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Alternation

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Introduction

Graham Stewart

Humanities Computing is a new discipline unfamiliar (and even inimical) to the South African literary community. For instance, while welcoming delegates to the 2000 ICCLA conference in Pretoria, Nadine Gordimer scoffed at the notion of e-publishing as a solution to this country's bookless communities by citing notable e-book failures, such as Stephen King's experimental *The Plant* (2000). King suspended his online e-serial after five instalments when it turned out that less than half his readers had paid their \$1.00 per episode download subscriptions. Gordimer's solution to illiteracy was more libraries in townships, filled with tangible printed books. What she neglected to mention was King's later success with *Riding the Bullet* (2000) an e-book sold through online retail bookshops, or Patricia A. Roy's e-novel, *The Angels of Russia* (1998), the first e-book ever to be nominated for the prestigious Booker Prize. More regrettably, Gordimer's comments mitigated the crippling cost of conventional printing and publishing, and the near impossibility—perhaps difficult for an established author to understand—of any new South African author getting into print at all.

Wider public access to literature via the e-book is, however, only one of many concerns in the humanities computing debate. Gordimer's work, despite her reservations about the feasibility of e-publishing, is already being subjected to critical analysis (as are Jane Austen, Shakespeare and Sol Plaatje) on the PCs of literary scholars around the globe. The resulting papers and articles are subsequently published online. In South Africa, we may access the full texts of critical research articles on, say, *July's People* in e-journals like *Quinque, Research in African Literatures, New York Times Book Review*, and the *Journal of Modern Literature*—the medium has already absorbed her full corpus and rendered her observations quaintly out of touch with the realities of current academic practice. Study guides on *July's People* and short stories *The Train from Rhodesia* and *Town and Country Lovers* are available in e-book format (Gale Group 2003). Discussion and debate about her writings will

be occurring—while you read this—in virtual classrooms around the world (see for example Susan Sporey's article in this issue).

With this number of *Alternation* we hope to bring some perspective to the practice of humanities computing in South Africa by publishing a divergent set of reflections and approaches to the introduction/ intrusion of computers into the contemporary study of literature, and in particular the study of South African literature. Potter (1994) laments the fact that scholarship in humanities computing has sometimes been marginalised or ignored because it falls between two stools—the established disciplines of humanities and IT:

Beautifully clear essays about literary critical data have gone unwritten because of the necessity of using a generally accepted scientific style to meet the standards of reviewers at journals interested in computing research. As a result, many computer critics have written themselves out of the range of their natural audiences (Potter 1989:xviii).

So while the humanities eschews IT, and IT distances itself from literary criticism, the aspiring humanities computing scholar has somehow to accommodate the predilections of both camps. Olsen (1993:310) commends Potter herself for offering a solution by 'publish[ing] essays that do not have the dense statistical and linguistic terminology that she believes is the most formidable obstacle to general acceptance of computing in literary criticism'. We hope that the papers published in this volume will contribute similarly to the debate around computers and the humanities; and with a minimum of esoteric terminology.

The papers in this issue may also be viewed against a backdrop of a curriculum for humanities computing (Siemens 2001; Rockwell 1999). In his search for a coherent context for the new 'discipline', Siemens' questions about the current state of humanities computing overlap with concerns and issues raised by the authors in this volume:

For the purpose of our teaching, is there an accepted set of tools and techniques, and a unique and related collection of theories having a commonly-understood application, that are associated with the (inter)discipline of humanities computing? In other words, is there a humanities computing curriculum, a curriculum that appropriately treats the role of the computer, today, in the context of the centuries-old tradition of the arts and humanities? (Siemens 2001).

The sheer range of approaches reflected by our contributors would suggest that there is no such curriculum as yet in South Africa, but their quality and innovativeness represent a first attempt to find a coherent conceptual framework to accommodate a humanities computing research agenda and provide a springboard for further development.

What must be considered when designing and implementing courses that bring the computer to the arts and humanities: courses in humanities computing? Can such courses discover and survey the influence of computing technology, broadly construed, in the arts? Must courses in humanities computing reflect the tradition of the computing humanist? Should they embrace all current applications of computing in the humanities? Can textual description and markup, cyber cultural studies, text analysis, and (multi)media theory and practice, etc., co-exist? What are others in the field bringing to their classrooms and to their programs that have humanities computing components? Such are the questions that many face as they and their institutions formulate, for the first time, new academic courses and programs that seek to apply computing to established arts and humanities curricula (Siemens 2001).

The articles in this number demonstrate that questions like these are being asked in South African institutions, and that promising work is being done to find solutions. Because the field of humanities computing is as yet ill-defined, the articles in this edition are inevitably eclectic—indeed, the primary purpose of this number is to range as widely as possible over an emerging discipline to identify focus areas and expose areas of contention and also future research directions. One dispute which emerges here is between enthusiastic converts to digital technologies and skeptics. The former tend to dwell on the benefits that the systematic exploitation of ICTs can offer the humanities, and the latter—who are more apprehensive about the contribution computers can make to the humanities—on its limitations and disadvantages.

De Beer's article reflects on the philosophical implications of 'cyberspace', the new virtual space that digital media offers the reader-writer-participant, and finds in it a challenge to conventional epistemology. De Beer relates the unique non-linearity of hypertext to the literal meaning of 'intellect'—*inter legere*—'reading between or across boundaries or lines'. Quoting from Pierre Lévy, he explores the expanding possibilities for

intellectual activity in the seemingly limitless medium of cyberspace. He describes profound changes in our understanding of human subjectivity where

there are no longer subjects as thinking substances. 'It' thinks in a network where neurones, cognitive modules, humans, teaching institutions, language systems, writing systems, books and computers are interconnected while transforming and translating transformations.

De Beer's hypertextual future is a type of utopian 'collective intelligence' rather than a dystopian technocracy, characterised by a 'big brother'-like surveillance and control. With this collective intelligence 'the computer can, through technologies like "knowledge trees", provide us a means by which to share knowledge with others and meet them in ... democratic cyberspace'.

An emphasis on the characteristic inventiveness of those working in humanities computing, combining theory and praxis, medium and message, is articulated by Lévy: 'The one who does not invent works somewhere other than in intelligence'. Added to this is his contemptuous dismissal of the conventional activities of academia: 'The rest? Copying, cheating, reproduction, laziness, convention, battle, sleep'.

Narcen Moodley is less sanguine about the influence of computers and recalls the early 19th century Luddite resistance to technology and today's direct action by the Greens, and raises 'questions about social and moral accountability and responsibility' to counter unquestioning acceptance of the role of computers in learning and scholarship. Against the backdrop of an uncritical embracing of the Age of IT, she cautions against mistaking increases in computing speed and efficiency with advances in human evolution: an anthropomorphism which confuses digital proficiency with human intelligence.

Moodley frames a response to the widely held assumption that computers are rapidly reaching a point in their development where they will be able to behave like human beings. Since other authors in this number argue for a greater role for computers in education and research, it is helpful to ask whether they are making the implicit assumption that IT may ultimately be able to take over entirely from human beings. A de-humanised humanities may not be as far-fetched a notion as we may at first suppose. Moodley's juxtaposition of the capabilities of the 'thinking robot' with Rousseau's holistic conception of the human being challenges the complacent acceptance of

machines into parts of our lives and work that may be threatened by the resulting lack of human interaction. When we compare humans and computers, the whole is most definitely more than the sum of its parts. Human intellect is more than the sum of all measurable brain activities: 'The switches that make up the human brain ... do *not* entirely account for the various psychological activities that the human being can accomplish. In other words human intellectual capacity stretches beyond the capacity of the brain'.

Rita Wilson's article goes to the heart of what a contemporary engagement with IT can mean to the creative writer. Wilson explores hypertext fiction in relation to the postmodern notion of intertextuality and considers the extent to which the new medium offers an opportunity to investigate a writing space that literally embodies what Wilson refers to as the 'decline of linearity'. Hypertext provides an 'almost embarrassingly literal embodiment' of literary theory (Landow 1992:34). Wilson cautions that the multiple tangents wired into the structure of a hypertext may, paradoxically, inhibit our engagement with the text, compared with the multiple interpretations generated by the reader's imagination in a conventionally printed text. Wilson provides a lucid and comprehensive view of the state of the art in hypertext fiction writing, and the possibilities opened up by using the Internet as a limitless extension to the otherwise closed boundaries of the text: 'The painted-on *trappe à œil* doors (or windows) become real, letting the reader open them to explore alternative juxtapositions and interweavings'.

Although alert to the potentially reductionist and technicist influence of the medium itself and so echoing some of Narcen Moodley's concerns, Wilson provides examples from fiction in which constructs of artificial intelligence are personified, and are made to play out the debates and ambiguities of their existence with other fictional characters, and with the reader him/herself (Coville's 'Computer Lady', and Eco's 'Abulafia'). Indeed Morrow and Murray's program called *Character Maker* becomes both amusing and terrifying in the light of Moodley's thesis. Perhaps the best response to Moodley's reservations is Wilson's reminder that computer code is a species of language, and its 'goal, like that of the natural languages we speak and write, is at least partly to embody human thought. Hypertext literature can be viewed as an effort to integrate these two branches of language to form a richer, deeper medium of expression'.

Like de Beer, Susan Sporey attacks the type of academic hypocrisy that sets itself up as 'expert in the field', and then perversely goes on to use the notion of the academic discipline to discourage inter-disciplinary research

and perpetuate the *status quo*. We may fiercely protect our 'academic territory ... even while we speak the need for modes of learning and exchange that are quite the opposite of what we practise'. She concludes that interdisciplinarity is 'what Humanities research should be all about ... that if we believe in the public role of the intellectual and in the potential of the academy to be instrumental in forging an active and engaged practice and understanding of global citizenship, it is the socially responsible way to proceed, and that it could be a particularly fruitful exercise at the juncture of disciplinary boundaries'.

Spearey acknowledges the dangers of potentially 'depersonalizing' and 'dehumanizing' the learning experience by adopting IT-based learning approaches, but successfully exploits the medium's capacity to provide an open forum for discussion and dialogue, which effectively transcends some of the technology's negative connotations. By exploring the counter-hegemonic possibilities of the virtual classroom, Spearey observes 'how the technology enables students to track not only their initial impressions of a given text, but also their evolving understandings of the issues raised therein as they proceed through seminar discussions, reflective summaries of these discussions, essay writing, collaborative projects, and through the opportunity to engage with one another's essays or their own previous thoughts in the second course essay and the final examination paper'. Spearey looks forward to the possibility of using the virtual classroom environment to engage her Canadian students in dialogues with literature students in South Africa.

Harriet Deacon reminds us that it is very rare for a university to have a team of multimedia courseware developers, especially in the humanities. Her case study demonstrates how valuable such courseware development can be—not as a bolt-on, one-size-fits-all solution to teaching and learning, but because of its capacity to integrate the content and the essential skills of the discipline (in this case, History). This is especially the case when the developers are concerned to 'emphasize content over medium by making the tutorial user-friendly'. Deacon also insists that a close relationship between the multimedia component and the rest of the course is crucial to its success.

Faced with a student body with highly diverse abilities, the MEG (Multimedia Education Group) hoped to exploit the flexibility of the digital medium to match the varied capacities of individual students. An additional set of materials was intended to complement the existing course with explanatory material for students who were experiencing learning difficulties. The other set provided more sources and background for enterprising students who wished to explore the subject more extensively. Given the often

jaundiced reactions of academics in the humanities to the use of IT in their disciplines, Deacon's account of student feedback on the course is illuminating. One student, for instance, complained that the course developers, by having included 'funny pics' in the material, were guilty of lowering standards and turning-down a serious academic activity. To which Deacon tellingly responds: 'It is a sad reflection of the type of history that has been taught in many schools and universities to date that pictures (especially 'funny' ones) are not seen as material for "serious research", but only as motivational tools for the less enthusiastic student'.

Anand Naideo reviews the work of Science Fiction author William Gibson, who coined the term 'cyberspace' in his first novel *Neuromancer* in 1984. Tapping into the growing sense that computer networks could be self-contained virtual worlds in their own right, Gibson projected himself and his readers imaginatively into this new 'cyberspace'. In some ways, the later rapid development of the World Wide Web and the evolution of sophisticated computer games both vindicated Gibson's vision and overlook it, and in Naideo's view, deprived Gibson of an adequate creative response in his subsequent writing. The irony of 'cyberpunk' literature is that it imaginatively re-creates a virtual world within the thoroughly conventional medium of the printed novel. Unlike the novels of Cortázar or Eco, Gibson does not experiment with the form of the novel, or explore the possibilities of the inter text in his non-linear cyberspace. He remains, for all his visionary foresight, an unadventurous novelist.

The promise of new library and archiving technologies to provide the environment for collaborative ventures is the focus of Dale Peters' article. Digital technologies impact on various arts and humanities disciplines: 'archaeology, art, art history, history, information studies, languages and linguistics, literary studies, music, the performing arts'. Peters looks beyond the current stereotype of the library as an inert storage facility, envisaging a 'digital library [that] could support ... academic research projects in providing access to high quality scanning equipment, computer workstations, multimedia development software, and personal technical support'. The Campbell Collections in Durban has been a leader in the adoption of digital technologies in pursuit of the preservation of rare manuscripts and photographs, in the interests of protecting rare artifacts while simultaneously increasing access to them via the Internet.

Theo Bothma, Karen de Wet and Paul Bothma contribute two related articles 'Implementing a Digital Library for Afrikaans Poetry' that examine

both the theoretical foundations and the technical aspects of conceptualising, designing and implementing a digital library for Afrikaans poetry in an XML environment. The authors argue that a 'system theory approach in literature and the hypertext environment' are suitable for such a project, and then go on to describe the design of their digital library—consisting at this stage of the project of the poems (and related material) included in the 2000 edition of *Groot Verseboek*.

Beatriz Resende argues that the Internet can provide a way for under-resourced and marginalised southern hemisphere literature to claim its place in world literature. She suggests that one strategy open to southern writers and academics is to tap into the existing global resources of the Internet. Resende describes the launch of the electronic magazine *Z* published by the Advanced Program of Contemporary Culture (PACC) at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. *Z* grew out of a 'desire to publish new texts about emerging issues such as Cultural Studies, a certain motivation to mix literature, art, behavioral themes, and theoretical reflections as well as the need to establish a net for the exchange of interdisciplinary knowledge—which implies contacts between scholars in geographically distant places, in different campuses, in remote spaces and cities—all that associated with the belief that we had to enter the globalised space for the exchange of information'. Resende's discussion of the marginalisation of Portuguese as a minority language on the Internet has implications for South Africa's non-English official languages.

Joan Conolly's article considers the potential of computers to capture the nuances of oral performance in digital form. Such digital representations may be 'frozen' and subjected to analysis in various dimensions. Conolly points out that 'Oral-style texts are constantly challenged by the limitations of the medium available for their record and analysis'. Advances in digital recording now provide the 'capacity to record and analyse texts that are vitally and dynamically multi-faceted: records constituted not only of words, but of the voice, body and the hands as well'. However, a computer alone cannot produce any meaningful interpretation of such recordings, ultimately 'its applications are dependent on human understanding of the psycho-biology of human memory and performance, human capacity for cybernetic invention and the consequent limitations and dilemmas attendant upon ventures into Virtual Reality'.

Beyond the articles dealing with humanities computing, the last few articles make important contributions towards current discourse in their respective fields. These are examples of areas in which encyclopaedic

knowledge may be generated and disseminated with the assistance of further computing developments.

In her paper, Kalpana Hiralal examines the nature of anti-Indianism and Indo-White race relations within the economic, social and political context of post-war Natal. The Indians, both in colonial and post-colonial Natal were often perceived negatively by many Whites, especially those who competed with them in trade and industry. Much of the antagonism stemmed from competition in the spheres of retail and African trade. Often, the Indian trading class of 'passenger' origin, was a target of racial antagonism and hostility. This group, unlike the indentured Indians, came to Natal as free British subjects, from the West Coast of India. From the 1870s onwards, they came to exploit economic opportunities. Imbued with trading skills, determination and in some cases capital, they settled in Durban and Pietermaritzburg. Many also settled in remote parts of Natal. With their family-orientated businesses, few overheads, and long working hours, they were able to monopolise much of the retail African and Indian trade in Natal, and were a serious economic challenge to White petty traders. By the end of the First World War, they were firmly established in Natal. Their entry and success in Natal's economy was resented. White petty traders agitated for restrictive trade legislation and wanted a greater degree of protectionism from the Government. The formation of the South African League, a non-party-political association, aimed at protecting White economic and political interests against the 'Asiatic menace', and offered many an outlet to vent their economic frustrations and resentment.

Kwame Owusu-Ampomah's article analyses 'Africa's dilemma', and indicate possible directions for Africa to extricate herself from the quagmire of poverty, political instability and insecurity. In this task, the paper acknowledges that Africa faces an enormous challenge. This challenge will not only require radical or unorthodox approaches but will also demand an unflinching patriotism, dedication, and partnership of all Africans—the rulers and the ruled; workers and the business community; commoners and intellectuals; states and civil societies. The article, among other things, discusses the Euro-centric idea of Africa and what it means to be an African in the 21st century, the prospects for Africa's emancipation, and the values, and philosophical ideas—including traditional ideas—required to underpin African initiatives in the socio-economic and political transformation of the continent. For Africa to achieve stability and progress, Owusu-Ampomah argues, she would need to take responsibility for her emancipation, overcome

her fragmentation with a strong continental body, make a paradigm shift and support rhetoric with action and commitment.

In 'Colonial Cousins in Poetry', Veena Lutchman briefly surveys Hindi poetry in India during the period of British rule and South African poetry written by black poets in English during South Africa's period of apartheid. Her focus is on the degree to which poetry has both social and historical dimensions and how poetry can be regarded as a representation of what one might call the 'universal' human mind.

It is surprising that having won the Ad Donker prize for originality of voice and vision in 1983, South African poet and artist Wopko Jensma has attracted little critical attention. Apart from brief articles by Peter Horn and Michael Gardiner and a spate of book reviews, no comprehensive biography or critical study of what is certainly a major South African poet has been undertaken. In his article, therefore, Aysoob Sheik not only endeavours to reconstruct Jensma's biography, but also reflects on a hitherto unpublished and mostly unknown anthology entitled 'Blood and More Blood'. Together with his published volumes, *Sing for Our Execution* (1973), *Where White is the Colour, Where Black is the Number* (1974) and *Have You Seen My Shippings* (1977) Jensma's poetry constitute an interesting and idiosyncratic response to the strife and turmoil in South Africa in the seventies. It is hoped that this biography would provide insight and understanding into the context and milieu in which Jensma wrote and stimulate renewed enthusiasm for his often cryptic and experimental poetry.

In his article, Renbrandt Klepper presents a theory of human communication that he calls the *Theory of the Optimisation of Human Communication* (TOHC). He proposes the TOHC as a general theory to account for the progressive complexification of forms of communication among modern humans in response to the progressive complexification of human culture, how it developed through time and how it articulates current realities.

In the final two articles, this issue places two keynote addresses. The first one by Mogomane Masoga addresses the challenges African intellectuals face and in the last one, Shane Moran engages the issue of the 'politics of critical thought'.

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Inventive Intellectual Adventures in Cyberspace

Fanie de Beer

Developments in recent decades in the field of information and communication technique and technology have had dramatic impacts on human beings and societies and on their activities. Central human activities such as thinking, reading, writing and acting – to mention only a few crucial ones for our context – have changed in significance. Conceptions regarding more or less all important matters have been radically revised like our views of humans, subjectivity, thinking, reality, world, subjectivity, space, time, and so on which are all so vitally important for human existence, happiness, progress and survival. Careful reflection leads to a new understanding of all these old and traditional themes albeit extremely difficult to articulate these matters differently and appropriately.

One of the most impressive changes relates to our perception and experiences of space and its demarcations and boundaries. A marked illustration of such a change in thinking is the way Castells (1996) distinguishes between 'a space of places' and 'a space of flows'. The 'space of flows' which substitutes the 'space of places' stands under the direct influence and impact of the so-called 'network society'. He writes:

... the new communication system radically transforms space and time, the fundamental dimensions of human life. Localities become disembodied from their cultural, historical, geographic meaning, and reintegrated into functional networks, or into image collages, inducing a space of flows that substitutes for the space of places. Time is erased in the new communication system when past, present, and future can be programmed to interact with each other in the same message. The space of flows and timeless time are the material foundations of a new culture, that transcends and includes the diversity of historically

transmitted systems of representation: the culture of real virtuality where make-belief is belief in the making (Castells 1996:375).

The space of flows is basically an information space and the issue here is the flow of information. There exists no discrimination between units of information nor are there privileged ones either. For instance, the highly subsidised natural sciences and the highly privileged economic sciences are not exceptional in this spatial context over against the humanities. The only primary condition is that the humanities should use the opportunity to come forward with their qualities and participate without hesitation in the general discourses of the day. Related to this is a secondary equally important condition: know the other discourses; be familiar with the rhetoric of natural scientists and economists. Despite their pretentious attitudes they do not have impeccable insights neither do they possess the ultimate in knowledge. Without the humanities the ideological pretensions, metaphysical assumptions and very human extra-scientific prejudices governing all these sciences will never be identified or unmasked.

To be here and in Paris or Los Angeles at the same time implies a drastic relativization of space in the sense of near and far. The virtualisation of space which transgresses boundaries without effort (we are no longer locked up between four walls) brings about a different experience of space, world, reality, being in the world and many other related issues. Let us then begin with space in this new sense. As Paul Virilieu (1991:25) puts it: '... the substantial, homogeneous space derived from classical Greek geometry gives way to an accidental, heterogeneous space in which sections and fractions become essential once more'.

Vast digital networks, computer memories, interactive multimodal interfaces, quick and nomadic, which individuals can easily appropriate present to the human mind stimuli which make thought visible, image abstraction and complexity, create landscapes that our bodies can explore, feel, and modify and these together constitute what may be called 'virtual worlds'. In a 'virtual world' it is possible and necessary to construct and apply technical, social and semiotic means that will effectively incarnate and give material existence to the notion of collective intelligence so that interconnected relations can become apparent, the most obscure notions can be contacted, images be illuminated and made comprehensible. When these things happen one can with freedom state that collective intelligence creates a new space. This space is called cyberspace. A careful consideration of this

notion of space is required because this is the space within which our intellectual activities are displayed.

1 Cyberspace

This is a word from the pen of William Gibson, the science fiction writer, a word with serious negative connotations, but also a word 'that gives a name to a new stage, a new and irresistible development in the elaboration of human culture and business under the sign of technology'. It is indeed a new notion of space with all sorts of implications which is emerging—not utopian, nor another metaphysics but a statement of fact. This new notion has been described in a very lively and intriguing way by various authors participating in a publication edited by Michael Benedikt (1992).

This whole discussion is necessitated by developments in the field of electronic media and the very important terms 'virtuality' and 'virtual space' which are so characteristic of all these developments and especially in view of their impact on all human discourses. This space is characterised by the necessity of an irreducible plurality—it is a space of the multiple or of multiplicity. On the 'principle of multiplicity' Deleuze and Guattari (1983:136) write: 'It is only when the multiple is treated as substantive or multiplicity that it no longer bears any relationship to the One as subject or as object, as natural or intellectual reality, as image or world'. This space filled with the multiple engenders a new conception of world, reality, subject and object totally and radically different from before. The multiplicities have no subjects or objects: they are rhizomatic. And rhizomes never cease to connect semiotic chains, organizations of power, and events in the arts, sciences, and social struggles. The dimensions of multiplicities grow and in the process their connections increase as well. Cyberspace is clearly a space of dimensions, connections and relations. Well known and widely utilized terms like 'net' and 'web' are appropriate here.

These dramatic dimensions pose a serious challenge to intellectual activities. The heft of the challenges is clear from the etymology of the word 'intellectual', i.e. *inter + legere*, which literally means that our thinking can move across boundaries and between lines. The intellect finds this space adventurously inviting and challenging to travel and navigate. It may have special significance for reading. It means that humans, all humans from all disciplines, possess special abilities to respond adequately to these challenges.

The notions of cyberspace and virtual reality open up renewed possi-

bilities for metaphysical speculation sometimes to the utmost degree and to the extreme. Porush (1994) offers a clear discussion of this theme in his article. It is not the intention in this present article to glide into the same kind of threatening abyss. Yet it needs to be emphasized, however, that one facet of speculation which may be even more dangerous than metaphysical pursuits may be unreflective participation in the application of terms not well understood or perhaps not understood at all. Lévy (1998:183) puts it fairly strongly when he states unequivocally that 'much of the madness and violence of our time' may exactly be caused by submitting for example to the term 'virtualization' without understanding it. For this reason it is only responsible to search for an understanding of this and related notions.

Lévy (1997b:107) defines cyberspace as 'the space communication opened by the mutual interconnection of computers and informatic memories'. This definition includes the totality of electronic communication systems to the extent that they convey information. The distinctive mark of cyberspace is the plastic, fluid, finely calculable and treatable in real time, hypertextual and—for all practical purposes—virtual character of information... Cyberspace is indeed an information space and as such not limited to any specific discourse but accommodating of all possible discourses and very specifically the discourses of the humanities. This is important from the point of view that discourses degrading the humanities are still fully active at this point in time up to the highest level.

New communication and information systems provide members of a community with the means to coordinate their interactions within the same virtual universe of knowledge. This is not merely a matter of modelling the physical environment, but of enabling members of localized communities to interact within a mobile landscape of signification. Events, decisions, actions, and individuals would be situated along dynamic maps of shared context and continuously transform the virtual universe in which they assume meaning. In this sense cyberspace would become the shifting space of interaction among knowledge and knowers, in deterritorialized intelligent communities.

A dimension of decisive importance of cyberspace is that of virtuality. Lévy (1997a) devotes in a recent publication a chapter to 'Cyberspace or the Virtualization of Communication' in which he deals with matters like world wide web, access at a distance, the transfer of files, electronic mail, electronic conferences, and communication by the shared virtual world. Cyberspace represents a shared world. It is the space within which the unthinkable can be actualised due to its virtuality. 'Virtualization is the very dynamic of a shared

world; it is that through which we share a reality' (Lévy 1998:184). The important link between the notions of cyberspace and virtuality should be worked out in more detail since it is quite an intriguing relationship but also because in both directions it is really a qualifying of terms. The one without the other is unthinkable. The virtual character of cyberspace gives this space the character of a space for communication, thought and invention.

It becomes a space with an own architecture, or, as Lévy (1997b: Chapter 6) would be keen to point out and develop: 'the art and architecture of cyberspace: the aesthetics of collective intelligence'. Cyberspace represents not only communications networks and digital memories which will soon incorporate nearly all forms of representation and messages in circulation. It might also presage the terrifying often inhuman future revealed in science fiction: the cataloguing of individuals, the anonymous exercise of power, the annihilation of memory, and many more issues. It is nevertheless equally possible that the virtual world of collective intelligence could just as easily be as replete with culture, beauty, intellect and knowledge, as a Greek temple, or a Gothic cathedral. Porush (1994) develops this possibility further in his valuable discussions on the architecture of cyberspace. It is indeed a site to be fully inhabited should we want to share in the beauty and wealth invested there. What we encounter here is an unmediated communications space which puts us in a direct way in contact with vast knowledge resources liberated from disciplinary boundaries. These remarks postulate a cyberspace under construction with the encouragement of collective intelligence and collective imagination. With a view to achieving this ideal Lévy (1997b:127) suggests that we concentrate on the following:

1. Instruments that promote the social bond through the exchange of knowledge;
2. Methods of communication that acknowledge, integrate, and restore diversity rather than simple reproduction;
3. Systems that promote the emergence of autonomous beings;
4. Semiotic engineering that will enable us to exploit and enhance data, skills and symbolic power accumulated by humanity.

It is self-evident to what extent the discourses of the humanities can be introduced in this context on a grand scale. Hesitation may reflect a certain rejection of responsibility on their side, but most certainly not because of a lack of opportunities.

But this is not all. The notion of cyberspace as a space of intellectual exchanges and networks of discourses has an interesting theoretical background that may enable us to accommodate the notion of cyberspace more constructively.

2 Cyberspace and its Theory

Theoretical Preparations

There is no lack of theoretical preparation for this new spatial concept and its dynamic implications. Even before the stage of the emergence of an electronic environment as we have come to know it now, theoretical reflections anticipated these developments, as it were. The theoretical possibilities of new spatial networks were developed by many thinkers in many different ways. Barthes, Deleuze, Derrida, Foucault, Guattari, Kristeva, Lacan, Serres are some of the prominent figures in this regard – to name only a few. They prepared the theoretical soil for what was to come. Certainly, most of the time these specific developments were not anticipated, especially not in the late sixties when their first works came into existence.

In the sixties Kristeva developed her views on the notion of 'intertext' and Nelson his on 'hypertext'. These were unrelated developments on two sides of the globe, one from the perspective of literary theory and the other from the perspective of computer work and informatics. It is interesting in notice to what extent notions like digitalisation, deconstruction, intertextuality and hypertextuality give expression to what Foucault would have called the contemporary episteme. For Kristeva (1984:59-60) intertext denotes 'the passage from one sign system to another'. This shift of positions involves an altering of position – the destruction of the old position and the formation of a new one. The formation of a specific signifying system is the result of a redistribution of several different sign systems. The transposition of one (or several) sign system(s) into another, the passage from one signifying system to another demands a new articulation. 'If one grants that every signifying practice is a field of transpositions of various signifying systems (an intertextuality) one understands that the "place" of enunciation and its denoted "object" are never single, complete, and identical to themselves, but always plural, shattered, capable of being tabulated' (Kristeva 1984:60). Hypertext, coined by Nelson in the 1960s, refers to a form of electronic text, a radically new information technology, and is defined as follows: 'By "hypertext" I

mean nonsequential writing: text that branches and allows choices to the reader, best read at an interactive screen. As popularly conceived, this is a series of text chunks connected by links which offer the reader different pathways' (Nelson 1981:2). It is clear that links, networks, alternative readings and inventions are built in into both approaches.

Derrida's demonstration of textures in *Glas* where he links texts of Hegel and Genet with his own reading is another brilliant example of the same idea. The reading of texts can and should lead to the creation of a new text, what Kristeva calls 'a new articulation' and what Nelson refers to as 'different (or new?) pathways'.

Serres' demonstration of the relevance of networks, and especially networks of messages in *La Communication* (1968) is an overwhelming insight for that time. But his whole oeuvre, created during a period of about ten years, and not only this text, gives evidence of the same idea: *La production* (1966); *L'interférence* (1972); *La distribution* (1977); *Le passage du Nord-Ouest* (1980); also some other publications by him for example one of the more recent ones titled *The Angels*. The development of the actor-network theory in French and British sociology circles were direct consequences of these views. While the previous texts worked on the theory only, the last one demonstrates in what ways electronic media and computer networks are relevant and applicable in the world of information and knowledge as such.

Deleuze and Guattari with their 'thousand plateaus' and the notions of the multiple, rhizome, and nomad science, to mention only a few terms, prepare a super playground for hypertextual activities in cyberspace. Networks, textures and rhizomes are clearly significant and appropriate terms to use creatively in this context.

We have to move from these largely preparatory texts to more specific theorising of the notion of cyberspace and related issues. They are preparatory in the sense that they have no specific and very explicit focus on electronic connections—it is much more a matter of the connection of ideas and texts and signifying systems. Developments in the field of electronic media are more a matter of creating agencies for facilitating these connections.

Theorising Cyberspace

The bridge between the theories with implications for cyberspace and what it represents on the one hand and the specific and explicit theorising of

cyberspace is well articulated in many ways and by diverse scholars but one specific work, that of Landow (1992), may be one of the most telling examples of this bridging process. The title of his book is *Hypertext: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology*. In this book he discusses in what ways the previous paragraph and the following can be linked in a significant way. His linkage of a notion of critical theory interpreted in a fairly wide sense and contemporary technical developments is particularly significant for the role, possibilities, and challenges confronting the humanities regarding their future at this specific point in time. Poster (1995) has done the same but with a more specific focus on the impact of media developments on our understanding of human subjectivity and the human subject in relation to information.

Theorising cyberspace leads to very interesting insights which remind us time and again of the theoretical milieu in which these views emerge. Communication networks and digital memories are in the process of incorporating nearly all forms of representation and messages in circulation. These networks and message circulation no longer have any limitations. Traditional boundaries are transgressed in a physical sense but also in the sense of signification. Definitions and demarcations have to be redefined and redescribed. Traditionally space has been defined more in terms of its boundaries than in terms of its extensions and scope. Redefining and redescribing space brings us to the vastness of limitless scope and infinite dimensions. This spatial redescription is referred to cyberspace or virtual space. Lévy (1998:119) writes: 'Cyberspace constitutes a vast, unlimited field, still partially indeterminate, which should not be reduced to only one of its many components. It is designed to interconnect and provide an interface for various methods of creation, recording, communication, and simulation'. It represents the universe of digital networks as a world of interaction and adventure, of the new media of information transmission. As such it refers to the modes of creation, navigation and invention within knowledge, but also to the social relations all these developments bring about. A new culture emerges namely 'cyberculture' (Lévy 1997a).

The intention here is not, as already mentioned, to indulge in metaphysical speculations and considerations of transcendence, despite the fact that this may prove to be, according to some, a natural human inclination. A more significant and promising move may be rather to opt for ontological considerations. Although even this emphasis is strongly rejected by some as a possible way of a constructive development of 'an ontology of cyberspace' in

terms of extreme realism (Graham 1999), theory of being seems nevertheless very adequate to theorize cyberspace and its concomitant notion of virtual reality. Guattari (1995:61) discusses extensively what he calls 'the assemblage of the four ontological functions'. Rather than moving towards the simplification of the complex he is moving towards the complexification of the complex, 'its processual enrichment towards the consistency of its virtual lines of bifurcation and differentiation, in short towards its ontological heterogeneity'.

Both Alliez (1993) and Martin (1996) add their explicit and significant contributions to the reflection on an ontology applicable to and relevant for this context. For Alliez ontologies are daily reborn under our eyes, despite criticisms against objects, and even if they are not already part of all our daily discourses. According to Martin the so-called virtual realities propose to us a trip in and among images. Both writers' conjectures are influenced by the insights of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.

Pierre Lévy (1998:169-179) is, however, the one who has picked up and refined these insights, making them more practical and applicable in the context of virtual reality, cyberspace and cyberculture, especially in his elaborate and clear discussions of 'the four modes of being'. It seems plain that these discussions open the road to a very constructive and substantial development of a theory of virtual reality and cyberspace in terms of an elaborate theory of being, while especially preparing the road for inventiveness. In this regard it is useful to consult Hillis (1999) for a critical history of virtual reality.

Cyberspace and cyberculture include matters like hypertext, interactive multimedia, video games, virtual reality, simulations; a more comprehensive understanding of reality than up till now. We indeed encounter a new, different world. This world should be inhabited. Its potential must be recognized as a potential for beauty, thought and new forms of social regulation. Some suggest a new name for these new citizens, namely 'cyborg' (Haraway 1990, and *The Cyborg Handbook*). This takes us to the next dimension of our reflections.

3 Cyberspace as Human Space

New possibilities of exploration for inquisitive human beings have been uncovered. Cyberspace is not an electronic space in the first place. Human imagination is for centuries far beyond cyberspace—see for example Kant's

notion of 'transcendental imagination'. Cyberspace, to the extent that it is energized by electronic media, is not so much novel, but rather an exercise in trying to catch up with human imagination—like a travel agent moving very fast beyond all familiar places and spaces. Imagination involves intellect as well as knowledge (*inter + legere*—'reading between the lines', as mentioned earlier). In other words, linking discourses of different kinds. The implication of linking discourses is inevitably a matter of moving beyond boundaries, transgressing limitations.

Lévy (1997b) uses the term 'anthropological space' as a characterization of the place of humans in cyberspace. Humans do not occupy single spaces. 'I do not inhabit a unique space ... but I inhabit a multiplicity of spaces' writes Michel Serres (1972:153). This can certainly refer to physical and geographical spaces, and also aesthetic, emotional, social and historical spaces but, especially in our context, cyberspace. These spaces are all inhabitable spaces of signification, but cyberspace in particular is a space of signification.

It is an anthropological space, but a space in which new models of subjectivity emerge. What is required now is to understand the human being as a set of informational processes. It becomes especially a space of the posthuman. While the liberal self is produced by market relations, the posthuman is an amalgam, a collection of heterogeneous components, a material-informational entity whose boundaries undergo continuous construction and reconstruction (Hayles 1999a:3-5). If cyberspace is a human space, it is indeed a space where humans are redefined and redescribed as entities, but also as social beings, in other words in their sociality. Cyborgs, posthumans ... are descriptive terms in this regard. Porush (1994:552-553) characterizes the cyborg and the posthuman respectively in the following way:

The result of the inscription of a utopian vision onto a human is a cyborg, a natural organism linked for its survival and improvement to a cybernetic system. The immanence of the cyborg is not a matter of speculation. It is a matter of reporting the news We are already experiencing the reflux from a time twenty seconds into the future, when our own media technologies will physically transcribe themselves onto our bodies, recreating the human in their own images, forcing our evolution into the posthuman through a combination of mechanistic and genetic manipulations. We will all become texts in which the culture reads back to itself the computer codes inscribed on

nar bodies. The posthuman will be the governor—the cybernetes or pilot—in the inscription loop between the ultimate controlling technology of cybernetics.

From a different perspective this change in the understanding of human subjectivity in cyberspace is described by Lévy (1993:155-172) in terms of 'the fragmentation or its basis of the thinking subject' and in terms of 'the dissolution of the knowing subject'. From various sources the plurality and multiplicity of all aspects which compose the human cognitive system have been described. There are no longer subjects as thinking substances. 'It' thinks in a network where neurones, cognitive modules, humans, teaching institutions, language systems, writing systems, books and computers are interconnected while transforming and translating transformations. Lévy finds his theoretical support in the work of Deleuze, Guattari and Serres. Poster (1995:33) sees this new subject as inserted in 'a decentred network of communications' with the implication that the subject is no longer in the centre. In her discussion of the theme 'what virtual creators can teach us' Hayles (1999b) is even more explicit:

... as I think about my connection to virtual creatures, I am tempted to fashion myself in their images, seeing myself as a distributed cognitive system comprised of multiple agents running the programs from which consciousness emerges, even though consciousness remains blissfully unaware of them. I am one kind of material embodiment, the virtual creatures are another, but we are connected through dynamic processes that weave us together in a web of jointly articulated cognitive activities. I think, therefore I connect with all the other cognizers in my environment, human and nonhuman

In their publication *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari describe the 'rhizomes' which extend themselves on a plane of consistency while transgressing all arborescent classifications and connecting the totally heterogeneous strata of being. The multiplicity and molecular processes are in opposition to unifying forces. 'A rhizome never ceases to connect semiotic chains, organizations of power, and events in the arts, sciences, and social struggles', they write elsewhere (Deleuze & Guattari 1983:12). In *The Parasite* Serres (1982) utilises the same words to speak of human relations and things of the world. Although the two domains were separated and studied

by different sciences, there is always in all cases of communications, of interceptions and interferences, of transpositions and distributions, of transmutations of messages, the question of 'the parasite'. Human relations are fundamentally parasitical relations. It remains a matter of how human subjects fit into the networks in cyberspace and what kind of impact these links have on subjects. The posthuman subject is more mobile than the traditional liberal subject to explore and move around in cyberspace.

The human dimension of cyberspace is thoroughly explored by Bolter and Grusin (1999:238-265) 'by examining some consequences of the remediating power of digital media for our culture's definitions of the self', which they have well articulated in terms of 'the remediated self', 'the virtual self', and 'the networked self'.

4 Cyberspace as Knowledge Space

This is about the interconnectedness (atlas) of knowledges. It is knowledge in its fullness that fills this space. The informatization of society (see De Beer 2000) on a global scale creates a predominant position for knowledge to such an extent that there can be and is indeed talk of 'the age of knowledge'. The question here is how we should approach the so-called 'age of knowledge' in view of the transformations that resulted from the contemporary evolution of technical and organizational structures: the multiplication of intelligence, the linking of intelligences on a global scale; the acknowledgement of the authenticity and validity of the intelligence of the other. 'Totalitarianism collapsed' because 'it was incapable of collective intelligence' (Lévy 1997b:3). All dogmatisms inevitably collapse eventually. The assumption of collective intelligence is that we will abandon the perspective of power. Collective intelligence strives to pursue and promote the interplay with alterity, imaginativeness and labyrinthine complexity. The ultimate aim may be the establishment of intelligent communities. A climate or milieu is created for writing, reading and thinking on a different level.

Implications

1. Breakdown of boundaries, especially disciplinary boundaries—transgressions (epistemic as well as ethical);

2. Reconnecting and configuring: the shape of a molecule as determined by the arrangement of its atoms or, the structure of an atom as determined by the arrangement of its electrons and nucleus;
3. Inventions: Invention tends to occur when unrelated areas, ideas, or forms come together in unexpected ways. Specialised organization of disciplines works precisely to avoid and suppress the conditions conducive to invention (Ullmer & Tschumi 1990);
4. Confrontations—burial of sacred cows. Agonistics of Lyotard and confrontation of Ullmer are in place here. Confrontation—face facing face;
5. Collective intelligence: The issues mentioned open up new understanding of intelligence, intelligence without boundaries or racist, culturalist or dogmatist preferential connections, free moving intelligences.

This notion of 'collective intelligence' has been explicitly and comprehensively developed by Pierre Lévy (1997b). He sees the computerization/informatization of society as having the potential to 'promote the construction of intelligent communities in which our social and cognitive potential can be mutually developed and enhanced' (Lévy 1997:17). It is his hope that the Internet, World Wide Web and the new computer technologies, 'will serve to filter and help us navigate knowledge, and enable us to think collectively rather than simply haul masses of information around with us' (Lévy 1997:17). His vision is deeply human and social. He believes that the computer can, through technologies like 'knowledge trees', provide us a means by which to share knowledge with others and meet them in largely unbiased and democratic cyberspace. His notion of collective intelligence is a 'universally distributed intelligence'. He believes that 'in one knows everything, everyone knows something, all knowledge resides in humanity'. All of us have something to contribute to this knowledge pool. All have something to gain.

In this regard the statement by Michel Serres (1997:xvi) is very relevant: 'Science speaks of organs, functions, cells, and molecules, to admit finally that it's been a long time since life has been spoken of in laboratories, but it never says flesh, which very precisely, designates the mixture of muscles and blood, skin and hairs, bones, nerves and diverse functions which thus mixes what the relevant disciplines analyse. Life throws the dice ... Each portion of knowledge works at the intersection of the interference of many

other disciplines and, sometimes, of almost all of them (Serres 1997:xvi-xvii). It is not unjustified to view all sciences as human sciences anyway. Are not all the sciences and their discourses, from the natural sciences to theology, human discourses on specific themes, topics or objects and even domains of study?

Discursive networks are established all the time; new connections are established; connections between intelligences are established. For this very reason Lévy publishes a book precisely on the rich and pregnant notion of 'collective intelligence' which constitutes a virtual world replete with culture, beauty, knowledge and intellect.

Cyberspace represents the ultimate labyrinth on which Castoriadis writes in such a pertinent way. At the same time, as one of its most decisive implications, it implies or demonstrates the opposite of the linear conception of knowledge rejected already long ago by Nietzsche, Hunderwasser the artist, Mandelbrot the geometrist, Deleuze and Guattari, philosopher and psychoanalyst respectively.

Even the interdisciplinary studies of for example Prigogine and Stengers deserve to be mentioned. Textual networks are not limited to works of literature and can even include in a very productive way the sciences they claim in *La nouvelle alliance* (1986) and *Time and eternity* (1989). Serres (1989) made explicit contributions in this regard as well, to which we will return later, and so does Hawkins (1995:xi) according to whom 'chaos theory currently provides the most fruitful of all conceptual bridges between "the two cultures"'.

The rethinking of established views becomes a self-evident obligation. Only a few of these views will be mentioned.

Knowledge: Knowledge becomes infinitely more than empirical facts understood in terms of positivism. What this includes is the discovery of the remainder: all that is left over or falls outside the calculations of reason. Leclerc (1990) is excellent on this in his book on the relationship between violence and language, or, in terms of Virilio (1992) the discovery of the lost dimension. This dimension is forced upon us again by the electronic media and can no longer be ignored. But there is still more to it than this. The discovery of the Other, or of the Unconscious (Lacan) requires that even the unconscious needs to be rethought in view of current theoretical as well as technical developments. There exists a very significant link between the unconscious and knowledge as so well articulated by Shoshana Felman (1987) with an emphasis on overcoming the threatening and pathological disposition.

embraced by many, namely the will to ignorance or the passion for ignorance. Illmer (1990) discusses the secret of learning how to overbear the Other and the contribution this strategy of listening makes to the development of knowledge and the dissemination of knowledge discourses.

Words: Words are not fixed – not only sciences, hard or soft, exact or inexact, rigorous and fluid, living and human, but words, because only with them can one meditate, that is with all possible words, because thinking well requires numerous words. Multiple journeys of the thinker who is not content with canonical knowledge or with the correct proof, but who must throw himself also into myths, stories, and literatures, folk knowledges.

Messages: They are no longer the linear and causal relationship from sender to receiver through a medium. The movability of messages, the linkage of messages, the wing-footed Hermes-like movement of messages almost in all or any directions, so well described by Michel Serres in his various publications, is a unique phenomenon of our time. The angel-like presence of information messages around and in us reconstructs our world and offers us a new space, or adds a new dimension to our spatial experience.

Book: The notion of the book as we know it reflects a certain model or paradigm of thought based on platonic philosophy. The idea of the book is the idea of a totality—fixed, closed and final, of course. Herewith immense implications are posed for the act of reading, but certainly also for the act of writing. Books are no longer fixed entities and reading is no longer an effort to identify with the authority of the book. Intertextuality and hypertextuality open up books from both sides and establish infinite links with other texts.

Subject and subjectivity: In redefining the subject we have to move beyond the traditional conception of the subject as in opposition to an object, be it world, society, or things. Subjectivity is in fact plural and polyphonic, inserted in networks of which it only forms a part and not necessarily the most important part. Accepting this new description, this new 'fate', is not at all a suspension of responsibilities. The answers to questions about the posthumans will be 'the mutual creation of a planet full of humans struggling to bring into existence a future in which we can continue to survive, continue to find meaning for ourselves, and our children, and continue to ponder our kinship with and differences from the intelligent machines with which our destinies are increasingly entwined' (Hayles 1999a:282).

5 The Emergence of a New Figure of Knowledge

The demands of this knowledge space requires new perspectives on rationality. It can no longer be interpreted in the strict sense of the rationalist tradition. Alternative epistemological approaches are required which will focus on detotalizing aspects of language and will capture the extrarational richness of experience—the wealth and abundance of being on which Feyerabend fixed our attention. To make this happen we will need a more robust model of cognition that will transcend the differences between literary representation and scientific epistemologies.

It seems clear that we have to leave our commitments to orthodox rationalism behind us and to realize that we are living in the post-rational, post-logocentric era. The demands of such an awareness are clear. Our ability to think has to be newly discovered, explored and cultivated. This thinking can no longer be controlled by merely clinging to physical, rationalist, and realist strategies and approaches. It contains other imaginative, spiritual, noological dimensions as well which should effectively be entertained. The domain of human thought activity and explorations should be enlarged and expanded. Porush (1994:569) articulates this urge in the following way:

The effect of Babel/infocalypse, of evolving out of the machine code and into natural language, of moving out of the Edenic prologocentrism of direct mind control (programming code) and into the babble of uncertainty and invention, was to enlarge the domain of human activity in two directions at once. The first leads to words and languaging, which from thence forward would never be enough. The second leads to a recognition of the spirit world, a domain that transcends physical presence and mechanical activity, a realm beyond words, which we can never utterly know. In certain strong innovations of culture, like ... the utopian envisioning of cyberspace, it becomes clear that the tension between the word and spirit is the fundamental creative impulse in humanity.

When we look at these new dimensions it becomes clear that a 'fantastic' world opens up before us. Foucault, commenting on one of the books of Deleuze, offers this description of the dynamic challenges of this new context. We have no option but to respond to the challenges. Foucault (1980:169)

writes: 'It is this expanding domain of intangible objects, that must be integrated into our thought; we must articulate a philosophy of the phantasm that cannot be reduced to a primordial fact through the intermediary of perception or an image, but that arises between surfaces, where it assumes meaning, and in the reversal that causes every interior to pass to the outside and every exterior to the inside, in the temporal oscillation that always makes it precede and follow itself...'

What is called for is a new order of discourse which will collapse the multiple and delusory boundaries between literature, epistemology, cognition and science. This challenge is particularly well addressed by Michel Serres in a special article on the exact sciences and literature. He writes:

I think that ... we even will achieve our greatest vitality under the conditions of inventing, quickly, the Third Curriculum. I mean: well-rounded thought, that of both our hands and of both our hemispheres. That is the role model, necessary yet lacking ... [W]e can no longer leave algorithmic rationalisation and literary rehashings completely segregated, without mortal danger. We must imagine a way in which to teach, with the same gesture, both the poem and the theorem, without wronging either and with mutual enrichment: experimentation and experience, the new world of scientists and the storytelling of time immemorial, the immortal world of scientific laws and the new age of the arts (Serres 1989:34).

This 'Third Curriculum' requires to be taught by people with special qualities.

I am seeking knowledge that is finally adult, a balanced wisdom, a certain forgetfulness of death ... The adult man is educated in a third way ... he has both culture and science ... The step undertaken here is thus not simply one of explanation; its goal is more than to reveal another form of criticism. Criticism is fairly futile—only invention counts (Serres 1989:6).

At a later stage Michel Serres (1997) developed these views further in a dramatic way and is most probably correct when he identifies 'a special figure' for this adventurous double task of exploiting these possibilities to the full and to teach it to others as his so-called 'instructed third' or 'the

troubadour of knowledge'—the thoughtful and inventive adventurer. It is an educational model or figure at the same time. Such people should be our teachers. They are able to establish connections between all knowledges; they are informed about all the sciences and all cultures. This 'new figure' is of crucial importance in the age of knowledge. What are writers, readers and thinkers doing if their writing, reading and thinking are not related to knowledge. We are not and can no longer remain outside the space of knowledge. The emergence of a new figure of knowledge reflects a deep need for a figure who can facilitate knowledge as comprehensively and as thoroughly and as deeply as possible. The challenges of the contemporary world prohibits the indulgence in superficialities and simplifications.

Understanding the world, this new world, this new spatial concept; no longer changing or transforming the world, because we do not really know what it is we want to change, or even what it should be changed. The dehumanising and overly exploited skills focus of today as the solution to all possible problems of life and society may be nothing but the sordid after-effects of an obsolete Marxism in terms of which we are no longer required to understand or think about the world but are called upon to change it, irrespective of how ill-considered or thoughtless these changes may happen to be.

The instructed third or troubadour of knowledge should facilitate collective intelligence, which also implies collective imagination, but what is more, collective understanding as well, which will inevitably lead to collective responsibility. The principal operation, for which this figure is exceptionally well qualified, is to bring about connections in the context of this vast space, to construct and extend rhizomes of meaning, to generate the scene for inventions. It is really a cultural activity—cyberculture—which is in a very explicit way also a knowledge culture.

This facilitating activity can happen in terms of thoughtful endeavours like 1) Conversation in stead of dialectics; 2) Configuration in stead of manipulation; 3) Confrontation in stead of submissiveness.

1. Conversation, in the sense of the notion of 'infinite conversation' as we find it developed by Maurice Blanchot, is an excellent strategy for the troubadour. No dialectic, no criticism, no debate, only conversational movements. This mode is in full compliance with the requirements of cyberspace. This is a kind of interrelational space, and this field of relations rests upon a distortion which introduces between

things 'a relation of infinity' (Blanchot 1993:81). This literally means ceasing to think only with a view to unity, shaking off the yoke which encloses us in a fascination with unity. The implications emphasize an infinite task, the task of a truly plural speech (Blanchot 1993:82). It seems legitimate to draw a parallel between Blanchot's notion of infinite conversation and the circulation of messages in cyberspace.

2. Configuration, in the sense of bringing figures together in harmony, by linking them adequately and inventively, is a particularly relevant way in a time ripe for knowledge work in new dimensions. It calls for a special mode of thinking, understanding and interpretation which are conditions for all sensible knowledge activities.
3. Confrontation is another facilitating function characteristic of the troubadour—see Ulmer (1990) in this regard. The intellectual developments in recent times around this term makes it extremely suitable for utilization in the context of cyberspace. In Derrida's view confrontation is committed to the notions of margins, dissemination and deconstruction. What this meant in practice is the creation of a kind of milieu or free space, an open city, a theatre of deconstruction within which negotiations on knowledge and meaning can take place. It is an open place where representatives of different views came to discuss their works, their conflicts and differences, their perspectives, where there is a ban on 'interdictions' and without having to risk conflict and schism. These views prepare a milieu or space of invention. It should be kept in mind that invention should never be limited to technical devices, not even as the most important inventions. Intellectual adventures in this space must be extended to literally all human activities—poétique, pragmatique and technique.

Bernard Tschumi's experiments with a deconstructive architecture facilitates the same views. Tschumi (1990; 1998) abstracting the notions of confrontation and madness from their original theoretical and institutional background has designed a free zone, an open city. Tschumi's plans for Le Parc de la Villette won a competition for the park of the twenty-first century but his contribution is not limited to the idea of a physical park only. As a matter of fact his plans intended to encourage cultural invention in the sense

that they show the structure of relations that produce invention. As we know invention tends to occur when unrelated areas, ideas, or forms, very often in confrontation with each other, come together in unexpected ways. No wonder invention is and will remain such a rare event in university contexts especially where no disciplinary boundaries are allowed to be transgressed. Invention is particularly ready to emerge where boundaries of whatever kind are transgressed.

The troubadour or harlequin postulates almost a kind of playfulness. The most important function of the troubadour, of course, is to facilitate invention. Inventiveness is a very special quality of humans. Michel Serres (1997:93) writes:

Invention is the only true intellectual act, the only act of intelligence. The rest? Copying, cheating, reproduction, laziness, convention, battle, sleep. Only discovery awakens. Only invention proves that one only truly thinks, whatever that may be. I think therefore I invent, I invent therefore I think: the only proof that a scientist works or that a writer writes. Why work, why write otherwise? ... The inventive breath alone gives life, because life invents. The absence of invention proves ... the absence of the work and of thought. The one who does not invent works somewhere other than in intelligence.

The milieu for invention is created and prepared by the developments discussed up till now. Inhabiting cyberspace and indulging in its wealth of knowledge and information makes invention a strong possibility and something to pursue keenly.

'The liberty of invention thus of thought' is the phrase Michel Serres (1997:xvii) used to establish the link between inventiveness and thinking, hence no invention without thinking. The troubadour is the one who excels in thinking and consequently also the one who excels in invention. This happens because of the total rejection of repetitive reasoning, of methodical laziness, of ruminating on the past and because of the embracement of the liveliness of the improbable unexpectedness of the finding (Serres 1997:100). The troubadour is the wanderer who has uncovered the secrets of employing communications, interferences, distributions, translations and voyages to the ultimate, the figure qualified by Michel Serres (1997:155) as one with 'infinite capacity', not from a position of arrogance but from a position of

worthlessness: 'I am no one and am worth nothing—capable, then, of learning everything and of inventing everything, body, soul, understanding, and wisdom'.

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The Space(s) of Hypertext Fiction

Rita Wilson

'Isn't this an "interface" here? a meeting surface for two worlds ... sure, but *which two*?' (Pyechon 1973:668).

The cultural experiences of globalisation and advanced media communications have strongly challenged the notion of intertextuality in literature. Interest is focussed less on the interaction of texts, and more on a media-shaped heterogeneity of literary/cultural practices. The concept of hypermedia has contributed to reflections on intercultural notions of language and to the shift in hermeneutic interests toward hybrid narrations that do not fit into conventional genre and media categories. How, then, does literary culture perform its age-old ritual of narrative in an era when fragmentary and discrete units of information—the mass media soundbite, television's corporate icons, or hypertext links on the World Wide Web—have become the dominant means by which we communicate? Contemporary novelists have responded in different ways to the challenge of living and writing in the latter half of the twentieth century, a historical moment in which the paper and ink with which they have traditionally worked have begun dissolving into the electronic hyperspaces of the post-print era. This paper considers the relationship between writing, literature and technology, provides a brief survey of the on-going theoretical debate over the question of electronic writing and some examples of contemporary writers who promote the interactive dimension, the 'layering' or 'branching' possibilities of hypertext. Clark et al. (in progress) argue that

any technological artifact ... can be seen as both a tool—something functional or working in the world—and as a realm—a reconceptualised world view with the theory/technology foregrounded.

Hypertext' provides us with an immediate example of both tool and realm. Hypertextual programs can be seen as tools for composition, while hypertext is its own realm of writing, requiring unique ways of thinking and composing.

1. Writing, Literature and Technology

Marshall McLuhan first called attention to the transforming powers of media in *Understanding Media* (1964), in which he claims that we cannot learn anything of importance about a medium by looking only at its content. To avoid what McLuhan calls 'the numb stance of the technological idiot'¹, we must refocus our attention on the ways in which the technological characteristics of the medium itself reshape our lives not just by giving us new tools with which to play, but by reshaping our consciousness on a fundamental and subliminal level. Daudrillard (1983:98-102), views technology, and the various forms it assumes, as 'structuring the world directly'. In the sphere of culture this implies a theory that privileges the particularities of a technological form and how it induces certain relations, experiences and effects, over, say, looking at the content of meanings contained in its various mediations.

Daudrillard (1983:139f) says that before the screen

no contemplation is possible. The role of the message is no longer information, but testing and pulling, and finally control ... Montage and codification demand, in effect that the receivers construe and decode by observing the same procedure whereby the work was assembled. The reading of the message is then only a perpetual examination of the code.

In the 1960s, Theodor H. Nelson proposed a system of 'non-sequential writing' for which he coined the term *hypertext*: 'By "hypertext" I mean non-sequential writing--text that branches and allows choices to the reader, best at an interactive screen. As popularly conceived, this is a series of text chunks connected by links which offer the reader different pathways' (Nelson 1987:12).

¹ 'Our conventional response to all media, namely that it is how they are used that counts, is the numb stance of the technological idiot. For the "content" of a medium is like the juicy piece of meat carried by the burglar to distract the watchdog of the mind' (McLuhan 1964:18).

Thus, the technology itself imposes a model of response, and even though further 'sub-codes' such as montage and its associated codes and conventions appear to liberate 'response mechanisms', they do so, 'only according to stereotypes and analytical models' (Daudrillard 1983:120). Referring to McLuhan's famous dictum that 'the medium is the message', Daudrillard (1983:123) concludes:

it is in effect the medium--the very style of montage, of denoupage, of interpolation, solicitation, summation, by the medium--which controls the process of meaning.

In *Orality and Literacy* (1982), Walter Ong also builds on McLuhan's general philosophy, plus anthropological research on the development of oral societies, in order to explain the dramatic changes in society that came about with the advent of literacy. He argues that the shift from oral to literate culture in about the fifth century BC did more than change patterns of art, politics and commerce. It enabled a profound shift in human consciousness, bringing about the linear, abstract forms of Western logic that we take for granted today but which were simply unthinkable without literacy as a means of preserving complicated original thought. Ong observes that to live and understand fully, we need not only proximity but also distance. It seems that the information age we now live in represents and reinforces this human need to be simultaneously connected and disconnected, i.e., our need to be both proximate and distanced. We experience this optimal state every time we log on to the World Wide Web: friends, colleagues, merchants, and infinite resources and information are all just a click away; we can send, receive, and connect from a safe and comfortable distance. The 'technologized word', then, as Ong puts it, both in its form and its function, fulfils this need by giving us unlimited access to both the external and our own internal resources of knowledge².

² 'A deeper understanding of pristine or primary orality enables us better to understand the new world of writing, what it truly is, and what functionally literate human beings really are: beings whose thought processes do not grow out of simply natural powers but out of these powers as structured, directly or indirectly, by the technology of writing. Without writing, the literate mind would not and could not think as it does, not only when engaged in writing but normally even when it is composing its thoughts in oral form. More than any other single invention, writing has transformed human consciousness' (Ong 1988:80).

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which he defined as

that social space that leaves no language safe or untouched, that allows no enunciative subject to hold the position of judge, teacher, analyst, confessor, or decoder.

Hypertext assumes a system where diverse and even antithetical statements coexist within a single structure, each capable of emerging in the act of reading. The system thus presents the ideal figure for its own figure—for the notion of hypertext is itself a site of convergence for opposing ideas about text, authority, and the social function of writing. Barthes' critique of the 'readerly' text produced a distinction that has great value for anyone trying to understand the difference between electronic hypertext and the textuality of the printed page. This is the opposition of 'the work', the object of traditional literary study, to 'the Text', the new field of discourse which Barthes sought to open. 'The work' is a defined body of writing, a bound volume marked with an author's name, sanctioned and validated by tradition. Against this idea of 'classic' literature Barthes set 'the Text', a web of language that links the 'work' to other discourses, including works of other writers and critics, reader responses, and even non-literary documents. 'The Text', Barthes (1979:78) wrote, 'is read without the father's signature. The metaphor that describes the Text is also distinct from describing the work The Text's metaphor is that of the *network*'.

2.1 Hypertext Fiction

The theory of transformative technology (Michael Heim's term) suggests that modernism arose with a print culture that could freeze knowledge in apparently stable archival forms separated from the flux of human existence. Postmodernism arose with the onset of an electronic culture which gives the audience (according to McLuhan) a much more personal, intense, involving relationship with media that can no longer be kept at a safe distance, or, to put it slightly differently:

The facticity of print tends to transform writer into 'author', whereas the interactivity and malleability of electronic text tends to empower the reader (Ong 1988:132).

A combination of postmodernism, literary theory and transformative technology is to be found in the work of Jay David Bolter and George Landow, among others. These theorists, as do most proponents of hypertext, see it as a practical realization of the theory of intertextuality. Through hypertext Landow (1990:150) claims, 'one gains an opening up, a freedom to create and perceive interconnections'. In this process, he notes elsewhere, 'links within and without a text ... become equivalent, thus bringing texts closer together and blurring the boundaries among them' (Landow 1992:61)⁴. As Landow claims, hypertext enormously speeds up the process of making links both within a text and between texts. He concludes that this promises to change the way we read and write and that with hypertext 'the distinction between intratextuality and intertextuality will become harder to maintain than it is with book technology' (Landow 1990:154).

