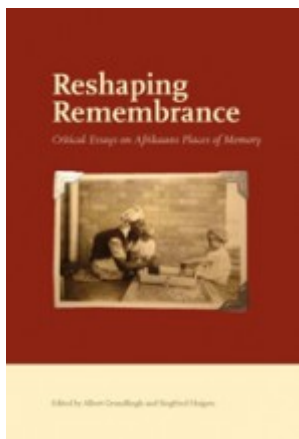


Reshaping Remembrance ~ Why Have A Ghost As A Leader? The 'De la Rey' Phenomenon And The Re-Invention of Memories, 2006-2007



1.

In an altogether unusual way, a dimension of the South African War of more than hundred years ago came to knock on the door of Afrikanerdom in 2006 and 2007, in the form of a popular song entitled 'De la Rey', and sung by Louis Pepler under the stage name Bok van Blerk. The song is about the exploits of the Boers during the war under the charismatic leadership of General Jacobus Hendrik (Koos) de la Rey. At the time of the centenary of the South African War in 1999-2002 there was little sign of mobilisation around bygone military events; in fact, the Afrikaners' commemoration of the war was characterised by contemplative reflection rather than by an emotional reliving of the past.**[i]** However, four years later 'De la Rey' struck gold. Within less than a year Bok van Blerk sold the unequalled number of 200 000 CDs - an exceptional achievement in a relatively limited market. Moreover, his concerts were packed with enthusiastic fans, from the rural areas in South Africa to as far afield as America, Canada, the Netherlands and New Zealand.**[ii]**

For many fans the concerts were an emotional issue. Some teenagers were totally carried away: with closed eyes and hand to the heart they almost went into a trance on hearing the first chords of De la Rey. Among the enthusiastic crowds were those who regard the song as nothing less than a new national anthem.**[iii]** Moreover, this song did not appeal to the youth only. In Potchefstroom, where Bok van Blerk performed at the Aardklop Arts Festival, 'little old ladies with gilt-framed reading glasses' whispered the words in unison while 'elderly men wearing Piet Retief beards' jumped to their feet and heartily joined the students in song.**[iv]**

2.

What was Van Blerk's intention in bringing De la Rey back to life? The media regularly questioned him about this and his answer was the same every time: it was merely about a historical figure and not politically motivated.**[v]** What complicates the matter, however, is that there are of course many levels of political expression. If one focuses on overt and explicit intentions linked to a programme, there is no evidence that Van Blerk and his group had any connections with organised politics before the CD was launched. But other dimensions of political involvement could indeed exist. In his description of the connection between politics and music, Goehr points out that

*... by denying involvement with the political, musicians might be playing out in music their most effective political role - ... in abstraction, in transcendence ... In general, abstraction or transcendence has been seen to be achieved in the employment of creativity, imagination, and contemplation in what nearly twocenturies ago was referred to as 'the free play of faculties'.**[vi]***

It can be argued that it is at this broad level of transcendence that the political nature of De la Rey comes to the forefront - it touches on the cultural and historical dimensions, and within this framework creates space for free association. Van Blerk's viewpoint is that it deals with the restoration of a part of history that is in danger of being forgotten. He demarcates the terrain within which he operates: 'Patriotism is not always political.

Just ask the Scots who still cry - even today - when they hear "Flower of Scotland" being played. It touches one's inner being, one's identity and culture'.**[vii]** From this broad, transcendental perspective the audience can then interpret the song in their own way.

De la Rey must also be read against the background of the other songs on the CD that are mostly about liquor consumption, cars, girls in bikinis and rugby (the 'coloured' wing Bryan Habana). These contributions are more in line with mainstream Afrikaans light music and have a different flavour. Consequently one can deduce that it was not initially the intention of Van Blerk and his group to send out a strong political message.

In slight contrast to the political assumptions concerning De la Rey, it was also alleged that the song was merely produced for financial gain. Van Blerk denied this: 'On the contrary, it was a bit of a risk to include this song in a commercial

album. If someone had tried to tell me a year ago that a song about a Boer general would become a number one hit on the radio, ahead of the top names in the music business, I would have laughed at him.’ At the same time, he made the point that it was only logical that an artist would never turn out a product in the hope that it will not succeed. However, De la Rey exceeded their wildest expectations and ‘we are obviously not going to be ashamed of, or apologise for the fact that we are making money with it’.**[viii]**

De la Rey as a historical figure was not simply chosen by chance. Besides the fact that De la Rey rhymes with the Afrikaans word ‘lei’ (to lead), which was surely an important consideration, Van Blerk also found him a ‘fascinating character’.**[ix]** The renowned poet and writer Antjie Krog agrees with this view. She contends that De la Rey was ‘a fantastic choice for the song, considering that on the very day of his death various myths came into being about the man’.**[x]**

There were various elements and apparent paradoxes that afforded him status as an enigma. He had his doubts about Paul Kruger’s declaration of war in 1899, yet he avowed that he was altogether willing to commit himself to the battle. During the war, he became known as the ‘Lion of the Western Transvaal’ as a result of his military genius. But he was also a gallant general who showed concern for the wounded general P.S. Methuen. At the time of the turmoil caused by the 1914 Rebellion he was strongly influenced by the shadowy Boer prophet Siener van Rensburg, and this contributed to the fact that he acquired a certain mystic quality. In addition, the circumstances surrounding his death, which Siener supposedly predicted, fanned his supporters’ suspicions. On the eve of the Rebellion, just outside Johannesburg, De la Rey was accidentally hit by a ricocheting bullet fired by the police, who mistakenly identified the car in which he and General C.F. Beyers were travelling as that of a criminal gang. Some of his supporters, who had their doubts about the way in which he died, spread the false rumour that he had been shot deliberately on government orders.**[xi]**

His mythical status flourished even further. Aspects of his career and his death clearly contributed to the creation of his image as a charismatic hero. It is this De la Rey aura that Van Blerk and company exploited in the song and the video. Antjie Krog rightly points out that ‘De la Rey is pictured in romantic terms in the song: rushing at a gallop, flying across the landscape, known by his praise name: the Lion of the West Transvaal. A lion and a horse, majestic, beautiful, fearless and fast’.**[xii]** But why, one may well ask, have mainly the youth of the ‘volk’ now

decided to choose a ghost as a leader?

3.

Historically speaking, protest music was not an outstanding genre in Afrikaans music, with the important exception of the Voëlvry Movement who in the 1980s used their music in a unique way against the ruling apartheid government.**[xiii]** During the first half of the 1990s, at the time of the transition in South Africa, Afrikaans music showed mainstream qualities and was mainly devoid of political elements. Yet, music with implicit social commentary gradually started to surface. Bands such as those of Karen Zoid - the first Afrikaans rock chick - and others with names like 'Klopjag' (*'Raid'*), 'Snotkop' (*'Snothead'*), 'Brixton Moord en Roof Orkes' (*'Brixton Murder and Robbery Band'*) and 'Fokofpolisiekar' (*'Fuck Off Police Car'*) all addressed elements of the changing contemporary dispensation and established their own artistic critical accents.

Some of the music, like Zoid's, contained nihilistic ambivalences, while the lyrics of others were more outspoken in denouncing state policy and showed increasing rancour at still having to do penance, as Afrikaners, for the sins of apartheid. Although they were at times explicit in their discontent, they did not express this dissatisfaction in the form of a potentially ethnic project.**[xiv]** Nevertheless, it can be argued that the frustration that these groups pinpointed did, to some degree, prepare the way for De la Rey.

A striking feature of De la Rey is the nostalgic undertone of the song, which refers longingly to a hero of bygone times. Although the phenomenon of nostalgia has the past as its subject, its essence is to be found in the present. It is constructed in the present and accordingly bears the tracks of the spirit of the age in which it is created. At the same time, the nostalgically constructed mental image of the past is set up in opposition to the present, which subsequently implicitly forces a comparison. In both cases, a particular reciprocal action takes place. The past is inclined to become purified and idealised while the present is experienced as being disagreeable and threatening. Emotional strength can therefore be drawn from the past.**[xv]**

However, this does not necessarily mean that nostalgia is an antiquated and sentimental kind of reflection that has a crippling effect on the challenges of the present. As Kloppers**[xvi]** indicates, '(i)t is rather a form of affirmation of life, recalling certain matters from the past and reclaiming them (often in new ways)'.

In this sense nostalgia cannot in the first place be seen as atavistic in so far as it rather attempts to overcome a modern kind of fragmentation by energising images of the past. **[xvii]** In conjunction with this aspect, nostalgia can be a journey of discovery that gives meaning to the present.

According to the well-known Afrikaans writer Dana Snyman, who relies heavily on nostalgia in his work, 'after 1994 many Afrikaners were slightly ashamed of our past [...] now we are unashamedly involved in rediscovering ourselves. To rediscover yourself you must know who you were. That is why we become nostalgic about the past'. **[xviii]** Within the context of rituals of dance and music that have the past as subject, Eyerman and Jamison emphasise that this practice does not demonstrate some kind of 'primitiveness', but rather constitutes a present that can be remembered in a creative way. Similarly nostalgia cannot merely be linked to particular political schools of thought. In this regard Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase point out that '[t]he view of nostalgia as a self-serving, chauvinist, right-wing version of the past foisted by the privileged and propertied likewise neglects half the facts. The left no less than the right espouses nostalgia.' **[xix]** Without wanting to imply that the African National Congress still strives after a leftist ideological agenda today, it can be said that it does indeed often appeal to a leftist struggle past.

It is easy to see the ghost of the old and obdurate Afrikaner nationalism in these De la Rey flights of memory. Perhaps too easy. It is true that a few people waved the old South African flag at concerts, but on the whole the discourse exuded a different spirit. Van Blerk himself claims that it has to do with respect for cultural goods and that they are '100% in favour of moving on', of leaving the apartheid past behind and of being part of the 'rainbow nation ... but then we ask to be treated in the same way as other groups'. **[xx]** The desire is therefore expressed to be accepted fully as a minority and without reserve in the new South Africa.

Although his word naturally does not have to be accepted, Van Blerk's followers also make it clear that

[we do not] long for the old dispensation of the Broederbond and the mendacious National Party ministers. We are merely seeking a new identity, an identity that is removed from the lip-service and lies of the National Party. And the attempts at indoctrination by the Broederbond. In other words, the Afrikaners' own identity and not the politicians' rendering ... And that new identity has become clear to me in the case of artists like ... Bok van Blerk. **[xxi]**

4.

The emotion-laden quest for identity of Van Blerk's followers can also be situated within the broader context of South Africa's material realities. As far as the economy is concerned, there are analysts who claim that despite difficulties, the Afrikaners are financially in a better position at present than in the time of apartheid. **[xxii]** Ton Vosloo, chairman of Naspers, has pointed out that notwithstanding 'pockets of poor whites ... in material terms things have never been so good ... Notice who possess beach houses and drive 4X4s, besides a Merc and another smaller car as well as a bakkie in the garage or yard. We complain far too easily while we are sitting pretty.' **[xxiii]**

It is in this connection that Herman Wasserman wrote a satirical response in which he exhorts De la Rey to come and lead the Boers:

You will have to come and fetch them. But remember not to look for them in the wrong places. Although Bokkie's little song laments the fact that his wife and child are languishing in a camp ('my vrou en kind lê in 'n kamp en vergaan'), the people who sing his song at the top of their voices do not live in squatters' camps. Their children are not perishing while their parents earn a starvation wage by toiling in other people's kitchens and gardens. No, you will have to fetch your followers from Tyger Valley, Somerset Mall and Menlyn Park. You will see huge, shiny 4X4s, packed with supplies from Woollies, following your horse out of the parking areas. **[xxiv]**

De la Rey is also advised to change his attire, because 'that bandolier and waistcoat are going to make you look very out of place among the Billabongs and Levi's that the young fellows wear when they go out for a drink at the Mystic Boer in the evenings'. **[xxv]**

This point of departure does not necessarily cancel the idealistic yearnings of Van Blerk's adherents, but by involving other realities it does indeed place the youth's position in perspective. An analysis of the nature of the De la Rey concerts clearly shows that excessive drinking is part of the profile. A report of a specific concert stated that the drinking went on to a point of great exuberance. **[xxvi]** Although excessive drinking is, of course, quite common among the youth and does not necessarily have any greater overt meaning, it is in sharp contrast to the sober historical figure that is called to mind. One commentator formulated it in the following way:

The Boers of whom Bok van Blerk sings were God-fearing people with self-

*respect, pride, ethical values, moral values, standards and loyalty. The 'Boers' who sing De la Rey in bars these days lead debauched lives. They have no self-respect. They sleep around and have no moral or ethical values, because all they do is look for the next opportunity to become motherless. What is more, there is much we can say with regard to loyalty.***[xxvii]**

In the same way there is also a discrepancy between the language usage of certain individuals and the general passion for Afrikaans Van Blerk lays claim to. One fan had the following to say about Van Blerk: 'I dig his music. He's a cool dude. I like Bok because he says it like it is. I'm telling you, he's hot! Hot like a potato!' **[xxviii]** It is clear that some young people will derive from rock concerts whatever makes sense (or non-sense) to them, notwithstanding the more elevated connotations that others might want to attach to such shows. These expressions of behaviour indicate simultaneously the multiple contexts within which De la Rey has been received and interpreted.

Furthermore, it is obvious that the De la Rey phenomenon shows strong signs of a masculine character. As Cornell puts it, 'Masculinity is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practice through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture.' **[xxix]**

In the case of De la Rey it is not only the masculine icon of the man on his horse that occupies the particular space, but without trying to pretend that De la Rey does not have its quota of female fans, it seems as if men are over-represented at concerts and women stay slightly in the background. De la Rey, it appears, speaks more powerfully to men than to women. **[xxx]**

It is understandable that if one looks at the phenomenon from a different angle, both the lyrics of De la Rey and the emotive nature of the song are enough to make one suspect that a resurgence of sectional nationalism is apparent. In the absence of largescale formally organised nationalistic Afrikaner structures that are striving for the return of the old political dispensation, it would however be difficult to channel the possible power of De la Rey into meaningful avenues. Today, without the backing of state power, Afrikaner organisations such as the 'Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurkringe' and 'Solidariteit' have a different role than in the past.

In this respect, the song at best caused political stirrings. It should also be taken into account that some of the Afrikaner youth see the 'old' Afrikaner nationalism as a strange, distant phenomenon with which they find it difficult to identify; it has an archaic and problematic character. It is even experienced so negatively that it is felt it should rather not be studied.**[xxxi]** The idiom and register in which some of the youth discover De la Rey differs altogether from the way in which older generations experience it.

A somewhat unexpected reaction to the De la Rey phenomenon at one stage was that the government deemed it advisable to issue a statement on the matter. The statement read that each group has the right to freedom of speech but that it is necessary to be aware of 'De la Rey and its coded message to fomenting revolutionary sentiments'.**[xxxii]**

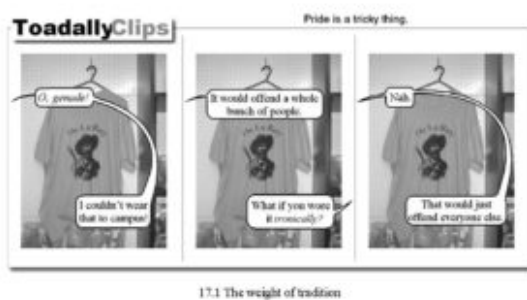
The dynamic of such an exaggerated reaction points to a distrustful state. The Afrikaner establishment reacted in a similar manner to the Afrikaans anti-apartheid music of the Voëlvry Movement in the late 1980s.**[xxxiii]** Likewise, under communism in Eastern Europe, popular music was frequently seen as subversive. Garofalo points out that this was a widespread phenomenon:

*[The] suspicion [exists] on the part of the authorities that even the most innocuous songs contain subversive political content, which is received as such by a 'knowledgeable' audience. The tendency has had the effect of politicizing music which is not intentionally political and enhancing the power of music which is.***[xxxiv]**

In this way, exactly the opposite is achieved of what was initially desired. It is not too far-fetched to suspect that the ANC's reaction to the song possibly lay in the fact that during the anti-apartheid struggle the term 'Boere' was synonymous with the enemy and that it was expressed, among others, in the slogan 'Kill the Boer, kill the farmer'. Today, thirteen years after 1994, the term 'Boer' has not yet lost its negative political connotations in certain black circles.**[xxxv]** In the light hereof it is understandable that a song in which the 'Boers' are mobilised might cause suspicion. Sean Else, one of the cowriters of De la Rey, found it 'quite worrying that we be analysed under a political microscope' as a result of 'a song that is about a Boer general of 100 years ago'. According to Else, a song that the previous deputy president Jacob Zuma regularly sang at gatherings, 'Awulet' umshini wam' ('Bring my machine gun') had the potential to be far more inflammatory than De la Rey.**[xxxvi]**

5.

Reservations about the song probably emanate from an assumption that the Afrikaner youth in the new South Africa ought to create a new and more appropriate identity. The irony however is that for some supporters De la Rey, as indicated, is in fact regarded as a positive, forward-looking expression of identity, supported by a relatively uncontaminated pre-apartheid South African version of history. Since many of these young people have a limited understanding of the past, they see De la Rey as new and fresh, despite the possible repugnance that it may evoke in others.



17.1 The weight of tradition

17.1 The weight of tradition

In a concluding perspective, it is useful to compare De la Rey with the way in which the South African War was used as a historical marker in Afrikaner circles in the past. During the 1930s and 1940s, at the time of the flourishing of Afrikaner nationalism that finally came to political fruition at the polls in 1948, the prevailing discourse on the South African War mainly centred on regaining political power after the defeat suffered in 1899-1902. When the results of the 1948 election became known, some Nationalists took it to mean that the injustices of the past had been redressed. [xxxvii] In 2006 and 2007, the discourse mainly centred on a cultural expression and rediscovery of identity without conveying a message that focused on the regaining of power. In fact, in a certain sense, the song reflects the sense of futility in realising that power has been surrendered for good, thus the almost plaintive appeal to a bygone leader whose time is, likewise, long past.

