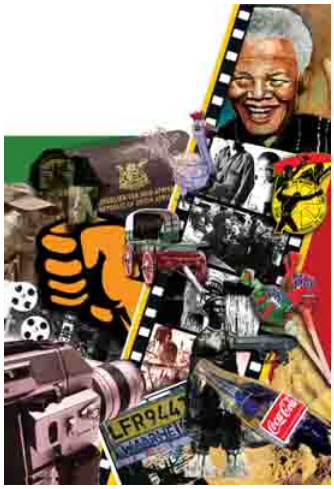
Imaging Africa: Gorillas, Actors And Characters



Africa is defined in the popular imagination by images of wild animals, savage dancing, witchcraft, the Noble Savage, and the Great White Hunter. These images typify the majority of Western and even some South African film fare on Africa.

Although there was much negative representation in these films I will discuss how films set in Africa provided opportunities for black American actors to redefine the way that Africans are imaged in international cinema. I conclude this essay with a discussion of the process of revitalisation of South African cinema after apartheid.

The study of post-apartheid cinema requires a revisionist history that brings us back to pre-apartheid periods, as argued by Isabel Balseiro and Ntongela Masilela (2003) in their book's title, *To Change Reels*. The reel that needs changing is the one that most of us were using until Masilela's New African Movement interventions (2000a/b;2003). This historical recovery has nothing to do with Afrocentricism, essentialism or African nationalisms. Rather, it involved the identification of neglected areas of analysis of how blacks themselves engaged, used and subverted film culture as South Africa lurched towards modernity at the turn of the century. Names already familiar to scholars in early South African history not surprisingly recur in this recovery, Solomon T. Plaatje being the most notable.

It is incorrect that '*modernity denies history, as the contrast with the past – a constantly changing entity – remains a necessary point of reference*' (Outhwaite 2003: 404). Similarly, Masilela's (2002b: 232) notion that '*consciousness of precedent has become very nearly the condition and definition of major artistic works*' calls for a reflection on past intellectual movements in South Africa for a democratic modernity after apartheid. He draws on Thelma Gutsche's (1972) assumption that film practice is one of the quintessential forms of modernity. However, there could be no such thing as a South African cinema under the modernist conditions of apartheid. This is where modernity's constant pull

towards the future comes into play (Outhwaite 2003). Simultaneous with the necessary break from white domination in film production, or a pull towards the future away from the conditions of apartheid, South Africans will need to re-acquire the 'consciousness of precedent', of the intellectual and cultural heritage of the New African Movement, such as is done in *Come See the Bioscope* (1997) which images Plaatjes's mobile distribution initiative in the teens of the century. The Movement's intellectual and cultural accomplishments in establishing a national culture in the context of modernity is a necessary point of reference for the African Renaissance to establish a national cinema in the context of the New South Africa (Masilela 2000b). Following Masilela (ibid.: 235), debates and practices that are of relevance within the New African Movement include:

1. the different structures of portrayal of Shaka in history by Thomas Mofolo and Mazisi Kunene across generic forms and in the context of nationalism and modernity;
2. the discussion and dialogue between Solomon T. Plaatje, H.I.E. Dhlomo, R.V. Selope Thema, H. Selby Msimang and Lewis Nkosi about the construction of the idea of the New African, concerning national identity and cultural identity;
3. the lessons facilitated by Charlotte Manye Maxeke and James Kwegyir Aggrey in making possible the connection between the New Negro modernity and New African modernity;
4. the discourse on the relationship between Marxism and modernity within the context of the Trotskyism of Ben Kies and I.B. Tabata and the Stalinism of Michael Harmel, Albert Nzula and Yusuf Mohammed Dadoo; and
5. the feminist political practices of Helen Joseph, Lilian Ngoyi, Phyllis Ntanatala and others.

In the building of a South African national cinema, therefore, it is imperative that South Africa's new phase of modernity does not deny history but seeks to situate South African film practice and film scholarship within African film history, where they naturally and historically belong, rather than in only European or Hollywood film history, as Eurocentricism and supremacy have attempted to impose them (Masilela 2000b: 236). This task of indigenisation is one that I have set myself for this book for, as Masilela argues:

Although the context of 1994 represents a political triumph, it is questionable whether it has been accomplished by commensurate intellectual and cultural achievements. Our present is the reverse mirror of the past of the New African Movement. In this light it is all the more necessary for the African Renaissance to

establish a dialectical connection between past and present (ibid.: 234).

Romancing Africa

Africa is considered in the popular imagination to be an undeveloped continent, a contemporary representation of humankind's 'past'. The continent has been an enormous source of mythical imagery since the birth of the film industry in 1885. The readable, engaging, and often irreverent Africa on film: *Beyond black and white*, by Kenneth Cameron (1994), charts and evaluates recurring patterns of such representation by American, British and some South African films. Amongst the recurring patterns are:

1. the presence (or more noticeably, the absence) of women, both black and white;
2. the recurrence of the Great White Hunter, a classless individual who often represents counter-racist tendencies;
3. Imperial Man, who represented British governing confidence during the colonial era;
4. the Good African, Imperial Man's trusting and doting servant; and
5. American self-aggrandisement via a male landscape. In these 'jungle movies' negative images of black women and race hatred are a speciality.

A key contributor to myths of Africa in both British and American fantasy films was the nineteenth century South African-based British novelist H. Rider Haggard. He exported bizarre descriptions of Africa and Africans, writing about volcanoes, treasures, hunter-heroes, demonic black witches, lost white civilisations, white goddesses, and so on. These images reappear in endless remakes of his books on film and television, and they are imported into other titles and media as well. Films like *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), now a Disneyland ride, for example, to some extent derive their imagery and characters from writers like Haggard. Contemporary images of Africa found in world cinema are thus inextricably linked to the nature of the encounter between early writers and this mysterious continent. Many such writers were based in South Africa during the late nineteenth century.

Another key historical influence on images of Africa came from the pen of American Edgar Rice Burroughs. Burroughs's twin sources for Tarzan were Haggard and Rudyard Kipling, writer of the famous *Jungle book* (Cameron 1994: 32). Tarzan is cast as a 'noble savage', an exemplar of an aristocratic British bloodline, in many early Tarzan films, and in the much more nuanced Greystoke:

The Legend of Tarzan Lord of the Apes (1984). The American interpretations eliminated Tarzan's aristocratic imperial origin and made him 'American'. As an American, Tarzan expresses white Americans' racial fear of blacks. The American Tarzan films are a depression-era fantasy, and those featuring Jane provide narratives of a stable couple in which the husband is stronger than the chaotic forces of life (ibid.: 43).

The role of monkeys and gorillas is also instructive in the Tarzan and other films. My experience in talking to primary school children at two schools in Indiana, Pennsylvania in March 1996, bears this out. One class of 10/11-year-olds had formed their impression of Africa with the help of PG-rated films such as *Congo* (1995), *Outbreak* (1995) and *Jumanji* (1995). Africa for them was a jungle inhabited by diseased gorillas and monkeys that threatened Americans' health! Once they had succeeded in obtaining an admission from me that monkeys indeed visited my garden in Durban, no explanations contradicting their stereotypes could repair the damage done. (I explained that Durban is sub-tropical, our gardens have wild bananas and other fruit and that monkeys were being displaced by massive urbanisation – no one looks out for monkey's rights!) My daughter, who started high school in Michigan in 1998, came up with the defensive analogy that '*squirrels are to East Lansing what monkeys are to Durban*', as we had previously only seen these small furry creatures as comic book characters. However, once she admitted the fact of monkeys in our garden, the moral high ground could not be retrieved, despite the analogy. Now that one theory on the origin of Aids is sourced to transmission between chimpanzees and humans, Africa again becomes associated in the United States (US) with incurable globalising pandemics. Muhammed Ali's '*Rumble in the jungle*' (where he fought George Foreman for the world heavyweight boxing title) owes its origins to the kinds of films set in Africa which shaped the early American imagination.

In the late 1940s after he became a little too saggy to fit into a Tarzan loincloth without depressing popcorn sales among cinema audiences, the great Johnny Weismuller filled the twilight years of his acting career with a series of low budget adventure movies with titles like *Devil Goddess* and *Jungle Moon*, all built around a character called Jungle Jim. These modest epics are largely forgotten now, which is a pity because they were possibly the most cherishably terrible movies ever made … My own favourite, called *Pygmy Island*, involved a lost tribe of white midgets and a strange but valiant fight against the spread of

communism. But the narrative possibilities were practically infinite since each Jungle Jim feature consisted in large measure of scenes taken from other, wholly unrelated adventure stories. Whatever footage was available – train crashes, volcanic eruptions, rhino charges, panic scenes involving large crowds of Japanese – would be snipped from the original and woven in Jungle Jim's wondrously accommodating story lines. From time to time the ever-more fleshy Weismuller would appear on a scene to wrestle the life out of a curiously rigid and unresisting crocodile or chase some cannibals into the woods, but these intrusions were generally brief and seldom entirely explained (Bryson 2002: 1-2).
Bill Bryson (ibid.: 2) thrusts the point home: *What is especially tragic about all of this is that I not only watched the movies with unaccountable devotion, but also was incredibly influenced by them. In fact, were it not for some scattered viewings of the 1952 classic, Bwana Devil, and a trip on a Jungle Safari Ride at Disneyland in 1961, my knowledge of African life, I regret to say, would be entirely dependent on Jungle Jim movies.*

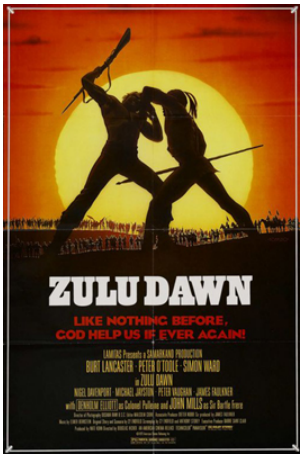
The later Greystoke restores Tarzan's British lineage, while simultaneously revealing aristocratic viciousness, and Tarzan's escape from it, by returning to the wild, back to his gorilla family, and a social and environmental integrity long lost to the West. While Burroughs never set foot in Africa, Tarzan visited South Africa in a television series (1997) shot at Sol Kerzner's *Lost City*, part of the Sun City hotel, casino and entertainment complex that became infamous for boycott busting during the 1980s by international music celebrities who performed there. Black South African actors on a promotional television programme, which preceded the television series, insisted that '*this is the real Africa*'. Their PR came to mind when I visited the Disneyland feature of the Tarzan Tree House under attack from a gorilla, which in 2004 seemed to have replaced the more stable Swiss Family Robinson set. These actors thus undermined nearly a century of African criticism of the racist dimension of the bulk of the Tarzan genre. However, as Rob Gordon reminds a forum of documentary filmmakers, audiences do not always assume the imperialism of the director or characters as
… the meaning of race (and of culture) is ultimately a matter of local grass-roots interpretation. The most striking example here is Rambo, a film which most of us would find offensively imperialistic. Yet it's a hit in Vietnam and among Australian Aborigines because they see Rambo as fulfilling important kinship obligations and fighting an obstinate bureaucracy. Rambo is currently the training film of choice for the sad child soldiers of Sierra Leone. So too, on the South African platteland

['countryside'] Tarzan was popular, not because it reinforced notions of white superiority (although it undoubtedly did) but because the audiences loved to find fault with the film's representation of Africa. Let us always be aware that every production has unanticipated consequences (cited in Tomaselli 2001).

South Africa: Protecting its own

In 1995, cinema in South Africa was exactly one hundred years old. Early projection devices were frequented around the Johannesburg goldfields from 1895 onwards (Gutsche 1972). The first cinema newsreels were filmed at the front during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) by the British Warwickshire Company. Others simply fabricated the war scenes in England itself. The world's longest-running weekly newsreel, African Mirror (1913-1984), was in the mid-1980s broadcast as history on national television. The first ever South African narrative film was *The Kimberley Diamond Robbery*, made in 1910.

Between 1916 and 1922, I.W. Schlesinger produced forty-three big-budget technically high-quality features. Schlesinger had arrived penniless on South African shores from America at the turn of the century and proceeded to build an international insurance empire from Johannesburg. In 1913, he consolidated total control over the South African entertainment industry – theatre, cinema, and later radio (Gutsche 1972). The cinematic themes and images chosen by Schlesinger were rooted in the ideological outlook of the period prevalent in European and Anglo-American culture. Haggard's novels were a recurring source for film scripts, and continue to be so a century later.



Zuludawn

In Schlesinger's own historical epics, Boer and Briton stood together under the flame of unity and civilisation against barbaric black hordes (e.g. *De Voortrekkers*

/ *Winning a Continent,* 1916 and *Symbol of Sacrifice*, 1918). Though *De Voortrekkers* was the model for the later American epic, *The Covered Wagon* (1923), it was the sheer magnitude of Symbol of Sacrifice, with its 25 000 Zulu warrior extras, that set early technical standards for this genre. Foreign productions such as *Zulu* (1966) and *Zulu Dawn* (1980), docu-dramas based on the British-Zulu Wars of 1879, followed *Symbol of Sacrifice*. These films continued the West's fascination with the Zulu, mythologised in the South African television series and US cable hit, *Shaka Zulu* (1986) (Tomaselli 2003; Shepperson and Tomaselli 2002).

