikhoi life in 'Gedicht over de volkplanting van de Kaap de Goede Hoop' is seen as a reaction against the idealisation thereof by John Philip in his *Researches in South Africa*. Before Europeans came the Khoikhoi according to Philip lived 'in a state of independence, possessing in abundance the means of subsistence' (Huigens 53). Borchard through reference to other texts such as Kolbe's *Naaukeurige en uitvoerige beschryving van de Kaap de Goede Hoop*, and the use of poetic imagination, in his construction of his poem attacks Philip's 'primitivism'. Borchard's representation derives from Christianity and the idea that man in his natural state lives in misery. Huigen also mentions another text by Borcherds 'Reedevoering over het Christendom' ('Debate about Christianity'). It seems as if these texts by Borcherds and Philip can form the basis of a much larger

intertextual project. William Wellington Gqoba's 'Discussion between the Christian and the Pagan' and 'Great discussion on ishlaluo' as organised debates come to mind.

Chapter 4 deals with the popular history series by D'Arfert (pseudonym for J.J. van Oordt) and its increasing texts on the Dutch East India period. Although racial prejudice dominate in these texts, there is also another conflicting code of the universality of moral and religious values operating in these texts.

In chapter 5 he performs Jacob Lid's *Het gevaarlijk ras* ('The black peril') from 1913, and apparently the second Jim-comes-to-Joburg novel produced in South Africa. Douglas Blackburn's *Leaven: A black and white story* of 1908 being the first. It is a text dealing with the identity transformations that the main character experience through the process of urbanisation and coming to consciousness of his being equal to whites. Although the text endorses a paternalist and racist discourse, the text clearly counters the way authors such as Said, Fanon and JanMohamed essentialise colonial discourses as always representing blacks as the 'quintessence of evil' (Huigen 140). The main character is portrayed with great sympathy. The impact of realism as literary form was possibly decisive in this.

Huigen surprises not only through the historical detail uncovered, but also through intelligent argumentation backed up with extensive evidence. This is an important contribution and would gain considerably by in future going much more extensively beyond the confines of Dutch to the texts in the other South African languages.

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Colonization, Violence and Narration

Colonization, Violence and Narration in White South African Writings: André Brink, Breyten Breytenbach, and J. M. Coetzee
by Rosemary Jane Jolly
Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press and
Witwatersrand University Press, 1996, 179pp.
ISBN: 1-86814-297-5

Reviewed by Stewart Crehan
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The contemporary concern with representation usually precludes the task of ancillary

ruration that tries to place literary works in their social and historical 'context'. By locating a context, a commentary may claim to have knowledge and understanding of a text according to the 'reality' in which that text is embedded, thus forestalling any critique of the commentary's own narrative operations. Rosemary Jane Jolly admits that it 'may seem strange to introduce this exploration of violence and literature in the South African context without a description of that context in historical or sociopolitical terms' (1). The reason, 'I have my desire to spectacularize, and thus to exoticize, the violence of South Africa which motivated the founding questions of this study' (1). Turning South Africa – one of the most violent societies in the world – into 'an international spectacle', encouraging the voyeurism and moral condemnation that 'replicates the twin violations of pornographic involvement and the myth of objectivity', is something she wishes 'most strenuously to avoid' (1). If these are by no means the only options – therapy and healing were the goal of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission – one can see why strategies of avoidance and critical distance might have an advantage from a literary standpoint over the more familiar encouragement in the reader of a moral and emotional involvement whose own darker motives and effects often fail to be taken into account. Indeed, Jolly argues that forms of narrative that assume they can redeem us therapeutically by 'treating' or 'dealing with' violence invoke a specious kind of closure characteristic of a failed white liberalism (13).