The great majority of Afrikaners are level-headed enough to realise that erstwhile political power cannot be regained. During an interview in 2004, Tim du Plessis, the editor of *Rapport*, made the following comment on the creation of a new Afrikaner identity: 'No-one sees a political Afrikaner any longer. Politics is a sore

point that white Afrikaners in particular avoid, apart from on election days ... but there are other spaces that they explore intensely.' In this regard there is 'a golden thread that runs through everything: continuing interaction with the country that is just as dynamically and unpredictably changing as the Afrikaans community'.**[xxxviii]** Two years later, the De la Rey phenomenon would prove to be a manifestation of the process. The chords of the song resounded loudly in an apparent attempt to mobilise the Afrikaner. But this does not necessarily imply any sinister intent. Given the constant shifts occurring in the Afrikaner community it appears to be little more than a temporary flare-up that could be taken over by other voices promoting an identity strain containing different accents. Be it as it may, it will be difficult in the future to ignore De la Rey as a retrospective pointer in Afrikaans popular culture - even if it is only enshrouded in spectral mists.

NOTES

- i.** A. Grundlingh, 'Reframing remembrance: The politics of the centenary commemorations of the South African War of 1899-1902', in: *Journal of South African Studies* 30(2) (June 2004), 369-375.
- ii.** *Die Burger*, 7 February 2007, 'Dié Bok se bokkies wil hom hééé!'
- iii.** *Die Huisgenoot*, 15 February 2007, 'Hoe rey die boere? Jil-Jil so!'
- iv.** *Beeld*, 28 September 2006, 'Bok van Blerk se magtige dreuning'.
- v.** For example, 'Bok maak hart oop oor De la Rey', in *Rapport*, 26 February 2007.
- vi.** L. Goehr, 'Political music and the politics of music', in: *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (52)1 (Winter 1994), 107.
- vii.** *Rapport*, 24 February 2007, 'Bok maak hart oop oor De la Rey'.
- viii.** *Ibid.*
- ix.** *Rapport*, 21 October 2006, 'Bok van Blerk staan styf oor sy De la Rey-lied'.
- x.** *Die Matie*, 21 March 2007, 'Krog positief oor De la Rey'.
- xi.** H. De la Rey, *Die ware generaal Koos de la Rey* [compiled by Lappe Laubscher]. Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis 1998; F. Pretorius, *Generaal JH de la Rey*, Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis 2007; H.J. May & I. Hamilton, *Die dood van Generaal de la Rey*, Cape Town: Nasionale Boekhandel 1968; A. Grundlingh, 'Probing the prophet: The psychology and politics of the Siener van Rensburg phenomenon', in *South African Historical Journal* 34 (1996), 225-239.
- xii.** A. Krog, 'The myth, the general and the battlefield', Lecture, Department of Sociology, Stellenbosch University, 16 March 2007.
- xiii.** A. Grundlingh, 'Rocking the boat in South Africa? Voëlvry music and

Afrikaans anti-apartheid social protest in the eighties', in: *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 37(3) (2004), 483.

xiv. Andries 'Roof' Bezuidenhout, 'From Voëlvry to De la Rey: Popular Music, Afrikaner nationalism and lost irony', LitNet Seminar Room, 28 February 2007, <http://www.litnet.co.za> (accessed 2 March 2007); M. Bosman, 'Die FAK-fenomeen: Populêre Afrikaanse musiek en volksliedjies', in: *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde* 41(2) (Winter 2004), 36-37; Akropolis, 16 June 2007, 'Die jeug se vastrap'.

xv. For a general discussion on the nature of nostalgia see D. van Zyl, 'O boereplaas, geboortegrond': Afrikaner nostalgia and the romanticisation of the platteland', Unpublished Honours research essay, Stellenbosch University, 2006, 3; F. Davis, *Yearning for yesterday: A sociology of nostalgia*. New York: The Free Press 1979, 37-38.

xvi. E. Kloppers, 'Die postmodernisme, nostalgie en die himniese geheue', in: *Stilet* (XV(2) (September 2003), 205.

xvii. Compare J. Fishman, *Language and nationalism*, Massachusetts: The Open Press 1972, 9.

xviii. Sarie, June 2007, 'Gister se dinge'.

xix. C. Shaw & M. Chase, *The imagined past: History and nostalgia*. Manchester: Manchester University Press 1997, 27.

xx. Beeld, 17 November 2006, 'Besige bok is 'n bok vir sports'.

xxi. 21 H.H.B. Zaayman, 'Leandri jou doring', 6 December 2006 <http://www.litnet.co.za> (accessed 2 February 2007).

xxii. S. Terreblanche, 'Mag en onverdiende rykdom in Suid-Afrika', in *Vrye Afrikaan*, 15 February 2007.

xxiii. *Die Burger*, 11 May 2007, 'De la Rey-verwagtinge en die pad na oorlewing'.

xxiv. *Die Burger*, 12 February 2007, 'Repliek: Ope brief aan Koos de la Rey'.

xxv. *Ibid.*

xxvi. *Die Huisgenoot*, 15 February 2007, 'Hoe ry die boere? Jil-Jil so!'

xxvii. *Die Huisgenoot*, 1 March 2007, 'Forum: Brief van L.M. Janse van Vuuren'.

xxviii. *Die Huisgenoot*, 15 February 2007, 'Hoe ry die boere? Jil-Jil so!'

xxix. R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers 1995, 71.

xxx. Personal observation by author and independent observations by Sandra Swart and Lize-Marie van der Watt.

xxxi. Feedback of Stellenbosch University History students, 2007.

xxxii. 'Press statement', <http://everfasternews.com> (accessed 7 February 2007).

xxxiii. A. Grundlingh, 'Rocking the boat in South Africa? Voëlvry music and Afrikaans anti-apartheid social protest in the eighties', in: *International Journal of*

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xxxiv. R. Garofalo (ed.), *Rockin' the boat: Mass music and mass movements*. Cambridge MA: South End Press 1992, 10.

xxxv. Mail and Guardian, 18-24 May 2007, 'De la Rey - Is it just a song?'

xxxvi. Beeld, 'Almal ken die wet, sê Sean Else oor 'De la Rey'.

xxxvii. A. Grundlingh, 'The war in twentieth-century Afrikaner consciousness', in: D. Omissi & A. Thompson (eds), *The Impact of the South African War*. Basingstoke: Palgrave 2002, 29.

xxxviii. Rapport, 3 October 2004, 'n Groep wat herskep word'.

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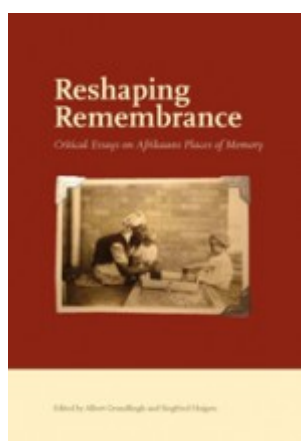
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Reshaping Remembrance ~ Boeremusiek



In the twenties and thirties traditional boeremusiek was played widely throughout South Africa. Many evenings the sounds filled houses and public places, sounded out over our land and gladdened the hearts of Boer people.[i]

1.
On 18 January 2001, I am sitting in the lounge of Professor Stanley Glasser in his house in London. Glasser is the retired Head of Goldsmiths College, University of London, and an expatriate South African. We talk about South African composition, and the imperative for South African composers not to compose European music for South Africa, but rather South African music in which Europe could be interested because it is South African. Glasser advances the notion of a kind of composition engagée. He asks where the desire is to hear the sounds of the land, where the intimate engagement with the music of the people is to be found. And then he says:

Go to a Vastrap and see what you can do with it. Go to a Vastrap evening in Nelspruit or wherever. And see what it means, the dancing, the life, it's all part of the music ... I'm talking about if there's a dance in Nelspruit on a Saturday night and all the farmers are coming in and the locals are coming in and there is a boereorke. Where are you guys ... do you ever roll up to that sort of thing? No. It's the composer who has got to do that. It's all very well to take poems by Van Wyk Louw or Leipoldt and set them. You could set it twelve tone, whole tone, keys. Whatever you like. It doesn't matter what you use, but it's the feeling you have that's got to be very attached and respectful to the community as opposed to the university, I may put it that way. I used to live in Bethel, going to a dance in

the local hall, with a Boereorkes playing. It was so lively and everybody was in a good mood and you'd see African children looking through the window and everybody was enjoying it in their own way. [ii]

'You guys'. The musicologists. The academics, including and especially Afrikaners, in the suburbs and the universities. The only paper on boeremusiek at a local academic conference for music researchers ever heard by the present writer, was in Pretoria in 2002. The secretary of the local boeremusiek club addressed delegates at the invitation of Professor Chris Walton, a born Englishman who had recently arrived from Zurich to take up the Headship of the Department of Music at the University of Pretoria. Walton found boeremusiek fascinating, partly because of the significant similarities between the local sound and the folk music equivalent in Switzerland. It was a memorable occasion, not only because the paper was so interesting and the presenter very knowledgeable, but also because of the reactions of the small audience consisting of academics and music students. As the presenter demonstrated, on one of the concertinas he had brought with him, a retired English-speaking professor from the University of the Witwatersrand started moving to music, looked merrily to her neighbour and asked: 'Where are the days?' If the music had continued for a little while, I am convinced that she would have started to dance. The Afrikaans students and academics cringed in their seats in the lecture room. Boeremusiek is not Culture (with a capital 'C'). It is a little low, a little feeble, a little simple, a little direct, a little too close to our uncultivated needs and past.

It is therefore hardly surprising that there are no entries on boeremusiek in Jacques Malan's *South African Music Encyclopaedia*. There is no reference to boeremusiek in Jan Bouws's *Komponiste van Suid-Afrika* [Composers of South Africa] (1971), Bouws's *Die Musieklewe van Kaapstad 1800-1850 en sy verhouding tot die musiekkultuur van Wes-Europa* [The Musical Life of Cape Town 1800-1850 and its relationship to the musical culture of Western Europe] (1966), Peter Klatzow's *Composers in South Africa Today*, or in any of the twenty-five editions of the *South African Journal of Musicology* (SAMUS), or any of the congress proceedings of the then *South African Musicological Society* or the *Ethnomusicology Symposium*. Nothing either in *Ars Nova*, *Muziki*, *The Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa* or *Musicus*. The 'sounds that filled houses and public places' in the twenties and thirties clearly did not reach universities, at least not in the form of published research, research papers or documents. Academically

institutionalized musicians and researchers never made this 'place' their own. The boeremusiek that 'gladdened the hearts of Boer people' is not the music of the Afrikaner intelligentsia. **[iii]**

2.
Conviviality is perhaps too light-hearted a description of the function implied here. Boeremusiek is a performance practice, a form of musical expression that links closely with memory as a performative entity. It recalls and carries memories, even maintains them. Boeremusiek is perhaps the most exemplary form of cultural expression connected to Afrikaners that can claim to maintain the collective memories of a 'group' in this way, without also imparting to the group political, social or racial definitions. In Japie Laubscher's *Ou Waenhuis* ('The old barn'), the concertina playing has a meticulous, pernickety quality, just like Japie's thin moustache. It is very different from Manie Bodenstein's broad, lyrical sound in *Lentebloeisels* ('Spring blossoms'), or Dirkie Smit's unsteady rhythm in *Mielieblare* ('Mealie leaves'). In his *Jampot Polka* ('Jam pot polka') on the accordion, Nico Castens is a virtuoso performer who can do absolutely everything and with intense energy alternates each repeated fragment with small appoggiatura's, syncopated beats or changes in articulation. The sorts of memories that Mieke Bal calls 'cultural memory' are inherent to these sounds.

The spirit of cultivation that characterized the Afrikaner in power misunderstood this energy of boeremusiek. For the Afrikaner concerned with Culture, boeremusiek was a matter of identity, of tradition, of cultural distinctness. It is therefore not strange that the FAK (Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge, translated here as Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Societies) Music Commission considered the matter of the 'quality of boeremusiek' in 1953. The minutes of that meeting read as follows:

*It has transpired from discussions that there is no clarity about what 'Boeremusiek' and a 'Boere-orke' ['Boeremusiek band'] really means. Originally, the bands now called 'Boere-orkeste' used to provide the accompaniment to dances. Later, they were also used at Boere events, where the term 'Boere-orke' seemed to originate. The problem of the SABC [South African Broadcasting Corporation] is that listeners are asking for more 'Boeremusiek'. **[iv]***

The Gallo-music archivist and David de Lange expert Rob Allingham describes boeremusiek as follows:

As I've come to understand it, boeremusiek is not just any type of Afrikaans music

- in the minds of most of its fans (and detractors), boeremusiek can be typically categorised as an instrumental dance genre which, more often than not, features the concertina as the principle instrument to render the melodies. (There are 'modernised' boeremusiek variations where the melodic leads are played with a piano accordion or even electric keyboards but the concertina, although originally of English origin, is so imbued with Afrikaner-ness in the minds of most boeremusiek fans that it has become a virtual cultural touchstone.) Another defining element is the repertoire: boeremusiek melodies draw almost exclusively on Dutch-German- French sources or sometimes, Cape Coloured/Malay influences. The characteristic off-beat rhythm that came to dominate the genre from the fifties onwards derives directly from the Cape goema-based rhythm - prior to that, the rhythm patterns were also Dutch-Germanic. **[v]**

Allingham ends his e-mail to the current writer by saying that David de Lange would not normally be described as a boeremusiek musician, as he sang instead of playing an instrument. And yet, in his book Tradisionele Boeremusiek, Piet Bester devotes a long section to De Lange. **[vi]** It is this uncertainty with regard to genre definitions (not unique to boeremusiek and applicable to most if not all popular music culture) that points to a living, fast-evolving practice rather than an expression in dialogue with tradition. The estrangement between a South African academic musical discourse and boeremusiek is confirmed in Piet Bester's rich notes on boeremusiek as a musical practice of autodidacts:

*One day [Hansie van Loggerenberg] heard a black man play a concertina and he stepped up to listen more closely. The Black played only one tune on an old boere concertina, but Hansie became interested. After the Black taught him a bit, he bought his own concertina and not long after he could play Sarie Marais fluently. **[vii]***

At the age of six, Fanie Bosch exchanged some of his best doves for a ukulele. After that, he also taught himself the pump organ, guitar and banjo: 'Fanie says that he never had any lessons or teaching and that he had to struggle on his own to master the concertina.' **[viii]** Oom (Uncle) Nelie Janse van Rensburg was taught the concertina by his uncle, Kerneels Pienaar, whose sheep he tended during the winter in Swaziland: 'Uncle Nelie kept his blood warm with the soft, melodious sounds of his boere concertina'. **[ix]**

Boeremusiek cannot be reduced to a nationalist discourse. There is something provisional, unregulated, spontaneous, unwritten about

boeremusiek.**[x]** One day, when Fanie Bosch was busy recording an LP, ... a new tune came into his head. When the next number had to be recorded, he gave the orchestra the rhythm and the key in which he wanted to play and launched into the new piece. He says that it went surprisingly well and the piece was recorded without a single mistake. His banjo player, old Banjo Botha, was apparently almost crazy with frustration. He just failed to understand how something like that could be done!**[xi]**

Hendrik Susan apparently composed the number *Ons lag, sing en dans* ('We laugh, sing and dance') only minutes before a performance.**[xii]** It is the same Fanie Bosch of the improvised recording who, after he had lost two digits of his right index finger, had to do a radio broadcast with a bandaged finger. He then composed the *Seervinger wals* ("Sore finger waltz").**[xiii]**

3.
Die Seervinger wals. Boeremusiek titles represent an Afrikaner topography far removed from the triumphalism of Afrikaner monuments, statues, theatre complexes and sport stadiums. And it is a topography that stirs memories rather than encourages historical reflection: *Soepvlees-polka* ('Soup-meat Polka'), *Lekker Kafferbier* ('Tasty Kaffir Beer'), *Pinana Booi* ('Banana Boy'), *Kamiesberg settees* ('Kamies Mountain Settees'), *Jou Flerrrie* ('You Flirt'), *Eensaam wals* ('Lonely Waltz'), *Dik Dawid settees* ('Fat David Settees'), *Die Soebat wals* ('The Pleading Waltz'), *Lentebloeisels* ('Spring Blossoms'), *Pannekoek wals* ('Pancake Waltz'), *Ou Willie se vastrap* ('Old William's Vastrap'), *Rietspruit Galope* ('Reed Stream Gallop'), *Die Blomkool polka* ('The Cauliflower Polka'), *Die Skelmvy-wals* ('The Slap-and-tickle Waltz'), *Vaalhoed* ('Faded Hat'), *Eensaamheid* ('Loneliness').

The titles refer to food, places, love, seasons, people. The references are far removed from the exclusivities that would characterize the Afrikaner community during its years in power. We find in these titles a subtle evocation of mood and an artless poetry of existence. Karel Schoeman writes about his visits to the Free State farm of Dot Serfontein and her family:

... what I now recognize clearly as influences, are the historical and genealogical interests of Dot's husband and the boeremusiek that he played from records. I remember one particular visit when we only departed late on that Sunday afternoon from the farm. Sitting in the back seat of the car during the long return journey to the city I saw the dusk-encroaching veldt pass by with the maudlin music inseparably a part of it: 'Eensaamheid' ['Loneliness'] by Sewes van

Rensburg is particularly clear in my memory. The name, no longer the tune. First the emotion, then the rhythm and then the images and the words fit: it was that evening in the car on the road back to Johannesburg that the passage came to me that I used in 'n Lug vol helder wolke ['A sky with clear clouds'], 'The silence and loneliness were intertwined in the sound of their words and weighed on the spirits; their music spoke of their isolation and deep silence, and of infinite space around every word and each flickering candle in the dark.' [xiv]

Although Schoeman writes that it is the name of the music that lingers - 'Loneliness' - it is impossible to separate the 'maudlin music' from his observations. The fact that Schoeman can't remember the tune, but instead distinctly connects the music to the dusk-encroaching veldt separating the farm and the city, tells us something about the kind of memory work performed by boeremusiek. The representation of the past in this music is not direct, but spatially concrete, emotionally highly tuned and historically informed.