Production declined after 1922 because, despite high technical standards, obtaining footholds in British and US markets proved difficult. However, unlike other countries, the South African film industry remained in local hands until 1956, when 20th Century Fox bought out most of Schlesinger's cinema interests, including the Killarney Films production house. In 1969 the South African-owned Ster Films bought Fox's South African holdings and retained near monopolistic control of the industry until the mid-1990s, when it sold its interests to another South African group, Primedia (cf. Tomaselli and Shepperson 2000). This unusual situation of very long periods of domestic ownership resulted in South African producers enjoying some leverage with the local distributors and exhibitors when it came to securing screen access for their films.

A thirty-year lull was broken in the early 1950s by Jamie Uys (of *The Gods Must be Crazy*, 1980; 1989 films) when he succeeded in attracting Afrikaner capital to establish independent production. In 1956 he represented a consortium of producers in persuading the government to provide a subsidy for the making of local films. This subsidy was modified through the years and continued until the late 1980s. The subsidy was paid against a percentage of box office income and deliberately favoured Afrikaans-language films over English. Later, in 1975, a specific subsidy was also introduced for films using black South African languages (Tomaselli 2000b; Murray 1992). The subsidy system was terminated at the end of the 1980s, and as was discussed in Chapter 3, a new system was introduced in 2004.

It was the government subsidy that resulted in films supportive of the military such as *Kaptein Caprivi* (1972), made while the South African Police (SAP) propped up the white Rhodesian regime. One of the sub-genres within these 'jeep operas' is what Cameron (1994: 145) calls the 'mercenary film', such as *Wild*

Geese (1977). These kinds of films reveal clear racism on the part of their directors, as a handful of usually ageing American and British actors playing mercenaries wipe out hundreds of pursuing blacks. The myth of the mercenary remained strong amongst older whites in Africa, rekindled by the idiotic exploits of French, English and South African has-beens in the late 1980s, early 1990s and 2004 with regard to their aborted attempts at coups d'état in the Comores Islands, Seychelles, Equitorial Guinea and elsewhere. These continuing escapades indicate a residual pattern of destabilisation of African countries during apartheid and the Cold War. Mercenaries, 'dogs of war', to use Frederick Forsyth's (1974) term, conducted the work of Imperial man in the twentieth century, taking on communism, barbarism and rescuing all manner of victims of the 'dark continent'. Where the Great White Hunters are a social and sexual ideal, as in *Out of Africa* (1985), the anachronistic young and old fools in Jeeps are nostalgic throwbacks to mythical cinematic times when a few white (and black) mercenaries armed with machine guns could control an entire continent. Indeed, one soldier/actor/mercenary, Simon Mann, arrested with sixty mercenaries in Zimbabwe in March 2004, had even played the role of a parachute regiment colonel in *Bloody Sunday* (2002), a re-enactment of the 1972 massacre of thirteen Northern Ireland demonstrators by British troops (Sunday Times, 14 March 2004: 6). Antoine Fuqua's film on African genocide turned into another mercenary-type film, owing to pressure from the film's star, action hero Bruce Willis, and the production studio, who were hoping to outdo their 2001 success, *Black Hawk Down* (2001). The result, *Tears of the Sun* (2003), is an action film with a humanitarian angle, resembling the American western. Bruce Willis plays a Navy SEAL sent to rescue a mission doctor – the female love interest (Monica Belluci) – in Nigeria, which has come under military rule. After witnessing the brutality of the rebel forces, the hero undergoes a change of conscience and decides to help the villagers leave the mission station to the safety of a neighbouring country, thereby putting his own life at risk. The film once again portrays America as the world's saviour (Bruce Willis's character at one stage remarks that 'God already left Africa'), at a time in world history when US intervention in Iraq was a contentious subject.

Afrikaner concerns

While many subsidy-driven films were of appalling quality, rarely returning their costs, those made by Jamie Uys were always box office successes. In large measure, Uys's grasp of the rural Afrikaners' taste in humour benefited from the

relative lack of alternative sources of entertainment before the advent of television in South Africa in 1976. His comedic themes, which usually made fun of inter-ethnic rivalries, especially those between English-speakers and Afrikaners, consistently outperformed titles from Hollywood. Uys's studio, in fact, provided a training ground for young Afrikaans-speaking directors, scriptwriters and technicians, who later contributed to the development of the conflict-love genre. These films engaged social issues via genre structures, and are much less conspiratorial than commentators like Peter Davis (1996) would have us believe.
Where international films on Africa and South Africa have tended to ignore women, the insider-outsider genre, wrapped up in a conflict-love plot, consistently depicted headstrong females. Cast as boeredogters ('farmers' daughters', daughters of the earth), these femmes fatales traumatically broke with the tradition and close social and community cohesion centred on 'the farm', 'family' and volk ('nation') as propagated by Rompel (1942a; 1942b). Rather, and with the directors' approval, they sought their uncertain futures in the sinful city populated by the victorious English enemy. The boeredogter's relocation heralded the onset of Afrikaner cultural modernity. The cities were where the real political and economic struggles between English and Afrikaner were occurring and where Afrikaner power was negotiating its ascendancy. The boeredogter indicated the strategic need for Afrikaner nationalists to secure their interests in this new ideological and economic battleground.

The boeredogter storylines captured the imaginations of the Afrikaner public and, more recently, the rise of South African actress Charlize Theron to Oscar-winning success can be likened to the plots of these earlier films. Theron, who apparently said in an early interview that she left South Africa when apartheid ended for fear of not being able to find a job as a white person, was raised on a smallholding on the outskirts of a working class part of the country. After a brief modelling stint, which included her baring her breasts for the editor of the South African edition of Playboy magazine, she moved to Hollywood with her mother, dropped her accent in favour of an American drawl, and worked her way to the top, ultimately gaining Oscar recognition for her performance in *Monster* (2003). Her Golden Globe award acceptance speech played on this romanticised rags-to-riches tale when she cried, '*I'm just a girl from a farm in South Africa*!' In her Oscar acceptance speech, Theron thanked 'everybody in South Africa' and promised to '[bring] this [the Oscar] home next week'. To many proud South Africans, this was a sign that she was acknowledging her cultural roots despite her American

accent. The media hype that surrounded her visit 'home' highlights the African inferiority complex when it comes to cultural production, where the ultimate measure of success is to 'make it overseas'. 'Making it overseas' is the equivalent of the boeredogter 'going to the city', a necessary though culturally alienating social trajectory in class struggle and personal emancipation from the tyranny of the Community. Theron, for example, travelled with an entourage, her itinerary was kept secret, and she was pressed for interviews by the media. South African Airways donated her and her entourage the first-class cabin, and both President Thabo Mbeki and former President Nelson Mandela met her in person to thank her for 'putting South Africa on the map'. Theron is now considered South Africa's most successful film export, thereby dislodging Jamie Uys. This is the fate that awaited the boeredogter in the earlier genre – success results in cultural distance, enculturation into an alien environment, and consorting with the enemy. Theron's achievement is secured at the expense of, but on behalf of, the group, Afrikaner culture and economy. Theron has adapted herself to suit Hollywood standards: even her dress and styling on Oscar night made deliberate reference to the Hollywood sirens of yesteryear, appealing to American femme fatale iconography. (However, in fairness, the local industry is perhaps not able to support many actors and actresses, especially those after big-budget box office success.)

Intercultural mediations

Intercultural conflict underpins many a South African film. For instance, the sympathetic treatment of the conflict between Roman-Dutch and African Customary Law is the theme of *Uys's Dingaka* (1964). Commentators such as Mtutuzeli Matshoba and John van Zyl recognised at the time of the film's release a cultural authenticity in the film (cited in Tomaselli 1988: 134). Dingaka (which means 'traditional healer') was the first South African film made in Panavision, and it introduced actor Ken Gampu to the world. The story begins in a remote and tropical African village where two men are publicly engaged in a stick fight. The resentful loser of the fight, Masaba, seeks the help of the village traditional healer, who tells him that in order to regain his stick-fighting prowess, he needs to eat the heart of a twin child. When a twin from the village disappears, father Ntuku (played by Gampu) sets out to find Masaba, who has fled to the city.

From here the plot revolves around Ntuku's experiences in the city: he is conned out of his money and forced to find work in the mines. Here he encounters and attacks his rival and is subsequently arrested. At this point the white male lead,

legal aid lawyer Davis (Stanley Baker), enters the plot. After failing to convince Ntuku to follow legal procedure and accept his professional services, Ntuku is imprisoned for again attacking Masaba (Paul Makgoba), this time in open court. Ntuku escapes from prison and Davis and his wife (Juliet Prowse) travel to his village to seek him out. At the village, Davis urges Ntuku to kill the sangoma ('traditional healer', played by John Sithebe), who is 'only a man'. Amid the sounds of thunder, Ntuku eventually does so, despite fearing the wrath of the gods, and peace is restored, 'proving that [Davis's] white-European rationalism was correct: the "witchdoctor" is only a man, and he has no magical power' (Cameron 1994: 125).

The film is severely criticised by Davis (1996) for its unrealistic and overly stylised portrayal of African village life, which glosses over the realities of apartheid inequalities as they were experienced in everyday life. He objects to the film's racially patronising and binaristic depictions of African people and their spiritual beliefs (in particular the stereotypically 'evil' sangoma), which reveal 'a syncretising of apartheid's delusions' (ibid.: 66). He points to Uys's Nationalist political leanings, and the apartheid legislation that was being enacted at the time, to further his point. During the 1960s, the apartheid government developed a scheme to replace the traditional leaders in the tribal homelands with appointed Bantu Authorities, 'puppets who would dance on the government's strings' (ibid.: 67). For Davis, this suggests that 'what is being played out in Uys's melodrama of African life is very much an unconscious metaphor for what was happening over the broader landscape of South Africa – the overthrow of not only the traditional but the popular leadership of the African people' (ibid.: 68).

While the film does have the mandatory African travelogue feel in places, as required by the US market, it offered a thematic breakthrough at the time with regard to the portrayal of the African encounter with Western tenets of justice, and also in terms of depicting an interracial friendship. The white layer, the bearer of Roman-Dutch Law, is by no means Imperial Man, and the black character, Ntuku, is no-one's doting servant. While 'white justice' rules, 'black justice' is revealed as being less impersonal. As Van Zyl concludes in his review in The Chronicle: '*This is the stuff of Nordic sagas, and all credit is due to Jamie Uys and Ken Gampu for pulling it off. It hardly matters that an "impression" of an African tribe was created which can be faulted by ethnologists*'.

Cinematic treatments of the San (or Bushmen) have indicated a different encounter with white South Africans to that of the Zulu, or with regard to

traditional law. The remote, unforgiving Bushmen in *Lost in the Desert* (1971) are very unlike the endearing characters Uys constructed in his *Gods Must Be Crazy* pseudo-documentaries (cf. Tomaselli 2006). In propaganda movies, men, the patriarchal stalwarts, are well served by their submissive women. In the conflict-love genre they betray their men. In Uys's films they are either absent or bemused by the anxiety and ineptness with which suitors interact with them. While foreign anti-apartheid critics have not always been kind to Uys's few international releases, especially Dingaka and the first two *Gods Must Be Crazy* films, they did provoke discussion about race and racism of a kind which also left its mark on debates in South Africa (Davis 1996; Blythe 1986). More relevantly, these films were negotiating ways of approaching intercultural relations at a time when racial conflict had hardened into the intractable binary frame which characterises much of Davis's analysis.

In contrast to the kind of politically correct critique that characterised attacks on the two *Gods Must Be Crazy* films, Cameron (1994: 155) argues that these titles reject the more pervasive stereotypes of jungle, savage dancing and witchcraft which typify the majority of Western film fare on Africa. *The Gods Must be Crazy* (1980), in theme, narrative structure and comedic device is very similar to Uys's earlier films in which people of colour hardly featured at all. He basically repeated the story he made of himself and his family in his first amateur film, *Daar Doer in die Bosveld* ('Far Away in the Bushveld' – 1951), and embroidered it in each retitled and more technically sophisticated reincarnation in a different environment over the period of his forty-year career.

Key to the Uys idiosyncratic intertext is the lead male Afrikaner character's awkwardness with women, inter-ethnic Afrikaner-English rivalry, and a preference for pastoralism. Uys, as an interpreter of Afrikaner foibles and social anxiety, thus inaugurated a set of peculiarly South African themes. These drew on Buster Keaton's films, where machines seem to have minds of their own and engage in all kinds of bizarre, uncontrollable and unpredictable behaviours. Machines are products of modernity, itself a mystery to ruralites. Uys sensitively highlighted Afrikaner anxiety of entering into modernity through using these machines (vehicles, winches, etc.) as metaphors for social and cultural insecurity. Pastoralism was held to be the protector of pure Afrikaner identity in the face of uncertainty brought about by massive industrialisation where 'self conscious' machines could herald the destruction of traditional societies. Uys's use of machines as Keaton-type comedic devices subverted via slapstick the previously

dominant images of die Boer ('farmer'/Afrikaner), created by Afrikaners of themselves in their propagandistic amateur feature films of the 1930s and 1940s.