Violence, then, is not simply an act or event to be witnessed, commented on, or empowered, but a process in which all of us, whatever the context, are in some way and to some degree accomplices. Before the overt act of violation takes place there is symbolic violation, the violation of the other that occurs in discourse, in language itself. Taking her cue from Coetzee's *Foe*, Jolly examines the extent to which acts of narration are 'always also, necessarily, acts of violation at the figurative level' (2). Certain writers, such as Breytenbach and Coetzee, have challenged or tried to avoid such acts of violation. André Brink, however, in depicting close relationships as violent in *A Chain of Voices*, has according to some reviewers made that intimate violence seem 'in some sense inevitable' (39). This is so, Jolly argues, because the description of those who master black-slave relationships carries an erotic charge, appealing to sado-masochistic fantasies. Instead of subverting the basis of the master-slave relationship, Brink's novel, by representing violence as the 'truth' of colonial history, and thus promoting horror in the reader, 'overlooks the potential of fiction to create readers who may develop alternative fictions about the status of history' (53).

Breytenbach's strategies for eluding or defying violation are exhaustively analysed in terms of the self, the relationship between interrogator and interrogated, and the unstable, split subject. Jolly's conclusion is, in her own terms, 'fundamentally different' from that of Coetzee: reducing Breytenbach's autobiographical attempts in *Mouroir* and *The True Confessions of an Albino Terrorist* to the status of 'a diversion', she says, 'is to forget that they also comprise a complex and vital act of self-defense'

(99). Jolly quotes here from Coetzee's *Raritan* (1991) essay 'Breytenbach and the Censor': 'Turning the gaze from the window to the mirror has never been a step out of a new prison: it has always proved to be what Breytenbach in *Mouroir* discovers it to be: a diversion'. Coetzee has, however, reversed this essay as 'Breyten Breytenbach and the Reader in the Mirror', chapter twelve in *Giving Offense: Essays on Censorship* (1996), where the (offending?) passage quoted by Jolly no longer appears. In this book Coetzee says of Breytenbach that in 'masking the surface of the mirror something that has gone *through*, an opening to an infinite progress, he has deferred the confrontation with his enemy twin, and further has turned this deferring into a model of textual production' (230). From 'diversion' we move to the more acceptable deferral. But Coetzee doubts Breytenbach's strategy in *Mouroir* of incorporating the censor figure into himself: 'The text is *Mouroir*, and *Mouroir* finally dwindles into a coaxing with Ariadne's thread, the Minotaur forgotten' (231). Between a complex act of vital self-defense and pointless 'coaxing' many, including this writer, will be inclined to side with Coetzee.

Jolly's third section comprises subtle and detailed readings of Coetzee's *Dusklands* and *Waiting for the Barbarians*. Following other commentators, she convincingly demonstrates how Coetzee's metafictional strategies manage to avoid the pitfalls into which Brink and – as some (including Coetzee himself) would argue – Breytenbach have fallen. In Coetzee, as do-masochistic fantasies in the text where there exists the largest propensity for the narrative to perform as sadist, and the reader to respond as masochist) arouses no erotic fascination. The reader is provided with an alternative ethical and aesthetic position from which to view – or rather to review the views – of those scenes of cruelty, killing, and torture evoked in Coetzee's fiction. In *Dusklands* the writer 'does not so much mark the scenes of violence as representations of violence' (121) as, for example, Eugene Brown's Vietnam photographs. Quoting Barthes' superbly accurate and apposite formulation, the 'text-constructed frame ... that prohibits empathy', Jolly feels that 'Coetzee's narrative does not encourage the reader's involvement as participant in a pornography of violence' (121).

The argument is carried through with rigour and subtlety. The question of the narrative representation of violence/violation is examined from nearly every angle, but one finds it hard to find fault either with Jolly's readings or with her conclusions. The slide from violence to violation is entirely justified from a Derridean or Foucauldian perspective (that is, in relation to 'the violence of the letter'). Although there are times – especially in the discussion of Breytenbach – when the argument is elaborated with a rigour that may try the patience of readers who lack the necessary stamina, the book is as important in relation to its chosen area of study. It makes a strong, coherent, and convincing case.