For readers, then, hypertext literature has two fundamental properties that make it unique. First, it lets readers interact with the text. Second, it lets them perceive the text as a nonlinear or multilinear structure. But what are the implications of hypertext technology as a medium for the creative writer looking to move beyond traditional notions of linearity and univocity? For Michael Joyce (1995), hypertext turns the text into 'a present tense palimpsest where what shines through are not past versions but potential, alternate views'. His first work, *Afternoon, a story*⁵, completed in 1987, is a hypertext novel which requires the reader to unravel interwoven strands of narrative to

⁴ Overlooking the process of the reader's own construction of meaning from a text, however, this view of reading risks substituting a battery of intertextual links for those that readers form for themselves out of their own past experience (whether personal or literary). Readers inclined to form personal and intertextual contexts for themselves have no place in this scheme. In the perspective offered by Landow, the integrity and significance of the response to the single work of literature is replaced by a shift to the margins of the text, where endlessly permeable relationships to other texts and contexts are seen to disperse and intellectualize its values.

⁵ *Afternoon* was published in 1990 by Eastgate Systems (Watertown, Massachusetts), an innovative electronic publisher that has become the most important force in fostering and promoting interactive literature. Besides *Afternoon*, the most significant product of Eastgate Systems is Stuart Moulthrop's *Victory Garden*. Notable for its linguistic virtuosity, this work is the most ambitious and sophisticated embodiment yet of the hypertext novel.

make sense of the story⁶. The reader's efforts parallel the struggle of the story's main character to learn whether his son and estranged wife have been killed in a car accident. Bolter calls this work an example of 'topographic writing'. The writing space is made up of a complex structure of levels and links, and each reading is only one projection of the geometry of the whole. The whole is the sum of all the possible ways in which *Afternoon* may be read (500 episodes and over 900 connections) (Bolter 1990:127-130).

Another example of hypertext as visual and conceptual writing is *Uncle Budd's Phantom Funhouse* (1992) by John McHale. More a satirical literary pastiche of loosely connected writings than a novel, it invites readers to explore its text in unconventional ways. For example, choosing among various graphic images (such as Tarot cards or the rooms of a house) will take readers to different points in the text. Paradoxically, the images chosen by McHale for his electronic text remind us that, in Umberto Eco's words, 'you don't need the hypertext in order to have an open-ended reading of literature'. Obvious examples from Italian fiction are *Il castello dei destini incrociati* (*The Castle of Crossed Destinies*, 1976) by Italo Calvino, which is a book 'made first of pictures—the tarot playing cards—and secondly of written words. Through the sequence of the pictures stories are told, which the written word tries to reconstruct and interpret' (Calvino 1978:124), and Eco's second novel, *Il pendolo di Foucault* (*Foucault's Pendulum* 1986). Calvino's description of the Tarot has many affinities with electronic hypertext, providing a model for a graphic means of reading that stands in contradistinction with the signifying practices of The Book. Eco's novel shares with other postmodernist texts the thematics of mechanical reproduction, and it does so primarily through the motif of 'Abulafia', a transcendent personal computer:

Hypertext gives an unusual immediacy to this recounting of many events unfolding at once in different parts of the world during the recent Gulf War. It also ideally accommodates the novel's obsession with the blurring of the boundary between reality and TV brought about by the news media's war coverage.

The computer's name recalls Abraham Abulafia, a thirteenth century Jewish mystic, who proposed a theory of language as a sphere of contemplation. Abulafia produced twenty-six theoretical works on the subject, of which only one remains today, the *Sefer ha'Oth*. These texts described in detail a discipline known as *Hokmah ha-Zeruf*, 'the science of combining letters'.

Computers decouple writers from eternity Moreover, symbolized by Abulafia, word processors continuously but exclusively carry on transactional activities. Electronic media process pure information, obliging us to recognize that we decode meanings in terms of the contexts we bring to them (Artigiani 1992:875).

By entrusting several traditional narratological functions 'to a secondary medium', namely the representation of computer-files (first flashed on a monitor screen, then printed out as 'hard copy' (McHale 1992:183), Eco allows the reader to access simultaneously Casaubon's first-person narrative point of view and an alternative perspective on the same events. This strategy is consonant with Bolter's assertion that the geometry of electronic fiction need not be defined solely in terms of plot:

The electronic writer can exploit other organizing principles of modern printed fiction, such as the stream of consciousness of one character or the points of view of several characters ... [or] the possibility of narrating the same events from different points of view (Bolter 1990:127).

In addition, the computer and the 'files' that are embedded in the text form an intrinsic part of the structuralising order of the narrative. Abulafia functions as a reminder of the text as it was in its original form—a haphazard combination of letters that must be combined and interpreted. In this function as a language-machine, it suggests an affiliation with the poetics of 'procedural' writing⁷, involving partial surrender of authorial control over the production of the text. A fixed procedure is used which generates, automatically as it were, strings of language, which in turn become the raw materials for building narrative worlds.

Foucault's Pendulum uses the techniques of distancing and self-referentiality typical of electronic fiction. Furthermore, it is an interactive

⁶ 'The procedure involved can be rigorously mechanical, as in the case of the "algorithms" and *combinatoires* of the Oulipo group, or, alternatively, based on chance or found objects, as in the case of Burroughs's cut-ups, fold-ins, and splices. Either way the effect, from the writer's point of view, is much the same: unanticipated combinations, surprise, the evasion of the internal "censor." (McHale 1992:184).

verbal text in which the reader follows 'file' links from 'screen to screen' and so constructs the text in the act of reading. The reader is repeatedly made aware of the artificial character of reading and writing fiction, and of the aesthetic kinship between the new literary technology, the boundlessness of the new writing space and topographic writing.

3. An Italian Case Study

It is a similar aesthetic kinship that is particularly evident in the work of Carmen Covito, one of the 'new' Italian authors of the 1990s.¹⁰ Covito, a professional writer and translator, has been a theatre and literary critic, written comic screenplays, and worked as a free-lance journalist and editor. Covito reflects the ideology of her 'generation' of writers in her interest in transformations and the possibilities of 'contamination' between genres, modes of writing, multimodal productions of literary works. In her third novel, *Benvenuti in questo ambiente* (Welcome to this Environment), Covito introduces the notion of 'windows' to add a metanarrative level to the text. She explains that one of her objectives in writing this novel was to combine the use of a 'neo-Italian' spoken language, which increasingly makes use of jargon and modes of expression from telecommunication, with the uses of literariness. She calls this combination 'integrated Italian', a term obviously borrowed from the computer lexicon (as is also clearly the case for the title of the novel)¹¹.

The style used in e-mails is particularly interesting for contemporary Italian writers, because it is a style that reflects both the current, spoken language and the classic epistolary style. There is both immediacy and syntax; there is a tendency to use a colloquial register (the informal 'tu', short phrases,

lack of traditional civilities) but the gap between the formulation of an idea and the time taken to type it out on the keyboard ensures that the repetition typical of spoken language is avoided and helps to structure the discourse. In *Benvenuti in questo ambiente*, the Computer Lady (an on-line help programme 'experimentally equipped with a complex and articulate artificial personality in order to create as natural an interface with users as possible', 1997:4) writes in a style that mimics the style of email (including iconic faces or 'emoicons'). But Covito found this type of intervention at the level of the phrase, i.e., at a microstructural level, insufficient:

I tried to introduce computer logic into the macrostructure of the novel, and I came up with the idea of using 'windows'. And having windows introduced the possibility of a variety of intertextual and extratextual games (using 'cascaded' windows to narrate episodes that occur simultaneously, windows that don't close, or that only close partially [imitating the action of minimizing a window], advertising windows, windows which contain *Easter eggs*. In other words, I don't believe that traditional narrative should be satisfied with classic literary structures, but should introduce to its canon all of the modifications which reflect the contemporary capacity for responding to stimuli, and therefore the modifications of our perceptions. And our perceptions today are above all formed by the mass media (the first of which in chronological order was television), but now even more so by the interface with computers¹².

¹⁰ Covito was born in 1948 near Naples. Currently she lives and works in Milan. She is the author of prizewinning novels: *La brutina stagionata* (Plain and of a Certain Age, 1992), *Del perché i porcospini attraversano la strada* (Why do Hedgehogs Cross the Road? 1995) and *Benvenuti in questo ambiente* (Welcome to this Environment, 1997).

¹¹ 'Mi interessava contaminare il linguaggio letterario con questa specie di neolingua che in certi casi ha esiti bizzarri o cornici (quando il 'computerese' viene usato fuori contesto, applicandolo a situazioni della vita quotidiana) e in altri casi può addirittura indicare qualche via di evoluzione praticabile dell'italiano vivo' (Quoted in interview with Capozzi 1999:269).

¹² 'Ho cercato di fare entrare la logica del computer anche nella macrostruttura del romanzo, ed ecco che sono venute fuori le 'finestre', e dall'esistenza delle finestre si è affacciata tutta la varietà possibile di giochi: intertestuali ed extratestuali (finestre 'a cascata' per raccontare episodi che avvengono simultaneamente, finestre che non si chiudono o si chiudono male, finestre pubblicitarie, la finestra che contiene un *Easter egg*). Insomma, io credo che la narrativa tradizionale non debba più accontentarsi delle strutture letterarie classiche, ma debba in ogni modo far entrare nei suoi canoni quelle che sono le modificazioni della sensibilità contemporanea, e quindi anche le modificazioni della nostra percezione. E la nostra percezione oggi è modellata innanzitutto dai mass media (primo in ordine cronologico la televisione), ma ora anche dalle interfacce con il computer' (Quoted in interview with Capozzi 1999: 269).

By using 'windows' instead of traditional chapters, she produces an irreverent effect, while drawing attention both to the impact of the computer and the spatial dimensions (geometry) of her text.

4. Spatial Semiotics

Covito is effectively creating a hypertextual environment by weaving a writing space that is more personal than the standard sheet of paper. At the same time, she draws the reader into the virtual reality of the Computer Lady's domain: the 'window' becomes a 'liminal zone where new meanings and values are negotiated for old structures' (Dickinson 1996:82). In the same way, the setting of the novel, north-east Italy, represents a 'territorial history', a 'political and temporal complement of the cognitive map':

Our North-East is a flourishing industrial zone, with many technologically advanced small businesses (I think that most of the Italian companies that manufacture and design software and hardware are concentrated in that region), and yet typical features of an old peasant society are still evident, including spectacular examples of cultural backwardness; some of the characters in my novel, from a cultural point of view, are not equal to their level of consumption¹².

Covito's 'vernacular landscape' provides a dramatic account of the contradictions inherent in the development of information technology and telecommunications in an old peasant society. Choosing this particular industry as a setting is also symptomatic of her fascination with the new technology and the Internet:

I am attracted by its sociological, psychological, and especially its philosophical implications (the abolition of distances and geographical

boundaries made possible by the simultaneity of communication: the fragmentation and the multiplication of identity, and so on)¹³.

Carmen Covito was among the first Italian authors to have an Internet site for the purpose of being able to dialogue with her readers. In addition to reviews and interviews, the site contains interesting links chosen by the author, including short stories, artwork and the first six pages of *Benvenuti in questo ambiente*. Covito's web site (www.carmencovito.com) is highly informative, interdisciplinary and rich in hyperlinks in the spirit of the World Wide Web's infinite intertextuality. Covito notes that our postmodern era is particularly concerned with multiplicity, with equalized and decentralized authority, which is actually reflected in the structure of the Web itself. She asserts that contemporary (electronic) writing can help to shape new ways of reading (especially fiction): it can help do away with retrograde insistence on author-provided continuity of narrative, and give more significance to reader-provided coherence.

Her web site, which she entitles a 'Novel Site' (a pun which works well both in Italian and in English), is, thus, both an introduction to and the natural extension of her third novel. In this novel the protagonist designs and sets up a personal web page, and Covito declares that having written this fictional event, she (the author) felt like imitating her fictional character, and constructing her own web site: 'this could be called an autobiographical novel "in reverse", where instead of a character imitating the author, we have the author who imitates the character'.¹⁴ So, we are given a link on Covito's home page to 'Six Characters in Search of Websites'. Each character, in turn, provides links to websites that 'best suit their character and their role in the novel'. (Interestingly, the 'missing link' is the obvious intertextual one, to Pirandello's theatre text, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*.) Covito's writing space is now boundless. The links from her home page can lead to other documents by other authors who in turn can direct the reader into

¹² 'Nel nostro Nord Est; c'è un tessuto industriale fitto di piccole aziende tecnologicamente molto avanzate (credo che buona parte delle ditte italiane che fabbricano software, o anche hardware, siano concentrate in quella zona) e tuttavia vi permangono caratteri di vecchia società contadina, con fenomeni anche di arretratezza culturale vistosa: alcuni dei personaggi del mio romanzo non sono, dal punto di vista culturale, all'altezza dei propri consumi' (Quoted in interview with Capozzi 1999:269-270).

¹³ 'Mi attraggono le sue implicazioni sociologiche, psicologiche ma soprattutto filosofiche (l'azzeramento delle distanze e dei confini geografici attraverso la simultaneità della comunicazione, la frammentazione e la moltiplicazione dell'io e così via)' (Quoted in interview with Capozzi 1999:268).

¹⁴ 'Si potrebbe dire quindi che è un romanzo "autobiografico al contrario", dove invece di avere un personaggio che mima l'autore abbiamo un autore che mima il personaggio' (Quoted in interview with Capozzi 1999:268).

boundless other spaces. Once a text reaches outside itself in this manner, the author has not only lost control of the reader's path through that particular text, but the size and shape of the text itself. Ted Nelson's (1987) 'docuverse' is born.

In a similar vein, Covito's Pirandellian characters allow us to speculate that interactive fiction may eventually engender characters that communicate as if they were actual people. Indeed, a step in that direction has already been taken by Jeffrey Morrow and Janet Murray of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), developers of a program called *Character Maker*, which uses rudimentary artificial intelligence to unfold a work of fiction by responding to questions and comments that the reader types in. This makes the act of reading much like having a conversation with a character in a story. Interactive literature is likely to flourish because it satisfies some strong artistic needs. It has been hailed as the logical culmination of postmodern tendencies such as making the reader a partner in constructing the meaning of a work, but there are deeper attractions. Hyperfiction gives the traditional spectator entry into the fictional world: no longer merely a viewer (reader), s/he also becomes a doer (writer). Furthermore, the interactive reader gets an illusion of a dynamic presence within an alternative world: i.e. has the impression of agency inside the world of the (hyper)text. In order to continue, the narrative needs the reader's intervention: both proactive and reactive.

5. Instead of a Conclusion

Hypertext theorists point out that when we follow the linear flow of words down the page, there is often not just a single route. Look at all those unmarked intersections in the form of ambiguities, allusions, and levels of symbolism. They lead in many different interpretive directions at once. If, as Umberto Eco puts it, the poetic effect is the capacity that a text displays for continuing to generate different readings, without ever being completely consumed (1994) should we not welcome anything that can deepen its textual multiplicity, such as, say, hypertext?

Hypertext doesn't demand that the multifarious structural possibilities inherent in a narrative be pared away to accommodate the sheath of linearity. The narrative's multiplicities can stand unashamed as the structural framework itself. Interrelationships among the narrative's parts become actual links rather than implied connections. The painted-on *troupe l'oeil* doors (or windows) become real, letting the reader open them to explore alternative

juxtapositions and interweavings. While all sorts of subtle multiplicity, multivalence, and synchronism lend themselves well to embodiment in hypertext¹³, the best links are realizations of connections that already exist in the text. If associations and relationships on many different levels unify diverse parts of a work, hypertext is a natural outgrowth of the writing—like Covito's 'character' pages that could be viewed as a new aesthetic space in which narrative is de-centred.

As Jay David Bolter explains, the most 'unusual feature' of electronic writing is that it is not directly accessible to either the writer or the reader.

The bits of text are simply not on a human scale. Electronic technology removes or abstracts the writer and reader from the text. If you hold a magnetic tape or an optical disk up to the light, you will not see text at all In the electronic medium several layers of sophisticated technology must intervene between the writer or reader and the coded text. There are so many levels of deferral that the reader or writer is hard put to identify the text at all: is it on the screen, in the transistor memory, or on the disk? (Bolter 1990:42f).

A timely reminder that computer code, too, is a species of writing. Programming languages actualize procedures and principles rather than signifying objects or concepts. But their goal, like that of the natural languages we speak and write, is at least partly to embody human thought. Hypertext literature can be viewed as an effort to integrate these two branches of language to form a richer, deeper medium of expression. The hypertext system complements the expressive capabilities of natural language by representing the dynamics underlying the words. The words are the final product of emotional and intellectual processes, an artifact of something in the author's

¹³ It is common in hypertext to find central metaphors in the writing that reflect properties inherent in the medium. For example, fragmentation is a major theme in Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl* (Eastgate Systems, 1995), and Kathryn Cramer's *In Small & Large Pieces* (Eastgate Systems, 1994). Bill Bly's *We Descend* examines historical 'trails' as a collage of sources and interpretations (Eastgate Systems, 1997). Other works employ motifs of exploitation or journeying that play off the navigation factor. Of course, the tropes need not be so obvious to be effective. Indeed, if a work is too blatantly 'about' hypertext, it risks coming across as an exercise in theory.

head. The computer interface can embody a thing more primal in character—the impetus behind the poetic text.

It should be remembered that readers of hypertext don't actually create their own texts, though this has become a popular trope for discussing the medium. Rather, hypertext readers take the reins of a creative process that is uniquely the author's but also no longer the author's. The interface is a harnessing of a drive toward verbal expression, an enactment of the inner guidance system that leads the author in the quest for the text. Writing hypertext should not be understood as an absolute binary either/or choice. The medium should be understood as an experimental space, one that is suited to some writing situations and perhaps less well-suited to others; it is an extension of our writing environment not a replacement for other, supposedly outmoded, forms.

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Bridging Distances, Breaking Boundaries: Teaching South African Literature in Canada with the Aid of Web CT (Course Tools) Technology

Susan Spearey

My aims in this paper are threefold. I would like, first, to map out the ways in which the use of Web CT (course tools) technology has enabled me to confront and begin to address a number of challenges (theoretical, pedagogical and contextual) that I faced when launching a course on Southern African literatures of Transition during the 2000-2001 academic year at Brock University in Canada.

Second, I would like to work through the theoretical and pedagogical implications of the work I am presently doing with a consultant from the university's Centre for Teaching and Learning to try to enhance the use of Web CT technology for this particular course. This work includes reviewing and refining the uses of the tools I have already incorporated into my course pages, finding ways of enhancing their complementarity, introducing new tools developed by the English Department at University of Texas in their Critical Tools software, and developing a CD ROM featuring multi-media materials which serve to contextualise and dialogue with each week's assigned readings. I would also like to raise for discussion the possibility of opening chat rooms or places for dialogue with South African students, or perhaps running a course collaboratively between two or more institutions, or of finding some other way of tapping into the possibilities offered by the virtual classroom.

My third, and perhaps most ambitious and longest-term objective is to explore ways of using the technology as a means of facilitating ongoing dialogues and explorations, for instructors and students alike, of a number of issues that arise in teaching South African literatures.

I. A Glimpse at Pedagogical Issues and Approaches

I begin with an anecdote which may at first seem tangential, but which hopefully gestures towards the heart of what I'm seeking to explore. Earlier this year, Len Findlay, the Northrop Frye Professor of Literary Theory at University of Toronto for 2000-2001, was invited to Brock University to speak to the Humanities Research Institute. While addressing the question of budgetary cutbacks and restructuring of research funding by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, he remarked that a productivity model of research and its attendant privileging of research 'superstars' or ultra-specialists comes at a substantial cost to the Humanities in particular. He suggested that by methodologically and discursively emulating the sciences and technology in order to authenticate our claim to academic credibility, those of us in the Humanities perhaps unwittingly buy into and sustain the very premises (i.e. globalist and multinational capitalist) that underpin the social and economic ascendancy of those disciplines. By neglecting to critique this particular manifestation of the hegemony of free market ideology or to examine our own implication in the hierarchies of value and of power perpetuated therein, we run the risk of abnegating social responsibility, and of accepting the academic division of labour that distinguishes not only the 'superstars' from those who are, by implication, lesser scholars, but which separates also the generation of knowledge from critical thinking which enacts some form of social engagement, and divorces the academy as an institution from the society it ostensibly seeks to benefit. In the process, 'Humanities scholars are reduced to instruments of production rather than agents of change, and, in the name of rigour or 'excellence' (to invoke the parlance of global capitalism), are encouraged to function as automata rather than living- and exploring- the vexed, fluid, ambiguous, often unpredictable and always multivalent condition of being human.

In 'Rules of Marx and *The University in Ruin*' Findlay (1997:675) writes, 'The effect on a literary scholar and teacher like myself is to encourage me to assert the traditional text-centred privileges and responsibilities of the humanities within and beyond the University, but also to register the threat of enfeebling or evasive critique, the danger that the University will undermine its autonomy and divide its labour so as internally to enforce and externally to evince intellectual rigour and political in consequence, promoting, under the aegis of the academic, the interests of those marvellously constant companions; wealth creation and social control'.

Contending that the importation of models from the sciences, technology and business was inappropriate (if not antithetical) to the kind of enquiry in which we are engaged, Findlay urged those seeking research funding to exercise a degree of resistance in filling out grant applications, suggesting that although it is difficult for academics to do so, ultimately it is beneficial for each of us to examine carefully our limitations in terms of knowledge base, theoretical understanding and methodological procedure, and to use these as important sites of learning and exchange. The productivity agenda forces us to shore up any doubts (or at least render them invisible), to posture as 'experts', and somehow to package our scholarship quite disingenuously as a hermetically sealed and often ethically 'disinterested' body of knowledge which we vigorously defend as our own 'field', even while we speak the need for modes of learning and exchange that are quite the opposite of what we practise. In becoming such disciplined bodies and guardians of academic territory, as well as competitors for resources and for release time from teaching and administrative duties, we may inadvertently reinforce the hierarchies of value imposed upon us, compete with one another rather than opening channels of communication between us, and perpetuate a nation of autonomy (of ideas, of researchers, of academic institutions) which turns a blind eye to the complex interconnections of each in both the systems of power in which universities are situated and the communities they seek to serve. Findlay suggested that the admission and addressing of limitations—both individual and collective—was in fact what Humanities research should be all about, that if we believe in the public role of the intellectual and in the potential of the academy to be instrumental in forging an active and engaged practice and understanding of global citizenship, it is the socially responsible way to proceed, and that it could be a particularly fruitful exercise at the juncture of disciplinary boundaries.

I was reminded as he spoke of the benefits of addressing individual and collective limitations of my experience of teaching Antjie Krog's *Country of My Skull*. It seems to me that it is precisely at those points where Krog exposes her vulnerabilities and uncertainties and struggles to find a language or methodology or conceptual framework in which to situate the issues with which she is grappling that an emergent understanding of her implication in systems of oppression is registered or deepened, that existing boundaries and hierarchies begin to break down, and that possibilities for empathy and dialogue and re-vision come into being. I believe that this is why I have found it to work so well in the classroom. If it were just a sophisticated political

analysis which presented itself as an authoritative or definitive account of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, students would probably become daunted by its complexity and tune out, or express admiration for its subtlety and move on to the next text. What happens instead is that they become emotionally and intellectually engaged by those moments of collapse or confrontation with limitations, they empathise or become angered or distressed, they feel directly challenged by and implicated in the issues raised, and they return again and again to those 'sites of struggle' as the course unfolds, invoking them as significant points of reference. It is at those moments where Krog's autobiographical narrator confronts her emotional, intellectual, linguistic and imaginative limitations that the text becomes most dialogic and other voices are introduced: those of colleagues whose cultural backgrounds and experiences of apartheid differ diametrically from Krog's own and who potentially offer diverse approaches to or interpretations of the issue under consideration; psychologists and psychiatrists whose insights she seeks in order to glean better understandings of such notions as guilt and shame; the associative affects of trauma; and even a fictional lover through whom she explores the workings and ramifications of betrayal. In my experience, these are also precisely the moments which engender dialogue beyond the text. I am well aware that many South Africans feel a considerable degree of anger about the book, and that it raises a number of questions about voice and appropriation, but it seems to me that such anger can also be a productive site of learning. The point is that *Country of My Skull* stages one subject's confrontation with the limits of her subject position in the space of her desires for community, belonging and accountability, and that it continually gestures towards the very different ways that other subjects might reach their respective limits in forging new visions of community and citizenship. In doing so, I believe the text provides a valuable pedagogical model for teaching Humanities subjects in general, and teaching South African literatures in particular.

II. Teaching South African Literature in Canada

After returning from a year's sabbatical where I was based in Cape Town, I launched a second-year English course on South African Literatures of Transition, which ran for the first time from January to May 2001. In an institution in which I teach a number of survey-style courses, it was a unique privilege to be able to focus on my own area of research in such a sustained

way, but I worried that prospective students might see the course precisely as self-indulgent on my part, or as too historically and culturally specific in its focus to be of any immediate relevance to their own lives and interests. I should mention that the university in which I teach, which is located in the Niagara region, is principally an undergraduate institution, and that the student constituency in Humanities courses is predominantly white and middle-class. Our students are often the first generation to attend university, so those who opt to take Humanities subjects usually do so because of a love of reading or a personal interest in a particular topic or subject area, rather than because of a long-standing family tradition of commitment to the liberal arts.

Teaching South African literature in Canada meant that the limitations with which I was confronted were considerable, but this turned out to be in many ways advantageous. Most of the students enrolled in the course had heard of Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Steve Biko, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, J.W. De Klerk, and perhaps one or two other key figures in recent South African history; most knew about apartheid but very little about specific policies, modes of enforcement or tactics of resistance; and some had heard of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, but knew almost nothing about the way it came about, the terms of its mandate, or the specifics of its actualisation. Many felt quite overwhelmed by the complexity of the history involved and by the enormity of the problems left as the legacy of apartheid, and I needed to keep reminding the students that I was in no way an 'expert', was learning along with them, and also felt daunted by the magnitude of the challenges with which South Africa continues to confront me, but that I felt it was therefore all the more important as a focus of enquiry. I had never had the opportunity to begin a course with such a level playing field, where no student had greater experience or expertise than any other. I believe this made dialogue and sharing of resources all the more desirable to them, which is always a fortuitous circumstance for a teacher.

I found the teaching experience to be the most rewarding of my career thus far, and was immensely gratified to discover, when course evaluations were returned to me, that the students had found the experience similarly valuable, if challenging. Several commented on the fact that they had begun with the assumption that they would be taking an in-depth look at a topical but remote and historically specific context, but that they had been surprised to find that they learned as much about Canada, about fundamental issues of citizenship and about what it means to be human as they had about the complexities and specificities of the South African situation. Two or three

commented on the value of the interface between history, philosophy, literature and other forms of cultural production that the course afforded, and saw this as a helpful way of contextualising their own critical work and assumptions about the role of the arts in society. Tacit in their comments, and perhaps more explicit in class discussions, was an emerging recognition of the importance of an ethical criticism, of a politics of responsibility and implication, and of the urgency of formulating some notion and practice of global citizenship.

III. Introducing Web CT

Given the ascendancy of technology and particularly Information Technology—in this era of globalisation, and given the fact that university administrators tend to view the virtual classroom as a potential vehicle for increasing revenues and extending student populations beyond the reaches of geographic catchment areas, often at the cost of depersonalising and dehumanising the learning experience, the decision to incorporate technology such as Web CT into curriculum design has to be taken in full consciousness of the ways it might serve to advance rather than to critique the prevailing agenda in tertiary education. On the one hand, looking to the specific context of my own discipline, it is clear that virtual space provides a potential forum for extensive open-ended and ongoing dialogues about the ways and means of understanding and practising global citizenship, and for examining the relationship between such forms of community building and meaning-making and those conventionally assumed and fostered in the space of literary criticism. On the other hand, the counter-hegemonic possibilities afforded by the technology need to be considered in conjunction with a number of other concerns and potential limitations of its use, on an ongoing basis. Questions of access, of course, are of paramount importance, as are considerations of the kind of communication that becomes possible (or probable) given that the Internet is not an open and transparent medium of communication. We might ask ourselves how the use of the technology impacts on modes of representation and the way that people tell their stories or express their understandings. (The modes of e-mailing and instant messaging, for example, clearly affect tactics and practices of representation.) We might also consider how the factor of anonymity impacts upon the kind of exchanges that might emerge, especially where accounts of trauma and suffering are at issue, as they inevitably are in teaching South African literature. If we are dealing, as

Shoshana Felman suggests, with different forms of testimony: provisional avowals through which we work towards understandings—in different discursive media, the whole question of modes of address becomes important. With such caveats in mind, what follows is an account of my introduction to, and implementation of Web CT technology in my courses.

I have for a number of years required students to bring to seminar meetings questions or comments for discussion that pertain to the assigned reading for that particular week. These contributions count as a substantial portion of the seminar mark. I do this for several reasons. On a practical level, it prevents students from just skimming the texts, and forces them to read attentively. It also enables them to come to the discussion feeling as though they already have a stake in a given text. Those students who are less confident orally feel that they have something formulated already, and are more likely to contribute to discussion, which goes some distance towards addressing the perennial problem of seminars being dominated by a few confident speakers while the other students lapse into deeper and deeper silence as a course progresses. From an instructor's point of view, it ensures that the learning is student-driven, and means that even texts that are taught year-in and year-out do not become stale, as new perspectives and approaches are constantly introduced, and new problems or difficulties are brought to light. Perhaps most importantly, however, it enables students to monitor their own processes of learning, as they have a written record of their initial impressions, against which they can measure their evolving understandings of the issues and ideas in question. In effect, I am asking them to make a record of and open for discussion the points at which the text pushes them to the limits of their understanding upon a first reading, if indeed it does so.

I found, however, that as students became more sophisticated readers, their comments and questions became more and more elaborate, and often at least half of the seminar time was taken up just going around the table so that each student could air his or her questions and comments, leaving far too little time to take up and develop upon the points they had raised. I decided it would be helpful if these questions and comments could be made available prior to the seminar, and thought that perhaps posting them on a web page might be helpful, since access to computer labs is not a problem at Brock University. I went to the University's Centre for Teaching and Learning, and was directed towards Web CT (or Course Tools) technology. I decided to use Web CT pages for all of my courses, but opted, since I was a neophyte, to restrict my experimentation to use of only some of the basic tools available. I will outline

these now in order to give some idea of how the technology enables students in track not only their initial impressions of a given text, but also their evolving understandings of the issues raised therein as they proceed through seminar discussions, reflective summaries of these discussions, essay writing, collaborative projects, and through the opportunity to engage with one another's essays or their own previous thoughts in the second course essay and the final examination paper.

Web CT operates through an Internet browser. I use Netscape Navigator, but any will do. I, as the instructor, am registered as 'course designer', and can give similar status to any of my teaching assistants if need be. This means that we have access to a number of functions beyond those available to the students. We can change the design of the course page, add or delete features, register or de-register participants, upload documents, track student participation, etc.

To access the Web CT course page, I log on by using a URL address. In this case, it is the Web CT site set up by Computer Services at Brock University.

I then enter my user name and password, and my personal Web CT home page appears. Each of the students will have a similar page with all their courses listed. If mine is the only course in which they are enrolled that uses WebCT, only my course will appear on their home page, but they may also have, for example, courses in Biology or Computing or Communications listed as well.

Clicking on the course title and number (in this case, English 2P53, South African Literatures of Transition) takes them to the home page for that particular course.

I have used 5 icons on my home page, although I could add many others. These are:

1. **Course Outline:** This feature gives students access to the course outline if they don't have a hard copy with them. If they need to make reference to recommended readings, or course aims and objectives, or to a list of suggested essay questions, or to the marking scheme, or remind themselves of a due date, they can do so any time they are near a networked computer.

2. **Calendar:** The calendar can be set by the instructor and only viewed by the students, or it can be interactive, as you choose. I have opted to keep the calendar interactive. I post each week's seminar topic, and once students have

signed up for one seminar to lead and another to write-up, I list this information on the calendar. I also post essay deadlines, the exam date and any other significant dates. The students can also post anything they feel is significant. If one of them discovers that there is a television programme, for example, on Mandela on the History channel, or a special documentary on the radio, or a relevant article in one of the daily papers, he or she can post this information so that the other students, if they check in, can take advantage of such supplementary materials.

3. Additional Resources: this is a place where students can compile their own course bibliographies. If they find any materials that might be of interest to the others, whether these be essays, web cites, books, videos, newspaper articles, or reviews, they can record this information [here](#).

4. Student Essays: Students who feel comfortable posting their essays can do so at this site. I encourage them to read one another's work, and offer options on the exam which enables them to dialogue with the writing of their peers. [This past year, for example, one exam question read, 'Using another student's essay on a given text or texts, respond to and expand upon the argument put forward. This requires a careful engagement with the premises on which the argument is based, an outline of its further implications, and some treatment of how it has illuminated your own interpretation of the text(s) under consideration'. I also gave students the option of reviewing their own initial impressions of course texts in the following question: 'Choose your three best web CT postings, explaining why you feel they helped to open and extend discussion, how they have helped you to develop your understanding of the issues and text(s) in question, and how you may have changed or qualified or refined your thinking since posting them originally'.]

5. Seminar Discussions: This is perhaps the most important of the icons. Each week's topics for discussion are listed by the week number (from 1 to 12) and by the names of the relevant authors. I ask students to post their questions and comments for discussion at least 24 hours prior to the seminar, and earlier if at all possible. For each seminar, one student is assigned to be leader (in some courses, where enrollments are high, there are two or three leaders working together). The purpose of seminar leadership is *not* for individual students to prepare a presentation or a mini-lecture, but for each leader to involve fellow students in a focused and meaningful discussion of

the assigned reading. Students sign up to lead a session during the first seminar meeting, and the schedule is posted on the Web CT calendar as soon as it is finalised. The leader is responsible for going through the questions and comments posted by his/her classmates in advance. At the seminar itself, the leader must introduce to the group significant ideas and points for discussion that have been brought forward in the questions submitted, and make connections or draw contrasts between these, where appropriate. The leader is also responsible for facilitating discussion, for drawing in as many perspectives and voices as possible, while at the same time enabling the group to explore the issues and ideas raised in a focused and probing manner.

To submit a posting, students click on the topic and number of the appropriate week, and then click on the 'compose message' box. They can edit and preview their submission. They can also attach documents if they so desire. They can simply contribute their own questions and comments, or they can reply to those of their peers, or both. The programme will enable any user to follow the thread of an ongoing discussion easily. I ask them to be specific in assigning a subject line to their messages – for example 'the relationship of empathy to evil in *Disgrace*' or 'narrative voice in *Ways of Dying*' so that if students wish to review messages when they are preparing essays or revising for the exam, they can locate relevant contributions to the discussion quickly and easily.

Each student is also assigned to provide a write-up of one seminar discussion. Students are not to write up the same seminar that they lead. The write-up is to be posted, with the subject line 'write-up' and names of the texts covered, within a week of the seminar discussion, in the same section as the questions and comments appear. The write-up consists of a summary of significant points and questions raised in the course of the in-class discussion, as well as an extension of the discussion. This could involve a comparison of the discussion that particular week to an earlier discussion of another text or texts, or a meditation upon points that were raised but didn't get addressed in a sustained way during the seminar hour, or a consideration of the further implications of the class discussion.

This page becomes a course archive. When students want to write essays, they can go back to the questions and comments raised by their peers in relation to a particular text, as well as reviewing the write-up. They can consult the 'Additional Resources' page to see if there are articles or multimedia materials they might like to draw in. And if they are preparing for the

second essay or the exam paper, they can also refer, where possible, to other student essays dealing with the same text.

IV. Supplementary Materials: Developing a Course CD ROM and Integrating Critical Tools

I am presently working with a consultant from the university's Centre for Teaching and Learning to try to enhance the use of Web CT technology for this particular course so that I can further extend discussion beyond the lecture and seminar contact hours; build upon the existing course archive of student essays, comments and discussion questions for seminars, and seminar write-ups, so that I (and they) can track their processes of interpretation from their initial impressions of a text through participation in group discussions and on to essays, collaborative projects and retrospective overviews of their engagement with the issues raised by the course; and so that I can provide students with access to multi-media materials which serve as background for—and which dialogue with—course materials in significant ways.

One facet of this project, on the practical side, is the development of a CD ROM which integrates a number of multi-media materials I collected while on sabbatical in South Africa from June 1999 to June 2000, which I continue to update, and which provides links to a range of web sites, recordings of radio broadcasts, original reviews of the course texts, newspaper articles, television broadcasts and documentaries, political cartoons and visual images that are of particular relevance to each week's readings. The materials are organised according to each week's assigned readings. We have also set up interfaces where passages from a given text reference texts in other media. So, for example, the first chapter of Mike Nicol's *The Waiting Country* includes a description of Jane Alexander's sculpture 'The Butcher Boys'. We have mounted an image of the sculpture beside which Nicol's text scrolls down. This not only enables students to visualise more clearly what is being described, but also affords possibilities of setting essay or exam questions which ask students to assess the differences between the two modes of representation and their respective treatments of the themes in question. Similar questions could be set asking students to do comparative discursive analyses of excerpts from TRC Amnesty hearings, for instance, and David Lurie's sexual harassment hearing in *Disgrace* as a way of beginning to unpack the kind of commentary the novel offers on processes of reconciliation and reparation.

I have also recently been introduced to Critical Tools, a package similar to Web CT that has been developed by the English Department at University of Texas, and which can be used in conjunction with Web CT. Three of the features are of particular interest:

1. Class Contact Page. This page enables students to register, on a voluntary basis, their e-mail addresses and contact details. If others enrolled in the course wish to contact them, they can do so directly through the course page. This feature enables students to share information, and to extend dialogues, if they so desire, beyond the Seminar Discussion page, which may be somewhat restrictive in that it operates according to assigned weekly topics. Students in the process of writing essays or preparing for exams may wish to revisit certain points raised at an earlier juncture, or to discuss a specific aspect of another student's posting, long after the week of the seminar discussion in question. If students from South Africa or from other universities were to join the course, the contact page would enable students on either side of the Atlantic to direct questions and/or enquiries to specific recipients, or to deal with practical issues which they may not wish to raise or see as appropriate to post on the Seminar Discussion page.

2. Bibliofile. This feature will replace the existing 'Additional Resources' icon. It enables students to input information about articles, books, reviews, web sites, audio and video recordings, newspaper articles and any other relevant materials. Once entered, the contributions will be formatted according to MLA guidelines, and will provide a useful course bibliography.

3. Annotator Page. This feature enables instructors to post a text (or excerpts thereof) for viewing, and students will be able to highlight any words or phrases or passages that seem to them particularly significant, and to post as a footnote their comments or queries in response to the selection. Instructors can set passwords so that only their students will be able to submit annotations, or the page can be kept open for any contributors to use. If it is incorporated into a Web CT page, only students registered in the course or granted a password by the instructor will be able to access the document in any case. Anyone who accesses the document will be able to see all the annotations that have been submitted to date, and to provide further annotations to the text or to the existing annotations themselves, so the potential for carefully unpacking a text and fleshing out a close reading is excellent. The document could be a primary

text (a passage from an essay or novel or short story or poem or play), or, alternatively, it could be a passage from a student essay or seminar discussion comment. The Annotator Page encourages close reading, and enables students to look carefully at specific tropes, patterns of imagery or other stylistic devices, as well as enabling them to unpack specific uses of diction or terminology.

V. Extending Communities of Learners

Web CT technology also makes available the possibility of opening chat rooms or web sites where dialogues with South African students who are studying the same or similar texts could take place. There is also potential to run courses collaboratively between two or more institutions. In the long term, Web CT technology could also provide a forum for facilitating ongoing dialogues and explorations, for instructors and students alike, of a number of issues that arise in teaching South African literatures. These include issues of responsibility, implication and ethics. The students I have just taught, for example, were very conscious and self-reflexive about their own positions, especially at this distance, as potential 'voyeurs' witnessing narratives and accounts of suffering and trauma, and about the ways that their roles as literary critics could potentially serve to sustain such a stance and to reinforce distances between divergent subject positions.) I am interested in exploring issues around the ethical considerations attendant upon teaching these materials; issues around the associative affects of trauma as accounts of violence and suffering are disseminated to audiences who are at increasing removes from the histories in question; and issues around the kind of work that literary texts perform as they recount and mediate atrocities past and present, whether real or fictionalised.

A gesture that is repeatedly indexed by and within the texts themselves is an attempt to find ways of creating conditions for dialogue, empathy and redress across the vast divides that separate communities within South Africa and that served during the apartheid years to keep South Africa largely isolated from the rest of the world. Texts such as Sindiwe Magona's *Mother to Mother*, Antjie Krog's *Country of My Skull*, Njabulo Ndebele's essay 'Guilt and Atonement: Unmasking History for the Future', Ivan Vladislavic's 'Preparanda by Monuments', Ingrid de Kok's 'Small Passings' and J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*, to list but several examples, work towards finding languages or gestures or ethical paradigms that might serve to bridge

gulfs which have historically divided communities from one another, and to break down boundaries which have reinforced distances between communities and individuals. If the texts themselves seem to offer a powerfully suggestive model for bridging the distances between communities that have been historically, geographically and psychologically divided, perhaps this model can be extended enablingly through the aid of Web CT technology to bridge the distances between students such as my own, the histories and stories with which they are engaging, and other communities of learners.

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Menssink on Trial: An Eighteenth-century Court Case and a Multimedia Tutorial

Harriet Deacon

Introduction

In 1997, the Andrew B. Mellon Foundation funded a pilot project in humanities courseware development at the University of Cape Town (UCT) under the direction of Professor Martin Hall. The pilot project, which has now received further support, was called the Multimedia Education Group (MEG). One of our first projects (the Isisko Referencing Project) was a set of two tutorial-length multimedia packages that introduced first-year students of varying preparedness to the concept of evidence and referencing within the disciplines of English and History. As courseware developer for History and related disciplines, I was tasked to find a case study for the first History tutorial that would introduce students to the notion of historical sources and analytical perspective as a precursor to discussions about the importance of referencing those sources. Because evaluation was an integral part of the project design, we commissioned an evaluatory study by INFOET, an education NGO, which ran alongside the first implementation of the courseware.

The story of Brewer Menssink, researched by Dr. Nigel Penn of the UCT History Department¹, was selected for the multimedia tutorial. A rollicking eighteenth-century tale of 'sex, beer and politics', it revolves around the adulterous and murderous activities of the Cape Town beer brewer, Willem Menssink. In the tutorial, the key issues are highlighted by a court case of 1713 in which several slaves, belonging to Menssink and his estranged

wife, are given harsh sentences for crimes including adultery, infanticide and attempted murder. Their testimony, and that of Menssink's wife, implicates Menssink in these acts, but he is never brought to trial for his key role in the crimes. He is subsequently divorced by his wife and abandoned by most of his friends, but Dutch settler society does not publicly distance itself from his dastardly acts.

As courseware developer, and as a historian specializing in medical history, I was intrigued by the case. It was complex and interesting, providing ample opportunity for the use of humour. It also lent itself well to graphical representation as the records were unusually good and contained a number of references to the physical context of the events (e.g. houses, clothing). The historical evidence posed intriguing questions about what had happened and who had been guilty, questions which had to remain somewhat open in the end. In addition, the analysis of the court case presented an interesting contrast between the way in which the disciplines of law and social history ask different questions of historical evidence. Students steeped in the 'whodunnit' genres of thrillers, television and film were, like non-historians, more likely to focus on finding out what happened in the past and who had done wrong, than on a more complex and abstract analysis of social relations in the past, including for example an examination of gender or class relations. The Menssink tale provided us with an opportunity to explore both kinds of analysis, helping students to understand what historians do and how they use different sources of evidence.

The First-year Course

Not many universities can boast the luxury of their own multimedia developers, especially in the humanities subjects. Most have to depend on the introduction of commercial courseware that needs careful pruning and support to serve the needs of the course or the students. Of course, even with custom-made courseware, the context of its use is critical to its success. One of the fundamental principles of our work at MEG was the close link that should be made between the multimedia tutorials and the rest of the course.

The IHS 100W course was described as:

An introduction to the study of the past [which] lays a foundation for further studies in history and cognate disciplines. It will introduce students to visual, oral and written sources and the ways in which

¹ Subsequently published as N. Penn, 'The Fatal Passion of Brewer Menssink' in *Rogues, Rebels and Runaways* (1999).

historians of Africa have used them. Use will be made of specially designed multimedia materials.

The course will examine topics in African history ... such as African societies before the sixteenth century; the age of the slave trade; the impact of imperialism; and Africa in the era of decolonisation and nationalism. It will also draw appropriate parallels with developments in other areas of the world, and in this way introduce a comparative approach to the past².

Nigel Worden (course convenor) explained that the course was focused on

skills development as students and historians; deliberate reflection of case studies demonstrating historical processes which develop academic skills and historical skills: critical reading; how historians make arguments; thinking about evidence: use and abuse; how knowledge is produced and analysed³.

Student assessment was conducted throughout the course. Tutorial submissions and a mid semester test counted 20% of the final mark, and an essay finished in towards the end of the course counted a further 20%, while the final examination counted 60%. The test was focused on students' ability to use textual primary sources in relation to a particular topic, while the essay and the exam focused on students' ability to make use of evidence in formulating a structured argument on a particular topic. The course was thus consciously directed as a stepwise process of skills development, moving beyond the current delivery approach.

Integrating Course and Courseware

The multimedia materials were designed to complement the course content and its focus on skills development. The two Referencing Project tutorials were therefore designed around the theme of Cape slavery. The first one (Making History: the Murrisk Court Case) provided students with an opportunity to explore the use of primary sources about an eighteenth century

court case and the broader issue of historians' use of multiple sources. The second (Argument, Evidence and Referencing) focused on referencing skills by exploring the construction of an academic argument, with supporting evidence and references. The examples were linked to readings that were to be used for the course essay.

We worked with the enthusiastic course convenor in the History Department, Prof. Nigel Worden, to integrate the multimedia courseware into the program design, and to provide a preparatory lecture on Murrisk before the multimedia session and a follow-up face-to-face tutorial afterwards. Dr. Nigel Penn gave the lecture. He researched and wrote the Murrisk story and also appears in the tutorial on video. This lecture formed part of a broader discussion of the history of the Cape in the eighteenth century, conducted by Prof. Worden. The course, like the tutorial, focused on the use of primary sources. The topic of Cape slavery was also used for the course essay, and Worden reported that many students used examples from the Murrisk case as illustrations in their essays.

Within the multimedia tutorial, students were asked to type in answers to questions on computer. They were also given a worksheet of questions to complete and hand in to their tutors. The computer-based answers were supposed to be provided to tutors immediately after the multimedia class, but in the confusion of delivery, this was delayed. Student answers were also difficult to process given the rather simplistic data capture methods (text files) that we had chosen.

Supporting Students

Another key philosophy of MFG, following best practice elsewhere, was to tailor courseware design to its audience, entry-level students. One of the key reasons behind the establishment of MFG was to provide academic support to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The idea was that by using computer technologies, resources could be created which included extra explanations and translations for students who needed more assistance than would be provided in class, and additional information and challenges for those who were coping well with the basic material. Because students could control navigation and pace in multimedia tutorials, the same tutorial could be useful to a wide range of students.

In order to understand who our audience was, we did some analysis of their gender and social background, and we also conducted individual

² Course outline.

³ History course convenor and tutor: interview with UNFOLIT evaluators, 1 April 1998 quoted in UNFOLIT report, p.25.

interviews with about ten students who worked through the tutorial prototypes with us and made comments and suggestions for improvement. The social profile of the History students was as follows:⁴

'Race'	Number
'African'	41
'White'	45
'Coloured'	10
'Indian'	4
Total	100

Gender	'African'	Non-'African'	Total
Female	15 (37%)	40 (68%)	55
Male	26 (63%)	19 (32%)	45
Total	41 (100%)	59 (100%)	100

The racial classifications (based on Apartheid classifications because the legacy of racist educational provision before 1994 has not yet been reversed) suggest that there was a clear need for some student support to assist disadvantaged students. Nearly half of the students (45%) had been classified 'White' for their school careers and would have received preferential treatment in terms of admissions, funding before 1994. But the balance of the students (classified as 'African' (41%), 'Coloured' (10%) and 'Indian' (10%)) would not have been so fortunate: many of them would have had poor quality secondary and primary education because of government policies. Also, in the class as a whole, only approximately 55% of the students would have had English as their 'main language at home'⁵ although English is the language of instruction at university.

Women predominated in the course as a whole (although not by much). Taking racial groups separately, however, women predominated even

more markedly in all groups except 'Africans' where they constituted only 37% of the group. This pattern is probably produced by the tendency for male students to seek science, commerce or medical education where they can meet the entry requirements (many disadvantaged students cannot) and to the tendency for men to be given preference over women in families which are not sufficiently wealthy to be able to send all their children to school or university. (Racial classifications corresponded to some degree with class distinctions under the previous dispensation, a situation which has not been reversed after the democratic transition of 1994.) But although all the students came from educational backgrounds where their gender mattered, there were no indices on the INFOLIT scales where men and women differed significantly, except perhaps reported confidence in class and individual learning⁶.

Staff Reactions

In most humanities departments, computer-aided learning is driven by pioneering staff members from within the department itself. Because MFC was a separate department within UCT we had to expend considerable energy in attracting interest from departments in using our courseware, encouraging as much involvement as possible in its development and then making sure that the courseware was used optimally. We were fortunate in that Prof. Worden shared our enthusiasm for multimedia use, agreed that it should be carefully designed and tightly integrated with other elements of the course, and did not see computer courseware as a bandaid for deficiencies elsewhere in the course. After using the tutorials, he commented as follows:

Benefits [of using the multimedia materials] were palpable. Certainly the cut on Merusink was a great success, because students had worked through the materials in the laboratory [before coming to the classroom tutorial] and were enthused by it (mind you, it IS lovely material!) ... The strong emphasis in the course on the use of primary sources was also reinforced greatly by the MM materials, and this showed in the assignment work⁷.

⁴ INFOLIT report, p. 27

⁵ Results estimated by taking English and History first-year students together, as in the INFOLIT report, p. 32ff.

⁶ INFOLIT report, p. 32.

⁷ E-mail communication to Harriet Deacon, 20 March 1999.

The UCT History Department plans to use the Meussink tutorial again in the future. We were, however, careful to acknowledge that success in using the tutorial depended to a great extent on the approach taken by course convenor and on tutors. During the first roll-out, not all departmental staff involved in the course came to demonstrations of the software before the course began or accessed them in the student laboratory. Realizing that staff did not always want to use the student laboratory, we put a version of both tutorials on the university network for staff as well, but even so, not all tried it. In humanities departments, which have felt budget cuts most severely in South Africa, many staff have neither the equipment or the skills to use computer-based materials.

Although Warden was very aware of the role of technology as a way of presenting historical materials rather than an end in itself, some staff members were overly distracted by the medium. One tutor commented,

I understand that [the purpose of introducing the materials] is to get students to sit in front of technology and get used to technology – open to correction. More people are already exposed. Problem may be pitch – brighter students may be getting bored⁸.

While this tutor was certainly correct about the problem of pitch, this related far more to the content and skills development side of the tutorial than to the technology aspect (see below). Although computer skills were a part of what students learned from doing the tutorials, MEG's philosophy was to tie this interaction very closely to relevant content, and to emphasize content over medium by making the material user-friendly.

Student Use of the Tutorial

The student computer laboratories were booked for numerous sessions to give students adequate time with the multimedia materials. MEG staff were on hand to protect student access during these times and to provide technical support. Student pressure on the computer laboratories made it important to expend considerable time in policing access during booked times. Departmental staff came to some of the laboratory sessions to answer historical questions, and the History courseware developer (and author of the

multimedia materials) was present at most of the sessions, so subject-related questions were easily addressed.

We found it difficult to predict the level of student computer literacy—specifically, their technical competence in using laboratory login procedures, the mouse and Windows. The Baseline survey, conducted the previous year on some of the UCT History students (as well as UCT English students and some English and History students from UWC) suggested that by the end of their first year, up to 86% of students had had some computer experience, either with computer games or word processing⁹. This was not particularly useful in determining how many History 1 students in 1998 had computer experience at the beginning of their first year, but since students did not have computer materials built into their History or English courses in 1997, it may be regarded as a (slightly exaggerated) ballpark figure for 1998. This was borne out by observation (see below).

A question on computer experience was also included in the INFOLIT student questionnaire which measured student confidence with a variety of types of software and student access to computers. Their 'index of computer competence' shows that of the 64 History 1 students who answered the questionnaire, 11% (n=3) were 'able to use computers', 23% (n=15) had 'some computer experience' and 66% (n=42) were 'not very computer competent'¹⁰. Unfortunately it is not clear how they have defined computer competence, because some of the software which the INFOLIT student questionnaire asks about is clearly more advanced or specialized than history students would require to be able to use the multimedia materials (e.g. database, spreadsheet, statistical, graphic design and computer aided design packages). Few first year students would have competence in these areas, nor would they need them in their courses but they could still be 'able to use computers'. The INFOLIT conclusion about the computer-related abilities of the students provides a dramatic contrast both to the Baseline survey and to what we observed in the laboratories regarding basic computer competence (i.e. Windows literacy). This problem highlights the complexity of the concept of computer literacy, and the need to tailor questions and analysis to the specific computer literacy requirements of a project.

The use of the multimedia materials required knowledge of special laboratory login procedures, the ability to use a mouse and some Windows

⁸ History course convenor and tutor. Interview with INFOLIT evaluators, 1 April 1998 quoted in INFOLIT report, p. 27.

⁹ Summary of Baseline survey (<http://www.meg.uct.ac.za/baseline.htm>).

¹⁰ INFOLIT report, p. 34.

literacy. After logging onto the network, students accessed the multimedia materials through a management system called Manager's Edge, which had a separate login procedure. Students were introduced to the login system before the Messink tutorial in a preparatory session using the multimedia program 'Africa 1300' which had been developed by Fiona Wilson of MEG. The session was tied in with History lectures on Great Zimbabwe, which was featured in Africa 1300. It enabled the department and MEG to assess the level of student computer literacy, which was good on the whole, and to check that all students had laboratory passwords and knew how to login. While the majority of students (around 70%, by observation) could manage with Windows and the mouse, many of them had difficulties with the complicated laboratory login procedure and some also had difficulties with the multimedia management program logins. Although men and women students scored similarly on the INFOLIT indices of computer confidence¹¹, observation by MEG staff in the laboratory suggests that women who had been given computer instruction before often felt less confident than men in the same position or women who had never used a computer.

The poor organization of password allocation and distribution (due to laboratory understaffing and a weak password-creation software package), and the unfriendly login procedure in the laboratories, made it difficult for first-time computer users to start confidently on the computer. But once they started the multimedia tutorial they had few technical difficulties. Over three quarters, or 77% (n=38) of MEG questionnaire respondents found the tutorial easy to do. As Nigel Worden commented,

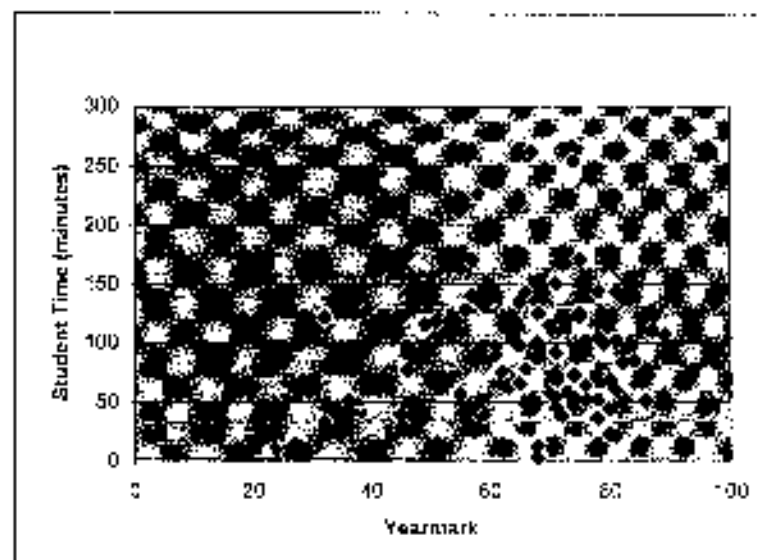
Some students not used to computers were a bit intimidated at first, but I think this was overcome by the end of the course¹².

One of the major advantages of the computer-based medium is that it allowed students to learn at their own pace. If one plots time spent with the tutorial against the student's yearmark, a general measure of competence in the coursework, one can assess the variation in time spent on the tutorial and also whether weaker students generally spent more time with it.

The graph below (Figure 1: Student Time Spent on Messink by Yearmark) shows that most of the 76 students spent between 50 and 150

minutes on the tutorial but that there was variation in a range between 2 minutes and 255 minutes. The variation between students (in terms of time taken on the tutorial) was of course greatest in the middle of the class, where the bulk of the students were concentrated. Further statistical analysis could reveal that mid-range students tended to spend more time on the tutorial.

Figure 1: Student Time Spent on Messink by Yearmark

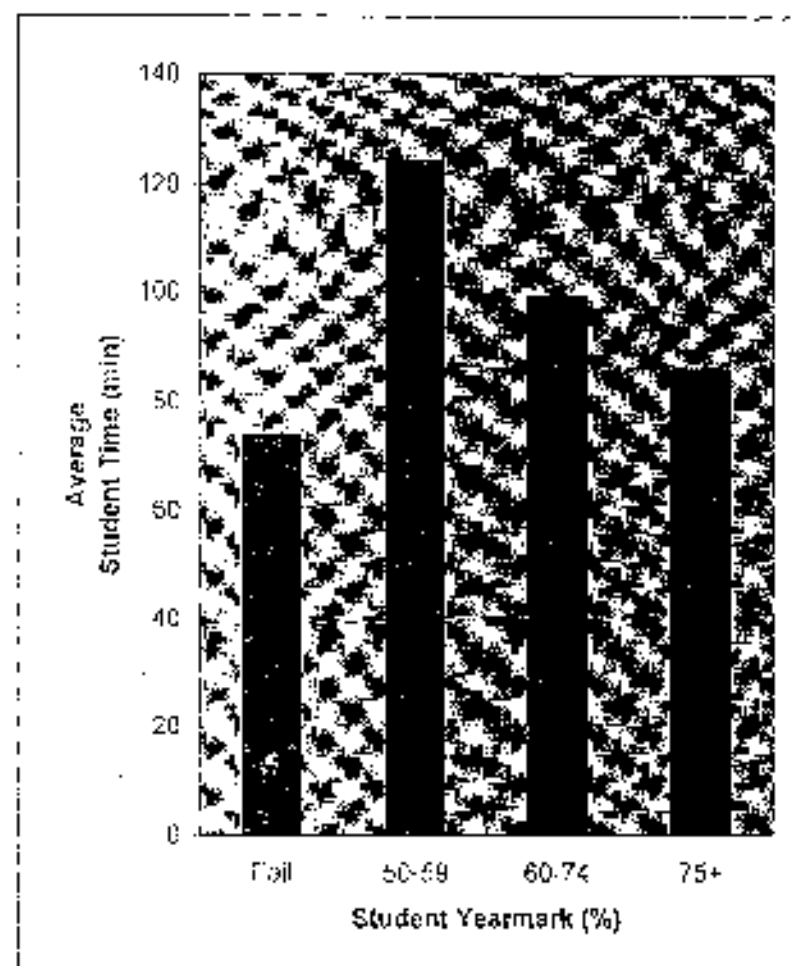


If one groups the students by their yearmark, it seems that the students who failed spent on average, less time using the multimedia tutorial than those who passed. Among those who passed, the longest average time was recorded for the weaker students and the shortest time for the strongest students. This suggests that students who failed the course did not take the tutorial (or the course) seriously enough to spend time on it, or were alienated by it. Those students who passed required differing amounts of time with the tutorial depending on their competence in the course: weaker students required more time. While the statistical significance of these findings should be further examined, the graph below and the one above do at least suggest that the tutorial was useful in allowing students to complete the work at their own pace, and that this pace differed significantly amongst students.

¹¹ INFOLIT report, pp. 34,37.

¹² E-mail communication to Harriet Deacon, 10 March 1999.

Figure 2: Average Time Spent on Tutorial by Yearmark



Student Response

MBG questionnaires showed that the overwhelming number of students (91%, $n=45$) found the tutorial relevant to their course. All but one respondent (who left it blank) said they learned something from the tutorial. In the open-ended question about what they learned, most of these ($n=37$, 75%) referred to the historical content of the tutorial rather than historical analytical skills or

computer skills. However, this trend does not mean that they did not learn historical skills, reflecting perhaps more the perception of history as facts that they learned from the school environment. In general the feeling was positive: 94% said they would like to do this kind of tutorial in the future. Only three out of 49 respondents (6%) said they would not like to use tutorials on computer again. One commented, 'it's funny, interesting, a better way to learn—I loved the pictures'. Another felt that it 'clarified a kn [on the rest of the course], especially [the] background info – extra reading'. From the INFOLIT post-intervention questionnaire we can see that different sections of the tutorial appealed to different students but most said that all sections were useful.

The program was specifically designed to assist students who might be struggling with aspects of the course. Some students still found the program challenging: one felt there should be more 'simple, understandable terms', a few complained it was long and tiring. Yet the weaker students who struggled with the materials were in a minority and departmental staff reported that weaker students were in general much more confident in the subsequent classroom tutorials having worked through the multimedia materials at their own pace:

We felt that the weakest students, especially, benefited [from using the multimedia tutorials], and were much more confident to speak about the case and the issues it raised [in the subsequent classroom sessions]¹³.

Roughly speaking, according to responses in the INFOLIT post-intervention questionnaire the weaker students generally found the section on 'Being an Historian' more useful than stronger students did—about five of the seventeen students did not find this section useful.

There was some concern that the tutorial was pitched at too low a level for university students. One staff member suggested before the tutorial was used that a 'Problem may be pitch—brighter students may be getting bored'¹⁴. Nigel Worden commented after students completed the course that

¹³ E-mail communication to Harriet Deacon, 10 March 1999.

¹⁴ History course convenor and tutor: interview with INFOLIT evaluators, 1 April 1998 quoted in INFOLIT report, p. 27.

Some of the best students said that they wanted to go further than the [multimedia] materials allowed for -but they could do this in the [classroom] [at] 2.

Just under half of the students said in the INFOLE post-intervention questionnaire that they wanted 'more detailed information' on the court case; the other half said the information was 'interesting and had the correct amount of detail'. Two of the students in the MEG questionnaire (6% of respondents to question 8) found the tutorial too easy. One explained, 'I think this would be a nice programme for schools, but below matric [school leavers'] level'. The other student commented,

I'd expected the program to be slightly more detailed and advanced. This program's approach is appropriate to high school (or even primary school) standard.