People defining themselves as Afrikaners are known for a certain austerity. Uys's early cinema offered the first light-hearted self-depreciating cultural moment after the severity of the historical processes this group is historically known for, as it attempted to be humourous rather than overtly ideological in its approach. His self-depreciating humour was continued in the 1990s by Afrikaner comedian Leon Schuster whose racial politics shift as fast as does the political landscape in films like *Oh Shucks, Here Comes Untag* (1990), *Sweet 'n Short* (1991), *Panic Mechanic* (1997), *Mr Bones* (2001) and *Mama Jack* (2005). All these films, from a variety of directors, interrogate white Afrikaner fears about a Mandela 'black government' and white loss of political control. Slapstick and, increasingly with Schuster, a narratively developed Candid Camera genre, denotes one trajectory in post-apartheid cinema (cf. Steyn 2003). A clear introspection and engagement of South African themes such as in *Chikin Biznis* (1998), *Shooting Bokke* (2003), and *E'skia Mphahlele* (2003) accounts for another more culturally serious post-apartheid trajectory.
Another film in the Schuster-type genre, written by Mfundi Vundla and directed by David Lister, is *Soweto Green* (1996) with John Kani playing the returned exile. *There's a Zulu on my Stoep* (1993), written by and starring Schuster, was one of the few in the genre that effectively interrogated racial issues via blackface casting and identity exchange. A promising start, where the returned black exile (John Matshikiza) switches identities with his early white boyhood friend to outwit their friends whose car they have stolen, degenerates into over-the-top slapstick chaos. Slapstick heaven also mars the conclusion of Soweto Green. Is it possible that this idiotic chaos was a metaphor for political times to come?

International African actors and voices
Films set in Africa provided opportunities for black American actors such as Paul Robeson, Sidney Poitier, James Earl Jones, Denzel Washington, Danny Glover and Morgan Freeman, to redefine the way that Africans are imaged in international cinema. Cameron (1994: 182) mentions the later films of Robeson especially, who brought dignity to his roles, and created spaces for African female characters to emerge in their own right. South African singer Miriam Makeba, for example, shot to international fame in *Lionel Rogosin's Come Back Africa* (1959) (cf. Balseiro 2003). Another vehicle to an international career for a South African was

Zoltan Korda's *Cry the Beloved Country* (1951), based on Alan Paton's novel. Lionel Ngakane made his name as a supporting actor alongside the lead played by Poitier (cf. Ngakane 1997). The contribution of Michael and Zoltan Korda to the British image of Africa was less racist than contemporary American representations, and Zoltan's break with Empire stereotypes of both British and blacks in *Cry the Beloved Country* challenged the industry internationally to rethink its representations of Africans in cinema. Davis (1996: 2), however, notes the deep influence of imperialist literature on Zoltan Korda who later made *Sanders of the River* (1935), *Elephant Boy* (1937) and *Four Feathers* (1939), 'all of them celebrating heavily romanticised aspects of white rule'. However, as Hees (1996: 178) observes:

This may be true, but Zoltan Korda also directed and himself produced *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1951), a version of Paton's novel totally lacking the sentimentality of Darrell Roodt's more recent version; the other films mentioned were produced by his brother, Alexander Korda. I am not making a point here about the factual content of Davis's book, but rather expressing a concern about its tendency to present material in a way that reduces racial issues to white exploitation of victimized blacks.

Very little has been written on the contribution of actors in South African cinema. Ken Gampu, who starred in *Dingaka*, gets a brief but long overdue mention from Cameron (1994: 124) as a great performer. Gampu's interpretation of the roles into which both South African and international directors had cast him generally lifted the tenor of the films in which he acted. In contrast is Richard Rowntree's *Shaft in Africa* (1973), with its blaxploitation characters in which Africa was merely a convenient backdrop to American storylines. Such was the popular impact of the Shaft films in South Africa, however, that a beer label and some shops briefly named themselves thus.

Even less has been written on female South African film directors and actors, some of whom have also doubled up as directors. Entries in The feminist companion guide to cinema including Katinka Heyns, Helen Nogueira and Elaine Proctor are offered by Ruth Teer-Tomaselli and Wendy Annecke (1990). Heyns, directed by Jan Rautenbach, played particularly significant roles in Afrikaans cinema that critically interrogated Afrikaner bigotry and political expediency (e.g. *Wild Season*, 1968; *Katrina,* 1969; *Jannie Totsiens*, 1970 and *Pappalap*, 1971). Heyns later directed films that continued this thematic analysis in *Fiela se Kind* ('Fiela's Child') (1987), and *Paljas* ('Clown') (1997).

Cinema as the voice of the people is much younger than cinema the institution. That voice was facilitated by producers located elsewhere in films like *Cry the Beloved Country* and the clandestinely shot, chilling docu-drama *Come Back Africa*, which reveals the brutality of apartheid's structural violence in the psychological breakdown of its central protagonist Zacharia (Zachariah Mgabi) (cf. Balseiro 2003; Beittel 2003). Later, Euzhan Palcy's *A Dry White Season* (1989, based on the novel by Andre Brink) and Richard Attenborough's *Cry Freedom* (1987, based on the friendship between journalist Donald Woods and slain black activist Steve Biko) were the first films to bring the horrors of apartheid repression to the big screen and cinema audiences on a mass scale not previously achieved.

These international and other productions employed South African actors such as Zakes Mokae, amongst others. Lionel Ngakane made his mark as a director with the British-made, award-winning Jemina and Johnny (1966), a short cinematic statement on non-racialism, which followed his documentary on apartheid, *Vukani Awake* (1964). Ngakane served as technical consultant on A Dry White Season. Ngakane, who died in late 2003, however declined an invitation from producer Anant Singh to act in the Darrell Roodt remake of *Cry the Beloved Country* (1995) due to other commitments. Ngakane's influence on African cinema through his involvement with the Pan African Federation of Filmmakers (FEPACI) (while he was in exile) that occurred after finishing the Korda film was significant. This pan-African work was recognised in 1997 when Ngakane was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Natal. He had earlier been awarded a lifetime Achievement Award by the M-Net Film Awards on which he was also a consultant for its New Directions short film series.
Between 1956 and 1978 genre films (especially in Afrikaans) earned higher returns than did imported Hollywood fare. Exceptions which interrogated apartheid exposed white South Africans to new critical styles. Amongst these was the unique expressionism of Rautenbach's *Jannie Totsiens*, in which a psychiatric asylum inhabited by white inmates is an allegory for apartheid. A thin, comedic neo-realism is found in Donald Swanson's *African Jim* (1949) and *Magic Garden* (1961), both of which emphasise black characters and stories in urban settings. The more obviously bleak neo-realist style of Athol Fugard and Ross Devenish is evident in *Boesman and Lena* (1973), *The Guest* (1978) and *Marigolds in August* (1980). These are films with tortured characters, whose angst is perhaps of a more existential origin than of apartheid. Fugard's last film, *Road to Mecca*

(1992), directed by Peter Michel, is his best yet. Its swirling camera which focuses on interpersonal relationships between an old, eccentric, secluded white artist and her hostile small-town conservative Afrikaner community (based on Helen Martin of 'the owl house' fame, Nieu Bethesda), reveals the inner Fugard, a solitary artist also alienated from the society in which he then lived.

The first domestic black-made film was theatre director Gibson Kente's *How Long (must we suffer …?*) (1976). It was shot in the Eastern Cape during the Soweto uprising. How Long was briefly shown in the Transkei Bantustan. The whereabouts of the print are unknown. Other films made by whites and aimed at blacks tended to be appallingly inept, exploitative and patronising, such as *Joe Bullet* (1974), which kicked off the South African blaxploitation genre. This marginalised sector of the industry literally consisted of butchers, bakers and candlestick makers. It emerged in 1974, milked the government subsidy pot dry, and collapsed at the end of the 1980s (Murray 1992; Gavshon 1983; Tomaselli 1988).
However, black director and actor Simon Sabela, employed by Heyns Films, injected a degree of cultural integrity into the films he made, such as *U-Deliwe* (1975). It was only towards the end of the 1980s when it became known that Heyns Films had been secretly infiltrated, Nazi-style, by the apartheid government, which was responsible for funding Sabela's films, though this was not known by him. The contradictions are clear – even state-sponsored films had a degree of integrity of content, in contrast to the blatantly opportunistic racism of many of those privately financed low-budget films made by some whites for the 'black' market, and funded via post-release subsidy claims made by their makers. Such films sometimes consumed less than a weekend in production time.

Emergent anti-apartheid cinema
White South Africa, observes Cameron (1994), tends to see itself as a reflection of white American values; hence the obsession with Theron and to a lesser extent Arnold Vosloo, star of *The Mummy* (1999; 2001) films. Breaking with these values indicates to Cameron a maturing of South African cinema as seen particularly in the post-1986 anti-apartheid films directed by Roodt such as *Place of Weeping* (1986), *Jobman* (1989), *City of Blood* (1986), *Sarafina* (1993) and the *Cry the Beloved Country* remake starring James Earl Jones. Anant Singh, a South African of Indian extraction, produced these films, and many others. His activities extend to the US, one of his most technically sophisticated being *The Mangler* (1994),

based on a Stephen King novel.

The years following 1986 saw the sustained development of a domestic anti-apartheid cinema financed by capital looking for tax breaks and international markets, mainly driven by Singh's financing. Simultaneous with this emergent oppositional trend, Canon Films responded with a new wave of Haggard's explorer titles like *King Solomon's Mines* (1985) and *Alan Quartermain* (1987), before eventually going out of business (see Yule 1987). The 1980s saw host to over 800 foreign-made films in South Africa during this time, all pursuing loopholes in South African tax law. South Africa offered relatively cheap, but highly sophisticated technical labour, which was a deciding factor in the use of South African locations and facilities. Ninjas in the Third World, voodoo killings, psychotics and other themes also emerged from South African directors during this time (Taylor 1992).

Multiracial teams have made films such as *Mapantsula* (1988) and *Hijack Stories* (2002), both directed by Oliver Schmitz, *Ramadan Suleman's Fools* (1997), *Wa Luruli's Chikin Biznis* (1998) and Les Blair's *Jump the Gun* (1996). Productions like these have for the first time given South Africa a sustained and sophisticated examination of the full spectrum of South African history and everyday life. These examinations include:

1. Historical dramas, for example Boer prisoners held by the British during the Anglo-Boer War in Dirk de Villiers's *Arende* ('The Earth', 1994), cut into a feature from the SABC-television series, and Manie van Rensburg's *The Native who Caused all the Trouble* (1989). Also see *De Voortrekkers/Winning a Continent* (1916), *Bloodriver* (1989), *Zulu Dawn* (1980), amongst others;
2. Films depicting the liberal opposition to apartheid that occurred in the 1960s, for example, Sven Persson's *Land Apart* (1974), *Broer Matie* (1984), Chris Menges' *A World Apart* (1988), Roodt's 1995 remake of *Cry the Beloved Country*, *Cry Freedom* and *A Dry White Season*;
3. The psychological impact on white South Africans of the wars waged against South Africa's neighbours, for example Roodt's *The Stick* (1987) and urban violence in *City of Blood*. These are films about pathology as normality. Opposed to the psychological analysis offered by these films were the jeep operas like Kaptein Caprivi, *Grenbasis 13* (1979) and the two *Boetie Gaan Border Toe* (1987; 1988) films directed by Regardt van den Bergh;
4. The popular anti-apartheid struggle of the 1980s was imaged in *Mapantsula*, *Sarafina*, Place of Weeping, *Bopha* (1993), the BBC's *Dark City* (1989) and scores

of documentaries. *Land Apart*, which predicted the Soweto uprising of June 1976, provided a benchmark for anti-apartheid documentaries made within South Africa. Nana Mahamo's *Last Grave at Dimbaza* (1973), shown clandestinely throughout South Africa during the 1970s, offered South Africans a very different, indirect address style of documentary. The 1980s in particular saw many more, for example, Jurgen Schadeberg's *Have You Seen Drum Recently?* (1988) recreated the energetic days of Drum magazine of the 1950s. Many others have contributed to a growing movement of critical and historically sensitive film and video makers;

5. Comedic films critical of white racial attitudes and experiences, for example, *Taxi to Soweto* (1991), *Soweto Green*, *Panic Mechanic* and *There's a Zulu on my Stoep*;

6. Both the historical origins and the contemporary effects of apartheid are found in *Procter's Friends* (1994), Heyns's *Fiela se Kind*, and Van Rensburg's *The Fourth Reich* (1990), constituted into a cinema release from the four-part television series. Andrew Worsdale's *Shot Down* (1990) reveals the inner turmoil of South Africans of various races as a consequence of apartheid (see Savage 1989b).

Signposts towards post-apartheid cinema

The future of South African cinema was established in the 1920s. A short film, directed by Lance Gewer, *Come See the Bioscope* (1997), based on Plaatje's endeavours to bring the visual technologies of modernity to black South Africans, signposts this post-apartheid revisionist aim. The film is set in 1924, by which stage Plaatje, founding member of the New African Movement and first secretary of the African National Congress (ANC), was already a well-educated and well-travelled politician, historian and author. After returning from his travels, Plaatje toured the country for several years using sponsored equipment (a Ford motor car, a generator and film projector) to educate people in both towns and rural areas about the New Negroes in the US and the unfolding political situation in South Africa (Masilela 2003). Just as Plaatje pioneered mobile cinema distribution, so have many filmmakers since, ranging from the producers of features 'made for blacks', through HIV educational movies such as the STEPS for the Future series, to Roodt's Yesterday (2004). Development of audiences is a major project of the Film Resource Unit based in Johannesburg.