Clearing Spaces: Multilingualism in a Multicultural Context

Multilingualism in a Multicultural Context: Case Studies on South Africa and Western Europe.
Edited by Guus Extra and Jeanne Maartens
Tilburg: Tilburg University Press, 1997. 253pp.
Studies in Multilingualism 10.
ISBN: 90 361 9774 5

Reviewed by Johannes A. Smit
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This book of sociolinguistic case studies edited by Guus Extra (Research Group on Language and Minorities, Tilburg University) and Jeanne Maartens (Department of Afrikaans and Nederlands, University of Natal, Durban) is most probably one of the most important academic interventions of 1997—i.e. as a bottom-up intervention and not a top-down one (cf. Breeden & Extra p. 155). Pioneering as it is, it provides a wealth of information ranging from historical factors (including migration) relating to current (and past) constitutional/policy decisions and available statistical and demographic information from South Africa and Western Europe, through sociolinguistic case studies as such (with which the book is primarily concerned), to numerous interpretations of this research and suggestions for further research, language policy formulation and constructive engaging of the possibilities open to languages in a multicultural context.

Variously pointing to the hegemonic role Afrikaans played as ruthless medium for apartheid (cf. Maartens pp. 29–33; Zungu p. 47 for example), it also does not endorse an uncritical attitude towards English as medium of instruction for various reasons. In the context of the disjunction between the South African Constitution (which recognises eleven official languages) and governance structure practices (which seems to favour English), it points to challenges and provides different options of how to address this problematic. The book's cross-national or rather, cross-continental nature is its strong point and prevents the debate's sinking up behind historical politicised battle lines. It opens up a space in terms of which the main challenge—as captured in the title—can be dealt with responsibly, realistically and pro-actively.

If I must abstract from the book three currently relevant issues, they are: 1) the antinomy between the South African constitution's provision for eleven official languages and current language practices in society (broadly speaking); 2) the constructive possibilities to be gained from home language as well as multilingual instruction; and 3) the various possible models of multilingual research in a multicultural context for purposes of language policy formulation and practices facilitating equal social participation (pre-empting 'xenophobia, discrimination, and sometimes brutal racism': Extra & Vallen pp. 174f).

In the context of the mismatch between language policy and language practice, one of the main concerns raised is the 'strongly dominant role' of English in governance structures, education and the media (Maartens p. 25). Even though English is a minority language — with only 9% and 16% mother tongue speakers in South Africa generally speaking and in KwaZulu-Natal more particularly, cf. McDermott p. 106; Maartens p. 23) — Lydia McDermott (p. 105) points out that especially upwardly mobile black South Africans view it as the gateway to 'self-empowerment, upward-mobility, sophistication and learnedness'. She importantly analyses this 'myth' in terms of its 'hegemonic dominance' and 'subversive effects' (McDermott pp. 106ff, 110ff). One of the important points on this issue in her overview of 'views of "others" on the mythology', is Njabulo Ndebele's implicit argument that South Africans have not yet started to appreciate 'the immense freedom of choice before them' (in the new dispensation), and Neville Alexander's that 'African languages can be as powerful as English' (McDermott pp. 115f). This latter view is importantly supported by J. Keith Chick's (pp. 91ff) excellent setting specific international study on the relationship between English and isiZulu (which may also be true of minority languages). If the 'all-setting of English as "language of liberation" during the apartheid years to correct inconsistencies between the Constitution and language practices are not heeded, McDermott (pp. 111f, 117) suggests that African mother tongue speakers *follow Afrikaans Language Movement* strategies (which originated in the face of Milnerist 'cultural-imperialist policies' and practices; cf. Maartens pp. 25f).