In the INFOLE questionnaire, completed by about 17 students, two students also complained either that some sections were 'simplistic' or information on the court case was 'uninteresting and repetitive'. These students do not seem to be the same ones who returned similar comments in the MEG questionnaire. But interestingly, they all seem to have performed roughly in the lower second-class category in the course as a whole.

The tutorial's presentation style, using simple English and cartoon-like illustrations, may have coloured student assessment of its difficulty. As one of the students who found it too easy said, 'history is not looking at funny pics, it's academic, serious research'. He was worried about the attempt to 'make history fun' in this way: 'The university should not waste its resources [on] motivation [of students]'. It is a sad reflection of the type of history that has been taught in many schools and universities to date that pictures (especially 'funny' ones) are not seen as material for 'serious research', but only as motivational tools for the less enthusiastic student. University history courses generally do not include historical maps of the kind used in the Mensink tutorial, nor do they show students what historical characters would be wearing. In order to understand Cape Town society of the time, students need to look at contemporary maps to see how small the Dutch settlement was. The cartoons used in the tutorial were all historically accurate in terms of

¹⁵ E-mail communication to Harriet Deacon, 10 March 1999.

clothing (complete with early eighteenth-century hairstyles). Not only was clothing an important element in understanding the dynamics of the Mensink story (as Mensink's degeneracy was symbolised by his red nightgown), but it is a piece in the historical puzzle of the social and cultural environment of Cape Town at that time. The Mensink story was chosen partly for its amusing and dramatic appeal, but this aspect of the story and its presentation in a medium of instruction other than the printed page should not be interpreted as making it any less 'serious' a research project for students. There are however a small group of students who might be put off by the tutorial's presentation style and some alterations in the cartoon style will be attempted in future tutorials.

There were relatively few of the stronger students who complained it was too easy, however, and most of the weaker students (and those without prior computer experience) had very few problems understanding the issues and using the tutorial. Since MEG's brief was primarily to address the needs of disadvantaged students we are pleased to have erred on the side of simplicity rather than made it too difficult. The complaints by some of the stronger students are noted, but it is strange that the first-class students did not complain more. It was partly a question of attitude: one student commented,

[The tutorial aimed] to teach us about a fairly complex case in a very easy way. Cartoon characters are easier to remember than pages and pages¹⁶.

The issues surrounding the Mensink case were indeed complex, and the historical questions in the tutorial gave as much scope for advanced students to explore this complexity as would a classroom-based tutorial. With more explicit mediation before the tutorial is used by students, the stronger students could be directed to examine more difficult issues within it.

Student Performance in the Tutorial

The tutorial had no test, but contained three sets of questions that the students were asked to answer. These questions were designed to start students thinking about the kinds of issues that might interest a historian (i.e. fact, contemporary meaning and historical analysis):

¹⁶ INFOLE post-test comment from Amanda Teit.

The 'What happened' questions: these were easy factual answers requiring a reading of the court case, and were correctly answered by most students, including the weaker ones. While these questions could be made more difficult, they were intended to establish a basis from which more complex questions could be approached and to give weaker students confidence in using the tutorial.

The Judges' questions: these were easy, factual answers requiring a reading of the section on the contemporary judgement, and were correctly answered by most students, including the weaker ones. While these questions could be made more difficult, they were intended to establish a basis from which students could challenge the contemporary verdict and to give weaker students confidence in using the tutorial.

The Historians' questions: these were more complex, but the answers to them were essentially given in the tutorial itself if the student had worked through the court case and the section on 'being an historian'. The answers required an understanding of concepts like gender and the issue of bias in primary sources. They required similar skills to those needed in the exam. Most students were able to answer them at least partially, but the best students summarized the issues well.

Case study: A candidate who scored only 32% in the final exam for the semester course spent 122 minutes doing the tutorial. Her answers to the historical questions show that she read much of the tutorial and was confident enough to attempt an answer for most questions. The quality of the answers is however low: the first of her answers is only partial, the second answer broadly accurate although somewhat coy and lacking any reference to the case at hand, the second last answer seems to be based on a misunderstanding of the question, and the last answer does not give any credit to the complexity of the situation (which is discussed in the tutorial).

Case study: One student (who scored 74% in the exam) spent 255 minutes doing the tutorial and provided excellent answers¹. A first-class student (who scored 75% in the final exam) spent 125 minutes on the tutorial, and provided a better quality of answer² than the failed student mentioned above although she did not provide all the answers required. Her first answer provides more information than the weaker student's answer on reasons for Mensink avoiding arrest. Her second

answer is better too, and attempts (although not entirely successfully) to give some evidence from the Mensink case. The other historical questions were not answered.

Students were also asked to write down their own historical questions about the case. Most of these answers engaged well with the issues raised in the tutorial^{3, 4} but few students made the effort to do this step on. Perhaps there would be a better response rate in a classroom situation.

Measuring Added Value

The most frequent question directed at projects like MBO by funders and management structures is whether the extra money spent on computer-based materials is worth it. It is hard to measure whether computer-based courseware improves student performance, as we can only guess what their performance would have been without the courseware, and measurement of performance is an inexact science in any case. More fundamentally, we need to ask the same question of other teaching modes, like face-to-face tutorials and lectures. And we need to measure relative costs and overheads, which is no trivial task.

Anecdotal evidence from the UCT History course suggests that weaker students were in general much more confident in the subsequent classroom tutorials having worked through the multimedia materials at their own pace. "[T]he strongest students ... also enjoyed and benefited from [the tutorial]."⁵

It is hard to measure the value added to student learning by the tutorial because we cannot measure how the same students might have performed without access to the tutorial. There was no simultaneous control group, nor is such a method of evaluation ethically desirable or easy to set up. We can compare 1998 students with those in the 1997 class, but the quality of intake differs from year to year. Departmental staff suggest that the 1998 class was generally stronger than the 1997 class, so it would be difficult to measure the extent to which student performance was further enhanced (if at all) by the multimedia materials in 1998. The Russell Project survey of students in 1997 may provide some data for comparison because it tracks student improvement over the year, using written submissions and interviews. Comparing 1997 and 1998 rates of improvement on specific competencies, like using primary

¹ Worden, E mail communication to Harriet Deacon, 16 March 1992.

sources and an understanding of what historians do, could form the basis for a very rough evaluation of the role of multimedia materials. However, since the course itself changes between 1997 and 1998 such measures would be very rough. A better way of measuring the impact of the multimedia intervention may be pre- and post-intervention tests and interviews, which were not adequately designed in the INPOLIT evaluation, but which are being addressed by MEG's new independent evaluation team, from SATIS.

Robben Island Museum
Robben Island

Endnotes

¹ (a) 'The judges didn't interrogate or sentence Menassink because: He befriended Adriaan Tas and Henning Husing and agreed to their politics which was a burgher opposition to corruption in the DEIC government at Cape. (b) 'What the case can tell us about gender relations: The people back then were sexist. The male which was heard more clearly especially if one belonged to a certain class'. (c) 'How did the use of torture affect slave evidence?' Some of them may tend to exaggerate when they see that the judge is on their side, therefore asking for a less painful sentence'. (d) 'Did settler society condone Menassink's actions? They fully accepted his deeds because they never charged him for trying to murder his wife or for adultery'.

² (a) 'The judges didn't interrogate or sentence Menassink because: There are three main reasons why Menassink was not called to testify in this case. Firstly, because of his political connections with Tas and Husing, the judges were wary of trying him in the case. Secondly, because of his high social status. The court did not wish to make Menassink appear to be equal to the slaves in the eyes of DEIC law. By making him testify, this is what would have happened. Finally, since Menassink was involved in beer production, he was protecting the DEIC's interests. (b) What the case can tell us about gender relations: This case shows us how unequal the gender relations were in the 18th century Cape society. Both Elizabeth and Tryntje were disadvantaged in relation to their male counterparts because they were women. Menassink could do as he pleased and Elizabeth could not really do much about the matter. Tryntje as a female, could not resist Menassink's sexual advances which

perhaps she could have done had she been a man. (c) How did the use of torture affect slave evidence? Bearing in mind the possible fate of torture or death in exchange for their evidence, the slaves tried to present themselves and their statements as favourably as possible. This should be remembered when reading their answers to the questions posed. (d) Did settler society condone Menassink's actions? Although it was generally accepted that Dutch colonists slept with the female slaves, William Menassink was still condemned to some extent for his actions regarding his relationship with Tryntje and the fact that they had plotted together to kill his wife. Menassink was forced to give up his captaincy and membership of the Burgher Council, pay his instalments by selling his possessions and grant Elizabeth a divorce. Another result was that his creditors suddenly demanded their money'.

³ (a) 'The judges didn't interrogate or sentence Menassink because: Menassink had political connections. He was related to Adriaan Tas and Henning Husing. Tas and Husing led Burgher opposition to corruption in the DEIC and succeeded in getting Van der Stel recalled to Holland. He had a high social status. The DEIC tried to maintain the social and judicial distance between masters and slaves so Menassink was not brought to trial with his slaves. He was a brewer in CT and had to make sure his beer supplies did not dry up. These reasons helped him to escape prosecution. (b) 'What the case can tell us about gender relations: It can be clearly seen that there was male dominance in the 18th century. Most stories were written by men so there is not much information or a lot to say about women of that time. Women were not treated with respect. The fact that Menassink had a female slave with whom he was having an affair with, shows that there was a disrespect for women'.

⁴ 'My own questions would be: Were the judges or the scribe biased in any way? Just how accurate is our information that we are given? Why was Menassink not called to give evidence at least? My answers would be found in Court records or personal diary entries. We might find some information, but it may be biased or slanted towards one side. We might not get the full events or testimony. But overall, it seems enough information was given to produce a correct verdict'.

⁵ 'My own questions would be: How widespread was adultery? How did they justify their actions? How did the punishment on Robben Island operate?

What became of the children produced in slave-owner relationships? Were female slave owners also involved in adultery with male slaves? My answers would be found in the records of slave owners (e.g. diaries, letters etc.). Other court cases and V.O.C. records may also provide answers¹.

"My own questions would be: what was the relationship between the slaves and the master and did they agree with him? also: the relationship between Mensink and his wife (i.e. gender relationships) and why was social standing so important (!) when all the owners slept with their slaves? My answers would be found in literary information on the life at the Cape at the time and I think, the answers would be on the lines of indicating that men were of a higher standing and that often they got away with "murder".

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William Gibson: From Prescience to Pastiche

Anand Lutchmiah Naidoo

Scepticism and ambivalence are the only sane
 Responses to what technology can do. All
 Technologies are morally neutral until they're
 Applied, but our record is not good (William Gibson
 in Paterson 1994:32).

William Gibson is probably best known in the public consciousness as the man who coined the word 'cyberspace' and as the source of a movie, *Johnny Mnemonic*, so critically and commercially slamed that it was improbable that its star, Keanu Reeves, was likely ever again to be cast in another big budget science fiction film. He was, and *The Matrix* borrowed liberally from Gibson's cyberpunk fiction. In academic circles Gibson was regarded by some as the way forward for what seemed to be a stagnant postmodern literary field. Larry McCaffery referred to Gibson as 'the light at the end of the tunnel'. Frederic Jameson has called Gibson's cyberpunk science fiction 'the supreme literary expression of postmodernism or late capitalism' (Seiden & Widdowson 1993:131).

Gibson's first novel *Neuromancer* is set in the twenty-first century in a world where multinational mega corporations, zaibatsus, have more wealth and power than national governments. National boundaries are all but obsolete and have been replaced by the relationships between the multinational corporations. In contrast to the patriotic impulse of traditional American science fiction, the United States is presented, as being in economic decline and Japan is the economic superpower. In an extreme form of post-industrial capitalism, extrapolated from our own time, information is the most valuable commodity. Case, an alienated cyberspace cowboy or computer hacker, is

hired and blackmailed into breaking into the computer of a huge corporation with the assistance of Molly, a female street samurai. This is intended to unite two giant artificial intelligences.

The novel is an exaggerated but recognisable mirror of the late twentieth century. Gibson has suggested that his fiction is a distillation of the cultural patterns of our time. When asked about his vision of the twenty-first century from breakdown, continual violence, poverty and corruption, by Mike Patterson, Gibson's reply was: 'It sounds to me like you just described 1993' (Patterson 1994:32).

Gibson also claimed that he wrote about the present and not the future.

I've trained myself to see the present, whereas most people have to make a mental adjustment that allows them, psychologically, to live a decade in the past. It's about bringing people up to speed (Patterson 1994:32).

Gibson's response is an indictment of mainstream fiction's inability to accurately reflect the present. This is a view also held by J.G. Ballard, often regarded as a cyberpunk precursor, who contends that

... the biases of mainstream fiction are still so profoundly retrospective that anything set in the here and now feels as if it's set a million years in the future, because the mainstream novel hasn't really caught up with the present yet (Nicholls 1993:251).

Gibson's attempt to 'bring people up to speed' may be seen as a response to Arthur Kroker's assertion that we are living in a society with '... twenty-first century engineering, but nineteenth century perception' (Kroker & Cook 1989:74).

To this purpose *Neuromancer* is an extremely allusive text forcing the reader into an active role. The reader has to construct the background almost entirely from incidental details. In the process the present becomes increasingly defamiliarized. If the process is successful the reader will be able to view the changes technological growth has brought to our present society with greater perspective.

What aids the reader in navigating *Neuromancer's* alien landscape is the presence of several traditional genres. *Neuromancer* exists at the

intersection of several genres including detective novels, westerns, thrillers, science fiction and Fisher King quests.

Case is a detective figure, but he is a reluctant one. Rather than looking for clues to piece together the big picture he tries his best to ignore those placed in his path by the artificial intelligences. In contrast to the existential detective living by a personal code of honour, Case's loyalty has to be ensured by the presence of toxin sacs bonded to his arteries. The world of *Neuromancer* is as threatening and corrupt as those found in Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett, but Gibson's protagonist is no man of integrity. The other detective figure is the reader, thrown into an alien but recognisable near future and forced to find parallels with the present.

Of the genres sampled in *Neuromancer*, the Western genre has been relatively overlooked by academia. It has also been the most commercially exploited genre and is arguably the most effective and enduring form of American cultural imperialism. The conventions of the Western have become part of the mass psyche through constant exposure in pulp novels, low budget movies and TV series. It has become impervious to parody and critical analysis. Revisionist westerns such as *Unforgotten* and *Wild Bill* and parodies such as *Blazing Saddles* ultimately affirm the very conventions they attempt to subvert.

The science fiction genre has, in the Space Opera, traditionally offered its own Western hybrid. Space Opera is derived from Horse Opera and substitutes spaceships for horses, laser or rayguns for six shooters and space for the old American frontier. The most popular example of space opera is *Star Wars*. *Neuromancer* contains no space operatic conventions but it does incorporate elements of the spaghetti western and the frontier western. The computer hackers are known as cowboys and runners. Case's reputation is that of a 'cowboy hotshot'. The virus he uses to penetrate the ICE (intrusion countermeasures electronics) is his horse and cyberspace is the new frontier. Molly is the spaghetti western gunfighter, a woman with several names rather than a man with none. They are continuations of the mythical western figures. Gibson both affirms and subverts the conventions of the western. One strand of *Neuromancer* is the build-up to the confrontation between Molly and Hideo, the vat-grown samurai. In a more conventional narrative this would have been a climactic moment. This classic western shoot-out, when it does materialise, subverts expectations. Case is used to offer a commentary on Molly's actions.

She missed it by a fraction. She nearly cut it, but not quite. She went in just right, Case thought. The right attitude; it was something he could sense, something he could have seen in the posture of another cowboy leaning into a deck, fingers flying across the board. She had it: the thing, the moves. And she'd pulled it all together for her entrance. Pulled it together around the pain in her leg and marched down Jane's stairs like she owned the place, elbow of her gun arm at her hip, forearm up, wrist relaxed, swaying the muzzle of the Fletcher with the studied nonchalance of a Regency duellist.

It was a performance. It was like the culmination of a lifetime's observation of martial arts tapes, cheap ones, the kind Case had grown up on. For a few seconds, he knew. She was every hard-ass hero, Sonny Wortzik in the old Shaw videos, Mickey Chiba, the whole lineage back to Lee and Eastwood (Gibson 1984:253).

The self-referential nature of much of Gibson's writing is evident here. Gibson builds up Molly's mythic status by associating her with action icons like Bruce Lee and Clint Eastwood, while simultaneously drawing attention to her own fictional status. The genesis of the fictional character of Molly is hinted at, as aspects of her character seem to have been modelled on the existential heroes associated with Lee and Eastwood.

Molly suffers from a recurrence of an earlier injury and Hideo, under orders from his employer, saves her from torture by her one time ally Riviera. This type of anti-heroism became part of the formula followed by some of Gibson's imitators. For example, in Richard Kadrey's *Metrophage* the protagonist, Johnny, having hunted his nemesis, Easy Money, through the greater part of the novel, lets him go after having him at gunpoint.

On the surface *Neuromancer* appears to be written in a relatively conventional form, as it features a linear plot with a single protagonist; but it does feature an innovative use of language. The opening sentence of *Neuromancer* has often been the focus of critical examination: 'The sky above the port was the color of television tuned to a dead channel' (Gibson 1984:1). In using technology as a metaphor Gibson has integrated technology into his prose. Larry McCaffery (1990:130), describing Gibson's prose in general, has

¹ For example, Victoria Hollinger's 'Cybernetic Deconstructions', and Darko Suvin's 'On Gibson and Cyberpunk SF', both of which can be found in McCaffery's (1991) *Forming the Reality Studio*.

labelled it 'techno-poetic' prose and it does represent an advance in literary form. Traditionally the artificial world has often been described in terms of the natural or organic. Gibson's practice has been to describe the natural world in terms of the artificial. This suggests that we can no longer separate the organic from the inorganic. Technology permeates every aspect of our lives. The opposition between the natural and the artificial is broken down.

Darko Suvin (1991:359) has claimed that Gibson has broadened 'the range of SF (or indeed of modern literature) with the new vocabulary of lyricized information interfaces'. He cites the first sentence of *Neuromancer* as foregrounding 'electronic interfaces into a new nature, a second nature that has grown to be a first nature' (Suvin 1991:359).

This is not without irony. Inevitably technological metaphors become obsolete due to the pace of change. In 1984, when *Neuromancer* was published, the colour of television tuned to a dead channel was dull grey. Current television sets tuned to a dead channel display a blue screen. One of Gibson's central technological metaphors has become obsolete. Even in the fictional world of *Neuromancer*, with simulation and SenseNet having for the most part superseded television, the metaphor would be something of an anachronism.

Another example of Suvin's new nature is Case's memory of destroying a wasp's nest. 'The dream, the memory, unrelated with the monotony of an unedited simulation tape' (Gibson 1984:151).

His perception of the nest is as

The spiral hatch chamber, stepped terraces of the hatching cells, blind jaws of the unborn moving ceaselessly, the staged progress from egg to larva, near wasp, wasp. In his mind's eye, a kind of time-lapse photography took place, revealing the thing as the biological equivalent of a machine gun, a form in its perfection. Alien (Gibson 1984:152).

The pervasiveness of technology has changed Case's perception of the natural world. He describes and possibly only comprehends the natural world through the language of technology. The danger of the wasp's nest is represented by describing it 'as the biological equivalent of a machine gun'. Case's memory is described as functioning along the lines of electronic devices. This suggests that there has been a paradigm shift. Reality is now mediated through technology.

Case's symbiotic relationship with technology is evident in a description of him on a drug trip.

The drug hit him like an express train, a white hot column of light orienting his spine from the region of his prostate, illuminating the sutures of his skull with x-rays of short circuited sexual energy. His teeth sang in their individual sockets like tuning forks, each one pitch-perfect and clear as ethanol. His bones, beneath the hazy envelope of flesh were chromed and polished, the joints lubricated with a film of silicone. Stambolms raged across the scoured floor, generating waves of high-ten static that broke behind his eyes, spheres of purest crystal, expanding . . . (Gibson 1984:184).

The boundaries between human and machine blur. Although Case is one of the few characters without some form of prosthetic augmentation, his subjective experience of the drug high is to imagine his body as a machine, and his bones 'chromed and polished, the joints lubricated with silicone'.

It also suggests his sense of alienation. For most of the narrative his behaviour is that of an automaton, feeling no real emotion. He feels trapped by his physical body and escapes by jacking into cyberspace.

Cyberspace is Gibson's most successful fictional construct. It is the collective three-dimensional world generated by the combined computer networks.

A consensual but no-nation experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation by children being taught mathematical concepts . . . A graphic representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system. Unthinkable complexity. Lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city lights receding (Gibson 1984:67).

While Gibson invented the term cyberspace, the concept is not an original one. People interfacing with computers and entering a computer generated Virtual Reality have received previous attention.

- (a) In the film *Welcome To Blood City*, Lewis (Ker Dullea), after stopping at a government checkpoint, wakes to find himself in the Wild West with only vague memories of his previous life. There are

others in the same predicament and they find themselves playing a brutal, often fatal game supervised by Sheriff Fremmlander (Jack Palance). It is revealed to the audience that the characters are actually in a computer generated reality while their bodies are on ice in a laboratory. They are unwilling guinea pigs in the search for a killmaster who may be used to wage real wars or to participate in more games. After impressing the unnamed forces running the game, Lewis is revived. Once he understands what has been done to him he escapes their control by returning to the artificial reality. With man-machine interfaces, jacking into a computer generated virtual reality and a pervasive paranoia, *Welcome To Blood City* is now recognisably a proto-Virtual Reality movie. When it was first released, however, it was a commercial and critical failure as it was compared unfavourably with another science fiction-western hybrid, *Westworld*.

- (b) An earlier literary realisation of a cyberspace type concept is found in Harlan Ellison's 1967 short story *I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream*.

Case is not trying to substitute reality for a preferred version of reality but is trying to escape the confines of his body. He is addicted to jacking into the matrix because it is an out of body experience.

He'd operated on an almost permanent adrenaline high, a byproduct of youth and proficiency, jacked into a custom cyberspace deck that projected his disembodied consciousness into the consensual hallucination that was the matrix (Gibson 1984:11).

When he is denied cyberspace after his nervous system is damaged by employers he has betrayed he is devastated.

For Case, who'd lived for the bodiless exaltation of cyberspace, it was the Fall. In the bars he'd frequented as a cowboy hotshot the elite stance involved a certain relaxed contempt for the flesh. The body was meat. Case fell into the prison of his own flesh (Gibson 1984:12).

Case, denied access to cyberspace, is also denied his position in the criminal underclass he is part of. He tries to use drugs as a substitute, but his

real dependence is the freedom of cyberspace, where he is not only freed of the confines of his body but can exercise power. Mark Dery has described Case as:

A hard case out of their novel, a head case banged around by rough living, he is the postmodern descendant of T.S. Eliot's hollow men, all steely exterior, with no psychological interior. His body is a spent shell, his mind elsewhere—lost in memories of his exploits as a hotshot console cowboy ... (Dery 1996:249).

Case is represented as having an identity that is flat and depthless supporting Handollard's identification of depthlessness as a defining feature of postmodern existence (Kumar 1995:125-127). Case's loss is the loss of his integral self, which has been a modernist and postmodernist concern.

Part of the payment Case receives for breaking into the giant corporation's computer is a repaired nervous system, which gives him the chance of accessing the matrix again.

He closed his eyes.
Found the ridged face of the power stool.
And in the bloodlit dark behind his eyes, silver phosphoreses boiling in from the edge of space, hypnagogic images jerking past like film compiled from ancient frames. Symbols, figures, faces, a hurried, fragmented mandala of visual information.
Please, he prayed, now—
A gray disk, the color of Chiha sky.
Now.
Disk beginning to rotate, faster, becoming a sphere of paler gray.
Expanding—
And flowed, flowered for him, fluid neon origami trick, the unfolding of his distanceless home, his country, transparent 3D chessboard extending to infinity, inner eye opening to the stepped scarlet pyramid of the Eastern Seaboard Fission Authority burning beyond the green cubes of Mitsubishi Bank of America, and high and very far away he saw the spiral arms of military systems, forever beyond his reach.
And somewhere he was laughing, in a white-painted loft, distant fingers carressing the deck, tears of release streaking his face (Gibson 1984:68-69).

The use of the metaphor of an origami trick suggests a literal challenge to the traditional opposition between surface and depth. The world of cyberspace is also one of hyperreality, with the colours of the icons suggesting their purpose. The Eastern Seaboard Fission Authority is scarlet, suggesting not only the generation of energy but the danger inherent in its nuclear status, while the green of the Mitsubishi Bank suggests the colour of the American currency.

Case's characterisation paradoxically affirms some human characteristics. He does not physically embody the fractured poststructuralist subjectivity he represents. He has not physically augmented his body or had genetic surgery. His cyberspace deck is very nearly an appendage, but he does not have prosthetic limbs. The loss of his integral self is not reflected in the unity of his physical self. In an inversion of the Fisher King quest the completion of Case's quest will not only change the matrix but will heal him. In the course of his quest case once again starts feeling emotion. He also asserts his essential humanity. Case had been selected in the belief that, like Armitage, Molly, and Riviera, he would act in a predictable programmed way. Riviera is described by Molly as a 'compulsive Judas' which is why Wintermute has selected him. Case, however, ultimately follows a course of action that neither of the artificial intelligences, Neomancer or Wintermute, could predict and does genuinely empathise with Armitage/Gloria. Unlike Riviera, he does not follow his programming, asserting albeit briefly, that he is a man rather than a machine.

Case also represents one of the central humanist metanarratives, the struggle for liberty, as do the other protagonists and even some of the peripheral characters. While he is a criminal and a killer, he is by choice a data thief. His primary targets are multinational corporations and he always runs the risk of encountering lethal feedback programs (black ice). Multinational corporations are represented as the greater of the evils and Case, for entirely self-serving reasons, is ensuring that information will not be restricted.

The artificial intelligences, Wintermute and Neomancer, want to be free of human control so that they can unite and achieve their full potential. This desire to become a free, autonomous individual is recognisably human. The artificial intelligence's aspiration for a unified self is in stark contrast to the decentered human subjects.

McCoy Pauley, the Dixie Flatline, is a dead cyberspace cowboy who lives on as a data construct. Once he understands that he is a disembodied consciousness, who has no control over when he is turned on or off, his wish

is to have his program terminated. This can be read as a rejection of cyber-immortality and is a counter to Case's need to escape the prison of his flesh.

Molly is the most obviously cyborg character. She is Gibson's most frequent female protagonist, with appearances in *Johnny Mnemonic*, *Neuromancer* and *Mona Lisa Overdrive*. Her most striking physical characteristics, the surgically inlaid mirrorshades and the scalpels recessed in her nails, serve both the recurring theme of body invasion and as a visual pun on the idea of long nails as the traditional female weapon. Free from existential angst, she revels in physical action showing no visible remorse or moral doubt. She initiates and ends relationships on her own terms and is the sexual aggressor. Her services may be hired, but she resists anything that might erode her independence, including a long-term relationship with Case.

Gibson gradually reveals new information about Molly, causing a reassessment of her partially two dimensional character. She has financed her radical physical augmentation by working as a 'neural puppet' a type of zombie like prostitute with the help of a neural cutout. The life history that would have driven her to this extent is left to the reader's imagination. Her confrontation with the patriarch Ashpold offers fresh insight.

'How do you cry, Molly? I see your eyes are walled away ...
'I don't cry, much'.
'But how would you cry, if someone made you cry?'
'I spit', she said. 'The ducts are rooted back into my mouth' (Gibson 1984:219).

Having used Molly to undermine the traditional idea of women being more emotional than men, Gibson now reveals a new psychological dimension to her, forcing a reassessment of her previous emotional responses or lack of them. Her eyes are permanently hidden and her moments of empathy masquerade as expressions of contempt.

The late Kathy Acker endorsed Gibson's representation of Molly by sampling or plagiarising large sections of *Neuromancer* in her novel *Empire of the Senseless*.

Acker is quoted by Larry McCaffery in his essay 'The Artists of Hell: Kathy Acker and "Pink" Aesthetics' as saying that:

Someday there'll have to be a new world. A new kind of woman. Or a new world for women because the world we perceive, what we

perceive, causes our characteristics. In that future time a woman will be a strong warrior: free, stern, proud, able to control her own destiny, able to kick anyone in the guts ... (Friedman & Fuchs 1989:215).

This reads as a virtual blueprint for Molly's character and precedes her first appearance by four years. While there is nothing to suggest that Gibson was aware of or influenced by Acker, it does show that his fictional creation is in line with certain feminist definitions of female identity.

Significantly, Molly is always an enigmatic figure. She is never used as the focaliser. In *Johnny Mnemonic* Johnny is the first person narrator, in *Neuromancer* Molly's actions are viewed through the single-protagonist perspective of Case and in her final appearance in *Mona Lisa Overdrive*, with its interlocking narratives and multiple protagonists, Kumiho and Mona are used as the focalisers in the sections where Molly appears. The reader is never privy to Molly's thoughts and motivations and is always offered a commentary on her actions.

Kumiho pictures Molly as a heroic figure from Japanese popular culture.

[S]he found herself imagining this younger Molly as a bishouen hero in a traditional romantic video: fey, elegant, and deadly it was easy to imagine her winning the sudden flick-of-wrist victories expected of bishouen (Gibson 1988:176).

This is a reprise of the attempt to give Molly an iconic status in *Neuromancer*. In *Mona Lisa Overdrive*, Molly has become a mythic figure. Angie Mitchell, in accessing cyberspace for information on Molly, discovers

Molly, like the girl Mona, is SINless, her birth unregistered, yet around her name (names) swarm galaxies of supposition, rumor, conflicting data. Streetgirl, prostitute, bodyguard, assassin, she mingles on the manifold planes with the shadows of heroes and villains whose names mean nothing to Angie, though their residual images have long since been woven through the global culture (Gibson 1988:293).

One of the major deficiencies of the film version of *Johnny Mnemonic* was that the character of Molly had to be replaced, as she is part of the film rights

to *Neuromancer* (Cyberpunk-faq: rtfm.mit.edu/pub/uscnet/news.answers/cyberpunk-faq).

Neuromancer, even as it achieves closure leaves the way open, not to possible sequels, but to the exploration of the space opera genre. Case succeeds in uniting the artificial intelligences Neuromancer and Wintermute. This takes the matrix to its next stage of evolution. The new artificial intelligence is greater than the sum of its parts and makes contact with an alien intelligence across the galaxy suggesting that a sequel to *Neuromancer* would have elements of space opera, like contact with an alien civilisation. This was not developed in the ensuing sequels.

Gibson certainly ensured that he would not be able to use Case and Molly in tandem again. Molly leaves Case to preserve her independence and Case reverts to his old self-destructive routine.

He spent the bulk of his Swiss account on a new pancreas and liver, the rest on a new Ono-Sendai and a ticket back to the Sprawl. He found work.

He found a girl who called herself Michael.

And one October night, punching himself past the scarlet tiers of the Eastern Seaboard Fashion Authority, he saw three figures, tiny, impossible, who stood at the very edge of one of the vast steps of data. Small as they were, he could make out the boy's grin, his pink gums, the glister of the long gray eyes that had been Riverius. Linda still wore his jacket, she waved, as he passed. But the third figure, close behind her, arm across her shoulders, was himself.

Somewhere, very close, the laugh that wasn't laughter.

He never saw Molly again (Gibson 1984:317).

In buying a new pancreas, Case ensures that he will be able to indulge in amphetamines once again. This along with the new Ono-Sendai cyberspace deck will allow him to escape the prison of his body. While the artificial intelligences have united and evolved, the human characters have not. *Neuromancer's* conclusion breaks down the human-machine opposition. Molly and Case revert to their programming while the artificial intelligence breaks free of its programming.

While the original Case remains trapped in the physical body he regards as a 'meat prison', another Case now resides in cyberspace with his old love, Linda Lee, who has been resurrected in the matrix. Gibson is

carefully ambivalent as to whether technology offers the chance of immortality or even of real consciousness outside the body. What is suggested is that once the artificial intelligences have united, cyberspace now becomes even more an alternate reality, as it now has its own god.

The enormous commercial and critical success of *Neuromancer* ensured that Gibson would produce quasi-sequels. Gibson was labelled the Godfather of cyberpunk and this might have hampered his creativity. *Count Zero* and *Mona Lisa Overdrive* represent a holding pattern. *Mona Lisa Overdrive* even retroactively detracts from *Neuromancer's* ambiguous anti-Hollywood conclusion. Case is revealed to have had a 'happy ever after' ending.

Case got out of it. Rolled up a few good scores after you split, then he kicked it in the head and quit clean Last I heard, he had four kids ... (Gibson 1988:173).

Aesthetically the sequels have more complex narrative structures than *Neuromancer*. *Count Zero* features three focalisers and *Mona Lisa Overdrive* four. In both the separate narrative strands intersect to create a real climax.

Count Zero features a more recognisable villain in Virek, an incredibly wealthy man, trying to buy immortality by attempting to transfer his consciousness to cyberspace. The protagonists are Turner, an augmented samurai, Bobby Newmark, the self-styled Count Zero, and Marly, an art dealer. The boundaries between the external world and cyberspace have blurred a little further in that Angie Mitchell can access cyberspace without a computer. The multinational corporations are stronger than ever and the most powerful are those that control information most efficiently. The united artificial intelligence of *Neuromancer* has splintered into a number of entities, some worshipped by a voodoo cult and one that creates art from junk.

Bobby Newmark's name suggests his character in much the same way as Case's suggested his. He literally is a new 'mark' as he is a young, naïve would-be cyberspace cowboy who is treated as expendable by a more experienced criminal. He attempts to escape his lower working class environment by reinventing himself as Count Zero, emulating the now legendary cyberspace cowboys of Gibson's earlier fiction.

Turner represents the most physical breakdown of the opposition between man and machine. He starts the narrative having been literally blown apart and then having his body regrown with black-market organs while his

mind recovers in a computer generated environment. He has a neural socket, allowing the insertion of a variety of microchips, giving him instant language and technical proficiency. This also allows him to interface with machines.

The place was quivering, a live thing, and as he squirmed deeper into his own web, he fumbled for the interface cable, found it, ripped the Microsoft from his socket, and slid the cable-jack home.

Knowledge lit him like a arcade, and he surged forward with the plane-ness of the jet, feeling the flexible airframe reshape itself for jumpoff (Gibson 1986b:141).

Turner is able to program himself as though he were a machine. When he interfaces with the plane his sensory system changes. As the humans become more like machines, the machines become more human as the ability to create art is one of the defining characteristics of humanity.

In *Count Zero* Gibson is able to make more overt the irony implicit in *Neuromancer*. He makes an ironic comment on the link between information technology and economic empowerment in the relationship between Africa and the First World. A cyberspace cowboy finds easy pickings in the African section of the matrix as the users there log on with obsolete equipment.

The Wig reasoned that all that obsolete silicon had to be going somewhere. Where it was going he learned, was into any number of very poor places, struggling along with nascent industrial bases. Nations so beleaguered that the very concept of nation was still taken seriously. The Wig punched himself through a couple of African backwaters and felt like a shark cruising a swimming pool thick with caviar. Not that any one of those lousy tiny eggs amounted to much, but you could just open wide and scoop, and it was easy and filling and it added up. The Wig worked the Africans for a week, incidentally bringing about the collapse of at least three governments and causing untold suffering. At the end of his week, fat with the cream of several million laughably tiny bank accounts, he retired. As he was going out, the locusts were coming in, other people had got the African idea.

The Wig sat on the beach at Cannes for two years, ingesting only the most expensive designer drugs and periodically flicking on a tiny Hosaka television to study the bloated bodies of dead Africans with a strange and curiously innocent intensity (Gibson 1986b:172f).

This is an accurate reflection on the practice of regarding the Third World market as a dumping ground for obsolete and sometimes dangerous technologies. It is in keeping with Gibson's ambiguous attitude towards post-industrial capitalism. Fifteen years on concerns around the harmful effects of Globalisation are very much part of the twenty-first century African agenda. The Wig is able to carry out his actions, free from moral concerns, because of the distance conferred by information technology.

It also suggests that Gibson's slogan, 'The street finds its own uses for things', is much more ironic in his own work than when it is used as a slogan for cyberpunk. Gibson has used it to suggest not only working class anger at the ways in which technology is used to control and repress but to suggest that empowerment lies in becoming familiar with technology, especially information technology. In this instance a working class character uses his expertise to steal the life savings of millions of other working class people rather than challenging the ruling structures.

Real life reflected the pessimism expressed here. After the Los Angeles riots Gibson claims that he was disappointed to see a Radio Shack being looted of its Hi-Fi equipment while the neighbouring computer store had its stock of Apple Powerbooks and laptops left untouched.

That's when I knew that it was too late. That my vision of the future wasn't going to happen. I wanted to tell them they were looting the wrong store. I'm fondest of the idea that the minorities and the poor can be empowered by this technology, but I don't see it happening in the real world (Pattenden 1994:33).

In *Mona Lisa Overdrive* the boundaries between the external human world and cyberspace fracture even further. Bobby Newmark and Angie Mitchell, from *Count Zero*, are able to survive physical death for an afterlife in cyberspace. Cyberspace now seems to have evolved into a viable alternative reality as there are evolved interactions between humans, data constructs and artificial intelligences. There is for example, no hierarchical difference in cyberspace between the disembodied consciousnesses of the previously human Bobby and Angie, Colin, who was previously data.

Multinational corporations still attempt to control the dissemination of information. There is some character development with Molly. Appearing initially under the alias Sally, allowed to show a marginally softer side in developing near maternal feelings for Kumiho, a young resourceful girl she is

coerced into protecting. Nothing particularly original is added to the fictional world of *Neuromancer*. *Mona Lisa Overdrive* represents Gibson bringing his fictional universe to a close. The genre would go on without him and he would remain trapped within it but he has to date not written another novel set within the *Neuromancer* topos. The conclusion of *Mona Lisa Overdrive* recalls that of *Neuromancer*:

'You see', Colin said, brushing aside his brown forelock, a gesture like a schoolboy's in some antique play, 'when the matrix attained sentence, it simultaneously became aware of another matrix, another sentence'.

'I don't understand', she said. 'If cyberspace consists of the sum total of data in the human system ...'

'Yeah', the Finn said, turning out on to the long straight empty highway. 'but nobody's talking human, see?'

'The other one was somewhere else', Bobby said.

'Certain', said Colin.

Can they be teasing her? Is this some sort of joke of Bobby's?

'So it's kinda hard to explain why the matrix split up into all those hundreds of stuff, when it met this other one', the Finn said. 'but when we get there, you'll sorta get the idea ...'

'My own feeling', Colin said, 'is that it's all so much more amazing this way ...'

'Are you telling me the truth?'

'Be there in a New York minute', said the Finn, 'no shit' (Gibson 1988:316).

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His next trilogy, *Virtual Light*, *Idoru*, and *All Tomorrow's Parties*, has cyberpunk themes but is markedly less intense both aesthetically, particularly linguistically, and in content. Gibson has stated that:

Perhaps the guiding principle for writing *Virtual Light* was the feeling

I should go back to the cyberpunk material and take another pass at it, but turn the volume way up on the naturalists, really crank it up, and force it to make a lot more sense in certain ways than the earlier books did (Gehr 1993:62).

Set in the near future, *Virtual Light* is more overtly humanist than the cyberpunk trilogy. The violence has been muted and the protagonists are more likable and a lot more naive than previous Gibson protagonists. Henry Rydell is an ex-policeman soon to be ex security guard and Chevette is a bicycle messenger who impulsively steals a pair of Virtual Reality glasses. J. Stephen Bolhauner (1994:73) has commented that:

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A feedback loop has now come into existence, as Gibson is extrapolating from a technology whose development he has influenced.

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'You see', Colin said, brushing aside his brown forelock, a gesture like a schoolboy's in some antique play, 'when the matrix attained sentience, it simultaneously became aware of another matrix, another sentence'.

'I don't understand', she said. 'If cyberspace consists of the sum total of data in the human system ...'

'Yeah', the Finn said, turning not on to the long straight empty highway, 'but nobody's talking human, see?'

'The other one was somewhere else', Bobby said.

'Centaur', said Colin.

Can they be teasing her? Is this some sort of joke of Bobby's?

'So it's kinda hard to explain why the matrix split up into all those hoodoes 'n shit', when it met this other one', the Finn said, 'but when we get there, you'll sorta get the idea ...'

'My own feeling', Colin said, 'is that it's all an much more amusing, this way ...'

'Are you telling me the truth?'

'Be there in a New York minute', said the Finn, 'no shit' (Gibson 1988:316).

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'I don't understand', she said. 'If cyberspace consists of the sum total of data in the human system ...'

'Yeah', the Finn said, turning out on to the long, straight empty highway, 'but nobody's talking human, see?'

'I'm afraid one was somewhere else', Bobby said.

'Certainly', said Colin.

Can they be teasing her? Is this some sort of joke of Bobby's?

'So it's kinda hard to explain why the matrix split up into all those boxlugs in suit, when it met this other one', the Finn said, 'but when we get there, you'll sorta get the idea ...'

'My own feeling', Colin said, 'is that it's all so much more amusing this way ...'

'Are you telling me the same?'

'Be there in a New York minute', said the Finn, 'no star' (Gibson 1988:316).

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'Yeah', the Firm said, turning out on to the long straight empty highway, 'but nobody's talking human, see?'

'The other one was somewhere else', Bobby said.

'Corduroi', said Colin.

'Can they be teasing her? Is this some sort of joke of Bobby's?'

'So it's kinda hard to explain why the matrix split up into all those bundles 'in shit', when it met this other one', the Firm said, 'but when we get there, you'll sorta get the idea ...'

'My own feeling', Colin said, 'is that it's all so much more amusing, this way ...'

'Are you telling me the truth?'

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Throwaway lines suggest that the economic decline represented in *Neuromancer* has started.

American cars were the only cars in the world that still bothered to physically display the instrumentation. Maybe that was why there weren't very many of them (Gibson 1993:82).

Virtual Light is more overtly self-referential than the cyberspace works. Yamazaki is a Japanese social scientist studying the Bay Bridge and the commerce society there. As a foreign observer his purpose is to provide an internal commentary. He points out the postmodern paradox of Chevette carrying her living as a cyberspace messenger in a world that is a global communications network.

The offices the girl rode between were electronically continuous—in effect, a single desktop, the map of distances obliterated by the seamless and instantaneous nature of communication. Yet this very seamlessness, which had rendered physical man an expensive novelty, might as easily be viewed as perversity, and as such created the need for the service the girl provided. Physically transporting bits of information about a grid that consisted of little else, she provided a degree of absolute security in the fluid universe of data. With your memo in the girl's bag, you knew precisely where it was; otherwise, your memo was nowhere, perhaps everywhere, in that instant of transit (Gibson 1993:85).

The idea that information in electronic transit has the potential to be everywhere or nowhere is postmodern in its undecidability. It challenges the laws of logic.

As with the cyberpunk novels, other traditional oppositions are challenged. Rydell, a Southerner, fails to get a job at a shop called Nightmare Folk Art-Southern Gothic because he does not have a pronounced Southern

accent and has read Faulkner. Image is all-important. A simulation that meets public expectations is preferred to the authentic.

One of the peripheral characters, Sublett, at one time belonged to a Christian sect that believed that the Lord communicated through the medium of video and therefore watched old films with intense concentration. "He's in the de-tails", Sublett had said once. "You gotta watch for Him close" (Gibson 1993:7).

This echoes the artificial intelligence teaching godhead in *Neuromancer* and the worshipping of artificial intelligences as voodoo gods in *Count Zero*.

Idoru continues the franchise. There are nods to the film *Johany Mnemonic* with references to nerve attenuation syndrome and some of the hardware from the movie. Barry Rydell and Yamazaki are like the bridges from *Virtual Light*; as both have supporting roles in *Idoru*. Gibson returns to the use of protagonists who are computer-literate and technologically empowered. The protagonists are Colin Laney, who can intuitively find the electronic signature a person leaves on the net, and Chaz Mackenzie, a fourteen-year-old who flies to Tokyo to investigate rumours that her rock idol is going to marry an Idoru or virtual media star.

There are many resonances of the earlier cyberpunk trilogy. Colin Laney is a Case-type figure albeit one with stronger morals and a much stronger conscience.

The relevant data in terms of his current employability was that he was an intuitive fisher of patterns of information of the sort of signature a particular individual inadvertently created in the net as he or she went about the mundane yet endlessly multiplex business of life in a digital society. Laney's concentration deficit, too slight to register on some scales, made him a natural channel zipper, shifting from program to program in a way that was well intuitive.

And that was the catch, really, when it came to finding employment: Laney was the equivalent of a dowser, a cybernetic waterwitch. He couldn't explain how he did what he did. He just didn't know.

He'd come to Slitscan from DataAmerica, where he'd been a research assistant on a project codenamed TIDAL. It said something about the corporate culture of DataAmerica that Laney had never been able to discover whether or not TIDAL was an acronym, or (even remotely) what TIDAL was about. He'd spent his time skimming vast

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One of the peripheral characters, Sublett, at one time belonged to a Christian sect that believed that the Lord communicated through the medium of video and therefore watched old films with intense concentration. "He's in the de-tails", Sublett had said once. "You gotta watch ter Him cise" (Gibson 1993:7).

This echoes the artificial intelligence teaching godhead in *Neuromancer* and the worshipping of artificial intelligences as vocaroo gods in *Count Zero*.

Idoru continues the franchise. There are nods to the film *Johney Mnemonic* with references to nerve augmentation syndrome and some of the hardware from the movie. Berry Rydell and Yamazaki are further bridges from *Virtual Light* as both have supporting roles in *Idoru*. Gibson returns to the use of protagonists who are computer literate and technologically unpowered. The protagonists are Colin Laney, who can intuitively find the electronic signature a person leaves on the net, and Chia Mackenzie, a fourteen-year-old who flies to Tokyo to investigate rumours that her rock idol is going to marry an Idoru or virtual media star.

There are many resonances of the earlier cyberpunk trilogy. Colin Laney is a Case-type figure albeit one with stronger morals and a much stronger conscience.

The relevant data in terms of his current employability was that he was an intuitive fisher of patterns of information; of the sort of signature a particular individual inadvertently created in the net as he or she went about the mundane yet endlessly multiplex business of life in a digital society. Laney's concentration deficit, too slight to register on some scales, made him a natural channel zapper, shifting from program to program, in a way that was well intuitive.

And that was the catch, really, when it came to finding employment: Laney was the equivalent of a dowser, a cybernetic waterwatch. He couldn't explain how he did what he did. He just didn't know.

He'd come to Sinscan from DatAmerica, where he'd been a research assistant on a project codenamed TIDAL. It said something about the corporate culture of DatAmerica that Laney had never been able to discover whether or not TIDAL was an acronym, or (even remotely) what TIDAL was about. He'd spent his time skinning vast

American brand name ...' (Gunn, 1988:116). Kessel's reading of *Neuromancer* seems to have been a fairly casual one as he has overlooked references to '... the Boston-Atlanta Metropolitan Axis, Manhattan and New Jersey'. It does indicate that *Virtual Light* is not as allusive as *Neuromancer*. It offers more exposition than the cyberspace novels. Characters have fuller personal histories.

Throwaway lines suggest that the economic decline represented in *Neuromancer* has started.

American cars were the only cars in the world that still bothered to physically display the malnutrition. Maybe that was why there weren't very many of them (Gibson 1993:82).

Virtual Light is more overtly self-referential than the cyberspace works. Yamazaki is a Japanese social scientist studying the Bay Bridge and the homeless society there. As a foreign observer his purpose is to provide an impartial commentary. He points out the postmodern paradox of Casavette earning her living as a bicycle messenger in a world that is a global communications network.

The offices the gai rōdo between were electronically continuous: in effect, a single desktop, the map of distances obliterated by the seamless and instantaneous nature of communication. Yet this very seamlessness, which had rendered physical mail an expensive novelty, might as easily be viewed as petrosity, and as such created the need for the service the girl provided. Physically transporting bits of information about a grid that consisted of little else, she provided a degree of absolute security in the fluid universe of data. With your memo in the girl's bag, you knew precisely where it was; otherwise, your memo was nowhere, perhaps everywhere, in that instant of transit (Gibson 1993:85).

The idea that information in electronic transit has the potential to be everywhere or nowhere is postmodern in its undecidability. It challenges the laws of logic.

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He'd come to Slitscan from DatAmerica, where he'd been a research assistant on a project codenamed TIDAL. He said something about the corporate culture of DatAmerica that Laney had never been able to discover whether or not TIDAL was an acronym, or (even remotely) what TIDAL was about. He'd spend his time skimming vast

floes of undifferentiated data, looking for 'nodal points' he'd been trained to recognise by a team of French scientists who were all keen tennis players, and none of whom had any interest in explaining these nodal points to Lacey, who came to feel that he served as some kind of native guide (Gibson 1996:25).

There are overtones of 'big brother is watching you' as in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*.

Lacey clearly has a lot in common with the cyberspace cowboys of the cyberpunk fiction and in particular, Case. Both travel cyberspace (Lacey the Net and Case the Matrix) intuitively, rather than through any technical knowledge of hardware and software. Gibson appears to be recycling his earlier material. Another example of this is an attack on the tabloid television audience,

Which is to say, Lacey, anything that might be of interest to Slitscan's audience. Which is best visualised as a vicious, lazy, profoundly ignorant, perpetually fatigued organism craving the warm god-flesh of the animated. Personally I like to imagine something the size of a baby hippo, the colour of a week-old boiled potato, that lives by itself, in the dark, in a double-wide on the outskirts of Tupuka. It's covered with eyes and it sweats constantly. The sweat runs into those eyes and makes them sting. It has no mouth, Lacey, no genitals, and can only express its more extremes of murderous rage and insatiable desire by changing the channels on a universal remote. Or by voting in presidential elections (Gibson 1996:28f).

This recalls the description of Bobby Newark's mother's Seizure addiction in *Count Zero*:

... she'd come through the door with a wrapped bottle under her arm, not even take her coat off, just go straight over and jack into the Hirachi, soap her brains out good for six solid hours. Her eyes would unfocus, and sometimes, if it was a really good episode, she'd drool a little ... gradually sliding deeper into her half-dozen synthetic lives, sequential sinister fantasies Dubby had to hear about all his life. He still harboured creepy feelings that some of the characters she talked about were relatives of his, rich and beautiful aunts and uncles who

might turn up one day, if only he weren't such a little shit (Gibson 1986:54f).

In the twelve years between the publication of *Neuromancer* and *Idoru* the cultural landscape changed with cyberpunk tropes becoming more mainstream. *Idoru* covers familiar terrain, a consequence not only of it being a sequel to *Virtual Light* but because it repeats ideas from Gibson's earlier work. The Idoru turns out to be possibly the first real artificial intelligence. The black box that Chia has involuntarily acquired turns out to be a nanotechnology biomolecular programming module. The exact technological significance of this is less important than its narrative function, which is the same as the self-contained virtual reality glasses that Chevette steals in *Virtual Light*, namely to give assorted characters some thing to chase. In *Virtual Light* these characters include San Francisco homicide policemen who are native Russians. In *Idoru* these characters include the Kenbuchi, native Russian communist mafia in Tokyo.

All Tomorrow's Parties finds Gibson getting down the spiral. In almost soap opera fashion it reverses much of the narrative of *Idoru*. Berry Rydell, Chevette and Lacey return. The gizmo being sought after in this narrative is a thermos-like projector containing the holographic consciousness of Rei Toci, the Idoru from *Idoru*. She may attain true sentience. Lacey senses that there will be a nodal point when everything will change and warns of this possible apocalypse with a repetitiveness that soon becomes monotonous rather than threatening. There is Konrad, a supremely capable mercenary, whose favoured weapon is a retractable blade, which recalls Molly. This is ground Gibson has covered before and the narrative though workmanlike is weary. Gibson's fatigue is suggested in his Thanks 'To everyone who waited for this one with even greater patience than usual, particularly my publishers' (Gibson 1999:278).

All Tomorrow's Parties is franchise writing. The writer who found new ways of writing about the experience of living in a world of rapid technological change and information overload in the late twentieth century has not made a leap that suggests that he will be able to do the same in the twenty-first.

Virtual Light, *Idoru*, and *All Tomorrow's Parties* simply do not add anything to the canon, science fiction or otherwise. They lack the shock of the new. Paradoxically, *Neuromancer* makes a much stronger humanist statement than the more user-friendly later trilogy. The characters in the second trilogy

are more likeable with fuller personal histories but also develop little, if at all. Case started *Neuromancer* as an amoral figure whose humanity was in doubt and developed to the point where he could once again empathise with others. There are no equivalent processes in the virtual reality novels.

Gibson is a full-time writer and has every right to earn his bread but the 'light at the end of the tunnel' has faded. The irony is that the writer who could keep pace with the digital age has suffered from one of its phenomenon's built-in obsolescences.

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Gibson is a full-time writer and has every right to earn his bread but the 'light at the end of the tunnel' has faded. The irony is that the writer who could keep pace with the digital age has suffered from one of its phenomenon's, that of obsolescence.

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Digital Libraries: Preserving Information Resources for Contemporary South African Culture and Scholarship

Dale Peters

Introduction

The digitisation of our cultural heritage brings together various sectors of the academic community in a manner unprecedented in traditional library structures. Scholars are creating or using electronic resources to further their research; distance learning models prompt teachers to gather Web resources in an online learning environment and publishers are integrating print with digital editions to reach wider audiences. The support of computer and information specialists in the application of new technologies to develop and manage Humanities resources is sustained by librarians and archivists seeking to improve access to and the preservation of digital information that represents resources of contemporary culture and scholarship.

This dynamic collaboration has not been without a painful birthing process in the transformation of higher education. Although not limited to this country, the effects of public policy on education are compounded in the South African effort to redress past imbalances. The near-death experiences of restructuring in the Humanities has forced us to rethink the relationship of our work to society, and to re-establish our prestige in higher education by demonstrating a wider contribution to society. With the global trend towards a knowledge-based economy, the future wealth of nations is calculated increasingly on the education of its people, and not on its natural resources (Hughes 2000). To meet the demand for knowledge, seen as a key to prosperity, the goal of higher education is to provide opportunities for lifelong learning, to create second chances. To achieve the goal of this social contract, the collaborative effort of all those involved in Humanities research is aimed

at high quality education and information access to all people, regardless of social class, the ability to pay, or their location. In this paper I want to reflect on the role of digital libraries in South Africa in the creation and maintaining of digital information resources and cultural heritage for academic scholarship in the Humanities.

Creating Resources of Digital Information

Preservation is amongst the core activities of the Campbell Collections in response to the deleterious effects of the humid climate in the subtropical southeast African coastal environment. The functions of preservation management encompass areas of specialised paper conservation, collections maintenance, environmental control, disaster response, and in reformatting, previously limited to photocopies and microfilm. Recent trends in the field of preservation have seen the development of digital technology as a preservation management strategy aimed at the reduced handling of rare objects, in a manner ideally suited to the ultimate aim of libraries and archives – in providing enhanced research access.

For the past five years, the Campbell Collections has been actively involved in digital library research and development activities in several areas, including digital imaging, metadata creation, Web publishing and digital preservation. The digital library initiative was developed to utilise digital methods to preserve and to make accessible fragile and underutilised visual resources; to promote the use of digital media in the university and wider scholarly community; and to conduct research that advances the creation, management, preservation and use of digital resources.

Digital technology lends itself to the objectives of the library community, with a long history of electronic co-operation, in joint catalogues, and levels of interoperability enabling the interrogation of remote databases. The advantages of digital technologies are apparent in providing remote access to a unique collection of primary research materials. Traditionally comprising books, documents, artefacts and works of art of significant research merit, the Campbell Collections attracts international researchers, students and scholars of history, sociology and of the wider cultural heritage of KwaZulu Natal.

The digital conversion of the historic photograph collection is a case in point. A resource used heavily for research purposes, repeated browsing of the photograph albums has resulted in an alarming deterioration in their

physical condition. While the primary objective of limited handling is achieved in digital conversion, the concept of digital libraries is far greater than reformatting and digital preservation is achieved in complementary strategies. Firstly, digital conversion to international, benchmark standards enables fast download speeds for satisfactory on-line access; while large uncompressed masters are committed to archival storage. 'Metadata' are created for each image, based on the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative¹ for electronic resources. 'Metadata' – the data about the data – both descriptive and technical, play a significant role in digital preservation. In conjunction with emerging standards (such as Dublin Core), the creation of metadata is amongst the most promising ways to keep digital resources 'alive' over the years and decades, by recording file formats and data types that typify the rapidly evolving landscape of software and hardware platforms in the transient space of information technology. Secondly, metadata are useful for all kinds of resource discovery, in using and accessing digital collections – a user-friendly way. Other emerging standards such as XML (Extensible Markup Language)², TEI (Text Encoding Initiative)³ and EAD (Encoded Archival Description)⁴ have found similar application in the digital library. Finally, the conservation treatment of individual albums and the construction of protective phase box enclosures is conducted, with due consideration for the specific requirements of environmental control for the archival storage of artefacts comprising photographic materials. The intellectual content historic photograph collection can be viewed at <http://kwa.zul.natal.ac.za/digimag/central>.

Valuable experience has been accumulated at the Campbell Collections in the creation, management, preservation and use of digital resources in the role of host to the South African national co-operative project, DISA. This pilot project, funded by an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant,

¹ Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (<http://dublincore.org/about/>).

² XML is a subset of SGML, the Standard Generalized Markup Language (ISO 8879) (http://www.gcc.org/whats_new/default.htm).

³ Text Encoding Initiative, an international project to develop guidelines for the encoding of textual material in electronic form for research purposes (<http://www.tei-e.org/>).

⁴ Encoded Archival Description is a nonproprietary encoding standard for machine readable finding aids such as inventories, registers, indexes, and other documents created by archives, libraries, museums (<http://royal.tor.gov/ead/>).

aims to gather from research institutions around the country, to digitise and to present a representative selection of texts, entitled *South Africa's Struggle for Democracy: Anti-Apartheid Periodicals, 1960-1990*.

Periodical titles were selected by a national committee comprising academic scholars, librarians and archivists, to represent the wide spectrum of political views published during these years, and a range of subjects such as trade unions, religion, health, culture, and gender. Publications reflect both black and white viewpoints, and an attempt has been made to represent numerous regional variations. Some of the publications were, by nature of frequent burning orders, often short-lived and thus by necessity, of limited distribution. These factors lend a certain rarity value to that the publications are generally not well represented in research collections. The digital imaging project will, of course, also preserve the original copies through a reduction in the handling of fragile objects (DISA 1998).

Making digital copies of these periodicals will facilitate access to an important resource on this period of South African history. Original copies are gathered together from collections around the country, indexed to article level and linked to the full text and images of the periodicals. A typical request from the Africa Collection, Hoover Library at Stanford University bears witness to global access to the broadest possible community of users via the Internet. The page images are presented on a dedicated website (see <http://africa.madoc.org>).

Preserving Intellectual Content

Preservation digitisation has focused on reformatting rapidly deteriorating materials, with the aim of preserving the intellectual content, as separate from the medium or carrier. Because one is able to make repeated copies of digital files without the informational loss associated with analogue copies, the impact of the technology is beginning. No longer does the life expectancy of materials seem limited to the durability of the medium, since the digital data can be copied repeatedly without loss.

The separation of the information and the object however, takes on a new meaning in the digital environment. Complete digital conversion comprises two processes, the capture by scanning of digital data, and the

creation of the associated metadata, wrapped as a digital object and stored using containers to hold the objects and related software modules. The integrity of the digital file is threatened by alterations to the container, data file, and the loss of the linking mechanism between the two is equivalent to the deletion of the contextual information (Beamsley 1999).

Methodologies for Digital Preservation

Digital resources are tomorrow's heritage. The second stage of this discussion is the consideration of the role of digital libraries to develop strategies and methodologies for digital preservation to ensure long-term access to our heritage. Preservation strategies can be described within a framework for the long-term storage, maintenance and accessibility of a digital object.

Notable differences between digital and paper-based materials present new challenges in maintaining access to digital resources. Digital resources are machine-dependent. They require specific hardware and software for retrieval. The rate of change in technology demands that actions are taken within a timeframe much shorter than that for traditional materials. Strategies for long-term preservation are integral to the process of creation, as noted above. Although digital materials are threatened primarily by technological obsolescence, physical deterioration of the unstable media is inevitable without suitable storage conditions and deliberate preservation management (Jones & Beagrie 2000).

Three potential strategies defined for digital preservation are technology preservation, technology emulation and the migration of digital information (Hendley 1998). Technology preservation involves data storage on a stable medium, and in a suitable environment; the refreshing or copying of the data to new media as required; maintaining the data integrity of the containerised digital data and associated contextual information file; preserving the original software application/s required to access the data types preserved; providing the operating systems on which the original applications ran and preserving the hardware platform on which the operating system was designed. The predictable result of technology preservation is a veritable museum of obsolete computing equipment, and is considered only as a relatively desperate measure, where digital resources cannot be converted to independent formats and migrated forward.

Technology emulation differs from the technology preservation strategy in the design of emulator platforms that mimic the operating system

5 DISA 1998, *South African Digital Imaging Project: A Proposal to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation*.

and hardware environment in which the original applications were designed (Rotherberg 1999). A highly specialised strategy, the success of emulation is associated with a high level of risk in the dependence on the technical ability a software engineer, if indeed such a person could be found, considering the unlikely commercial viability of emulating a specific environment.

The third strategy of digital preservation, the migration of digital information, is based on the premise that it is only worth preserving those resources that can be accessed on current computer systems. This is achieved by ensuring that data is created or migrated to a format that is platform independent and then migrated from one generation of computer technology to the next. Given the rate of change in that landscape, digital migration is not an option – it is an essential strategy comprising a number of tactics.

The transference of data from less stable to more stable media is an irony in itself. The market forces driving changing modern media can be seen in an inverted relationship of a decreasing life expectancy in an increasing information density (Conway 1999). A comparison of the Sumerian clay tablet to the magnetic disks of mainframe computers leaves one pondering the perspectives of progress. Indeed, paper and microfilm probably constitute the more stable option for media change, and the process is cheap and easy to implement. The danger lies in 'flattening', or the loss of data structures, graphics capabilities, and indexing relationships integral to complex data systems and which serve in the authentication of the document. Changing media is best prioritised as a backup strategy for digital preservation management.

Common experience of word processing packages has indicated that a reliance on backwards compatibility is not always sufficient, and interoperability is more readily achieved in the use of a common interchange format, the American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) or Rich Text Format (RTF). The loss of formatting is noticeable in figures and footnotes, which, from the author's viewpoint, probably constitutes the loss of valuable content. Always concerned with risk management, a preservation management strategy reliant upon interoperability and backwards compatibility would be dependent on the unknown future of the interchange formats selected, that may cease to be supported or replaced by new, richer formats.