Not only the names of boeremusiek numbers evoke, create, imply the 'isolation and deep silence, and ... infinite space around every word', but also the names of people who made the music. Jewish names appear in the band lists. Names like Saul Benjamin (Boy) Solomon, Harry Bartz and 'a Jew, Postma, who also played the violin'. [xv] English names too like William Schreiner (Willie) Cooper and Morgan O'Kennedy. And then the names of bands and groups: Die Soetspelers ('The Sweet/Good Players'), Die Vyf Vastrappers ('The Five Vastrappers'), Die Vier Transvalers ('The Four Transvalers'), Die Vyf Voortrekkers ('The Five Voortrekkers'), Die Vyf Dagbrekers ('The Five Day Breakers'), Die Vier Hugenote ('The Four Huguenots'), Die Ses Hartbrekers ('The Six Heart Breakers'), Die Baanbrekers ('The Pioneers'), Die Hoogekraal Orkes ('The High Kraal Orchestra'), Die Vier Staatmakers ('The Four Dependables') and Die Naglopers ('The Night Riders'), described by Rian Malan as follows:

[To my mind De Lange is by far] the most compelling figure in the history of Afrikaans popular music. His music is electrifying. His banjo player was Coloured in days when that was unthinkable. He danced and drank like a demon. He screwed everything that moved. His band was called the Naglopers ... How cool can you get? [xvi]

4.
Boeremusiek was, surprisingly perhaps in the light of the rigid paternalism of the governing Afrikaner, a music also practiced by women. There was Cissie

Cooper who played the piano and sang, Carolina Leeson who played the piano and dreamt the melody of *My mooi Carolina* ['My pretty Carolina'], **[xvii]** Lettie Palm who played guitar, piano and concertina, Anna van Loggerenberg who played the drums in the band of her husband, Hansie. Many women played in Pietie le Roux's Stellenbosch-boereorke: Laetitia Louw, Elise van Vuuren, Bettie van der Merwe, Annette Scheepers, Ena Krige, Lena Theron, Martha le Roux, Hester le Roux, Petra Schoeman, Rykie Smit, Anna Minnaar, Dux van Niekerk. **[xviii]** And then there is the extraordinary tale of Jo Fourie, born in Zwolle in the Netherlands in 1884. In 1934 she created her own boereorke in the Groot Marico and began to notate all the boeremusiek tunes she encountered. After her husband's death in 1939, and after her children were married off and had left the house, she began travelling though the country to find all the old and almost forgotten tunes and songs. She was particularly interested in old people who could still play or sing these songs. In the back of her car she had an old duet concertina, because many of the old people no longer had an instrument on which they could play. This quest lasted almost eleven years ... **[xix]**

It is an indication of the disregard for boeremusiek in intellectual discourse that Jo Fourie is not recognized as South Africa's first female ethnomusicologist. Stories such as these collected by Piet Bester call for the kind of historical treatment enabled by the rhetoric of fictional narrative. It emphasizes, once again, something about the kind of collective cultural memories activated by boeremusiek.

Who listens to Boeremusiek today? And what do they hear when they listen to it? One of the most beautiful stories written by Piet Bester in his ethnographic treasure trove *Tradisionele Boeremusiek* is the story of Sakkie van Wyk. His father Gert, a good violinist, farmed on a piece of land called Morkanie, close to Schweizer Reneke. Gert stopped making music after the death of his two daughters and thereafter also forbade his sons, Sakkie and Gert, to play any dance music. Gert was so talented that he could make the most beautiful sounds by blowing into the spout of a coffee kettle. Apparently the sounds thus made sometimes sounded like a violin, and sometimes like a saxophone.

The two boys secretly acquired a concertina and a guitar and started practicing in the veldt, far from the house. The instruments were hidden under a large halved paraffin drum under a bush on the bank of a small stream. **[xx]**

Hidden instruments. Secret musicking. One thinks of old instruments that can no longer be played by young people. Concertinas, banjos, accordions, pump organs. And then one thinks of empty dance halls, hotels, bars, empty barns, farm houses, recording studios. One thinks of the clerks, hospital porters, teachers, farmers and mine captains that Piet Bester writes about. There is a hidden history in these things, in the spaces where this music sounded and in the colourful lives of the musicians. This is neither the canonized history of Western art music in South Africa, nor the now dominant history of jazz and other forms of black music performance. Boeremusiek is a kind of secret music, connected to a silenced history in an ever more competitive South African historiography. It calls for curatorship because of the pasts it allows, in ever diminishing degrees, to infiltrate the present.

NOTES

- i. Lourens Aucamp cited in Piet Bester, *Tradisionele Boeremusiek: 'n Gedenkalbum*. Pretoria: Afrikanervolkswag (1987), unnumbered page 'Voorwoord'. Translated from the Afrikaans. All translations from the Afrikaans are by the present author.
- ii. Interview with Stanley Glasser on 18 January 2001 at his home, 46 Weigall Road, London.
- iii. There are exceptions to this generalization. Professor F.E. (Charles) Fensham was well-known in boeremusiek circles. Later State President C.R. Swart composed the Maluti song and there is a photograph of him in Piet Bester's *Tradisionele Boeremusiek* where he plays his traporreltjie (pump organ) (see p. 125). When Anton Hartman remarks that 'even the symphony orchestra' can't play the Zoutpansberg se settees like the Vier Transvalers (see p. 27 in *Tradisionele Boeremusiek*) this observation only serves as an illustration of the chasm between high and low musical culture.
- iv. Minutes of the FAK Music Commission's meeting held on Saturday 25 April 1953 in the FAK offices in Johannesburg. Translated from the Afrikaans. See PV 1/2/3/4/2/2/1, INEG, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein. Five 'solutions' were also suggested by the Music Commission, including that Anton Hartman would draft a statement on boeremusiek which would be published under the name of Stephen Eyssen 'to stimulate further discussions and criticism'.
- v. E-mail to the current writer, 20 February 2007.
- vi. Piet Bester, *Tradisionele Boeremusiek*, 50-53.
- vii. *Ibid.*, 54. Translated from the Afrikaans.

- viii. Ibid., 138. Translated from the Afrikaans.
- ix. Ibid., 146. Translated from the Afrikaans.
- x. Boeremusiek is a performative culture that survives mostly through oral transmission. Piet Bester writes in *Tradisionele Boeremusiek*: 'Of course Hansie [van Loggerenberg] could read music ... The most of the old Boere musicians and even many performers today were not as privileged.'; 56. Translated from the Afrikaans.
- xi. Piet Bester, *Tradisionele Boeremusiek*, 140. Translated from the Afrikaans.
- xii. Ibid., 66.
- xiii. Ibid., 139.
- xiv. . Karel Schoeman, *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek: outobiografiese aantekeninge* (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 2002, 399. Translated from the Afrikaans.
- xv. Piet Bester, *Tradisionele Boeremusiek*, 206. Translated from the Afrikaans.
- xvi. Letter of Rian Malan on Sênet, 3 July 2006. Translated from the Afrikaans. See also the significant body of correspondence between Rian Malan, Rob Allingham, CIA and Puris that appeared on LitNet about David de Lange at <http://www.oulitnet.co.za/senet/default.asp>. This 2006 correspondence is dated 14 June, 15 June, 26 June, 3 July, 10 July, 1 August and 2 August.
- xvii. Ibid., 17.
- xviii. See list in Piet Bester's *Tradisionele Boeremusiek*, 61.
- xix. Piet Bester, *Tradisionele Boeremusiek*, 130. Translated from the Afrikaans.
- xx, Ibid., 150.

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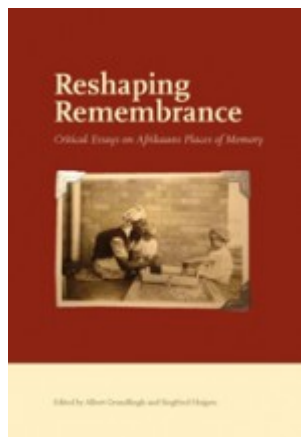
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Reshaping Remembrance ~ Die Stem



1.[i]

Music is high or low. It can ascend or descend (like mountains and valleys) with an ascending run or descending scale. It is here, close to home (tonic), or there, close to relatives (relative or parallel minor/major, perhaps dominant or subdominant keys). Sometimes it moves, as is envisioned in Schoenberg's idea of tonality, to far-off reaches of larger tonal geographies, to the furthest of such places before it returns (if it returns at all) to the known world of the tonic.

Music as a kind of *res extensa*. [ii] Orchestration could be airy and spacious in the hands of Webern, or constructivist and muscular when done by Brahms. Music creates horizontal contours and arches through the distances between notes (intervals). These distances are determined during performance by controlling the time-space separating the end of one tone and the beginning of the next (articulation). Music is architecturally monumental in form, like a Beethoven symphony, or it is in expression and form as intimate as the salon.

We cannot approach music in language without the metaphors of place and space. Individual combinations of tones (musical 'works') constitute designated spaces. When these spaces become known after frequent visits, they become inhabited by cultural memory. The evocative nature of such spaces is inherent to the fact that the sentiment (emotional and/or cultural) is felt precisely, but cannot be expressed accurately in language. It is a language-resistant space. To consider

Die Stem as collective memory depends on this metaphorical understanding of music in general, and of a specific work in particular. This is not a perspective that demands clarification of the song's history. C.J. Langenhoven's poem is only the foundation of this place. M.L. de Villiers's melody is only the outer walls thereof and Hubert du Plessis's official orchestration only the interior decorating. **[iii]**

Questions on memory and remembering and of how these things relate to this particular text, are not questions about historiography. The imagination in search of memory has to find more poetic avenues to knowledge.



Figure 19.1 David Goldblatt's photograph with the description 'Die Heldeakker, The Heroes' Acre: cemetery for White members of the security forces killed in "The Total Onslaught", Ventersdorp, Transvaal, 1 November 1986'.

Figure 19.1 David Goldblatt's photograph with the description 'Die Heldeakker, The Heroes' Acre: cemetery for White members of the security forces killed in "The Total Onslaught", Ventersdorp, Transvaal, 1 November 1986'. **[iv]**

2.
The closing phrase of *Die Stem* is literally displayed 'triumphantly' (the character indication in the music) as meaning-giving banner over this demarcated space. It lends definition to the space of the military cemetery. Does the reader hear it? The two security force members buried there are lifted up by the contour of the melody: B flat-A flat-G-B flat-C-D-E flat. The dotted rhythmical introduction to the phrase, undergirded by the secondary dominant harmony, assuages doubt, presses forward, aims towards the solution at the end of the phrase. The end is comforting as an end. It brings us home. Goldblatt's photograph dates from 1986.

It is understandable if one hears *Die Stem* in this time as a military song; the contours and rhythms and harmonies sound like bulwarks against the enemy, as encouragements to those who would doubt the final victory. However, for André P. Brink, *Die Stem* is also the song of torture in the seventies:

*... every time the rebel leader is arrested, and tortured, and killed, leading to new protest, and to new martyrs; this goes on until a deadly silence remains, lasting an agonising eternity, a silence out of which, almost inaudible at first, the national anthem rises while a group of folk dancers in white masks begin to dance on the bodies of the martyrs.***[v]**

It is also this 'Stem' that, at the end of J.M. Coetzee's *Age of iron*, provides the sound track to the author's nightmarish vision of hell. 'I am afraid', says the dying Mrs Curran, 'of going to hell and having to listen to *Die stem* (sic) for all eternity'.**[vi]** *Die Stem* that accompanies the coffin of Milla Redelinghuys into her grave at the end of Marlene van Niekerk's *Agaat* has a different tenor. When the Grootmoedersdrift farm is taken into possession by the coloured woman, *Agaat*, who was formed by the white woman who loved and rejected her, it is *Die Stem* that articulates ambiguously change and continuity:

Gaat making people by the graveside sing the third verse of Die Stem: ... When the wedding bells are chiming, Or when those we love depart. And then all eyes on me for: ... Thou dost know us for thy children ... We are thine, and we shall stand, Be it life or death to answer Thy call, beloved land! Wake up and smell the red-bait, as Pa would have said. Poor Pa with his ill-judged exclamations. Did at least make a note for my article on nationalism and music. Thys's body language! The shoulders thrust back militaristically, the eyes cast up grimly, old Beatrice peering at the horizon. The labourers, men and women, sang it like a hymn, eyes rolled back in the head.

Word-perfect beginning to end. Trust *Agaat*. She would have no truck with the new anthem.**[vii]**

But how did historical reception develop the fascistic timbre that characterized performances and receptions of *Die Stem* in the 1980s, so apparent in the quotation above? Surely there was a time when *Die Stem* was a freedom song for Afrikaners, an alternative text for collective musical mobilization to God Save The Queen. This essay wants to connect the cited examples of fiction-mediated memories of *Die Stem* to the historical process represented in FAK (Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge, directly translated as Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Societies) archival documents from the 1950s.

In 1952, five years before *Die Stem* became the only official anthem of South Africa, the Afrikaanse Kultuurraad (Afrikaans Culture Board) of Pretoria launched an initiative to elicit 'opinions by three authorities regarding suitable occasions when an anthem should be sung or played'. From Stellenbosch, Dr C.G.S. (Con) de Villiers wrote as follows:

*I am of inclination and education extremely conservative, particularly when it concerns the holy things of our volk. And Die Stem has become one of those. I even lamented it bitterly that Die Stem was sung and played at the end of rugby football matches in England ... There is for me only one indicator to justify singing it: does the meeting possess poids et majesté in the Calvinist sense? Then Die Stem can be sung!***[viii]**

De Villiers's answer can only be quoted in part. In the rest of the letter he also expresses opposition against the singing of *Die Stem* at political meetings because, as a member of the National Party, he would find it 'sad if the Sappe [South African Party] viewed *Die Stem* as the calling card of the [National] Party'. For De Villiers the most terrible violence against *Die Stem* constitutes 'a young lady who goes to sit at the piano and makes her own, apocryphal harmony to the tune'.**[ix]**

It is clear that by 1952 *Die Stem* had already become for De Villiers one of the 'holy things' of the Afrikaner, a place of worship. His dislikes point to possible contaminating influences: sport, politics and 'young ladies'. With regard to the latter, the danger of contamination is located specifically in the harmony and not any of the other musical parameters. Historically (one thinks here of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Council of Trent), this fear can be connected to a philosophical and ideological privileging of the word, the clarity of which is endangered by complicated vertical musical activity. More about this later.

For De Villiers, *Die Stem* as holy space is a space of good taste and of higher things in life. These political and gender biases expressed as pseudo-aesthetic judgements can also be found in his published writings. Mussolini's signed portrait displayed in his lounge linked with his Verdi worship, the influence of English songs that clung like a bad odour to his past, the memories of the 'passionate, barbaric Gypsy folk dances that the young Jew played for the modest, civilized Afrikaner family';**[x]** coordinates aiding the reconstruction of De Villiers's camp 'poids et majesté'. *Die Stem* as 'soete inval'.**[xi]**

Dr H.C.E. Bosman, then secretary of the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns [South African Academy for Sciences and Arts], writes on 16 June 1952 that *Die Stem* might be sung at 'occasions where the feeling of the nation is naturally expressed'. For him, this includes 'general national festivals [Volksfeeste], Dingaan's Day festivals [16 December], Union Day [31 May], Hero's Day [on Paul Kruger's birthday, 10 October], Van Riebeeck's Day [6 April], parliamentary events, functions where the provincial and city administrations are involved'.**[xii]** Bosman does not deem *Die Stem* inappropriate at big political meetings, and is of the opinion that it can also be sung at 'cultural events, camping-out gatherings [laertrekke], folk dances, big events for the young, international matches or events'. Excluded from his list are 'weddings, dances, cocktail parties, cinemas, camps, plays, concerts and picnics'. He justifies these exclusions by saying that such performances would be continuing 'the English practice, which is in part monarchical-traditional, and in part deliberate imperialist propaganda'.**[xiii]**

Die Stem, therefore, is an anti-British space, but even more: it occupies the places of the state. In this emerging discourse, *Die Stem* as symbol is no longer a space being occupied, but an object with a place. For Prof A.N. Pelzer of the University of Pretoria, a national anthem [Volkslied] is

*... an elevated utterance of the fixed aspirations that live deep in the soul of a nation. It indicates the longing that nation and State should continue to exist and serves to unite the nation into an indivisible whole and to strengthen it in realising the high ideals expected for nation and state. It rises above what is temporary and points to everlasting and imperishable values.***[xiv]**

Die Stem is thus a metaphysical space of aspiration and idealism. According to Pelzer it can only be honoured by performing it at 'events where the aim of the event is not limited to the event itself, but points to the cultivation of values that will be meaningful to the future'. He also fears that *Die Stem* could be misused by subjecting it to the same 'lowly treatment of the English anthem'.**[xv]** The transcendental, we are given to understand, is not an English space.

The intervention of the Afrikaans Culture Board of Pretoria on this important matter forced the FAK to conduct a further investigation. Asked about their opinion, the South African Teachers' Union (SATU) recommended the singing of the song at school functions in order to 'create amongst the youth of our country healthy love for the fatherland'.**[xvi]** After all this consultation, a decision was

taken at a meeting of the FAK's Music Commission on 25 April 1953:

The meeting recommends to the FAK that the following be propagated to the nation:

- a) That '*Die Stem*' be sung only at events where the value of representing the country is evident;
- b) that care should be taken to prevent '*Die Stem*' being used in the same way as [God save] 'The Queen';
- c) that where '*Die Stem*' is played, it is played as a whole and not only in part;
- d) that, at the end of events, other songs, like Afrikaners Landgenote, be sung. **[xvii]**

It is important to articulate clearly what was happening here: control, anti-British sentiment, the propagation of a museum aesthetic alienated from ordinary people, the creation of a perception that *Die Stem* was not just a song, but a mystic key to the independence of the Afrikaner nation. It is therefore not surprising that in 1957, when *Die Stem* was proclaimed the only official anthem of the Republic, no superlative sufficed to express the joy amongst the song's supporters in the FAK. A telegram of congratulations was sent to the prime minister, J.G. Strydom:

To: *The Honourable Prime Minister, House of Assembly, Cape Town*

The declaration recognizing The Call of South Africa as the official and only anthem of South Africa is for everyone of the thousands of members of the FAK a source of the highest ecstasy. With this act, an old national ideal has been accomplished and one of the most important milestones on our road to full nationhood has been achieved. Having achieved this, the last of the former conqueror's symbols that have towered over us, has disappeared. We honour Your Excellency personally, and also every member of the government.