Within the current impasse brought about by the prevalence of English in society, Phyllis Jane Zungu addresses the 'Status of Zulu in KwaZulu-Natal' by analysing isiZulu as first, second and third language in education, code-switching, code-mixing and language shift at work in modern isiZulu and makes some recommendations. Important suggestions address the need for professionals to learn isiZulu (for obvious reasons), policy decisions which require Afrikaans and English speakers (especially educators) to learn isiZulu and the importance of language as medium of historical, cultural, literature and environmental translation in a multilingual society. Proactive

steps by especially Afrikaans and English speakers may try to rest suspicions that 'multilingualism' is just another cover for 'apartheid maintenance' (Zungu pp. 46ff) she reasons.

Other case studies on the languages in KwaZulu-Natal include those by Anita de Villiers (Afrikaans), Varijakshi Prabhakaran (Indian languages) and Peter Broeder, Guus Extra and Jeanne Maartens (languages in the Durban Region). Whereas some (majority and minority) language communities do not see their home languages as part of their core values of their culture and identity (cf. Broeder & Extra on Dutch in The Netherlands and abroad, p. 155), this is not so amongst [at least some] Afrikaans speaking South Africans (as well as the Welsh, the Irish, the Francophone Canadians, the Flemish-Speaking Belgians, p. 71). In this context, De Villiers' helpful case studies of Afrikaans in KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa more broadly speaking, points to and further advocates 'additive multilingualism' (ie. Zulu-Afrikaans for example, and *vice versa*) in 'creating a multilingual society' (pp. 7–9).

Varijakshi Prabhakaran (pp. 76ff) overviews the historical factors which lead to people of Indian descent representing close to twenty Indian languages in South Africa. Of these, only five remain, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Gujarati and Urdu 'plus Sanskrit as sacred scriptural language'. Pointing to the shift towards English within the Indian community, she notes that there is a current 'revival of interest among the younger Indian generation in their linguistic and cultural heritage'. This is mainly due to 'various socio-economic, religio-cultural and political reasons' (Prabhakaran p. 89).

An interesting study of the first section is the book (mainly focussing on KwaZulu-Natal), the 'Durban Primary school, Language Survey' by Peter Broeder, Guus Extra and Jeanne Maartens (pp. 129ff) reveales that pupils bring many more languages to the classroom than many educators are often aware of. In the light of the prevalence of English in many classrooms, the survey also showed that pupils from minority languages prefer instruction in their first or home language—suggesting that 'the educational alternatives are on the wrong track with the current move towards English as the medium of instruction' (Broeder, Extra & Maartens pp. 139ff). In the context of isiZulu being the majority language in KwaZulu-Natal (with 80% mother tongue speakers in KwaZulu-Natal; cf. Maartens p. 23), many a poor academic performance in this province may be attributed to isiZulu speaking pupils having to study in a foreign language 'and teachers teaching in one'.

II

Reflecting on the constructive possibilities to be gained from home language as well as multilingual instruction, one of the images I toyed with and explored as if in a picture, will most probably only remain a dream. Perhaps.

In this dream, I have seen the isiZulu speakers in KwaZulu-Natal (80% of the 85% population) as confident, on-top-of-the-game educationists, business persons, world-renowned scientists conducting themselves in isiZulu, making a crucial contribution to African and international knowledge. Such a dream, I think, would be any educationist's natural dream or rather expectation/purpose towards which to work. The question which does not seem to go away, however, is whether such a goal is realistically achievable when pupils and students have to learn, study and do research in a foreign language (whether 'South African English' or 'Zulu English').

This contradiction is amplified when its real implications are analysed.

It may be true that there are perceptions that English provides the gateway to the emerging black bourgeois bureaucratic class. The limited access to this class, however, will not only frustrate expectations but also prevent the practical development of a self-sustaining economy and society independent of state or private funding. Moreover, if the critique of this state of affairs collapses into an antagonistic struggle march between this class and the English, Afrikaans and Indian bourgeois classes), these middle and upper classes will be using their 'blackness' [not to justify their hegemonies, irrespective of whether they achieved it 'legitimately' or not. The result? The majority of the population will remain excluded from improving their quality of life.