Come See the Bioscope depicts Plaatje (Ernest Ndlovu) as an inspiring leader and educator who takes on the role of 'the bioscope man' in order 'to show people a

world they do not know'. Plaatje appreciated early on the powerful role that cinema could play in propagating and shaping beliefs: he protested outside the Johannesburg Town Hall at the showing of *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), asking why such an anti-black film, banned in some parts of the US, could be shown in South Africa (Masilela 2003: 21). Although the film itself could be criticised for being a somewhat sentimental portrayal, it is a well-made account of how an influential black leader overcame political obstacles and distribution constraints in order to expose black people to cinema, and in so doing educate them about their situation in relation to American developments. *Come See the Bioscope* brings to life a significant and previously neglected episode in South Africa's cinema history.

Most documentary crews working in the Plaatje vein work with subjects and sources as ends in themselves, rather than as means to ends. Everyone, prostitutes, street children, gangsters, people with AIDS, villagers, torture victims, experts and others, are all revealed to have personalities, identities and feelings. They are seen to have hopes, fears and disappointments. I call these encounter videos – 'being there' – we learn what it is like to be a victim, a social actor, a survivor. We also learn, mainly via the video makers, what it is like to be an activist, a facilitator, an advocate, like Plaatje. Videos can be empowering – for their subjects, their communities and their producers. The STEPS For the Future series on AIDS videos for example, are gut-wrenching and disturbing visual sociologies of the ordinary. As sociologies, experiential, personal, visual, they are also explanatory, theoretical, methodological, and are compelling studies in and of themselves. They are innovative both in terms of form and practice, taking intertextuality to new heights. The 'actors' are sometimes the HIV/AIDS educational facilitators, and are recognised as such by audiences to whom they are screening their films.

Infrastructural developments

Part of the revitalisation of South African cinema since the late 1990s was the establishment of the National Film and Video Foundation in 1998. This body arose out of an industry-wide consultative process, which brought all sectors of the film and video industry into productive if often tense discussions over the post-apartheid structure of the film and video industries (cf. Tomaselli and Shepperson 2000; Botha 2003). The Foundation, administered by the Department of Arts and Culture, Science and Technology, allocates development grants for training, production and audience development purposes. The Foundation is responsible to

a board of governors drawn from the film and video industry and civil society. This initiative encourages state and private financing partnerships with regard to production projects.

In South Africa, unlike in other African countries where broadcasting is part of the civil service, the film and television industries have always been closely integrated. This relationship therefore provides a much greater set of financing and market opportunities to South African filmmakers than is available in the rest of Africa. The impact of television, therefore, also needs to be assessed in relation to the development of South African cinema in a companion study.

Taking advantage of the relatively economic production cost structures of television, the public-service South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), the commercial subscription broadcaster M-Net, and the commercial free-to-air channel, e-TV, all encourage, develop and market the work of South Africa's fiction filmmakers and documentary and short film producers. All three companies invest directly in production of feature films, and all kinds of innovative projects emerged in the 1990s from within the film and television industries as a whole. With Jeremy Nathan's *Africa Dreaming project* of 1997, and his subsequent *DV8* projects, the SABC combined with commercial entertainment giant Primedia, the Film Resource Unit, and other sponsors to produce a series of short features for broadcast. The SABC project placed South African filmmakers within the broader context of African cinema's rich history. Thus, the first batch of films under the Africa Dreaming rubric all dealt with the theme of love, and combined female South African director Palesa ka Letlaka-Nkosi's *Mamalambo*, with Namibian Richard Pakleppa's *The Homecoming*, Mozambican Joao Ribeiro's *The Gaze of the Stars*, The Last Picture from Zimbabwean Farai Sevenzo, *The White and the Black* by Senegalese Joseph Gai Ramaka and *So Be It* by Abderrahmane Sissako, from Tunisia.

M-Net, a South African-based multinational pay television corporation, initiated an annual New Directions competition for directors and scriptwriters in the early 1990s. In the first half of each calendar year, the company solicits proposals from first-time directors and writers. Proposals are scrutinised by a panel of experienced professionals, which included Lionel Ngakane, and through a process of mentored refinement six proposals are selected for production. The final products emerge from a further refinement session, in the form of thirty-minute dramas broadcast on selected M-Net channels. One project was later remade into a cinema feature, *Chikin Biznis*. The script was written by Mtutuzeli Matshoba,

produced by Richard Green of New Directions, and directed by Ntshaveni Wa Luruli. The plot revolves around Sipho (Fats Bookholane), a retired office worker, who sells live chickens on the street in Soweto. He gets up to all kinds of tricks and crosses swords with everyone in his path. Chikin Biznis is not a political film. The freedom of the transition to democracy offered filmmakers an opportunity to make films about ordinary people engaged in everyday ordinary activities.

Another M-Net initiative was its annual All Africa Film Awards, an event first held in October 1995, following its earlier Awards, which only considered South African fare. Films from everywhere but South Africa were nominated in every category for the 1995 awards. The following year, the Cape Town ceremony saw one partial South African production, *Jump the Gun*, funded by Britain's Channel 4 and directed by an Englishman, Les Blair, receive awards for best leading actor (Lionel Newton) best sound (Simon Rice), and best English language film. In 1997, an Egyptian film, *Destiny* (1997), piped the South African-made Paljas. The Awards showcased a range of producers, directors and products (even if only once a year) and brought the diversity of African cinema home to an audience which mostly watched sport and anything M-Net contracts from a variety of Hollywood sources. The Awards were discontinued in 2000.

Yesterday / tomorrow

The technical golden age of South African cinema epics occurred between 1916 and 1922. The period of sheer quantity at thirty films a year occurred between 1962 and 1980, the heyday of apartheid. However, the South African industry's political and aesthetic coming of age was signalled by a sustained movement towards historical interrogation that began in 1986. The mid-1990s saw the next phase facilitated by the new democratically elected government, which for the first time created a development strategy for the wider development of the industry as a whole, from grassroots video to international co-production. The new millennium has already seen the production of top quality local films and promises to be an exciting time for South African cinema. The local film industry is growing, owing to the regular filming of foreign productions in Cape Town and Durban where production costs are comparatively low. In April 2004 the government's Department of Trade and Industry announced plans to provide financial incentives to increase foreign investment, to encourage the production of local content and boost job creation. In 2004, ten years after the country's first democratic election, South African audiences were able to see the first full-length Zulu feature film with English subtitles. The film Yesterday tells the story of a

mother who confronts her recently diagnosed HIV status in rural KwaZulu-Natal. The aptly-titled *Forgiveness* (2004), gives a compelling fictional account of an ex-policeman, granted amnesty at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), who approaches the family of the man he murdered in the name of apartheid for their forgiveness. The film highlights the moral issues raised in post-apartheid South Africa.

As someone privileged to have consulted for the government on its post-apartheid cinema and video development strategy, I see the fruition of my life's work in these infrastructural developments, in that film and video are being developed as growth sectors within the broader economy, but in ways that are democratically inclusive rather than racially and sectorially exclusive. Within just a few years the fruits were clear to see: aesthetically, in terms of themes, and in terms of the infusion of refreshing new talent into both the television and cinema sectors. The role of new film schools and university courses, of course, played a key role in such developments.

However, as Jeanne Prinsloo argued in 1996, filmmaking in post-apartheid South Africa faces particular context-specific challenges. Following the demise of apartheid there was a renewed understanding of nationhood as a potentially unifying force in South African society. In this 'renarration of nations' (1996: 34), the discourse of the anti-apartheid struggle is frequently invoked in attempts to constitute 'the rainbow nation'. However, this reconciliation discourse often 'speaks to a condition as not yet achieved' (ibid.: 47). In reality, apartheid has left its mark on the South African film industry. Therefore, Third Cinema aspirations need to be viewed against the infrastructural and institutional challenges that exist, such as unequal economic power relations, inadequate non-urban amd black township distribution networks and competition from cheaper (American) entertainment options (Prinsloo 1996). Prinsloo contends that at the discursive level, there is a need to balance celebratory reconciliation discourses with more critical engagements with the process of transformation, while at the same time resisting the pressure to always be politically correct. South African films need to draw on a range of narratives and a plurality of meanings.

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Keyan G. Tomaselli – Encountering Modernity – Twentieth Century South African Cinemas

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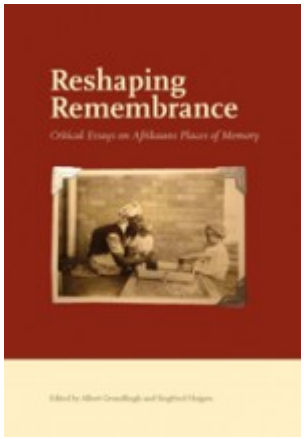
A book describing the history of South African cinemas can never be about cinemas only, for the subject will always be intimately intertwined with its context, in this case 20th century South Africa.
Keyan Tomaselli, one of the founders of cultural studies in SA, explores in this book how South African cinemas and films have been decidedly shaped by the country's history. In turn, films have inspired their makers and audiences to understand, and come to terms with, the complex phenomenon of modernity.
Discussing film theory, narratives, audiences and key South African films and filmmakers, Tomaselli aptly demonstrates that the time has come to adapt a more 'African' view on African cinemas, since western theories and models cannot automatically be applied to an African context.
Far from shying away from the personal, Tomaselli gives a conscientious and telling account of how his own experiences as a film maker, a cultural studies scholar, and a South African, have inevitably influenced his academic viewpoints and analysis.

About the author:
Prof. Keyan Tomaselli (Culture, Communication and Media Studies Department, University of KwaZulu-Natal) previously worked in the film industry and was co-writer of the White Paper on Film. His seminal books include The Cinema of Apartheid and Appropriating Images (1996). His interest are political economy, African cinema and visual anthropology.

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 acred 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 Malboro 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 dawerend 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 that 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 coasts 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 kultuurfeestent / 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 braaivleistunes 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 braaivleistunes 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. Knightrider. 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

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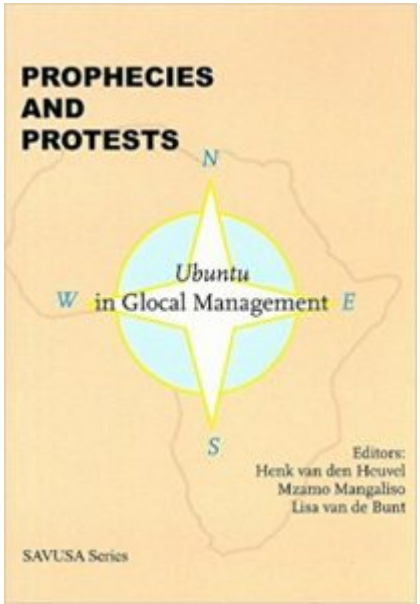
Prophecies And Protests ~ Ubuntu And Communalism In African Philosophy And Art



During my efforts to set up dialogues between Western and African philosophies, I have singled out quite a number of subjects on which such dialogues are useful and necessary. Recently I have stated in an essay that three themes in the African way of thought have become especially important for me:
1.1 The *basic concept of vital force*, differing from the basic concept of being, which is prevalent in Western philosophy;
1.2. The *prevailing role of the community*, differing from the predominantly individualistic thinking in the West;
1.3. The *belief in spirits*, differing from the scientific and rationalistic way of

thought, which is prevalent in Western philosophy (Kimmerle 2001: 5).

In these fields of philosophical thought there are contributions from African philosophers, which differ in a very characteristic way from Western thinking. Therefore in a dialogue on these themes a special enrichment of Western philosophy is possible. In the following text I want to clarify this possibility by concentrating on two notions, which have a specific meaning in the context of African philosophy. To discuss the notions of *ubuntu* and communalism means working out some important aspects of the second theme. The *community spirit* in African theory and practice is philosophically concentrated in notions such as *ubuntu* and communalism. But the concept of *vital force*, which is mentioned in the first theme, will play a certain role, too. We find the stem *–ntu*, which expresses the concept of vital force in many Bantu-languages, also in *ubu–ntu*. For a more detailed explanation of *ubuntu*, I will depend mainly on Mogobe B. Ramose's book, which gives the most comprehensive explanation of the philosophical impact of this notion (Ramose 1999). The concept of communalism is explained in the context of the political philosophy of Leopold S. Senghor and other political leaders of African countries in the struggle for independence (Senghor 1964). A vehement critic of that theory is a Kenyan political scientist, V.G. Simiyu (Simiyu 1987). For a philosophical evaluation of this controversy I will refer to the articles and books of Maurice Tschiamalenga Ntumba, Joseph M. Nyasani, and Kwame Gyekye, dealing with the relation between person and community (Ntumba 1985 and 1988; Nyasani 1989; Gyekye 1989 and 1997).

Finally I will briefly look for *ubuntu* and communalism in African art. I am a lover or African art, but my knowledge of it is not developed on a par with my knowledge of African philosophy. There is no doubt that music and dance are of special relevance in African art. K.C. Anyanwu, in his article 'The idea of art in African thought', has stated convincingly that music is the most important form of art in Africa (Anyanwu 1987: 251-3, 259). The cosmic sound has to be answered by human beings, moving together in the same rhythm. From oral literature I will entertain examples of the predominant role of the community and of the position of the individual. I will also refer to some pieces of woodcarving that express the African community spirit and the reciprocal support given by individuals to each other. This is illustrated by Makondes: towers of human beings, leaning one on the other. A special motive is the relation between men and women and between mothers and children, which we find on some masks and sculptures.