From: Secretary FAK **[xviii]**

Highest ecstasy! One of the most important milestones on our road to full nationhood. *Die Stem* had become the Afrikaner score to nationhood. Three days after this telegram was dispatched, the Chairman of the FAK, Prof H.B. Thom, wrote a congratulatory letter to J.G. Strydom in which he formulated the importance of *Die Stem* as follows:

You have led the Afrikaners, and indeed the whole of South Africa, to advance an important step on the road to full, unqualified spiritual independence, which is such an indispensable prerequisite for real economic and political independence. I am convinced that History will one day acknowledge the outstanding

*contribution of your leadership in connection with our national hymn.***[xix]**

Full, unqualified spiritual independence. This is one way of articulating the meaning of this song in the ears of Afrikaners of that time. But even after *Die Stem* was adopted as the only national anthem of the republic, the desire of the Afrikaner leadership to control it did not abate. Spiritual independence is, alas, no substitute for good taste. Not only was the melody required to remain the property of the volk, but the cancerous corruption against which Con de Villiers had warned - deviant harmony - also had to be removed from *Die Stem* as alien to the volk. The minutes of a FAK Music Commission of 12 March 1960 documents the following discussion:

Mr A. Hartman reported that the SABC wants to record and market a LP of Gideon Fagan's arrangement of *Die Stem van Suid-Afrika*, and then to request that the Government approve this as the accepted official arrangement. The Music Commission did not view this arrangement as acceptable, especially since it radically changes the harmony. The Commission favoured the arrangement of Rev M.L. de Villiers.

Mr A. Hartman also mentioned that Dr F.C.L. Bosman, Chairman of the South African Music Board, had consulted Prof [Friedrich] Hartman (sic) of the University of the Witwatersrand about this matter. The opinion of the latter, written in English, was read to the Commission. From this it transpired that he attacked Rev De Villiers's arrangement on technical points.

Mr A. Hartman's opinion was that the stamp of approval should be given to that which fits with our national tradition ['volkstradisie'] and not necessarily to the best technical arrangements.

Dr G.G. Cillie pointed out that Prof Hartman (sic) had praised the arrangement of Gideon Fagan in such superlatives and rejected that of Rev M.L. de Villiers so radically, that they could emphatically conclude that this was not an objective and scientific opinion, making it possible to reject it in its entirety.**[xx]**

On 14 March 1960, a letter was sent on behalf of the Music Commission of the FAK to Prof H.B. Thom, presumably written by the secretary of the FAK. In this letter, an 'urgent matter' was raised, namely the SABC's planned recording of *Die Stem* on LP. The source of unhappiness was the Fagan 'four-part arrangement', so lavishly praised by Prof Friedrich Hartmann:

We have also seen the (English) remarks of Prof Hartman. Briefly, the contents thereof comes down to the fact that the M.L. de Villiers arrangement is hopeless and the Fagan arrangement faultless. The Music Commission is of the opinion that such an absolute condemnation of the one and absolute extolling of the other cannot be accepted as a scientifically objective judgment.

This was followed by the coup de grâce:

*The tempo of 60 crotchets per minute of the Fagan arrangement is unacceptably slow and seemingly an imitation of the tempo of God Save the Queen.***[xxi]**

Die Stem is thus anglicized by making it sound more like a hymn and less like a march. But the antagonism against everything English, from the character of the English anthem to the continuing references to the negative remarks being made 'in English', makes it clear that these motives are strongly anchored in nationalist discourses. The existence of an underlying mistrust in 'the best technical settings' is clear, and the possibility that this mistrust could be located in the (unconscious) confirmation of the Afrikaans word as potentially vulnerable to 'alien' harmony, is a rich idea. The writer of the letter to Thom explains the petty Afrikaner politics behind this polemic step by step. In short it constitutes a 'devious plan' by the 'enemies of the volk' to install Gideon Fagan as the principal conductor of the SABC, instead of appointing the chairman of the Music Commission of the FAK (Anton Hartman). Whether Friedrich Hartmann's opinion could be motivated musically or not, was not deemed relevant:

*The opinions they canvassed are exclusively from people who are not part of our Afrikaner nation's ideals. If folk songs and the harmonization of such songs were to be judged purely on musical merits, *Die Stem* would never have been adopted in the first place.***[xxii]**

Subsequently, the FAK also sent Dr H.F. Verwoerd a letter with an appeal to the effect that the M.L. de Villiers setting be recognized by the government as official arrangement.**[xxiii]**

3.

What can be deduced from the pitiful politics about harmonization, the suitability of places and events, the discourses on dignity and gravitas? At least the fact that there is nothing neutral about this song, and that the political ballast weighing down *Die Stem* is not only of our time, imagined retrospectively by the 'enemies

of the Afrikaner', but that it has been historically conceived and understood by Afrikaners themselves. Also that the restrictive control that would characterize the Afrikaner Republic would stunt this song in self-glorified mediocrity. Finally that music, too, could not escape the machinations of the secret Broederbond.

Die Stem as Afrikaans place of memory: Goldblatt's tragic emptiness, Brink's martyr's dirge, Van Niekerk's set-piece on the burial of the Republic, Coetzee's version of hell, Con de Villiers's 'poids et majesté', Anton Hartman's national tradition, H.B. Thom's 'spiritual independence'. Different conflicting memories, representing different histories.

NOTES

- i.** The full title of the anthem is *Die Stem van Suid-Afrika*, officially translated into English as *The Call of South Africa*. Throughout this essay the anthem will be referred to only as *Die Stem*.
- ii.** Compare the discussion on the rhetoric of tonality in Brian Hyer's 'Tonality', in: T. Christensen (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Western music theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002, 726-752, esp. p. 733.
- iii.** This essay is not about the history or the ideological context and meaning of *Die Stem*. More can be read about these aspects in S. Muller, 'Exploring the aesthetics of reconciliation: rugby and the South African national anthem', in: *SAMUS* 21 (2001), 19-38; See also W. Lüdemann's "'Uit die diepte van ons see": an archetypal interpretation of selected examples of Afrikaans patriotic music', in: *SAMUS* 23 (2003), 13-42.
- iv.** D. Goldblatt, *South Africa: the structure of things then*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press 1998, 154 and 243.
- v.** A.P. Brink, *Looking on darkness*. London: W.H. Allen, 1974, 308.
- vi.** J.M. Coetzee, *Age of iron*. London: Penguin, 1990, 181.
- vii.** M. van Niekerk. *Agaat*. tr. Michiel Heyns. Cape Town: Jonathan Ball and Tafelberg 2006, 675.
- viii.** Compare file PV 202 2/4/1/3/1/4, INEG, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein. Translated from the Afrikaans by the present author.
- ix.** Compare file PV 202 2/4/1/3/1/4, INEG, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein. Translated from the Afrikaans by the present author.
- x.** Compare *Soete inval: nagelate geskrifte van Con de Villiers*. Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1979, 26-27 and 50-51. Also see *Die sneeu van anderjare*. Cape Town: Tafelberg 1976, 72. Translated from the Afrikaans by the present author.

- xi.** De Villiers's flat was situated in a block called Soete Inval, approximately translated as 'gentle strains'.
- xii.** File PV 202 2/4/1/3/1/4, INEG, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein. Translated from the Afrikaans by the present author.
- xiii.** File PV 202 2/4/1/3/1/4, INEG, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein. Translated from the Afrikaans by the present author.
- xiv.** File PV 202 2/4/1/3/1/4, INEG, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein. Translated from the Afrikaans by the present author.
- xv.** File PV 202 2/4/1/3/1/4, INEG, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein. Translated from the Afrikaans by the present author.
- xvi.** See the letter of 14 February 1953, PV 2/4/1/3/1/4, INEG, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.
- xvii.** Compare the minutes of the meeting by the Music Commission, 25 April 1953, PV 202 1/2/3/4/2/2/1, INEG, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein. Translated from the Afrikaans by the present author. Also see Appendix to the agenda of the Music Commission meeting of 6 July 1954, entitled 'Verslag van die FAK-kommissie insake "Die Stem" soos gewysig deur die Afrikaanse Nasionale Kultuurraad' ['Report of the FAK-Commission regarding "Die Stem" as modified by the Afrikaans National Culture Board'], PV 202 1/2/1/4/2/2/1, INEG, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.
- xviii.** See telegram of 3 May 1957, PV 202 2/4/1/3/1/4, INEG, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein. Translated from the Afrikaans by the present author.
- xix.** Letter of H.B. Thom to J.G. Strydom, 6 May 1957, PV 202 2/4/1/3/1/4, INEG, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein. Translated from the Afrikaans by the present author.
- xx.** Minutes of a meeting by the FAK Music Commission, 12 March 1960, PV 202 1/2/3/4/2/2/3, INEG, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein. Translated from the Afrikaans by the present author.
- xxi.** File PV 202 2/4/1/3/1/4, INEG, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein. Translated from the Afrikaans by the present author.
- xxii.** Letter to H.B. Thom, 14 March 1960; File PV 202 2/4/1/3/1/4, INEG, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein. Translated from the Afrikaans by the present author.
- xxiii.** The letter is dated 21 March 1960. The Prime Minister's Office acknowledged receipt on 28 March 1960 and a comprehensive answer was sent to the FAK by the secretary of the Prime Minister on 25 May 1960. In this letter the government wisely decided to remain neutral and not choose sides with

regard to 'all harmonisations or arrangements of the composition for orchestra or voices or anything else', with the understanding that such arrangements should 'stay within the framework of the acknowledged composition and be performed with dignity and devotion at suitable occasions'. Translated from the Afrikaans by the present author.

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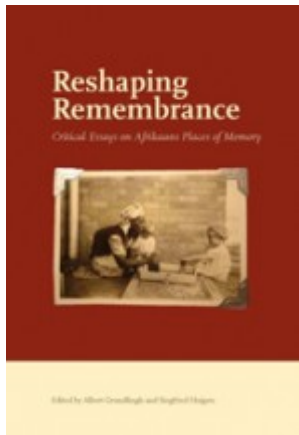
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Reshaping Remembrance ~ 'In

Ferocious Anger I Bit The Hand That Controls' - The Rise Of Afrikaans Punk Rock Music



On a night in 2006, a Cape Town's night club, its floor littered with cigarette butts, plays host to an Afrikaner (sub)cultural gathering. Guys with seventies' glam rock hairstyles, wearing old school uniform-like blazers decorated with a collection of pins and buttons and teamed up with tight jeans, sneakers and loose shoelaces keep one eagerly awaiting eye on the set stage and another on the short skirted girls. Before taking to the stage, the band, Fokofpolisiekar, entices the audience with the projection of their latest music video for the acoustic version of their debut hit single released two years before and entitled '*Hemel op die platteland*'.

In tune with the melancholy sound of an acoustic guitar, the music video kicks off with the winding of an old film reel revealing nostalgic stock footage of a long gone era. Well-known images make the audience feel a sense of estrangement by means of ironic disillusionment: the sun is setting in the Cape Town suburb of Bellville. Seemingly bored, the five members of Fokofpolisiekar hang around the Afrikaans Language Monument. Against the backdrop of a blue-grey sky, the well-known image of a Dutch Reformed church tower flashes in blinding sunlight. Smiling white children play next to swimming pools in the backyards of well-to-do suburbs and on white beaches while the voice of the lead singer asks:

can you tighten my bolts for me? / can you find my marbles for me? / can you stick your idea of normal up your ass? / can you spell apathy? can someone maybe phone a god / and tell him we don't need him anymore / can you spell apathy? (kan jy my skroewe vir my vasdraai? / kan jy my albasters vir my vind? / kan jy jou idee van normaal by jou gat opdruk? / kan jy apatie spel? kan iemand dalk 'n god bel / en vir hom sê ons het hom nie meer nodig nie / kan jy apatie spel?)



And whilst the home video footage of a family eating supper in a green aced backyard is sharply contrasted with images of broken garden chairs in an otherwise empty run-down backyard, the theme of the song resonates ironically in the chorus: *'it's heaven on the platteland'* (*'dis hemel op die platteland'*). On the dirty

floor of the night club, a young white Afrikaans guy kills his Marlboro cigarette and takes a sip of his lukewarm Black Label beer, watching more video images of morally grounded suburb, school and church and relates to the angry words of the vocalist:

'regulate me [...] place me in a box and mark it safe / then send me to where all the boxes/idiots go / send me to heaven I think it's on the platteland' (*'reguleer my, roetineer my / plaas my in 'n boks en merk dit veilig / stuur my dan waarheen al die dose gaan / stuur my hemel toe ek dink dis in die platteland / dis hemel op die platteland'*).

As the video draws to a close, the young man sees the ironic use of the partly exposed motto engraved on the path to the Language Monument: *'This is us'*. He has never visited the Language Monument, but he agrees with what he just saw and because he feels as though he just paged through old photo albums (only to come to the disillusioned conclusion that everything has been all too burlesque) he puts his hands in the air when the band takes to the stage with the lead singer commanding:

'Lift your hands to the burlesque [...] We want the attention / of the brainless crowd / We want the famine the urgent lack of energy / We are in search of the search for something / We are empty, because we want to be' (*'Rys jou hande vir die klug [...] Ons soek die aandag / van die breinlose gehoor / Ons soek die hongersnood die dringende gebrek aan energie / Ons is op soek na die soeke na iets / Ons is leeg, want ons wil wees'*).

Tradisiemasjien

Since the band's conception in 2003, the controversial Afrikaans punk rock group who named themselves Fokofpolisiekar, sent a series of shock waves through the remnants of conservative Afrikaner Nationalism. This was especially evident in the polemic consequences and media frenzy sparked off by the bassist Wynand

Myburgh writing the words *'Fuck God'* (instead of an autograph) on the wallet of a young fan after a show the band played. Fokofpolisiekar however claims not to be anti-Christian but rather see themselves as heathens. Sceptic heathens bore forth from the Afrikanervolk during the uncomfortable aftermath of Christian National education. As Afrikaans rockstar-heathens, they would challenge things like the *'tradisiemasjien'* in their lyrics. Fed up and bored with the vicious cycle of mediocre Afrikaans Christian life in white middle class suburbs (dubbed by them as small beige palaces on the outskirts of Cape Town), they chose music as a means to not only lash out, but also to question.



Fokofpolisiekar's Wynand Myburgh and Francois van Coke (Photo: Annie Klopper)

Exploding onto the South African music scene, Fokofpolisiekar sang of the time bombs left in the gaping holes of their upbringing. These time bombs started ticking when the Afrikaner Nationalist establishment actively strove to sanction any *'volksvreemde'* influences that might carry any subversive messages to the Afrikaner. During the late 1960's it was proven elsewhere in the world (especially in the USA and Britain) that rock music can play an instrumental role in the challenging of the status quo. Afrikaner cultural entrepreneurs saw rock music as a dangerous threat to the sober, wholesome Afrikaner culture they advocated. They feared it might bring the Afrikaner youth to moral demise and labeled it communist (ironic, considering the USSR was trying just as hard to withhold Western music from the ears of the Soviet youth). Until 1975 rock music could still make its way to many a South African ear via short waves. LM Radio broadcasted from Mozambique and played (among other music) contemporary American and British rock and pop. With the FRELIMO liberation movement taking over in Mozambique that year, LM Radio was closed. By this time the Broederbond held most of the senior positions in the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) from which they could play an active role in repressing any possible subversive musical notes. They also saw the closing down of LM Radio as

a perfect opportunity to launch South Africa's own rock radio station, Radio 5. With the rigid censorship maintained by the SABC, this station however failed to be much more than a pop station. Moreover, the same strict control of the airwaves was maintained when television broadcasts started in South African households in 1976.

Lekkerliedjies

The dictation of the Afrikaner's musical tastes and preferences commenced with the inception of Die Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge (FAK) in 1929. The FAK was functional in judging whether music was '*volksvreemd*' or '*volksvriendelik*'. One of the aims of the first publication of the FAK *Volksangbundel* (folk songbook) in 1937 was to probe the Afrikaner youth into proudly singing Afrikaans '*lekkerliedjies*' at picnics, in choirs and at school. Songs with words to the likes of: *And do you hear the mighty rumbling? / Over the veld (field) it comes widely soaring: / the song of a volk's awakening that makes hearts shiver and tremble. / From the Cape up to the North the chords rise thunderously loud: / It is the SONG of Young South Africa. (En hoor jy die magtige dreuning? / Oor die veld kom dit wyd gesweef: / die lied van 'n volk se ontwaking wat harte laat sidder en beef. / Van Kaapland tot bo in die Noorde rys daverend luid die akkoorde: / Dit is die LIED van Jong Suid-Afrika.)* The legacy of these Afrikaans volksliedjies (of which the melodies was often imported from foreign folk songs) set the precedent to, and paved the way for trite and conformist Afrikaans lyrics lacking the questioning of convention that still resonates in Afrikaans music today. By the late 1970s, while most Afrikaans singers were still echoing the love of '*volk*' and '*vaderland*' and not contesting norms and convention in their lyrics (keeping to the unchallenging Afrikaans folk song), a small revolution hit mainstream Afrikaans music. By this time, the Afrikaans youth was far more intent on listening to the music of foreign English speaking artists and groups. It was also believed that Afrikaans was far too guttural a language to be used in the creation of rock & roll.