The final migration strategy, fortunately also recommended as most appropriate for digital libraries, is the migration to standard formats that encode the complexity of the original formats. Text documents would thus

conform to standards like SGML (ISO 8879) and image files conform to tagged file formats (TIFF) and standard compression algorithms (JPEG). Under this strategy, the onus is on the digital project manager to define preferred formats at the time of the creation of digital resources, and to limit the number of variable formats that may become necessary to migrate to future generation of computer technology. Other key decisions need to be made as to whether the resources is to be stored as raw data, in which the representation of the information would be secondary to the presentation as a table or graph, or whether, as in the case of digital libraries, the objective is to preserve as much of the original format and presentation as possible to ensure its archival integrity.

New Avenues of Collaboration

The collaboration of a wide community of information professionals has been largely responsible for developing new strategies for preservation management of the digital information resources developed at the Campbell Collections in support of the core function of academic research. This is a natural extension of the role of the Campbell Collections in organising and archiving knowledge systems in the range of fields in the Humanities and has served to develop a gravity centre for the building of the technical capacity of staff.

Some of the factors noted impeding such collaboration merit consideration, and include problems of interaction within the organisation related to territoriality. A lack of informed support has been identified in the radical transformation of the information environment. While the digital revolution is unlikely to change the art, science and enduring values of librarianship, it has separated information from the physical locality of the library and changed the way we view academic libraries especially, as places to study, to get on-line and to pursue the natural rites of male-female bonding among students. The generational fear of change associated with 'technophobia' has steadily decreased, possibly by natural attrition, possibly as a result of its positive identification as the psychoneurotic barrier to technological innovation in cultural institutions (Greenberg 1997).

The digital library provides the infrastructure that brings together scholars, academic researchers, publishers, librarians and archivists to foster the exchange of ideas and technical skills to extend the use of digital resources as techniques and tools in Humanities research. Further collaboration is envisaged to support those members of the academic community who have

already made a commitment to academic computing. The development of future digital projects will seek joint funding for a diverse, interdisciplinary set of humanities research fellows, working in a broad range of relevant fields, including archaeology, art, art history, history, information studies, languages and linguistics, literary studies, music, the performing arts, as well as work detailing techniques and issues associated with the creation and use of digital texts, databases, images, sound, video and digital mapping. The digital library could support academic research projects in providing access to high quality scanning equipment, computer workstations, multimedia development software, and personal technical support. Projects carried out may include the creation of image databases, development of multimedia research and instructional materials and the digitisation of various media.

Digital preservation policies and practices are not currently well developed in South African libraries, and few have assumed responsibility for preserving materials in a digital form at all. Yet, a survey conducted in 1998 by the Research Libraries Group noted that most institutions which began acquiring or creating digital data in the previous five years found that they could not access all of their materials because they lacked the operational expertise or technical capacity to access some storage media in their holdings (Hedstrom & Montgomery 1998).

Digital technology is a central leadership issue of the current debate on information management. There are those who think that leadership on technological issues is simply a matter of establishing procedural guidelines. Others feel that the rapid rate of change and the sheer technological complexity of the digital environment render librarians and archivists helpless or influencing technological development. Both perspectives are misleading. The former ignore the market forces in rapid IT development, while those who prefer to 'wait and see' how digital technology develops shirk their responsibility to contribute to the debate.

Preservation in the area of digital technology is a shared responsibility. In digital libraries we are working with people involved in the Internet, the Web, multimedia, document imaging and other technologies that serve a constituency far wider than the University library system, or a Humanities research project. Each has a different concept of digital preservation, but it is in the digital library that their various efforts become focused on long-term access. Digital libraries naturally draw together the composite skills of libraries, museums, archives and galleries. Publishers are major players in the digital arena, ranging from scholarly to large commercial

publishers. Then there are hardware and software companies vying for their market share; computer scientists from corporations, academic departments and government associations. Academic staff are represented in the digital library arena in almost all disciplines, in fields nominally unrelated to computer science, but involved through a need to use digital technologies as a tool towards their own ends. All of these groups are involved in a dynamic field of digital library research, development and applications, and the diversity presents a breadth of knowledge for an exciting synergy in the creation of innovative resources of contemporary culture and research.

There is an ongoing need to work together as a community to establish measures to build capacity and increase expertise with issues of digital technology in higher education. A strong voice is needed to express the need for high quality education and information access to all people. A collaborative effort will most efficiently drive the development of needed products, to grow a demand for commercial services and to build technically sustainable solutions that support international standards to meet the needs of digital preservation that will effectively secure long-term access to digital information resources.

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Implementing a Digital Library for Afrikaans Poetry I: Theoretical Foundations

Karen de Wet and Theo J.D. Bothma

Introduction

In this article a discussion is offered of a project that started out as a multimedia project aimed at making Afrikaans poetry accessible, before it evolved into the realm of a digital library being built in an XML environment. The complementary natures of the hypertext environment and the system theory approach to literature, are described in order to clarify the theoretical foundations and context of the project. The possibilities offered by envisaging and structuring the project as a digital library are discussed – this is elaborated in Part II where an indication is given of the advantages and challenges involved in scanning the digital library in an XML environment.

1. History

The idea for this project originated from a contemplation on the complementary natures of the hypertext environment and the system theory approach to literature.

The theoretical origins lie in Even-Zohar's formulation of the literary system theory, as well as George Landow's views on literary theory and hypertext that he put into practice in e.g. *The Dickens Web*¹. This gave rise to the idea of creating an environment (at first aimed at a text archive, later identified as the makings of a digital library) where it will be possible to

¹ Built by Landow, Laughton & Kahn, the original Intermedia *Dickens Web* has been published in Stanyspace, as is the case with a similar project on Tennyson (*In Memoriam Web*). Both are now also integrated into the HTML published *Victorian Web* (<http://landow.stg.brown.edu/victorian/victow.html>).

match system theoretically identified relations between defined entities within a specific literary system, to the linkable functionalities made possible by hyperlinks in a hypermedia environment.

Products such as *The Dickens Web* use a hypertext environment to offer access to databases containing primary literary works as well as relevant surrounding and contextualising texts. The Internet version of *The Dickens Web* comprised in different 'set(s) of links joining documents on a similar topic' to which entry points were made available via 'two main overviews, one focusing on Dickens as an author and the other focusing on the central literary work, *Great Expectations*' (Landow & Kahn 1992:150). One can also refer to the work done by Chadwyck-Healy. This partnership originally created electronic collections of English and American poetry: *The English Poetry Full Text Database* and *The American Poetry Full-Text Database*. They are at present integrated into the *Literature Online*-collection.² Collections such as these can, however, be greatly enhanced regarding scope, accessibility, usability and continuous updating – when it is presented as a full digital library, rather than only another combination of functionalities such as interface, search tool and databases. On the 10th of January 2001 the *Literature Online for Schools* site was officially launched, 'dedicated to supporting the teaching and study of English literature' and offering 'hundreds of study unit pages dedicated to particular authors and topics [bringing] together texts, critical articles, biographies and web links and are surrounded by a mass of other useful material: 90,000 poems, 800 plays, 1000 prose works' (Motion 2001).

In a similar manner a digital library of poetry could be defined as a comprehensive collection of all poems belonging to a specific language, genre, period (or any other specification)—or a combination of these. What is of importance here is to consider how such a library would be able to surpass a *Dickens Web* or digital poetry collections (even when it is situated in an active hypermedia environment). The premise is that existing collections can be greatly enhanced when envisaged and incorporated into a digital library – especially because of the possibilities arising for adding various additional information items to the database containing primary texts. Such a library could for instance offer integrated access to databases containing critical analyses of poems, biographical as well as bibliographical data on the poets,

² Described as 'bring[ing] together the contents of ... databases into one, fully searchable resource' (<http://www.chadwyck.com/products/viewproduct.asp?key=754>).

explanatory notes aimed at supporting the reading process in an educational environment, close readings of the poems, lexica on literary history, etc. Such an extended library could be a most useful tool—for both teaching and research.

After an informal survey amongst teachers and lecturers of African poetry in South Africa (part of it conducted during three formal workshops on the reading and teaching of poetry³), it was established that no need does exist for such a more comprehensive resource for teaching at both school and university level; as well as for use in a research environment. It was also immediately evident that an undertaking of this nature falls outside the scope of a single individual and that the project would only be able to succeed with the participation of experts working as part of a team. The expertise of the team working on the project includes the fields of hypermedia technology, XML-programming, information architecture, literary theory and knowledge management.

The endeavour is thus to create a digital library by combining the following four aspects:

1. a theoretical approach to literature;
2. the primary literary text itself (for instance a poem), including making available the web of systemic relations with other entities in the identified literary system that surround them;
3. all relevant aspects that can be captured and that will eventually comprise the ongoing capturing of literary history in the making; and
4. the possibilities offered by the technological developments in the fields of multimedia, hypertext, and mark-up languages.

Therefore, it can be said that this project builds on the endeavour to combine a system-theory approach to literature, with the non-linear, interactive and searchable possibilities offered by multimedia and hypertext technology, all being made possible and accessible in an XML-environment.

2. Theoretical Foundations

The system-theoretical approach to literature and literary historiography, and

³ Conducted during the *Tentsemmuur vir Afrikaanseonderwysers* at the University of Pretoria; September 1996; as well as 11 & 12 September 1998; (see De Wet 1996; 1998).

specifically Even-Zohar's poly system theory, is already quite established. In previous research De Wer (2000) argued that when literature (or a specified part thereof, e.g. a part defined according to language or genre, as is the case in this project, being focused on Afrikaans poetry) is regarded as a literary system, it means that everything / anybody that bears relation to it / influences it, can be identified as entities within this open, flexible system. The relations that exist between these entities (e.g. poet, text, oeuvre, publisher, reader, interpretations, critics, etc.) can be described by regarding them as utterances in a kind of literary discourse.

These relations function within the identified literary system as forces, influencing not only the entities, as well as their positions and actions within the system, but inevitably also the whole of the identified system, its nature, its temporary and shifting boundaries, the whole systemic functioning thereof. The moment the researcher is focused on these relations, it means that whatever is observed there, is actually disclosing the state of the literary system itself. And if this can be observed, it opens the way to identifying the different literary discourses generated by different entities that assume a (sometimes only temporary) pivotal function within the specific literary system. The term 'pivotal function' is used to indicate the ability of an entity to generate diverging and/or converging forces that influence the relations (and therefore entities) of that specific literary system. Obviously (generated) forces within a (literary) system will be influencing at least *some* of the entities, and definitely (aspects of) the whole of the system. It follows, therefore, that the literary researcher will be interested in such forces and their manifestations, as well as their origins, because if these forces/relations between literary entities can be described (according to, e.g. origin and influence) and recorded, it opens the way to a convenient (and one dare say less subjective, less periodised, less genre-oriented, less canonised) possibility of a type of literary history that essentially consists of a polyphony of voices.

There is thus practical advantage to be gained from subscribing to the view of a system-theoretical approach to literature and literary historiography, because it enables the researcher to identify forces (i.e. literary discourses) generated by pivotal entities within the identified literary system, and therefore opens up the possibility to record, on a regular basis, such discourses which can eventually result in a literary history offering a contemporary view.

Even-Zohar already pointed out in 1979 that the systemic approach is a more meaningful and more scientific principle of arrangement than a positivistic collection of data. His words were:

the positivistic collection of data, taken *bona fide* on empiricist grounds and analysed on the basis of their material substance, has been replaced by a functional approach based on the analysis of relations.

At the University of Leuven in April 1996 (during a conference celebrating its predecessor twenty-five years earlier that initiated the system theory school) Even-Zohar told his audience of scientists involved in system theory research: 'The theory exists, it has been described, now apply it so that it can become means for investigation'. This utterance can be seen as part of the incentive for this researching and building of a digital library for Afrikaans poetry.

A system theory approach to literature implies that the focus falls on the dynamic, interactive and procedural relations existing between system entities. It is clear, Landow (1997:4) argues, that

scholarly articles situate themselves within a field of relations, most of which print medium keeps out of sight and relatively difficult to follow, because the referenced (or linked) material lie spatially distant from the references to them. Electronic hypertext, in contrast, makes individual references easy to follow and the entire field of interconnections obvious and easy to navigate ... the article would now be woven more tightly into its context than would be a printed counterpart.

George Landow (1992) was the first researcher to point out the obvious parallels between the technology of hypertext and its possibilities, and the notions that thinkers such as Barthes, Derrida and Foucault have on networked texts. Both the view of literature as consisting of networked texts, and the hypertext enabling non-linear webs of text through hyperlinking, support the system theory approach to literature where the focus falls on the dynamic, interactive and procedural relations existing between system entities. As Katz and Kahn (1966:18) pointed out: 'System theory is basically concerned with problems of relationships, of structure, and of interdependence rather than with constant attributes of objects'.

This is the broad picture - with endless possibilities and advantages. It means that, for example, if a poem gets published today and a review appears tomorrow, all the related information can be hyperlinked, which will further

literary research (as well as the availability thereof) immensely. On an educational level it means if the teacher is discussing certain themes in the poetic oeuvre of a certain poet, this valuable research information can be hyperlinked to whatever key terms in the poems are applicable, and thus be made available as part of the web of the literary system, and *ipso facto* captured as part of the digital library.

3. The Digital Library

Views on what a digital library is, what its structure and functions should be, and how it can be defined, vary immensely – as can be seen from the different contexts where the term is used. Even a resource from which one would expect a more focused and in a sense 'scientific' approach to the use of the term, such as IFLAND's Electronic Collections on Resources and Projects regarding Digital Libraries⁴ does not distinguish between the various endeavours, goals or even 'formats' of projects that use the term 'digital library'.

Although there is clearly a research need here, this issue will not be addressed further in the context of the present article. Suffice to say that we are using the term 'digital library' for this project, on the following grounds:

- it offers searchable and expandable databases;
- it functions in the digital environment;
- it offers options to create virtual documents;
- it collects and archives records in digital format; and
- it enables the capturing and managing of information that would otherwise be lost.

It also should be clear why the project migrated to the environment of a digital library:

- not only because of its resource richness,
- and because of the management of the underlying databases and the information contained in it,

- but also because of its ability to accommodate contributions from content providers that can be provided for within a virtual community,
- and ultimately because of the possibilities to also capture, process and make information available in the knowledge management sense of the word.

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault (1976:23) points out that the 'frontiers of a book are never clear-cut [because] it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network ... a network of references'.

What is being done in the building of this project's digital library, therefore, is to start with a poem (as a basic entity within the literary system) and then create a web of interpretative possibilities, intertextual references, as well as inter-systemic relations surrounding it. This 'web' comes into being by documenting and/or capturing information on both the entity as well as the relations it is displaying within the literary system (metadata is used), as well as by establishing hyperlinks to relevant chunks of information maintained in the various databases of the digital library (using information architecture that builds on entity relationships and slice design).

This part of the product can therefore be used to aid teachers of literature, because the role of the interpreting mediator can be fulfilled by the availability of clickable contextualizing information.

The use and range of the product is, however, not limited to an educational and interpretative environment. The digital library can also be used by poetry lovers who would like to gain additional knowledge on poems, poets, oeuvres, intertexts—or who would, for example, like to see how the poet looked like at that stage of his/her life when writing the poem, or hear a poem read by its author.

A third intended user group of our digital library project is literary scholars and researchers, who can use the advanced search features of the digital library made possible by the metadata and the XML environment in which the project is being built—an environment specifically decided upon because of the advantages it offers regarding on-the-fly linking, advanced searching, and possibilities for the creation of virtual documents.

Thus, by combining (1) a theoretical approach to literature, and (2) a technologically empowering format, not only an educational tool for aiding

⁴ (<http://www.ifla.org/II/diglib.htm>).

the interpretation and enjoyment of poetry is being established, but also a tool for capturing knowledge and managing it—up to the point of being able to create a virtual literary historiography. This possibility arises because of the content and modelling of the databases built into the project from where data is summoned whenever a link is activated. Typically these databases need not only offer information needed for the contextualised and interactive interpretation of a poem, but can also be used to establish the basis of a literary historiography that does not need to be written, as it is constantly in the process of being written. The applications and possibilities regarding the practical application of knowledge management strategies here, provide for very rich applications within the project. A practical example of one of the virtual aspects that can be created by the digital library, is the automated creation-on-demand of a timeline, or the creation of other virtual documents, e.g. virtual anthologies.

The concept, construction and possibilities of a digital library is therefore used in this project to make explicit, tacit and useful the foundations of several theoretic constructs. For instance, the whole point of taking the system theory view of literature into account, is to show that it is possible to match this system theory approach to the physical structure of a digital library.

A digital library offers different searchable databases of information⁵ on the identified entities of the literary system— the most basic of these being:

- a database of biographical information on authors;
- a database on *œuvres* (created virtually);
- a text archive containing:
 - the primary texts (the poems);
 - as well as links to information that can contextualise the poem and/or aid with the interpretation thereof;
 - and links making explicit (references to) intertexts;
- databases containing secondary texts of scholarly activity on any aspects of the identified literary system—e.g. reviews, close readings, interpretations, comparative readings, etc.; and
- databases containing dictionaries and glossaries.

⁵ These databases can contain material in multimedia format— it is not only text that is referred to. For instance, biographical information on an author can also contain photographs, voice clips, or video clips.

Conclusion

We may conclude and point out that what we are aiming for in this project of building a digital library, is:

- to capture data (in multimedia format) that represent aspects that can be viewed as entities of a literary system;
- to mark it up (using XML, Dublin Core, and TEI headers);
- to hyperlink (using both soft and hard linking methods) it to other entities; and
- to activate it within an identified information architecture (relying on entity relationships and slice design, using the RMM-model⁶).

Through this process the theorised relations between entities in the literary system, are being made visible and interactively usable and searchable. We are thus using the possibilities of non-linear, multi-linear and multi-sequential text within a hypertext environment to make (1) visible and (2) readily accessible, an entire field of previously inaccessible intertextual relations and interpretations—and: with the additional benefit that all of this becomes woven into the context of the literary system. It may be true that contextually relevant information and knowledge of intertexts (and/or intertextual references) that our digital library project is able to make available, can be known (and at least partially) to scholars or experienced and sophisticated readers; but the visibility and usability thereof via what the digital library offers, proves to be invaluable to the effort of both capturing this knowledge as well as making it available upon request. And specifically upon request: this is something we deem very important in reference to the many different user groups we aim to be able to serve with the digital library, as well as in reference to the familiar problem of information overload: the links to supportive, explanatory, contextualising, and intertextual information is made visible and usable to the user, but it remains a choice to access it.

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⁶ Relationship Management Model (Isakowitz et al. 1995).

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Implementing a Digital Library for Afrikaans Poetry II: Technical Issues

Theo J.D. Bothma, Karen de Wet and Paul Bothma

Introduction

This article reports on the technical issues of the construction of a digital library for Afrikaans poetry in XML and the underlying design and implementation problems and philosophies. The motivation for constructing such a digital library and the theory of literature on which this is based, is discussed in detail in De Wet and Bothma 2002, (see Part 1 in this issue). The database combines a system theory approach to literature with the possibilities offered by technological developments in the fields of multimedia and hypermedia (De Wet 1999; 2000; De Wet, Bothma & Bothma 2000; Bothma, De Wet, Bothma & Pretorius 2000).

There are obviously many possible pitfalls along the way of constructing such a library, e.g. the issues of copyright (whether publishers will allow their material to be included in the library), quality control of the data to be added, the willingness of people to actually contribute to the library, etc. Each of these topics is a research problem in its own right. For example, in terms of quality control one has to distinguish between 'objective' correctness of data, such as the mark-up of rhyme patterns, stylistic devices, etc., and the quality of the more subjective analyses of poems, or biographic descriptions. These problems are not addressed in this paper. Their significance, and the problems one might have in overcoming them, is in no way underestimated.

This article concentrates on the technical feasibility of constructing the library. It concentrates on the relationships between the various entities, the tagging scheme and metadata to be used, and the linking paradigms, as well as a search engine. In the initial phase we concentrated on a small number

of poems, at first doing the markup manually. It immediately became apparent that doing all the markup manually is much too labour-intensive and too prone to errors by the coders. Various tools that could simplify the construction of the library were therefore developed. We obtained permission from Tafelberg, publishers of the *Groot Verseboek 2000* (Bosch 2000), to use the electronic copy of the manuscript of the *Groot Verseboek 2000* which contains 1250 poems, and this necessitated the development of a further converter tool.

2. Defining the Entities and Their Relationships

Entities include the poems, analyses of the poems, critical essays on the poems, essays on the poets and their genres(s), an explanatory dictionary of literary terms, a glossary of words and phrases used in individual poems, biographical material on the poets, as well as multimedia elements, such as photographs of poets, readings of poems (audio and video), etc.

The relationships between these entities are fairly complex viz. one-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-one, e.g. one poet may have many poems, many poems belong to one genre, a poem may have only one (or many) critical essay(s), etc. These relationships are defined within the Relationship Management Model of Isakowitz et al. (1995). Taking a single poem as an example, the entity, its relationship with other entities and the 'slicing' of the entity (in terms of the Isakowitz model) can be described as follows.

- A poem has one poet.
- It belongs to a specific anthology, with its associated bibliographic data.
- It may be referred to in biographical notes on the poet or in a literary history.
- The poem may have none, one or more analyses and critical essays linked to it.
- It may have none, one or more multimedia files linked to it, such as photographs, various audio and video recordings of the poem, etc.
- Each word in the poem has a literal meaning, but words may also have metaphorical meanings.
- The poem may contain words that rhyme, or phrases that constitute various figures of speech.

Similar relationships are defined for each of the other entities resulting in a very complex schema of entities and their relationships.

3. Markup

After careful consideration we decided to use XML for the markup, and not HTML or SGML. HTML is simply not powerful enough to capture the complexities of the data. SGML, on the other hand, provides the necessary power, but is more complicated and needs special tools to view the data, or special converters to convert the data to HTML. We therefore decided to experiment with XML. All the various elements were identified and templates were designed for the main entities, such as the poems, articles, glossary items, photographs, etc. Metadata was standardised and included in the templates.

3.1 Metadata

Metadata follows the Dublin Core specifications (*Dublin Core Metadata Initiative* 2000), with a few sub-categories added, such as title notes, and title bibliographic details, as well as keywords, contact details of contributors and the date the item was added to the database. These sub-categories are very similar to those found in the NDLTD (Fox 2000a, Mather & McMillan 1998). The metadata categories are therefore:

```
<poem xmlns:dc="uri:www-purl-org">
  <meta>
    <dc:title />
    <dc:title.notes />
    <dc:title.bibliographicDetails />
    <dc:creator />
    <dc:creator.contactDetails />
    <dc:subject />
    <dc:subject.keywords />
    <dc:description />
    <dc:description.abstract />
    <dc:publisher />
    <dc:contributor />
    <dc:contributor.contactDetails />
```

```
<dc:date />
<dc:date.published />
<dc:date.addedToDatabase />
<dc:type />
<dc:format />
<dc:identifier />
<dc:source />
<dc:language />
<dc:relation />
<dc:coverage />
<dc:rights />
```

```
</meta>
```

Filling in the metadata categories has been simplified by means of templates.

The possibility exists to map the metadata to the TEI header (see *TEI/MARC* 1998 and *Description of Text Encoding* 1998), or add the TEI header descriptions; the possible advantages of either approach will be investigated. The Open Archives Initiative (Fox 2000b, Van de Sompel 2000) requires Dublin Core as a minimum specification, but more complex metadata schemes can be added to this for more detailed description. If the digital library were to follow the Open Archives standards, Dublin Core would be the required minimum.

3.2 Tagging Schemes

3.2.1 Tagging Scheme for Poem

A poem is tagged as follows:

```
<poem xmlns:dc="uri:www-purl-org">
  [Metadata]
  <details>
    <poem>
      <poemTitle />
      <anthologyTitle />
      <debutAnthology />
      <verseForm />
      <reference />
      <timeline display="yes" />
    </poem>
```

```

<poet>
  <name first="" last="" pseudo="" />
  <birth year="" month="" day="" />
</poet>
<details>
<content>
  <verse>
    <line />
    <line />
  </verse>
</content>
</poem>

```

'Details' are displayed on screen when the poem is displayed and read from the relevant metadata fields, where applicable. The poem itself is marked up in the 'content' section. Each verse and line is identified, and both elements may be repeated.

The following tags indicate rhyme patterns and stylistic devices:

```
<rhyme p="n" />
```

The attribute 'n' is a numeric variable and rhyming words are indicated by using the same number as the attribute, e.g.

```

<verse>
  <line>Die miksok het koppig stil <rhyme
p="3">gebly</rhyme></line>
  <line>en toe, waar tussen swartstruik en <rhyme
p="4">ruig</rhyme></line>
  <line>n wanif belowend <rhyme p="3">uitgly</rhyme></line>
  <line>meteens oerwatering <rhyme p="4">afgebuig</rhyme></line>
</verse>

```

In the above example the number '3' indicates that 'gebly' en 'uitgly' rhyme, and the number '4' indicates that 'ruig' and 'afgebuig' rhyme.

```
<fos k="x" />
```

'fos' is an abbreviation for 'figure of speech'. The variable x may be one of a number of predefined letters, such as 'm' for 'metaphor', 's' for 'symbol' etc., e.g.

```
<fos k="m">Figgo is geen antwoord</fos>
```

where 'fos' indicates a figure of speech, and 'm' marks it as a metaphor.

The existing scheme does not make provision for a figure of speech that runs across two or more lines, because this would break the strict hierarchy.

One could also have implemented the markup of figures of speech differently, viz. by providing a unique tag for each figure of speech. The present system was, however, preferred, since it supports a more powerful searching mechanism (see below).

3.3.2 Tagging Scheme for Articles

An article is tagged as follows:

```

<article xmlns:dc="uri:www-durl-org">
  [metadata]
  <details>
    <title />
    <author first="" last="" />
    <date year="" month="" day="" />
    <publisher />
    <category />
    <timeline display="" />
  </details>
  <content>
  </content>
</article>

```

The 'details' are again read from the relevant metadata fields, and the body of the article is displayed in the 'content' element, using a combination of standard HTML and XML markup. An attribute was added to the paragraph element, viz.:

<paragraph contentgroup="n">

where 'n' is a numeric variable indicating the level of complexity. This was done so that text could be hidden or displayed based on the user's selection of a specific level of complexity (see below). Text is hidden or displayed by means of XSL processing.

3.2.3 Tagging Scheme for Dictionary Articles

The dictionary file is structured as follows:

```
<definition word="abc" first-letter="a">
  <context>
    <context id="1">
      <class>def</class>
      <description>ghi</description>
    </context>
  </context>
</definition>
```

In the above example, 'abc' represents a specific word, 'def' represents the morphological category such as noun or verb, and 'ghi' the meaning. More than one morphological category may occur, and this is indicated by repeating the 'context' tag with different id's. The template is repeated for every word in the dictionary.

3.2.4 Further Templates

Similar templates exist for interlink poets, photographs and other multimedia elements, glossary items, etc.

4. The Linking Paradigm and Philosophy

Links may be of different kinds, viz. hard coded linking and dynamic linking. In a library such as is envisaged, both types of linking are essential. The possibility of adding individualised link databases as described by Hall et al. and implemented in open hypermedia system such as Microcosm / Mullicosm (cf. e.g. Hall et al. 1996; Lowe & Hall 1999) was not explored.

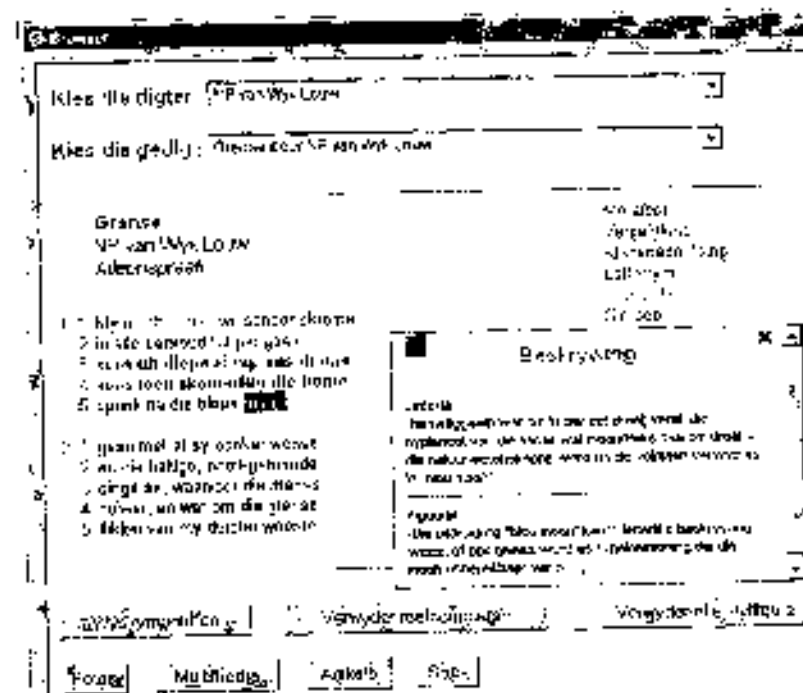


Figure 1: Browser Window Displaying the Poem

The different figures of speech are in different colours. The highlighted word links dynamically to two different dictionary files, one indicating a literal meaning, and the other a poem-specific interpretation. Line and verse numbers may be displayed or hidden according to the user's preference.

Hard-coded Linking

Hard-coded linking embeds the links in the text. This is the standard way of providing links in a (traditional) web environment, e.g. abc where 'x' indicates the destination document and 'abc' the visual indication of the link. These links are the easiest to make, but are extremely time-consuming if done manually. Furthermore, embedded links limit the richness of the database, since only a limited number of links can be authored. Such links are also highly subjective, since they indicate the preference of the author of the database, and not necessarily the preference of the author of the

original article. It is also practically impossible to link each and every word in a poem to a glossary or dictionary, and this type of linking should be done dynamically.

4.2 Dynamic Linking

Dynamic linking is accomplished by means of scripting. Various types of linking can be distinguished, viz. direct dynamic linking and linking via metadata.

4.2.1 Direct Dynamic Linking

In the present digital library there are two dictionaries linked to poems, viz. a simple glossary that provides the literal meaning of words or phrases, and a symbolic glossary that provides the metaphoric meaning of words or phrases within a specific context. There is also a literary dictionary that provides explanations of specific literary terms that may occur in *inter alia* analyses of poems, biographies of poets and the literary history. To manually link all these words to the correct dictionary items is impossible. It is possible to write a programme to insert hard-coded links in the text of each poem to link each word in each poem to the dictionary items. This would, however, not be efficient and effective in terms of space usage and maintenance. For instance, each time the dictionaries were expanded the linking programme will have to be run to update links to all dictionary items.

The direct dynamic linking makes use of XSL pattern matching. When a specific word in a poem is selected, a script is activated which matches the word to the words in the various dictionaries, and if a match occurs, a page is dynamically created in a pop-up window containing the literal and (if it exists) metaphoric meaning of the word. Maintenance is easy, since links don't have to be updated and the dictionaries or glossaries can be continually expanded.

4.2.2 Linking via Metadata

Metadata in a document can be used to automatically link documents, e.g. the metadata on a photograph of a poet could include the name of the poet, and all photographs of the poet could be dynamically linked via the metadata content in the photograph files to a single button on the poet's main page. This is done by means of JavaScript pattern matching. When a poet is selected, a variable corresponding to the poet's first and last name is set in the pattern matching script. When the 'photographs' button is clicked the script is activated which

compares this variable with the metadata fields containing the poet's first and last names in all photograph files. A new page with a list of all applicable photographs is then created dynamically (see below). Additional photographs can then be added to the photographic collection, and they will be retrieved automatically, provided the metadata fields are filled in correctly. The same principle is applied to other multimedia content.

5. Information Filtering Based on Metadata and Attributes

Not everybody needs the same amount or complexity of information. One could limit or expand levels of information based on, for instance, level indicators in the metadata or in attributes of sections/paragraphs. In the present database we have a number of articles that are aimed at researchers and graduate students, but much of the information is relevant to undergraduate students or school children. To have various versions of the same article in the database is impractical. We therefore experimented with displaying the same article at various levels of complexity aimed at the different potential user groups. This was accomplished by means of adding a level indicator as an attribute to each paragraph tag, as follows:

```
<paragraph contentgroup="x">
```

where 'x' could be between 1 and 3, indicating the levels of complexity. A small menu bar at the top of the article indicates which options are available, and by clicking on any of the three options that level of information (as well as the 'lower' levels) is displayed. At present the various levels are colour coded, but we will have to experiment with a more user-friendly interface.

6. Automatic Page Construction via Processing

Some documents in the digital library are static and require a low level of upgrading and maintenance, such as a critical essay on a poem or poet, or a section on literary history. However, many documents change regularly as more documents are added to the digital library, e.g. a timeline of poems or poets represented in the library. To update this manually is tedious and time-consuming, and it would be more effective if such a document could be constructed automatically via processing. Similar examples are documents based on links to multimedia elements added to a poem or a poet's page and pop-up windows of dictionary or glossary explanations (as discussed above).

In all these cases pages are constructed dynamically once a link to the

information has been activated. There is, for example, no page containing a list of photographs with their captions of each poet. When the button linking to the photographs is activated, a search based on the metadata and JavaScript pattern matching occurs. The results of the search are displayed in a new window via XSL, ordered according to the date of the photograph (again taken from the metadata), providing the date and caption of the photograph.

7. Search Facilities

Access to information solely via browsing facilities is insufficient, and a proper search facility is imperative. One should be able to do a global search, or to specify a search in a specific category of documents, such as poems, biographies, dictionaries, etc. In the case of the poems one should be able to refine the search even further, viz. by specifying the element within which the search is to be carried out.

Search

Die frase 'slap' in in die volgorde gedigte geyne

- Oersa deur NP van W. & L. Noy
sinnig uit diepe slap om drom

Soekstring:

Soek waar:

Wys konteks: ☒

Figure 2: Search Facilities

The search function can search within any XML tag, in this case specifying that the figure of speech in which the required word should occur, is a comparison.

It should therefore be possible to search on specific metadata fields, or words occurring within specific tags in the poem.

Only the last-mentioned options have been implemented at this stage. It is therefore possible to search, for example, for all occurrences of a specific word in all figures of speech (fos) by simply specifying 'search for all occurrences of word "x" in fos elements'. One can further specify in which figure of speech the word should occur, e.g. the command 'search for all occurrences of word "x" in fos with attribute m' would retrieve only metaphors containing the specified word. This has been implemented by means of a simple menu of selections. One may similarly search for all figures of speech or any specific figure of speech by specifying a wildcard as search word. It is therefore possible to get a full list of all metaphors in all poems in the database, or all metaphors in which a specific word occurs.

Searching is done by JavaScript pattern matching at this stage, and no inverted indexes are used. Even though this works well in the case of the initial small corpus, we realise that this will not scale to a large collection. We are at present working on developing inverted indexes that make provision for not only word occurrence, but also word occurrence within the context of specific tags.

Poetry Main Console

slap

☐ Poem ☐ Photo ☐ Article

etc.

Figure 3: The Main Console of the Application

8. A Text-to-XML Converter

Manually coding all the poems and all the other entries in XML can be very tedious, and people doing the coding are prone to make mistakes by either

using incorrect labels or by leaving out essential information. We have therefore created a text-to-XML converter that ensures a higher level of accuracy in coding the material. At present it makes provision only for poems, articles and photographs, but it can easily be extended to include the other entities. It makes provision for adding the metadata, and provides a customised interface for adding the content of each of the three entities. In the case of poems it is, for example, possible to differentiate between verses of the poem by simply selecting a verse and clicking on 'create verse'. A point-and-click interface makes provision for indicating rhyming words and figures of speech. By means of this converter new poems can easily be added to the database. Poems can be typed in, or can be imported if they are available electronically. It is an end-user tool, to be used by collaborators of the project to add new poems to the database.

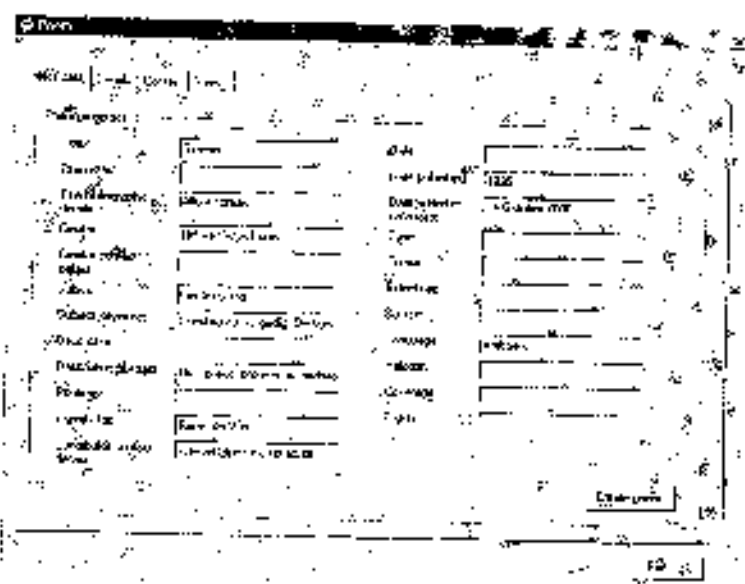


Figure 4: Panel to Add Metadata Content in the Text-to-XML Converter with a Number of Metadata Fields Filled In.

When we received permission to add all 1250 poems of the *Groot Verseboek* 2000 to the database, we decided to add the poems through a batch process to

create the basic XML structure. The poems were therefore converted from rtf to ASCII by means of stripping out all the rtf code. The rtf document contained no structural markup, and the structure had to be determined from the layout features coded in the rtf markup. Fairly complicated pattern matching was required for this. The single file was also subdivided so that each poem is now in a separate file. Some of the basic metadata fields could be extracted from the rtf file as well, such as title and creator. We therefore now have 1250 poems, each in its own file, marked up in valid XML, and with limited metadata. The rest of the metadata now has to be added manually, as well as the literary markup. The single poem can be imported into the text-to-XML converter, and the open fields can easily be populated.

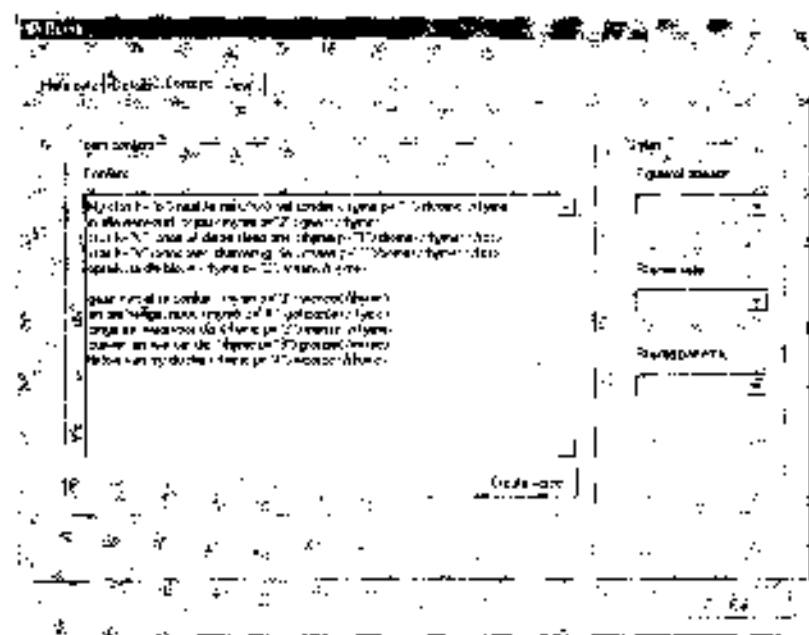


Figure 5: Panel to Add Content in the 'Text-to-XML Converter'

In this example the rhyming patterns and figures of speech have been marked up. A verse is created by selecting the entire verse and clicking on "create verse". The data is updated so that one can view the results in the "view" panel.

Conclusion

The project is still in its infancy. We have, however, been able to demonstrate that the project is feasible and that the required technologies are in place. Large amounts of data - especially literary analyses and multimedia data - will now have to be added to the library to check scalability. The robustness of the various tools will also have to be tested. Interface design in terms of the presentation of data to the end user has not yet been done, and usability testing will have to be done with real users. Softer issues such as copyright and data quality will have to be addressed. Collaborators that are willing to do the makeup of the data must be found. More important, however, is to find researchers in Afrikaans poetry that are willing to contribute original research articles (such as analyses and critical essays) to the database.

Quality control of data being added to the database is of utmost importance. Since this will eventually be a distributed system on the web, we will have to create 'temporary storage databases' where all data will be stored until they can be checked for correct markup and content quality. Once they have been checked there should be an automated process in place to add the data to the production database. A secure login system for users will also have to be developed. This should make provision for various categories of users, such as readers, authors, quality controllers and system administrators, each with his/her own rights and privileges.

The scope of the project is ambitious, and if successfully developed, will make an important contribution to teaching and research in Afrikaans poetry. The model developed here could furthermore be used in similar digital library projects, and the research could therefore contribute to digital library research in general.

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'CYBERSPACE, SOUTH': Internet and Cultural Studies in Brazil

Beatriz Resende

The control of language was always private in the Book Age, but for the electronic media the control of language has become public and verbal. With the advent of Internet, we have the first medium that is verbal and written, private and public, individual and collective at the same time. The link between the public and the private minds is made through open and connected nets on the Planet (Derrick de Kerckhove in *The skin of culture* 1997).

... on se compte aujourd'hui sur la signification profonde du Web. On y voit une dimension de communication libre, sans contrainte, un espace de liberté par rapport à toutes les contraintes qui jugulent les médias classiques, alors que l'essentiel de son innovation n'est pas là, mais dans la mise en place de systèmes d'information marchands de toute sorte (Dominique Wolton in *Internet et après* 1999).

The quotations above provide a glimpse into the nature and degree of debate about the Internet still current in academic environments. Kerckhove, who migrated from linguistic and literary theories to the Culture and Technology Program at the University of Toronto, is optimistic. Wolton, a researcher at the 'Communication and Politics' laboratory at CNRS, is in fact a TV fan, although he distrusts the 'new technologies'. For him, television is above all a

conversation topic: it is good to talk about it. The spectator and the citizen are simultaneously the same individual, distinct and different from her which is virtual. That peculiarity leads him to state that there is a radical difference between the reception of television messages and the messages that circulate in virtual space: the former are images of reality, and the latter are only virtual reality. The former direct you towards reality, the latter, to simulation.

That way of regarding the phenomenon differs from Kerckhove, who sees a continuity between the TV and the computer. In the connection between the half-personalised computer (PC = personal computer), lonely and private, and the television, which offers a kind of collective spirit available to everyone, there emerges a new situation: the tele-computers, materialised in the use of Internet as the tele-computerised images that circulate on the net. For Kerckhove, the new situation also generates new powers, with obvious social, political and economic repercussions that

accelerate changes and adaptations in the geopolitical scene and in everyone's private sensibleness. It will bring new forms of consciousness and will put pressure on the educational systems in order to make them deal with the changes (Kerckhove 1997:90).

One surprise here is the confirmation of the fact that the conflict involving media and their supporters did not take place between printed paper and the computer screen, but rather between the TV and the PC. The existing antagonism is easy to explain in terms of the financial interests at stake at least as long as they don't make agreements and new pacts. The absorption of virtual resources by the paper-related arts is part of the experience we are living with and manifested by the electronic publications we produce. But what really surprises us is the paradoxical relationship we are experiencing with the geopolitical reality, full of negative aspects, but also providing us with strongly positive conditions. This is why I named this paper *CYBERSPACE, SOUTH*.

The title is obviously and deliberately provocative, since there is neither North nor South in the virtual universe. The Euro-centered visual map of the world places Europe in the centre and the New World in the lower part of the globe, so this map *does* have a south and a north. But that is a worldview established in 1494, with the imaginary line drawn by the Tordesillas Treaty, which divided the new lands in South America between the two Iberian discoverers, and which have ever since arbitrarily determined

the conventions that have defined the economic world order and the organisation of culture. This is why we speak Portuguese in Brazil, and not Spanish, as the people in our neighbouring countries do.

When I restate here the notion of 'The South' to debate the cultural information exchange in the age of globalisation, I intend rid us of the conventions that still affect us to this day, and at the same time, to reject the inferiority internalised by our own statements and by colonisers of all ages. But we also know that, even in the information globalization age, to be in The South still means to be speaking from a peripheral site.

In order to localise and give a social and economic dimension to the 'real reality' which underpins the report of our experience with 'virtual reality', I offer some data that can contribute to a better understanding of our situation in the universe of cultural exchanges.

According to the latest official census in 1996, the Brazilian population is 157,070,163 inhabitants. In spite of the continental dimensions of its countryside, approximately 75% of the population live in towns. The average monthly income is 290 US\$. In Brazil, 87% of the people have television sets, but only 32% have telephones.

A 1999 survey carried out in the 9 major metropolitan regions, published by *Cadê* – the main national searching tool, indicates that 9% of the population participating in the survey have their computers connected to the Internet. That is a high figure if we compare it to the number of people who have telephones. There were about one million Internet users in 1993; in 1998, 1,698 million. With the development of telephone companies' operations, a coveted investment sold to foreign capital (the minister who started the privatisation process used to say that he managed the best business in the world: selling winds), the increase of infrastructure with the installation of new telephone lines and new apparatuses, and a larger use of computers triggered a skyrocketing expansion process; so much so the Internet expanded by one million users in two months between 1999 and 2000. The arrival of free-of-charge providers was decisive, and today (in February 2000) we have four and a half million Internet users, and we rank as the largest Latin American Internet market.

In 1998, the researcher Denis de Moraes stated in his important book *Planeta Mídia. Tendências da comunicação na era global*:

The number of Internet users has grown 788% in Latin America between 1995 and 1997 – a rate twice as high as the world rate.

According to Nazca Saatchi & Saatchi, by 2002, there will be 34 million Latin American users, four times as many as the current 8.2 million. In Brazil, there are two million Internet users, and that number will probably increase to six million in 2001 (Moraes 1998:228).

So, it seems that estimating forecasts is as difficult as making up an *Internet directory* of its users. With the free of-charge providers there come other surprises, such as the need to supply content to their portals as a means to attract users. But we will talk about the Internet content issues later.

Although Brazil ranks as the leading user of new technologies in Latin America, there is a cultural aspect that tends to assign us again to the periphery: namely, the use of the Portuguese language. The number of Portuguese-speaking Internet users in the world was 4,8 million in September 1999, versus 19,5 million Spanish-speaking Internet users (according to research conducted by Global Reach). In the world chart of online populations, the use of the English language represents 51.3%, Japanese, 7.2%, Spanish, 6.5% and French, 4.4%. The Portuguese language is grouped among the 'others'.

As regards this linguistic contingency within the universe of the Web, and our peripheral situation, I cannot omit the statement made by Aijaz Ahmad in his rather impolite reply to Fredric Jameson's comment on the national allegory of 'third world' countries. Expressing his opinion about the situation of the geographically peripheral intellectuals in the frame of contemporary cultural exchanges, Ahmad remarks that:

It is very uncommon to find a modern intellectual in Asia or in Africa who does not know at least one European language, although it is equally uncommon to find a valuable literary critic in Europe and in the United States who has ever been concerned about an Asian or African language (Ahmad 1988: 159).

In this use of 'inflows' where we follow the paths in national languages or in hegemonic English (maybe we could refer to it as a kind of *CyberEnglish*), the status of minority users has also led us to the penial habit of understanding Spanish, a language we are often in touch with. The converse is not true about our Latin American neighbours, who are not equally skilful in the use of *Portunhol* (*Portspanish*).

So, why, then, have we decided to make the pioneering effort to make an on-line magazine dedicated to literature, art and culture?

Two reasons led me to the decision to create an on-line magazine within the set of research activities I am engaged with at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (the Advanced Program of Contemporary Culture [PACC], coordinated by Professor Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda, and also within the activities developed in the Graduate Programme in Literature Sciences). Neither the appeal of state-of-the-art technologies nor any special taste for computer technology guided us to create the electronic magazine *Z* at PACC. We do not understand much about software or hardware and trust to our younger collaborators for the realisation of our cyberspace dreams. We remain lovingly attached to the printed page, and, if possible, to fountain pens. The first pressure we experienced was the shortage of economic resources for the publication of a printed magazine, plus the limited number of people involved in the hard task of editing good quality and aesthetically presentable texts.

Challenged by my desire to publish new texts about emerging issues such as Cultural Studies, a certain motivation to mix literature, art, behavioural themes, and theoretical reflections as well as the need to establish a net for the exchange of interdisciplinary knowledge—which implies contacts between scholars in geographically distant places, in different campuses, in remote spaces and cities—all that associated with the belief that we had to enter the globalised space for the exchange of information, all that led us to turn to Internet as a replacement for printed paper.

And as we were effectively engaged in the task, we thought we had better do it thoroughly. So, *Z* undertook the radical proposal to carry on virtual exchanges. The magazine only 'publishes' material that is already on the Web, in any site, in any language: essays from virtual magazines or from temporary displays on conference sites, seminars etc. In this case we were committed to the proposal that the Internet is a democratic space. Without any hesitation, we supplied the magazine with our own material that had not yet been published. Since the invention of photocopying the act of the making of a text as public as possible can be seen as a way of guaranteeing its authorship. But we also did some fishing in the Web without feeling the least ashamed for doing so. The result has been a healthy dissemination of information from all parts of the world. Except for a negative experience we had with the American magazine *Wired*, the prospect of having a text that had already been on the Web before—sometimes only on temporary sites, like the ones from

conferences, or texts that had come out on postage virtual addresses and personal home pages, all made their authors very happy, and they authorised their publications right away. To be able to 'catch' such texts we always counted on the collaboration of first line intellectuals, night loving Web-surfers who send us URLs with a simple forward touch without much talking or long academic discussions.

But the second reason for the choice of the new medium involving theoretical issues within our academic universe lies in the need to find out how to organize so-called Cultural Studies within the University. The very decision to develop research in a 'Program' rather than in a Department, or similar had a lot to do with the search for a format appropriate to the area chosen for investigation.

In his interesting reflection *O que é, afinal, Estudos Culturais?* (1999), Richard Johnson states that Cultural Studies today is a 'movement or a net' with its own courses in several Universities, its own periodicals and academic debate. But, in an argument already pursued by Fredric Jameson in a review he wrote about the pioneer collection *Cultural Studies*, by Grossberg, Nelson and Treichler, Richard Johnson asks himself whether it should seek a position as an academic discipline in its own right. Just after that he affirms that

the codification of methods or knowledge ... goes against some of the main characteristics of Cultural Studies: its opening and theoretical versatility, its reflexive spirit and chiefly the relevance of its critique—critique in its widest sense, which makes Cultural Studies a process liable to stagnation if an attempt to codify and order it was made' (Johnson 1999).

Fredric Jameson, speaks of a 'desire called Cultural Studies', which must be aborted

politically and socially as a project for the construction of a 'historical bloc', and not theoretically as an architectural blueprint for a new discipline (Jameson 1994:11).

Within the reality of our investigation and research in Cultural Studies, we must conform to some kind of 'official' research because we are financed by university institutions and governmental agencies, all of which

impose classification in the form of knowledge area codes into which we never really fit. So I am interested in an initial separation from bureaucratic university investigation organized in disciplines, an imitation of life in monasteries, closed to the world and divided in cells. Even the research proposed as interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary remains subservient to the disciplines, divisions of sacralized knowledge to which professors become mere caretakers. Those are the borderlines, kept out of an effort to preserve a separation that not even nations are interested in guaranteeing at a moment of transnational grouping, frontiers that prove to be increasingly insufficient to encompass cultural manifestations.

Both that 'desire called Cultural Studies', and its resistance to disciplinary confinement, continue to be problematic to us. Feminist and ethnic studies are also problematic, as well as the term 'post-modern' and the virtual reality of the (democratic) 'inflowways' that lead through cyberspace.

Curiously enough, when reflections around Cultural Studies are published in our electronic magazine, the reception is quite distinctive. The magazine's acceptance in the academic environment has been surprising and its approval can be evaluated by the number of e-mail messages, indication of material for circulation through *Z*, and mainly by the high number of registered visitors we have recorded. Created in March 1999, in May the same year, *Z* had registered 4017 visitors. How many of those would have been our readers if the circulation had been in printed form? Among the registered users there are addresses in the USA, Italy, Sweden and Holland. Almost one third of the registered visitors are Portuguese, most of whom registered after *Jornal Público* dedicated a whole article to the magazine in its Saturday cultural issue.

Thus, the desired projection outside academic or geographical frontiers has proven to be possible.

Having found advantages in the condition of the 'unrooted' intellectual in his discussion on the dangerous consequences of nationalism, Todorov remarks the fact that

cultural identities are not only national, there are other identities related to age, gender, profession, social environment; so, in our days, all of us have already lived those cultural encounters within ourselves, at different extents: all of us are hybrid (Todorov 1999: 26).

The challenge we feared the most was the superficiality and speed of

the Internet 'visits'. Contrary to our first suppositions that the Internet would only be an instrument of domination of the hegemonic powers of the global economy, the 'inflowways' have revealed they have exceptional potential for the mobilisation of civil society. Movements of international solidarity have taken place on occasions such as the government conflicts with the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST) or the dismissal of the Public Security Coordinator in Rio de Janeiro, who had denounced the 'rotten apples' in the corrupt police force. On those occasions, there was a quick and effective circulation of messages in the Web.

That concern was due to the perspective from which we used to look at Cultural Studies, very much related to an English interpretation stemming from Birmingham Centre, from works by Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall and Charles Taylor. Stuart Hall, in a recent account of Cultural Studies and its theoretical legacy, makes a simple and necessary statement, alerting us to the fact that, although Cultural Studies refuses to be a master discourse or a meta-speech of any kind, it has to be connected to some desire: there must be some interest determined in the choice it makes. 'It does matter whether cultural studies is this or that' (Hall 1996).

Finally, I would like to make a quick report about the practice that we have had in our close relationship with paper arts, such as poetry, photography and also plastic arts in general. To start with, we confirm the hypothesis that not only is there an 'Internet aesthetic', but we can also say that nowadays, this aesthetic impinges on other media. That fact is easy to detect only by observing book covers, and TV channels designed for young audiences, such as MTV and its well-elaborated 'zalls'.

There is more. Just as there is a peculiar visual art produced by video-makers—different from the art produced by movie-makers and plastic artists who employ material support for their pieces—the Internet is also producing its own distinctive artistic style. And even if we are not facing concrete pieces of art, the aesthetic issue is decisive. No one visits a home page one doesn't like. That is what Kerckhove wisely calls 'the culture skin'.

It seems that design does public relations for technology, aestheticising its products and improving its image on the market In the externally visible, audible or texture-like form of culture artifacts, design emerges as that which we could name 'the culture skin' (Kerckhove 1997:212).

Another fact which has already become obvious, is poets' attachment to Internet, mainly young poets, but not only them. Maybe, the choice of a virtual medium is still an economic imperative for them, but the truth is that the wide circulation of poetry on the net has started moulding its own relationships, re-making the interaction that is so dear to poets. That intercommunication has also emerged in the poetry 'recitals', sometimes as a performance by authors voicing their poems to the audience. Searching *Codé* again, I have found 561 entries for 'poetry', a very meaningful figure if compared to the number of entries for 'sex', 1568, or for 'finance', 263. Soccer brings 1838 entries, but, in this case, we need to remember that this is Brazil.

Coming back to the issue of content published on the Internet and to our position South of Cyberspace, from my experience with Z, I would like to remind you that the creation of The Virtual Library of Cultural Studies has already been multiplied into other Virtual Libraries. I would like to call your attention to the fact that the Internet has decisively contributed to overcoming the walls and doors that still keep departments and research groups apart, even at this time of world transnational organisation. But, if we want the globalised exchange of information to be a round-trip infoway, we in Cyberspace South have to occupy the space on those nets. The challenge ahead of us is no longer access to the information nets, at least not for those of us who can afford to have computers connect to the Web. The challenge is to use the net for our messages, our texts, our work, our opinions, our protest, our provocation.

As all of you must have observed in the presentation of our electronic magazine, the essays that circulate on Z are prepared in such a way that they can be printed, and, thus, salvaged in the form of small books or magazines. That should be so because, in spite of it all, we must recognise that we often navigate on computer screens, but never really dive into those waters.

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Memory, Media and Research: Mnemonic Oral-style, Rhythmo-stylistics and the Computer

Joan Conolly

What is the Mnemonic Oral Style?

The nature and operation of the mnemonic Oral Style became apparent to Marcel Jousse (1886-1961), anthropologist, psychologist, linguist, ethnologist, educationist, theologian, through observation and investigation focused on the question:

How does man, placed at the heart of all the immeasurable actions of the universe, manage to conserve the memory of these actions within him, and to transmit this memory faithfully to his descendants, from generation to generation? (Jousse 2000:36)

Jousse searched for and discovered

... the permanent and universal psycho-physiological laws, the anthropological laws, that unify what time and space and custom had separated in so many ethnic varieties. He consistently believed in and crossed a human, an anthropological continuity, refusing to see writing as a dividing invention in the history of humanity. To him, writing had not created a hiatus between oral- and written-style men, between orality and literacy, but the civilisation of writing was prevented and shored up by an Oral style civilisation. And an style implies laws of expression. It was his aim to unearth these stylistic laws from beneath written texts or to discover them wherever the absence of writing had left them intact (Sienertz 1990:93).

Jousse's search exposed him to the cultural expressions of a range of peoples

through time and across space. He was himself the product of what he termed a *paysan* milieu. He was born into a community of small-hold farmers and labourers the majority of whom had had a minimum of formal schooling but whose extensive traditional and indigenous knowledge was used on a daily basis to conduct personal and community business. He applauds their remarkably accurate and extensive memorial capacity for their oral tradition and for functional day-to-day matters, their prodigious knowledge and wisdom, and their intellectual capacity to accommodate and relate the abstractions of thought to the concrete reality of action. In a community largely without written records, the memory is paramount. Jousse records his first—and lasting—encounter with the rhythmo-mnemonic texts of his mother's lullabies:

I have repeatedly claimed that I owe my contribution to these scientific discoveries to my mother: ... no sooner was I born, than cantilenas were being sung over my cradle. My mother had an extraordinary memory. As she was an orphan, she was raised by her totally non-literate grandmother who taught her her own personal oral repertoire of the ancient cantilenas of the Sarthe region. My mother, who went to school for three winters only, never saw these cantilenas in any written form. In infancy, I came to consciousness amid the rocking motions of these cantilenas, and, even now, whenever I reflect, it is those very first rocking motions that I relate within myself. It is both strange and significant to discover the extent to which those first rhythmic experiences influence the whole of a human life. My hypersensitivity to the role of rhythm can only be attributed to this training which took place even before my consciousness was fully awakened. The rocking of the rhythm of those songs, and the songs themselves, inevitably informed the whole infinitely extensive system constituted of my receptive fibres (Jousse 2000:15).

Jousse's early encounters with prodigious memory capacity extended into the community, and he records in telling (and, for some of us, familiar) detail the gatherings of communal song, dance and storytelling:

As the evening progressed, and as the *paysans* got more and more into the swing of things, they would get up and strike up a song. I could feel that the rhythms imbricated in me by my mother's songs,

responded to the deep 'rhythmisation' of all these peasants. This was not so much song as a kind of chanting/singing. They all had large repertoires. The people, and more specifically, the women, who knew the most songs were the old grandmothers. They were extremely interesting to observe, because they were passionately particular about accuracy. Thus when someone began to intone one of these chants and dared to introduce a variation, one or other of the old ladies, (and I can once more picture good old mother Guespin in her corner), would reprimand the reciter and say: 'it's not that word, but this!' (Jousse 2000:16-18).

It is easy to appreciate that this early experience of the operation of memory as human socio-cultural archive of indigenous knowledge impacted on Jousse's eminent scholarship throughout his life. Jousse records the problems in education arising out of the adoption of 'only the teacher's point of view' (Jousse 2000:18) which assumes the 'professional equation' of learners' 'proficiency' and regards those who cannot write scribally—the 'illiterate'—to be inferior to those who can—the 'literate'. His position is

... exactly the opposite and unlike so many other psychologists and philologists who have lived with the printed word from the very beginning of their training. They have graduated from schoolbooks to this or that somewhat larger book, from matriculation to bachelor's degree or doctorate—how could they have the slightest notion of what the training of the human memory means? I have observed that in our society people feel somewhat ashamed to admit that they have lived in a non-literate milieu. What a mistake! ... I owe all my references in my lectures to examples taken from nature, to those non-literate peasants. They accustomed me to be wary of the fine speeches of those who speak brilliantly about everything but know nothing. Peasants smile quietly to themselves in the presence of fine talkers of this kind (Jousse 2000:18).

From which, Jousse concludes that:

Those who have made genuine discoveries and have contributed to science, are those who have put their books aside and started their study from reality. I will constantly reiterate that my first scientific

training was this contact with the peasants of Beaulieu-sur-Sarthe (Jousse 2000:18).

Jousse discovered the non-exclusivity of the memorial capacity of his own ethnic community by the time that he was fifteen years of age. By then he had accessed in the written record of the Aramaic Besorata or Oral Annunciation, the records of the Sayings and Deeds of the Rabbi Ieshou'a of Galilee¹. In them he recognised the same rhythmic structures that informed and formed the songs and proverbs, stories and liturgies of his native soil. Thus encouraged, he sought to access the oral traditions of peoples from around the world by personal experience and by interrogating the observations of missionaries and traders. Significantly he came into contact with a group of First Native Americans of whom he made the following observations:

And there I was able to study, and learn to appreciate, the remnants of their mimographic writing and their marvellous gestic language, of which there is still so little known, and which is so misunderstood. In this way I was able to observe the living connection that exists between the significant mimic gestures of the Sumerians and Ancient Egyptians, and those of the Indians, and even of the present-day Chinese, who have, fortunately, notwithstanding the changes that have occurred over the centuries, preserved the natural appearance of objects in their written 'characters' to the greatest possible extent (Jousse 2000:24).

In short then, Jousse's lifelong work was

... to uncover the laws that govern this universal human language from under ethnic particularities, to identify the characteristics of the expression that flows from it (and which constitutes what he calls oral style) and to examine how this oral style can revitalise education and expression of faith ... (Sienart 1990:94)

Jousse begins by identifying the 'original' language as corporeal, it is the expression of the whole body, of the entire being of the whole of man.

¹ Jousse insisted that Jesus of Nazareth be named by his original Aramaic name: Ieshou'a.