It is my contention that it will not be easy to adhere to *ubuntu* and communalism, which stem from a traditional and mainly rural environment, in a modernised and mainly urban life-world. The bonds of the community, all based on the extended family, unravel in an urban environment, where people get isolated from each other due to living and working conditions. Nevertheless it is of crucial importance that the moral aspects of *ubuntu* and communalism, and the specific values that are connected with these notions, do not get lost. Their actualisation in philosophy and art can be useful for the endeavour to revitalise them. They can permeate from philosophy and art into other domains of life and be applied in the world of today, also in the domain of management and of organising processes of common work.

My contribution is limited to a short survey of the meaning of *ubuntu* and communalism in philosophy and art, as I do not feel competent to apply it to management or the science of management.

Main philosophical aspects of Ubuntu *and communalism*

If a philosopher trained in the West tries to understand the philosophy incorporated in *ubuntu* thought, s/he will notice that s/he has entered an unfamiliar terrain. The *ubuntu* way of thought differs greatly from what the Western philosopher is accustomed to. However, Tschiamalenga Ntumba's demarcation of African and Western ways of thought along these lines, is too simplistic. He states that African philosophy is a philosophy of 'We' and Western philosophy is a philosophy of 'I' (Ntumba 1985: 83). To reduce *ubuntu* to the saying 'I am because we are', as so frequently happens, is also too schematic. This saying cannot be regarded as a direct African counterpart of Descartes' dictum '*Cogito ergo sum*'. Things are more differentiated. We have to take into account that the 'I', or the person, is becoming increasingly important in African ontology, too. In the West a philosophy of 'We' is not impossible and has emerged as a strong philosophical stream called 'communitarianism', which stresses the meaning of the community. We thus have to look in more detail to the philosophical impact of *ubuntu* and of the African community spirit in order to discover what they can mean in the world of today.

Let me start with Ramose's book *African philosophy through ubuntu*. The discourse of this book is organised around three proverbs, maxims or aphorisms taken from the language of the Northern Sotho. The first aphorism, '*Motho ke motho ka batho*' can be understood as a simplification of *ubuntu*. According to

Ramose it expresses the central idea of African *philosophical anthropology*. It means more specifically: 'to be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognising the humanity of others and, on this basis, establish respectful human relations with them'. In other words, my human-ness is constituted by the human-ness of others, and *vice versa*. And the relations between human beings, other persons and me, are characterised by mutual recognition and respect. The second aphorism, '*Feta kgomo o tshware motho*', says in a condensed formulation: 'if and when one is faced with a decisive choice between [one's own] wealth and the preservation of the life of another human being, then one should opt for the preservation of life'. Hereby a basic principle of *social philosophy* is presupposed: the other ranks higher than I myself, especially when his/her life is in danger. This is due to the fact that life or life force is the highest value, which determines also the relations between human beings. The third maxim is about kingship and expresses a fundamental aspect of *political philosophy*. The formulation of this third maxim, '*Kgosi ke kgosi ka batho*' is very much similar to the first one. It relates kingship like human-ness in general to the humanity of others and demands mutual recognition and respect. In the words of Ramose it means 'that the king owes his status, including all the powers associated with it, to the will of the people under him' (Ramose 1999: 193194, see also 52, 120, 138, 150, and 154).

However, *ubuntu* has aspects that reach further than the contents of these proverbs. It has to be discussed in a comprehensive ontological horizon. It shows how the be-ing of an African person is not only imbedded in the community, but in the universe as a whole. This is primarily expressed in the prefix *ubu*-of the word *ubuntu*. It refers to the universe as be-ing enfolded, containing everything. The stem –*ntu* means the process of life as the unfolding of the universe by concrete manifestations in different forms and modes of being. This process includes the emergence of the speaking and knowing human being. As such this being is called '*umuntu*' or, in the Northern Sotho language, '*motho*', who is able by common endeavours to articulate the experience and knowledge of what *ubu*-is. Thus –*ntu* stands for the epistemological side of be-ing. This is the wider horizon, in which the inter-subjective aspects of *ubuntu* have to be seen. Mutual recognition and respect in the different inter-subjective relations are parts of the process of unfolding of the universe, which encompasses everything, in the speaking and knowing of human beings. This process in itself leads to the forms of inter-subjective relations that have been mentioned above. Ramose underlines the one-

ness and the whole-ness of this ongoing process (Ramose 1999: 49-52).

Through this more comprehensive explanation of *ubuntu* in its ontological and epistemological dimension it becomes understandable that *ubuntu* can be regarded as a specific approach to African philosophy in its different disciplines. We have already seen how this is valid for disciplines such as philosophical anthropology, social and political philosophy, and by the same token for ontology and epistemology. Other disciplines, such as metaphysics and philosophy of religion, logic and ethics, philosophy of medicine, philosophy of law and philosophy of economy, including problems of management, are taken into account, as is philosophy of art, although this latter subject is not treated in Ramose's book.

In connection to this new approach to African philosophy, a different use of language is necessary. It has already become clear that *ubu–ntu* is approached 'as a hyphenated word' and that a specific interpretation flows from this way of writing it. The same applies to words such as be-ing, whole-ness or one-ness. The hyphen between the two parts of the words signifies that they have to be understood as processes or in a dynamic sense. So it could be said that *ubuntu* is about human-ness (if the hyphen between human-and – ness is taken in its specific meaning). At any rate it is important not to understand *ubuntu* as an -ism like in the word humanism. Therefore, Ramose criticises the title of the book written by S. and T.M. Samkange: *Hunhuism or Ubuntuism*. According to Ramose these authors, when they speak of 'a Zimbabwe indigenous *political philosophy*', also give a restricted meaning to *ubuntu* (or *hunhu*, which is the word for *ubuntu* in the language of the Shona in Zimbabwe), neglecting the broader dimensions of this notion (Ramose 1999: 51). The suffix -ism indicates 'fragmentative thinking', which gives the general state of affairs with regard to a certain subject-matter. That is not in accordance with *ubuntu* as a whole-ness and a constant flow of be-ing. Ramose aims at a mode of language, in which nouns are also understood as verbs, as they express an ongoing process. He calls this a 'rheomode language', using the Greek word '*rheo*', which means 'to flow', in order to express the specific character of this language. A certain type of logic corresponds with this mode of language. Departing from this, Ramose says: 'The logic of *ubuntu* is distinctly rheomode in character'. He refers in this regard to the book of D. Bohm: *Wholeness and the implicate order*, in which these notions are coined by the 'nature of collective thought' (Bohm 1980 and 2004: 55-69). And he refers to an

analogy with famous thinkers of Western philosophical traditions. Firstly, he mentions the thought of the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus, from coined the famous saying '*panta rhei*' ('everything flows'). Secondly, he refers to the German idealist Hegel who has worked out a philosophy, in which all things and the human knowledge of them are constantly in a process (Hegel 1977). And thirdly, he points to the American pragmatist Peirce who speaks of a 'universe of change' (Peirce 1958). A specific affinity is stated with the Belgian thinkers Prigogine and Stenger. Their book *Order out of chaos* (1985) expresses the African experience of a 'fundamental instability of be-ing', which leads to the 'ontological and epistemological imperative' to contribute to the forthcoming and stabilising of order as a dynamic equilibrium. To obey this imperative means a persistent search for harmony 'in all spheres of life', especially in the inter-subjective relations (Ramose 1999: 55-60).

The notion of *ubuntu*, *hunhu* or *botha* is particularly in use in Southern Africa. In West and East Africa, we come across the notion of communalism, by which the intersubjective aspects of *ubuntu* are expressed in a similar way, although the more comprehensive philosophical horizon of *ubuntu* is missing here. It is well-known that this notion is used by Leopold S. Senghor, a leader in the struggle for independence and the first President of Senegal, to characterise the specific mode of African socialism. According to Senghor, the traditional African societies show harmonious forms of life without any antagonism of classes, as it is presupposed in the Marxist type of theory. There is an ethics of mutual help and of caring for each other. The absence of private ownership of the land or other means of production leads to inequality among the members of the society. That is the core of what he calls communalism. He points out that a direct way is possible from the communalism of these societies to communism and the classless relations in industrialised socialist societies. This implies that African socialism does not presuppose any dictatorship, as does Marxist theory for the period of transition from class society to communism. It can combine socialist politics with freedom and humane relations between people (Senghor 1964). Theories of this kind can also be connected to other political leaders during the struggle for independence, e.g. Nkrumah from Ghana, Kenyatta from Kenya, Nyerere from Tanzania, Kaunda from Zambia and others (Nkrumah 1970; Kenyatta 1938; Nyerere 1968; Kaunda 1966). The idea of communalism implies a way of decisionmaking which is based on consensus. And the consensus is found through dialogues. In a meeting where political decisions are taken, everybody has to

participate and to speak. Julius Nyerere has given a well-known formulation for that: ‘We talk until we agree’.

The notion of communalism is criticised by different authors as an idealisation of traditional life in African communities. The most fervent criticism is formulated by V.G. Simiyu, a Kenyan political scientist. He speaks of ‘the democratic myth in the African traditional societies’. He makes clear that hate and struggle were not unknown in these societies. Moreover, to presuppose one and the same structure everywhere, proves to be a too simplistic way of speaking about traditional social life in Africa. Simiyu refers to the book of the British cultural anthropologists M. Fortes and E. Evans-Pritchard, which shows that *African political systems* are diverse, ranging from highly authoritarian types of government in the old kingdom of Congo to strictly egalitarian societies with the Gikuyu in Central Kenya (Simiyu 1987; see also Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1970).

What remains true of the communalist ideas is that among the members of the extended families and villages in traditional African societies mutual help was and is a widespread trait of social life. It could be formulated best in a negative way, namely that a member of a family or a village who is in great existential difficulties will not be left alone. Somebody will be there to help or to show a way out of the predicament. And with regard to the different forms of government it can be said that all of them are measured in terms of whether they function for the well-being of the people in the long run. In this sense a democratic intention can be found in them.

Tschiamalenga Ntumba, a philosopher from the Democratic Republic of Congo, has done linguistic research to show that there is a prevailing role of the community in African theory and practice. He gives striking examples from the Lingala-language as to how people use the notion ‘we’ in many, and, for Western ears, unexpected ways. The answer to the question: ‘How is your son developing’, can be: ‘We are studying at Kinshasa University’, and the question: ‘How is your wife doing?’ can be answeredas follows: ‘We have died last month’. As the word for ‘we’ or ‘us’ in Lingala is ‘*biso*’, he confronts the ‘*bisoité*’ of African thought, which is expressed in this language, with the ‘*moité*’ of Western thought, as it is expressed in the French language. In a final conclusion he states a ‘dialectical primacy of the We over the I-You’ in the Lingala language and in African thought as a whole. Here again it seems that Ntumba is guilty of an overstatement when he says that African thought is based exclusively on ‘we’ or ‘us’ and Western

thought on ‘I’ and ‘me’. At least he is not aware of existing Western philosophies of ‘we’, and of the emergence of communitarianism as a rather strong current in Western philosophical debates (Kimmerle 1983; Tietz 2002; Taylor 1992; Kymlicka 2002).

Joseph Nyasani from Kenya builds his theory on Ntumba’s basic assumptions. He shows that not only the living members of a family or a village are joined together in a community by a language of ‘we’ and a feeling of ‘we’, but also those who have passed away and who are present as spirits. Nyasani quotes from the book of E.A. Ruch from South Africa and K.C Anyanwu from Nigeria on *African philosophy* (Nyasani 1981: 143):

The whole African society, living and living-dead, is a living network of relations almost like that between the various parts of an organism. When one part of the body is sick the whole body is affected. When one member of a family or clan is honoured or successful, the whole group rejoices and shares in the glory, not only psychologically (as one would rejoice when the local soccer team has won a match), but ontologically: each member of the group is really part of the honour.

According to Nyasani, even those who have not yet been born belong to the spiritual whole of the community. The ‘we’ of the living members of the community are part of a flow of life that is passing through them from the past to the future (Nyasani 1989: 13-25, see also 14-15).

Although Nyasani does not deny the autonomy of the individual person within the society, and especially not ‘the responsibility for his own misdeeds’ (Nyasani 1989: 14 and 22), Kwame Gyekye from Ghana puts much more emphasis on the role and the importance of the individual person. To a certain extent this can be attributed to their different positions in East and in West Africa. But Gyekye also argues against ‘the advocates of the ideology of African socialism’ from West and East Africa ‘such as Nkrumah, Senghor and Nyerere’. The conception of Gyekye is not so much based on language in general, nor on the demands of a political struggle, but on proverbs and on conversations with sages. He departs from the Akan-proverb: ‘All persons are children of God, no one is a child of the earth’. He explains that the ‘innermost self’ of each and every person, called ‘*okra*’ by the Akan, is something divine, and as such forms the essence of his or her individuality. In other words: each person is unique, because each ‘*okra*’ is unique. Another Akan-proverb says: ‘When a person descends from heaven,

he/she descends into a human society'. This means that 'the human person is conceived as originally born into a human society, and therefore as a social being right from the outset' (Gyekye 1989: 47-63, see also 49 and 53).