A major shift in this belief would occur with the release of Anton Goosen's debut album *Boy van die suburbs* in 1979 and the accompanying phase in Afrikaans music dubbed *Musiek en Liriek* lead by Goosen and Laurika Rauch. *Musiek en Liriek* managed to renew the traditional folk song and successfully replaced the '*lekkerliedjie*' with songs of a somewhat more challenging nature, especially with regard to the lyrical content. However, clear-cut social and political commentary

was still lacking. Where elements of protest could be detected in the lyrics of Goosen, the songs in question was banned outright by the SABC or received only very limited airplay on the radio. It would only be due to the culmination of the sobering fall of apartheid, the state of emergency of the 1980s and the international condemnation of the South African government that a group of youths would take up their instruments in a rock & roll protest against the order of the day. With Johannes Kerkorrel (pseudonym of Ralph Rabie), Koos Kombuis (also known as André Letoit) and Bernoldus Niemand (alias of James Phillips), and with Dagga-Dirk Uys as manager, the Voëlvry movement saw the light in the late 1980s with the Voëlvry Tour as highlight in 1989. The members of Voëlvry came from respectable middle class households where they grew up with the SABC, Sunday School, 'Whites Only'-signs and censorship. They realized that the time was ripe for change and that Afrikaans rock music could be the weapon of choice in attacking the already weakening Afrikaner Nationalism. With sharp Afrikaans lyrics satirizing and parodying well-known Afrikaner cultural elements, this weapon could hit straight to the spot where the impact would have the greatest effect: the eardrums of the Afrikaner youth.

The Voëlvry anthems encapsulated themes like conscription, patriarchy, racism, the evils of apartheid, the ignorance of the white middle class and the ever waving index finger of P.W. Botha. The impact of the message was strengthened by the fact that they were performing in Afrikaans, thereby giving this language a fresh identity. Afrikaans became cool. Cooler even than Anton Goosen's *Boy van die suburbs*, Laurika Rauch's soulful voice and David Kramer's Boland Blues began to make it in the early eighties. Afrikaans music would cease to be the same after Voëlvry. With their biting socio-political commentary, Voëlvry rejected a formal Afrikaner identity whilst reformulating what it meant to be Afrikaans, with the creative implementation of music. Realizing new possibilities in Afrikaans music, it became evident that there shimmered more in Afrikaans music than Bles Bridges' sequenced waist coats and the red plastic roses he so liberally handed out. Afrikaans rock legends of later years like Valiant Swart and Karin Zoid were given footsteps to follow – as did many Afrikaans punk rock bands that would ultimately still shake South African stages – but in the meantime the 1990's had to happen.

K.O.B.U.S.

At about the same time as the musical tsunami called Voëlvry was rocking the

Afrikaans community, Apartheid was abolished and steps were being taken towards the introduction of a democratic South Africa. These political currents caused the tsunami to subside and the wave of protest music retreated, leaving behind a silent but still somewhat fertile ground as legacy. Koos Kombuis and Johannes Kerkorrel each embarked on solo careers together with a few other rock musicians like Paul Riekert (of the band Battery 9) and Valiant Swart who would keep the remnants alive at the music and cultural festivals that became one of the characteristic elements of the nineties South Africa.

But the *Afrikaans* rock revolution started losing steam as the conscience of the Afrikaner. James Phillips died after a car crash in 1995. Kerkorrel would go on to expand his solo career to the Netherlands and Belgium where he spent extensive time performing until his suicide on 12 November 2002. The South African political landscape was changing at a rapid pace with the country's transition to democracy. There was no longer a finger waving PW to condemn and, moreover, in its vast oversaturation, the Afrikaans music industry was beginning to develop an ever worsening identity crisis. The Afrikaans rock and metal band K.O.B.U.S.! sums it up as follows in a 2004 song: *We are hostages in one big cultural festival tent / entertained by people with more self confidence than talent / Every Tom, Dick and Harry has a CD on the shelf / we are choking on the 'hits' however ridiculous or poor. (Ons is gyselaars in een groot kulturfesestent / word vermaak deur mense met meer selfvertroue as talent / Elke Jan Rap en sy maat het 'n CD op die rak / ons verstik aan al die 'treffers' hoe belaglik of hoe swak.)*

Meanwhile South Africa was no longer closed off to musical influences from the outside. On the contrary, with the abolition of apartheid, sanctions and boycotts South Africa was open to international influences to come pouring in. Influences of grunge and metal could be heard in many a suburban garage where every second Jan, Francois and Arno was starting a band. Usually these bands were singing in English because Kerkorrel was sounding quite old school compared to Kurt Cobain who together with many other internationally acclaimed English bands were influencing the musical styles of the South African music scene and youth. On the bedroom walls of teenagers from Bellville to Melville, posters of South African rock bands like Springbok Nude Girls, Just Jinger and Wonderboom were appearing next to those of international acts like Nirvana, Metallica, Bon Jovi, Counting Crows, Pearl Jam, Greenday and Smashing Pumpkins.

In 1997 journalist Ilda Jacobs reported in the Afrikaans magazine *Die Huisgenoot*

on a new rock explosion in South Africa:

One can barely count on one hand the amount of South African pop and rock artists who has been successful locally or internationally a couple of years ago [...] But in the new South Africa a wave of inspiration is sweeping through the country. The fingers of two hands are no longer enough to count all the up 'n coming stars. For an evening of live entertainment, you can choose from a whole range of groups who play new, original music. And more and more people are getting together to listen to them on a regular basis. (Die Suid-Afrikaanse pop- en rock-kunstenaars wat tot 'n paar jaar gelede oorsee of voor hul eie mense hond haar-af gemaak het, kan jy amper op een hand tel [...]. Maar in die nuwe Suid-Afrika is dit asof die inspirasie soos 'n golf oor die land spoel. Twee hande vol vingers is nie meer genoeg om al die opkomende sterre af te tel nie. Vir 'n aandjie se lewendige musiek kan jy kies uit 'n tros groepe wat nuwe, oorspronklike musiek speel. En ál meer mense ruk gereeld op om na hulle te luister. But despite the rock explosion the 'cultural festival tent' K.O.B.U.S.! sings about was becoming increasingly crowded. In a 2004 interview, veteran musician Piet Botha comments on the Afrikaans music industry: The industry is being run by people who know nothing about music but a lot about money. The whole market is saturated with Bokkie songs and braaivleis tunes and such irrelevant nonsense [...] The world is morally bankrupt. The youth of today will start seeking more depth in music than what they find in the rubbish they are currently being fed with. (Die bedryf word gerun deur mense wat niks weet van musiek nie, maar baie weet van geld. Die hele mark is besaai met Bokkie songs en braaivleis tunes en sulke irrelevante nonsens [...]. Die wêreld is moreel bankrot. Die jeug van vandag gaan meer diepte in musiek soek as die snert wat hulle nou gevoer word.)

And they did. The same Afrikaans teenagers whose parents still sent them to Sunday school in the nineties, slowly but surely became irritated by the atmosphere in the 'cultural festival tent'. Moreover, they started wondering about the sins of their fathers and the demons of the past. It was these very same teenagers of the late nineties who, with their torn jeans, walked around with skateboards, went to music festivals and had mixed tapes with Nirvana on side A and Springbok Nude Girls on side B playing in their walkmans. To them the Dutch Reformed Church started looking all the more like an oppressing artifact from the apartheid era and they wanted nothing to do with an oppressing organization of any kind. English charismatic churches gave some of them a momentary sense of belonging.

It was in an English charismatic church that the members of Fokofpolisiekar would find each other. Two of the members (the two lyricists), Francois Badenhorst (who later changed his surname to Van Coke, most probably in the interest of his father, a Dutch Reformed minister) and Hunter Kennedy were members of the English Christian rock group New World Inside whilst the other members (Jaco 'Snakehead' Venter, Johnny de Ridder and Wynand Myburgh) were also involved in other gospel bands (22 Stars and 7th Breed). But they turned their backs on the church, probably because in their existential anguish, they came to the conclusion that they did not need the god of their forefathers, or any god for that sake, anymore. Whatever their reasons, they longed for the emancipation from the institutions and ideas that were forced on them by their ancestors and *'in ferocious anger bit the hand that controls'* by means of a punk rock protest.

Sporadies Nomadies

Biting the hand that controls has the purpose of taking the leash from this hand and thereby appropriating an own identity (or merely expressing the search for this identity). In this regard the youth's relationship with (and use of) music plays an imperative role. After the Second World War the American youth, for example, used rock music as a means whereby the status quo could be challenged and at the same time a sense of solidarity could be expressed. This solidarity is gained and expressed by the identification with the music maker(s), the music's content or message as well as with the fellow fans. This gives a sense of belonging and at the same time it creates a space within which there can be struggled with old identities and new ones can be appropriated - even if the identification is with a common *lack of identity*, as it is worded in the lyrics of Fokofpolisiekar's song *'Sporadies Nomadies'* (*'Sporadically Nomadic'*): *'Come let's agree / We are all confused'* (*Kom stem saam / Ons is almal deurmekaar*). Evidence of the confusing period and experiences the Afrikaans youth (especially those in the suburbs) could relate to, can be found in the diverse sources of inspiration that Fokofpolisiekar listed in a press release of their debut EP *As jy met vuur speel sal jy brand* in 2003:

Thundercats. God. Three years intensive church attendance. Doug. Pornography. Punk. Cigarettes. Worship leading. He-man. Bellville. Durban. Cape Town. Stellenbosch. Airwolf. Growing up. Knight rider. Rugby. Biltong. Spirit. Bitterkomix. Skateboarding. Toy Machine. Metal. Rock. Tygerberg Hospital.

Rodney Seale. McDonalds. Post-apartheid. Mandela. De Klerk. Internet. Spiderman. X-men. Punk shows. Weed. Cigarettes. Johannes Kerkorrel. City. Farm. CD's. Safety bubbles. Alcohol. Reggae. The Oudtshoorn police station. Dad. Minister. Uncle. Head of the ACSV. Student body. David Iche. Friends. Girlfriends. TV. Mr Video. Orkney Snork Nie. Koos Kombuis. Pets. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Chat-rooms. Mr Nice. The world according to Garp. Europe. America. MTV. Imaginary personality restrictions. Psychology. Sound. Satanism. Nkosi Sikelela. Die Stem. Jeugsangbundel (Youth Song Book). Fashion. Ernest Movies. Beetle Juice. Tim Burton. Waking Life. Photo albums. Coffee table books. Art school. School. Headmaster. Vetkoekpaleis. Weed. Egoli. Loving. Democracy. Red wine. Afrikaans alternative. AWB. ANC. NNP. PAC. NP. PAGAD. Republic. Soweto. Rage Against the Machine. Wayne's World. Playstation. Doom. Death metal. Children. Eye drops. Home. Joystick games. Streetfighter. Zimbabwe. Rape. Camps. Osama. Warcraft. Hansie Cronje. Naas Botha. Tolla van der Merwe. Casper de Vries. David Kramer. Alex Jay. No Jacket Required. The 80's. Ferrari's. War. Tadpoles. Silkworms. Dirty socks. Spiders. Bionic Six. GI Joe. Duke Nukem. Wielie Walie. Liewe Heksie. Swartkat. Borrie van Swartkat. Dawson's Creek. All those fucking American College movies. Acid. Bob Dylan. Willem Samuels. Valiant Swart. Tamagotchi. BB guns. Airgun. A-team. Mannemarak. Swear word. Fokofpolisiekar!



Fokofpolisiekar (Photo: Annie Klopper)

Fokofpolisiekar was the first commercially successful punk rock band in Afrikaans becoming one of the many voices (and speaking to) a youth who had to find their marks in a transitional phase of a country with a problematic history. The sometimes angry lyrics, dripping with underlying themes of nihilism and uncertainty, advocated purification or regeneration by means of destruction, as in the songs 'Destroy yourself' ('Vernietig jouself') and 'Burn South Africa' ('Brand Suid-Afrika'). At the same time, it gave a liminal Afrikaner youth, longing to shout

their frustrations from the rooftops, something to relate to. The members are also clever musicians with an exceptional knowledge of marketing to boot. After the band's debut in 2003, the full length album *Lugsteuring* (2004) was released, followed by the EP's *Monoloog in Stereo* (2005) and *Brand Suid-Afrika* (2006), the full length *Swanesang* (2006) and the EP *Antibiotika* (2008).

The impact the musicians had as rebellious rockers is obvious when one looks at the way the band was perceived and portrayed in the media. To quote but a few headings: *It's enough to make one grey: Afrikaans punk is sweeping everything flat; Fokofpolisiekar: a dosage of rebellion in Afrikaans music; With their back on the church, 'Afrikaner mentality'; Afrikaans rockers challenge the status quo; Straight to hell; Fokofpolisiekar rocks church; Fokof divides church; Rebel Rockers; Polisiekar in trouble after member blasphemes; Anger because school asks scholars to boycott Fokofpolisiekar; Controversial Afrikaans band suffers Christians' wrath; Outcry over band's invitation to fest; Keep Polisiekarre away from KKNK - church authority; Stayaway-polisiekar; Dutch Reformed Church asks for calm in struggle over Polisiekar; 'Karre pop prophets; Borders, Christians and the 'Karre; Commission asked to give constitutional direction with regards to Polisiekarre ...*

The flood-gates were now opened far too wide to ever be closed up again. Many an Afrikaans rock and punk rock group took to the stage listing Fokofpolisiekar as their number one inspiration. Just as the Sex Pistols stand out as iconic marker in British punk, Fokofpolisiekar became an undeniable beacon in the Afrikaans music industry: a point of reference still fresh in the memory of a youth who would now more than ever refuse to keep quiet about the crises of their time. The song of young South Africa was rewritten. The social observing K.O.B.U.S. words it as follows in the song '*N.J.S.A. (Lied van die Nuwe Jong Suid Afrika)*' which can be translated as '*Hymn of the New Young South Africa*' :

Famine, Aids death Homeless, Jobless, Despondent, Frail Presidentia in Absentia Mismanagement, Purgatory, Monsterous pleasure Orania, Azania Early morning Venom spewing, Culture-bomb fuse Obsession, Depression Youthslaughter, School-rape, Dead Expectation Oh yeah, Oh yeah we refuse to carry the sins of your parents Oh yeah, Oh yeah The Hymn of the New Young South Africa Cybersex, SMS Pentium-Jugular, Stork-Computer Soul stolen, Pain dulled Dark days, Thunderclaps, Narcotics Heavy Metal, Anti-Social Critic-school, Word-Conjuring, KOBUS! Hyperbole Guiltcomplex, Mudpool Pain unlearn, Dispense

with, Distantiate Oh yeah, Oh yeah cut our wings and we grow another pair Oh yeah, The Hymn of the New Young South Africa Oh yeah, Oh yeah cut our wings and we grow another pair Oh yeah, The Hymn of the New Young South Africa Oh yeah, South Africa Oh yeah, South Africa Oh yeah, Oh yeah, Oh yeah The Hymn of the New Young South Africa.

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See also: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Vo%C3%ABlvry_Movement

Sjoerd Hofstra ~ Sierra Leone In The Years 1934-1936.

This category contains photographs made by researcher *Sjoerd Hofstra* (1898-1983). Most of the photographs were made in Sierra Leone in the years 1934-1936. His daughter, Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, has kindly agreed in making his photographs available with a CC-BY-SA license. Uploading and categorizing was done by staff members of the African Studies Centre Leiden (the Netherlands).



Four boys looking/listening. Sierra Leone, 1935. Collection Hofstra. Panguma (surroundings). Photograph: Sjoerd Hofstra



Seated company and military chapel standing behind, Kailahun May 1934. Front row from left to right: Sjoerd Hofstra, three chiefs, the assistant District Commissioner, the band master, the D.C. of Kailahun, an old English trader, two chiefs and a civil servant.



Panguma. Sierra Leone, 1935.
Panguma (surroundings). Collection
Hofstra. Photograph: Sjoerd Hofstra

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Some Notes On Citizenship, Civil Society And Social Movements



Antonio Gramsci 1891-1937

Ills.: Ingrid Bouws

Over the past decades, notions of citizenship and civil society have come to occupy a prominent place in Latin American political discourse. All kinds of activities have been attributed to civil society, including preventing a military solution to the Chiapas conflict in 1994. We also hear a great deal about “organized civil society,” “social movements of civil society” and “global civil society,” terms that have entered everyday political discourse and become incorporated into common sense, though this does not mean that everyone understands the same message when using these terms. Quite to the contrary, incorporation into common language may well be facilitated by a lack of specificity. Such fluidity suggests, above all, that citizenship and civil society are contested categories subject to “wars of interpretation” (Slater, 1998:385). This approach to such questions implies admitting that we cannot know exactly what citizenship and civil society “are” and recognizing that they are notions forged through political discourse and practice.

There is no such thing as society, there are individual men and women. —
Margaret Thatcher, 1993¹

In this essay, I will outline some of the pathways the notion of citizenship has taken and how it has been reconfigured over the course of time. Taking Europe and Latin America as our main references, this discussion will show that what has been considered the foundation of citizenship has been conceptualized and practiced in distinct ways at different times and in different places. It will also discern how citizenship and civil society are mutually implicated social constructs. I will argue that in a first moment, civil rights were considered the primary foundation of citizenship and of the autonomous participation of the citizen in society. However, the conflicts generated by the social structure of 19th-century capitalist society contributed to the consolidation of social rights as a new basis for citizenship. In Latin America, in contrast, the incorporation of the population followed an itinerary distinct from that of Europe, which reveals specific forms of inclusion and exclusion. Finally, societal and economic changes in recent decades have given rise to new imageries of citizenship, which often center on consumer sovereignty as its vital element, a fact that has important implications for what we call civil society. Taking the example of Brazil, I will show that such views are not uncontested, but that they are challenged by a political imagery premised on the idea that citizenship itself can be a strategy employed in the search for a more inclusive and civil society. This theme is certainly ample, and I do not pretend to examine it exhaustively, but only to offer some food for thought. As noted, I consider citizenship and civil society to be interrelated notions and thus seek to put a certain distance between my perspective and views of civil society currently in vogue, which tend to define it as a space located somewhere beyond the market and the state. Instead, I seek to highlight the ways in which the market, the state and civil society all intersect in an effort to construct something that we might call a “political economy of citizenship.”