Other real alternatives* would be to 1) not enforce language purity and to allow a certain degree of freedom in education institutions; 2) enforce English usage on all levels of education and rural, or some institutions; 3) to continue to develop the Sotho-ness within Zulu culture and to present Zulu phrases/words in class alongside English as medium of instruction; 4) change the language of instruction to isiZulu on all levels of education in all or in some institutions; or 5) to allow for a mixture of these options.

Many issues and contradictions in all these options need to be pursued further. I mention only two. *Firstly*, if English retains its dominant position, the question then is whether the isiZulu lifeworld (which will be true for 80% of the KwaZulu-Natal population) will not remain barred from educational/information/knowledge/discourse development, i.e. except for the first few years of basic education. The contradiction, here, would be the enforcing of (a locally numerical) minority discourse ([of] English) onto a (locally numerical) majority. In the face of the obvious (as both threat and lure)

* Such or similar alternatives echo one of the projects of The UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar. This project envisions the use of National Languages in Basic Education in Sub-Saharan Africa in four areas: 1) countries with language policies but which have not provided easily for the implementation of such policies; 2) countries in which national languages are taught only as subjects but not used as media of instruction; 3) countries in which national languages are used as media of instruction only in the early years of basic education; 4) countries in which basic education is entirely in indigenous languages (cf. *UNESCO Regional Office, Dakar*, p. 7).

of universalism – which may not deliver as much as it promises – the result would be a cultural particularism continuing to disadvantage isiZulu speakers or at least not create the space for the development of their full potential. The detrimental effects this would have on the development of the isiZulu lifeworld, speaks of itself.

Secondly, if options four and its harsher variant, option four, are seriously considered and implemented, this will mean the development of (scientific) discourse within isiZulu, to various degrees. For the lifeworld development of isiZulu speakers into scientific domains, this would appear crucial. It would mean that isiZulu may vitally contribute to an ownership *model*[1] *of knowledge/discourse including* both production and consumerism of not only discourse but also products in the marketplace. As a start, it seems to me that option three must be employed more vigorously. Initial indications are that such developments already exist (practised by numerous isiZulu teachers) and that the professional and education sector must seriously consider meeting the challenges posed by the proponents of *Zunguism* (pp. 461ff).

In the spirit of *Multilingualism*, the ownership model will guard against a new particularist hegemony by also fostering the development of similar activities in other minority languages of KwaZulu Natal. Moving along a *different* curve, Afrikaans as language (and its speakers)—seeing the degree to which it as language is positively perceived (cf. De Vriers 580f)—must continue to free itself *from* concepts nationally and internationally not acceptable. (As was the case amongst educationists especially since Soweto 1976.) This can be achieved by reaching out both locally and internationally. It is at precisely this juncture which I locate *Multilingualism* and for which it is to be applauded. Initiated by the Department of Afrikaans (University of Natal, Durban), it does not only reach out to the multilingual and multicultural plurality in South Africa (and KwaZulu-Natal); it also reaches out internationally.

This raises the question of foreign participation in research in Africa (and South Africa). To thoroughly research the ravages which Africa has been subjected to by the various colonialisms – and is only economically and culturally – much remains to be *done*. This is needed not so much to create objects of blame, foster a paralysing resentment or absolving one from responsible participation. I think. It is rather needed to prevent and block neo-colonial forms of extraction and exploitation. In this, it seems to me, *Multilingualism* has succeeded importantly. The participation of the University of Tilburg researchers in the research here presented does not only make (both theoretical and practical) contributions locally but also internationally, i.e. to other situations where one is confronted with contradictions concerning the status of what may be termed, generally speaking, minority discourse. Concerning Afrikaans as discourse, it also means that its reaching out to the society and language of origin will provide liberatory possibilities in the spirit of *Multilingualism*.