In his later book on *Tradition and modernity*, Gyekye has criticised a too strong subsumption of the individual person under the community in African thought in general, especially because of the predominant orientation to the past inherent in the endeavour to act in accordance with the spirits of the ancestors. If something is right just because the ancestors have always done it that way, the present is dominated by the past. According to Gyekye, the openness for new events, for tasks of the future is consequently not adequately developed. He regards it as important to act in accordance with the habits of the community and with the opinions and rules of the fathers and forefathers. But he warns that this must and need not lead to a principally backward orientation. Comparing Western communitarianism and its social and ethical dimensions, as it is worked out by Charles Taylor or Will Kymlicka, with a personal attitude towards the tasks of the future, as he would prefer it for Africa, Gyekye defends a 'moderate communitarianism' against any of its more radical forms. And he concludes that he wants to advocate 'a life lived in harmony and cooperation with others, a life of mutual consideration and aid and of interdependence', but at the same time 'a life that provides a viable framework for the fulfilment of the individual's nature and potentials' (Gyekye 1997: 35-76, see 75-76; cf. Taylor 1992; Kymlicka 2002).

In the notions of *ubuntu* and communalism the African community spirit is epitomised. The meaning of these notions shows that there is a high estimation of the community in African thought and practice, higher than that of the individual, but not at the cost of forgetting the individual person. A person is a person in the community and through the others of his or her community. This implies a culture of mutual help, of caring for each other and sharing with each other. This is not only expressed in the African languages; it is also practised by talking to each other, by means of dialogues. Of course, this culture should not be understood in an idealised way. But in spite of struggles between members of a community, envy and hatred, every member can rely on support from somebody of the extended family when in serious trouble or in danger of life.

Ubuntu *and communalism in African art*

K.C. Anyanwu from Nigeria, whom I have already mentioned, writes in his article 'The idea of art in African thought' that the universe as a whole is 'sound'. Like in

the unfolding of *ubu*-by –*ntu*, the cosmic sound is taken over and differentiated on earth. The human beings participate in this process of continuing the cosmic sound on earth and of answering it by making it explicit. The most prominent answer to the music of the universe is dance. Dancing is participating in the vibration of all that is and giving expression to it in a common as well as in a personal manner. That is the realm for a comprehensive esthetical interpretation of the world in African thought. And the esthetical approach is closely related to ethics and to all forms of behaviour. A good action has to be a beautiful action as well, showing some elegance. The concept that connects aesthetics and ethics is that of harmony. Besides music and dancing, oral literature and story telling, wood-carving and other forms of sculpturing are important expressions of a thoroughly esthetical worldview (Anyanwu 1987).

The philosophical impact of oral literature is made obvious most of all by Sophie B. Oluwole, who teaches philosophy in Nigeria. She gives an interpretation of Yoruba aphorisms and short poetical texts. Among others she interprets the following poem:
Cutting alone, cutting alone,
The axe cannot cut alone,
Splitting alone, splitting alone,
The wedge cannot split alone;

Without the Erelu,[1]
Osugbo cult cannot operate.

Oluwole underlines that the English translation of the text cannot transmit the original specificity and the full poetical expression of the text. Again language turns out to be of crucial importance for the understanding of an African world-view. In the structure of the poem we can recognise some formal elements such as frequent repetition and an unexpected climax. However, some ideas become clear: working together is necessary in a community. In questions of public relevance especially the contribution of the women cannot be missed. ‘Osugbo’ is a secret organisation with the Ijebu, a subgroup of the Yoruba, which has executive government functions. That they need women representatives says something about the understanding of democracy in this group. In the process of decision-making cooperation and participation of all, women included, are necessary. Oluwole summarises the general meaning of the poem, which is not restricted to some kind of technical cooperation, by quoting a proverb: ‘The bird

does not fly with one wing' (Oluwole 1997: 36-9). This can be regarded as a basic principle of African social philosophy.

In another context, Oluwole quotes two texts from the Ifa-Corpus of oracular poems, which I cannot give here in full length. They deal with problems of the community. The first one expresses 'the hypothesis that the adults and the youth have complementary qualities and responsibilities to each other'. And the second one stresses the individuality of things and of persons, not only men, but also women. In this connection, the text 'explicitly states that the ideal family is monogamous'. It relates extensively how 'any additional wife is an additional problem to the home'. Here Oluwole defends the ideal of monogamy against misinterpretations of the fact that there is 'no law against polygamy' and that polygamy is practised in many African societies. According to her, we must not confuse 'an African social practice with African philosophical ideas', as they are expressed in the Ifa-poems (Oluwole 1999: 89-91 and 94-95).

We also find the expression of the African community spirit in many works of wood carving and other forms of sculpturing. I will give four examples here (photos by the author):

Four examples – Photos by author

They have been selected to illustrate different aspects of what I have described as the contents of *ubuntu* and communalism. Example 3.1 is a Makonde from an area in the Southeast of Tanzania. (It is owned by the Foundation for Intercultural

Philosophy and Art, Zoetermeer.) It shows a tower of people, carved from a piece of wood, which is somewhat bent and thus shows the tension and the suppleness of life in a community. Every person needs the others and they need him/her. So together they form a whole, in which specificity and individuality are not lacking. Example 3.2 is a wooden mask, carved by Bangboye from Nigeria. It represents a family and it shows in particular 'someone who has lived to see his own great-great-grandchildren' (Willet 1993: 2467). The old man is highly appreciated, and he can enjoy witnessing how his life force is going through generations. The third example (3.3) is again a Makonde, but it shows the specific form of life in community, namely a mother with her children. (This piece is also owned by the Foundation referred to.) The continuous support of the mother for the children gives her an especially high value. This relation is the core of the family and of the society. A proverb of the Chewa in Malawi says: 'Mother is God number two' (Schipper 1991: 38). The father lives at a certain distance from this core community. Finally, example 3.4 is a sculpture from stone, made by Chenjerai Chiripanyanga from Nigeria, called 'Polygamy'. (It is owned by the Gallery 'Chiefs and Spirits' in The Hague.) It gives a different perspective on this social practice in Africa from that of the Ifa-Corpus and its interpretation by Oluwole. It is obviously not seen in a critical, but rather in an affirmative way. It may be that we have to conclude that the relation of men and women in the family is changing in the African communities of today. Old practices and new ideas exist side by side.

These four examples make clear (1) that the individual person is dependent on and embedded in the community; (2) that the flow of life goes through the generations of a family and that this is part of the 'joy of being'; (3) that the core of the community is the family, which has at its centre the role and the position of the mother who represents more clearly than anything else the principle of 'caring is sharing'; and (4) that polygamy can be seen as being in accordance with the African community spirit and the social climate of mutual recognition and respect. These are expressions of African thought and African experience, which can illustrate important aspects of *ubuntu* and communalism as we have pointed them out above.

Conclusion

In an article on 'The ethics of *ubuntu*', Ramose deals with '*ubuntu* through the family'. Here he seconds the view of the artist, which is different from that of Oluwole's interpretation of the Ifa-poem. He makes clear that for *ubuntu* love is

not the only ‘basis of the family’. It plays an important role between the partners, ‘but is not necessarily decisive for the formation of the family’. It is embedded in the broader connection of ‘mutual care and sharing’. Therefore, ‘marriage here need not be monogamous’. This is ‘one of the practices’ which is implicated in ‘*ubuntu* philosophy’. There is an obvious tension with regard to the practice and the main ideas of marriage and the relation between men and women in Africa and in the Western world.

Another aspect of *ubuntu*, which seems problematic in a modernising environment, is the urge for employed members of the family ‘to make it possible for other family members to find employment’. That leads to the ‘charge of nepotism’, which is also often heard on the political level. Ramose admits that this traditional African custom is in line with *ubuntu* ‘from one point of view, but invites criticism from another’. If we look at the political level, whereas the African ‘community is constituted by a network of interrelated families’, the practice of nepotism ‘invites the criticism of ethnocentricity’. A solution might be found, according to Ramose, by taking into consideration that ‘the right to subsistence’ and the priority of family relations must not be defended ‘by way of denying the same right to others’ who are independent from family obligations (Ramose 2003: 329). Of course, nepotism does not only occur on the political level, but also in the economic sphere and in modern work relations. The argument of Ramose is valid here in the same way.

This argumentation makes us understand that *ubuntu* cannot be interpreted easily from outside. In the same article Ramose explicitly criticises the book of Augustine Shutte, *Ubuntu: An ethic for a new South Africa*, because this author ‘approaches the question of *ubuntu* ethics from the point of view of the stranger to *ubuntu*’. He ‘is looking at *ubuntu* and interpreting it from the point of view of a “European” with an influential Christian background’ (Ramose 2003: 326-7). The cultural differences between African and European opinions in this field are not so easy to bridge. In this matter, it is necessary to apply the ‘methodology of listening’, which I have recommended for intercultural philosophical dialogues in general. This methodology also implies that even after long and patient endeavours not everything in a different culture can be fully understood.

The project of intercultural philosophy means in the first place that we have to listen, to listen for a long time, how in the philosophy of a different culture answers to certain

questions and reactions to certain of our arguments are articulated. Listening has to be learned; it requires openness, concentration, discipline and a methodical technique. Listening is art, just as understanding that comes much later (Kimmerle 1991: 8; cf. 1994: 124-8).

Of course, a critical attitude is not excluded by that. If we want to learn from *ubuntu* and to work with *ubuntu* principles, we have to try to behave in the spirit of these principles in our own cultural environment with its specific conditions. That means that we must not look for a direct application, but where necessary, for a transformation of the practical outcome of a deeper understanding of the leading principles.

By interpreting *ubuntu* and communalism in African philosophy and art, an aspect of the second of the three themes for dialogues between African and Western philosophies mentioned at the beginning of this article, is worked out in more detail. I have given a more specific shape to the general trait of the African community spirit. But we must also keep in mind how this theme is intertwined with the other two: the basic notion of vital force and the belief in spirits. Human persons are part of a universal interplay of forces through the communities in which they live, and they are in close and permanent connection with the spiritual world of those who have passed away and those who are yet to be born.

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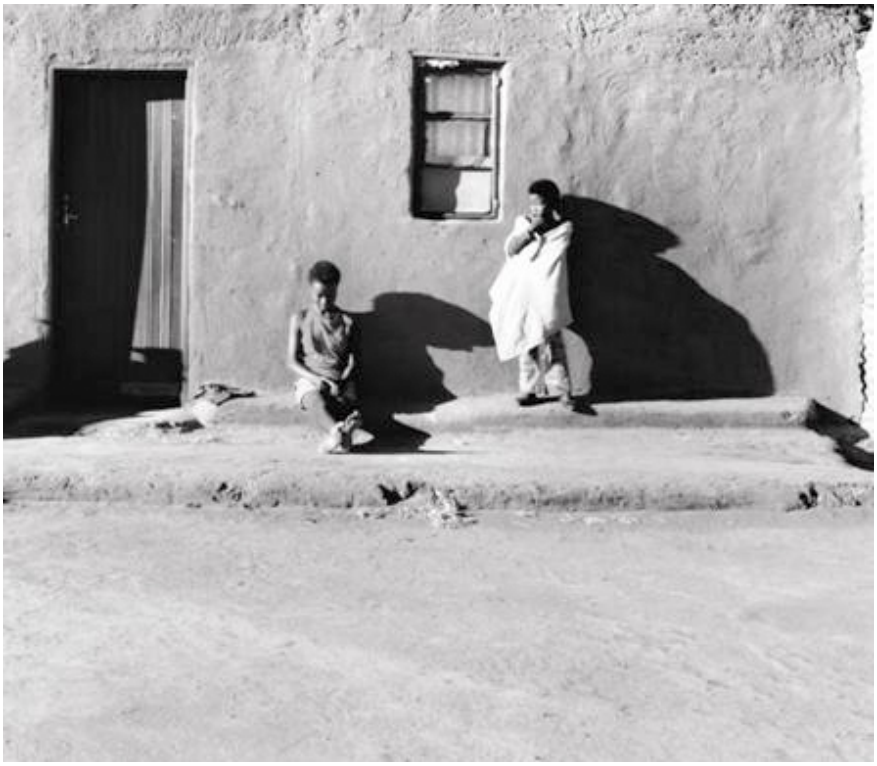
The Purchase Of The Farm Braklaagte By The Bahurutshe ba

ga Moiloa – Whose Land Is It Anyway? (1908-1935)



Basking in the early morning sun
Photo: Michelle du Pisani

Braklaagte, registered as farm number 168 on the Transvaal farm register (the number was changed in the second half of the twentieth century to JP-90), was 3,152 morgen and 529 square rood in size, which is equal to 2,700.5441 ha in metric measurements.

The first title deed to the farm was registered in October 1874 in the name of Diederik Jacobus Coetzee. Ownership of the farm was transferred several times to other white farmers. W.M. Beverley was the last white owner before the farm was bought by the Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa.

In 1906 a dispute arose in the Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa tribe of Dinokana in Moiloa's Reserve between Abraham Pogiso Moiloa and Israel Keobusitse Moiloa. When Abraham's father, Ikalafeng, had died in 1893 he was a minor and Israel, Ikalafeng's younger brother, would for a number of years act as regent. When Israel had to hand over the bokgosi (chieftainship) to Abraham in 1906

differences arose between them. A section of the tribe, led by Israel, moved eastward and settled at Leeuwfontein.