The citizen comes on stage

The notion of citizenship has roots in the ancient Greek *polis*, the Roman Empire and the medieval European city. Modern notions of citizenship and civil society, however, were forged in the context of the religious wars in Europe and the formation of constitutional nation-states, on the one hand, and the transition to capitalism and the transformation of estate into contractual societies, on the

other. Citizenship came to signify a condition of liberty, while the rights that underpinned this condition were known as “civil” rights: that is, the right to hold property and to enter into contracts, the freedom of the individual and the right to justice. With the English Revolution of 1688, freedom of speech, freedom of consciousness and freedom of religion were included.

More than a century later, rights such as these were codified in the constitutions drafted in the aftermath of bourgeois revolutions on the continent. The right to acquire and own property was considered basic to the emerging order. Property, in fact, would become the very foundation of autonomous participation in the self-regulated contractual society imagined by Enlightenment thought. It should be noted, however, that although the right to own property was considered fundamental, the notion of civil citizenship went beyond the right to hold economic property as individuals considered owners of their “personhood” protected by individual guarantees. Although in principle civil citizenship was extended to all citizens, the fact that freedom was basically anchored in property meant that political citizenship was limited to just a small group of propertied, educated males,² while the “common people” were excluded, as were women, because they were considered to be “minors” for life.³

The appearance in early modernity of the concept of civil society went hand-in-hand with the formation of civil rights and was also marked by the philosophical and cultural climate of the epoch. Civil society was thought of as the realm of private relations, including economic ones. It was conceived of as a space for the conformation of a “natural order” in which private vice would be transformed into public virtue. Civil society thus became anchored in property rights and market exchanges among sovereign agents freed from the regulations and interventions of the monarch in the context of the constitutional state: the expression of the “original contract.”

There is no need here to review the debates on the relation between the state or political society and civil society during early modernity.⁴ What should be noted is the differentiation between these spheres and the way in which civil society was conceived of as an entity both rooted in and made up of mercantile relations. We also know, somewhat in contrast to liberal thought, that the republican tradition would emphasize the role of civil associations in containing the tendencies toward social dissolution generated by competition among individuals. It emphasized the

importance of their permanent participation in the management of the public cause in order to reconcile particular interests with the common good. It was Hegel who sought to “synthesize” these two positions: instead of viewing civil society as the locus of the constitution of a natural order, Hegel saw it as a space of disorder and dissolution and, suspecting that the collision between private interests and the disorganization of civil society might infiltrate the state, he proposed a sort of corporatist reintegration or modernization of the estate system in order to achieve the *Aufhebung* of civil society in the state: the incarnation of “virtue.” Marx, in contrast, criticized such ideas, arguing that it would be illusory to overcome the class divisions of capitalism through a return to pre-capitalist forms of estate organization. Rather than viewing the state as the locus for overcoming the contradictions of civil society, Marx considered it the very expression of those contradictions. The solution, therefore, was a revolutionary transformation that would bring about the abolishment of capitalism and thus make possible the re-absorption of the state by civil society.⁵

In sum, in early western modernity the formation of civil society was linked to a binary view of “society vs. the state” forged in the struggles of the nascent bourgeoisie against privileges and Absolutism.⁶ Mistrust of the state was reflected in liberal precepts that describe it as a “night-watch,” while conceiving of civil society as an entity opposed to the state, and made up of formally equal and autonomous individuals as the exclusive repositories of rights. At the same time, in the context of the transition from an estate to a contractual society,⁷ property was regarded as the basis of citizenship and the foundation for autonomous participation in the management of the *res publica*. The realm of “material life” was thus considered a *constitutive* element of civil society.

Later, Marx coined the famous phrase according to which the anatomy of civil society should be sought in political economy, which, we should note, in no way meant that it could be reduced to the economy. It was exactly this reflection on political economy that made it possible to discern that civil society did not tend towards the construction of a natural order but rather towards contradictions and the division of society into classes pitted against each other. This led Hegel to his proposals on the “universality” of the state and Marx to his thesis concerning its extinction.

Citizenship's shifting foundations

The Manichean views of the relation between the “night-watch state” and civil society of liberal thinkers or Marxist analyses of the symbiosis between *bourgeois* civil society and the state reflected quite well the reality of Western Europe during the first three quarters of the 19th century. There is no need to evaluate here the rights and wrongs of Marxist theorizing or its philosophy of history in order to perceive that in the course of the 19th century struggles and processes of change and accommodation evolved that led to a significant transformation of the organization of the economy as well as of the relations between the state and civil society. While in the economy a transition from competitive toward “organized” capitalism began, the relations between the state and civil society showed an increasing interpenetration and a broadening of state functions. Up to that time, the state had basically been a machinery of repression towards the interior and of war towards the exterior. Meanwhile, *bourgeois civil society* was replaced by *mass society*, a transformation whose beginnings are generally situated around 1870. The aftermath of the French-German War saw the defeat of the Paris Commune (1871), the last attempt at revolutionary insurrection in Western Europe, while 1873 was the year of the first genuine world crisis. The notion of “imperialism” came to denote the new scramble for overseas dominion. Those events marked the transition to a new “phase” of development of western European countries.

It was under such changing conditions that citizenship acquired new dimensions as a result of the extension of political rights and the gradual introduction of certain social rights as well. The right of the male population to vote was conquered in France in 1848. In 1871, the new German Empire granted this right for the election of the Lower Chamber of the national parliament. In Great Britain, a succession of reforms between 1832 and 1884 enfranchised the majority of the male population and, in 1918, the franchise was universalized to the entire male population while at the same time part of the female population was granted the right to vote, one that would be extended to all adult women in 1929 (Hobsbawm, 1987:85).

As Marshall (1950) suggests, social rights developed as a mechanism to counter the disintegrative tendencies of capitalism signaled by Hegel and Marx. He describes how in the early years of English capitalism forms of social protection centered in local communities or trade associations were dismantled. The forms of wage regulation that had emerged in the 16th century were modified

and gradually abandoned. With the introduction of the New Poor Law in 1834, all interference in the free play of market forces was condemned in the name of individual freedom of contract. In this context of emergent capitalism, it was considered that wage regulation and social protection contradicted civil liberties such as the right to celebrate contracts.⁸ Marshall notes that assistance for the indigent under the New Poor Law was conditional on their renouncing individual liberties, their confinement in a Poor House, and the loss of their political rights, that is, if they actually had any to lose.⁹ This destruction of earlier forms of regulation and construction of new labor relations often triggered violent responses on the part of workers, based on their conceptions of justice and their “moral economy.”

The working conditions of the male workforce were not subject to state intervention because they were considered free citizens who voluntarily assumed the conditions of their contracts. As for industrial relations, we should note that the French Chapelier Law of 1791 and the British Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800 banned associations among workers and thus reflected the views on civil citizenship characteristic of early capitalism (Castel, 1995:255-337). Throughout Europe, workers’ manifestations or attempts at organization would be treated as rebellions and be repressed by the state. This began to change near the end of the 19th century, when early forms of collective bargaining emerged as instruments for the creation of what Marshall calls “industrial citizenship.” This did not yet imply the formation of social rights, because this modification of the laws of the market relied on the collective exercise of civil rights and not on political intervention. Though foreshadowing the emergence of social rights, the acceptance of collective bargaining took place in the civil “sphere” while the subsequent formation of social rights would take place in the political domain. Social rights, conceived of as *entitlements* for each and every citizen, would derive from the exercise of political power and relied on the decommodification of access to certain goods and services. After 1945, as “warfare” states were gradually transformed into “welfare” states, this new configuration of citizenship would be formalized through policies that relied on Keynesian economics and Fordist regulation (Castel, 1995).¹⁰

By defining social rights as *entitlements* administered through political intervention and decommodification, Marshall outlined a new foundation of

citizenship, distinct from the liberal one. In order to achieve the coexistence of the principle of liberty with that of the free market, Marshall proposed that the state guarantee a minimum level of wellbeing necessary for the autonomous participation of all people in social and political life, separated from the "achievement principle." In this manner, he argued, "citizenship becomes the architect of legitimate inequalities." In other words, instead of defining citizenship in terms of property, this concept was given a new basis in universal, *politically*-guaranteed social rights through the redistributive intervention of the state. Marshall's ideal thus implies a significant departure from the 19th century liberal model of citizenship, due to its objective of reconciling the principles of equality with those of the market economy, which required setting limits to free competition.

It should be stressed that Marshall outlined an ideal that was partly realized in welfare states and, moreover, that he developed his views on citizenship by taking the British case as a reference. Thus, he describes the development of citizenship as a sort of evolutionary sequence that passes from civil rights, through political rights, to social rights. This representation has been criticized by various authors, among them Michael Mann (1996) in his essay on ruling class strategies and citizenship, first published in 1987. Arguing against the evolutionary sequence, this author emphasizes the power relations between classes in order to develop a more critical perspective on the unequal and non-linear development of the bundle of rights that make up citizenship. Besides the liberal scenario, which was followed by Britain and the United States, Mann mentions four other strategies: reformist (France, Spain, Italy and Scandinavia); monarchic authoritarian (Germany, Austria, Russia and Japan); fascist (Nazi Germany); and authoritarian socialist (the Soviet Union). These were all strategies designed to transform the frontal confrontation between massive and antagonistic social classes, as foreseen by Hegel, Marx and others, into conflicts less defined by their class character; more limited and complex; and on occasions more orderly and on others less so. In Gramscian terms, one might say that they are just so many ways of maintaining power through variable mixes of hegemony -in the sense of achieving consent- and coercion.

Without entering into a detailed discussion of each of these strategies, it is worth calling attention to the case of Germany. In the course of the 19th century, the Prussian regime and the local bourgeoisie came to the conclusion that civil

citizenship and its liberal rights would be indispensable to the achievement of modernization. This civil liberty, however, coexisted with the virtual absence of political citizenship for the majority of the population. At the same time, partly as a consequence of a traditionalist paternalist ideology, Germany's modernizing absolutist regime also came to favor a modicum of social citizenship.¹¹ It was Kaiser Wilhelm and Otto von Bismarck, and not the liberals or the reformists, who invented the welfare state. Although its expansion was limited, this scheme, which included social security and pensions, was relatively advanced in comparison with those of Britain, France or the United States. While such incipient welfare schemes were being elaborated, from 1878 to 1890, anti-socialist laws impeded the political organization of the German working class, whose civil rights were severely curtailed through the suppression of labor unions. This is just one case that demonstrates that the development of citizenship rights is not a lineal evolutionary process. Of the bundle of rights that Marshall considered, some may advance while others contract, according to the relations of power in a given country. This case also shows once again that within the set of civil rights, those related to the functioning of a market economy were guaranteed, while freedom of association was not. When we direct our attention to Latin America, we observe a distinct ruling class strategy in relation to citizenship: populism, which in certain aspects resembles the Bismarckian strategy.¹²

Before turning our attention to Latin America, we must first extend our examination of the transformation of civil society and its new relationship to the state in Western Europe towards the end of the 19th century. One important aspect of that process was the institutionalization of compulsory education. In western countries, literacy increased from around 60% of the population in 1870 to over 90% by the end of the century, proving that massive public education and the emergence of social rights were among the significant changes that took place in the relationship between the state and civil society. At the same time, industrialization entered a new phase thanks to technological innovations and the introduction of new forms of organization such as Taylorism in the 1880s and Fordism by the early 20th century. This was also a time of diversification of society with the emergence of new middle classes based in bureaucratic occupations, in both expanding state apparatuses and industry. Gradually, the living conditions of the masses improved, transforming them into a public of

consumers that became the target of new means of mass communication, a process that contributed to the consolidation of nationalisms. Politics also underwent a change with the emergence of large-scale political parties and a greater tolerance of workers' organizations. One might say that whereas the balance between consent and coercion tipped towards the latter in the early 19th century, by the end of that century the element of consent had gained considerable ground.

In 1895, on the occasion of the reprinting of some of Marx' writings on the class struggle in France, Engels wrote a Preface in which he reflected on the transformation of political life and criticized the insurrectionary road *à la 1848* that had characterized a large part of the 19th century. Calling attention to the improved equipment of repressive apparatuses, on the one hand, and considering the electoral advances of German Social Democracy, on the other, he recommended that the socialist movement reconsider its tactics and wager first on the electoral road and the patient labor of propaganda and parliamentary politics (Engels, 1971). Although arguments between "revisionist" and "orthodox" socialists went on for quite some time and were renewed after the Russian Revolution, in practice, European Social Democracy adopted the electoral road. Years later, between 1929 and 1935, Gramsci reflected on the economic, social and cultural changes that had occurred in Western Europe. With the emergence of large labor unions and new professional associations, mass political parties and universal suffrage, new means of cultural production and "private apparatuses of hegemony," a new sphere had come into being, one relatively autonomous from both the economic domain and the repressive apparatuses of the state. Gramsci sought to disentangle the implications for leftist strategies often inspired by the 1871 Paris Commune and the Russian Revolution. It was in these reflections that, after a lengthy absence, the concept of civil society re-emerged in Marxian theorizing. A central element in Gramsci's reflection is his comparison of conditions in "the East" and "the West": "In the East the state was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West a proper relation between the state and civil society existed and when the state trembled, the robust structure of civil society immediately revealed itself" (Gramsci, 1971:238).

Comparisons such as these informed his reflections on hegemony and the "war of positions" within civil society. Under the conditions in the West, revolution could not be insurrectional or a "war of movement" to "take power" -analogous to

storming the Winter Palace- and a subsequent construction of hegemony over a “gelatinous” civil society. To the contrary, what was needed was a prior patient construction of new intellectual, moral, and economic orientations (Gramsci, 1971:161) in order to build a counter-hegemony that could sustain a power alternative. Retrieving the concept of civil society, Gramsci contributed significantly to the critique of the prevailing statecentrism. Civil society emerged as a field and as an object of struggle.

As we shall see, Gramsci’s work would be a source of inspiration, not only for the renovation of the political culture of the Latin American Left but also for academic work that developed new perspectives on culture in general and on political culture in particular. This opened the way for much more creative approaches than those inspired by functionalism or those that relied on the concept of ideology, which, when all is said and done, were not really that distinct.¹³

Permutations of citizenship in Latin America



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Liberal notions of citizenship have become what Santos (1998a) would call a “globalized localism.” In Latin America, such ideas were first appropriated by the *criollo* elites in their struggles against the *peninsulares*, but they struck no deep chords among the population. There were some radical popular conspiracies inspired by the French Revolution in Brazil and certain other countries, but they were soon subdued, and the main result seems to have been similar to that of the indigenous revolts of the Andean region; namely, to scare the elites and inspire mistrust of the so-called “dangerous classes.” Latin American independence was mainly an affair of the *criollo* elites who maintained a “healthy distance” from the

popular masses (Mallon, 1995).

What predominated was a *criollo* liberalism focused largely on free trade. Although new constitutions abolished Indian tribute, they also limited citizens' rights to the property-owning classes and did not put an end to slavery. Indeed, Indian tribute soon reappeared under new denominations such as the *contribución indigenal*. The new republics also often recognized the "adscription" of workers to haciendas and delegated or privatized the administration of these populations to *hacendados*; a situation quite distinct from the monopolization of violence by the modern state described by Weber (1958:78). Despite solemn declarations on equality, new social classifications emerged that were often even more hierarchical and exclusionary than those of colonial society.

At the same time, the liberal view on private property and its virtues provided a rationalization for the privatization of corporately-held lands. Citizenship thus served as a mechanism for dispossessing indigenous communities and consolidating the landowning oligarchy. By the 1870s, post-independence turbulence had settled down and given way to relatively stable oligarchic orders, based largely on a combination of state and private violence. Much more than in Europe, the state here preceded the "nation" and if the nation was an "imagined community," then it was imagined by -and for- the dominant class, in such a way that most of the population became "invisible."

The persistence of this "invisibility" up to the present is now being challenged by demands for the recognition of diversity and the rights of the indigenous and black populations (Assies, Van der Haar and Hoekema, 2000). Latin American populism, as noted, can be viewed as another ruling class strategy in relation to citizenship. Around the beginning of the 20th century, the "problem of the incorporation of the masses" became a matter of concern (Weffort, 1980). Populism emerged as a top-down form of incorporating the masses in a context of increasing urbanization and industrialization and the pressures exerted by emerging sectors to enter the political arena. It should be noted that at the end of the 1920s, only 2.3% of the Brazilian population voted in presidential elections. In Chile, the figure was 6.6%, and in Argentina and Uruguay, 12.9% and 18.4%, respectively (Mainwaring, 1995:358; see also Sokoloff, 2002). Clearly, the political arena was dominated by "parties of notables." However, the downfall of those oligarchies, in many cases precipitated by the crisis of 1929, did not imply a clear rupture but, rather, a reaccommodation.

This was not at all similar to the French Revolution. As Weffort (1980) puts it, Vargas' 1930 "revolution" in Brazil was a "poor revolution, but the only one we had," underlining that it was a preemptive move intended to avert a potential popular movement. The outcome was what has been called a "compromise situation": the landowning oligarchy was not defeated, but given a new place in the field of forces. There was no national bourgeoisie capable of leading a project of independent industrialization, but what was emerging were "urban masses" of workers and middleclass sectors. In such a context of precarious "equilibrium" among classes, the state could become "relatively autonomous," procure compromises among different sectors, and manipulate them in order to promote industrial development. This was the so-called "arbiter" state, one that while often relying on the armed forces could claim the role of "moderating power." It was in just such situations of precarious equilibrium that leaders like Vargas or Perón could project themselves as the incarnation of the "national popular" state.