In addition to English as avenue to contribute to international knowledge, further South African Netherlands participation could, in the spirit of *Multilingualism*'s approach, prove relevant. Similarly co-operative research could operate along language trajectories opened up by the texts of the Research Group on Language and Minorities on Arabic, Berber, Hindi and Turkish (cf. Broeder & Extra pp. 145ff for more language communities researched). The assertion of the realities of multilingualism in multicultural context, would guard against language as well as cultural particularism if not exclusivism. Similarly, it will create spaces for the constructive engagement and governance structure facilitation of the education and development possibilities which still lies dormant because minority languages are prevented from developing their lifeworld potential. Foreign country South African participation may importantly contribute towards our reconstructive and development challenges and practices.

Multilingualism has opened the door to these and other issues not addressed here (cf. *Multilingualism* for more). In the spirit of El Aissati and Bos' (cf. p. 192) proposal, minority languages should not be viewed as home languages or just for ethnic minorities but as 'modern' languages which receive 'the same attention all other modern foreign languages get'. This has never been more true than now. In the multicultural context which is South Africa, for example, the resources minority languages offer – especially concerning the positive value access to such languages by and for non-mother tongue speakers may create within and for our country – need to be developed pro-actively. Stated differently: why can English speakers (in both South Africa and Britain) not study one of the other South African Languages: Afrikaans or Zulu speakers not Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Gujarati, Urdu or Sanskrit; French or Dutch speakers not Arabic or Berber; etc.?

In the bottom-up approach which sees multilingualism as a 'resource' (and not a 'problem' as in top-down approaches: cf. Broeder & Extra p. 195) educators and pupils/students (as learners) alike, must realise the possibilities brought about by our

[1] The ownership model links up to the *real*, embraces both production and consumerism and does not exclude multiplicity—one of the core inertia propagated in and for former and neo-colonialist countries, by Zygmunt Bauman, 1992. *Intimations of Postmodernity*. London & New York: Routledge. The 'ownership model' may be the alternative 'road' to the continuation of capitalism and socialism presented in these countries (cf. Bauman, 1992:22 23:22). In this model, such countries are challenged to see their multilingualism as resources rather than 'problem'. They are challenged to put governance structures in place in their own countries as well as in former colonies which may facilitate the development of 'foreign' languages for the benefit of the people both in the 'home' countries and in the diasporas, by the isiZulu-English means. Britain is not absolved from this challenge.

[2] The tradition of we can call it part of minority resistance within the Afrikaans speaking community (especially since 1948) still needs to be described/thematised.

newly found freedom. It is hoped that more scholars will participate in such research, methodology, and ultimately, the participative and constructive pro-active development of minority languages.

III

In a country which has been ravished by political and other hegemonic discourses, *Multilingualism*, especially as far as it presents us with case study approaches and case study data, has done scholarship an immense service. Even though it is true that any empirical study will always be discursively slanted, it is for us to evaluate the results for, my attempt under it above) or prove differently. Even so, the methods employed, especially as they attempt to move beyond existing 'census' and 'survey' type approaches, signal a desire to greater scientificity (cf. especially Maartens p. 151f and Chick p. 91ff on this issue). To this purpose, each and every contribution provides a particular approach (with sample questionnaires and tables developed for interpretation and collection purposes) which may be used for similar studies, further developed and/or transcended by creating better ones. These comprise the perceptive treatment of existing census and demographic data, the pointing to gaps and how they may be transcended for policy formulation (Maartens pp. 15ff; De Villiers pp. 67ff; Prabhakaran pp. 87; Broeder & Extra pp. 141; El Aissati & Bos pp. 180f; Van der Avoird pp. 193ff), the addressing of issues of first, second and third language identity (Zungu pp. 3ff; De Villiers pp. 61ff; Extra & Vallen pp. 165ff; Van der Avoird pp. 212ff); the study of code-switching, code-mixing, language shift and language change (Zungu pp. 44ff; Van der Avoird pp. 201ff; Backus & Boeschoten pp. 221ff); geolinguistic studies (De Villiers pp. 52ff), sociolinguistic profiling (De Villiers pp. 58ff; Prabhakaran pp. 77ff), sociolinguistic diversity studies (Broeder, Extra & Maartens pp. 121ff; Chick pp. 95ff), interactional studies (Chick pp. 91ff; El Aissati & Bos pp. 181ff); the demythisising of a language (McDermott pp. 105ff); the development of multilingual teaching models and practices (Extra & Vallen pp. 170ff); the addressing of the education-employment nexus (El Aissati & Bos pp. 182ff), language variation studies (El Aissati & Bos pp. 184ff); the study of the interrelation of socio-economic and cultural states (Van der Avoird pp. 201ff).