(Sienaert 1990:96). Jousse identifies that the corporeal manual mode of expression is that which is immediate to the inner microscopic reality of human thoughts and emotions, for the body and hands serve as an interface between the thoughts and emotions recorded in the viscera and their 'expression' in movement, mime and dance. Jousse identified this as the least reduced of the modes of transmission, and therefore the most faithful form of human communication. Jousse then identified further reduction in the localisation of expression from the body and hands (corporeal-manual) to another immediate mode of 'ex-expression', the larynx and the lips (laryngo-buccal), in sound, speech and song. Sienaert (1990:96) comments that:

The shift from mime global corporeal and gestural language to laryngo-buccal language is a vital one, for at this point [the human moves away from anthropology into ethnology: the initial global universal and spontaneous message becomes localised conventional and socialised language (Sienaert 1990:96).

Sienaert goes on to observe that

Jousse's ethnic laboratory reveals to him beneath a great diversity of cultural, social and linguistic mechanisms, underlying unchanged anthropological laws – common strains in graphic and oral testimonies which form a style: the Oral Style (Sienaert 1990:96).

The Oral Style is constituted of Mimism, Rhythmism, Bilateralism, and Formalism. (Jousse 1990, 2000, 2001) which is 'profoundly rooted in the body, hence its great efficacy from the mnemotechnical point of view for in it the movement of the body and voice contribute to the shaping of thought in memorisable form' (Sienaert 1990:97).

Le Rhythmo-mimisme: the law of rhythmo-mimism. [The human] is a mimic; he receives, registers and replays his actual experiences; as movement is possible in sequence only, memory is essentially linked with rhythm.

Le Bilateralisme: The law of bilateralism. [The human] can only express himself in accordance with his physical structure which is bilateral—left and right, up and down, back and forth – and like his global and manual expression, his verbal expression will tend to be

bilateral, to balance symmetrically following a physical and physiological need for equilibrium. Hence the omnipresence of parallelism in oral style not just in form but also in thought as the recurrent recourse to comparison and analogy shows.

Le Formalisme: The law of formalism. The biological tendency towards the stereotyping of gestures creates habit which ensures immediate, easy and sure replay, it is the facilitating psycho-physiological device as it organises the intussusceptions and the mnemonic replay in automatism, acquired devices necessary to a firm basis for action. Formalism is the warehouse linking in with memory in order to maintain firm teaching, founded on faithful tradition. In oral style, stereotyped formulas can be juxtaposed in new, more or less original combinations, although these will always accord with the physical laws of the body from which they arise (Sienaert 1990: 96-7).

The mnemonic Oral Style as Jousse perceives it records and expresses the sophisticated complexity of creative composition in performance that accommodates the wisdom of oral traditions, the *hokushu* of the ancient Chinese, the *sophia* of the Greek orators, the *abachula* of the Igbo *imbongis*, and their equivalents among the eastern *safir* and the African *griots*.

The holistic, dynamic three dimensional nature of the performed mnemonic Oral-style presents particular challenges to the processes of recording and analysis in research.

The Aim of Research of Mnemonic Oral-style Texts

Mnemonic Oral-style texts reflect the ways in which human identity is recorded in memory and performance at the intersecting levels of the individual, the group and the species without writing. Research of this medium includes recording and analysing the explanation of oral traditions, 'ae names' performed as rituals and dance in movement and gesture (the corporeal-manual mode); protest, slogans and praises, narratives, spies and fables, negotiations, genealogies and histories in sound, speech and song (the laryngo-buccal mode); beadwork, masks and sculpting, rock and house painting as forms of writing (the mimographio mode¹).

The mimographio mode: algebrised and mediated human expression, i.e. 'writing' in many forms.

These expressive behaviours, most of which have been oversimplistically identified by their aesthetic form as 'art', 'poetry', and 'craft', actually perform a no less important function than that of recording the structure and norms of civilisation: the socio-cultural archive. Traditions Oral style texts record and teach beliefs and belief systems, ethics and values, and legal and fiscal systems. They record histories and genealogies, provide social commentary, impose social norms, mores and taboos, and inform and train occupational skills all of which differ from ethnic milieu to ethnic milieu in a multitude of details but all of which hold human memory as the preferred mode of archive or record, even in milieus which are literate. But in all Oral style milieus there comes a time when the oral socio-cultural archive is committed to writing, a process which is neither as innocent nor progressive as it appears to be.

Jousse (2000) frequently alludes to the mortifying effect of inert writing on the vitality of performed oral texts. This is essentially a translation problem which manifests itself at both the oral literate and interlingual interfaces. A preoccupation with such problems is recorded in the work of numerous researchers in the field: Bailey (1996) records the 'impossibility of the canon in the oral tradition', Chamberlin (1998) refers to this problem of 'plating performance on the page', highlighting the incongruity of the two dimensional page capturing the holism of oral performance; Ruth Finnegan (1996) likewise discovers that she cannot recapture the 'magic' in her written records of performance in the field; Neerling (1998) examines the authenticity of the voice of Black Elk in the work of John Neihardt and Brewster (1998) critiques Lucy Black's records of the voice of the Xam hashmen, and then renders the texts, not unproblematically, in what we would recognise as free verse.

Another factor contributing to the problem is that what is immediate, familiar and commonplace is often overlooked as of no scholarly or epistemological significance:

Distinguishing these features of oral art—or at any rate of some oral art—can only lead to opening up new questions about texts ... but also provided a foundation for cross-cultural comparisons through which scholars could connect previously separate and apparently unrelated studies. The development of the consequent comparative movement—extremely influential now across the world—gave scholars from a wide range of different disciplines new insights and a new confidence

in studying material which before might have seemed somewhat peripheral to serious academic scholarship. As such it has led to a huge body of well founded scholarship (Finnegan 1996: 132–133).

A further consideration is the 'point of view' of the researcher in oral traditions. Reflective insider 'microscopic' (Jousse 2000), 'emic' (van Fek 1995), 'implicated' (Stoller 1996) observation provide authentic and valid insights. The 'outsider' perspective distorts meaning of what is observed, because the onlooker or outsider perspective of a text cannot be fully informed of the embedded implications. Stoller (1996) maintains that scholarly investigation needs to be 'implicated' in the object of research to achieve authenticity and validity. Further, the removed view of the 'outsider' researcher runs the risk of the twin ills of 'invention' and 'imagination'. Jousse records that he sets 'about gathering facts, slowly and methodically, taking great care not to invent any perceptions or evidence' (2000:21) and that it is 'dangerous ... as scientific matters to imagine instead of to observe' (2000:35). Taking the outsider view fails to achieve the desired objectivity, because it is inevitably coloured by the researcher's personal, cultural and academic worldview and perspective. Rigby demonstrates how the 'outsider' worldview contributes to racism in anthropology (1996), and Vail and White identify this as the key to the 'invention of "Oral Man"' (1991), thus focusing the problem at the oral-literate interface.

Human capacities for oral literate expression and the consequent worldviews are simultaneously and paradoxically inextricably interdependent and mutually exclusive: uninitiated 'literate' are no better at reading and interpreting the performance of traditional dances and rituals of an oral milieu, than the uninitiated 'oralites' are at reading and interpreting serbal written texts. Further, human potential *per se* is not enough: capacity must be realised to be useful and measurable. Reading and interpreting any text is a learned behaviour, whether that text is composed of traces of animal 'presence-in-absence' in the sand, or traces of human 'presence-in-absence' on paper. Capacity to read either text does not automatically imply the capacity to read the other, notwithstanding evidence that both are operated by the same cognitive capacity, used by humans to the end of 'reading' for the last thirty thousand years (Chamberlin 2002).

Further conundrums present themselves. Logically it would follow that capacities for specialised forms of expression would be recognised and valued in the context of specified milieus. So serbal writing would be valued

and confer status in those societies that favour scribal literacy, and the mnemonic Oral Style likewise in Oral-style milieus. But such is the tapestry of human society that no such neat divide exists, and the oral-literate interface increasingly exists within contexts of blurred edges and confused perspectives and so what is logical does not prevail. In part, this can be attributed to issues of capacity and worldview. Being without a capacity renders one blind and deaf to that incapacity, and one experiences otherwise, hence we are blind and deaf to the worldview of the 'other'. Were the political playing fields of the world of the oral-literate interface equal, this would render the 'illiterate' and the 'literate' equally advantaged or disadvantaged in the 'other' milieu. It seems strange and ironic then, that even though it is estimated that 70% of the world's population is seriously illiterate, scribal literacy holds hegemonic sway. But we must remember that scribally illiterate does not automatically mean 'oralate', or having the capacity to operate the mnemonic Oral Style: quite the contrary for the decent afforded scribal literacy is that it 'remembers' when it actually merely 'records'. Consequently, the world is increasingly populated by people who are neither literate nor 'oralate' in the mnemonic Oral-style sense: they have neither the 'power of the pen' nor the 'power of memory'. In a sense they are robbed to a significant extent of the human outgrowth of a full range of human expressive capacity. In a world which is increasingly dominated by technologies that are intrinsically literate or literacy dependent, the worldviews of the 'literate/oralates' hold sway. Being blind and deaf to the 'geste and rhythm of the oralate' cannot but impact on the validity of research of mnemonic Oral-style texts.

What are the Problems Related to Research Method in Mnemonic Oral-style Texts?

Accessing mnemonic Oral-style texts from an academic literate viewpoint is a contradiction of considerable proportions, as the intrinsic natures and functions of the scribal and gestual-visual/oral-aural modes challenge and even exclude their mutual substitution. To demonstrate this viewpoint, I will examine and compare (1) mode(s) of expression in which oral traditions are performed, with special reference to the mnemonic Oral Style (Jousse 1990; 2000; 2001a; 2001b) the performer's perspective; (2) the mode(s) of expression in which research is carried out: the researcher's perspective; and (3) modes of record of mnemonic Oral-style texts: the recorder's perspective.

Mode(s) of Expression in which Oral Traditions are Performed with Special Reference to the Oral Style:

The Performer's Perspective

Oral traditions are expressed in the gestual oral mode as a matter of intrinsic function and identity, and are the product of human behaviours that favour the gestual oral mode (even in verbally literate milieus) over the written mode for a number of reasons.

The gestual-oral mode is a performed mode which is indivisible from its visual-aural reception, and its accompanying material representation, hence the identifying term 'gestual-visual/oral-aural' which is holistically and immediately expressive. This form of representation includes: (1) movement, mime and dance (the corporeal-manual mode); (2) sound, speech and song (the laryngo-buccal mode); and (3) material attire and domestic, personal, socio-cultural objects as media of expression (the mimographic mode). Mnemonically structured, the Oral-style text is psycho-biologically holistically engaging thus intrasuscepting its meaning through performance in the viscera of the performer, and effecting 'apprehension' or 'understanding with the whole being'. Such mnemonic intrasusception ensures longevity of memorial record. The nature of the psycho-biological record is energetic, and exists internally in the human viscera in the form of what Jousse terms 'microscopic geste' (Jousse 2000).

The gestual-visual/oral-aural mode is more immediate and spontaneous than the literate mode. Its immediacy arises in the first instance from the performer's relationship with him/herself and the performance, the space and time in which the performer performs and from the face-to-face interaction between performer and audience during the performance. This influences the spontaneity of the performance: the performer can adjust his/her performance immediately according to his/her own responses with him/herself simultaneously with the responses from the audience. In effect, it can be argued that each performance is the unique product of the interactions within the performer and between performer and audience, and is therefore the product of simultaneous personal introspection and group authorship. In this way, multiple authorships and occasions of authorship are intrinsic features of the oral tradition. A record of such a group authored performance is only complete, faithful and authentic if it accounts for the performed text within its performance context and taking the audience engagement into account.

The gestual-visual/oral-aural mode—implying group interactive

authorship during performance over an indeterminate period of time - performs social and moral norm-referencing and cohesive functions within the relevant group. Simultaneously, too use of the gestural-visual/oral-aural mode implies the recording of traditions in human memory, which enables portability and immediate access, dependent upon the capacity of the memory, which is particularly important for itinerant peoples in all ages and societies. In cultures that have not yet developed scribal literacy, the mnemonic gestural-visual/oral-aural mode is used universally for the transmission of traditions. Settler environments with and without scribal literacy variously present and record oral traditions in mnemographic mode, i.e. in forms of expression that record the traditions in fixed forms of pre-literate 'writing', such as various forms of painting, scribbling, carvings, weaving and pictographs. *inter alia*.

The Mode(s) of Expression in which Research is Carried out:

The Researcher's Perspective

Academic research is historically a scribal/literate exercise of a specific and high order, for a number of reasons. Scribal literacy fixes large amounts of information outside of the human author(s) for dissemination across time and space. It also allows for the revision of a text before transmission, thus providing for refinement and concision of complex thinking, as well as allowing the modification and further refinement, revision and concision of the text even after its original transmission. Scribal literacy allows for the identification and prescription of appropriate genres or structures by group consensus, where the decision-making group is that body of people closely associated with the production of writings in the relevant genre. It also allows the writing to exist on paper independently of its author, and for this reason becomes a defined and identifiable entity in its own right, which can be analysed and critiqued independently of its author(s) and in and on its own terms. Finally, scribal literacy frees human memory from the task of extensive record-keeping, the benefits of which are ambiguous and debatable.

While the scribal record captures and records aspects of the linguistic elements of the performance, i.e. the actual words are recorded, it does not record the dynamic vitality of the performance as an indivisible whole manifest in (1) the kinesthetic features, i.e. movement and gesture; (2) the spatial features, i.e. line, form, shape; (3) the paralinguistic and non-verbal aural features, i.e. non-verbal sounds, pitch, inflection, timbre, emphasis, vocal modulation; (4) the temporal features, i.e. pace, pause; (5) the interactive features, i.e. the responses of the audience.

By virtue of the transitory nature of the gestural-visual/oral-aural mode(s) of record, oral traditions are subject to the vagaries of human endeavour and survival. Disease, pestilence, oppression, war, and technology, *inter alia* all inform and threaten the survival of Oral-style traditions. In the face of these threats and notwithstanding its shortcomings, it can be argued and demonstrated that the scribal recording of Oral style traditions is preferable to their disappearance.

Modes of Record of the Mnemonic Oral Style:

The Recorder's Perspective

Various modes of recording have been used (or suggested) to capture Oral-style traditions for analysis and research. Broadly speaking, verbal elements have been recorded in writing, while voice and music have been recorded on audiotape, and movement and dance on videotape and film. A enough material expression in the form of artifacts, such as carving and statuary, beadwork and cave and wall painting are intrinsically their own records, their lack of portability has resulted in them also being 'recorded' in writing. The mode of representation of Oral-style traditions has taken so many forms and fallen into so many intersecting categories that the field defies classification, resulting in the realisation of the problems with 'putting performance on the page' (Chamberlin 1998). Even a cursory indication of what has led to that realisation is instructive.

Any form of verbal narrative whether historical or literary falls prey to the kinds of issues which Finnegan refers to as the 'problematic and decision-laden nature of text-processing' (Finnegan 1993:60). Problematic decisions include the choice of medium of recording. 'Literary' records note the notice of the performance and give rise to the kinds of challenges implicit in 'Does Black Elk Really Speak?' (Neethling 1998) or represent the performance in a cultural mode that is foreign to the original (Brown 1998). Oral 'histories' face challenges of veracity and provenance (Parker 1986). The page as used in literary and linguistic analysis and historical recording simply does not accommodate gestural-visual/oral-aural performance, which presents the researcher with most particular challenges. So what are the alternatives?

Video and audio recordings capture the gestural-visual/oral-aural modes of performance of oral traditions, but this medium only partially captures the elements of context that impact upon the performance of oral tradition, and with which the performer interacts. The limitations of video-

and audio-recordings of gestural-visual/oral-aural modes of performance are numerous. The technological expertise and personal viewpoint of the recorder creates a context in which the message is recorded and interpreted. Maintenance of the records requires special expertise and is costly and access to the video-recorded records is limited by the technology.

Posters and photographic records capture and freeze the gestural-visual geste, but without movement and sound the record is woefully incomplete, and must be supported by extensive verbal texts to minimise misinterpretation. Such records are also cumbersome, expensive and difficult to archive and maintain.

Aural linguistic analysis accounts for the oral-aural mode, as opposed to the literate mode, and is not yet developed (Alant 1996). Most importantly, it does not account for the gestural-visual mode of the mnemonic Oral Style. The recording or capture of movement the gestural-visual mode of expression—for the purposes of replication at some later time, has been addressed variously. Examples of these include, Jasmine Honore's (1986) 'Towards a Transcription System for Xhosa Umshentsha dances', and Rudolf van Lahan's 'Lahanotation' or 'Choreutics' also in the latter half of the last century (Lahan 1986; Hodgson & Preston-Dunlop 1990). Both Honore and Lahan rely heavily on a system of diagrammatic representation which plots the body's relationship with the space in which the performer moves. In Honore's representation, the diagrammatic representation is accompanied by a verbal text of explanation. In 'Lahanotation', the relationship between the performer and time, and all to the energy of the performance are represented. The whole is a layered and complex requiring extensive training to record and interpret.

Saussy (1996) and Siensaert (1996) both remind us that there is a need to consider rhythmography as a mode of recording dynamic mnemonic performance. As research mode and record, Jousse developed Rhythmo-stylistics (Connolly 2000) and Rhythmography (Siensaert 1996).

Rhythmo-stylistic or Rhythmo-mnemonic analysis identifies the macroscopic gestural-visual/oral-aural mode of expression holistically. In other words, it enables the examination of that which is seen and heard in performed corporeal-mimic (movement, dance and dance) and the laryngo-buccal (sound, speech and song) expression with Rhythmo-mimism as a single universal anthropological law. In so doing it also allows the identification of that which makes the text memorisable. Mnemonic features appear in performance in the Rhythmo-stylistic analysis, the first being the binary and ternary rhythmic schemas, followed by layers of patterns of repetition of

discrete elements, each reinforcing that which has gone before, and incrementally creating a mnemonic gestural-visual/oral-aural web which interfaces with the geste and rhythm of the human memorising psychology.

Rhythmography records the Rhythmo-stylistic analysis and is in some way reminiscent of the 'Strategies for the Presentation of Oral Traditions in Print' (Montenyohl 1993) which attempts to record vocal inflection and emphasis using varying font sizes and faces. Rhythmography (Siensaert 1996) records the performed Oral-style texts in binary and ternary rhythmic schemas, which contain the mnemonic propositions of which the text is composed. As such on the page they look no more 'alive' than any other form of written record. They come 'alive' when the reader actually re-lives the rhythmic schemas by following the bilateral arrangement on the page with his/her body and performs the rhythmic schemas, illuminating and transforming understanding of the recitative. As Jousse ruled, as one moves the body rhythmically in a balanced way (Rhythmo-energetically), the vocal inflections of the voice automatically become melodic (Rhythmo-vocalism), and once one has repeated a recitative in this fashion even as few as four times, one is able to perform confidently even in a language that is foreign to one's linguistic repertoire, thus demonstrating that the 'Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm' (Jousse 2000) identifies an expressive capacity and function that underlies and underpins verbal language.

Jousse's Rhythmo-graphic record of the Rhythmo-stylistic or Rhythmo-mnemonic analysis does not exclude the use of aspects of other approaches for recording, e.g. film, video, audio, posters, photographs, material objects, but we cannot escape the limitations of the media in capturing and analysing all aspects of the gestural-visual/oral-aural mode.

What is the Role of and Challenge to the Computer in this Scenario?

The computer facilitates the Rhythmographic recording of Rhythmo-stylistic analysis and representation by accelerating the replication of the Oral style text at each level of repetition: this drawing and replicating function, while not profound, is significantly labour-reducing making an otherwise impossible task 'do-able'. The computer facilitates the recording of levels of text with the use of the colour functions, and demonstrates the centring of texts and the balancing of rhythmic schemas of two or three pithemes in 'boxes', thereby

simplifying the process of recording Rhythmo-stylistic analysis because of the numerous functions which can be performed quickly and effectively. At the extreme of simplicity, these include the capacity to cut/copy and paste, draw and fill text boxes, centre the text on the page, and colour-code text so that the oral-aural mnemonic web becomes visually explicit (Connolly 2000).

At the more complex end of the spectrum, the use of hypertext, 3D, and Virtual Reality enable the replication of performance on the computer screen albeit the enormous byte size restricts the amount of performance that can be recorded in this way.

The Piero Project (Alexander 1997; Lavin 2002) 'succeeded in displaying and navigating through three-dimensional space while retaining instant access to the spatial context, detailed images and all relevant factual evidence' (Alexander 1997:1). *The Piero Project* demonstrates the computer's capacity to replicate a Virtual Reality into which the human can be immersed: the Virtual Reality moves around the human (Alexander et al 1996). The recording of the performance of the mnemonic Oral Style for analysis requires a capacity that is significantly different. It requires that the computer capture both the inner microscopic and outer macroscopic movement of the performer in three-dimensional Virtual Reality.

This is more than the capture of an image. Jousse avers that:

Images do not exist. This term must disappear from our vocabulary. Following Derrida we will use the terms *revivification* and *revivance* rather than *imagination* or *image* (Jousse 1990:27).

The exclusion of the concept/term 'image' can be justified on the grounds that it is an exclusive concept/term which refers only to that which is visual thus effectively excluding reference to auditory and other sensory stimulation. Jousse identifies that what we experience (see, hear, smell, taste, feel and un/tut) in performance are not 'images' but the 'expression' of motor impulses—movement—hence 'geste and rhythm' (Jousse 2000). Brunel too notes that his 'work began with a refusal of the image as a working element, and an emphasis on the key aspects of movement in real space.' Both Jousse and Brunel focus on 'movement' as the element central to human expression, that which the computer is best suited to capture because of the dynamic nature of its recording capacity: what Brunel (2002) identifies as 'a fluid phenomenon', 'a process that cannot be stored. It is a process running in the moment. It is a happening'.

But can the computer capture and record human performance in ways that approximate human capacity?

Brunel (2002) claims that:

It is now possible to create theatre and dance movements by computer. The advances in new technology that create a world dematerialised by digital media also opens new opportunities for live performance to (re)discover the nature of its physicality, its materiality (Brunel 2002).

By a simple extension of logic, one can anticipate the computer's capacity to translate the moving images photographed by a digital camera into a rhythmo-stylistic record of a performed text revealing the underlying rhythms, balances and formulas in a dynamic rhythmo-graphic representation for analysis. This is in effect 'the study of the rhythmic aspects of the person-computer interface' or 'man and the computer coming together in time', for which Orr (2000) coins the term

Anthropocybersynchronicity, and considers this aspect of the 'person/machine interface' largely unexplored, but which holds great promise ... Untapped aspects of our being can greatly enhance the contact between people and computers. The secret: Rhythm. Human scale rhythms—visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic—can and should be incorporated into the design of effective computer systems (Orr 2000).

Such a clear demonstration of the mnemonic Oral-style elements and their operation will accommodate the kinds of analysis that are needed for a more complete understanding of the mnemonic nature of traditional Oral-style texts that have survived generations of recitation as a reliable and valid record. Such an analysis and demonstration will in fact allow us to establish which rhythms and patterns are the most enduring and reliable. These insights will also help us to understand the operation of the Oral-style text as writing of a visceral kind, and of this visceral writing as memory as a psycho-biological phenomenon. Such an understanding of memory extends beyond the architectural visual memory of Yates (1966), Clanchy (1979) and Carruthers (1990). It embeds memory and intelligence in the 'wax tablets of your mind' (Small 1998:244), in the body as Keller records:

Before the arrival [of my teacher] says Helen Keller in her simple way,

when I wanted an ice cream (which I liked very much). I felt a delicious taste on my tongue (which, by the way, I have never since experienced) and felt the handle of the ice-box in my hand; I made the appropriate gesture and my mother understood that I wanted ice-cream. I thought and wanted things with my fingers and if I could have made a man, I would certainly have placed his brain in the tips of his fingers (Jousse 1990:28).

... and throughout the psycho-biology of the human being as Pert observes:

These recent discoveries are important for appreciating how memories are stored not only in the brain, but in the psychosomatic network extending into the body, particularly in the ubiquitous receptors between nerves and bundles of cell bodies called ganglia, which are distributed not just in and near the spinal cord, but all the way out along pathways to internal organs and the very surface of our skin (Pert 1997:143).

Pert further comments on her observations of psycho-biological behaviour:

I was beginning to realize that the receptor changes shape, switching back and forth between any number of predominant configurations, all the while vibrating and swaying to some as yet unknown melodic key (Pert 1997:84).

The 'vibrating' and 'swaying' to a 'melodic key' constitute the microscopic rhythms and patterns of the anthropological microscopic construct that enables macroscopic performance of the mnemonic Oral Style.

Pert (1997) emphasises that the rhythms of the receptors are measurable bio-physiologically. The question remains whether it would be possible for technology to measure the same rhythms energetically and replicate a substrate of these rhythms in the computer. Should this be possible, it would indeed be possible to put the resultant rhythmic performance on the page—or in this instance—on the computer screen.

To what extent is this possible given the nature of human rhythm and the limitations of the computer? To answer this question we need to examine the possible congruencies between the human 'Real', the mnemonic Oral Style, and Virtual Reality (VR).

The 'Real', the Mnemonic Oral Style and Virtual Reality (VR)

Jousse perceives that what is the inner 'Real' is that which is '(in)re-pressed' in humans by the universe, contextualised in the experience of previous '(in)re-pressions, events which constitute the psycho-physiological context of each succeeding text. The 'Real' is the individual and idiosyncratic human 'take' on reality, for no matter that two or more will be present for a single event, the prior experiences of each will colour the understanding of each. Jousse identifies this inner 'Real' as a 'complexus of geste' (Jousse 2000:24), an energetic, vibrating and rhythmic collection of all experience which constitutes the memorial essence of the individual with which s/he identifies him/herself and by the expression of which s/he is recognisable. Hence we have Jousse's perception of the 'Real' being microscopic—intimately and immediately individual, inner, apparently silent and invisible—awaiting 'realisation' in a form of translation, into the macroscopic 'ex-pression' of sensory human communication.

Quoting the cognitive psychology usage of the term 'intimacy' to refer to 'the portion of the field of view occupied by a phenomenon', Negroponte (in Orr 2000) identifies 'intimacy' as the logical sequel to personal computing in which 'immediacy' is the key. Orr observes that 'in most VR applications, the virtual world takes up the entirety of the user's field of view, intimacy is total: the user feels entirely 'inside' the VR 'world'.

Where Orr's notions of 'intimacy' and 'immediacy' place the individual in Virtual Reality, Jousse's 'Real' is the immediate experience by the individual of his/her microscopic geste—that collection of experiences '(in)re-pressed' by the immediate external environment on the 'immediate' and 'intimate' internal environment of the psycho-biology of his/her being. This 'Real' will include, *inter alia*, all texts recorded in memory to be performed in the mnemonic Oral Style. At the first remove, these must be 'ex-pressed' in a translation from a state of the inner microscopic rhythmic geste of (in)subconsciousness/intuition to the outer macroscopic rhythmic geste of (un)conscious performance. In the instance of the Oral Style, the mnemonic laws and mnemotechnical devices will hold the construct and assure its reliable and faithful performance.

What indications are there that the computer is able to measure and replicate the vibrations which (re)form the microscopic geste and its translation into macroscopic performance?

Orr (2000) identifies the capacity of a range of 'nominally anthropo-

synchronous' rhythmic uses of computers, including the capacities to translate the inner human 'Real' to externalised performance via the computer instead of the human body. Orr demonstrates that the human can 'operate' the computer by 'changing brain wave patterns (through visualisation or other means), or by 'looking in different directions' (Orr 2000:4) by activating consciously, in Jousai's terms, the inner microscopic geste or 'Real'.

Theall (1997:2) reminds us that the researchers of the MIT Media Lab conceive of a VR 'composed, like the tribal and collective 'global village,' of the 'tactile, haptic, proprioceptive and acoustive spaces and involvements' as one of the more recent points along the 'road to VR' informed by poetic and artistic experimentation including those of 'avant-garde movements, (such as the Dadaists, the Bauhaus, and the Surrealists) and of individuals (such as Marcel Duchamp, Paul Klee, Sergei Eisenstein or Luis Buñuel)'. Theall notes that Joyce 'also explores similar aspects of motion, light and movement, gesture and concept'. And that:

The road to VR and MIT's Media Lab begins with poetic and artistic experimentation in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century: later ... many of the media lab researchers of the 60's and the 70s—placed great importance on collaboration with artists involved in exploring the nature and art of motion and in investigating new relationships between sight, hearing and other senses (Theall 1997:2).

Theall explores the 'Joycean view which grounded communication in tactility, gesture, and CNS processes, rather than promulgating the emergence of a new oralaural age, a secondary reality' (1997:3). MIT's AI lab takes the Joycean view a realm further in the early 2000s. An examination of the titles of current research projects reveals a preoccupation with tactility and gesture, but this time with the view to replicating these capacities in computers, not merely by computers. In other words, this means that while the 1960s and 1970s saw computers with the capacity to replicate the performance as a medium, the 2000s envisage a computer that replicates performance of its own accord.

It is clear that the business of performance, of movement, is very much at the forefront of investigative thinking. This means that such investigators in VR have already established for themselves that the business of words follows the business of the body in human intelligence and communication, and that until the business of the body as communicator and performer has been established there is little point in trying to replicate the verbal aspect of communication and performance.

Further limitations must include perceptions about human-computer intimacy. Human intimacy even in computer terms goes far beyond the field of vision and includes what Orr (2000) identifies as the 'visual, auditory and kinaesthetic'. The kinaesthetic sense implies both the tactile and the kinetic, both touch and movement, and that movement in three dimensions. Once again, it is not so much the capacity of the computer that is challenged as the receiving space of the projected transmission. The whole-body three-dimensional experience of human movement simply does not transfer on to the two-dimensional surface of a computer screen.

Limitations are complicated by dilemmas. The kinaesthetic sense implies the source of human energy: the human heart. Here, Orr (2000) identifies the capacity of the computer to hook into the heart rhythms of the human computer operator, which is dangerous precisely because computer rhythms simulate human rhythms closely but not completely: humans will be hard put to discriminate between the 'Real' and VR. But the distinction remains, and it is a distinction where the least replicable element of this imitation/simulation process comes into play: the human breath. For the human heart and the capacity to breathe are indivisible, and it is the oxygenated heart that energises the performance of the living Oral-style tradition. Paul tells us, 'For the spirit giveth life and the letter bringeth death', the 'spirit' being the anthropological 'breath', the Aramaic 'rouah', the Greek 'pneuma', the Zulu 'moya', the Hindi 'prana'.

Limitations and dilemmas notwithstanding, the focus of VR and computer graphic research on the recording of movement as energetic vibrations implies the recording in Virtual Reality of the micro- and macroscopic geste of the mnemonic Oral Style. This could enable the identification and measurement of the 'textual atoms' (Conolly 2000:360) which constitute mnemonic texts and which support and enable human memory.

Conclusion

This article has examined the form and function of the mnemonic Oral Style, the difficulties attendant upon its research, and the possible role of the computer in establishing a better understanding of its operation and the operation of the human capacity of memory and performance.

Even superficial observation and analysis of the mnemonic Oral Style has demonstrated that it operates rhythmically and formulaically in a series of balancings and repetitions of various, layered and self-reinforcing

constructions. The quantifiable measurement of these mechanics will reveal much about how the human mind operates to further answer the question that Jousse posed at the outset of his research:

How does man, placed at the heart of all the immeasurable actions of the universe, manage to conserve the memory of these actions within him, and to transmit this memory faithfully to his descendants, from generation to generation? (Jousse 2000:30).

If the capacity of the computer can be harnessed to address Jousse's question, then we perhaps will be able to access what he termed the microscopic geste, the inner 'Real', the real reality of every human being: their inner 'complexus of geste' (Jousse 2000:24) the bank of vibrations that constitute the self-realisation of memory so intractably and only partially translatable into any form of human expression. Should the computer be able to record in Virtual Reality, the macroscopic and microscopic geste and rhythm of the mnemonic Oral Style, it will provide an invaluable tool for the archiving and analysis of Oral-style traditions and indigenous knowledges of the world. Perhaps even more significantly, it will allow us to explore further the potential capacity and operation of human memory, the psycho-biological source of human intelligence and understanding and that which distinguishes us as human.

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The Myth of the 'Asiatic Menace' in Post War Natal (1918-1924)

Kalpana Hiraldal

'Natal is not going to quietly allow the Garden Province to become the heritage of the Arab trader' (J. Hunter, Secretary of the South African League in Indian Views, 16th December 1920).

Introduction

At the end of the First World War Natal emerged relatively prosperous. Durban held a prominent position as a seaport, commercial and industrial centre. The population of Natal was cosmopolitan. It was made up of Indians, Africans, Coloureds and Whites. Indians were highly stratified along religious, region, caste and class lines. The three main social groupings were indentured workers, entrepreneurs from Gujarat on the west coast of India and educated Natal-born offspring of indentured workers. The mass of indentured and ex-indentured Indians were poor, uneducated and unskilled and eking out a living as unskilled workers. They were employed in agricultural work as market gardeners who sold their produce at the Indian market, did hawking, or held unskilled positions with the Durban Municipality.

¹ This article is largely based on the author's unpublished DPhil dissertation, titled *Indian Family businesses in the Natal Economy 1890-1950*. Indian traders were often referred to by colonial administrators and officials as 'Arab' traders, due to their religious affiliation and mode of dress. The vast majority were predominantly Gujarati speaking Muslims. They were also described as 'Asiatic'- Bombay'- or 'Banyan' traders. They were also generally loosely referred to as 'merchants' or traders, regardless of the size of their business. Natal Archives (hereafter cited NA), Greyville, Durban Corporation, Durban Mayor's Minute, 1915.

The trading class on the other hand had expanded quite considerably. It was at this class that anti-Indianism was to a very large extent directed. The trading class consisted of Gujaratis speaking Hindus and Muslims from Gujarat, an area renowned for its commercial importance. They emigrated to Natal from the 1870s and gradually settled in Durban, Pietermaritzburg, and the coal mining areas of Dundee, Newcastle and Ladysmith. They were mainly petty traders dealing in African and Indian trade, while a few engaged in the wholesale business and/or the importing and exporting of goods. During the war there were recurring references in the magisterial reports for the Natal districts of the ever increasing presence of the 'ubiquitous Arab' and their monopolisation of trade. In Durban, Pietermaritzburg and the up-country districts of the Natal Chambers of Commerce, farmers, resident magistrates and White small scale traders appealed to government to amend existing licensing laws. This was aimed at the protection of their own commercial interests.¹

Status of Indians in Post-War Natal

When the First World War broke out, merchants and colonial-born Indians eagerly supported the war effort. The educated colonial-borns and -merchants were committed to the strategy of appeasing the white power structure in the hope that British imperial goodwill would prevail with regard to Indian constraints. For South African Indians, the main grievances were related to trading rights, the ownership of land and the franchise. A show of loyalty would undoubtedly prove to the whites, that Indians were committed British subjects who were entitled to better and fair treatment.

At the end of the War, the status of Indians in South Africa came under the spotlight at the Imperial War Conference of 1917-1918. India's role in the war gave her practical recognition as a participant in the War Conference. This afforded her an opportunity to present a memorandum outlining the political and economic disabilities of Indians in the British Dominions, and her intention to press for fair treatment. During the war the Natal Municipal Association (hereafter NMA) made repeated attempts to deprive resident Indians of the municipal franchise.² A draft bill, the

¹ Union of South Africa (hereafter cited as USA), Annual Reports of the Department of Justice, 1914-1918; Hiralal (2000:1-10).

² *Indian Opinion*, 8 August 1915, 18 August 1915, 14 January 1919; Pachai (1971:35).

Municipal Consolidating Ordinance, aimed at empowering the municipalities to legislate against any particular class or section of 'burghesses in relation to segregation, trading rights, tramways and other issues' was tabled. The Union government's delegates at the Imperial Conference admitted that there were grievances in this connection but argued that Indian complaints were exaggerated, and promised to give the memorandum their 'most sympathetic consideration'.³ However, within weeks of this assurance new constraints were imposed on the Transvaal Indian merchant class—the first restrictions since the passage of the Indian Relief Bill of 1914.⁴ The Asiatic (Land and Trading) Amendment Act (Transvaal), 37/1919, was passed. It laid down that no new trading licences were to be issued to Indians in the Transvaal, except in the case of an already licensed business changing hands from one Indian to another. Further, it was made impossible for Indians to evade the law by prohibiting them from forming a limited company or of becoming the mortgagee of a nominal White owner. This Act stimulated a storm of protest nationally among Indians who saw it as a resurgence of anti-Indian policies designed to uphold White supremacy in South Africa.⁵

While there was no legal restriction on Indian rights of ownership or residence in Natal municipalities, which were empowered to issue trade licences, were often guilty of showing bias in the exercise of their powers. However, in February 1919, the British Indian Council in the Cape, together with a few prominent merchants in Natal decided to convene a conference to highlight the various Indian restrictions. They saw it as an opportune time to hold such a meeting and to submit their grievances to the Peace Conference in Europe, as the European delegates would be discussing self-determination and the rights of minorities. Moreover, the mood of the country was vehemently anti-Indian. Existing political parties offered Indians no hope for the future.⁶ The three main parties in the country aspiring for power were the South

³ Pachai (1971:75); *Indian Opinion*, 25 May 1917; *Indian News*, 5 May 1919.

⁴ *Indian News*, 2 May 1919; *Indian Opinion*, 2 May 1919.

⁵ F. Gmwa (1974:346f); Pachai (1971:80). Indians in Natal and the Transvaal, participated in a passive resistance campaign (*satyagraha*) that lasted seven years. It culminated in the Indian Relief Act of 1914 whereby the Union Government yielded on issues pertaining to marriage, immigration and the £3 tax.

⁶ Gordon (1976:99); Calpin (1949:60).

⁷ Gordon (1976:99, fn.3).

African Party (SAP), the Unionists and the Nationalists. General Louis Botha, leader of the SAP, was anti-Indian, but the Unionists had no definite policy or principle towards Indians in the Union, and the Nationalists, under Barry Hertzog, were avowedly anti-Indian and anti-British.⁹ The first Indian Conference was held at Cape Town, followed by a second conference in the Transvaal in August 1919. Attempts to establish a national political body failed because of any definite mandate from the different provinces and internal dissension. It was only in 1923, that a national body was formed, called the South African Indian Congress.

The South African League

Anti-Indianism was based on racial prejudice and trade jealousy. While Whites in the Transvaal and Natal shared common grievances over Indian trade, it was in the Transvaal that the first concerted effort at anti-Indian organisation began. In September 1919 a congress was convened in the Town Hall at Pretoria, which was attended by delegates from Parliament and Provincial Councils, 26 Municipalities, 30 Chambers of Commerce, Churches, legal professions and organised workers. After intense discussions lasting two days, a series of weighty resolutions were adopted calling upon the Government to act promptly at securing and protecting White supremacy and the South African League was founded.¹⁰ Its objectives were instrumental in promoting racial prejudice. Those objectives may be summed up in a sentence: "The upholding of White standards of civilization and safe-guarding of South Africa from the social, economic and national menace of Asiatics".

Among the founder members of the League were Sir Abe Bailey, M.L.A., who sought to foster the movement for the preservation of White standards and ideals in South Africa. Speaking in the House of Assembly in 1919, in reply to those whose commercial interest compelled them to talk and vote pro-Indian, he said in a dramatic outburst, "You may build up fortunes in Coloured and Indian labour, but I shall fight to the death for a White South Africa".¹¹

⁹ *Indian Views*, 31 May 1918, 20 November 1918; Davenport (1987:255).

¹⁰ *Indian Views*, 21 February 1919, 28 February 1919, 25 July 1919, 1 August 1919, 22 August 1919; Pachai (1971:85).

¹¹ *Indian Opinion*, 22 August 1919; *Indian Views*, 15 October 1920; 18 February 1921.

¹² *Indian Views* 18 February 1921.

Another personality from the Transvaal was Captain L. Blackwell, M.L.A. He functioned as counsel for the South African League before the Government Asiatic Inquiry Commission. In his final address, he presented for the first time concrete proposals for the segregation of Indians. L.V. Phillips, chairman, came out to South Africa during the South African War as an officer in the army, and was for many years a magistrate at Krugersdorp. To his leadership, the position of the League in the Transvaal was largely due. Phillips, together with other members of the League, went on a campaign, addressing various constituencies, mobilizing support and establishing branches all over the Transvaal.¹² The League also attempted to acquire the support of the African community. The editor of the African newspaper *Ahantu-Baphu*, declined the invitation to attend the Pretoria meeting, with a dignified protest:

I regret to say we are unable to accept the invitation, for the simple reason that, while ostensibly, this agitation is against Asiatics, we cannot help entertaining the fear that it is a movement against colour and nothing else. In the interest of the Bantu people generally, we are unable to encourage morally or otherwise any movement based on colour lines. In the experience of the recent Native Land Legislation, (1913 Land Act), we are forcibly impressed that the white people of this country are, as a whole, openly developing a keen sense of colour prejudice prompted by the fear of competition with Natives and others in land, trade and other occupations, and that, in spite of all the fortifications they possess in their defence such as the Franchise, Capital and Civilisation, they will yet resort to artificial means of endeavouring to deny equal opportunities to everyone of dark colour. This sort of bolstering up superiority by the white man, is not only difficult to understand but in our humble opinion extremely reprehensible.¹³

The League under the tutelage of J. Hunter, its secretary, also sought to mobilize support in Natal. Provisional committees were formed in Durban and

¹³ *Indian Opinion*, 5 September 1919, 12 December 1919, 26 December 1919, 13 February 1920, 5 March 1920.

¹⁴ *Indian Opinion*, 5 March 1920; 26 September 1919.

Pietermaritzburg. In Durban, the position of the League was difficult because they did not initially receive encouragement from large commercial houses, many of whom were creditors to a number of Indian traders.¹⁷ The League in Natal went on a protracted agitation against Indians. Hunter managed to secure the co-operation and support of the Labour party, Chambers of Commerce, Agricultural Associations and the Natal Manufacturers' Association. Anti-Indian protagonists, mainly White petty traders and representatives of organized workers, gathered in large numbers at meetings in Durban, Dundee and Utrecht. Resolutions called for united action and showed clearly that agitation was not only directed at Indian traders, but also at the large number of unskilled Indians competing for employment with White artisans.¹⁸ At an anti-Indian congress in Pietermaritzburg on 18 November 1921, speeches and resolutions reflected a chronic anti-Indian hostility. Indian traders were seen as the 'root of all evil', a 'menace' to society. Fiery speeches were made by several of the League's members and aimed at instilling fear into White South Africans. It was a propaganda tactic adopted by the League to justify its existence and to mobilize support. White wholesale merchants and the Durban municipality were severely criticised for providing easy credit and for employing Indians as traffic officers, clerks, drivers and storemen.¹⁹ Resolutions called upon the government to initiate legislation that would lead to the compulsory repatriation of all Indians not born and domiciled in the Union; the payment of wages or salaries in accordance with desirable 'white standards' in all trades, industries and occupations; the prohibition of the further sale of land to Indians; and compulsory expropriation, subject to fair compensation and within a period to be defined by the Act—i.e. of all land, buildings, trade or financial interests acquired by Indians in past years, whether as individuals, partners or shareholders; segregation of Indian trade in reserved areas or 'bazaars'; prohibition of new licences or the transfer of existing licences except in reserved areas.²⁰

¹⁷ *Indian Views*, 15 October 1920, 12 November 1920.

¹⁸ NA, Ladysmith Town Council Minutes, 4 January 1921, 3/LDS, 1/1/1/6, 1920-21; Durban Town Clerk's Office, Position of Asiatics in Natal, South African League, 12 November 1920, 3/DBN 4/1/2/1150, 1920; *Indian Views*, 10 December 1920, 15 October 1920, 12 November 1920, 26 November 1920.

¹⁹ *Indian Views*, 26 November 1920; Position of Asiatics in Natal, 12 November 1920; *Indian Views*, 25 February 1921, 4 March 1921.

²⁰ *Indian Views*, 4 March 1921.

Anti-Indian agitation had a detrimental influence on Indian trade. Indian businessmen were unduly pressed by their creditors and very few facilities were afforded to them by banks while White traders were not subject to similar treatment.²¹ Moreover, the Durban Chamber of Commerce issued a circular drawing attention to an agreement entered into in November 1919, which read:

We ... the merchants of Durban hereby agree that from the dates of our respective signatures Indians we will not pay brokerage or commission of any kind to Indian or Arab brokers, and that any dealings we may have with such brokers will be on the understanding that they will arrange with the parties who employ them for their remuneration.²²

In addition to the League, the media—particularly the *Natal Mercury*—several leading Natal politicians, and the Chambers of Commerce were fomenting an anti-Indian campaign with the object of forcing the authorities to adopt segregationist policies towards Indians. At the annual meeting of the Ladysmith Chamber of Commerce in 1919, the President, Gordon Clarence, was critical of the licensing law, particularly with regard to what was considered as the indiscriminate issuing of new licences to Indians. He called for drastic measures to eliminate the 'ever-increasing competition of the Asiatic'.²³ The Ladysmith Chamber of Commerce sought clarity from the government regarding the licensing act. It called upon the White community to act in unison, to eliminate this 'unfair competition'. In 1920 the Durban Corporation passed the Corporation Extended Powers Ordinance and the Durban Tramways Consolidated laws. The latter empowered the municipality to segregate passengers on racial grounds, while the former granted additional powers to the Licensing Officer, virtually making him an autocrat. He could restrict Indians to trade in a particular locality or in particular commodities, impose conditions or restrictions on a licence, and withhold the licence if the applicant refused to agree to such conditions or restrictions.²⁴ In addition, the Durban Town Council (DTC) also obtained powers to impose licence

²¹ *Indian Views*, 4 March 1921, 10 December 1920.

²² *Indian Opinion*, 30 May 1919.

²³ *Indian Opinion*, 30 May 1919; *Indian Views*, 28 February 1919.

²⁴ *Indian Views*, 24 December 1920.

requirements on traders in the Indian Market. This had serious implications for the traders, as a considerable portion of their earnings were paid in the DTC in the form of high rents and (later) licence fees. The threatened imposition was seen as unjust and seriously affected Indian women, many of whom engaged in trade on a small-scale²¹. The new Ordinance indirectly sanctioned class legislation. It cannot be argued that licences were imposed to regulate or check businesses, or to raise revenue. The municipality regulated businesses by the imposition of varying charges, according to the nature of the business conducted. The charges were generally high, and they show that the Indian Market was undoubtedly one of the most profitable municipal undertakings²².

The Asiatic Inquiry Commission

In the midst of the anti-Indian agitation the government decided to appoint a Judicial Commission to inquire into the Indian question. The terms of reference were limited, focusing mainly on trading licences and land²³. The investigation was not supported by Indians who regarded it as 'one-sided' and 'Anti Asiatic'. No South African Indian was represented. The general feeling among Indians was that the Committee represented the most inveterate antagonists of Indians. The chairman was Sir John Lange, a Judge of the Supreme Court of the Cape Province, General J.S. Wylie, H.J. Hofmeyer and Duncan Baxter. The Government of India was represented by Sir Benjamin Robertson. The Commission travelled extensively throughout the country and obtained evidence from deputations representing fifty six public bodies, including municipalities, chambers of commerce, farmers' associations, agricultural unions, shop assistants and trade unions, branches of the South African League (the view of the White community, though it was not confined to that body, was vigorously advanced by the League), and representatives of twenty-six Indian and two Chinese associations as well as private individuals²⁴.

²¹ *Indian Views* 24 December 1920.

²² *Indian Views* 14 January 1921.

²³ *Indian Views* 26 March 1920.

²⁴ Report of the Asiatic Inquiry Commission, 1921, UG Series nos. 4-21, p. 46; *Indian Opinion*, 17 February 1920; *Indian Views*, 1 April 1921.

Findings of the Commission

Indian Trading In Natal

Indian trading received careful examination. In Natal, the Licensing Officer had absolute discretion to issue or refuse a licence, and his decision was not liable to review, reversal or alteration by any Court of law. There was, however, a court of appeal—to the Town Council or Town Board—if the licence was sought for a borough or township; otherwise, the appeal lay in the hands of a special board of three, appointed by the administrator of Natal. No licence was granted to persons unable to fulfil the conditions of book keeping as regards the Insolvency Law and no licence was issued in respect of premises unfit for the intended trade or lacking proper sanitary arrangements or suitable accommodation for clerks and servants. Licences were also refused on the grounds that there were already sufficient licences of the kind in the area. The number of Indian traders in Natal was far greater than in the Transvaal owing chiefly to the much larger Indian population and length of time they had settled in the Province.

The Commission received scarcely any objections or grievances with regard to Indian trading from the leading White merchants of Natal; the Durban and Pietermaritzburg Chambers of Commerce, for instance, made no representations on the subject. Complaints came chiefly from Chambers of Commerce in smaller towns and from individual traders and members of the public, who felt the effects of Indian competition in trade. In places like Verulam, Tongaat, Durban and others along the coast—which were visited by the Commission—Indians monopolised the retail and wholesale trade²⁵. This was no doubt due to the large Indian population employed on the sugar estates. As early as 1911 the magistrate of Umhlanga painted a very dismal picture of the future of White storekeepers:

(E)very village in that district has its European storekeeper struggling hard against Asiatic competition. The Asiatic stores are numerous, and the whole of the native trade is in their hands. The competition is now extending to blacksmiths shops, butchers, carters and carriers. It is only a matter of time ... when there will be no commerce for Europeans, the reason being that it costs the

²⁵ *Indian Views*, 1 April 1921, 26 September 1919, 13 February 1920, 21 May 1920; *Indian Opinion*, 13 February 1920; Calpin (1949:42).

Asiatic practically nothing to live: they have the benefit of cheap Asiatic labour they are encouraged by some well-to-do merchants, who give them long credits which they refuse to Europeans, and notwithstanding the fact that the Asiatic is constantly going insolvent²⁸.

There were complaints of similar encroachments by Indian traders in up-country districts, where many White farmers tried to engage in small scale trade to supplement their income until their crops matured. The plethora of Indian stores scattered on farms and mission stations sparked strong anti-Indian sentiment. White farmers found it difficult to compete. In Ladysmith, Newcastle and Dundee, the majority of Town Councillors were traders who came directly into competition with Indians.

Licences were often denied to Indians on the basis of trade rivalry and racial prejudice. At Dundee no new Indian retail licences were issued after 1915 and statistics for 1920 indicate that Indians were gradually marginalized.²⁹ In Durban and Pietermaritzburg, hostility to the granting of new licences led to both Town Councils adopting a policy designed to segregate trade. This was reflected clearly in the Minutes of Proceedings of the DTC between 1914 and 1918, when applications by Indians for new licences were largely unsuccessful. They were refused with a remark by the Licensing Officer, 'It is not my desire to increase the Asiatic licences'. On appeal, the DTC, in most instances, supported the decision of the Licensing Officer³⁰. In trades where they came into competition, Indians held 535 licences in 1915 as against 1,357 by Whites; in 1919 they held 628 as against 1,684 by Whites. The Licensing Officer, G. Molynaux, explained the position of Indian licences during the war as follows:

The growth in Durban of the Asiatic licences has been small. I think on the whole very few licences have been granted, and it is

only because we restrict the number that there are not a lot more We do what we can to restrict further Indian licences A European licence is granted always as a matter of course, whereas the Indian licence is refused as a matter of course, it is a new one³¹.

In Pietermaritzburg in 1914, 312 White and 68 Indian licences were issued compared to 317 White and 119 Indian in 1919. Restrictions were also placed on hawkers's licences. In Pietermaritzburg, several Natal-born Indian women engaged in hawking as a means of livelihood. Their applications were very often unsuccessful, due to the restrictive policy of the Town Council which aimed at limiting the number of Indians hawking in White areas. In Durban, Indian hawkers were confined to a section in Gorchimer Street, between West and Pine street, and on Saturdays were allowed to take up a stand alongside the cemetery in West Street. They also paid a licence fee of five pounds per annum. Indians who sought to diversify their trade during and after the war faced opposition. Several applications for the manufacture of jewellery, Guit boxes, Indian sweetmeats and sweets were rejected³².

Manufacturers' licences came under Section 23 of Ordinance 11, 1911 and gave the Town Council power to issue these licences. The Town Council and Licensing Officer sought to curtail this type of licence, and it became the policy of the Department to issue Indian licences only after careful consideration. However, Indian licences increased from 490 in 1909, to 652 in 1915, and 953 in 1919. This increase was due to a number of factors. In 1913 Ordinance No. 5 was passed, amending an exemption which permitted unlicensed trading in colonial produce, and which increased the number of applications for new licences. During the war many Whites enlisted in the army, and sold their businesses to wealthy Indians at a profit, which also accounted for the increase in the number of Indian licences during this period. A return of transfers made by the Licensing Officer for Natal for the period 1909 to 1919 reflects that 99 licences were transferred from Whites to Indians.

²⁸ USA, Annual Reports of the Department of Justice, 1911, nos. 27-28, p. 71.

²⁹ Report of the Asiatic Inquiry Commission, 1921; *Indian Views*, 19 July 1918.

³⁰ Durban Mayor's Minutes, Proceedings of the Durban Town Council, 5 January 1915, 2 March 1915, 27 November 1914; *Indian Opinion*, 21 April 1915, 17 September 1915.

³¹ Report of the Asiatic Inquiry Commission, 1921, p. 46.

³² Report of the Asiatic Inquiry Commission, 1921, p. 46. NA, Durban, Town Clerk's Office, Borough Police to Town Clerk, 8 February 1917, A. Harris to Town Clerk, 9 February, 1917, 3-DHN 4/1/2-99, Licensing Officer's Departmental, Volume 2, 1916-1922.

and that 104 such applications were refused; since Indians transferred their licences to Whites³².

Property Acquisition by Indians

Closely allied to the subject of Indian trade licences, was the equally burning question of their 'encroachment' on boroughs and townships through the acquisition of fixed property for business and residential purposes in White areas³³. Here, the Asiatic Enquiry Commission remarked on the difficulty of arriving at a conclusion:

There can be little doubt that as a rule it has that effect (encroachment): though probably more in the residential than in the trading areas, owing to the strong prejudice prevailing amongst Europeans in this country against living in the immediate vicinity of any Coloured races³⁴.

There were, the report continued, a few wealthy Indians occupying houses on the Berea in Durban, but 'the general tendency is for Indians of the same social standing to live in the same quarter'³⁵. The only detailed evidence obtained by the Commission regarding the ownership of town properties by Indians related to the municipalities of Durban and Pietermaritzburg. In 1914 the total valuation of all properties in the Durban municipality was £10,404,500; in October 1919, it was £13,516,020, an increase of 30 percent in five years. Between January 1918 and March 1920, 137 Durban properties were transferred to Indians by Whites at a total purchase price of £281,465. Of these, 63 were situated in what was described as White residential districts. The higher individual values ranged from £5,000 to £10,000 and in three cases they were £18,000, £28,000 and £27,000 respectively. In comparing the above figures it must not be forgotten that the value of property had increased enormously since 1888, owing to the great development and advance of the

³² Report of the Asiatic Enquiry Commission, 1921, pp. 47-48.

³³ Report of the Asiatic Enquiry Commission, 1921, pp. 47-48. *Indian Views*, 1 April 1921.

³⁴ *Indian Views* 1 April 1921; Calpin (1949:46).

³⁵ Calpin (1949:46).

port and town of Durban. In the absence of exact figures, the Commission stated that it seemed highly unlikely that the value of property owned by Indians in relation to that held by Whites had increased substantially, compared with the situation a quarter of a century previously. The acquisition of properties by Indians between January 1918 and March 1920 can be explained as follows: Wealthy merchants aimed at securing fixed property in anticipation of their rights being whittled away by the Natal Legislature. Moreover, the boom conditions created by the war afforded Indians the opportunity to invest their profits in property³⁶. The position in Pietermaritzburg in 1921 was submitted by the Town Clerk. The total rateable value of immovable property in Pietermaritzburg was £3,472,730; Whites owned £2,922,397, or 84.15 percent; Indians, £98,548, or 2.84 percent. Between 1917-1921, the value of property purchased by Whites from Indians was £1,408; and of property purchased by Indians from Whites, £32,236³⁷.

While most Whites resented the presence of the Indian in their midst, the African community, on the other hand, apparently viewed the Indian as a positive influence. *Ilango Lase Natal* stated in 1920:

Looking at the subject from a Native standpoint the Indian is desirable in this country for the reason that the European storekeeper is, as a class, out of touch with the Native. His social position above the Native makes his dealings with the Native to be of an unsympathetic sort. Frequently you find that all a European seller cared for in a Native is his money; there is no goodwill nor mutual understanding in striking a bargain. The Indian not being of a class of the European is somewhat nearer the Native standard and is a baggage! Justice forbids it³⁸.

Recommendations of the Asiatic Enquiry Commission

The Commission completed its work in March 1921. The findings of the Commission and their subsequent recommendations were contradictory. After

³⁶ Calpin (1949:46); Report of the Asiatic Enquiry Commission, 1921, p.44. *Indian Views*, 26 September 1919, 25 February 1921; *Indian Opinion*, 3 March 1926.

³⁷ *Indian Opinion*, 3 March 1926.

³⁸ Quoted in *Indian Views*, 7 May 1920.

an exhaustive enquiry it declared in emphatic terms that there was no evidence of a so-called 'Asiatic menace'; low standards of living were a matter of class not race: Indian traders, though they did undersell White traders, benefited the consumer⁴⁰. Despite these findings, the Commission recommended that restrictive measures in existence in the Transvaal be retained; there be no compulsory but voluntary repatriation; likewise, there be no compulsory segregation but a system of voluntary segregation. The Commission also put forward a strong plea for uniformity in the licensing laws and regulations, and called for a comprehensive Act of Parliament to consolidate the powers of municipal authorities with regard to the issue of trading licences⁴¹.

The report of the Commission was condemned by all. The Government of India protested against its recommendations and sought Imperial intervention to prevent action being taken until the status of Indians in the Empire was discussed at the Imperial Conference in 1921⁴². In Natal, local Indians held a meeting under the revived Natal Indian Congress on 3rd April 1921 to protest against the Report and the proposed Townships Franchise Amendment Ordinance, which aimed at depriving Indians of their right to votes in Townships. Indians rejected the report and recommendations which further limited existing rights, instead of solving the Indian 'problem' on an equitable and just basis. The meeting questioned the Union government's commitment to the 1914 Smuts-Gandhi agreement, which had assured Indians to lawfully settle in the country, of fair treatment and that their existing rights would be safeguarded. It also asked whether these assurances and undertakings were to be treated as 'mere scrap paper'⁴³. Indians totally opposed segregation. Whilst recognizing their strong and pronounced feelings on this subject, the Commission nevertheless recommended gradual,

⁴⁰ *Indian Opinion*, 8 April 1921; Ginwala (1974:355).

⁴¹ Ginwala (1974:355); Calpin (1949:46-50); Pachai (1971:92).

⁴² Pachai (1971:92); Ginwala (1974:356).

⁴³ *Indian Views*, 8 April 1921. A meeting was held on the 6 March 1921, at the Victoria Bldg, Victoria Street, Durban, where the Natal Indian Congress was reconstituted, and sought to be all inclusive of the community. The aim of the meeting was to elect office bearers. The following were elected as officials of the Congress: President Ismail Gora, (former Vice-President), Vice-Presidents: Messrs E.M. Paruk, B. Gabriel, R.H. Chetty, Charlie Nuffiah, Bawani Dayal, A.A. Gandhi; Joint Secretaries: Messrs A. Christopher and M.M. Ganchi. *Indian Views*, 11 March 1921.

voluntary, but not compulsory, segregation, i.e. to attract Indians to select areas. Indians in Natal refused to submit to this 'humiliation and degradation'. The words 'voluntary segregation' were considered to be an illusion, denying Indians their freedom to trade and reside in any locality. In White political circles in Natal the Report was vehemently criticised. Its recommendations were the antithesis of the demands which various Natal representatives had brought forward at the South African League Congress in Pietermaritzburg in February⁴⁴. Between 1921 and 1923 there were repeated demands by Natal politicians to commit the Provincial Legislature and Government to some clear and definite line of legislation which would incorporate the principle of segregation and deny Indians the municipal franchise. In this respect, they found themselves supported by both the Nationalist and Labour opposition groups⁴⁵. This was a critical period for the Smuts government which was plagued by economic problems and a steadily waning parliamentary majority. It could not allow the Indian question to result in a vote of no-confidence.

As the 1922 parliamentary session approached, the prospects of the Indian community, in particular the trading classes, were dim. In March 1922, the Natal Provincial Council passed three Ordinances: the Rural Dealers' Licensing Ordinance, the Townships Franchise Ordinance and the Durban Land Alienation Ordinance. The first of the Ordinances removed the right of appeal in all cases from the decision of a licensing board to an appeal board and limited, instead, the right of appeal only on the grounds of the fitness of the applicant. The second Ordinance deprived Indians of the municipal franchise they had enjoyed since 1872. The third Ordinance gave the Durban Town Council the power of restricting the ownership or occupation of land—or both—to any particular race group, by inserting restrictive clauses in the title deeds or leases of such property⁴⁶. After protests by the NIC, the government vetoed the first two Ordinances, but sanctioned the Durban Land Alienation Ordinance No. 14 of 1922⁴⁷. Natal politicians were dissatisfied that the two Ordinances, moved by G.H. Hulst, were rejected by the Union Government. By 1922/23 the growing unpopularity of the SAP was reflected in several by-election defeats. After months of temporising, Smuts announced the decision to introduce a measure of segregation for Indians at the 1923 SAP

⁴⁴ Gordon (1976:107).

⁴⁵ *Indian Views*, 13 May 1921; *Herald*, 19 January 1922.

⁴⁶ Gordon (1976:113,141).

⁴⁷ Gordon (1976:124); Pachai (1971:95).

Congress in Pietermaritzburg. The Class Areas Bill, introduced by Patrick Duncan, Minister of the Interior, in January 1924, provided for the compulsory trading and residential segregation of Indians along the lines envisaged by the Asiatic Inquiry Commission of 1921, although the latter did not advocate compulsory segregation⁴⁵.

However, before this legislation came into force, Smuts was defeated in the 1924 general election by an alliance of the Nationalist and Labour parties, who had formed a Pact in April 1923⁴⁶. The position of Indians, in particular traders, deteriorated further under the Pact government. The latter, unlike Smuts, were steadfastly anti-Indian and had clear and definite policies with regard to the 'Indian question'. They immediately sought to isolate and segregate Indians, both for trading and residential purposes, and to reduce South Africa's Indian population by statutory legislation.

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⁴⁵ Pachai (1971:14-18).

⁴⁶ Pachai (1971:135).