Even though this compromise situation implied a delimitation of the power of the oligarchy, the inclusion of the masses stopped short of the rural population. In most countries, the rural sector continued to be "administrated" privately; the Brazilian *coroneís* being one case in point. The urban masses were partly incorporated through corporatist structures that included some sectors of the working population and middleclass, white-collar groups. The provision of services was conditioned on membership in para-public unions, authorized and sponsored by the state, which, in turn, was personally incarnated in the Leader, an object of affection considered the "Father of the Poor" or the "Protector of the Shirtless." According to Lautier (1993), the emergence of the Latin American version of the welfare state was characterized by three features:

- 1) the initial appearance of a system of social security (covering work accidents, illness and pensions) for specific sectors of the population; 2) the inclusion of trade unions in a context marked by the absence of union freedom; and, 3) mechanisms of social assistance that became props for political clientelism. The outcome was the formation of "social enclaves," discretionally provided with some social "rights" in exchange for a restriction of civil and political ones (Roberts, 1995:184-207). Important sectors of the population remained on the margins of such systems as they were employed in sectors that were not officially recognized, and constituted what would later be dubbed the "informal" sector. Populism manifested itself in different ways and with distinct intensities in many

Latin American countries as a phenomenon that accompanied the transition from the oligarchic agro-export model to urban industrial society, which took place in the postwar period of import substituting industrialization and *desarrollo hacia dentro* (development toward the inside). Many countries achieved significant growth rates and societies became predominantly urban. However, the incorporating capacity of such processes was patchy and unequal, as is reflected in the *Cepalist* notion of “structural heterogeneity.” Despite manifest intentions to emulate European universalist welfare systems, those promoted by Latin American states were highly stratified and segmented (Santos, 1987; Draibe, 1989, 1990; Gordon, 1999). Social rights did not emerge as universalized entitlements but rather as handouts from a state personified in “the Leader.” Clientelist relations curbed the autonomous participation of the individual and the popular sectors were integrated primarily as “masses to be maneuvered” in the power game. In contrast to the partial, fragmented incorporation of the urban population, the rural population remained excluded. As time passed, the expansion of “marginality” became ever more visible in the spread of *vilas perdidas*, *favelas*, *calampas*, *tugurios* (i.e., slums), etc. and of the informal sector, all of which were marginalized elements dependent on the tolerance of those in power and subject to their manipulations.¹⁴



The 1960s saw the gradual disintegration of populist regulation and its replacement by bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes (Collier, 1979; O’Donnell, 1999). According to Weffort (1980), military intervention reflected a crisis of regulation in populist regimes. The perception among the masses was that populist handouts had gradually been transformed into entitlements, while at the same time the demand for such rights was rising and being expressed in increasingly autonomous forms of mobilization that threatened to overwhelm the limits of a capitalist economy. Though the debate is ample and there are alternative explanations for the demise of populism and the emergence of new authoritarianisms (Collier, 1979; O’Brien and Cammack, 1985), there can be no doubt that for many countries the 1970s were characterized by the suppression of civil and political rights and the institutionalization of state terror.

Without entering into a detailed discussion of such authoritarianisms, it is worth

noting the distinct trajectories that social rights followed the Brazilian and Chilean dictatorships. The Brazilian program of conservative modernization included consolidating the state-sponsored welfare system and broadening its coverage through a sort of “neo-Bismarckism.” The Chilean regime, in contrast, pioneered the introduction of the neoliberal reforms that currently prevail in the region. Such measures consist in privatizing and decentralizing the core of the welfare state (privatization and individualization of pensions and social security and decentralization/privatization of education and healthcare), leaving behind a reduced field for state intervention to fight “extreme poverty” through focalized interventions aimed at “helping the deserving poor help themselves.”

Where the social sector is concerned, neoliberal policies are oriented by a critique of the beneficiary state, ideologically represented as the “providential state” (Castel, 1995:452). It is argued that a culture of dependence has been created and that, moreover, state intervention in the freedom of citizens should be curbed. Such criticism is founded on a peculiar conception of the citizen, who comes to be viewed primarily as a sovereign consumer. Instead of a “citizenship of rights,” what is being proposed here is an “asset-based citizenship” (Lo Vuolo, 2002); a kind of postmodern re-edition of property-based citizenship. Such views underpin the drive towards the privatization and individualization of pension and social security schemes, as well as the “New Public Management” prescriptions that seek to introduce forms of entrepreneurial management and semi-market mechanisms into public administration. The idea is that the state or private agencies provide services to consumer-citizens who, in turn, can freely elect among service providers according to rational cost-benefit calculations.¹⁵ Here, we are presented with a utopian vision of a society ruled by the market mechanism, in which consumer rights become the central axis of citizenship (Sorj, 2001). Moreover, politics is conceived of in the same way: reduced to simple procedures in which the vote serves as a market signal. I will return to this issue in my discussion of the “new democracies.”

Before broaching that topic, however, we should turn our eye to the “discovery of civil society” by the Latin American Left and the development of a citizenship-discourse opposed to the neoliberal conception of an assets-based, consumerist citizenship.

The “discovery” of civil society and of citizenship as a strategy

For the Latin American Left, the 1970s were the years of the “discovery” of civil

society as a terrain for political struggle, of citizenship as a political strategy and of democracy as a value in itself (Barros, 1986, Castañeda, 1994; Dagnino, 1994, 1998; Weffort, 1988). These discoveries constituted a profound rupture with the ideological traditions and political culture of the Left. Weffort (1988:515) has underscored the fact that this rupture did not derive from an intellectual finding but, rather, from lived experience. The discovery that there is politics beyond the state began with the experiences of those persecuted by authoritarian regimes. Civil society was “born” from the experience of fear and the search for protection in the face of state terrorism. In the case of Brazil, the family, the Church, the Bar Association and, somewhat later, when the regime began to “distend,” trade unions, employers associations and cultural organizations were all found to be spaces that provided protection and allowed for resistance. Simultaneously, the disastrous guerilla experience and the defeat of vanguardism fueled debate over left-wing strategies, civil society and democracy. By then, political liberalization and the incipient transition process had triggered what was called the “awakening of civil society,” that expressed itself in a proliferation of social movements that prompted further theoretical reflection which, in turn, influenced the construction of the emerging movements and the way they framed their discourses (Assies, 1994, 1997). There is no doubt that in this context access to Gramsci’s writings¹⁶ has been crucial in opening up new horizons of political thought (Dagnino, 1998; Sader, 1988:167) and has helped to construct a new political grammar revolving around notions of democracy, civil society, citizenship and rights. Instead of the ruling class strategy of citizenship being imposed from above, what was articulated was a citizenship strategy “from below.”

The Brazilian case perhaps reflects most clearly the process of the construction of a new grammar and its penetration into political discourse and common sense. For this reason, I will discuss it at some length. In a recent analysis of Brazilian social movements, Hochstetler (2000) distinguishes two cycles of mobilization, the first of which began in the 1970s and ended in 1985, when the country formally returned to civilian rule at all levels of government. This new context gave rise to a second cycle of mobilization, oriented around a reconfigured discourse or a new “master frame,”¹⁷ strongly anchored in the concept of citizenship. During the first cycle, which coincided with the “awakening of civil society,” the “master frame” had been one of frontal “opposition to the military regime” and demands for democracy that did not reflect a desire to participate in

the existing political regime but, rather, its replacement.

Although notions of civil society and citizenship were not absent, this “master frame” was what I have called the “paradigm of the 1970s” (Assies, 1990:73-77). It was largely inspired by Marxist writings on the urban question (Borja, 1975; Castells, 1974, 1977; Lojkin, 1981) and carried the expectation that the end of authoritarianism -democracy-would necessarily be accompanied by a “social transformation” (Sader, 1988). This was the “heroic phase” of confrontation with the regime. The relationship between civil society and the state was clearly conceived in a Manichean fashion. However, though this conception reflected quite well the experience of opposition and repression (Dagnino, 1998:41), by the early 1980s, it was beginning to be criticized. Gramsci’s writings contributed to the development of more differentiated views on the relations between civil society and the state, and there were also some rather practical reasons to rethink them, since in the course of the transition process the opposition had in fact become the government at various levels of the state structure.¹⁸ The opposition movement reached its peak during the 1984 campaign for direct presidential elections -*direitas já*- though it did not achieve its objective. In 1985, after the tragic death of Tancredo Neves, who had been elected by an electoral college, Vice-President José Sarney assumed the presidency and attention shifted to the drafting of a new Constitution.

It was in this context that the “master frame” centered on democracy and the confrontation between civil society and the state gave way to one centered on citizenship. As Hochstetler (2000:167) rightly observes, the new frame revealed important continuities with the previous one in its reliance on a language of inclusion and exclusion and its definition of social exclusion as the “absence of citizenship.” In this sense, however, the notion of citizenship goes well beyond merely legal or political definitions and comes to include social and economic indicators. Hunger, violence and the lack of access to land could now be signified in terms of the absence of citizenship.

A new grammar emerged in which citizenship was conceived of as a “strategy” (Dagnino, 1994). Dagnino mentions some of the fundamental features of “citizenship-as-strategy”:

- the redefinition of the notion of rights in the sense that the point of departure is the “right to have rights,” entailing a significant broadening of the definition of

rights; - it implies that we are not dealing with a dominant-class strategy, but with the constitution of active social subjects;

- it entails the diffusion of a “culture of rights” that goes beyond their formal-legal aspect to include a proposal for a new sociability; - this, in turn, means going beyond the liberal perspective with its emphasis on the relation with the state in order to include the relations that exist in civil society. Dagnino underscores that this presupposes an “intellectual and moral reform” in the Gramscian sense;
- belonging means not only participation in a given system but the right to an effective participation in defining that system. Dagnino cites experiments with participatory budgeting at the municipal level as an example;
- finally, this new conception of citizenship should incorporate both equality and difference.

Such views seek to retrieve the cultural and ethical-moral aspects of social-political struggles. Social movements do not merely pursue material or institutional goals but are engaged at the same time in “wars of interpretation” over the meaning of “rights,” citizenship, and the spaces for -and forms of doing-politics. Along the way, therefore, they affect and transform political culture (Alvarez, Dagnino and Escobar, 1998). The renewed reading of Gramsci’s work contributed to a rupture with the state-centered understanding of political activity and a reconceptualization of power as a relation between social forces rather than “something there for the taking.” Additionally, attention was directed to civil society as an object and a terrain for political action. Finally, this opened the way to new conceptions of culture that broke away from the concept of ideology as false consciousness or a simple reflection of the economic base.

This was experienced as a liberation from economic reductionism, determinism and state-centrism and, therefore, as an escape from a cognitive straightjacket (Dagnino, 1994, 1998). This conception of “citizenship-as-strategy” did not simply reflect the new post- 1985 conditions, it also provided a powerful instrument for questioning the quality of the new democracy and a framework for new forms of mobilization and for doing politics. Once again, the question of social integration was high on the agenda.

Disenchantment and incivility

The 1970s saw not only the beginnings of transitions from authoritarian rule, but also of those towards a new economic model: neoliberalism. The two tracks of this “double transition” are not easily combined. Though the difficulties of the

nationaldevelopmentalist model in the “easy phase” of import substituting industrialization ¹⁹ had become increasingly notable by the 1960s, it was the second oil shock of 1979 that triggered a deep worldwide recession. The following years would be marked by policies of structural adjustment and state reform, and the 1980s would become known as the “lost decade.” The prices of primary goods, minerals and agricultural products fell to levels comparable to those of the 60s, while fuel prices soared. In 1982, the Mexican crisis erupted and it soon became clear that Brazil and Argentina would be unable to fulfill their foreign debt obligations. Per capita product in Latin America fell drastically, inflation became rampant and private and public investment and social spending were reduced dramatically. By the end of the 80s, officials from multilateral agencies and government representatives had agreed on a new economic policy, designed to assure the governability of Latin American countries: the so-called “Washington Consensus” (Williamson, 1990). Its main features were deregulation, market liberalization and the transformation of the role of the state, including a reduction of its involvement in social policies. Although this shock treatment restored macro-economic stability, the social costs of the crises and the measures taken to combat them were dramatic indeed (Green, 1999; Weeks, 1995).

In the course of the “lost decade,” per capita GDP dropped by more than 7%, while the proportion of the population living in poverty rose from 40% to 46% (Vilas, 1995). The impoverishment of important sectors of the middle classes spawned the “new poor.” The 1990s brought a certain recovery and a reduction of poverty levels, but by the end of that same decade “de-acceleration” set in, in the wake of the Asian crisis. Thus, while at the end of the decade the number of poor was estimated to be around 200 million -37% of the population- it was expected to increase again to some 220 million as a consequence of “de-acceleration” (CEPAL, 2000). Meanwhile, adjustment and economic transformation have resulted in new social-economic configurations that combine increases in productivity with greater income concentration. A recent study shows that in nearly all Latin American countries the Gini index, which was already quite impressive, has risen (Székely, 2001). As Fanfani writes: the rich become richer and the poor more numerous (Tenti Fanfani, 2001).

This increase in inequality goes together with a restructuring of labor markets that results in new forms of exclusion and greater precariousness in a context in which compensatory schemes have been stripped away or reduced to focalized,

privatized interventions. Open unemployment has gone up to two-digit percentages and the number of people with low-productivity, informal jobs is increasing. The formal sector shows little capacity to create employment and is involved rather in a process of informalization as a result of the erosion of collective contracts and increasing flexibility. The number of permanent jobs has decreased and, as a result, the stability that structured the lives of a good number of salaried workers and their families has crumbled away (Portes and Hoffmann, 2003). As production increases employment drops, thus generating a contingent of “superfluous” and/or “unemployable” workers (Tenti Fanfani, 2001).²⁰

These processes become interlaced with new forms of social and spatial segregation often associated with forms of ethnic or racial discrimination. The production of new marginalized sectors expresses itself in the creation of virtual urban ghettos where a sort of social extra-territoriality reigns. While the state certainly keeps watch over them it abstains from maintaining an actual presence there. Such sectors, then, are largely left to their own devices to “enjoy” the only right they have: the “right to misery.”²¹ Hence, we observe the formation of spaces of socialization and living that are governed according to the laws of the urban jungle: “islands” or “peripheral” areas – though some are located in central urban zones– where new forms of participation in a society that has elevated consumption to its highest norm emerge (Tenti Fanfani, 2001).

The dissonance between societal normativity and real exclusion promotes sentiments of relative deprivation and frustration that intertwine with attempts to break out of the condition of *ninguneado* (nobodyness) and to achieve the consumer dream in “illicit” ways. Sansone, who studied such phenomena in the very different context of Dutch society, captures the situation quite well in book titles that suggest that those who “missed the boat” seek to “shine in the shadow” (Sansone, 1990; 1992). Other studies (Pierruci, 1994; Telles, 1995) have pointed to the growing gap in sociability among sectors of the population and the construction of mental cartographies that divide urban spaces into more or less dangerous zones (BID, 1998; Kowarick, 2000; Peralva, 1996).

Segregation and the new climate of fear that reigns in the cities materialize in architectural designs and the privatization of urban space through the construction of closed condominiums (Caldeira, 2000). Despite the transitions to electoral democracy, the incapacity to construct an inclusionary societal project, both in the ethical-political and the economic sense,²² results in the coercive

element taking precedence over the aspect of consent.²³ Everyday forms of state coercion become increasingly visible, while at the same time one notes a privatization of the means of violence through the creation of private security agencies. It is estimated that in many cities private security guards now outnumber the police.

Thus, the processes of transition have not contributed to a decrease in state and parastate violence, but rather to a change in the object of that violence. Left-wing subversion is no longer the “internal enemy”; as this role has been taken over by a modern version of the “dangerous classes,” generated by an economic model to which, it is said, there are “no alternatives.” The expectations once generated by the “awakening of civil society” are now giving way to new concerns and to disenchantment with societies that seem to be becoming increasingly uncivil. Violence, injustice and impunity seem to be the norm, and they undermine the legitimacy of judicial and police institutions. In fact, much of the violence directed against the most vulnerable sectors of society is perpetrated by police apparatuses themselves. Moreover, the armed forces are becoming increasingly involved in tasks related to public security and maintenance of order (Holson and Caldeira, 1998; Isla and Miguez, 2003; López-Ménendez, 2000; Méndez, O’Donnell and Pinheiro, 2000; Pereira, 2000; Seoane, 2003).

In reference to the new democracies, O’Donnell (1999:142) has coined the term “low-intensity citizenship.” Though these are democracies in the sense that political rights and polyarchy are respected, they are also “delegative democracies.”²⁴ By the same token and as we have already seen, in the context of the globalizing economy the new democracies confront obstacles or lack the political will to do something about the “social debt.” At best, some emergency programs were implemented that were later replaced by focalized policies, while social policies were decentralized and at times privatized. The coverage and quality of social services has declined. The notion of “low-intensity citizenship,” however, refers specifically to the un-rule of law and the non-existence of civil rights for important sectors of the population, which are subjected to forms of “perversely privatized” violence and coercion.

Countercurrents: citizenship-as-strategy

The emergence of formally democratic but increasingly uncivil societies is precisely one of the themes that the concept of “citizenship-as-strategy”

addresses. In the early 1990s, Brazil witnessed a series of violent events in rural and urban areas. Later, in 1995 and 1996, confrontations between the *Movimento sem Terra* and the Military Police resulted in massacres that cost dozens of lives. These two cases are indicative of the pervasive climate of state and private violence in rural areas that has been amply documented by the *Comissão Pastoral da Terra*. As for urban areas, the killing of streetchildren in Rio de Janeiro in 1993, the massacre in the *favela* Vigário Geral in that same year and then the one in *favela* Nova Brasília a year later all drew the nation's attention.

In 1992, the Military Police killed 111 inmates at the Carandiru prison in São Paulo (Varella, 1999). In 1997, an Indian who had traveled to Brasilia to discuss his people's land disputes with government officials was doused with gasoline and set on fire by some middle-class adolescents who later stated that they thought he was "just a beggar." Thus, the climate -not only in Brazil, but throughout Latin America- is now marked by police and private violence, not to mention that practiced by organized crime. To protest such everyday violence, campaigns such as "Citizens' Action against Misery and Pro-Life"²⁵ and *Viva Rio* were launched. These were conceived as multiclass mobilizations committed to vindicating citizens' rights. The Citizens' Action campaign was largely financed through state enterprises and public institutions. Popular participation consisted in a broad spectrum of activities, among them attending shows staged by famous artists in exchange basic food products to be distributed among the poor. Coalition-building between the middle classes and the *favelados* is difficult, however, and reveals the very real distances that separate these two sectors. Although the middle classes may well view the *favelados* as victims of violence, they also see them as major perpetrators of it (Hochstetler, 2000). Attempts to extend such mobilizations to the more structural causes of violence, such as the extreme inequity in income and land distribution, have failed to generate a similar degree of success.