Each of these areas of sociolinguistic research opens a space to research the real. Even though this notion has suffered much in philosophy and other social and human science reminiscences, *Multilingualism* succeeds in grappling with issues which some would claim still form part of the unthought of thought, the irrational of reason or the unconscious of consciousness. Even though its sociolinguistic tools will be further developed and gaps identified filled, it provides methods and procedures for empirical socio-linguistic research which importantly open up questions and procedures before which many remain stupefied.

IV

As evident from the case study research, minority language maintenance is a fact and the sooner educators and governance structures in both South Africa and Western Europe (or elsewhere) pro-actively facilitate and contribute to this state of affairs, the better it would be—not only to facilitate improved learning quality but even more, to create spaces for constructive contributions to science and development by and for all. My view is that hegemonies of whatever kind would only spell one of two alternatives, Babel or conflict.

In a different context, Zarathustra longed for man to be 'delivered from revenge ... [a] bridge to the highest hope, and a rainbow after many storms'. *Multilingualism in a Multicultural Context* is such a bridge if not many bridges.

Drawing on internationally-recognised and constitutional imperatives, *Multilingualism*'s sociolinguistic case studies reveals a space where minority languages transcend narrow ethnic definitions and political co-option. *Multilingualism* is a positive resource and anyone grappling with language policy formulation, and its implementation (whether principals, teachers, governance officials, anyone participating in practices related to minority languages or the fact of multilingualism in a multicultural context, or anyone researcher/student/learner) embarking on similar research projects cannot ignore it. In this context, I think Maartens' (p. 30) statement apt:

> Only if leadership is seen to take pride in all South African languages, only if all schools value every child's mother tongue as a private asset, offering multilingual options; and only if people are rewarded for their knowledge of a variety of languages in terms of jobs and status, can language practice eventually reflect language policy.

The contributors and editors must be congratulated for creating contextual efforts and clearing spaces for not following idealised sociolinguistic trends but for openly relatively engaging the fundamentalisms, unevenness, diversity, tensions and struggle of real socio-(dis)-orders' (cf. Chick p. 91). Pro-actively, governance structures and education but also the media, business and private enterprise should participate. Research in the same pioneering spirit and which spans the net even wider to cover socio-economic, religio-cultural and political spaces—amongst others—more explicitly) promises much.

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[1] The recognition of the fact that multilingualism in South Africa is (a) practised in 'a' context, may lead to an interpretation conducive to an unintended universality. In such an interpretation, South African would constitute the 'a' context. 'Multiculturally' would appreciate its cultural diversity and, if rankling utility would then be mapped over this one or single context reflected in its diversity of cultural cultures, then you would have a post-Apartheid apartheid situation. However, the conviction and this book's argument posit a different space—as is especially evident from my treatment of the book not only in sections I and III above but especially my evaluation in section II. It is for this reason that I find the book not to exclusively in either race or class positions but to move into a space beyond such hegemonies.

Alternation

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