Already in 1876 Leeuwfontein had been bought for the tribe by chief Sebogodi Moiloa of Dinokana at the price of 200 head of large cattle, equivalent to about £1,000, but the transfer of the farm to the tribe had not yet been effected. ‘Quite an exodus’ of the Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa took place from Dinokana to Leeuwfontein and by 1907 the majority of Israel’s adherents had settled there.

After some time chief Abraham Moiloa visited Leeuwfontein in an attempt to persuade Israel’s followers to return to Dinokana to their old homes and lands. He promised to forget about the past, to forgive them and to treat them fairly. They refused to return to Dinokana without Israel and indicated that they regarded Leeuwfontein as their permanent village. Abraham then tried to solicit the help of the Native Affairs Department of the Transvaal Colony to evict Israel’s people from Leeuwfontein in terms of the Squatters Law, supposedly because they were defying any authority, but at first he was not successful. In 1908 he managed to get Israel and his brother Malebelele banished to the Heidelberg District of Transvaal, but they returned to Leeuwfontein in 1911.

Figure 2.1: Braklaagte and other surrounding farms mentioned in the book

In the few years between 1905, when the Transvaal Supreme Court made a ruling

that temporarily lifted restrictions on individual black land ownership, and 1913, when the Natives Land Act once again restricted black land ownership, black people were able to purchase farms outside the reserves. After the breakaway section of the Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa had acquired a part of the farm Welverdiend and a part of Leeuwfontein, they tried to purchase the farm Braklaagte to the south of Leeuwfontein. It was a couple of years before the Union of South Africa came into existence and all hope of blacks to get a say in the central government of the country would be dashed.

On behalf of Pholoane Naone and Lesaroa Kgori a letter was directed to the Minister of Native Affairs of the Transvaal Colony in June 1908, in which they applied to purchase Braklaagte for £1,500 from its white owner. Initially the acting Secretary of Native Affairs replied that permission could not be granted, because the black buyers wanted to settle 64 persons there, which would amount to squatting. At that time the Minister had instructed native commissioners to put the Squatters Law into operation by identifying and evicting blacks in excess of the number allowed on farms outside the reserves. Eventually, however, authorisation was given for the purchase of the farm and in 1909 five men (Kgosimang, Lesaro Rakgori, Ramogapo, Pholoani Nauni and Radikoba), on behalf of their section of the Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa tribe, received their title deeds on the land. Thus Braklaagte was bought in undivided shares by a group of named black farmers, on behalf of a section of the Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa tribe. Because the government was unwilling to recognise the community as a separate tribe, they held the property under an undisclosed trust.

Sebetlela Ceremony

Israel Keobusitse Moiloa requested his brother Malebelele Sebogodi of the third house of kgosi Sebogodi to settle at Braklaagte and he became the headman and performed the sebetlela ceremony. Sebetlela is the ceremony performed when a traditional leader settles with his people at a new place. Four sticks are cut from a môrobê tree (Ehretia rigida subsp. Nervifolia, English popular name: puzzle bush), sharpened, treated by the traditional healer with special medicine and planted in the soil at the four corners of the land. It marks the land as belonging to that specific tribe, and the medicine should protect the people from danger.

Braklaagte was subordinate to Leeuwfontein. Just after the land had become the legal possession of the tribe, their struggle to hold on to it commenced. They took a mortgage on the purchase price of £1,500. This mortgage was repaid, amongst

others, by deductions that the Zeerust native commissioner made from wages earned on the mines by Braklaagte residents. By 1913 they had fallen behind with the payments on the mortgage and they faced legal action, which could deprive them of the land. However, little by little the mortgage was repaid, and they managed to evade being put off the land for financial reasons.

The acquisition of the farms by Israel Moiloa's section of the Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa occurred at a time when, according to revisionist historical studies, a transformation in labour and agrarian relations was taking place on the Transvaal Highveld because of capitalist development in South Africa. Processes of accumulation and dispossession resulted from the rise of mining and agricultural capital. Revisionists differ on the nature of the 'uneasy' alliance between 'gold' and 'maize', but agree that it led to the exploitation of cheap black labour and the impoverishment of the rural peasantry, both white and black. Mine owners and white commercial farmers needed workers and pushed for legislation that would give them easier access to African labour. Legislative measures to this effect were indeed adopted: access to land was made more difficult for black peasants, taxes and fees were raised, and stricter control over 'squatting' was introduced. The rural black peasantry, according to Bundy and other revisionist historians, was gradually deprived of the means to pursue an independent livelihood on the land. Whereas they initially managed to maintain their autonomy up to the end of the nineteenth century, their position vis-à-vis white commercial farmers and the white-controlled state rapidly deteriorated in the early twentieth century.
After the conclusion of the second Anglo-Boer War in 1902 black chiefs, who had supported the British war effort, including Bahurutshe chiefs, hoped to receive more land. However, this did not materialise and in the period of British colonial rule over the Transvaal a contrary process was taking place. Because of increasing labour demands by capitalist mining and agriculture rural Africans were increasingly being restricted to and even dispossessed of their tribal lands and incorporated into the capitalist economic system. Relationships of exploitation in the rural areas were changing. In the interior, Morris argues, rent paying tenants and sharecroppers increasingly found themselves impelled into labour tenancy. The next phase would be the conversion of labour tenants into wage labourers on white commercial farms.

In the Transvaal, where the Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa lived, colonial control over land and labour was intensified during the post-war Milner period, which made it

increasingly difficult for black peasants and tenants to produce food for the markets, and therefore to resist full dependence on wage earnings. In July 1907 the local sub-commissioner in the Native Affairs Department reported ‘a marked increase in the number of natives proceeding to Johannesburg in search of work’. During that month no fewer than 490 passes were issued to blacks in the Marico District.

Commercial agriculture was bolstered, which benefited Afrikaner landowners more than anyone else. The victory of the Het Volk party in the Transvaal elections of 1907 was based on their promise to restore white hegemony in the rural areas at the expense of African producers. Legislation against squatting, formerly applied rather patchily, was bound to be enforced more strictly. The Marico Farmers’ Co-operative in fact requested the government to assist farmers to apply the Squatters Law strictly.

In terms of the African agency discourse, mentioned in the introduction as one of the main threads of the Braklaagte narrative, it is clear that the purchase of farms outside the reserve by the Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa was a deliberate action. These people exercised one of the few options available to them to get access to land. Thus they were resisting the processes of dispossession and proletarianisation that at that stage threatened to pin them down in an overcrowded reserve. The purchase of such farms in effect amounted to a means for black communities to extend the reserves. Their purpose was not to commercialise their farming and the newly acquired farms were immediately communalised.

Impact of the 1913 Natives Land Act

After the establishment of the Union of South Africa the political system accelerated the decline of the rural black peasantry. In 1913 the Natives Land Act was passed in parliament. The act reserved the shrinking areas under black communal control for occupation exclusively by blacks, but at the same time prohibited blacks from acquiring land outside the reserves. Scheduled land, that is, land set aside as reserves for black ownership in the schedule to the act, extended over about 9 million hectares or 7 per cent of all the land in South Africa. In addition the act attempted to curb squatting by blacks on white farms, by allowing them to stay on the farms only if they were employed there on a permanent or temporary basis.

The Natives Land Act was not the result of a desire to create the territorial basis of a just, if segregated, society. It was rather the response to the needs of white farmers, then the dominant interest group in South African politics, who required continued access to a supply of low-wage labour. It was intended to minimise competition for land by prohibiting blacks from acquiring land outside the reserves. In effect the 1913 act forced the majority of rural blacks, even formerly self-sustaining peasants, to work for someone else in order to be able to make a living. This was the case because the reserves were simply too small to provide a livelihood in agriculture for all their inhabitants. Therefore, the Natives Land Act is regarded as the death knell to the prosperity and possibilities of the peasantry. White commercial farmers only started acting in unity through farming associations towards the end of the 1920s. It took many years before the controls over sharecropping and squatting transformed labour relations into a pattern of labour tenancy. However, in the long run the population of the reserves became captive labour for the mines and the tenants became trapped labour for commercial farmers.

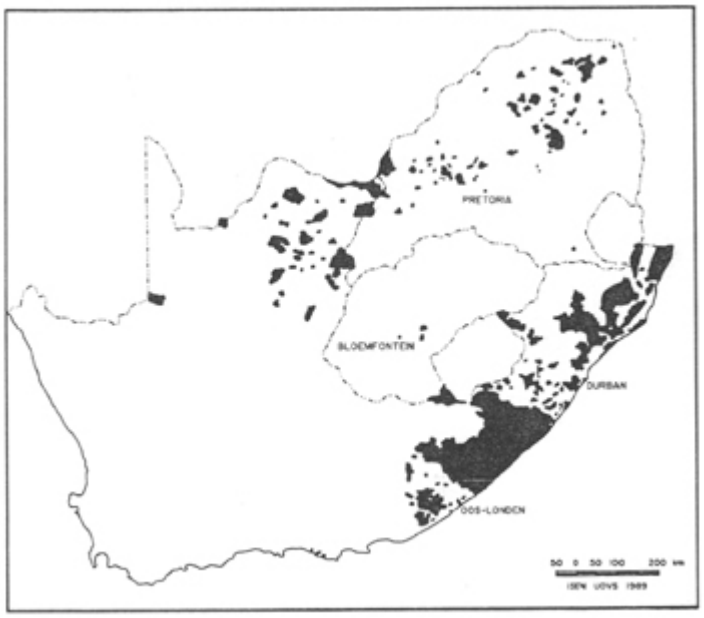


Figure 2.2: Scheduled lands in terms of the Natives Land Act, 1913. Moiloa's Reserve was part of the scheduled lands, but Braklaagte was not.

Attempts to get the Braklaagte Title Deed transferred to the Minister

Although Braklaagte's community was in a better position than most of the other rural communities, the ownership of Braklaagte was immediately at stake again when the 1913 Natives Land Act was passed. Private land ownership by blacks on land outside the areas reserved for them was restricted by the new legislation.

The Bahurutshe of Braklaagte were in real danger of losing their claim to the land the moment the last of the five deed holders would die. To protect their tenure the black inhabitants of Braklaagte requested the local native commissioner in 1921 to transfer their title deeds to the Minister of Native Affairs, who would hold the deeds in trust for them as the rightful residents. At three different occasions F.S. Malan (Acting Minister of Native Affairs, 1915-1921), J.B.M. Hertzog (Prime Minister, 1924-1939 and also Minister of Native Affairs, 1924-1929) and E.G. Jansen (Minister of Native Affairs, 1929-1933) signed letters in which permission was granted for the transfer.
At that point in time the old feud between the Bahurutshe of Dinokana and the Bahurutshe of Braklaagte flared up again. During the 1920s and early 1930s the successive kgosi (chiefs) of Dinokana, Alfred Moiloa and Abraham Moiloa, were involved in disputes with the kgosana (headmen) of Braklaagte, Malabelele Sebogodi (Moiloa) and George Moiloa. Because the Department of Native Affairs did not want to make a precedent by recognising the section of the Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa which was settled at Leeuwfontein and Braklaagte as a separate tribe, they seemed in no particular hurry to comply with the request for the transfer of Braklaagte's title deed to the minister. There had been an earlier Supreme Court ruling that a section of a tribe could not purchase land independently from the tribe of which it formed part. Consequently the transfer was delayed for more than a decade.

At this point the system of land tenure at Braklaagte was already moving away from true communal ownership under customary law to what Budlender and Latsky refer to as a system of 'nationalised ownership' held by the state. A few remarks need to be made here about the role of communal tenure and the situation of the black peasantry in the first half of the twentieth century.
Communal tenure, although it was originally based on African customary law, was modified by successive South African governments in the course of the twentieth century. Alternative forms of tenure were effectively denied to black people by law. In the literature communal tenure has been described as
… an *essential component of the migrant labour system, facilitating the concentration of the maximum possible number of Africans in the reserves/homelands, preventing the emergence of a stratum of rich peasants or capitalist farmers and providing the basis for a high degree of social control through compliant tribal leaders who controlled access to land.*

Formal title (in the form of deeds) of most communal land, including Braklaagte, was held by a state official on behalf of the state in trust for specific tribal communities and allocated by traditional leaders to people living under their jurisdiction on a usufructuary basis. Communal tenure was a hybrid form, which combined elements of individual and collective property rights. An individual's right to use the land flowed from membership of a tribal community rather than from private ownership. However, communal tenure did not imply communal ownership of all resources and communal agricultural production. Allocated residential and arable plots were reserved for the exclusive use of the occupying household, and unallocated lands were available as a commonage, providing pasture for livestock. Those who were allocated land by the chief or headman obtained a right to the use and benefits of that land, but had no right to sell it. In effect communal tenure in twentieth-century South Africa meant 'a degree of community control over who is allowed into the group, thereby qualifying for an allocation of land for residence and cropping, as well as rights of access to and use of the shared common pool resources used by the group (i.e. the commons)'.