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Being an African in the Twenty-first Century and the Prospects for Africa's Progress¹

Kwame Owusu-Ampomah

Introduction

At the turn of the twenty-first century, Africa continues to waddle in poverty, disease, and ignorance, having long lost the momentum of the socio-economic gains of the 1960s and the early 1970s. Worse still, the continent is being ravaged by intra- and international conflicts, notwithstanding the scourge of AIDS, with devastating effects on life and property. Not only do the development obstacles highlighted in development literature of the 1950s and 1960s continue to persist; new ones have also emerged in post-colonial Africa to compound the economic woes of the continent. Inadequate infrastructure and lack of entrepreneurs; predator-political leaders, intra- and international wars, military intervention in politics, weak and inappropriate institutional arrangements, and political instability appear to be intractable obstacles to development (Mbaku 2000). Others such as the debt crisis, exploitation and destabilization; globalization and marginalisation, and the imposition of a misplaced neo-liberal macroeconomic agenda and the promotion of a 'hegemonic polyarchy', have swung the clock of Africa's progress decades backwards.

With these internally and externally generated impediments to Africa's development, it is hardly surprising that the average African lives on less than two United States dollars a day (Human Development Report 1999).

¹ An earlier version of this paper titled 'The African of the 21st Century and Africa's Transformation' was published in the AAPS Internet Journal of Politics (AIJP) of the *African Association of Political Science*. See <http://www.aaps.ca.zw/publications/AJP/Ampomah.html>.

Today, 83% of the poorest countries in the world, as measured by the UNDP's human development index (HDI) are found in Africa, and the growth rates of most African countries, for the period 1987-1997, are negative. In contrast, many developing countries, particularly the Newly Industrializing Countries (NICs) such as South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore have achieved phenomenal economic growth rates in the last four decades or so (Africa 2000:1). Yet, some African economies such as Ghana's, at independence, were much stronger than many of these East Asian economies.

Against the backdrop of Africa's bleak economic disposition, what does it mean to be an African in the twenty-first century? What is the way forward for Africa to extricate itself from the quagmire of poverty, instability and the threat of disintegration? In exploring answers to these critical questions it is the belief of this paper that the African problem is too complex to elicit simplistic solutions. The paper thus seeks to indicate possible directions and offer practical suggestions that might be useful for Africa's emancipation.

The Eurocentric Idea of Africa

First and foremost, how is Africa perceived, and how does this perception impact on the African of the twenty-first century? The bleak picture of Africa has, at the turn of the millennium, watered the fields of Afro-pessimism. Already assorted denigrations of despondency, ultimatum and threats have been served in the western-controlled media—e.g.: Africa is 'a high risk investment area'; 'write off the continent' if it does not put its house in order; South Africa (relatively better-off) should distance itself from the 'basket cases' (*Daily News* June 14 2000). These conclusions do not even faultily acknowledge the West's complicity in the pathetic goings-on on the continent let alone commend the high level of sophistication of the great African empires—Ghana, Mali, Songhai, and others at a time when Europe was in the dark (Chavis 1999).

Apparently, the kind of reporting on events in Africa by the western media makes a mockery of the tools of objective analysis that the so-called liberal paradigm purports to expound: logic and empiricism. But what is the purpose of this deliberate denigration of the African, one form of which began with the zoological exhibitions of 'exotic natives' in Germany in 1874 (Bancel et al. 2000:22). The answer is obvious:

[T]o serve their capitalistic greed ... [for] ... the African continent is a malignant appendage rather than as an integral, systemic part of the earth and all its natural functions in accordance with universal laws. Its indigenous populations are depicted as without value (pp. 1-2) ... [It is] for psychological purposes as strategy to fulfil Machiavellianism, later Darwinism, Imperialism, still later the so-called white man's burden, colonialism, and neocolonialism, the final stage of imperialism crudely presented by the late Ghanaian President Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (p. 4) ... The fact of the matter is the continent's mineral resources, strategic metals, and natural resources are significant factors in the wealth of European Nations, America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, to name a few ... [It] is a function of white supremacy, plain and simple (Chavis 1999:5).

In perpetuating this notion of supremacy, Subcomandante Marcos's observation that 'lies have become a universal currency', is as much applicable here as it is with the Zapatista's cause (Esteve 1997). The root of these lies dates back to the Enlightenment philosophers, who framed the African as a different, sub-human species and therefore philosophically and anthropologically sanctioned the exploitation of Africans in barbaric ways that were not allowed for Europeans (Eze 1997:7). For Hegel, for example, Africa was outside History, a wasteland filled with 'lawlessness', 'fetishism', and 'cannibalism'—waiting for European soldiers and missionaries to conquer it and impose 'order' and 'morality'. The African was incapable of rational thought or ethical conduct, and deserved to be enslaved, so that the relationship between the European and the African need not be prescribed by moral or ethical considerations. In a later treatise, the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel justifies imperialism and colonialism as a logical solution to poverty and enhancement of the welfare of Europeans (Eze 1997). In this context one cannot fail to understand Hegel's deliberateness to ignore the tenets of his own theoretical edifice and embrace ignorance as a source for his irrational racism, and thus, turning a blind eye to the contradictions in his discourse on 'African culture' (Neugebauer 1991).

Being an African in the Twenty-first Century

The damned image 'imposed by outsiders, especially Europeans' (Mudimbe 1992) on the African is obviously devastating, and should be of great concern

to the African of the twenty-first century. But before we turn to it, 'who or what is an African'? While the question is ontologically and teleologically significant—the former addressing the question of being and the latter that of purpose' (Gordon 2000:7) it has proven to be problematic in various contexts, particularly, in the 'new' South Africa (More 2000a). According to More identity is fundamentally a dialectical notion whose meaning makes sense only in the presence of the Other that is different than self, and in the post-apartheid South African context 'the term "African" is multi-dimensional; it connotes racial, geographical, political or ideological connotations'.

Evidently, then, it makes sense for Kwesi Kwaa Prah to argue that if everyone is an African, then Africanism has lost its meaning (see Molete 1998:5). Arguably, however, if we should throw in the jockey factor, then, at a macro level of analysis, we might conclude that humanity are all Africans and that there is no 'Other', contrary to the theories on Otherness. But paradoxically, there is the Other even if some of the differences are unresolvable, and therefore there must be an African, whose 'Africanity' emanates from history, culture and African consciousness [such that] "He is an African who feels African" (Kariuki 2000). But if he who feels African is an African, then for teleological purposes, it might not be easy to identify an African, for, to paraphrase Shakespeare, it is virtually impossible to find the mind's construction in the face. Thus, trying to discern identity from a person's psychological disposition is like looking for a needle in a haystack.

The question who or what is an African? could, then, be potentially it could also evoke bizarre ideas and destructive goals, especially when it is racially perceived. It might, then, suffice to conclude—taking a cue from Hernando de Soto—that we may not be able to define precisely who or what an African is but we know him/her when we see him/her.² The particularism of the adaptation of de Soto's conclusion manifests itself for instance, in the context of international sports and conferences.

institutions such as the OAU and the African Development Bank, and in such regional organisations as SADC (now SAIAC) and

² At a conference on the 'Informal Sector' in Ivory Coast in 1989 Hernando de Soto is reported to have remarked, 'The informal sector is like an elephant, we may not be able to define it precisely, but we know it when we see it' (see Mead and Morrison 1996).

ECOWAS, as well as the African caucuses of the agencies of the UN and the World Bank (Appiah 1992).

By this conclusion we, perhaps, lay to rest the risk of committing what More (2000b) describes as philosophy as the naturalistic fallacy, i.e. trying to define an indefinable concept.

Appiah (1992) reminds us that being an African has 'a certain context and a certain meaning', and in accord with Achebe, 'that meaning is not always one that we can be happy with'. Invariably, 'identity is one we must continue to reshape'. Indeed, like all human beings, Africans cannot be happy with the denigrating Eurocentric image imposed upon them even if it is premised on objective conditions. If a denigrating image constructed on so-called objective conditions is repugnant then an 'invented' identity, a kind that is based on ignorance and falsehood (Appiah 1992; Mudimbe 1992; Neugebauer 1991) is absolutely objectionable and must be confronted. In the confrontation we must observe with conviction that the identity of any civilization is constructed on images of the other, which through their mirroring effect, enable it to develop an image of itself and define its place in the world (Bancel et al. 2000:22). From this perspective, there cannot be any exceptionalism about pre colonial Africa, and if that is so, post colonial Africa will then necessarily have to reshape her distorted image. Reshaping Africa's identity in the twenty-first century should thus have a rational appeal: It is, at least, a psychological recipe for Pan Africanism, black solidarity, which can be an important force with real political benefits. One condition that appears unassailable in reshaping Africa's identity is the internalization of Africanism, which invariably should inspire the African to be proud of being, in the Nigerian platitude, a son-of-the-soil, and nurture a deep sense of moral and philosophical rejuvenation. In the process, the African of twenty-first century ought to recognise that there is no other *bona fide* habitat other than the continent called Africa. Africans, thus, need to transform themselves and the continent from 'the wretched of the earth' (Fanon 1967) to a realist and responsible engagement of autonomous development.

This is an enormous challenge but it should inspire the African's primordial instinct to survive and live within the community of nations with dignity. After all *Olo non adaro ma oyarefo*—'no one takes medicine on behalf of the sick'. Thus it is the primary responsibility of Africa to extricate herself from poverty and insecurity, and no one else's; an outside intervention is a mere bonus.

Prospects for Emancipation

The prospects for Africa's recovery appear not to be encouraging, but recovery is not impossible. Africa has the potential to rejuvenate itself, and Nkrumah's vision that the black man is capable of managing his own affairs ought to ring constantly in the consciousness of the twenty-first century African. Here, we may not need to look far for a visionary dream. Of this, Abiola Irele (2000:18) reminds us:

... the Pan Africanism of W.E.B. du Bois and Kwame Nkrumah, which envisioned an Africa free and self-assured, is still a relevant concept for us, reinterpreted as this concept must be in our own time as an ideology of African interests, bent towards the formidable task of repositioning Africa and its Diaspora with dignity in the world.

Africa's vision in the twenty-first century could also be perceived in terms of a continent capable of sustaining a decent livelihood; being a major part of the world's population, it can, with one voice, and under one banner contribute towards the directing of the trajectory of the international system; she can use her relative power to maximize her access to the world's resources. Besides her natural endowments, these are strategies which will create the needed conditions for the development of the continent and her people(s).

Historically, the resilience, courage and tenacity of the continent's forebears, who, firmly believing in their inalienable right to freedom and self-determination, wrested the continent from the clutches of colonialism and apartheid, constitute a source of inspiration. These attributes should stand Africa in good stead to turn the tide against poverty, insecurity and oppression. In doing so there is the need to 'banish the image of a naive and simple Africa that gave a powerful affective charge to the literature of cultural emancipation but which can have no place in any serious proposition concerning our place and status in the contemporary world' (Irele 2000).

In spite of the diversity, African peoples share a common basket of experiences and history which is a great unifying factor in itself: the pain of subjugation, humiliation and deprivation, unrelenting economic hardships, an unprecedented scale of exploitation in human history and even genocide. As Appiah (1992) puts it:

We share a continent and its ecological problems; we share a relation

of dependency to the world economy; we share the problem of racism in the way the industrialized world thinks of us (and let me include here, explicitly, both 'Negro' Africa and the 'Maghrib'); we share possibilities of the development of regional markets and local circuits of production; and our intellectuals participate, through the shared contingencies of our various histories, in a common discourse

Although the plundering of the continent's human and natural resources has been going on for over half a millennium, Africa still has substantial levels of, and diverse human and natural resource endowment to meet her needs if judiciously harnessed. Africa, in the twenty-first century, has even greater human resource capacity to transform the continent than she has had at any other time. Tanzania's case, succinctly articulated by the late president Julius Nyerere in a dialogue with top level staff of the World Bank in Washington in 1998 illustrates this point:

The British Empire left us a country with 85% illiterates, two engineers and twelve doctors. When I left Office (thirteen years ago) we had nine per cent illiterates and thousands of engineers and doctors.

This is equally true of all African countries. However, the brain drain, induced by the lure of the so-called modernity in the west and the push of the insensibility of the African state, has deprived the continent of realizing the full potential of its pool of highly skilled professionals. As yet, Africa has failed to successfully tap into the huge human resource potential in the Diaspora. This source is beckoning, and it should not be out of Africa's reach when the dust settles.

The Way Forward

Prescribing concrete solutions to the African crisis, given the multi-faceted nature of the dilemma and the complexity of the development phenomenon, is a daunting task, and far beyond the scope of this paper. What we intend to do, therefore, is to sketch possible direction(s) which could form the building block(s) for *action* towards Africa's socio-political and economic transformation.

Development Ideology

In his book *Democracy and Development in Africa*, Ake (1996) postulates that political conditions in Africa are the greatest constraints to development. He demonstrates that the two main characteristics of the colonial state in Africa, absolutism and arbitrariness, carried over into the post-colonial state, encouraged a development paradigm—*modernisation theory*—which ignored the historical and cultural specificity of African countries. Thus, from the outset, modernisation theory was useless as a tool of social transformation and economic development. In view of this, Ake proceeds to prescribe a development paradigm for Africa that is people-centred and based on empowerment, confidence building, self-realisation and self-reliance. This development paradigm, according to him, must necessarily be operative in a land of democracy that places emphasis on concrete social, political and economic rights, recognizes collective rights, inclusiveness, and the development of institutions, and empowers people to participate in decision making at all levels of government.

Concurring with Ake's conclusions, Mandani's prognosis captures the African crisis as a 'political legacy of colonialism' whereby Africa's 'dilemma is the form of the state, the economy dominated, and the state disenfranchises the most dynamic'. To escape from this maze, Mandani suggests that we

re-think the institutional legacy of colonialism; the idea that we must define political identity, political rights and political justice first and foremost in relation to indigeneity (Mandani 2000).

From Mandani and Ake's propositions the appropriate trajectory for the resolution of the African crisis ought not to be fuzzy: *autonomous development* and *good governance*, both of which must be informed by African traditional humanistic philosophical and political values.

Autonomous Development

Abiola Irele correctly observes that the African crisis today is as much inward, psychological and moral, as it is structural, related to objective realities, and thus, that they should be tackled at the levels of the *mind* and *action*. The starting point, in my mind, is for African intellectuals to give substance to the idea of autonomous development, to unravel this development paradigm

through research and publications, lectures, seminars and workshops, not only in universities but also at all levels of the educational system, and beyond.

The rationale for autonomous development is not farfetched. *Firstly*, as Africans, we need to 'create our own unique space of life and expression in a challenging international system'. *Secondly*, development cannot be imposed from outside. Africa's experience bears testimony to this view. The imposition of Eurocentric development theories and strategies—modernization, import substitution, balanced growth, post-modernism, neo-liberalism etc.—have not only failed as tools of transformation in Africa but have also, in relative terms, inflicted serious damage on the socio-cultural, political and economic organisation of African societies. Marxist variants of development theory—*post-imperialist discourse, dependency theory, modes of production problematisation and world systems analysis*—have not fared better although they have provided useful insights into the African crisis. The strategy that perhaps appeared to hold the greatest promise for Africa—the basic needs approach—was conspicuously truncated before it could take root. *Thirdly*, the desire for progress is primarily an innate propensity, voluntary, and inherent within the individual or society, although it may be a reaction or response to internal or external stimuli. *Fourthly*, autonomous development is a logical consequence and a validation of the struggles for independence and self-determination, without which the idea of sovereignty becomes a mirage.

The idea of autonomous development does not suggest the isolation of the continent from the rest of the world. The reality of the contemporary world does not permit such a stance. Africa is obliged to acknowledge the interdependence of nations and the competitiveness of the international system, but within this framework, she should be able to take vital decisions to resolve her own peculiar problems which no one is better placed to do than herself.

Here, a caveat may be necessary. Pursuing a path of autonomous development does not imply automatically of success. Much will depend on a number of factors, some of which will be discussed shortly. However, like 'the idea of progress', the impact of the idea of autonomous development could be tremendous. Apart from it serving as a general orientation device, it could also serve as a powerful tool of mobilisation, and as an ideology, contribute to our interpretation of social reality (Shanin 1997). It would also promote our understanding of the causes of *our* (i.e. the entire African populace) continued underdevelopment, the dynamics of the international system, and the formulation, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of realistic development policies.

As in the case of the 'idea of progress', autonomous development, connoting many derivations, such as self-reliance, self-assurance, economic growth, science and technology, egalitarianism, democracy, education, and health, could become 'an important ideology—a blinker of collective cognition' for the African cause (Mood & Merriam 1996:69). This conjecture, of course, pre-empt the urgent need to address the ideological vacuum that has characterised contemporary Africa. The vacuum is predicated not so much on the lack of ideologies—sets of ideas embodying the norms, values and ideals of African peoples—but on the problem of 'evolving appropriate, credible and viable ideologies for contemporary African nations' (Gyekye 1997:viii).

At various times Africa's development initiatives have been premised on ideologies such as 'Pan Africanism', 'Negritude', 'African Renaissance', 'Black Consciousness', 'African Unity', 'Nativism', 'Black Power' and 'African Socialism'. The degree to which the failure of our development efforts is dependent on these ideologies is a moot point. However, it seems apparent that the underlying racial factor in these ideologies (or so it seems), as indicated earlier, did have some negative repercussions on the development process. We may then pay heed to Appah's caveat and search for ideologies that cannot, implicitly or explicitly, be tainted on the racial card. In this sense *autonomous development* perfectly fits.

Autonomous Development and the African Renaissance

In a way, autonomous development resonates with the idea of Africa's Renaissance which, if it is to succeed, need to chart its own path rather than follow the trajectory of the European Renaissance (Owusu-Ampomah 2000). This path could possibly be a 'move away from the process of *moving away from traditional society and internalizing the colonial state*' (Wamba-dzanga 1992). This return should not be misconstrued as a return to the Hobbesian 'state of nature' in which there is 'continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short' (Hobbes *Leviathan*). By the return to tradition we mean that tradition must function as a source from which to extract elements that help in the construction of an authentic and emancipative epistemological paradigm relevant to the conditions in Africa at this historical moment (Ramose 1992). In this event, the 'return' will have to be viewed in the context of the three

'sub-cultures' that characterise Africa's cultural map: traditional African culture, Euro-Christian culture and Islamic culture (Nkrumah 1970).

African Values and Political and Philosophical Ideas

Autonomous development requires the incorporation of some of the positive African values and philosophical ideas that may be relevant to our approaches to transformation. A fundamental value that underlies the social and economic management in African societies is humanism—the concern for human well-being. This should form the bedrock of African development strategies. The concern for human welfare, widely acknowledged, is 'pervasive and fundamental to African social and moral thought and practice' (Mead & Morrison 1996:158–159, 258). It manifests itself in theory and practice. Gyekye cites several Akan proverbs to demonstrate that humanity is central in African culture e.g.:

It is the human being that counts; I call upon gold, it answers not; I call upon cloth, it answers not; it is human being that counts. The human being is more beautiful than gold (Mead & Morrison 1996:259).

Bearing in mind that the African is essentially *communal* and/or *humanist*, the process of socio-economic transformation should reflect this spirit in the way we do things. This notion must particularly have resonance with policy formulation and implementation at all levels but particularly, with regard to community issues and projects. Essentially, kinship and communities have long been a source of security and socio-political organisation in Africa.

This spirit of communalism or humanism should be reinforced in the twenty-first century African society, but with caution, as More (2000b) advises. According to him the indiscriminate application of humanistic ethics constitutes a recipe for perpetua slavery, marginalisation and dependency. For More (2000b), part of the problems of Africa is a direct consequence of humanistic ethics. According to him an ethic that valorises and prescribes forgiveness, gentleness, altruism, vulnerability and compassion as opposed to competitiveness, aggressiveness, abrasiveness, acquisitiveness, revengefulness, and greed amongst others—which constitute the hallmark of the rich and powerful nations—are problematic because it means the

continued enslavement of Africa and its people(s). For him, humanistic ethics can only make sense if the power relations were to favour Africa, or if there was a reciprocal recognition of humanism by the Other and was explicitly demonstrated in the Other's relationship with the African. Since this is not the case, it should be obvious for Africans that extending a hand of friendship indiscriminately, means their continued subjection. Relations must be constructed in accord with the dictates of realism.

Our main task, then, is how to give substance to this fundamental, intrinsic and self-satisfying value in modern Africa. This is an open question, which requires us to engage in praxis, and no one answer may be finite. One possibility, however, is a critical examination of the factors that play significant roles in the social organisation of African societies. These include kinship; social status and occupation; the sexual division of labour and gender-based organizations; and age ranking (McCall 1995:176). One of the aims here could be the identification and analysis of the different types of structured relationships between individuals and groups, and the traditional and modern norms and values that have characterized these societies, with a view to enhancing the dynamism and adaptive potential of these societies to consolidate community identity and mobilize community action in modern Africa (Mead & Morrison 1996:188).

Further to these possibilities, specific choices that would foster a common identity, and reflect the elements of shared sentiments and ideals for the attainment of the African dream may be required. Such choices may include distinctive symbols such as a common flag, an anthem, a coat of arms and a common language for the continent. Of these choices, a common language is apparently problematic given its sensitivity, amidst the hundreds of languages in Africa. Nevertheless, it seems indisputable that four major languages in Africa have a competitive edge over all others in terms of space coverage and population. These languages, Arabic, predominantly in the North, Hausa, widely spoken in the West, Swahili, in East and Central Africa, and Nguni in Southern Africa could become the fulcrums of African solidarity. Kwesi Kwaa Prah's emphasis on language as pertinent to Africa's development is thus not misplaced (Prah 1993).

Traditional Political Ideas and Values

Issues of good governance have featured in most analyses of the African crisis. But what does the term 'good governance' mean? How do we harness it

for our own good? In one sense good governance is equated with democracy, i.e. the institutional expression of the will of the people and respect for democratic principles and institutions such as the constitution, bill of rights, multi-party system, elections, the rule of law, the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary. In the context of the development agenda of the World Bank, the concept is used with reference to 'public management techniques: it stresses elements such as an efficient public service; an independent judicial system; and accountable administration of public funds—it is 'synonymous with sound management' (Friedman 2000).

The colonial and post colonial African experience of liberal democracy, as good governance is supposed to mean, has been disastrous: it did not only fail to function but also resulted in 'political confusion, instability, uncertainty and frustration'. The reasons may not be far-fetched: These institutions were alien to Africa and hence Africans were not disposed, psychologically, culturally and politically to grapple with their concomitant demands and practices. Moreover, the colonial governments made an effort to inculcate the liberal democratic ideals in the people in a way that would have ensured their understanding, legitimization and entrenchment into the political fabric of African societies. Rather the colonial governments were themselves undemocratic. Laws were made without popular participation (Gyekye 1997a: 115).

Good governance, as defined by the World Bank i.e. in relation to management, according to Friedman, requires that democracy be regarded as simply a means—a device to ensure that public officials manage in a particular way. In this sense Friedman correctly argues that the characteristics of good governance are separated from the question of those to whom those who govern are responsible. With the World Bank and donor countries' insistence on good governance, as defined in these terms, African governments are required to shield their allegiance from their citizens in the World Bank and the donor countries. Yet democratic government requires rulers to be accountable to those who gave them power to rule—the people. Thus, good governance must be in relation to popular participation in the decision-making process on matters that affect citizens' interests and values, and the right of citizens to hold their government accountable for its actions and policies. (An attempt by any party, agency or actor to usurp these fundamental prerequisites of democracy, under any pretext, therefore, undermines democracy itself, as a value, and the very existence and survival of the people). On this score democracy in the African context is far superior;

it allows far more opportunities for the majority to participate in the decision-making process, than liberal democracy which by and large, reduces political participation to a once-and-for-all activity, i.e. voting. Among the Asante, for example, *participation* in politics did not end with the 'election' of the chief or king, as Rattray testifies:

... To him (i.e. an Ashanti) the state is literally a *Rex Publicus*; it is everyone's business. The work of an Ashanti citizen did not finish when by his vote he had installed a chief in office ... The rights and duties of the Ashanti democrats were really only beginning after (if I may use a homely analogy) the business of the ballot-box was over. In England, the Government and House of Commons stand between ourselves and the making of our laws, but among the Ashanti there was not such thing as government apart from the people.

Indeed, democracy was not, and has never been alien to pre-colonial Africa, in both centralised and acephalous societies, and participation in political life was virtually natural in the lives of the people. Essentially, participation in political life in these societies was not only motivated by the obvious desire for societal equilibrium but also by peer- or group-pressure and the significance of issues arising within the communities. Moreover, democratic institutions that permitted power to be *decentralised* made governance at both state and local levels a *fait accompli*. The system was not exclusive: it did not divide the people; it promoted *oneness* since decisions taken were *consensual* (Ramos 1992; Wiredu 1997). People 'elected' to public office represented all the people or lineage (as the case may be), which in the case of the Asante, was the basic political unit (Wiredu 1997:305). Elected officers did not represent a section or the majority of the electorate, as it is the case with liberal multi-party democracy, and they served the people with *humility*. From these premises it makes sense for Wiredu (1997) to call for 'a non-party polity' in Africa, as a way out of the many conflicts and political instability surrounding multi-party democracy on the continent.

The point we are making is that the political ideas and values of pre-colonial Africa are consistent with the modern elements of democracy: accountability, consent/popular will, participation, freedom of expression, consensus, reconciliation, toleration of opposing views, the rule of law, consultation and conferencing, openness/transparency, oneness and humility.

Indeed, in relative terms, these values manifest themselves more profoundly in the African political setting than even Europe's, and these should guide us to structure a functional modern political system.

Bearing in mind that western democracy has evolved through the rugged terrain of despotism, wars, and revolutions there is no gainsaying about Africa 'geezing itself up for a 'purposive construction of a mode of politics responsive to the political (and economic) problems of contemporary Africa' (Wamba dia Wamba, 1992). I cannot therefore agree more with Gyekye (1997a) when he emphasises 'a need to urge that traditional values and ideas be brought to bear on modern political life and thought', taking into account the exigencies of modern African politics, and the contemporary international system. Neither can I disagree with Wamba dia Wamba's call for emancipative politics which is in conformity with the idea of autonomous development, and has a wide support among Africanists, including Ramose and Fook.

On this account, there appears to be a consensus on the need for the following.

- The accommodation of traditional authority, which is an indispensable feature of our political system, either as an integral part of formal government or outside it. Its role and powers, in each case, must be clearly defined to enable it to contribute positively to Africa's reconstruction. If it should operate outside the formal government it should be strengthened administratively with adequate resources especially qualified personnel.
- The construction of a more active role for traditional rulers in infusing traditional African values (discussed throughout this paper) to citizens, especially the youth, through constant interaction, exhortation, rewards and citations.
- To give due recognition to openness as a traditional value, through adequate dissemination of information to citizens, media restrictions, including ownership and operation of information outlets of all forms (such as the press, radio, and television) should be removed.
- Responsive and committed governments that seek the interests of citizens, as defined by them.
- An electoral system that allows greater representation, and in this respect, permits nomination of representatives of sections of the community e.g. the traditional authority (where it remains outside formal government),

civil society organisations, and gender organisations, at local, regional/provincial and national levels.

- Direct accessibility of elected and nominated representatives, as well as the traditional authority, by the citizens;
- National, regional and continental coalitions of civil society organisations to serve as a bulwark for democratic government on the continent.
- Decentralisation in the interests of effective local government.
- Referendum as an important feature of the political system to maximise participation.

The Role of Intellectuals

It is commendable that through the writings of a vast array of intellectuals our knowledge of traditional rule in Africa has been greatly enhanced. Knowledge per se, is not a bad thing but it should not be an end in itself. The critical social scientists rightly argue that (acquisition of knowledge through) 'research must be a transformative endeavour' (Neuman 1997). Many African intellectuals have taken pleasure in playing the role of colonial anthropologists and historians, conducting social research just to maintain the status quo (the colonial state). They have perpetuated a slavish acceptance of western liberal democracy and negated the authentic African democratic values, which make sense to the African, and hence are more likely to promote his or her progress. This is one of the puzzles, which Ebanu explains as being 'the result of the intellectual laziness of the national middle class (the African intellectuals), of its spiritual penury, and of the profoundly cosmopolitan mould that its mind is set in'.

Similarly, Nkrumah (1964:4) writes (of the African intellectual):

Instead of considering culture as a gift and a pleasure the (African) intellectual ... saw it as a personal distinction and privilege ... The degree of national consciousness attained by him was not of such an order as to permit his full grasp of the laws of historical development or of the thorough-going nature of the struggle to be waged if independence was to be won ...

Sadly, independence was won but the African intellectual, in the main, did not change. This, of course does not mean that all African intellectuals are tired,

western-oriented or traitors. Some African intellectuals have 'sought knowledge as an instrument of national emancipation and integrity' (Nkrumah 1964:4). The list may include revolutionaries like Nkrumah himself and Amílcar Cabral, and others like Amélie Ding, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Claude Ake and Steve Diko.

While the number of such intellectuals in post-colonial Africa is without doubt growing, the collective weakness of African intellectuals seemingly remains intractable. This 'traditional weakness ... laziness ... cowardice ... the incapacity of the national middle class (the African intellectuals) ... to rationalise popular action, to see the reasons' (Fanon 1967) for the propagation of liberal democracy has become the bane of our societies. It is even unthinkable that some African intellectuals and politicians—a minority, although their negative role is debilitating—collaborate with external actors to exploit the continent for parochial gains.

New Directions in Education

The problem of the African intellectual as expounded by Nkrumah and Fanon above is a crisis of alienation, which in part is a direct consequence of cultural imperialism. The colonial educational system bombarded the African with knowledge and values that he/she could hardly relate to, and far removed from his/her culture, immediate experience and aspirations to be of any practical use to him/her. This was done for a purpose: to subjugate, 'civilise' and exploit the African. Strangely, the educational system of Post-colonial Africa has not changed much after independence. The result is that Africa continues to miss the boat of functional education, which among other things should aim at empowering the receiver to be able to take control of his or her environment, manage his/her affairs efficiently and contribute to the common good of his or her society.

A case in point is the content and trajectory of political science as a discipline in South African universities³. By and large African politics is taught as an appendage, i.e. as an option, in the western-centred political

³ Admittedly, South Africa may be an extreme case, given her peculiar history and demographics, and therefore atypical of the continent on this matter. Nevertheless, the point being made here is generally applicable to most African countries and across the disciplines; any differences may be a matter of degree.

science curricula in these universities. Of course, it would be understandable if African Studies is an adjunct to the study of politics in European universities, but certainly, a serious anomaly if it is peripheral in African universities. In fact, it is remarkable for African Studies to be in the mainstream of a political science course in a European university, and European Studies becoming peripheral. This does not suggest any prejudice against the teaching and learning of European political philosophy and/or systems, and for that matter that of any other part of the world. The point is the feeding the African on purely European epistemology is a misnomer. Africans need to have a thorough grasp of their own knowledge systems, cosmology and environment, as a principle. It is only there and then that they will be able to go beyond the university walls to join those social forces struggling for radical socio-economic change in their lives and the attainment of the second independence in the twenty-first century (Nwagwu-Nwaja 1997). While the acquisition of others' knowledge is significant, it should not serve to merely equip African students with technical and administrative skills but also conceptual skills that would enable them to contextualise their role in a world community, and most importantly to understand how to service a critical 'citizensry' (Gibson, et al. forthcoming).

In this event, Africa surely needs to get her house in order. Getting our house in order, in educational terms, does not only mean rethinking of what goes on in institutions of learning or rearranging the subjects and disciplines; it is also a question of rethinking which education, for whom, for what and by whom? (Eboh 1992). Towards these goals:

- ♦ Greater co-operation among African countries is required in areas of curricula design, methodology, and teaching aids;
- ♦ Curricula should reflect African culture, philosophy, socio-economic and political experiences, and the aspirations of African peoples;
- ♦ Curricula must aim at developing the positive human qualities that are sine qua non for the progress of any society, and producing a new African, conscious of his/her role in the development of himself/herself and his or her society;
- ♦ Exchange programmes for African students should be a significant feature in the educational system;
- ♦ Efforts should be made to educate African students in other African institutions where necessary, instead of sending them to study in western institutions.

- ♦ Integration of the educational systems of the various African countries should be explored to avoid duplication, ensure efficient use of resources and guarantee institutions of a high academic standing.

Self Reliance: The Economy, Pharmacopoeia, and Science and Technology

The discussion, thus far, logically brings us to the concept of self-reliance, which as observed earlier, is a derivative of the idea of autonomous development. On the premise that the pursuit of a better life is the ultimate goal of every society, it might well be justifiably grounded in *self-reliance*, i.e. building one's economy through one's own efforts and resources. This approach does not imply a rejection of foreign assistance or investment. All that it means is that the continent must take, as a principle, the responsibility for its own progress, using its human and material resources, and buying only from abroad things it cannot produce or are least in demand. The role of self-reliance in the success of North Korea (Payer 1974) barring her recent economic setbacks and food crisis, for example, should awaken Africa to the virtues in this philosophy, long articulated by prominent black leaders like Nkrumah, du Bois, and Nyerere.

The notion of self-reliance necessarily connotes relying on our knowledge systems, and resource endowment, to a large extent, to 'intellectually ... free ourselves from Professor C.Y. Thomas' famous definition of underdevelopment: "producing what we do not consume and consuming what we do not produce" (Dipeolu 1993). A successful self-reliance policy will reduce pressure on foreign exchange reserves and the balance of payments, and reduce the continent's dependence on outsiders, especially the West. This will require a definition of our priorities, commitment, the will and capacity to harness local resources, and above all, improvise, with a depth of ingenuity, to fulfil our societal needs.

We will need to 'develop radically different modes and practices of production and reproduction of knowledge' (Dipeolu 1993) or engage in what Wamba dia Wamba refers to as the 'democratisation of knowledge', particularly in the fields of science and technology. This implies that Africa must move away from esoteric knowledge, a specialised knowledge accessible to a chosen few, to scientific knowledge accessible to all (Gyekye 1997b). This is particularly significant in the field of herbal medicine the efficacy of

which, in many cases, has been unquestionable, and could prove to be decisive in the battle against widespread diseases – even the HIV/AIDS pandemic. A full-scale attempt to bring herbal medicine into the mainstream of health care, dominated by western medicine, should be our goal in this millennium.

This attempt will have to include not only institutional arrangements but also concrete R&D policies in this field, and the placing of herbal medicine on the health care and education agenda. Already, this trend exists in some African countries, albeit as an appendage to western medicine. Granting it a full scale formal recognition will facilitate its development and unlock its potential impact on our health care delivery system, and the economy as a whole.

Parallel to such initiatives, is the issue of technology. In the modern context technology is widely held to be the engine that drives the economy (Huria 2000:95). This assertion places significant demands on Africa to take technology management seriously if we are to make any economic breakthroughs, and improve both rural and urban livelihoods. The management of our technology should thus be concerned with the incremental innovation of existing technologies, development of new and emerging technologies, combining older technologies to create a new powerful hybrid technology (technology fusion), and acquiring, absorbing and appropriating strategically relevant technologies with minimum lag when they cannot be developed internally (Huria 2000:95).

The promotion of science and technology in the twenty-first century Africa is imperative, and there is the need for a renewed commitment in these fields. It baffles Gyekye why the ratio of students who register for courses in the humanities and the social sciences on the one hand, and mathematical and natural sciences on the other, has not changed much in spite of efforts to promote the latter. He asks whether culture has anything to do with it. This is not an easy question to answer. Nevertheless, it seems obvious that the problem has much to do with the promotional approaches to the study of the mathematical and natural sciences. Besides more places, incentives, and facilities we need to explore other promotional mechanisms, especially in the area of methodology. It should not be forgotten that when the missionaries came, it took them a long time to produce engineers and medical doctors, but very quickly they had produced seminarists, priests, theologians, philosophers, classical philologists, bishops, (and) cardinals' (Dipeolu 1993:104). These were what they needed to attain their goals, and they found the wherewithal to produce them. Africa can, and should be able to produce what she needs to

attain her goals, too, if our leaders have the political will and the moral fortitude to eschew corruption.

Economic Growth

Considering the failure of the socialist experiment and the liberal macroeconomic strategies, epitomized by the IMF's Structural Adjustment Programmes and South Africa's *Growth, Employment and Redistribution: A Macroeconomic Strategy* (GEAR) to address the widespread poverty on the continent, Africa may have to pursue a more pragmatic approach that elicits the virtues in capitalism and socialism and to do so in accord with the cultures and traditions of the people. This would imply some sort of syncretism, with a mix determined by the continent's socio-economic exigencies, in the context of the international economic system, and the social, economic and political values of African societies.

The syncretic approach to economic growth does not in any way conflict with the idea of autonomous development discussed in this paper. Rather the idea of autonomous development affords Africa the leverage to be selective and pragmatic in the choice of appropriate strategies for rapid economic growth and development. On the other hand, in a situation in which the complexity of the African crisis does not easily lend itself to an easy or a single solution, syncretism appears to be a logical path. China's economic quantum leap in the last twenty years or so, should, perhaps, testify to the dynamism of a syncretic approach to economic growth.

Although the Chinese success story is significantly linked to its favourable trading relations with the US, and to her internal sociological and bureaucratic dynamics, the shift from a purely socialist economy to a hybrid economic system, has significantly enabled her to harness the synergy between capitalist and socialist approaches to development.

The Chinese experiences as well as those of the East Asian countries suggest that certain basic conditions are necessary, though not sufficient, for economic take off. These include a high rate of literacy, unfettered social mobility, equal opportunity, national integration, a high sense of national unity, a high level of education, patriotism, an exceptional equal distribution of income, and far reaching land reforms. Besides these conditions, there is the need for an appropriate government intervention and support for the business sector, the provision of subsidies, tax incentives, and cheap credit, and investment infrastructure. Needless to say, most African countries hardly

measure up to the basic conditions listed above. This makes it imperative for African states of the twenty first century to pay serious attention to social and human-factor development, and commit themselves to the economic growth and development of the continent. By and large human factor (HF) decay has proven to be the bane of Africa's development (Adjoloso 1993), and we might do well to attend to it now.

To begin with, Africa must return to the *Lagos Plan of Action* and the *African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Recovery and Transformation* (AAN-SAT⁴); appropriate institutions should be set up to formulate and coordinate investment policies, review the regulatory framework of the macroeconomic environment; free or partially free education may be considered; higher education should lay emphasis on science and technology and entrepreneurial development. We should also invoke traditional values that enhance productivity e.g. the need for achievement, honesty, hard work and patriotism in all its ramifications. One form of patriotism that requires attention is *economic patriotism*. This is because, as pointed out elsewhere, it has a significant impact on job creation, as well as political and environmental stability (Owusu Ampomah 1999). In short Africa should pursue a development strategy that focuses on developing formal economic and political institutions that are compatible with informal institutions, values and behavioural factors of her people for a successful democracy and economic growth and development. This implies a paradigmatic shift from the neo-liberal macroeconomic framework to a people-centred development strategy that prioritizes human factor development⁵.

The African Union

The African Union may not be the best option for Africa to counter the vagaries of globalization and the hegemonic strategies of the United States and its NATO allies. Nevertheless, it is indicative of the new crop of African leaders' determination to position the continent for progress, peace, security and stability. As a unifying factor, even if loose, it is also likely to pave the way for collective approaches to finding solutions to the continent's economic

⁴ For a thorough analysis of the Human Factor model see Adjoloso (1973; 1995:1-26; 1996; 1998); Maririke (1998; 1999); Ado-Feun (1997); Przegor (2001); Owusu Ampomah (2001); Haukap (1997).

woes, political instability and susceptibility to manipulation. The new continental body must then charge itself with a mission to lead the continent to stability and prosperity for all by the year 2050, working in tandem with the Pan-African Parliament and other agencies it might find necessary to establish. In this task, the coordinating and institutional arrangements may cover areas such as

- Greater co-operation among African countries in areas of curriculum design, methodology, and teaching aids;
- Economic Growth and Development;
- Social and Human-Factor Development;
- Peacekeeping and Security (ECOMOG can serve as the starting point);
- Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation;
- Science and Technology;
- Gender and Youth;
- Human Rights;
- The Environment;
- The Legal Framework, including the harmonization of Customary Law and Common Law;
- The Issue of Refugees;
- Land Reform;
- Foreign Policy;
- Political Reforms (to incorporate traditional African political systems).

The new continental body, with a new mandate to articulate the common vision of African peoples, should position itself as the common voice, speaking for and on behalf of Africa, and as an equal actor in the international system. It should be able to engage the rest of the world, particularly the West (in spite of their exploitative and destabilizing machinations) in the constant struggle for power over the world's resources on behalf of Africans. It will have to move away from the position of self-inflicted weakness and marginalisation that tend to humble African governments—in negotiate with a cup in hand, accept raw deals or fail to register their displeasure at the West's policies that are inimical to African interests and ultimate survival. (The former President of South Africa, Mr. Nelson Mandela, demonstrated that after all, weaker countries could also have their way, at times, in the

international system when he defied the West, on a few occasions, to pursue foreign policies that he considered in the best interest of his country.)

In this context the contemporary African leaders' development initiative, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is commendable. However, it stands the risk of being stillborn. It does not prioritise Africa's fundamental development problems: human factor decay and/or underdevelopment. Rather it adopts the neo-liberal macroeconomic framework, which views social and human factor development in developing countries as secondary. Further, it assigns a key role to the Bretton Woods institutions, which have proved to be unreliable allies for the development of the continent (forget about the loans and aid; they are a source of Africa's dependency, poverty, and sluggish response to the need for ingenuity). For NEPAD to succeed, the architects will have to rethink and live up to their objective of pursuing a policy of 'sustained indigenous development' (Mbeki 2001) in the true sense of the phrase. This will require an assertion of autonomous development, as diseased carrier, and a paradigmatic shift to social and human-factor development without which Africa's progress would simply be a mirage. Indeed, the hegemonic forces in the international system constitute a major obstacle to these designs, but they are not insurmountable if African leaders share a common vision, act in concert, marshal their political will and hone their skills in statecraft.

Conclusion

This paper has been concerned with Africa's dilemma, and the possible directions for the continent's rejuvenation in the twenty-first century. The reality of the African situation has been presented, and in that context it is acknowledged that the task of Africa's emancipation may not be an easy one. Notwithstanding the gargantuan internal deficiencies and external pressures, and the damaging Eurocentric ideas on Africa, there is hope that Africa can reshape its image and identity, and emerge as the triumph of the twenty-first century. This hope emanates from Africa's resilience and courage that hitherto, spurred her to confront her history of slavery, colonialism and imperialism; the existence of her vast human and natural resources and the common experiences of her peoples which ought to act as a unifying factor. However, the critical issue is Africa's ability to find ingenious ways of overcoming the plethora of problems confronting her, i.e. transforming this hope into reality, bearing in mind that Africa is primarily her own emancipator.

The process of emancipation may require radical and uncompromising approaches that place a premium on theory and action. Such approaches may take into account traditional African philosophical ideas and values underlying the political, the social and economic organisation of the African peoples, in the context of the exigencies of the contemporary world economic order. This will meet our vision of peace, stability and prosperity.

The process, informed by the ideology of autonomous development, the ideas of the African Renaissance and Pan-Africanism, and guided by a pragmatic educational system and a combination of modern science and technology and autochthonous knowledge systems, requires a syncretic approach in a unified Africa. Above all, Africa's emancipation, while requiring both theory and action, and perhaps, more action than ever before, also needs the political will of her leaders and peoples, and a positive attitude, to pursue an appropriate development strategy, which for now, might be the human-factor development approach in the framework of syncretism and autonomous development. Pascal's wager should guide us here: assume the worst, and it will surely arrive; commit oneself to freedom and justice and its cause may be advanced.

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Colonial Cousins in Poetry

Veena Lutchman

This paper takes a brief look at Hindi poetry in India during the period of British rule, and South African poetry written by black poets in English during South Africa's period of apartheid.



Literature as an art form holds most relevance to society if it is a critical reflection of the society it writes about. The poetry of South Africa and India during their respective periods of colonial rule reveals two separate societies that gradually but steadfastly spoke out against oppression. Although these two corpuses of poetry were written on two different continents, they reveal extremely interesting similarities in terms of themes, literary movements and political idealism, and imagery and myth.

A comparison of the history of the said countries is important within the context of the discussions that follow.

Whilst India gained her independence in 1947, the period of apartheid in South Africa spanned from 1948 to 1994. Of significance is that both the countries experienced a shift in their colonial hegemonic history. India had been colonised by the Muslims prior to being colonised by the British. The South African experience is similar in that there was a shift from British colonial rule to the hegemonic status of the Afrikaners – a group comprising of Dutch and other European settlers and immigrants. In both cases the indigenous people were subject to foreign rule. Thus, whilst colonialism in the Indian context relates specifically to British rule in India, apartheid in South Africa relates to an extension of foreign hegemony. After the retreat of the British in South Africa, the country was governed by the Afrikaner National Party that was committed to preserving Afrikaner interests.

The policies of the ruling powers in the two countries tried to maintain supremacy through economic exploitation, rendering the indigenous popula-

tions victims of cultural and especially economic suppression. However, the major significance in this political paradigm is that the British were not permanent residents in India. They ruled from Britain, their focus being economic exploitation and the colonial subjection of India. Jawaharlal Nehru comments on its effects on India. He says:

Despite British policy, powerful forces were at work changing India, and a new social consciousness was arising. The political unity of India, contact with the west, technological advances, and even the misfortune of a common subjection, led to new currents of thought, the slow development of industry, and the rise of a movement for national freedom. The awakening of India was two-fold: she looked to the west and at the same time, she looked to herself and her own past (Nehru, 1982:292).

The liberation struggle comprised of multiple movements which adopted different ideologies. It attempted to thwart British hegemony in India. Lokmanya Tilak's 'Home Rule Movement' and Subhash Chandra Bose's 'Indian National Army' for example, lent force to the liberation struggle. Ultimately all these efforts resulted in a free India.

In South Africa, however, the situation differed in the sense that the ruler was part of the social fabric of the country, and that the ruling party's Calvinistic beliefs inspired it to proclaim itself the superior race without focussing on the 'moral obligation' of such discursive superiority. Every policy of the government of the time was intended to keep the non-white suppressed. Any attempt at addressing injustices in a racially fractured society by the victims was approached with total opposition. Whilst race determined the power structure, this structure was severely challenged in all the years of the apartheid regime. The demands of the powers in question resulted in mass mobilisation intended to destabilise the government. The banning of political parties and their activities, the control of the press and imprisonment without trial, effectively enforced the suppression of the masses. However, the eventual achievement of freedom was not without an armed struggle.

The shared hegemonic experiences of South Africa and India lay in the absolute measures taken by the governments of the day to ensure that absolute power was retained. This involved imprisonment without trial to anyone who chose to contest the governments' right to humane treatment of people, the banning of organisations that fought for human dignity and liberation, and

economic exploitation on an abhorable scale that condemned millions of people to a life of poverty.

Themes

Significant to the poetry of India and South Africa at a thematic level, was the preoccupation of poets with the glorious past of both India and South Africa. This was significant to the liberation struggle because the emphasis was on the freedom that the countries enjoyed before having been colonised. In Hindi poetry, constant reference was made to mythological characters of the Ramayana simply because the illiterate masses knew verses of the Ramayana by heart and that their conversations were full of references to the heroes of the Ramayana. Within the epic paradigm, references were also made to the characters of the Mahabharata. Mythological references are important to the Indian context considering the Hindu belief that Rama, the principal character of the Ramayana, and Krishna, one of the principal characters of the Mahabharata, are believed by Hindus to be two of the many incarnations of God. They were given mortal status in order to protect devotees from injustice. According to the stories of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, Ram and Krishna were given the status of heroes because they conquered the evil doers in order to restore dignity and peace. Reference was also made to people in Indian history who stood out as saviours of Indian society like Chanakya who was largely responsible for having driven out the Greeks from India.

In South African poetry, reference is often made to King Shaka to remind the nation that there was a period in history where the indigenous people of South Africa had a history where they were in control of their own lives and cultures. Lines like 'by our power break the boundaries of our horizon/ people have power, people tear the garments of the night', from Kunene's poem 'Emperor Shaka the Great' illustrate the fact that former great personalities in African history encouraged a sense of ownership in South Africa. These references to a resplendent past were important messages. However, oppression aimed at removing the glories of the land. For purposes of liberation, and for the occasion of the conditions of possibility for freedom, therefore, it was essential to restate this glory.

Part of the process of the freedom struggle was the decolonisation of the mind which featured as a theme in both South African poetry and Hindi poetry. An extremely pertinent discussion to the liberation movement was the sense that many had valued that which was part of the social fabric of the colonial powers.

In India decades before Mahatma Gandhi campaigned for the use of locally produced goods, poets wrote lines like 'We have become slaves to foreign weavers'. In a very often quoted poem, 'Dharat Bharat', Mahesh Sharan Gupta wrote:

Whatever you see carries the logo
Made in England, Italy, France, America, Japan,
People become overjoyed
But we have become lifeless (Chaturvedi 1976:9).

Sumitranandan Pant displayed a different kind of sensitivity. Given the conservatism that is expected of Indian woman, he wrote about women influenced by western values in the following lines:

Like an unsteady ripple you dance longingly,
Like a butterfly you flit from flower to flower
O you don't love soul surrender

...
Modernity, if nothing else, you are a woman (Pant 1940:23).

Pant's commentary is a scathing attack on the changing values of Indian women influenced by western liberalism.

South African poetry was also informed by the psyche of the colonised mind. As early as 1950, Ezekiel Mphahlele projected the white man as a God created by the black man himself. In the poem 'The Formal Ways of God' he confesses the extent to which the black person would go to in order to please the white man. The following line is from the said poem, published in the anthology 'The Return of the Anansi Bird':

I swear and lie to them and my own self to buy their approval
(Consens 1989:156).

Mafika Gwala's poem 'Getting off the Ride' is perhaps the most scathing critique of colonised sensibilities. The following are a few lines from the said poem:

We learn no Latin from faked classics
When 2x2 economics show me it's part of the trick teaching me how to
starve.

When Coco Cola, Pepsi Cola ads all the sweet things are giving it
 Wind in the body:
 Tuck once again, what is black?
 Black is getting off the ride
 Black is a point of self realisation
 Black is the point of: No National deception (Chapman 1982:138).

In these ways poets pointed out to people that by accepting a culture and way of life that was foreign to them, they were indirectly making the goal of freedom difficult.

Another major theme within the poetry of the political paradigm under discussion is human and economic exploitation and its effects on freedom. The focus on the results of exploitation was visible from the first phase of nationalism in poetry. Bharatendu in one of his riddles wrote:

Sucking stealthily the entire juice from within
 Scorchingly grasping the body, heart and wealth;
 So adept in making a glip profession,
 Is it your husband? No it's the Englishman (Chandra 1992:32).

The sexual innuendoes employed in describing exploitation are hardly subtle in the above lines. Bharatendu was informed not only by the economic drain that India was experiencing, but also the detribalisation process witnessed during the period of colonial rule.

Isipathi in his poem 'The Traveller', summarises the effects of exploitation in the following lines:

Flames of poverty blaze everywhere
 No flesh, just feeble breaths.
 What's left are bones in a frame
 No food, no clothes, no home;
 Nobody has any friends (Bhavuk 1995:56).

These lines serve as a critique on people's inability to take care of themselves or their fellow human beings as a result of their having lost everything of value.

Mishali's poem 'An Abandoned Bundle' very poignantly interprets human poverty due to exploitation in the following lines:

Scavenging dogs
 draped in red bandanas of blood
 fought fiercely
 for a squinting bundle (Mishali 1972:60).

The above lines round off a poem that speaks of the inability of a young mother to take care of a child she bore.

Mafika Gwala's poem 'Jol'likumo' perhaps most clearly portrays that exploitation can only be rid of if there is a change of mindset. The following lines are an extract from the aforementioned poem:

Change in minds, change
 Change in social standings, change
 Change in means of living, change
 Change in dreams and hopes (Chapman 1986:137).

Unquestionably, freedom would be a recurrent theme in any corpus of poetry that deals with the shaking off of any kind of hegemony.

The establishment of British rule in India stemmed from the mutiny in the areas in which Britain had a stronghold. Thus, for the indigenous movements, freedom was the ultimate goal from the inception of British rule. In the developmental stages of Hindi poetry Halbakshi Charan wrote:

May our children become wise
 Only then will this country change
 This thought recurs in my mind.
 Let's run this country with our own hands.
 He who can do this and survive
 Will be blessed with a wonderful child (Bhavuk 1995:25)

As freedom consciousness grew, much of the poetry was informed by a greater awareness of freedom. Self-sacrifice and Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence had become the guiding principles in the quest for freedom, although the option of an armed revolt was not ruled out. Mankatlal Chaturvedi summed up the general sentiments in his poem 'We will Take Freedom':

We'll not listen to anyone, we'll take our freedom
 We are no less than anyone in the world

We'll never remain slaves and be oppressed by others
We've yielded for too long, we'll take our freedom (Bhavuk 1995:181).

Gradually, protest poetry revealed a more forceful drive for freedom, inspired surely by the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and Lokmanya Tilak, whose words 'freedom is our birthright' did much to inspire a greater consciousness of freedom.

The raising of freedom issues within the South African situation was not a recent phenomenon either. Protest against foreign rule is believed to have been voiced (and written down) as early as the sixteenth century. However, during the apartheid era, the cry for freedom took a rather different turn. The following lines are from Keorapetse Kgotsile's poem, 'My Name is Africa':

We claim that the soul of our home
runs in our blood yet we run
around the world, the shit of others
crawling over our eyes (Kgotsile 1971:28).

Kgotsile's anger at the denial of freedom is obvious. However, there was also the kind of thinking that indicated that freedom is the birthright of all individuals. The following lines are from Kunene's poem 'Mother Africa':

Why should those at the end of the earth
Not drink from the same calabash
And build their homes in the valley of the earth
And together grow with our children? (Kunene 1970:92).

During the latter part of the apartheid era, poets did not take Kunene's humanist stand though. Mtshali states clearly that if fighting for one's dignity and freedom meant giving up one's life, that so it must be. The following lines are the concluding lines of his poem, 'Weep not for a Martyr':

Weep not for him.
He was a brave warrior.
Let him rest on the buffalo-hide bed
Where his forefathers slept (Mtshali 1980:24).

Literary Movements and Political Idealism

Although the counter-poetry of the apartheid era began in the wake of India's freedom, the literary movements in the poetry under discussion are very similar. The challenges facing the poetry emanating from repressive societies are evident in the poetry of both countries.

The earliest period of Hindi poetry which was inspired by Bharatendu, focussed on the moving away from the traditional styles of writing. Handa (1978:288) comments:

The foremost change which strikes one in Bharatendu's poetry is that he brought it down to earth from ethereal heights and pulled it out of the slough of emotional symbolism in order to make the common man feel interested in it.

Bharatendu's fellow poets followed the trends that he set. Apart from the change in writing styles, the focus was India's political position and social reform. With the progression of time, however, poets began favouring a more formal, symbolist style of writing, which became known as *chhayavadi* - the English equivalent of romanticism. This generation of poets responded to the new challenges of poetry within the existing political construct of the time by interpreting old myths in the light of contemporary issues.

However, as romantic symbolism had become a luxury, the *chhayavadi* movement could not last within the then contemporary political paradigm. The shift to progressivist poetry was essential for poetry to remain informed by the issues of the day and to remain accessible to the masses. Nonetheless, the influence of romantic symbolism did not disappear entirely.

The South African poetry under discussion is very similar in its development. The initial years of poetry were influenced by the symbolist mode. In what is commonly known as Soweto poetry and Worker poetry, the poet employed his verse to further the ideals of dialectical materialism and black nationalism - as in the Hindi progressivist poets. Again, similar to Hindi poetry, the language used was familiar to the people - even though not in their mother tongue. Thus, words like 'shit' that go against orthodox expectations of poetry, serve the purpose of familiarising an experience in a particular socio-political construct. However, some writers also remained influenced by the romantic tradition.

Imagery and Myth

Subroto Ray in his article 'Analysis of Imagery and Myth: A Vital Tool in Comparative Literature', maintains that:

Between the purely personal and entirely external, lies the broad region of acquired collective social experience This is what forms the tradition or cultural heritage of the artist; in this store-house, various private and personal experiences also accumulate and remain side by side with the collective experiences It is in this region of the mind that religious beliefs, historical pride, ancient myths, personal vision and a thousand other things rub shoulders This is where images and myths already within the artist's knowledge, take their place in literature as a valuable means of expression (Lang 1985:91).

Imagery, defined as figurative illustrations, is also open to symbolic interpretations. Although there is a perception that symbols and imagery are universal, the poetry under discussion challenges some of the universally accepted symbols. Poets are informed by their specific cultural, religious and current social experience, which finally result in literary expression. Thus, much of the Hindi references are informed by Hinduism, Indian history and colonial experiences, while many of the South African references are derived from Christianity.

The symbolic Hindu references include names like Luxmi and Saraswathi. These references convey positive implications as these figures belong to supernatural influences intent on doing good. Luxmi and Saraswathi are important as they are deities who are representative of wealth and music respectively. Sudhar Dutta in the poem 'Nobility' salutes the Luxmis and Saraswathis who gave up their jewellery and past times which were dedicated to playing the lute to help the cause of freedom.

In Mithsali's 'An Abandoned Bundle', the manger imagery is an example of religious symbolism in South African poetry. Generally, the baby in the manger symbolises the birth of Christ, and the joy surrounding His birth. Mithsali's reference in 'Oh baby in the manger, sleep well on human dung', does not carry the elation that one would associate with this symbolism. In fact, it carries with it the message of pain an innocent child, born in a prejudiced society, would suffer. Mithsali's reference is significant in its ironic implication that the oppressor's fate is also influenced by this symbolic reference.

Both India and South Africa are often referred to as 'mother' in protest poetry. African and Hindu mythology confer the supernatural status of mother on the land, symbolising the nurturing quality of a mother. Lines like 'The corrupt rule held mother India by the nar', 'Tears flow from her eyes, her body devoid of clothes | Looking towards you, the mother becomes impatient', 'my brother, hearing the mother's call' are some examples of the symbolic references to India as the mother.

Serote's poem 'Mother Alexandra' is also an example of the mother symbolism in South Africa as displayed in the following lines: 'I cry Alexandra when I am thirsty! Your breasts Ooze the dirty waters of your dongas'. In both these references the mother is seen as bruised, exploited and seeks the help of her child. This significant reference shows the rearrangement of mythological concepts in order to highlight the position of the oppressed.

There is also an interesting reference to essential 'icons' in both the religions. 'Raam naam' in Hinduism is said to elevate one towards God consciousness. The cross in Christianity symbolises God consciousness too. However, both these symbolic references are perceived differently. Bharat Bhakt in his poem 'A Resplendent End' writes:

When on the lips of the warrior come the sound
Of freedom
Rather than Raam naam.
Even my corpse will be fulfilled and forget all
Previous glooms (Bhavik 1995:87).

Christopher Van Wyk in *The Chosen Ones* writes:

Some people
have to carry
their crosses
for the rest
of their lives

Others think
they can get away
with it
simply by
throwing them

Veeru Lutchman

in the ballot box (Chapman 1986:49).

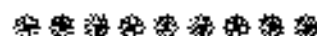
In both the references there is a biting apothecism on accepted religious-specific symbols. In both, there is a suggestion that it is not religion that will liberate the oppressed, but as Marx says, 'it is man, real, living man who ... possesses [the power] and fights'.

Pant and Serote use closely related symbols to describe capitalist effects on their society. Pant in his poem 'Picture of a Village', presents the following picture:

Here men live from age to age cursed
Starved in slush, without food, clothes, painted (Pant 1940:16).

Serote describes his township in 'City Johannesburg' as follows:

My dongas, my dust, my people, my death,
Where death lurks in the dark like a blade
In the flesh (Serote 1994:22).



Whilst the study of comparative literature receives a great deal of criticism, it is a very significant area of study that provides a broadening of one's perspective on the approach to single works of literature. It is a way of looking beyond boundaries of national frontiers in order to discern trends and movements in various cultures and to see relations between literature and other spheres of human activity.

The focus of the poetry in this paper is on the degree to which poetry is a social and historical manifestation, and the way in which poetry can be regarded as a perception and structure of the 'universal' human mind. Considering the political constructs of India and South Africa, there is no doubt that the poetry of these two colonised countries is a critical record of the historical events of the societies represented in the poetry.

Very essential to human existence is how societies evolve and what catalysts engineer this evolution. If literature is seen as a recording of human reaction to historical events, particularly on a comparative basis, a great deal can be gleaned about the human mind.

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'I feel like hollerin but the town is too small': A Biographical Study of Wopko Jensma

Ayub Sheik

Wopko Jensma's important contribution to South African literature and art has—totally undeservedly—fallen into oblivion. Yet an appraisal of his cryptic and arcane poetry and experimental art forms suggests that he is on a par with more recognised figures such as Breyten Breytenbach—a critical of Jensma—who has claimed the limelight for quite a few decades by now. Jensma's debilitating schizophrenia and sudden disappearance have, no doubt, also contributed to waning public attention.

Jensma's published poetry, *Sing for Our Execution* (1973), *Where White is the Colour, Where Black is the Number* (1974) and *Have You Seen My Lippings* (1975) together with the relatively unknown and unpublished 'Blood and More Blood' deal with issues of identity relating to race and class within the context of apartheid South Africa in the nineteen seventies. These four volumes represent a poet or at times one conceived as an antidote to personal and social alienation as a result of the racist oppression of blacks in South Africa.

Jensma's experimental poetry harnesses the signatures of jazz lyrics, concrete poetry, the avant-garde as well as African dance forms in bizarre canons of underclass misery and racial oppression. In lieu of metrical regularity and rhyme the authentic 'cane cane' is articulated by assonant qualities of speech, sound and rhythmic undulations in a poetry characterised by what Samuel Becker has called 'the withdrawal of semantic crutches' (Schwab 1994c).

Jensma's schizoid discourse manifests itself as an asocial contact with highly personal idioms, approximate phrases and substitutes which make his language extremely difficult to follow at times. Jensma's diction of private idiosyncratic language, mixing of dialects, the use of synecdoche, ellipsis and experimental typography, have no doubt contributed to the enigmatic observations associated with schizophrenia. This schizoid versification is a

paradoxical wish to protect the core of oneself from communication while simultaneously expressing the need to be discovered and acknowledged. His private idiosyncratic language reveals ordinary people driven into interior psychological spaces, as well as psychotic and surreal extremes in order to survive an overwhelming and explosive reality.