"Participatory budgeting" is another example of an innovation inspired by "citizenship-as-strategy."²⁶ The underlying idea is to create a new public, non-state sphere of deliberation that reduces the power of both the executive and legislative branches in favour of the populace. The objective of participatory budgeting is to devolve real decision-making power and control over public affairs to the population. It opens up a space for debating the municipal budget and its operative planning in order to publicize and confront interests so that they can be

spelled out, justified and confirmed, or not, as “in the public interest.” This should contribute to setting new ethical-moral standards and constructing new parameters of citizenship. Many popular organizations are participating in public debates on the priorities of municipal administration, and this has made it possible to “invert priorities” in favor of “the majorities.” Although the case of Porto Alegre (Baierle, 1998; Magalhães, Barreto and Trevas, 1999; Navarro, 1998; Santos, 1998b; Utzig, 1999) is the best known, similar initiatives have spread throughout Latin America as is reflected, for example, in a study of alternative municipal government experiments in Ecuador under the suggestive title of “emerging citizenships” (Hidalgo *et al.*, 1999).

It is by no means fortuitous that in January 2001 Porto Alegre hosted the World Social Forum in response to the World Economic Forum in Davos, and continued to host such events in subsequent years. These social forums bring together large numbers of intellectuals, trade unionists, politicians and representatives of NGOs and social movements to debate the production and distribution of wealth, access to welfare, sustainability, civil society, public spaces, political power and ethics in contemporary society. Through their search for alternatives, these forums have inserted themselves into what has disparagingly been called the “globalifobic movement.”

The “*citizenship-as-strategy*” framework consciously includes an aspect of cultural politics in order to counter the view of citizenship that reduces this concept to consuming individuals and consumer rights. Though the rights of consumers to public and other services are certainly a central element of this strategy, it seeks to go further by creating new spaces for public deliberation and struggles to attain the recognition that not all consumers are created equal. Thus “*citizenship-as-strategy*” presents itself as a counter-hegemonic measure that seeks new forms of exercising and democratizing state and economic power.

Some final reflections

In this essay, I have examined the relation between the concepts of civil society and citizenship. This approach departed in certain ways from the currently fashionable understanding of civil society, which often conceives of it as the space of associative life, distinct from the economy and from political society. This tripartite model is frequently attributed to Gramsci, though it derives from a specific reading of his work by, amongst others, Bobbio (1987, first published in 1969). In that text, Bobbio argues that Gramsci introduced a profound innovation

in Marxist theorizing by conceiving of civil society as part of the superstructure rather than of the infrastructure, a view soon questioned by Gerratana (1981) and others. The complexity of the debate increased when, in the 1980s, neo-conservatives and neoliberals appropriated the concept of civil society in order to demonize the state. They, and others, began to propose civil society as the space of the “supportive (“*solidario*”) third sector” or “public non-state sector,” an entity situated beyond the state and the market in which non-profit organizations and other kinds of groups would take charge of tasks that the state was busily shedding. Although in retrieving the concept of civil society Gramsci certainly sought to examine the new complexity of western societies, this does not necessarily mean that he thought of civil society as being located radically beyond the state and the market.

Rather, one might think of civil society in terms of relative autonomy and examine its relations with -and porosities in relation to- political society and the economy. The tripartite division thus appears to be one of mutually constituting and conditioning spheres that cannot be reduced simply one to another but that operate according to their own relatively autonomous rules and dynamics. Instead of viewing civil society as the space of liberty and voluntary association, and even reifying it, this would allow us to take into account the relations of economic and political power that traverse civil society and to construct a political economy of citizenship.

In this article, I have sought to outline some of the permutations of citizenship and its relations with civil society. As Marshall (1950) has shown, the initial notions of citizenship as a concept anchored in property collided with pre-capitalist forms of social protection and contributed to their demise. The resistance of the subaltern classes, informed by their notions of moral economy, has been amply analyzed by British social historians (*cf.* Dworkin, 1997), among others. The result of capitalist development and these struggles was a partial de-commodification of the reproduction of labor and the configuration of a new political economy of citizenship in which social rights became key. However, we also saw that no linear development of citizenship rights can be assumed. As a result of confrontations and ruling class strategies regarding citizenship, one dimension may expand while another is reduced, as illustrated by the German case and the case of Latin American populisms.

Critiques of the welfare state, maliciously represented as the “providential state,”

seek to promote another transformation of citizenship by opposing the model of the sovereign consumer to a culture of dependency, supposedly produced by welfare arrangements. The objective here is to transfer state responsibilities in the area of social rights towards private agents –be they non-profit or profit-motivated– and to achieve their recommoditization.²⁷ Here, competition over consumer preferences is expected to benefit such a reconstituted citizen. The objective is not only to depoliticize the economy but to depoliticize social life as well, on the assumptions that the market mechanism can replace public deliberation and that individual consumerism can replace the search for collective goals. Thus, the market mechanism is converted into the new hegemonic device. This is not just a colonization of the public sphere by economic forces, as was feared by the Frankfurt theoreticians, but its replacement by the market mechanism. The reverse side of this societal model is revealed in the lack of sensitivity to the inequities that it generates. Whereas sectors living in extreme poverty may become objects of attention and “targeted intervention,” it is assumed that the remainder of society is essentially a “level playing field” upon which all participants have the same opportunities. Reality, however, is somewhat different and is marked by new forms of precariousness and marginalization and by low-intensity citizenship. While the developmentalist model at least held out some hope of integration in which the state functioned as a “hope-generating machine” (Nuijten, 1998), this entity now seeks to shed this function. In this context, new forms of state, para-state and privatized violence and coercion flourish and, in the eyes of some, the “double transition” –to electoral democracy and free marketeering– may well usher in a democratization of violence.

“Citizenship-as-strategy,” rooted in the “right to have rights,” was invented to counter just such a scenario. Civil society was revealed as an object and a terrain of struggle, while citizenship became a device for questioning a broad range of injustices and exclusions considered signs of “non-citizenship,” which become the object of political practice that contests the dominant meanings of citizenship. This not only opened up new horizons, but also established new frames of reference. However, recourse to civil society has often entailed an impoverishment of reflections on politics and the state. Frequently, it derives into a celebration of extra-institutionality and the formation of subaltern counter-publics, or it declares civil society to be the field of struggle of social movements as well as their primary objective. What is often absent is a reflection on the way this may affect the dominant institutionality and how it may contribute to its

democratization. Those who call attention to civil society and the cultural dimensions of political struggles have rightly criticized the narrowly institutional focus of some analysts with respect to transitions to electoral democracy (Alvarez, Dagnino and Escobar, 1998), but this all too often has come at the price of an impoverished view of institutions and of the ways they may be made more democratic.

Slater (1998), for example, sets up a distinction between “the political” and “politics” and argues that whereas the former constitutes the living movement, the latter signifies the “pacification of the political.” Such a view, in which politics inevitably appears as an inherently normalizing and repressive activity, stands in the way of a serious reflection on the relations between the state and civil society and may be an obstacle when it comes to thinking about “progressive politics” or forms of empowerment that require the use of public power and legislation in order to counter tendencies and interests deeply embedded in civil society. While O’Donnell (1999:159-173) speaks of delegative democracies, Hagopian (1998) has drawn attention to the decline of the old networks of political representation such as parties and corporatist organizations, arguing that there is little evidence of the emergence of new forms of representation, as has been suggested by some enthusiastic accounts of the “awakening of civil society” and the formation of movements, associations and NGOs. Instead, we witness a deepening of a representation gap. The problem is not an excess of participation that leads to a crisis of governability, as predicted by neo-conservative thinkers, but rather a lack of credibility. This is cause for concern. As we saw, for different reasons neoliberal theorists as well as certain theorists of civil society and social movements coincide in turning their back on the state.²⁸

However, instead of being content with criticizing the perspectives on social movements and civil society that seek to take into account their relations with political institutions and state apparatuses for their reductionism and following mainstream theorizing, what is needed is a renewed debate and new research that addresses questions regarding the democratization of institutions, in order to put them at the service of the construction of a more inclusive form of citizenship.²⁹

Notes

¹ Cited in Zucker (2003:9).

² The American Revolution enfranchised the white male population; the 1791 French Constitution made a distinction between “active” and “passive” citizens according to the capacity to pay a direct tax. The “active” citizens could then elect “electors” from among those willing and able to pay a still higher tax. Finally, in an assembly in the departmental capitals the “electors,” voted for the national deputies. In other countries, the enduring presence of the aristocracy would be guaranteed through systems that included elements of representation by estate.

³ Olympe de Gouges, who in the early years of the French Revolution published a tract on “The Rights of Women Citizens,” was beheaded some years later for having desired to become a “statesman” (Albistur and Armogathe, 1977:213-36).

⁴ For outlines of the genealogy of the concept of civil society, see Cohen and Arato (1992:83-116), Bobbio (1987) or the volume edited by Shafir (1998).

⁵ Lenin (1971:325), when considering the withering away of the state and the emergence of a society in which everyone would contribute according to his/her capacities and receive according to need, took the postal services for a model of the ideal society; an idea that goes back to the somewhat authoritarian socialism of Louis Blanc (Vester, 1970:210, 239).

⁶ At the same time, the public-private dichotomy was construed, which institutionalized a gender bias that excluded women from participation in public affairs.

⁷ This transition can be thought of as a process of differentiation between the “political” and the “economic” spheres and as a form of privatization of certain political powers while, at the same time, the “political” and the “juridical” are constitutive of the “economic” sphere.

⁸ More recently, Castel (1995) has published a monumental study of the transformations of the “salaried.”

⁹ He also notes that the protection of women and children was only possible because they were not considered citizens.

¹⁰ Variations in the welfare schemes that emerged in post-war Europe, according to the degree of decommodification with which they operate, should be noted. Such variation is reflected in the classification of welfare arrangements in three groups: liberal-residual, corporative-conservative, and social-democratic. For a discussion, see Draibe (1989, 1990).

¹¹ It should also be noted that, at the time, Germany was heavily engaged in the imperialist competition, particularly in Africa.

¹² The explanation for such a resemblance may be found in the similarity of class relations and, specifically, in the persistent presence of a class of large landowners in a context of a “conservative modernization” project.

¹³ Arguably, with its monolithic concept of an omnipresent dominant ideology, in the end Althusserian theorizing on ideology is not that different from the functionalist approach.

¹⁴ For further discussion of the concept of marginality, see Kowarick in *Citizenship, Political Culture and State Transformation in Latin America*

¹⁵ For further discussion, see Assies (2003).

¹⁶ These writings were available in Argentina by the end of the 1950s, in Brazil around 1968, and in México by 1970 (Dagnino, 1998; Kasnousi, 2000).

¹⁷ Hochstetler (2000) relies largely on the conceptual language of resource mobilization and political process theory as developed by Tarrow (1994) and McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996). For a somewhat different periodization of Brazilian social movements and a discussion of shifting theoretical perspectives, see Assies (1997), and for a recent “state of the question” see Salman (2001).

¹⁸ For an overview of the Brazilian process and references to key texts in the Brazilian debate, see Assies (1993, 1994, 1997, 1999).

¹⁹ The surge of authoritarianisms has often been related to the exhaustion of the first phase of importsubstituting industrialization. The transition to a second phase based on the production of intermediate goods and durable consumer goods required a type of market distinct from the existing one and a reversal of the redistributive tendencies of populism, in order to promote income concentration and increase the purchasing power of the sectors demanding durable consumer goods. This might be one of the factors explaining the rise of exclusionary authoritarian regimes (Collier, 1979).

²⁰ See also the articles by Tom Kruse, Lúcio Kowarick and Emilio Duhau in *Citizenship, Political Culture and State Transformation in Latin America*

²¹ Title of a collection of postcards produced by Brazilian friends on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Lopes and Bazzo, 1998).

²² Gramsci (1971:161) emphasizes that hegemony includes the economic aspect, a fact often too easily forgotten in current culturalist interpretations of hegemony.

²³ See also the article by Laura Tedesco in *Citizenship, Political Culture and State Transformation in Latin America*

²⁴ Once elections are over, the executive branch feels itself in a position to take practically any kind of decision it wishes, forgetting whatever electoral promises it may have made and not fulfilling the obligation of accountability. It is in such contexts that neo-populism and technocratic forms of decisionmaking coexist.

²⁵ This campaign had its antecedents in the “Movement for Ethics in Politics” that contributed to the impeachment of Fernando Collor in 1992.

²⁶ For a discussion of its emergence, see Assies (1993).

²⁷ The proposals to engage the “third” or “public non-state” sector in the provision of public services are presented as an alternative. This proposal rests on the assumption that the motives of such non-profit organizations are rooted in values such as trust, dedication and solidarity. In this way, the proposal seeks to combine the recommoditization of social rights with non-profit motivations. On the other hand, this perspective stresses popular participation in the management, evaluation and control of public services, instead of a simple reliance on market and quasi-market “signals.” In lieu of viewing the citizen merely as an individual consumer, this view underscores republican values and participation in the public cause (Bresser Pereira and Cunnill Grau, 1998). One might situate this perspective, with its affinities to neostructuralism somewhere between the neoliberal strategy and the “citizenship-as-strategy” perspective.

²⁸ In the early 1980s, Evers (1983) wrote a famous essay entitled “With the Back to the State, and far from Parliament.”

²⁹ See also the recent PNUD (2004) report.

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In memoriam Willem Assies, 1954-2010

Ton Salman



Willem Assies

El día 22 de mayo falleció, demasiado temprano y repentinamente, el conocido latinoamericanista holandés Willem Assies. El tenía 55 años. Es una pérdida irreemplazable para el mundo de los estudios sobre el continente, dentro de Holanda pero también más allá. Willem Assies fue un antropólogo político muy prolífico, y trabajó en varias universidades en Holanda, pero también fue profesor e investigador, muchas veces invitado, en México, Guatemala, España, Alemania, Perú, Chile, Ecuador, Brasil y Bolivia. Sus temas fueron organizaciones barriales, movimientos sociales, derechos indígenas, conflictos sobre tierras y territorios, políticas de descentralización, políticas y gestión local, partidos políticos étnicos, manejo sustentable de bosques tropicales, democratización y derechos ciudadanos. Realizó estudios sobre y en Colombia, Ecuador, México, Perú, Brasil, Chile y Bolivia. Publicó en portugués, francés, español, holandés, e inglés. Escribió cuatro libros, fue editor de seis compilaciones de artículos, y publicó más que cien artículos, muchas veces en revistas prestigiosas. Supervisó seis proyectos de doctorado, la mayoría en América Latina - y en el momento de su muerte todas estas actividades estaban en pleno curso. La muerte lo sorprendió como a pocos otros.

Willem Assies, sin embargo, no será recordado solamente por sus publicaciones y su impresionante trayectoria. También será recordado por su personalidad, a la vez irascible y amable, gruñon y ameno, y por ser bien refractario a todo

protocolo y formalidad. Willem también fue muy hospitalario; no importaba dónde tenía su casa, siempre había gente conversando, durmiendo, comiendo y tomando, y pasándolo bien en ella. Willem Assies era bohemio y trabajador incansable en uno, y su energía fue razón de envidia y admiración para todos que lo conocieron.

A pesar de que casi nunca fue un tema explícito en conversaciones con él, todos sus esfuerzos de investigación tenían un denominador común: el tema, inalterablemente, fue el esfuerzo de dar voz a los underdog, de buscar la dignidad humana y la justicia. Por debajo de un aparente mordacidad, lataba un gran corazón humanista, y se escondió una búsqueda constante por estrategias con que los subalternos pudieron mejorar sus condiciones de vida, pudieron ganarse autorespeto y el respeto de otros, con lucha si fuera necesaria. Willem no era utopista: él sabía que el mundo y la historia eran demasiado ilógico y contingente para que el paraíso en el se pudiera realizar. Sin embargo, en su perspectiva, eso no significaba que se tendría que arrojar la toalla: la pelea para dignidad y justicia valía la pena, no importa cuán contradictoria y caprichudo el esfuerzo humano y el curso de la historia estuviera. Por eso, cuando escribió sobre Bolivia, escribió sobre las luchas y las paradojas de estas luchas de los movimientos sociales, sobre derechos indígenas y sobre justicia comunitaria, sobre las guerras del gas y del agua, y sobre los esfuerzos de los pobres de conseguirse voz y voto en la política nacional.

En Willem Assies, los investigadores sobre el continente y sobre Bolivia perdieron un colega, un estudioso y escritor inspirador, y un investigador prolífico y comprometido. Y muchos perdieron un voluntarioso pero muy leal y querido amigo.

Ton Salman, 2010

Willem Assies - In memoriam

Wil Pansters

It is with great sadness that we bring you the news of the sudden and untimely death of Willem Assies, a longstanding member of CERES and a prominent member of the scholarly community of Latin Americanists in the Netherlands. He was only 55 years old.

Originally trained as an anthropologist Willem Assies developed into a wide-ranging, critical and outspoken scholar of contemporary Latin America. He did research and published about peasantry and rural economies, urban social movements, citizenship, politics, democratization, and, in recent years, about indigenous movements and rights. He lived and worked in Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Mexico, Ecuador, and Chili. Undoubtedly one of the most prolific and hard-working scholars of his generation, he had a special talent for theoretical debate and languages. His command of the literature was extraordinary. Willem Assies was also quite a character: straightforward, at times uncompromising, but always in for a conversation about his beloved Latin America or his other personal interests. He was wary of all forms of pomp, formalistic ritual and new forms of higher education management.

An engaged citizen of the world and an avid traveller, he built an impressive global network of colleagues and friends and was widely recognized as an eminent scholar. Dutch academic institutions never managed to fully appreciate Willem's enormous academic potential, quality and achievements.

We wish his partner Gemma van der Haar, daughter Laura Willemijn, family, friends and colleagues all the strength needed to cope with the loss of Willem.

Wil Pansters, 2010

on behalf of CERES Office, Board and Directorate