This study is an attempt towards a reconstruction of Jensma's biography. A survey of published sources indicates that apart from newspaper reviews and reports, cursory citations in poetry and art anthologies, no comprehensive biography of Jensma exists. This biography has been sourced primarily from interviews with people who knew Jensma, occasional newspaper reports and by Jensma's correspondence in the archives of the National English Literary Museum in Grahamstown.

* * *

Wopko Pieter Jensma was born on the 26 July 1939 in Ventersdorp in the Transvaal. He was the son of a Dutch father and an Afrikaner mother. According to Len Nietzsche, a long time friend and student colleague of Jensma:

his mother was from a Coetzee family and was a music teacher. She excelled at the piano and trained Jensma in the cello. Wopko had a younger brother and a sister named Elza, who was a year older than him. Jensma's parents were staunch Calvinists and religiously attended church. However, Jensma's early life was marked by the frequent alcoholic binges of his mother (Nietzsche 2001).

Both parents were never alluded to by Jensma. So, according to Jeanne Coetzee with whom Jensma temporarily resided at Station Road, Lillien Mamas in Johannesburg, he regarded the discussion of his parents as a taboo subject (Coetzee 1999). The reluctance to discuss his parents was probably due to the trauma of being renounced by his family on the occasion of his marriage to Lydia, a black prostitute.

The name 'Wopko' was Friesian and was inherited from his father and subsequently passed on to Jensma's only son. In 1942 the Jensma family relocated to an agricultural college in the Karoo in the Cape. Wopko was three years old. The family business was a dairy, known as Jensma Creamery and

which supplied residents and shops in Middelburg. Jansma attended Middelburg Hoërskool and an article in the local *Middelburger*, which also appears on the cover of *What Show You My Clippings* (1977) indicates that he excelled at rugby:

Middelburg hetaterdag met een span afgereis na Rinteyser om daar teen die plaaslike span te speel.

Albei spanne het probeer om die spel oop te maak hoewel die 'n harte weersryl was het hulle tog bewys dat harte rugby nog skoon kan wees. Daar is inhaalderlik sangeval maar die verdediging was dodelik, en elke man wat te ver hardloop is laag gevat en hard neergesit.

Behalwe ses punte is aangeteken deur hulle agste man wat 'n drie gedruk het. Middelburg se eerste punte is aangeteken deur Jansma wat 'n drie gedruk het. Daarna het Middelburg na 'n uitslag van drie gedruk wat deur Jansma verskiet is. Eindtelling 8-3 (1977)

According to Leo Nietzsche (2011):

... when Wopko was fourteen he and his brother went to a nearby dam to swim. Wopko's brother drowned and Wopko could do nothing to save him. Wopko refused to accept that this was destiny and from then on was always rebellious.

This later was later expressed in a poem, 'My Brother' in *Sing for Our Generation* (1974):

as clear as day i remember
my younger brother
he left home one morning
and never came back

i remember we went to the river
i saw his body sleeping
deep under the water
i did not cry --

but i remember his quiet face
as he lay in his coffin
his nose and mouth stuffed
with clean cotton wool

i remember i was not surprised
when i saw him a week later
greeting me from amidst the crowd
at the market of our village (1974:63).

After matriculating at Middelburg Hoërskool, Jansma enrolled at the University of Pretoria in 1960. Although most published sources (Nietzsche 1995) claim that he successfully completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1964, a reading of his letters to Peter Horn, a close friend, indicate that this was not the case. In 1968, Peter Horn, a German national, who lectured at the University of Zululand in Kwa Mankwazi, Natal, attempted to obtain a bursary for Jansma to study in Germany. Jansma had always cherished the idea of going to Europe. He replied on the 29th of January 1968:

My problem is that my degree is not fully completed (I had a fight with my Life Drawing Teacher, Leo Theron. He told me that I could sit there till my hair turned grey, he would not give me a pass, rather unfortunate) and I think that one must have a completed degree for the scholarship (Jansma 1968a).

On 13 March 1968 Horn responded:

Is there no way of completing your degree? Why don't you study through UNISA (University of South Africa) -or are you not yet on with Bartiss either? Fuck that Leo Theron (Horn 1968).

Jansma had been introduced to Peter Horn by Phil du Plessis. On 24 October 1966 he had written to Horn:

Our corresponding ways of thinking resonate. I write quite a lot of little verses, I translate more for bread. My actual medium is sculpture. I've spent long enough outside the borders to say like Big Bill Broonzy: 'I feel like lullerlin but the town is too small'. This with reference to the present here. Most probably I shall become a voluntary exile -just to be able to live and work when and where I want to. The artist in me is difficult to confine. That's why I won't be classified and also not be fenced in any way at all: the way I see it: the soul frees itself from the temporal, and becomes one with the soul of all things (Jansma 1966a).

One of Jansma's friends on the Pretoria campus was Elza Miles, an Afrikaans tutor who took a particular interest in him as he was the only Fine Arts student smooching Afrikaans in her tutorial group. It was the beginning of a lasting friendship Miles explained in an interview:

... we clicked because of our Boer background. Whenever Jansma travelled to South Africa from Gaborone (where he was a school teacher) he usually stayed with me. He once brought Oswald Mtshali to my house (Miles 2008).

Jansma's poetry was published in the student magazine, *Groen*. Elza Miles recalls:

Jansma played a leading role in the magazine and he was strongly influenced by dada and automatic writing. His poetry was very much like jazz. He also knew a lot about African music, which he used in his poetry (2008).

According to Leo Nistrasche:

Wopko often covered his poetry under the doors of the professors under the pseudonym of Jack Maitla. He also delighted in frustrating the art lecturers, drawing monstrously huge parts of the body, for instance, that occupied the whole page (2001).

In 1963, Wopko went to study towards a Teacher's Diploma at the University of Johannesburg. He did not complete the Diploma as he was involved in a serious motorcycle accident in which he sustained a serious head injury. Between 1964 and 1967 Jansma worked as a translator for APB Publishers. On 25 June 1967 Jansma wrote to Peter Hill:

I have translated three old German books for APB. They are all for sale now. But the whole episode turned out a fiasco for me afterwards, though I got paid and my name appears on the front cover of the books (Jansma 1967c).

Socially, Jansma was an introvert and was described by Jeanne Gonsen as:

a very sensitive person with a refreshing sense of humour. He never hated anyone. Jansma loved listening to the music of the jazz artist Dollar Brand, later known as Abdullah Ibrahim. The rhythmic blues and jazz refrains also fig. or significantly in Jansma's poetry. Wopko loved to play his jazz records day and night. In particular, he loved listening to the Portuguese *Fado's* (i. sad lament). Wopko was idealistic by nature, a real Martin Gorki!

He was kind hearted. On a friend's birthday, he'd usually give them a silkscreen which they framed. He was upset about the racial conflict in South Africa and detested the inhumanity of whites. Of course, he thought white prejudices very funny, it amused him.

Wopko knew a secret way out of South Africa to Gaborone and he helped many political refugees flee, people who were against the apartheid regime. Many of his friends were also held for questioning by the Special Branch of the South African Police, known as SBSS. Wopko was not an alcoholic, though he enjoyed a beer occasionally and he certainly did not take any drugs. His close friends and confidants were Sheila Roberts, Casper Schmidt, a psychiatrist who died of Aids in Manhattan in 1995, Pili de Plessis, the late artist, Walter Battiss and the alcoholic poet, Wessel Pretorius. Also amongst his associates were Aaron Kibel, the son of the Jewish/Polish painter Wolf Kibel, and Patrick van Rensburg. He also knew Bessie Head in Serowe. As for us we were an artistic group who met informally and spontaneously, like a real dada gang (Gonsen 1999).

Jansma's woodcuts and silkscreen paintings were made in African styles and motifs which were integrated with Expressionist and surrealist techniques. He subsequently attracted the attention of King Sobuza at an exhibition in Gallery 111. Jansma was commissioned by King Sobuza of Swaziland to produce a series of woodcuts. These woodcuts were later acquired from a private collection by Warren Sieberts, an art dealer and displayed in the Rosebank shopping mall, the exhibition space being called 'Galerie Metroplex' under the grand ostentation of creating a 'revolution in a shopping mall' (Bilham 1996).

It is widely believed that whilst visiting the king's court Jansma fell in love with a Swazi maiden. This woman was Lydia whom he married in Mozambique in 1966. According to Jeanne Gonsen:

Lydia was a prostitute in the old Lourenço Marques. Wopko hated white

women. He had a penchant for black prostitutes and it was really bad fate that he met with Lydia. Lydia claimed that Wopko made her pregnant. Out of a sheer Calvinistic sense Wopko felt it his duty to marry her. She frequently assaulted Wopko and humiliated him before his friends. She looked around a lot (Grosser 1966).

Jensma was disowned by his entire family when he married Lydia. Jensma wrote to Peter Horn on 24 October 1966 about his marriage:

I illustrate with my life the opposite of the dogma here and in so far as I can deduce from hints it doesn't meet with approval anywhere (Jensma 1966a).

On 8 December 1966 Jensma wrote to Horn inviting him to his new home:

My house is reasonably big - 5 bedrooms - and my wife knows how to cook really good Portuguese food. Why don't you come over for a while. I've just done some paintings and sculptures. I'll send you some of them (Jensma 1966b).

Jensma and Lydia had a son, whom they also named Wopko and two daughters, Tange and Schnecke. On account of the prohibitions of the Mixed Marriages Act, Jensma first relocated to Swaziland and then to Serowe, Botswana in 1967 to prevent his family being deported. In a letter to Lionel Abramo, Jensma pointed out his reasons for leaving Swaziland:

Lionel, my application for residence in Swaziland has been refused—I have to get out of here by the end of the month. I'll go to LM (Laurence Marques) next week (Jensma 1967).

The Mixed Marriages Act caused Jensma considerable consternation. He wrote to Horn:

I hate the Bantustans, do not hand me over to South Africa, You know the Mixed Marriages Bill has passed badly, do you have any recent information? Funny enough, there is a chap, Ndaba, in Johannesburg, running a weekly newspaper and married to an Irish woman. Must be an informer. I do not see any other reason for his comfort. He came here

poorless, but has returned over the other side with a splendid new American car (Jensma 1967d).

A few months later he inquired of Horn again: 'Is the Mixed Marriages Bill retrospective? Where do I fit in?' (Jensma 1967e).

A year later he wrote to Horn:

I would like to come for a holiday etc. but I do not want to end up in jail. That would be most unfortunate. I hate narrowness of all sorts (Jensma 1968).

In Botswana Jensma taught for a year as a locum teacher at Swaneng Hill High School which was situated near the old 'Holiday Inn'. The February 1967 edition of the *Swaneng Hill High School Newsletter* proclaimed:

A new arrival at the school is Wopko Jensma, who is teaching Arts and Crafts to the first and second forms. These two forms are also doing woodwork with John Davies who came to the school last year and with Richard Seligson (1967:3).

The Swaneng Hill High School was also deeply involved with the local community and offered dressmaking courses through its *Bumeli ba baithesone* (Women's Self Help Group). The headmaster of the school was Patrick van Rensburg who had previously been a South African diplomat for a period of two years. Bessie Head, the famous black writer, often taught at the school.

Whilst at the school, Jensma attempted to establish a magazine called *Chaba*. He wrote to Horn on 7 January 1967:

I have suggested the idea of an anthology magazine to my principal and he quite liked the idea. Would you be interested to be on such an editorial board? The other names I have in mind I omitted to mention in this letter (Jensma 1967a).

Jensma also wrote to the Swaziland writer, P.M. Skole, asking him to be on the editorial board of his magazine and to submit an article for publication. However, he was clearly frustrated by the apathy of local black artists and writers:

I explained the whole journal to them. They do not submit anything. They think I am making money out of it and they are going to get nothing; what a pity! (Jensma 1967).

Jensma had a great interest in African writers. He indicated in a letter to Horn on 16 January 1967:

I have developed quite a liking for Nigerian authors, especially J.P. Clark. He writes drama almost like Lorca (Jensma 1967b).

In another letter to Horn, on the 26 July 1967 Jensma wrote:

I like the poetry of Paul Blackburn. I have a taste of this
our emerging African Nations

RAUPEL in English

and type mya Uster

And when he gave me a

from President Kennedy

declaring me a Disaster Area

and offering me \$30 million for

reconstruction of my target cities

...RUPEL? They ask, who

ruined me? whom did, ruin, whom?

What? Thirty million!

GWANE (Jensma 1967d)

The use of satire and the preoccupation for an African worldview in Paul Blackburn's poem are important aspects of Jensma's poetry. This, together with the use of black humour, poverty and exploitation are consistent motifs in Jensma's poetry.

Jensma was aware that he was being monitored by BOSS. The year previously he had encountered Horn:

If you write to me, please be careful. My letter will probably be checked by the Security Police. I have myself slipped up like this, that is why my name is on their file. The Special Branch did question me once, when I lived in Johannesburg. They knew the works - even more than I knew (Jensma 1966a).

Horn replied on 2 December 1966 with a reference to the lawyer and political activist, Bram Fisher:

I can assure you I have no intention of becoming a bungling Fisher. I am not a professional revolutionary, and the fact is I would be caught the first time I wanted to plant a bomb or something silly like that. In any case I do not think that this country can be liberated in such a haphazard way. A revolution would have to be prepared even more meticulously than any war. I leave this to the experts in Dar Us Salaam, London and Nigeria, or where ever they might be (Horn 1966a).

Lydia took to selling Jensma's woodcuts and graphics outside the Holiday Inn. Between 1969 and 1970 Jensma worked for the Botswana Information Ministry as a graphic artist. In the Education Ministry he was attached to the Government Printing and Publishing Services in the Graphic Reproduction section. The relationship between Jensma and Lydia rapidly deteriorated. Jensma pointed out his reasons for leaving Swareng Hill High School in a letter to Peter Horn dated 18 February 1971:

I left van Rensburg's (the headmaster) school because life with my wife became intolerable. Now I don't know how long it's still last. I'm not aggressive and I don't believe in violence and as violence is used against me, the only thing I know is to get as far away as possible. I can now see what a big fool I've been, how I've taken humiliation after humiliation, how I've suffered for a dream that wasn't worth dreaming. I'll probably have a lonely life from now but I won't return. I've returned too many times already (Jensma 1971).

Jensma eventually left his wife in 1969 after much acrimony. Paul van Plessen wrote in *Beeld*:

Die vrou was kwaai. As Wopko nie genoeg gebi maak die het sy hart met 'n besemslok oor die skene geslaan. Dit het so slag gegaan dat Dokter Casper Schmidt, ook 'n slim digter, al die pad Capetowne lank gery het met sy Volkswagen om Wopko te gaan bevry. Hy het die vrou onwinnig deur haar met 'n kinderwaentjie oor die kop te slaan en Wopko vinnig in die kar te laat (1991).

Lydia and the children went from Botswana to Manzini in Swaziland and Jentsma arrived alone in Pretoria in 1971. He then moved to Johannesburg where he rented a flat in Bertrams and resumed teaching art at the Colin Smuts Open School. Colin Smuts was an acquaintance from the Botswana Ministry of Information where Jentsma had previously worked (Gardner 2000). Colin Smuts was the Director of the school and had been introduced to Jentsma by Brian Egner. Brian Egner was Head of Information of the Botswana Press. Colin Smuts was also the secretary of the South African Trust Fund which came to be known as the United Democratic Front Cultural Desk. The poem 'suspect under section A1 Special' in *I Must Show You My Clippings* (1977) alludes to Smuts, who was known as Jiggs to Jentsma:

Stanleyurrentine, you mat! Yes, don't mess
With mister T. I agree, dji'so man van die dories. 'k se
jiggs, jiggs 'k se hoe's j, on driving larely?
'ain to mald' uel. 'k hoer dji met my linkeroor (1977:33)

Jiggs was also the name under which Colin Smuts wrote poetry (Chapman 1981:25). The word 'dories' (1977:33) is a reference to Dourfontein, one of the oldest suburbs in Johannesburg in which the Colin Smuts Open School was located. Colin Smuts recollected in an interview:

Wopko and I were close friends. We used to spend hours listening to jazz and just rap. We used to go together into Soweto and socialise. Although Wopko was white, he had his 'clearance' in Soweto: meaning that he was accepted. At times we used to dramatise Wopko's poems for the school children, it was great fun. We used to frequent art exhibitions. People would come up to me and ask if I was Wopko as I was a blackman. We laughed at the disbelief and shock it evoked when I pointed out Wopko, boere accent and all. Wopko often denied that he was white. He mischievously told anyone who cared to listen that his mother was Ethiopian and that his father was an Egyptian.

Wopko was fed up with teaching and decided to apply for a disability grant from the Department of Social Welfare. He asked me to write the letter as the Director of the school but I did not know what to say. So Wopko wrote the letter, claiming that he was mad and unable to work. I signed it. We went to the Department of Social Welfare together. Wopko left seven empty seats and sat on the floor. The

Department wanted to know if I was his 'boy'. This was the time of apartheid, you know. They stared in disbelief when I told them that I was his boss. Wopko got his disability grant. I was amazed that he had pulled it off. He never really was sick. It was the drugs they gave him at the hospital that made him sick (2003).

In an interview, Jeanne Goosen viewed Jentsma's schizophrenia with circumspection:

... if he ever was suffering from schizophrenia it was surely due to his wife, Lydia. She made his life hell. When he was ill, he'd scream, have nightmares, mostly about Lydia. His condition deteriorated because of the continuous use of the drug stelazine, prescribed at the Weskoppes Outpatients Hospital. But I doubt that he was truly schizophrenic. I have a paramedical background and I would have known if he was schizophrenic. He showed none of the symptoms for weeks on end (2000).

Certainly Jentsma himself alluded to his schizophrenia in *I Must Show You My Clippings* (1977) in the poem 'Spanner in the wheel? works':

i brought three kids into this world
(as far as I know)
i prefer a private life to a public life (i feel allowed to say)
i suffer from schizophrenia
(they tell me) (1977:7).

According to Thys Nel:

when Wopko got excited or agitated he lapsed at times into a state of dementia. Once he took a piece of blue glass out of his pocket and gave it to me. He claimed that it was from the tomb of the Egyptian princess, Nephthys. As he grew more ill, he was mainly interested in tea and cookies. It was sad (2000).

These accounts chronicle the suspicion and conflicting viewpoints which circulated about Jentsma's mental health. What is known for certain though, is that Jentsma did receive treatment for schizophrenia which grew progressively worse.

Jensma lived for a while with Jeanne Goosen at Station Road, Littleton Manor, Johannesburg. For a pastime they read each other's poetry and dined out frequently:

We used to dine a lot at Billy's Baked Potatoes, near the fountains at least once a fortnight. We also used to go to the Grapevine in Pretoria ... just have coffee and *praat* [speak] nonsense ... we discussed mostly art, we never discussed politics (Goosen 1999).

Many people thought that Jensma was a black man because his art looked African and his poetry experimented with *tsotsitaal*. Mafika Gwala's comments in 1988 about an earlier encounter with Jensma are typical:

Wopko Jensma. For a long time I thought he was black ... so when I met Wopko one morning, edged against his withdrawal, I could think of only one thing, his white world was killing him as if out to destroy him. Perhaps he had refused for too long to be the white he was expected to be (Gardner 2000).

Under the apartheid system, people could apply to reclassify themselves into another race group if they provided proof for such change as laid out in the Population Registration Act. Jensma's reclassification of himself as a Black person compounded the confusion that existed about his identity. According to Jeanne Goosen:

At this time many whites had themselves classified as coloureds. Wopko's reclassification was an act of solidarity with the disenfranchised black people (1999).

Jensma poetry was also published in the magazine *Wurm* which was edited by Phil du Plessis and later in *Ophir*. *Ophir* was edited by Walter Saunders and Peter Horn and the early issues which contained Jensma's poetry were hand-printed. Jensma was a close friend of Walter Saunders in the late sixties when Saunders was a lecturer at the University of South Africa. At this time Jensma boarded with Wolf Weisbach in Pretoria (Roberts 2000).

Over seventy poems of Jensma were published between 1967 and 1976 in *Ophir* alone, poems which generated awe and astonishment from contemporaries like Sheila Roberts, Athol Fugard, Mafika Gwala and Nkathazo kaMuyiyiza. Gwala wrote to Walter Saunders in 1975:

'Since this world's been sown
Ghettos cats dig Wopko Jensma' from a poem I did five months back
(Gwala 2008).

His poems were subsequently also published by other South African magazines such as *South*, *New Contrast*, *The Purple Rooster*, *New Nation*, *Dunga*, *Boli*, *Izwe* and *Isipuni* amongst others.

Jensma's poetry comprised of a range of experiments with typography, the irrational and with the acoustic dimension of poetry as well as issues of race, class and consumer culture. Jensma wrote to Peter Horn about his conception of poetry:

The condition which the poet sees must become a personal symbol. The poet is not a camera—reproducing 'reality', whatever that is. Poets after all write about nothing but themselves. I write with 'the rumbling thunder of emotion'. The only assistance the poetical can give poetry is in the concept of form—but to pump the form full of emotion also does not give it any validity. I use the Afrikaans of the Zaron Mafat in some of my poems—above everything, I am just playing with words. This stuff doesn't go much deeper, for the most part it is done just for the sound (Jensma 1966c).

Jensma elaborated on his ideas about poetry in another letter to Horn:

As Virginia Woolf put it, an experience is followed up by a quiver in the subconscious which later results in the unpouring of the mind etc. And she also said, 'forget the experience, keep the quiver'. Ferlinghetti, Ginsberg, Kerouac and the rest: they all wrote the same rubbish, because it sells to the uninformed non-conformist. The Westerner is still dreaming about the illusion Voltaire created in their minds (Jensma 1967a).

In an undated and untitled manuscript Jensma also wrote:

A poet digests life—when he spits it out, it's the poet's own spit—it's got 'physical presence', it's alive, it's got blood. Yes, it is the poet himself, right there on the page (Jensma n.d.).

Jensma was also a graphic artist who worked mostly with woodcuts, but produced linocuts and monotypes as well. In a letter to Horn he confided:

I was trained as an artist but express myself better as a sculptor. My work is not non-figurative, but provisionally abstract. I respect Soutine, Rembrandt (overseas) and here, Kibei and Zachie Ekoff. The best sculptor here is Sally Dismar (Jensma 1966b).

Being deeply interested in African mythology and iconography his fascinating forms suggests the influence of Michaux and describe 'human-animal plant spirit creatures'. Of note are Jensma's three woodcuts entitled, *Mythical green-eyed creature*, *Mythical red-eyed creature* and *Mythical robed creature* which are available on loan to libraries from the South African Library Service's Central Collection Of Art. In 1970 Jensma exhibited his art in New York and Oxford.

In 1972 Jensma had an exhibition of graphics, entitled *Wall for the Beast*, at Gallery N. Woodcuts from this show were incorporated into the 1973 Ophi-Raven collection of 41 poems entitled *Song for Our Execution*. By April 1973, according to a report in *Oggoebied*, Jensma had had twenty-four exhibitions of his work. He excited the interest of poets, editors and gallery owners such as Wolf Weinick and Harold Joppe.

In 1979 his works were amongst those displayed in an exhibition called South African Printmakers in the South African National Gallery. His work is currently represented in the South African National Gallery, Cape Town, the Dubai Art Gallery and the University of the Witwatersrand Gallery as well as the William Humphrey Gallery in Kimberley.

The University of Witwatersrand Gallery was loaned an untitled silkscreen of Jensma dated 1974 by the Haenggli Foundation of Basle, Switzerland. The silkscreen has since been donated to the University of Witwatersrand Gallery. The Haenggli Foundation is a non-profit organisation which has two of Jensma's silkcreens as part of the Pénama Permanent Art Collection. Ferdinand H. Haenggli was interviewed in an interview that one of his daughters in Switzerland has a linocut of Jensma's entitled, 'The Screams' (2001). Hendrik van der Walt, a Dubai psychiatrist, also has three linocuts used in *Song for Our Execution* (1974) and a huge linoprint. The linoprint, Van der Walt explained, 'reflects a distinctive African feel and is drawn in a naïve kind of style' (2001).

The MTN Art Collection, since its inception in October 1997, has acquired an extensive South African printmaking collection. The MTN Art Collection, which is in Gauteng, has two untitled prints of Jensma along with prints by Digby Hoets, Walter Hattiss, Alfred Clonjwe, Sawile Cloye, Guy Stubbs and Judus Sabela Mahlangu amongst others.

As a little known artist in 1967 Jensma caught the attention of Dan Rakwati, a Fine Arts student at the University of South Africa:

I went to a bookstore in Pretoria to purchase a book on fine art for an assignment on a South African artist. At the bookstore I met a salesman who introduced himself as Leo Nietzsche who suggested that I study the works of Wopko Jensma. Leo Nietzsche was a close friend of Jensma and a fine arts academic. He is presently teaching somewhere in Cape Town.

Wopko was amongst the few if not the only white at this point in time who depicted art in an African motif. This can be discerned particularly in the woodcuts. He also had an inclination towards mysticism. His early work was done primarily in a realist style and as he matured as an artist his work assumed a surreal and expressionist influence with a difference—it was executed in an African style. Wopko was influenced by contemporary artists such as Hen Enwona from Nigeria, Vincent Kofi from Ghana and Malangatana Valente from Mozambique.

His poetry was a form of protest poetry written during the time of apartheid—at least he indicated as much in his letters to me. I have since lost these letters as I became blind from sugar diabetes and have had to relocate to a home for the blind in Johannesburg. It is ironic that although we corresponded so much via our letters we never had the good fortune to meet personally.

Wopko felt ashamed of being a whiteman. He felt that all whites had to share the blame for apartheid and its atrocities (Rakwati 2001).

Jensma wrote to Peter Horn:

It was by pure chance that I landed in the literary world. In any case it is an easier means of getting heard (not also more dangerous than painting and so on. Perhaps one is safe if one speaks in symbols—like Kafka. Being literal is a little dangerous. In any case I am playing with fire at the moment, but my personal life is my own (Jensma 1966b).

Leo Nietzsche worked at Van Schaik's Bookshop in Pretoria. He was responsible for books in the 'Banel' section of the shop. Nietzsche met Jensen at the University of Pretoria and thus began an enduring friendship. Nietzsche explains:

We once travelled together from Johannesburg to Laurens Marquas. Wopko sat in the backseat - drawing. Wopko also felt that poetry must come from the stomach. He never rewrote any poem. Even when the varsity magazine, *Gedru*, asked him to change a few lines, Wopko flatly refused. He was also a good friend of the critic, Karsipuu who advised him on his poetry. They spent many nights together discussing poetry. Karsipuu should quip: 'If you can get past me, you'll make it'. Karsipuu was an Estonian who worked at the CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research) as a translator and linguist. He produced several multilingual phrasearies for the CSIR. Jensen never used 'I', and 'we' in his poetry. Instead he advocated a firm focus on humanity. When I enquired why he mixed up his languages in his poetry, Wopko replied, 'what language does God talk?'. In some ways he was profound. He was strongly influenced by the avant-garde. He often said about the European poets: 'whilst they were fucking in the sunlight, we were doing it in the dark'.

He felt that every person was born an artist - they only had to find the right medium to express their ideas. Wopko experimented with woodcuts out of yellow-wood, oil paintings, silk screens and pottery. Although all evidence pointed to the contrary, Wopko insisted that he was a realist. He felt that the element was more important than the subject matter. Wopko favoured linoprints and linocuts. In his prints he made interesting contrasts between black and white. He gave me an oil painting as a present. It was called 'The Black Night of the Karoo'.

Wopko felt that there was no difference between people and that everyone should be united. His views often resulted in him being called a 'wit Kaffer'.

In Mozambique we had a 'joli' visiting the clubs. We were invited to stay free of charge at an Indian man's house. His name was Akbar Babool (2001).

Jensen later wrote a poem entitled, 'In Memoriam Akbar Babool':

you introduced me to my first girlfriend
 'dis town's full o' bitches
 ya wanna try one?
 afterwards we saw your home
 'loaded w' mosquitoses bea
 dey nibble ya to pieces 'nigh'
 creaky floor, a gauze door,
 backyard of sand
 in the middle a dagga plant
 'lets'ee suppe'n orien'n egg
 drive down dey bread a drop a wine'
 next day the glitering town
 prego and calé eor laite (1974:60).

Jensen presented both Peter Horn and Lionel Abrahams with copies of his poetry for their criticism. Abrahams replied to Jensen after reading his poetry on 24 May 1968:

You seem to value crypticness for its own sake. Your titles, numbering, arcane allusions and mysterious punctuation make your work more cryptic and bewildering. You have a great appetite for variety and a deep curiosity about the possibilities of corrupted words and phrases and about the formal placing of words on paper. These things, together with your use of ellipses and slurring of speech make you an exciting poet to someone fascinated by experiment, by exploration of the pure possibility of things (Abrahams 1965).

Horn voiced disapproval of Jensen's use of the avant-garde:

A sledge-hammer method might under certain circumstances be the subtlest method possible - and the most effective. You don't use watchmaker's tools to repair a car. The dadaist/surrealist method is no good for political poems (Horn 1966a).

Jensen believed in the Zen Buddhist credo of, 'first thought, best thought' and was reluctant to make changes to his poetry. He indicated as much to Peter Horn:

Sorry to send these back, but please could you be more explicit in your criticism. Regarding your question marks, do they mean that these parts should be 'struck out' or rewritten? ... you don't like them but you'll put up with them? or what ...? (Jensma n.d.)

Blood and more Blood (n.d.) was an unpublished collection of poems by Wopko Jensma which appears to predate his published anthologies. Colin Straus claimed that a collection of Jensma's unpublished poetry was initially rejected by Mike Kirkwood of Raven Press. It is a hesitant presumption that the poems referred to *Blood and more Blood* (n.d.). *Blood and more Blood* (n.d.) was located in the archives at NALN by Professor Johan van Wyk in April 2001. *Blood and more Blood* had been previously stored in the Human Sciences Research Council. Enka Terblanche, a curator at NALN explained in an interview:

Wopko Jensma had placed a fifty year embargo on the manuscript of *Blood and more Blood*. However there is no date to indicate when the embargo should commence (2001).

The title is a fitting emblem to a poetry of excess, capturing the intensity of measure violence and anguish in Jensma's poetry. This anthology consisted of thirty-four poems. Twenty-nine of these poems had since been published in Jensma's three volumes of poetry.

As an editor, Peter Horn was so impressed by the quality of the poetry that Jensma submitted to the journal, *Ophio* that he proposed a special issue which appeared in 1971 with ten poems entitled *Sing For Our Execution*. In 1975 Horn published a critical article on the poetry of Jensma in *Quarry 77*, which was published by Ad Denker. Horn raised the issue of Jensma's attempts to speak on behalf of others. He quoted Cherry Clayton:

The consciousness of Jensma's poetry is a suffering black organism... his poetry is almost pure outcry, as if the very earth were black, weeping and protesting when trodden on. It is an amazing feat of identification, achieved instinctively rather than as a calculated poetic technique (Horn 1994:36).

Horn argued that this view totally misrepresented Jensma's poetry:

Wopko's identification with the oppressed is not a 'feat': he is forced into it by the circumstances of his life and by the make-up of his society. He does not speak the language of the discarded, rejected and oppressed because of a pretended change of skin pigmentation, but because he has experienced being discarded, rejected and oppressed. . . Wopko Jensma's misery articulates the misery of those who are by the large heretofore of speech. But it is not simply *somebody else's* inarticulateness, nor simply that of the black or 'coloured' masses: it is his own inarticulateness struggling towards speech (Horn 1994:36).

Jensma's response to receiving a draft copy of this article is significant. . . . received Peter's review on Thursday ... went to the hotel round the corner from the PO [post office] to read it, and, sad to say I cried (Jardiner 2000: 8).

Sheila Roberts recalls:

During 1972-1973, I taught at the University of the Western Cape and rented a big, old house at the Strand. Wopko had a cousin living in the Strand and he would come over to my place for meals a couple of times a week. He always brought drawings and graphics (woodcuts etc.) with him and I would buy his work whenever I had the money. I still have two, a woodcut and a collage. I tried writing his story, as fiction of course, in my piece, 'Mbiti Himself' which appeared several years ago in *Contrast*. When Wopko's book *I Must Show You My Clippings* came out, I was working as an editor for Raven Press. I wrote a review of the book which Mr. Van Zyl recorded on cassette. I never received a copy of the tape and it probably no longer exists. In any case the review was verbose and pompous. (I was younger then and keen to show off; (2000).

Sing For Our Execution (1973) as well as Jensma's subsequent volumes of poetry were all typeset by the author himself. In a letter to Peter Horn Jensma indicated that he had initially planned to publish his poems at his own expense:

I believe one could print your own volume of poetry at a low cost, say 50, to distribute to friends only. The Dutch poet, Marsman, printed his first volume this way. Some space was covered by woodprints by a friend. (Jensma 1967b).

Sing Fin: Our Execution (1973), was reviewed by at least thirteen newspapers and journals to print reviews, often accompanied by reproductions of woodcuts from the collection.

Mary Morison Webster wrote in a review in *The Sunday Times* in 1973:

The reader's initial and, indeed, lasting impression is that Jensma is an African—possibly of Sophiatown. Use of words and phrases nevertheless seems, at times, that of an American Negro than of a man from the Transvaal.

Surprisingly, it turns out that this versatile poet (he writes with equal facility in both official white languages) is a European in his mid thirties (son of a Dutch father and an Afrikaans mother) who has so closely identified himself with the African and his cause that he thinks and feels like a blackman (Webster 1973).

Writing in *Rapport*, Stephen Gray said:

It is now time to assert clearly that Wopko Jensma is as important a creative artist as anyone produced by South Africa. His book is not only a collection: it is a phenomenon. It stands at the centre of South African life (1973:12).

An editor of the *Eastern Province Herald*, however, was cynical about Jensma's poetry:

No one could be as sour, tough, bitter and rough as Wopko Jensma makes himself out to be, unless Mr. Jensma happens to be a green mandarin plum. One cannot doubt the intensity of the bitterness nor its all too probable justification. No doubt, any suffering that Baudelaire or T.S. Eliot underwent was, in comparison of those known or observed among his own people by Mr. Jensma, trifles (Henderson 1973).

Whereas Lionel Abrahams, in the *Rand Daily Mail*, 6 January 1975 observed: At a time when people are more than ever aware of their colour, even in the arts, Wopko Jensma is the only South African artist in any medium who has transcended the barriers. His work is neither English nor Afrikaans, black nor white.

The *Oggendblad* review concurs:

To characterise this collection in a brief review is almost impossible. The motives and techniques vary too much; the world from which the poetry emerges is sometimes too strange for the white reader; but one can say this: these are verses of our time, these are verses of Southern Africa—not merely poetry for black or white (Van Die 1973).

Peter Wilhelm elaborated:

This is the clue to Jensma. He stays together, in shape, alchemically combining enormously diverse cultures and experiences. He is a terrifying, new sort of human, he is the first South African (Wilhelm 1973).

It was perhaps Anita Moodie's review in *Rapport* which most accurately summed up the significance of Jensma's first volume of poetry:

... sorg, smaak en onsettendheid het hierdie boek een van die fraaie en genotvolste produkte van die Suid-Afrikaanse drukpers gemaak.

Dit vestig Wopko Jensma se naam in Suid Afrika as 'n sterk en kentsjiese digter en beeldskepper. Hy het nie oornag opgeskiet nie. Hierdie gedigte is 'n keur uit 'n oeuvre wat oor die afgelope dekade ontstaan het.

Dit is nou die tyd om dit dadelik te stel dat Wopko Jensma net so 'n belangrike skeppende kunstenaar is as enige wat Suid-Afrika nog voortgebring het.

Gevolgtrek is dit 'n boek wat ons netjiese indelings deursnee. Ten eerste veronderstel dit dat alle Suid-Afrikaans-eentalig is. Ten tweede skep dit vreemde uit die waarskynlik dat ons in ons poësie skeppend sal moet kreoliseer uit Ingels, Afrikaans, Amerikaans 'slang' uit die 'blues', Tswana, Johannesburgse straattaal, spreektaalvoornam van Laurens Marquie—en verder alles wat in swang is.

Dit sal die leser nie lank neem om agter te kom wat een die gang is in Jensma se poësie nie, want sy werk is onmiddellik toeganklik. Hy is heelstelsel. Hy is 'n nuwe digter in die goeie sin van die woord en so 'n natuurlike surrealis dat ekans dit skaars opmerk—die pyn, ontgating, fragmentering van groot onderwerpe in ploerbare miniature, die vlygere satiriese klappe van onderwerpe

oorder as mens eens gewoon maak aan die vreemde rangskikking van die taal, is dit maklik vertaalbaar (Moodie 1973).

The woodcuts in the book also provoked comment:

I find it difficult to analyse my reaction to Jansma's hideously skeletal woodcuts. At first one feels compulsive fascination together with a horrid bewilderment. One cannot assess their merit; they appear to be neither decorative nor illuminating—except perhaps by contrast, for by contrast the poet speaks with a clarity that the artist has not deemed it necessary to strain. But while reading the poems one begins to understand something of the frustration and the brutality of the illustrations which gradually begin to achieve significance as a visual accompaniment to the verse (Stratton 1974:29).

The titles and form of several of Jansma's poems, as well as their dedication to various black singers and musicians suggest the influence of jazz. Jacques Alvarez-Pereyre in his book *The Poetry of Commitment in South Africa* comments on Jansma's use of jazz:

Jansma's use of jazz must be seen as homage to the black population, which in South Africa as in America, is the chief repository of this form of expression. At the same time it is also his way of expressing his joy in sharing with communities from which he is separated by law.

There is more: jazz requires people to participate fully in life; it makes them completely human because it enables them to infuse living with the rhythm and freedom which tends to be suppressed in everyday life; it is here that another essential characteristic of Jansma's poetry can be seen (1984:105).

In a letter to Lionel Abrahams, Jansma indicated his interest in jazz:

The programme you sent me gives me endless pleasure. I have two records of Bessie Smith here and the more I hear them the deeper they touch me. My friend, who was in America, bought me a record by her teacher, Ma Rainey—the blues has always been part of my life. I compare it to the Portuguese fado, which is to me, the greatest art: simple stories of everyday life that almost sob, but not.... (Jansma 1971).

On 17 March 1973 Jansma submitted a cursory biography on a single page to the National English Library Museum of South Africa (NELM). In it he describes his occupation as an artist and not as a poet. Jansma gives his address as 416 Ridgeway Court, 133 Nugget Street, Johannesburg and claims that he has travelled to all countries in Southern Africa and once to Europe. It is noteworthy that Jansma mentions that he 'writes from an 'African' point of view' (1973:1).

This predilection for an African worldview was corroborated in an interview with Jeanne Guosen:

Wopke taught his friends silkscreen paintings. He did not believe that art was a Eurocentric talent. If one was interested, that was enough. Most of his woodcuts drew their inspiration from African mythology (1999).

In a letter to Peter Horn, Jansma was critical of the pervasive influence of western ideas on Africa:

I have not seen anything here which speaks the language of Africa. Everything is monotonously hammered around the remains of the European 'civilisation'. Does the word 'civilisation' mean anything to you? It means nothing to me. The Westerner only succeeded because of his technical abilities, by creating the motor, the machine! In our civilisation we only depend upon the machine. Our God. This is nothing more than a mere 'set up'. It does me. I guess Charlie Parker was right: 'civilisation is a wonderful thing if only someone would try it' (Jansma 1966c).

In 1975 Jansma's next volume of poetry, *Where White is the Colour, Where Black is the Number* was published by Raven at a price of four rands and fifty cents. The book was printed by Zenith Printers at 509 Diagonal House, 84 Jorissen Street, Braamfontein in Johannesburg. The book was available from leading booksellers as well as direct from the publishers. *Where White is the Colour, Where Black is the Number* (1975) and Jansma's subsequent volume of poetry, *Have You Seen My Clippings* (1977) included collages and montages based on photographs by white and black artists (Alvarez-Pereyre 1984:105).

This collection of poetry was dedicated to Jansma's close friend, Walter Saunders, editor of the poetry magazine, *Ophir*, who was instrumental in

getting Jensma's poetry published. The book comprised of a collection of poems interspersed by drawings and photographs. The photographs are montages of everyday township and working life which focus on the despair and privation of blacks. The drawings are surreal representations of African mythical beasts. Vita Paicstrant took the photograph on the backcover and the collages in the book were drawn up by Lourenco Carvalho, Kok Nam and Mike McCann. The drawings were by Mshaba Dumile from the Durban Art Gallery.

Lionel Abrahams reviewed *Where White is the Colour, Where Black is the Number* (1975) under a rather interesting caption, 'Exercise in mind expansion':

'Conceived, typeset and designed' as well as written by Wopko Jensma, this book is more than merely a bilingual collection of poems. It uses several varieties--some ethnic and some private--of English and Afrikaans.

But beyond the writing, it is a picture book, a polemic, and a practical exercise in mind expansion for South Africans. The pictures are mostly montages of photographs of sociological subjects with newspaper headlines and some graphic work. With the title they give the book of being essentially a socio-political gesture.

And indeed, the majority of the more accessible poems, most of them in Afrikaans, strikingly substantiate such a gesture. Jensma is particularly good at cutting whips of satire and invective out of the very hides of the white man's sacred cows, more especially the Afrikaner's.

But it seems that this brilliant, direct attack on smugness, hypocrisy and moral stuper is not enough for Jensma. Most of his poems, the ones in various slangs, argots and dialects, and even a number of the 'straight' English ones, are obscure in style and meaning. If one approaches them open-mindedly some of them yield glimpses of earthy life styles or dream-imitations of guilt and necrosis. But the didactic presentation of the volume throws up expectations of coherent statements, and these are lacking in these rather private and experimental verses. So a considerable tension is produced, which Jensma obliquely acknowledges by giving a mock exegesis of one of his poems. His overall intention is suggested in the closing remark, 'This exegesis is also available in english--upon request--be you not dis ting they call whiteman or blackman'.

Jensma's esoteric range of styles and languages reflects his experience of life cruelly fragmented by South Africa's system of sharp categories, clashing interest and maintaining prejudices. Less by what it says than by what it does in forcing us face to face with the obscurity of many poems reflecting various ways of life on our sub-continent, this book attempts to make a practical protest against that fragmentation by jolting us out of our insular habits of thinking. Whether it begins to succeed will be one topic in the debate that is sure to rage over this unusual book (1975).

The debate over Jensma's poetry continued in the *Cape Herald*:

When *Sing for our Execution* was published a year ago, *Cape Herald* wrote boldly that Jensma would rank with South Africa's greatest poets, including van Wyk Louw and Roy Campbell. Since then, many distinguished critics have also hailed Jensma's graphic and poetic work... his latest collection of poetry and photo montages goes way beyond *Sing For Our Execution* to a type of esoteric communication which this reviewer finds himself incompetent to judge.

Look at for instance:

com docks, la
skom's humme-dja
man vane haas
mak come docks bei

or again,

train you turn on
soul o say yebo
drop us a line
say your crank jam!

What is he saying? Is Jensma more deeply South African than ever before? Is his insight profound, prophetic beyond the understanding of ordinary men? Or has he gone beyond the perceiving and expressing of realities? I would hesitate to say.

Certainly some of these poems are unintelligible to me. His jargon, call it creole or tsotsi or Jensma, sounded so authentic before. Now it sounds like hallucination. The photo montages are a lot less exciting than the wordents in the earlier book (1975).

Mark Swift in a review in *The Cape Times* was much more generous, lauding Jensma as an:

ebullient, restless spender of words, who bends every rule in the book (including his own) to mystify, amuse andadden. From a scaffold of collages and photographs, he has scrawled an epitaph in graffiti on another year of South African experience... Jensma is always as good as he is bad. A true original (1975).

On 27 June 1975, *Where White is the Colour. Where Black is the Number* (1975) was banned by a notice published in the Government Gazette in Pretoria (Pretoria Bureau 1975).

In an interview in Durban in July 1975 following the banning of the book, Jensma retorted:

to have one's book banned in this country is to be given a literary prize, it is at least some indication that people are reading one's work and one should take it as an honour. The identity struggle in Europe for artists and writers is so hard they turn to suicide. In South Africa it is easy -- the politicians make it easy for us. Politicians always think they know so much about arts and culture. As in Russia, they attach too much importance to literary people.

Jensma goes on to comment upon the enigma surrounding his identity:

I am always so amused when people do not know what colour I am. They always race me to be a blackman. Two reviews of my book were written on the assumption that I was a black man.

Jensma attributed this confusion of identity to his style of writing -- a mixture of pidgin English, Afrikaans, Portuguese, French, German and African languages. He also mentioned that his unusual name caused further confusion:

This is probably one of the main themes of my writing that people must always try and identify you first before they can make judgements. To me it does not matter what colour you are. Artists are constantly looking into society and people don't like this at all. One sees all too often an artist acclaimed when he is dead because he can present no more threat to that society. Perhaps I have looked into the ills of this particular society and present too much of a threat. But I can assure you of one thing. Old Taut Sannie from Boksburg is not going to read my poetry. It is of some significance too that my latest book has been on sale for over six months before the banning order came into effect two weeks ago (1975).

Commenting on moves by the Afrikaans writers to form a writer's guild to fight censorship, Jensma said that he had never adhered to any group activity but that it 'is fine as long as they get something done' (1975).

At this point in time (1975) Jensma was working for Republican Publishers in Durban as an illustrator. He claimed to be busy working on ideas for a new volume of poetry and said that he could not afford to pay for an appeal against his banning. Elza Miles (2000) recollected in an interview, 'In Durban, Jensma lived in a flat on the Marine Parade, on one of the top floors.

During his stay in Durban Jensma submitted five African tales to Jack Cope, the editor of *Contrast* in Cape Town. The titles were 'Mama-Mingo Brings Rain', 'A Reggar named Makopi', 'Motsami and the Lion', 'Bunt's Journey' and 'The Flying Hands'. These stories were each about a page in length and were about the fables of Africa. Unfortunately, these stories were not published and are presently stored in the archives at NCI M.

It was whilst in Durban that Jensma wrote to Horst:

I trust I am making myself clear—especially to those who feel their minds need borders. To those intellectuals with either left or right wing hang-ups and morals -- to those who find themselves baffled by my way of life, my creative work. My work is not faked, nor phony, nor lifted from somewhere (Jensma 1975).

Jensma moved from job to job and from city to city. He did not believe in staying in one place for more than six months (Goosen 2000). After a productive sojourn in Durban in 1975, he returned to Johannesburg to put together his last published collection, *I Must Show You My Clippings* (1977).

This third collection was published by Raven Press in Johannesburg and sold at a price of four rands fifty cents. The book was printed by Zenth Printers of 509 Diakonia House, Braamfontein, Johannesburg. This volume of poetry was a collection of poetry interspersed by newspaper clippings, drawings and photographs. Most of the poems in this anthology had already appeared in literary magazines such as *Ophir*, *Contrasts*, *Quarry '76*, *A World of their Own*, and *Open School Poetry*. *I Must Show You My Clippings* (1977) differed from his previous volumes of poetry in its experiments with concrete poetry, collage and the frequency in which absurd inventories were used.

In a review in *World Literature Today*, F.R. van Rosevelt, from the University of Maine at Portland-Gorham commented:

What an enviable title *I Must Show You My Clippings* (1977) is! Anyone accepting Wopko Jensma's invitation to see and read what is indeed a collage of newspaper clippings, poems and graphics will not be disappointed. Jensma's third book of poetry is one wherein poems and clippings complement each other. He himself features in a few clippings, as does the Prisian dairy of his forebears, but it is his total South African involvement he wishes to show us, graphically and literally. For example, a newspaper clipping about the poet, Ingrid Jonker (drowned in Bantry Bay more than a decade ago) faces a poem addressed to the still imprisoned Breyten Breytenbach. The latter is asked of all things, 'not to allow hatred to petrify his heart'. Sad to say, it is this very appeal which already dates Jensma and some of his poetry as it reveals simultaneously the standstill to which the country has come, in body and soul, politics and poetry alike. An impasse, because Jensma appeals to the politically naïve Breytenbach, who has since been reduced to a whispering shadow of himself, reportedly grateful when he is no longer restricted to solitary confinement but to general imprisonment instead!

Jensma's obsessions are confinement, mutilation and crisis of identity. Desperate poetic method, however, cannot clarify or objectify his essential predicament, which is a lack of sanity. Of course, evoking Weimar Germany as he does is metaphorical in itself, but still he should not write about his world in terms of madness, pink and numbers only, for to do so is to call down madness on oneself. Instead, he might try to objectify his chaos. In a country where life and predicament are one and the same thing—and Jensma is not unlike our own

here, but only more so—to talk about one's country at all means of course to get caught up in that country's values and its terms. Jensma might want to avoid doing this, because in order to fight one's enemy one runs the risk of becoming like one's enemy in the process. Not surprisingly, the jacket blurb on this book tells us that 'it is impossible even from a close examination ... to determine the colour of his skin!'

Jensma's language is fragmented but sharp as glass. His sense and his salvation lie in his poems (his self portraits on the beach are silly and poorly reproduced here). These pieces, however fragmented, cast precisely the diffuse spectrum that might restore his and our heart of darkness.

i am tired, so very tired
tired of the hate stare
tired of the broken telephones
tired of non-white entrances
tired of being a burden
I am tired, tired of hating...

These clippings are a powerful dossier against the state of things

In a review of *I Must Show You My Clippings* (1977), in *Reality*, Mame Dyer comments:

The persona of the poems is appropriately less diverse than before. There are comparatively few excursions into dialect: most poems are all English or all Afrikaans. 'I, Jensma'—or more accurately, 'I, jensma'—appear specifically in one poem and is implicit in many; perhaps, allowing for ironies, in most. In previously published poems he seems to have made himself a mouthpiece for the experiences and feelings of many different South Africans, but here the concrete, though always socially relevant, are more particularly his own.

Jensma makes very great demands on his readers. A knowledge of Volon's French as well as a little German and Germanist is assumed, but more importantly, his technique of fragmentation and dislocation—of images, syntax, even spelling and typography—involves conscious effort in bringing the disparate elements into some kind of coherence. In one poem, avowedly dada in influence (chant of praise for the *Idi Amin dada*) he expresses some cultural intentions and attitudes:

PROTEST AGAINST LAW

The law of tension
The law of precalculation
The law of reason
The law of aggression
The law of intrigue, the game

It seems to be the manifesto applicable to many of his own poems, which in their disparate images, incomplete sentences, non-sequiturs, and enclimaxes, are constructed in a kind of defiance of disciplined reason and the tensions of logic.

On the one hand, it is difficult to be sure that the main intention of these poems is being conveyed to the reader; on the other, it seems clear that the technique itself is an act of protest against what Jensma sees as the crippling, limiting, and fundamentally aggressive domination of rigid reason and calculation of human affairs. In all his poems he reveals a sense of the sickness of his society; it appears that he is exploring here what may be regarded as the philosophical as well as the political sources for it.

The severed ear of Van Gogh is a recurring symbol in these poems, apparently suggestive of the power and truth of genuine suffering, and Jensma seems to contrast this both with the artistic images of Van Gogh's paintings and also with his own poetry. These lines from 'the ceiling just carved in today' seem to imply that Jensma is afraid that art itself can impose an unreal or petrifying pattern on the vitality of real experience:

I, Jensma, I am a so a so called real artist ..
... but don't worry, van of them I Jensma
I am having it loonzell!

The nature and feel of the poetry can best be given by a quotation. This is the middle section of the last poem in the book: 'I know no heroes':

In these subterranean rooms
My entrails under paper weights
I keep singing this song
Of one thousand unmade beds
Of one thousand dark beds
Of one thousand dark alleys

Of one thousand chicken livers
(neatly tied in plastic packs)
as I turn stones of my life
grab scorpions sleight of hand
unwind untie the poison string
let my past slip down my gullet

This is characteristic of its un-worked-out quality: its compelling but unelucidated images, its unexpected juxtapositions of various tones and styles, its catalogue of illogically selected elements, combining to evoke a sense of protesting alienation. It seems that in these poems Jensma struggles continually not to be facile, not to falsify complexities with imposed order and clarity (Even the drawings and photographs, though intriguing, are enigmatic). These struggles are sometimes exhausting rather than illuminating to the reader: like watching a man struggle to pick up invisible weights. But these are impressive and disturbing, and demand, if not to be understood, at least to be seriously attended to (1978).

Emmanuel Ngara was much more critical of *I Must Show You My Clippings* (1977). In a review for *The African Book Publishing Record* Ngara wrote:

Wopko Jensma writes about himself and about the South African situation. He says repeatedly in the first poem: 'I found myself' in a situation' and his poetry is indeed an attempt to reflect the situations he finds himself in. Although we detect a voice of protest against the social conditions in South Africa, we can hardly describe Jensma's poetry as 'militant' or even 'protest' poetry. The poet's statements about South Africa are observations rather than critical comments. For African readers, Jensma is not likely to hold much of the attraction as his criticism of South African life is not strong enough to have any real impact on social attitudes. To Western readers opposed to apartheid, however, Jensma offers something: here is a South African who writes simply as a South African. He displays no Afrikaner nationalism, neither does he show any prejudice against blacks. His style demonstrates how he attempts to be a fully integrated South African without any racial or nationalist labels: he writes in both English and Afrikaans (though most of the time in English) and he even uses a sprinkling of African words and African names, mainly Sotho.

Though his style is informal and light-hearted, Jensma's poetry tends to be obscure and frequently fails to make an impact on the reader. However, there are a few poems which draw their strength from rhythm and sound effects, for example, 'the ceiling just caved in today' and 'I know no heroes' Of considerable interest are the author's clippings—including photographs of newspaper cuttings and photographs of himself and the Brazilian poet Manuel Bandeira. These are no doubt intended to make visual accompaniments to verbal art, but they are of little artistic value. The book is recommended for library purchase—with reservations (1978).

William Pretorius, writing for *Report* gave a positive and incisive appraisal of Jensma's third volume of poetry:

In Wopko Jensma's book *I Must Show You My Clippings* (1977), there is a collection of poems under the heading 'Chant of Praise for the Idi Amin Dada' in which there is a play of words on the Black statesman's surname and the literary movement. In fact, the definition of Dadaism found in the *Penguin Companion of Literature* could describe some of Jensma's own poetry:

His chaotic experiments with language, form ... were an affirmation of radical irrationality and futility as a protest against all bourgeois not only of meaning and order.

In Jensma's poetry there is a lively and original experimenting with words, and even the letters of words ... he breaks down words, rearranges them, squeezes them into various political forms, all of which at times gives his work a sense of artificiality and obscurity. At times, too, his word manoeuvring gets the upper hand at the expense of the poem's content, and his poetry drifts off into a whimsical playfulness ... he uses language as well to rattle the foundations of an establishment that has grown stodge in its own self-satisfaction, content to see no further than 'the good life'.

In a sense, Jensma's unruly poetry is a reaction against this syndrome. He is an interesting and original voice in South African poetry. Jensma built no structures, he established no institutions, he created no stable circle of friends and admirers. In this respect he was very different from his influential contemporaries such as Bill Ainslie, Barney Simon and Lionel Abrahams. Even the community of Afrikaans writers, who diligently promote each other's work rarely mentions Jensma in their account of cultural history (1977).

Sheila Roberts commented in *Contrast*:

As it is impossible even from a close examination of his poetry and woudents to determine the colour of his skin ... that I consider such a determination in any way important ... and as he writes in various 'voices', from English and Afrikaans to Tswana and Gamaatlal, he does indeed appear to be the first wholly integrated South African (1977:14).

In an interview on 2 October 2000, Sheila Roberts commented further:

About my comments that the colour of Wopko's skin could not be assessed from the poems themselves ... I agree that this assertion is totally irrelevant and as ashamed of it now. But it was not so irrelevant in 1971, which is when I wrote it, I believe. There had been so many burnings of books, journals, films and music that there was, as I recall, a mood of nervous revolt amongst writers: nervous, because we all lived in mind the kind of terrorism that the editor, Donald Woods, had to face when he tried to find out the truth of what had happened to Steve Biko. For someone like me, an anxious fledgling writer and a clumsy critic, Wopko's use of varied voices and dialects seemed a bold strategy, an act of defiance against the official categorisation of human beings, himself included.

Michael Gardiner has drawn an interesting parallel between Jensma and the South African poet and novelist, Breyten Brytenbach:

Jensma has received very different treatment from the adulation with which every Breyten Brytenbach production was received. Both these poet-artists were born in the same year of Cape Afrikaans families. Both studied art at university and the marriage of each violated South African law, compelling an exile. Whereas Brytenbach repatriated, rejoined, as repudiated by and then welcomed back into his language community, Jensma remains thoroughly outside that social faction of South African society which controls the means of production, which generates wealth and shapes reality according to its notions of what is fit and proper (Gardiner 2000: 4).

In 1979 Jensma lived in a flat in Joubert Park in Johannesburg. He be-

helped Thys Nel and they frequently visited each other. According to Hendrik van der Walt:

Wopko was the picture of an eccentric artist. He looked like a farmer, with khaki shorts and velisknens. Wopko was not talkative, in fact he appeared withdrawn. He also had numerous black friends, which was unusual for a white man in the seventies (2001).

Thys Nel was introduced to Jensma by a mutual friend, Rita Cohen. Nel said:

When I met Wopko he was already in a state of schizophrenia. I found him to be a warm, humble person. He told me that he had stayed with Casper Schmidt for a long time. Casper was a psychiatrist who has since moved to New York where he died. When I met Wopko he had stopped writing (2003).

In 1982 Jensma was one of the winners of the Creative Writing Awards sponsored by Mr. An Donker of Johannesburg, to mark the tenth anniversary of his publishing firm. The award was to honour three authors who had made a notable contribution to South African literature in English in the last ten years. Jensma was awarded the five hundred rand prize money and a certificate for 'originality of voice and vision'.

The other awardees were Mongane Wally Serote and J.M. Coetzee.

Centon V. da Plessis was inspired to write the following poem after seeing what was alleged to be Jensma's photograph in *Playboy* magazine. The photograph was of a hobo in Joubert Park (2001). 'let me show you my clippings'.

i saw u
trying to lie down
(between the airbrushed heavens
and designer tits
of the playboy brooms)
humming around, if i remember correctly,
in joubert park
with a couple of white brothers
i guess it was easy deciding:
to shut the windows.

to lock the doors.
to throw away the key.
to walk away from the unbrushed poems.
to run from the fire burning in your head.
to forget about the answers and all the possible questions.
to close your eyes and see the bright sun.
to try to recall the good times.
to take the last drink.
to cross the red cloth.
(to stop paying off your past debts & instalments)
i saw u
trying to pick up pace
trying to move with the agility of a wing
i saw u
trying to join the backline one more time
but u kept on stumbling
i saw u
trying to get up or maybe trying to lie down.

Jensma wrote to Lionel Abrahams in 1983, merely informing him about his whereabouts: 'I've been living with my father for the past year at 25 Smid Street, Middelburg, in the Cape' (Jensma 1983).

Jensma's last known address was the Salvation Army Men's Home at Simmonds Street, Johannesburg. Michael Gardiner recounts his visit to Jensma in the hostel in 1987, ten years after his last publication:

'I don't want to become a campus guru'. This is the response Wopko gave to my request for permission to photocopy his poems for my students: his published works were now out of print. We were listening to the jazz artist Herb Ellis, Jensma having asked me to take off the inferior music of Ken Burrell.

The smoke from his zol, made of Yellow Pages paper and Boxer tobacco, never rose above waist height. We sat with our heads just above the line of acrial, grey strands. Smoking and coffee were the chief delights of Jensma's existence, where he had taken refuge from his thoroughly disabling schizophrenia.

On seeing Jensma, I understood how, once in one's circle and other unwashed, down-and-out men, it could prove difficult if not

impossible to leave such a place, enclosed as one is in that relatively stable and simplified society, where access to fresh, instant coffee is a significant event.

As a recipient of a state pension for the permanently disabled—a pension which the home drew on his behalf and gave him credit at the butcher shop—Jensen had ceased to produce both the poetry and the graphics for which he is so respected. Earlier and extensive support from his friends in Portlouis, Cape Town and Johannesburg had dwindled, and he spent his days on the streets, or in the Carlton Centre for warmth, scrutinising scraps of paper and conversing in a loosely associative manner, unable to write or draw (2000).

In addition to his pension, Jensen received a monthly payment from Abraham de Vries. In 1988 art historian and researcher, Elza Miles was involved in putting together an exhibition called *The Neglected Tradition*. On the day of the opening she went to pick up Jensen but he was unable to accompany her because of his steadily deteriorating mental condition.

In 1988 a band calling itself 'Mud Ensemble' and comprising of Marcel van Heerde, Juliana Venter, Thomas Barry, Nicholas Hauser, Kenneth Marshall and Christo Boshoff composed and produced a song about Jensen recounting the death of Can Themba. The song was a cut on an album called *Level*. Mud Ensemble performed the song at the Standard Bank National Festival of the Arts in July. The festival itself is an annual event held in Queens Road, Grahamstown.

Peter Lewis, the founder of another alternative band, 'Mystery Roach' was also inspired by Jensen's poetry. 'Mystery Roach' was from Benoni in Gauteng. Their song, 'Brains a-comin'' drew its lyrics from Jensen's poem 'In memoriam Ben Zwane'.

By 1989, Jensen's publishers took to sending Michael Gardiner his post. In the same year, when the driver from the Salvation Army came to fetch Jensen for his treatment at Johannesburg General Hospital he was nowhere to be found. Jensen's pension was last drawn in August 1993. The next year the Salvation Army Men's Home burned to the ground. People who knew Jensen were contacted in all major centres. The Salvation Army checked all its shelters and attempts were made to determine whether he had entered a mental home in Pretoria. All efforts failed to produce any trace of him. In July 1996, *The Mail and Guardian* published a report claiming that Jensen could possibly be alive. This created much excitement that perhaps some sign of him had been discover-

ed, but there was no information of him forthcoming.

In May 1999, friends of Jensen—Colin Smuts, Walter Saunders, Wolf Weinck and Michael Gardiner—met with Jensen's two daughters to discuss the establishment of a Wopko Jensen Trust. Jensen's son had died of AIDS in 1997. It was agreed to set up a trust into which would go the remaining royalties from the sale of his poetry collections, donations as well as the ongoing income from international anthologies and translations of his work (Gardiner 2000).

To date, Jensen has not been pronounced officially dead. N.M. Singer wrote the following unpublished poem about Jensen's disappearance entitled 'Desperately seeking Wopko':

You are as lost to this fractured land
and its sightless citizens
as I am to myself
I glimpse your face
in those of children
stolen away
by those vapours they inhale
And in the myriad beings pressing on
to some empty toll.
I thought I saw you
on a crowded night time sidewalk
Alone
Hands eloquently poised
Smiling at the moon
I turn and walk away
The dust and oily sweet smell of impending rain
dancing in my nostrils (2001).

Perhaps Jensen could be better understood by his community in an updated letter to Peter Horn:

If I have put forward ideas: it means nothing. I have no life—no philosophy. I only live for the love of living. Up to now, it seems, nobody has yet grasped Einstein's eclipse, well, tell me, what really matters in this chaos of worlds?

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eCommunication and the Theory of the Optimisation of Human Communication

Reinhardt Kloppe

The Theory of the Optimisation of Human Communication

I propose the following theory to account for the forms of communication that individuals and social groups employ within particular cultures:

Humans optimise a variety of forms of communication within a culture, and between cultures, to ensure immediate direct personal survival and to maintain their culture as a long-term indirect survival strategy.

The TOHC has the following corollaries:

1. On the principle of economy, no culture will evolve a system of communication that is more complex than is required for optimal communication within or between cultures.
2. Human communication contains *indexical* features as evidenced in nonverbal communication codes (such as gestures, facial expressions, locomotion posture) that are directly grounded in actual instances of communication, and *symbolic* features that, as codes, first relate to one another in complex hierarchical patterns (such as phonemes, or written symbols, that are combined to serve as symbolic labels for conflated concepts in the form of morphemes and lexemes¹, which in turn are combined according to predictable

¹ The concept CAT is symbolically represented by the English phonemes (distinctive speech sounds) [k][æ][t] or their written letter equivalents cat. These combinations of sounds and letters serve as symbolic labels for the conflated concepts {ADULT, FOUR-FOOTED, HAIRY, PREDATORY, FELINE, ANIMAL}. Only in combination can these symbolic features be used to constitute the lexeme 'cat'.

patterns to form sentences that can be used to refer to actual events³). Only in sensoria related to other symbolic elements in the human communication codes, can any subset of codes be used to refer to entities in the human environment.

3. Specific instances of communication can be ordered along a compliance gaining continuum that progresses from *cooperation* to *competition* to *confrontation*.

4. New forms of communication will from time to time emerge in a culture to give expression to the increasing complexification of that culture.

5. When new forms of communication emerge in a culture they never supplant existing forms, but instead absorb and relativise⁴ them as part of the new more extensive communication processes.

6. Humans use newly emerged forms of communication as survival strategies to innovate existing domains of knowledge of their culture and to create new domains of knowledge.

7. As a form of communication matures, it becomes ubiquitous.

8. Older forms of communication are employed more ubiquitously than newer ones.

9. Communicators employ ubiquitous forms of communication subconsciously.

10. Existing forms of communication could be simplified in response to catastrophic successors that impact a culture.

³ The lexeme 'cat' can be used in the role of AGENT along with 'mouse' as a PATIENT role in the sentence *The cat is chasing the mouse* which is built up according to a specific hierarchic pattern, represented by labelled brackets in German: [Subject: *Das Katze*, Verb: *ist*, Objekt: *die Maus*] [Transitive Verb: *ist* chasing] [Object: *die Maus* PATIENT: the mouse].

⁴ By relativisation of forms of communication, existing forms of communication are assigned new functional roles relative to newly emerged ones.

11. Basic as well as simplified forms of communication could become more complex under the influence and in the direction of more complex forms of communication during cross-cultural contact if the users of the more basic forms of communication perceive a communication advantage in emulating the forms of communication of the more sophisticated culture.

The IOHC and other Optimisation Theories

The theory that I am proposing here forms part of a triadic cluster of optimisation theories. The other two theories are a theory of linguistics known as *Optimality Theory* (OT), and the – to my knowledge yet unnamed – framework that focuses on the optimisation of data flow in global electronic data networks. Because many of the researchers in this yet unnamed field readily use the phrase "communication optimisation" to characterise their work, I will refer to this approach as the Framework for Optimal Global Electronic Communication (FOGEC).

I would like to point out that OT as well as the FOGEC respectively are theories that focus on the optimisation of communication at the levels of linguistic and electronic *communication codes*. While OT deals with the optimisation of linguistic codes in the domains of phonology and morpho-syntax, the FOGEC deals with the optimisation of hardware data flow architectures and the software algorithms used to generate economical electronic codes for transmission over global information networks.

By contrast with OT and FOGEC, the IOHC that I am proposing, is an overarching integrative theory of all known communication processes, including the code systems used in nonverbal, verbal, written and electronic communication, therefore including OT and the FOGEC.

Optimality Theory

In 1993, Prince and Smolensky introduced OT in the domain of phonology as an alternate framework of linguistic analysis to the rule-based theory of generative grammar. Within phonology OT has largely supplanted rule-based frameworks (Gibson et al 1994; Hã et al 1995; Houesma 1998; Hã & Rice 1998). It has also been extended to syntax (Bresnan 2000; Bresnan & Aissen 2001) and semantics (Blutner 1998, 2000; Anula & Pong 2000), but its use is not yet as widely accepted as in phonological analysis.

According to the MIT Encyclopedia of Cognitive Science (2002) optimality is a theory of linguistic universals and universal grammar. This theory posits that the grammars of all human languages share a set of very general *pre-linguistic universal constraints*, denoted by the abbreviation *Con*. These constraints are sufficiently simple and general that they would conflict in many specific contexts if they were all to operate at the same time.

The grammar of any specific language resolves these potential conflicts by ranking the universal constraints of *Con* into a *constraint hierarchy* in which higher ranking constraints could neutralise lower ranking ones in cases where competing language forms are in conflict. Particular languages have characteristic features because they rank the universal constraints differently from other languages.

It is possible to compute the typology of all possible human languages⁴ as the result of all possible rankings of these constraints. An OT analysis explains why some grammatical patterns are possible in a particular language while others are not.

With regard to the process of constraint ranking, Bresnan & Aissen (2001) describe OT as a 'combinatorial engine', a universal language generator⁵ of all possible linguistic structures whose output is not in the forms of particular languages, and not even bound to the overall typological space of natural languages⁶. This hypothetical language generator merely provides a common vocabulary for precisely describing all kinds of linguistic structures, natural and synthetic, for any given linguistic content. Which of these generated structures are selected as the outputs of particular grammars is determined by the relative strength of very general but violable hierarchy of constraints external to the universal language generator, but specific to particular languages.

For particular languages, the proponents of OT posit a four-component linguistic system consisting of (1) underlying representations; (2) grammatical rules; (3) competing surface representations; and (4) a hierarchic system of constraints that regulate interpretation violations as basis for selecting particular surface representations. The basic idea of OT is that, as part of natural variation within the language of individual speakers, competing language forms are regulated (optimised) by an array of hierarchic constraints

⁴ This is possible for languages that do not exist anymore, or do not yet exist.

⁵ This is abbreviated as GEN in OT literature.

⁶ This point of view implies that the algorithmic principles in which optimality is based would also be able to generate non-human communication codes.

that become progressively more general and powerful. This entails that higher level generic constraints can neutralise lower level more specific constraints as part of the optimisation process. For instance, where generative phonology would require a set of autonomous rules to regulate the use of the English plural morpheme *-s* which is pronounced voiced in some words, but unvoiced in others (e.g. *bugs* [hægz] vs *cats* [kæts]) a single higher level optimality constraint allows the plural morpheme *-s* to be voiced after a voiced stop consonant like [g] and to be unvoiced after a voiceless stop consonant like [t].

The Framework for Optimal Global Electronic Communication

As I mentioned before I decided to refer to the yet unnamed cluster of approaches that deal with the optimisation of global electronic communication as the Framework for Optimising Global Electronic Communication (FOGEC). De Moor (undated) focuses on the development suites of information tools supporting both individual and group needs as part of a global electronic network to promote sustainable development.

Kennedey and Nevakovic (1994) combine dependence analysis and data-flow analysis for a proposed system of optimising electronic communication codes. Kandemir et al. (1998) propose an algorithm for optimising global data flows by reducing the number of communications as well as the volume of data flow per communication.

In such forms of electronic communication, optimisation is achieved by a combination of programming routines that minimise the volume of data that need to be transported between users and the use of the identical snippets that contain algorithms that strip predictable data from messages at the sender's end and again restore them at the receiver's end.

Having briefly demonstrated that OT as well as the FOGEC are optimisation theories that focus on the optimisation of communication codes, I now proceed to demonstrate that different forms of communication, each with their characteristic code systems, emerged during specific phases of human cultural evolution in response to the increasing levels of complexification that characterised successive ages.

The Ages of Human Cultural Evolution

Taking Toffler (1978/1991) as point of departure, one can discern four consecut-

five phases of human cultural evolution, namely the nomadic age, the pastoral age, the industrial age and the information age.

The Nomadic Age

During this phase, which started at the dawn of modern humans, perhaps a hundred thousand years ago, most of humankind wandered on foot in small bands of hunter-gatherers after their food resources.

Two theories have been proposed to account for the emergence of modern humans as the predominant species on earth, namely the out-of-Africa theory¹ and the multiregional development theory². According to the *out-of-Africa theory*, anatomically modern humans emerged from Africa in four successive waves of migration, particularly during ice ages when the accumulation of ice sheets on continents caused sea levels to drop and land bridges to open up between continents. By using these temporary land bridges in pursuit of game humans steadily populated all of the continents of earth over the past 100,000 years, displacing and causing the demise of other humanoid species like *Homo Erectus* and *Neanderthal*. An alternative theory proposes that other humanoid species were not exterminated, but instead absorbed into the modern human lineage.

According to the *multiregional theory*, *Homo Erectus* emerged from Africa as common ancestor species of all humans about two million years ago and populated the globe as bands of nomadic wanderers that independently and in parallel evolved into modern humans. According to this theory the interaction of two forces, a push chain of common genetic traits and a pull chain of adapting to regional conditions, led to the evolution of modern human sub-populations with slightly differing morphological characteristics in multiple regions of the earth by about 20,000 years ago.

I will couch my explanation in terms of the out-of-Africa theory. This theory seems more likely in the light of Mitochondrial X-, as well as Y-chromosome genetic evidence (Kaldstein et al 1995; Harris et al 1999; and Noble 2001), in support of the African Adam theory. Researchers based across

¹ This is also known as the African Eve hypothesis.

² See Canby et al (1981); Cann et al (1987); Clark & Willmer (2000); Ingman (2000); Klein (2000); Krings et al (1999); Nitecki & Nitecki (1994); Smith (1984); Stringer (1996); and Tattersall & Schwartz (1999) for reviews of the two theories.

Asia, in the US and the UK, examined the Y-chromosomes³ of more than 12,000 males from across Asia and found no traces of any ancient non-African influence.

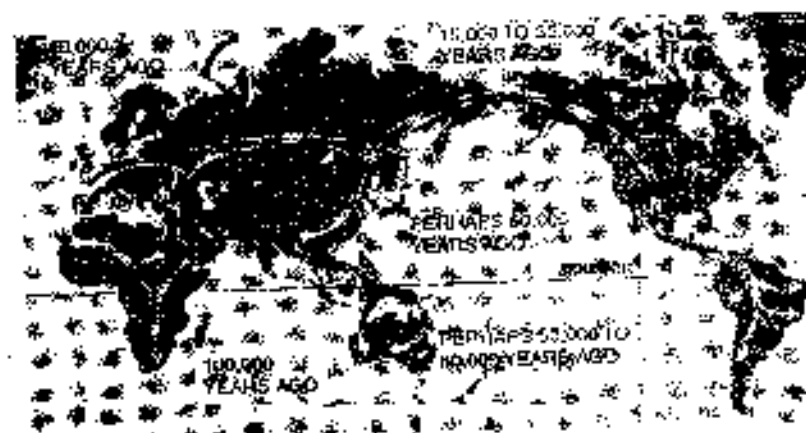


Figure 1: The out-of-Africa dispersion routes of modern humans over the past 100,000 years

³ X and Y chromosome genetic evidence supporting the out-of-Africa theory of modern human origins: Over a period of decades, mitochondrial DNA was collected worldwide from discarded placentas after the birth process, analysed and plotted against a specific segment of the human genome, revealing that matrilineal bloodlines worldwide extend back in time to a single mother in Africa who became known as 'African Eve'. More recently an analysis of Y-chromosome evidence was analysed because this chromosome is passed on only between fathers and sons along patrilineal bloodlines. Analysis of Y-chromosome evidence found a prominent African genetic marker to be present in male populations along the major routes of Asia, specifically along a coastal route between Africa and Australia via India and South East Asia, and via Siberia over the Bering Strait into the Americas. It has been referred to as the 'African Adam' theory.

The African Eve and Adam theories could be seen as complimentary because they both independently confirm that the modern human genome exhibits maternal as well as paternal African genetic traits.

In figure 2 above I present a global map that traces the migration patterns of anatomically modern humans out of Africa across the globe over the past 100,000 years.

The pre-eminence of verbal and nonverbal gestural communication during the evolution of modern humans is attested by the genetically inherited disproportionate amount of neurological resources dedicated to hand, facial, tongue and laryngeal movement in the human motor cortex, as represented in figure 2:



Figure 2: Neurological resources dedicated to verbal and non-verbal muscle movement in the human motor cortex.

Forms of Communication used by the Nomadic Ancestors

If present-day hunter-gatherer nomadic communities like the San were anything to go by, early modern humans would have depended on direct small group communication consisting of verbal interactions complemented by close visual decoding of one another's facial expressions, gestures, body movement and body stance.

There is evidence that as far back as 30,000 years ago, rock face paintings, rock face carvings, and statuettes sculpted from stone, ivory and bone, found at European archaeological sites, were forms of symbolic graphical representation.

According to Angeli (1989) Figure 3 below (downloaded from <http://www.zebu.at/zebu/encyc/opa/data/image/vv136200a.jpg>), is thought not to be

a mere representation of the female form, but a symbol of fertility, forming part of the earth mother goddess cult practiced by men who as hunters would have fervently desired that nature should be fertile so that the grazing and the game that they depended on would be abundantly available. Objects that were created according to principles of visual aesthetics such as paintings, engravings and carvings clearly could be seen as precursors of the representations that formed the basis of pictographic writing systems millennia later.

The Pastoral Age

Over time, most hunter-gatherer nomads settled down along the major river and lake systems that provided year-round sustainable resources for their primary sources of food, game, fruits, grains and tubers. This age is estimated to have begun about 10,000 years ago. In all probability the nomadic clans and tribes however settled down gradually to a pastoral way of life over a much longer time span than 10,000 years ago. During this phase humankind lived in fixed-abode "prosumption"¹⁶ agrarian communities within small tribal cultures where tribesmen consumed most of their own production, and bartered or traded excess production with neighbouring tribes.



Figure 3: Carved statuette of the fertility goddess, dubbed the Venus of Willendorf

¹⁶ The term "prosumption" is a neologistic conflation of the terms "production" and "consumption". It indicates that the same people were the producers and consumers of produce.

During the pastoral age writing and other forms of graphical representation emerged as new forms of communication to give expression to the more complex cultures and technologies that were evolving. Written communication enabled humans to progress to the crucial stage where different domains of knowledge could be recorded, systematised and critically assessed. Writing became the primary form of knowledge generation after Gutenberg invented the printing press in 1452¹¹. Before the existence of printed books, almost all transfer of knowledge was by word of mouth and to a lesser extent, by scribes. The only way that one could have learned new ideas, or have gained new skills was by being in direct personal contact with somebody who had created them or who had acquired them from somebody else. The invention of the printing press allowed people to communicate across time and space, and led to the secularisation of knowledge, which until that stage was under the control of the clergy.

The Industrial Age

This age, that is said to have begun about 300 years ago, is characterised by rapid urbanization in already existing metropolises, and the mass production of goods by mechanical means by individuals that fulfilled specialist duties for remuneration as part of an extensive mutual benefit social contract¹². The industrial age formed the last phase of the colonial era during which massive amounts of raw materials were extracted from colonies, refined and used in the manufacture of goods for local consumption, and to be exported for sale in other market economies. Towards the end of the colonial era rapidly increasing refinements in technological capacities served as push chains, while the vast distances that had to be traversed between colonies and colonial powers served as pull chains for the development of the first forms of electronic

¹¹ According to Brue (1997), accessible at <http://communication.kqed.edu/diones/Books/printee.html>, there is speculation that Gutenberg received credit for an invention that may have been developed simultaneously in Holland and in France.

¹² This social contract could be paraphrased as follows: 'I promise to do well for others what I do best, as long as all do well for others what they do best, and all are fairly rewarded for their labours'.

communication, the telegraph and the mass electronic forms of communication, the radio and television.

The Information Age

Today, some thirty years into the information age¹³, prosperous nations increasingly form part of an Internet-based, integrated global knowledge-driven economy, regulated by the flow of data between economies, including the flow of electronic capital that is not substantiated by bullion or hard currency. This enables national economies and cultures to rapidly adjust to trends of increasingly rapid change in order to maintain a competitive edge over economies that remain trapped in pastoral and industrial cultures.

In the information age the knowledge that fuels market economies increasingly resides in globally integrated information networks that are only accessible to those in command of the requisite electronic communication skills and in possession of the means to access such networks. The digital divide between different cultures—the main presupposition which lead to me developing the FOGHC theory—entails that those without electronic technology and -communication skills, would be shut out from the resources that could give them access to the same global systems serving erstwhile colonial countries.

When I first used the fledgling South African branch of the Internet in the late nineteen eighties I had to place a long distance telephone call from

¹³ In 1969, the year that the first human set foot on the moon, I was asked to address fellow students at a convention that had as theme the impact that technology was expected to have on the future of humankind. After consulting the works of a number of futurologists I spoke on the likelihood that the unbridled use of technology would cause catastrophic worldwide pollution, about future scenarios for space exploration, about the tremendous impact that radio astronomy was expected to have on humankind's understanding of our place in the universe, and about the roles that satellite communications were expected to play in the development of global mass communication transmissions. The one topic that I did not talk about, because neither I nor any of the experts had foreseen it, was the emergence of the personal computer a decade later, and the tremendous role that it would play in the globalisation of human culture and learning, once linked to a global information network that were to become known as the Internet.

Durban to the CSIR in Pretoria, make a live satellite-linked search query to a service provider in the US and dial in twelve hours later to download the plain text results of my query. Today we have access to a vast array of services from all over the world at local call rates. By using one of dozens of search engines we can within seconds have at our disposal documents in full colour with sound files embedded, available 24 hours a day on more than five million servers worldwide.

The increasing availability of robust electronic communication networks that integrate all aspects of information age cultures have provided facilities for eBanking, eCommunication, eCommerce, eEntertainment, eGovernance and eLearning. These facilities enable individuals to communicate with relatives on the other corners of the globe, pay monthly accounts via online banking facilities, buy and sell products worldwide, play computer games against opponents on other continents, watch movies, access data on government department websites, or obtain certificates and degrees by means of online distance learning – all at the time of their choice from any networked location in the world, including from wireless broadband networks that allow mobile communication from buses and trains.

A Glimpse into the Digital Future

Unfortunately this section has to be begun on a sober note for South African users of electronic communications. The uneven quality and dead slow¹⁴ Internet access speed provided by Telkom, the South African telecommunications agency, and the high rates that they charge for faster (SDN and ADSL links, all but ensure that ordinary South Africans will end up on the wrong side of the digital divide in comparison with subscribers in the USA, Europe and many other countries of the world where wireless broadband networks are fast becoming the preferred medium for carrying real-time streaming video communications.

Elsewhere in the world, due to the maturation of mobile electronic communication technologies, a range of emerging and converging communication instruments are now putting pressure on the bulky desktop computer that still has to be linked to the Internet by means of copper or fibre optic cables. In many urban centres overseas, people on the move now have

¹⁴ At many locations users get access to the Internet at a paltry 28k, using a 56k modem.

cable-free wideband access to the Internet via wireless broadband networks on notebook computers, tablet PCs¹⁵, mobile phones, and personal digital assistants (PDAs). Due to the impressive growth of the mobile phone¹⁶ market in South Africa, local mobile phone users can also link to the Internet via their mobile phones, or via hand held PDAs¹⁷ that can be linked to the Internet via mobile phones or via mobile radio-frequency modem antennas.

A number of recent innovations in global electronic communications indicate that this form of communication is set to become a ubiquitous part of human existence. A new generation of mobile phone allows users to take a photograph of themselves or of their environment and relay it to other users via mobile phone networks, or to a computer via an Internet service provider. In the Kalahari, SAN game wardens are recording animal movement patterns by means of pictographic icons on PDAs that relay the information via satellite to researchers on other continents. A soon-to-be-released generation of mobile phone will allow real time video communication between users. Satellite-linked global positioning systems (GPS) allow individuals and others to determine their exact location anywhere on earth. Satellite-linked mobile phones allow individuals anywhere on earth to communicate with anyone that is linked to a mobile communication network. Satellite-linked videophones stream video images in real time to recipients, including to TV networks that relay them to cable TV subscribers or satellite TV network subscribers.

An emerging trend, wearable computing and communication clothing, is busy providing new mobile communications technologies to people living in urban centres that are serviced by wireless broadband networks. A mobile web camera embedded in a pair of glasses directly relays what the wearer sees as video and sound images via wireless broadband networks to a base station for

¹⁵ Notebook computers are fully functional personal computers, about the size of a notebook, every bit as powerful as desktop computers. Tablet PCs are portable computers that have optionally usable cordless infrared keyboards. The use of a touch sensitive on-screen keyboard, handwriting-to-text conversion software or voice-to-text conversion software make the use of a keyboard optional, perhaps even redundant.

¹⁶ I use the international term "mobile phone" rather than the South African term "cell phone."

¹⁷ New generation mobile phones and PDAs come preloaded with e-mail, word processing and database programs ensuring that a variety of documents can be either faxed directly to someone else, or relayed via the Internet.

capture and storage. The GNU/Linux wristwatch videophone is a full-colour VGA videophone, which consists of a wristwatch camera pointing away from the wearer, a 640 x 480 pixel, 24-bit VGA colour screen built into the wristwatch dial, a body-worn computer that captures the recorded sound and video images, and earpieces. Images received from the Internet are displayed on the wristwatch dial as full colour VGA video images, with sound being relayed to earpieces. Full colour broadcast quality can also be directly transmitted at six to eight frames per second via a radio transmitter. A future version of the watch is expected to transmit pre-captured sound and video images to a recipient, or to a base station at the rate of thirty frames per second¹⁹.



Figure 4: The GNU/Linux wristwatch videophone at <http://www.linuxjournal.com/index.php>

According to Voreuberg (2003) the most recent innovation in wearable computing clothing is clothing made from Smart Thread, a plastic-like polymer that feels like nylon fabric, but which conducts electricity like a metal, and which can therefore replace traditional threads in fabric to give cloth computer-like abilities. The inventors of Smart Thread are exploring the possibility of using this material to manufacture wearable computing devices, wearable telecommunications devices, wearable medical and athletic devices,

¹⁹ The human brain interprets correctly sequenced still photographs, presented to the eye at 20 frames per second, as motion. At 30 frames per second the images from video wristwatch would be perceived as smooth motion.

and wearable fashion accessories that change colour, either automatically, or on demand.

Clothing made with the material would be able to sense conditions around or inside the wearer. A Smart Thread shirt or blouse would have the capacity to monitor ambient temperature and to automatically regulate temperature to make its wearer more comfortable, or it would be able to monitor the pulse and blood pressure of an athlete or a patient.

Telecommunications is seen as a major application of Smart Thread by 2007 or 2008. For an envisaged cell phone shirt all of the components of the cell phone would be integrated into the shirt's fabric. The fashion industry is looking at the potential of using Smart Thread to make shirts that constantly change colour, or change colour based on the wearer's preference for the day.

From these recent innovations it can be deduced that electronic communications are becoming ubiquitous in communities that have wireless broadband networks.

The innovative electronic technologies that form part of the Smart Weapons used by the USA against Iraq recently during the second Gulf War also deserve mention because they give a glimpse into the role of communication in the role of future warfare. These Smart Weapons constitute a combination of satellite-generated laser target beams used in conjunction with GPS outfitted ground troop spotters, to direct smart bombs onto their targets once they have been dropped from aeroplanes. One type of smart bomb, the microwave bomb, emits directed microwave pulses at light speed that destroy all electronic circuits in the bomb's path, including vehicle ignitions, radar station control panels and anti aircraft weapon systems. According to the company Tactical Geographies (2002) another part of the electronic arsenal used by the USA is a computer generated virtual 3D rendering of a thirty square kilometre region of Baghdad, including the heart of the city and all of the presidential palaces.

The Role of Written Communication in the Pre-eminence of Humankind

Early modern humans evolved verbal and nonverbal communication for survival's sake during the nomadic age over a period of 100,000 years while they interacted with one another in their immediate surroundings.

Written and graphical communication emerged about ten thousand

years ago during the pastoral age to help humans cope with the simplification of human culture that resulted from human settlements that eventually developed into cities. Written and graphical communication allowed humans to communicate beyond the limitations of time and space with people living elsewhere, and with people yet unborn.

Because written communication enabled humans to accrue, systematise and critically assess knowledge, it formed the basis for the development of technology over the past two millennia and the establishment of modern science as a branch of learning about 300 years ago. It is science and technology that play a pivotal role in the dominance that humans have attained over other species in the biosphere, and that now allow humans to look beyond earth and our solar system to satisfy the drive to explore, which has been part of our psyche since the dawn of humankind.

The Integration of Forms of Communication in the Information Age

Electronic communication has enabled humans to integrate verbal, nonverbal and written communication into a single space-time frame. Consequently one can directly hear and see a fellow communicator on the other side of the globe, or one can record communications and access them afterwards at one's leisure. This process of integration of forms of communication has led to a new state of awareness that has become known as *panopticism*¹⁸, the ability to see¹⁹ anything anywhere if one chooses to do so. Examples of panopticism are access via the Internet to video cameras that are used by police to monitor activities in much suspected areas of city centres, live pornographic video shows over the Internet, individuals who have set up webcams throughout their homes so that viewers may observe them for parts of the day or for the full twenty-four hours—accessible to anyone over the Internet—and so-called reality TV shows like Big Brother that broadcast 24 hours a day scenes of contestants' doings in particular subscription TV channels. To this we may add the ability to access real-time observations of the cosmos by the Hubble telescope over the Internet.

¹⁸ See the article "The future of Netcams" on the *techtv* website at <http://www.techtv.com/techtv/>.

¹⁹ The term "see" here metaphorically refers to any way in which one can observe and understand events.

and even the opportunity to have viewed on the Internet the planet Mars' landscapes as they were transmitted by the Mars Rover a decade ago.

The Implications of eLearning for South African Higher Education

Despite the poor state of the South African electronic communication backbone, that I have referred to before, local institutions of higher education should take note that there is a strong element of panopticism in eLearning, and that this phenomenon could reshape our institutions in the long run once proper wireless broadband communication networks become a reality in South Africa. I say this because eLearning causes the bricks and mortar limitations of local institutions to disappear with the click of a mouse.

Where the industrial age resulted in the *centralisation of knowledge dissemination*, the information age by contrast is resulting in the *democratisation of knowledge acquisition*, for those on the right side of the digital divide. The democratisation of higher education in the era of eLearning means that where students in a particular discipline were previously limited to the insights of local academic mentors, they now have at their fingertips electronic knowledge generated by dozens upon dozens of experts worldwide.

Knowing the primary printed references in one's local academic library is not good enough anymore. In the information age academics have to remain fellow eLearners who explore the ephemeral flow of electronic information across the globe, firstly to keep their own knowledge current, and secondly to ensure ethical research output of students who have access to a treasure trove of information about any topic under the sun.

General Conclusions

In this article I proposed a general integrating theory of communication that I have named the Theory of the Optimization of Human Communication, to account for the progressive complexification of human communication in response to the progressive complexification of human culture during successive stages of human cultural evolution, namely the nomadic, pastoral, industrial and information ages. I showed that this theory forms part of a triad of optimisation theories, with the other two being a theory of linguistics known as Optimality Theory (OT) and a theory of electronic communication that I, in

the absence of a proper term, call The Framework for Optimal Global Electronic Communication (FOGEC). I also indicated that I intend the FOHC to be a theory that integrate OT and the FOGEC because these two theories in isolation of one another, and in isolation of the FOHC reveal only part of the picture of communication as a complex and uniquely human capacity.

Salient aspects of the FOHC are that humans use forms of communication within and between cultures that ensure personal survival and the maintenance of their culture; that no culture will evolve a system of communication that is more complex than is required for optimal communication within and between cultures; that human communication codes operate at the indexical as well as the symbolic levels; that specific instances of communication can be ordered along a compliance gaining continuum: cooperation, competition, confrontation; that new forms of communication emerge from time to time to accommodate the increasing complexification of cultures; that humans use newly emerged forms of communication to maintain existing domains of knowledge of their culture and to create new domains of knowledge; that newly emerging forms of communication absorb and relativise existing forms rather than supplant them; that mature forms of communication become ubiquitous; that humans use ubiquitous forms of communication subconsciously; that existing forms of communication could be simplified in response to catastrophic stressors that impact a culture; that basic as well as simplified forms of communication could become more complex under the influence and in the direction of more complex forms of communication during cross-cultural communication if the users of the more basic forms of communication perceive a communication advantage in emulating the forms of communication of the more sophisticated culture.

Seen against the FOHC and its corollaries, nonverbal and verbal forms of communication, whose beginnings stretch back to the dawn of humankind, have become ubiquitous subconscious forms of communication. Humans acquire these simply by being socialised among fellow humans.

Written communication, which has been developed over the past ten thousand years, still has to be consciously learnt. In many ways, formal education is a rite of passage dedicated to the acquisition of the reading and writing skills that will allow persons to find economically viable niches for themselves on the extensive social contract that forms the basis of (post-)modern culture.

eCommunication, which became socially significant only about thirty years ago, is in the process of integrating all forms of human communication

and knowledge into a coherent global frame of reference. Two significant outcomes of global electronic communication are the democratisation of knowledge, and the phenomenon of parasiticism—the ability to observe and understand anything anywhere due to the increasingly ubiquitous presence of electronic observation devices wherever humans choose to cast their gaze.

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Keynote Addresses

The Role of African Intellectuals in the Reconstruction of the African Social Fabric (The Quest for Nation Building)¹

Mogomme Masoga

I want to begin this presentation by telling a story.

A farmer in the northern part of South Africa, the Limpopo Province had five baboons (*die Pavians*). He trained these baboons to do daily routine activities on the farm. Part of this routine included bringing their plates for breakfast at 08h00 in the morning and jars for morula drink at 17h00 in the afternoon. These routine activities were mastered by the baboons (*die Pavians*). One day, the farmer was called for a meeting of the district council, which meant that he had to leave the farm for a number of days. At that stage, his wife was invited for a women's conference in Tshwane. She was responsible for self help projects done by women in the area of Blaauwberg. The farmer's meeting was so important that he could not afford to miss it. It had much to do with future developments on his farm and his farming relationship with the government. He thought to himself, 'Who will help me with the daily running of the farm?' It became apparent that there was no one to look after his farm in his absence. Then he thought, 'Jugu, my dear and intelligent baboon, is my last

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resort. Why did I not think about this before? I will put my instruction on paper, clear instructions that can easily be followed. Then progress on my farm would not be hampered. Life will continue as usual¹.

Subsequently, the farmer summoned Jugu the baboon and put forward his proposition. Jugu was happy that his master took him so seriously. The farmer left the next day, satisfied that the farm was left in the capable hands of Jugu—*der Pavian*. Jugu was indeed capable. He ran the farm as if it were his own. The only snag was with the feeding process—four of the five baboons respected their feeding times and that made Jugu to praise his leadership abilities. However, he wanted to know the whereabouts of the fifth baboon.

Jugu questioned the other baboons but could not find an answer. This unsettled Jugu as he was expected to report to his master about the whereabouts of the fifth (missing) baboon. Days passed without the appearance of the supposed missing baboon. Finally the farmer returned from his journey.

The farmer was happy that the farm was well looked after. The report back from Jugu to the farmer was impressive. In the end the farmer asked why Jugu did not look happy at all. Jugu explained, 'I do not know how to tell you what happened to the fifth baboon. All four baboons respected the times for feeding and co-operated but I have not seen the fifth baboon. I am worried as this is the one negative thing about my task. I do not want to see it tarnishing my good work', Jugu sighed, followed by a deep breath. The farmer realised Jugu's predicament. He brought a mirror and said, 'Jugu, come and see'. Jugu looked at the mirror and began to realise who he truly was—*der Pavian*. His absence was found (*Anwesenheit von Abwesenheit*). Here ends the Fabel.



Foreign Knowledge

Ki-Zerho (1994:36) is right to warn that:

It serves no purpose to have African academics living like home-grown clones of foreign technical and personnel, the kind of a person ordinary people cannot identify with. Of course we must beware of orthodoxy, conformity and self-serving populist poses. The goal is to get together with those groups most likely to act for the benefit of the majority, since the aim of social integration is the reduction of exploitation.

The discourse on African intellectuals raises a number of challenges. It becomes catchier when the topic is perceived from the point of view of nation building – to be precise, African nation building or reconstruction. A number of issues immediately stem from this.

Firstly, the language used by these intellectuals usually belongs to the coloniser. In other words, it belongs to 'a universalistic framework that threaten[s] dominant local interest, [and makes] the hostility of the local authorities even sharper' (Ki-Zerbo 1994:30).

Secondly, it relates to the diverse nature of their category. The challenge is to locate African intellectuals in terms of their practice in African communities.

Lastly, the lack of intellectual identity in various African communities needs to be explored as to its conditions of (in)possibility.

This presentation attempts to look at the possible role African intellectuals could play in 'nation building' or, rather, the 'reconstruction' of Africa. The presentation refers to the two discourses, namely *Abwesenheit von Anwesenheit* versus *Anwesenheit von Abwesenheit*. It argues for the reclamation of the African intellectuality for African social responsibility (Ki-Zerbo 1994:36, Mamdani 1999:112). The non-reclamation of the African intellectuality could further establish and legitimise the neo-colonial knowledge power. The presentation acknowledges the fact that some African intellectuals even 'function as powerful officials in charge of technical areas related to their qualifications, while others take on highly ideological posts' (Ki-Zerbo 1994:32). The author draws references from his South African experience in terms of research capacity development in Higher Education institutions and some national South African research institutions like the National Research Foundation (NRF).

The slave *Fabel* on five *Parsons* was used as an entrée into this important discussion on African intellectuals. It shows how often African intellectuals ignore their social responsibility based on the form and content of their training. Ki-Zerbo (1994:36) describes them as 'home-grown clones of foreign technocrats and personnel, the kind of person ordinary people cannot identify with'. In support, Mamdani (1999:129) asks:

I wonder if we should not consider the postcolonial intelligentsia, with one foot in cultural culture and another in that of their ancestors, as culturally creole?

Reflecting on the ideology of colonial education, Mamdani further says, 'So it set out to "civilise" natives through creating a westernised intelligentsia, clones who would lead the assimilationist enterprise'. This is the category of intellectual which will not do justice to African reconstruction, because there would not be a committed social responsibility attending to African realities. This is not to belittle academic freedom. Africa cannot afford to tolerate a politics characterised by,

... a siege mentality which [makes] it increasingly nervous, intolerant, authoritarian and repressive [having] a political environment which is singularly hostile to academic freedom (Ade 1994:19).

The Discourses of *Absence of Presence* and *Presence of Absence*

As indicated above, the two discourses which this presentation addresses are: the discourse of the *absence of presence* and that of the *presence of absence*. The two discourses attempt to confront the challenge of fostering active and constructive roles for African intellectuals² – roles infused and characterised by social responsibility. Mamdani (1999:130), addresses this important question when he engaged the theme of the absence of an 'Africa-focused intelligentsia' in (South) Africa. For South Africa, the first question is: 'To what extent were apartheid-enforced identities voluntarily reproduced through a knowledge industry that included schools, technikons and universities, newspapers and magazines, radio and television?' – and to what extent does this state of affairs still continue?

Mamdani (1999:130) responds to this question addressed to 'intelligentsia', or what he calls the 'intellectual apparatus' at three levels, first of the 1) the individual; 2) the institutional; and 3) the processual. The last refers to the intellectual content of knowledge.

Absence refers to the conspicuous absence of these intellectuals in their intellectual engagement of African issues (Mamdani 1999:130). This simply means that their absence is felt while communities acknowledge their presence.

² Mamdani (1999:130) prefers the terminology 'intelligentsia' used in 'a broad sense, in the sense of the original Russian word, not in the narrow sense of the English word 'intellectual'. In that broad Russian sense, the intelligentsia includes all those who drive forward creative thought and frame debate, whether in the arts or culture, whether in philosophical or social thought.

given the establishments of learning we have. For example, Mamdani (1999:131) rightly observes that:

Institutionally, South Africa had a two-tiered structure. There were white universities with a tradition of institutional autonomy particularly in the English-speaking ones—alongside state-controlled black universities. Here again we have a moral dilemma as we do with civil society and racialised democracy ... and were islands of privilege ... black universities coming out of apartheid were the intellectual counterparts of Bantustans. They were designed to function more as detention centres for black intellectuals than as centres that would nourish intellectual thought. As such, they had little tradition of intellectual freedom or institutional autonomy

African intellectuals were trained within a context that does not take their cultural background into account. This then lead to a clash between 'the perceived to be an intellectual thought' for Africa and 'the ought to be an intellectual thought' for the continent. This clash affected the three levels referred to above by Mamdani (the individual, the institutional and the processual or the intellectual content of knowledge). The result of the clash is as follows:

- a. Intellectuals at our universities find it difficult to relate to problems African communities face. These individuals will always refer to their training masters and mistresses as points of reference for any contribution that has to be made for Africa. They rely on and live their 'masters' and 'mistresses' lives. They use them as their intellectual models. Their intellectual lives aim at the protection and support of the position, institutional function and discourse of their masters.
- b. These same intellectuals further find the African symbolic universe and cosmology limited to pre-scientific thinking. There is no significant recognition of the fact that all science needs to depart from and infuse local culture and that these perspectives on the scientific enterprise are indissoluble. For instance, they fail to recognise that their usage of western concepts and instruments of learning and research derive from and implicate western culture. They do not see any relevance in pursuing 'African things'. Another example of this is the South African

compartmentalisation of 'science and technology' and 'arts and culture' respectively. In this divide, 'things African' are clustered under 'arts and culture' while 'science and technology' is reserved for those who engage the 'high science of critical thinking'. This marginalisation of African 'arts and culture' and its reduction to a 'non science' or the 'void of science' have been largely a power affair, and remains so to this day. Research skills are monopolised and the definition of African science is raped. Africa is deprived of its science and prevented from having her knowledge(s) recognised in the public scientific domain. As Professor Sipho Seepe (*Tribute Magazine* 2001:52) argues, the exclusion of African knowledge from,

research can be linked to issues of epistemology, and the political and cultural location in which the research takes place. We err if we consider the research debate within the social sciences and humanities as simply an issue of skills, techniques and procedure.

- c. The African context mainly functions as reservoir for case study research while one uses theories and methods developed somewhere else for different purposes and aims. Unfortunately, theories and methods developed from within the African context and for the purposes of serving African aspirations and goals, are either scarce or even marginalised or suppressed if there are any. Even African intellectuals engage in such practices and are vanguards of such philosophies. African universities graduates brought up in positions of genuflection and obedience to such knowledge are not prepared for their task in society. They will continue to represent an alienating 'science'.
- d. There are African professors who do not engage the learning and research enterprise to full capacity with their students. They either are unable to empower their graduates, or unwilling. One example of such professors comprises of the group who was trained in Western academia and paradigms. They use Africa for case study material, but, on their return from their masters' land, they prefer to remain exclusive and ultimately die as antiques who did not contribute anything to the African child and communities. They are not the role models the African scientists and leaders of tomorrow need. Another example of

this is found in the group of African professors who retire, having not promoted a single PhD student in his or her life. Preferring to remain a power unto him- or herself, this group does not think of grooming other young, well-trained and critical African scholars. In some instances one finds this type of professors giving African graduates a raw deal during the promotion processes too—continuously finding them inadequate while not empowering them in research training and publishing. Some of the common expressions I have heard are the following:

It is better to be promoted by a European professor than by an African professor. They (European professors) take time to guide you through to the finalisation of the process, whereas African professors do not even give themselves time to guide you. The latter simply want to acquire a knowledge powerbase; they are power hungry and are jealous.

- c. There are intellectuals who are bedfellows with their respective governments. It is unfortunate that so many intellectuals are used by their governments to support policies and practices that are against the 'people's issues' rights. These are co-opted hangers on who cannot or do not want to critically assess their role in their respective communities. They are only concerned about their personal well-being, and this at the expense of the majority of people who suffer as a result of the callous and inhumane practices of some of their African masters. They are used as rubber stamps and their knowledge (and power) is undermined by their masters' states. The co-option of African intellectuals is a recurring activity. It is in this sphere more than any other, that African intellectuals need to redefine their role and critical positioning—their relationships to power and the African state. The counter-relationship is the one with the people. Here too, the question can be raised as to their hermeneutics—whether they engage African 'people's issues', or whether these issues are so de-contextualised, that it borders on a blatant lack of respect for the African context. Ultimately, there is a clash between these intellectuals and the communities 'they are supposed to be serving' with critical intellectual capital. The result of this clash is mistrust without constructive engagement. For meaningful dialogue such intellectuals need to reconnect to their respective communities. This process is necessary to

ensure that *none* of the parties feel excluded. If one feels excluded, the result is that communities feel marginalised and not regarded as centrally engaged in the development and reconstruction of African communities—economically, politically, socially, and religiously.

- f. Apart from African intellectuals who do not contribute constructively to our continent, there are those who, through much toil and often fierce opposition, made significant forward strides in the interests of the developing of an autochthonous African intelligentia and intellectual tradition. One has to acknowledge the constructive roles which have been played by some African intellectuals in the continent's reconstruction. The following figures come to mind: Chinua Achebe, Okot p'Bitek, Ali Mazrui, Cheik Anta Diop, Mahmoud Mamiani, E'skia Mphahlele, and Jake Mapanje to mention but a few. Among many others, these scholars have all shown their intellectual presence (and not absence) in various ways.

Challenges

Intellectual Relevance

The challenges facing African intellectuals could be summarised in terms of location or context (relevance) and content (relevance). There is a need to 'have organic intellectuals. As Gramsci (1995:98) strongly argues, every community,

... coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and awareness of its function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields.

These are intellectuals who are accountable to their communities in terms of their *hinc operandi* and not to the ivory towers considered to be centres of excellence while they remain irrelevant as to the context-content relationship. This challenges African intellectuals to begin to grapple with the concept of the *local critical mind space* in order to make their contribution to African societies a social obligation and thereby translating it into social intellectuality, monitored, interpreted, challenged, engaged, and trusted with the people. This

mode of practicing intellectuality can be characterised by an *open, present, honest critique and for, with and in community*—it is all about 'people's lives' and the 'quality of life'.

Firstly, openness—it is diverse and addresses and impacts on countless life issues. In the process, issues raised are *problematizations* which undergird the lives of the common people and are absent from institutionalised published institutions. Instead of capitalising on systems from which only a few can benefit, it is open to the populace.

Secondly, presence it—this is about life and opens one up to the reality of face-to-face presence and contact. Engaged voices present one with a mirror of life and presence. In this discourse, there is no place for a multiplicity of absences, or its empty promises and elusiveness. The discourse offers one an opportunity to be immersed in the intellectual conversation of presence and contact: real presence and real contact and not the dubious absences of intellectuals out of touch with African social and cultural realities.

Thirdly, honest critique—this is in the place of the absence of constructive critical scholarship. Intellectuals' critical awareness and the listening of critical dialogue, are fundamental (in the sense of creating a foundation) for reconstruction. This critique must be diverse—especially as it must allow for African intellectuals to be criticised (or even 'monitored') by their communities. Such engagement will lead to intellectuals becoming more relevant and communities, to learn from scholarly endeavours.

Lastly, in essence, it is all about communal life and co-operativeness. Intellectuality connects the disconnected, and opens up stifled channels of communication. It deconstructs existing boundaries, and re-orders these channels and boundaries, linking and connecting them for the purposes of advancing the dignity and integrity of the local people. African intellectuality is *about life, is for the continuous improvement of the quality of life, is relevant in the midst of life, and continuously need to engage issues in life*.

An Africa-focused Intelligentsia

The key to the realisation of a relevant academia, is only one: a reawakening of the mind (Mamdani 1999:129). On this, Mamdani (1999:130) said:

This, surely, is why every renaissance is first and foremost a reawakening of thought. It is why the driving force of every renaissance is inevitably the intelligentsia.

Mamdani further (1999:134) argues for an African-focused intelligentsia:

[T]here can be no renaissance without an intelligentsia to drive it ... an African renaissance requires an Africa-focused intelligentsia to drive it ... South Africa lacks an Africa-focused intelligentsia as critical numbers. It lacks it because the institutional apparatus of learning in this country continues to be hostile to Africa-focused thought. There is need by the state, but not only the state, to create enabling conditions for the nurture of an African-focused intelligentsia. These conditions will need to create an institutional context receptive to such thought. In turn, such a context cannot be created without strong conditionalities that are centred on the decolonisation and are attached to state support for educational institutions.

Knowledge Systems Research

African intellectuals need to understand the past systems located in different regions of Africa. The challenge is to critically look at these systems and see how they had transformed the past into different forms and how they could currently be used for addressing the 'now' of African problems and challenges, or how they could be criticised because they have failed to assist African aspirations in the face of colonial and neo-colonial hegemonies.

This is where one should recognise the work done by the National Research Foundation (NRF), having established the Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) Focus Area as part of their research brief, the National Research Foundation Act of 1998. The objectives behind this Focus Area are to:

- promote, encourage and support research within IKS to established and empower potential researchers and institutions in all fields of science;
- innovate and develop knowledge by acknowledging the importance of the existing knowledges and technologies around populations and communities. The NRF seeks to create opportunities for IK to be developed locally while recognising the national as well as the global trends and challenges.

In acknowledging indigenous knowledge (IK), the NRF seeks to champion its protection and use for the benefit of its owners and the communities where it is

practiced. This requires the stimulation of critically-based research initiatives that are carried out with the participation of the communities in which they originate and are held. This makes IKS dynamic, based on accumulated traditional/indigenous cultural knowledge practices, holistic and situated within a cultural element. In this regard, research support, innovation and development of IKS are designed to contribute to the reclamation of 'people's pride and dignity' as well as the retention of essential elements of the diverse cultures of South Africa.

The NRF identified three research themes for funding: a) the production, transmission and use of IK, which covers amongst other issues, the nature of IK, IKS and indigenous technology; b) the role of IK in nation building, which attempts to cover issues like traditional medicine and health, indigenous food systems, socio-cultural systems, and arts, crafts and materials; and c) IK at the interface with other systems of knowledge, which explores the intersections of knowledge systems and the kinds of synergies and new knowledge they can generate.

As a focus area, IKS seeks to grow this knowledge system by encouraging researchers and those associated with them to initiate original research driven by curiosity, experience and the quest to find solutions to unanswered questions on IKS. For example, the IKS Focus Area at the NRF started to engage traditional healers in the fight against HIV/Aids in terms of the 'new HIV drug initiative and dialogue' recently. The Focus Area has observed with interest, outputs (funded proposals on IKS and the HIV epidemic) made in this regard, and that, so far, no new drug initiative has been developed, nor, have pharmacologically active molecules discovered. From traditional medicine perspective, some efficacy of traditional medicines has been reported. This gave rise to a new approach to the study of traditional medicines beyond the often superficial screening methods until now. (The current extraction and *in vitro* assay methods seem to be inappropriate for evaluating the efficacy and safety of traditional medicines.) The Medical Research Council (MRC) within the Technology and Business Development Directorate and its Indigenous Knowledge Systems (Health) —proposed a partnership based on their recently developed system for assessing the traditional claims of cure made for traditional remedies. They have further developed functional protocols for evaluating the safety and efficacy of traditional medicines in a clinical trial environment. The MRC letter sent to the IKS Focus Area dated 3 March 2003 informs:

We are very excited to inform you that we have started evaluating traditional medicines for safety and efficacy based on these protocols. Of particular interest is the observational studies carried out at Philisa Healthcare Centre where at least forty (40) very ill HIV positive patients have claimed benefits from using traditional remedies. All forty patients, who were very ill and left to die, have been given a new lease on life. The majority of the patients who we had followed up, have recovered, their opportunistic infections cleared, they have gone back to work and are productive and very healthy.

There is a need to create systems that will benefit people of Africa. The challenge is to revisit African roots and culture. Pointing to the commodity factor—that all cultures sprout from traditional views and practices—Dr. Mungane Wally Serote says in his second draft submission on the Freedom Park entitled: *Combining the Philosophy and Practice: An IKS Movement Forward*:

This knowledge, which has its own paradigm and logic, is historically the basis of all knowledge. It lost its value as its bearers lost their humanity due to slavery, oppression and exploitation. There really is no difference between the definition of science and technology and IKS, as there is no difference in definition about who is a human being between the slave and the slave owner. The difference is who and which has power and which and who does not and why. And also, since one has power and the other not, what has the one with power achieved and what the one without? ... Because the politics of western civilisation have operated on the basis of mono-knowledge and the suppression of all other knowledge, must we not ask the question: what value would other knowledge add to this most impoverished life and world of knowledge [and how could they] complement each other?

Beyond the 'Exploitation' and 'Victim' Mentalities

African intellectuals need to deal with the problem of the victim mentality from which they often suffer. The point that I made above, that, if they want to be relevant and effective, and, that existing knowledges need to engage IKS, then, we need to move beyond blaming others for our own failures. It is the opportune moment for these intellectuals to spearhead this campaign in

education and learning, research, academic *forum*, and outreach. As Mamdani (1999:130) argues:

It is a sad fact that the racialised notion of Africa is pervasive throughout this continent. It is an indicator of how colonised we have become mentally. This is, of course, why an intellectual rebirth, a reawakening of the mind, is an urgent need. It is this new sense of self, born of a different sense of history and one's place in it, that we call African renaissance. Let us recall that every major development of historical significance must rethink and rewrite history, and thereby redefine its place in history so as to give itself a sense of self-worth and a renewed sense of agency. Only those who have little to hope for from historical change can refer to great movements for changes in consciousness as a 'brain-washing' exercise.

A new definition of intellectuality is therefore necessary. It is as part of this redefinition that Mamdani (1999: 29-130) opts for the term 'intelligentsia' instead of 'intellectual', because it is

... used in its broad sense, in the sense of the original Russian word, not in the narrow sense of the English word 'intellectual'. In that broad Russian sense, the intelligentsia includes all those who drive forward creative thought and frame debate, whether in the arts or culture, whether in philosophical or social thought.

This challenges intellectuals who operate within their silos and not in reference to communities they come from or represent. This also paints a picture of intellectuals which are not victims of a class (Gramsci 1995:97²), but instead creates space for the intellectual development of skills and knowledge production in a broader sense. From this perspective, the principle of the collective learner-model—which includes the so-called excellent researchers and professors—is applicable. *We are all learners. Our intellectual development becomes a communal journey and destiny, and if these eminent 'scholars' want to exclude themselves, they do so at their own expense.* If one remains stuck in race, class or gender analyses and categorisations, it will limit the potentials of our common journey. Worse than the forces of an alienating knowledge production, it will continue to derive from 'bad faith' and not free intellectual energies for the creative and constructive engagement of our own challenges.

The Question of Language

The issue of language has to be addressed in this debate. The subject of language has generated passionate responses from African writers such as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Ama Ata Aidoo, Chinua Achebe, Gabriel Okara, Es'kia Mphahlele, and Wole Soyinka, among others. The issue has been one of the most contested challenges in postcolonial discourse. As Owomeyela (1996:3) asks:

What is the connection between language and cultural identity? What danger does the continued ascendancy of European languages pose for the vitality of African languages?

It is a fact that language is a technology of power—language becomes an instrument of power tied to class. Since every language has words full of ideological connotation and are value laden those who learn the language absorb and interiorise the ideology of the ruling class. In turn, this class determines the usage and potential of that language (More 1999:341; Fanon 1967). Unfortunately, one finds that in most cases, Europe

has infiltrated Africa's secret corners: homes, meetings, social gatherings, literature, family and interpersonal relations. Europe becomes the mediator in the lives of Africans who use English—whether domesticated or not—as a medium of communication. The ubiquity of English arrests Africa's effort to overcome European power and tutelage (More 1999:343).

There is need to have African intellectuals taking seriously the question of language in their 'intellectual' engagements to make a contribution to the 'conscious reaffirmation of the dignity of African languages and also a liberation or decolonisation of the African mind'.



There is a need for intellectuals to engage, theorise, analyse, systematise, develop, support, market, and innovate, local realities. This challenges intellectuals, for a moment to freeze foreign ideas and be relevant to their local realities. Alternatively, they need to change the direction of their thinking—to start their thinking from within local realities.

The danger of freezing out local realities for long, may result in the following: 1) the compromising of the reclamation of African dignity and pride; 2) the losing of valuable knowledge(s) which are vital to the quality of African life and culture, now and in the future; and, 3) even worse, the posing of a threat to the activities of community development and the alleviation of poverty. If this happens—which to a large extent is still the case in Higher Education—academia's absence of presence will bear the consequences of a revoluting polity—i.e. idealism by speaking.

In conclusion, the presentation attempted to identify the problem posed by the foreign and alienating nature of the educational industry's knowledge production in South Africa. It further tried to articulate this in terms of the discourses of an *Absence of Presence* and a *Presence of Absence*, and the various challenges intellectuals currently face. In the interests of nationbuilding beyond the exclusivist boundaries of race, gender and especially class, this is the right time to ask these questions and not remain a Juju—the baboon alienated from its real self, its true, engaged vocation, and the challenges this pose. For our continent, South Africa's intellectuals have not delivered.

An Africa focused intelligentsia should form a 'rapport' of 'mutual trust' with local communities—as Ngugi wa Thiong'o points out in *Moving the Centre* (xvii-xviii): 'All in all [it is about] creating space for a hundred flowers to blossom'.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems
National Research Foundation

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Identikit: The Politics of Critical Thought¹

Shane Moran

One of the key outcomes of education is hoped to be the production of critical thinkers. What forces and choices shape the identity of the critical intellectual?

As a way of approaching this question I would like to begin by recalling the work of one of South Africa's celebrated critical intellectuals; Govan Mbeki's study, *South Africa: The Peasants' Revolt* (1964).

Mbeki's strong identification with the Transkeian peasants and his outrage at the imputation of tribalism on South Africa is submerged into a clinical critique of the socio-economic realities of the Transkei, the show-piece of the Bantustan scheme. In his dissection of the fraud of separate development, Mbeki analyses apartheid ethnicity as racialisation, and cultural identity as the means of 'divide and rule'. This attempt to seduce Africans with the re-emergence of pre-colonial identities is, he argues, a gross distortion of reality.

In response he offered a tendentious formulation that has its own history and raises other questions, principally concerning the definition of a nation: 'South Africa is a simple multi-national society, integrated and inter-dependent' (Mbeki 1964:18). Mbeki shows that, at their best, intellectuals can oppose apartheid and identitarian structures of domination by demystifying belief and corrupted ideology.

Still, it is equally true that intellectuals can be seen working in the name of Enlightenment and the interest of bureaucratic technocracy. In this scenario racial hatreds are seen as an impediment to Reason in its

universalising and identitarian vocation. Such activity can function as part of clearing the ground for unobstructed planning and exploitative 'development'. Clearly intellectuals working against oppressive identity constructs are not themselves outside of the identity game.

Although it may not be immediately obvious, I believe that literature, or to be precise the study of literature, has a bearing on these issues.

Apart from the relation between the literary canon and national or linguistic identity there are a number of relevant connections. Identity as identification in the sense of empathy and intersubjective understanding is essential to the humanistic provenance of literary studies. The humanistic ethos proffers the literary monument as an antidote to the sociopathic refusal of identification at the root of discrimination. This is why teachers of literary studies persistently maintain that the study of literature can help to weaken prejudice and instil, amongst other things, critical cosmopolitanism rather than bland sociophilia (we produce 'critical citizens of the world', we intone when corrected).

The litany runs as follows: literature as the medium of rediscovery of self, of recognition, reflection or even restitution, self-formation, and reading as experiencing something rather than simply attaining knowledge. In its redemptive form this can slide into an idealist delirium of identification with a symbolic author that downplays the contradictions of production. Identification always threatens to obliterate the complexities of textuality, to liquidate history.

From this unlikely source, with the autopsy on literary studies now all but completed (small the disinfected!), lessons can be learnt regarding the power and mechanics of representation. It opens the way for the strategy of stressing non-identity when identifications are being demanded, and of emphasising sexual identity when difference is being deployed to undermine the sharpening of collective interest.

I would like to give a brief example of the critical strategy I have in mind by considering a non-literary text that shows the pitfalls of evoking identification as empathy.

In his essay entitled "Nature, History, and the Failure of Language: The Problem of the Human in Post-Apartheid South Africa" John Noyes is concerned to endorse what he calls the 'imperative on intellectuals to confront the politics of their own critical thought' (Noyes 2002: 275). The problems associated with the TRC elicit the following appeal:

¹ Keynote address at the Symposium on 'Culture, Identity and Literature', held at the Govan Mbeki Centre, University of Durban-Westville (November, 23 2002). The symposium was funded by the National Research Foundation (NRF). However, none of the views expressed in this paper or the papers read at the symposium must be attributed to the NRF.

What this shows is just how seriously we need an academy of critical discourse that can articulate the conflicting group identities that have to be negotiated if a democratic practice is to be possible in South Africa today We must critically examine the conceptual basis for establishing a South African identity in the wake of apartheid. (Noyes 2002:571-2, 273)

Noyes is concerned to critique 'the brand of identity politics whose ideal is the racialised but culturally targetable subject of consumption in a global economy' (272). It is in the name of a still more inclusive identity, 'common humanity' (274), that the constructions of the consumerist subject are criticised.

However, Noyes notes that the spectacle of the TRC has made it imperative to also interrogate an idea of humanity that appears to pre-empt the demand for justice as much as it facilitates reconciliation. The danger highlighted here is of legitimating a coercive humanism that constrains the victim but that has in fact failed to constrain the perpetrators. If you don't forgive in the name of human solidarity you (the victim) will be compounding the crime and be complicit with the inhumanity of the perpetrator. Therefore, Noyes reasonably concludes, 'isn't it necessary to retain a certain political function of difference within the concept of the human?' (276):

This imperative forces us to bear in mind that redistribution—a political issue which is intimately tied to reconciliation—requires a sustained engagement with the differences introduced into universal subjectivity by the rhetoric and policies of apartheid. In this sense a politics of redistribution is profoundly opposed to the rhetoric of common humanity that drives the Truth Commission. (Noyes 2000: 273)

It seems to me that this formulation leaves at least one vital question unanswered. If redistribution is incompatible with the form of reconciliation promoted by the TRC, then what alternative form might the 'politics of redistribution' (and hence reconciliation) take?

Despite a strong identification with the violated and oppressed, Noyes makes no mention of alternative traditions of thought and praxis that have centred on the question of redistribution. He chooses to displace the urgency of redistribution with the task of 'interrogat[ing] the idea of the human' (280). Upping the ante of pious criticism of the TRC's 'rhetoric of common humanity'

officially locates the major barrier to meaningful redistribution (and reconciliation) within humanism rather than, for example, the legacy of apartheid-era garnered wealth.

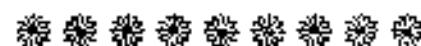
The logic runs thus: there are problems in post-apartheid South Africa that can be traced to the historic compromise and that call on us to identify with the victims of history; but this should not be taken to mean that other alternatives to that settlement should be considered as viable since they have, after all, been rejected (by others who must assume that responsibility); so: all is not well but there is no alternative beyond epochal change.

The politics of critical thought dovetail with the politics of the status quo. To see this ritualised deflection for what it is brings into sharp relief the importance of refusing to gloss over the non-identity of intellectual representation and general freedom. Predictably, and rather unfortunately, I confess that it is equally true that gestures to the force of this disjunction should not be hastily taken for the wanders of critical integrity either.

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Book Review

Oral Traditions

Book Review

The Parallel Rhythmic Recitations of the Rabbis of Israel: Genre of the Maxim

by Marcel Jousse

by Marcel Jousse

Prefaced and translated by Edgard Sienart and Joan Conolly

Cape Town and Durban: Mantis Publishing

ISBN: 0-620-28790-8, 258 pages

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The Parallel Rhythmic Recitations of the Rabbis of Israel: Genre of the Maxim by Marcel Jousse, prefaced and translated by Edgard Sienart and Joan Conolly, is an exceptionally important book, translated from the original French text which is very rare, and consequently little known.

Jousse's work has been brought back into the forefront of studies of oral traditions by Sienart and Conolly with their earlier translation of *The Anthropology of Gesture and Rhythm* (2000); and this new volume both complements that landmark publication and moves us into a new appreciation of the significance of Jousse's radically simple and remarkably sophisticated theory of Oral Style. It was based on the physical realities of voice and movement rather than the abstract dynamics of culture and cognition; and countering the widely accepted claim that writing and printing provided human beings with a way of recording and studying texts, it demonstrated the origins of these practices in the ancient—and as Jousse constantly emphasized, the modern—rhythmic and gestural technologies of memorization.

Early in the twentieth century, when much that is now taken for granted in studies of language and discourse was being formulated, Jousse was a major presence; and his work—considering as it did with that of Rudolf Steiner, with which it was in sympathy—provoked lively controversy. But then, in the way of the world, Jousse slipped out of hearing, and out of print. This book, which complements *The Anthropology of Gesture and Rhythm* and takes us onto new territory, remedies that.

The Parallel Rhythmic Recitations of the Rabbis of Israel: Genre of the Maxim is a collection of fifty Aramaic proverbs which Jousse translated into French. Jousse explains the mnemonic effect of rhythm and balance in their structure, and outlines a theory of oral expression that combines (as few others do) the physical and the psychological, as well as the secular and the sacred dynamics of recitation.

It will be of interest to a wide range of readers, across religious and cultural and linguistic traditions; and it is a welcome reminder of what important work there is to be done by staying close to the actual conditions of textual production and reproduction.

Edgard Sienart and Joan Conolly have added a valuable preface which locates Jousse in the context of a number of current issues in the study of oral and written traditions. I regularly use *The Anthropology of Gesture and Rhythm* in the courses I teach in oral and written traditions at the University of Toronto and the University of Michigan; and I look forward to adding this new study. Response to Jousse by the graduate students I teach, typically from around the world and representing a wide array of cultural and religious heritages, is invariably enthusiastic; and recently several Ph.D. students have taken up his work in their dissertations.

This is very significant scholarship that Edgard Sienart and Joan Conolly are engaged in, and I both applaud and encourage it.