Many South African social historians have argued that the native reserves were deliberately underdeveloped in order to force Africans to sell their labour to the farms, mines and factories of an industrialising South Africa. Colin Bundy contended that the African peasantry in the late 19th and early 20th centuries responded by increasing their production for the market. Then a rapid decline of the peasantry set in and by the 1930s an independent peasantry no longer existed. In his analysis of agricultural production Simkins came to the conclusion that the disintegration of the peasantry occurred a bit later, in the 1950s. Drummond states that available evidence from Dinokana would tend to support Simkins's view. Agriculture in Dinokana seems to have remained stable and productive till at least the Second World War period and even into the 1950s. A range of agricultural products was produced at Dinokana and in the 1930s the community, regarded as a 'model native area', received a large grant from the Minister of Native Affairs for agricultural improvements. When the government completed an irrigation system during the drought of the early 1930s a local councillor expressed optimism that increased production would ensure a 'great future' for Dinokana.
One of the residents of Lehurutshe recalled:
Even when I was attending school before 1937 I was gardening all the time. Only a few were running gardens under irrigation. Most people were farming on dry

land – kaffir corn and mealies. At that time we ploughed and irrigated wheat to a large extent. People were financially strong. I once harvested ninety bags of wheat, which I sold in Zeerust for Two Pounds Ten Shillings a bag. I sold vegetables locally as well.

In the case of Braklaagte it is not as easy to set a date for the decline of the peasantry, due to the lack of production data for the early twentieth century. Braklaagte was not as suitable for crop cultivation as Dinokana, because it did not have the same abundant water supply. Livestock farming was the main agricultural activity.

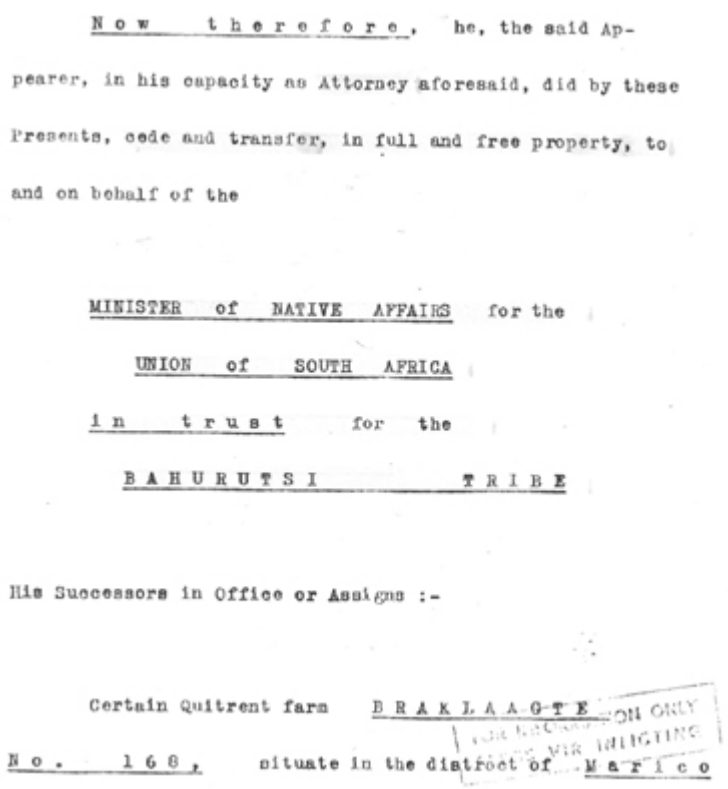
George Mosekaphofu Moiloa succeeded Malebelele Sebogodi after his death in 1925 as the headman at Braklaagte. He was the son of Israel Keobusitse Moiloa's second wife, Mmamosweu. Because of family differences Israel had moved to Braklaagte, died there in 1923 and was buried in Malebelele's cattle kraal. Mmamosweu and George Mosekaphofu stayed on at Braklaagte after his death. Malebelele's rightful heir in terms of customary law, Lekoloane John Sebogodi, was only eleven years old when his father died. An ethnologist, Isaac Motile Selebego, gave evidence to the Mabiletsa Commission in the 1990s that Lekoloane had been banished to Barberton, but he did not state by whom and why he had been sent away. In terms of the later rivalry for the headmanship between the Sebogodis and the Moiloas it is important to note that George did not become headman in the customary way through a decision by the serobe (royal family council) and was never inaugurated in that position by the kgosi-tona (supreme chief). In reality he was acting on behalf of Lekoloane. However, he tried to strengthen his own hold on the position. He had the backing of the government, because the native commissioner recognised him as headman.

Although the government refused to grant George's request that the Braklaagte community should be recognised as a separate tribe, they did in fact function independently from the chief at Dinokana. When in 1926 they purchased the rest of Welverdiend, the headman of Braklaagte was given autonomy to facilitate the administration involved in the registration of the farm. To repay the debt incurred by the purchase of the farm a special rate of £2 per annum was later levied on each member of the Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa at Braklaagte.

In May 1929, at a tribal meeting in Zeerust, the chief, councillors and members of the tribe of the Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa resolved with a majority of votes to once again request the transfer of Braklaagte to the minister. A list of 255 names of

male members of the tribe who had contributed to the purchase-price of Braklaagte, and of their descendants, was attached to the resolution. From the number of names on this list it is clear that the number of inhabitants of Braklaagte had increased considerably in the 21 years since the purchase of the farm in 1908. If each of the 255 men had on average three dependents, there were at that stage more than 1,000 people on Braklaagte and Welverdiend.
As a result of continued conflict between chief Abraham Moiloa of Dinokana and headman George Moiloa of Braklaagte the magistrate of Zeerust approached the Ministry of Native Affairs towards the end of 1933 and suggested that a headman should be elected by the inhabitants of Braklaagte. This headman should be appointed under the jurisdiction of the chief of Dinokana, with the qualification that the chief could not interfere in issues related to farmlands, dwelling-places, grazing rights and water. The headman would have the final say over these matters, with the right of appeal to the magistrate. Apparently the magistrate hoped that the democratic election of a headman would resolve the divisions in the ranks of the Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa.

On 23 February 1934 the election was held between two candidates, which were George Moiloa, the serving headman, and Johannes Moiloa, whose candidature was supported by chief Abraham Moiloa, his brother-in-law. George won the election by 134 votes to 116. Those who had voted for Johannes declared themselves willing to accept George's appointment, provided that he fulfilled his responsibilities without usurping the powers of the chief again. George's appointment as headman of Braklaagte, with civil and criminal jurisdiction, was approved by the Governor-General a full seven years later, in terms of the Native Administration Act (act no. 38 of 1927).
As far as the authorities were concerned the dispute among the Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa had been settled with George's election in 1934 and the transfer of the land could now proceed. The legal process for the transfer was set in motion and on 25 September 1935 the farm Braklaagte was transferred to the Minister of Native Affairs, who would hold it in trust for the particular section of the Bahurutshe tribe. The descendants of the members of the tribe who had contributed to the initial purchase-price of the farm would, in terms of the registered deed of transfer, have the only and exclusive right to the occupation and use of the land.



Now therefore, he, the said Appearer, in his capacity as Attorney aforesaid, did by these Presents, cede and transfer, in full and free property, to and on behalf of the

MINISTER of NATIVE AFFAIRS for the
UNION of SOUTH AFRICA
in trust for the
BAHURUTSI TRIBE

His Successors in Office or Assigns :-

Certain Quitrent farm BRAKLAAGTE
No. 166, situate in the district of Marico

Figure 2.3: Extract from deed of transfer, 1935

It seemed as if this section of the Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa was now assured of their land, even though in terms of the discriminatory legislation of the Union of South Africa it could not remain their private property any longer.

Concluding remarks

The historical events narrated in this chapter can be linked to two of the central issues identified in the introduction as the focus of this book, that is, (1) the manipulation of ethnicity by the government to implement segregation and consolidate their control over black communities, and (2) the agency of the Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa at Braklaagte in maintaining as much independence as possible under a system of racial discrimination.

The way in which the South African government handled the internal strife between the two sections of the Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa at Dinokana and Braklaagte and the election of a new headman for Braklaagte sheds light on the manipulation of ethnicity and traditional leadership to support the implementation of segregationist policies. It demonstrated the other side of the coin of divide and rule strategies.

The fact that the government constantly refused to grant full autonomy to the people of Braklaagte as a separate tribe with their own chief, but at the same

time granted jurisdiction over some domestic affairs to the headman at Braklaagte, was in line with the policies of the Department of Native Affairs. The Department did not wish to provide power bases for rural black communities outside the reserves. They regarded the chief at Dinokana as their agent who would ensure compliance of his subordinates with the implementation of government policies. The taxes imposed on the reserves made it virtually impossible for a chief to escape this role in the government system. The chief at Dinokana would be keen to maintain his jurisdiction over communities outside the reserve, such as the one at Braklaagte, because it enhanced his status among his own people and, if he performed his duties in a satisfactory way, would lead to a favourable assessment by the native commissioner. For the government it was all a matter of maintaining strict control over black communities, both inside and outside the reserves. The tension between Dinokana and Braklaagte could be, and was from time to time, utilised by the authorities to strengthen their control with regard to the Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa.

The available sources do not indicate that the government unduly interfered with the election of a headman for Braklaagte in 1934. This was probably because there was no evidence in the possession of the local native commissioner that either of the candidates would resist compliance with government policies. Therefore the government probably had no special preference for either of the contenders.

The agency of the Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa at Braklaagte in working out their own destiny was clearly demonstrated by their purchase of the farm and the way in which they fought to retain their possession of the land. The initial purchase of Braklaagte was an act of defiance, not only against the segregationist policies of the Transvaal government and the capitalist-induced process of proletarianisation that threatened to force them into wage labour, but also, as a breakaway group, against being directly controlled by the ‘mother community’ at Dinokana. These people used the opportunity, created by a 1905 court ruling, to purchase their own land from a white farm owner, thus repossessing a small part of the former Bahurutshe heartland.

They had to actively fight the squatters laws and later also the 1913 Natives Land Act to hold on to the farm, even if it meant ceding their title to the Minister of Native Affairs. Despite the financial pressure on them created by the tax system they managed to slowly repay the mortgage. Ironically they managed to do this, at least in part, by selling the labour of the able-bodied men among them to the distant gold mines and regularly having a portion of their wages deducted by the

local native commissioner. By the sweat of their brow they earned a right to the land.

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Whose Land is it Anyway? (1908-1935) – Chapter 2 from: The Last Frontier War – Braklaagte and the Struggle for Land before during and after Apartheid – Kobus du Pisani.

Savusa Series co-published by:
Rozenberg Publishers – 2009 – ISBN 978 90 3610 090 8
Unisa Press – 2009 – ISBN 978 1 86888 562 6

The book tells the story of how a black community in rural South Africa, the Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa, managed to hold on the farm which they purchased in 1908 and resist attempts by the successive white-controlled goverments to forcefully remove them from their land.
Braklaagte, the farm in the Northwestern corner of the country near the Botswana border, was in terms of the Land Act a "black spot" in "white" South Africa.
When the Apartheid regime failed to effect the forced removal of the community under resolute leadership of their traditional leader, John Lekoloane Sebogodi, they were first expropriated and later forcefully incorporated into the Bophuthatswana homeland. Thus losing their South African citizenship. The Braklaagte community lived through serious violence before being reincorporated into reunified South Africa in 1994.
The purpose of the book is not to tell the Braklaagte story for its own sake, but to interpret the narrative in the context of the discourses of South African historiography. This is achieved by focussing on three issues:
– The role of ethnicity and traditional leadership in Apartheid South Africa
– The relationship between insecurity of tenure and rural poverty
– The Braklaagte experience as proof of African agency in the face of oppression.
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Kobus Du Pisani is Professor of History in the School of Social and Goverment Studies at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University. His research interests include Afrikaner masculinities, the environmental history of arid regions in South Africa, and cultural heritage management.

The Ndebele Nation

Ndebele home

12-05-2015 ~ *With an Introduction by Milton Keynes*
The Ndebele of Zimbabwe, who today constitute about twenty percent of the population of the country, have a very rich and heroic history. It is partly this rich history that constitutes a resource that reinforces their memories and sense of a particularistic identity and distinctive nation within a predominantly Shona speaking country. It is also partly later developments ranging from the colonial violence of 1893-4 and 1896-7 (*Imfazo* 1 and *Imfazo* 2); Ndebele evictions from their land under the direction of the Rhodesian colonial settler state; recurring droughts in Matabeleland; ethnic forms taken by Zimbabwean nationalism; urban events happening around the city of Bulawayo; the state-orchestrated and ethnicised violence of the 1980s targeting the Ndebele community, which became known as *Gukurahundi*; and other factors like perceptions and realities of frustrated economic development in Matabeleland together with ever-present threats of repetition of *Gukurahundi*-style violence—that have contributed to the shaping and re-shaping of Ndebele identity within Zimbabwe.

The Ndebele history is traced from the Ndwandwe of Zwide and the Zulu of Shaka. The story of how the Ndebele ended up in Zimbabwe is explained in terms of the impact of the *Mfecane*—a nineteenth century revolution marked by the collapse of the earlier political formations of Mthethwa, Ndwandwe, and Ngwane kingdoms replaced by new ones of the Zulu under Shaka, the Sotho under Moshweshwe, and others built out of *Mfecane* refugees and asylum seekers. The

revolution was also characterized by violence and migration that saw some Nguni and Sotho communities burst asunder and fragmenting into fleeing groups such as the Ndebele under Mzilikazi Khumalo, the Kololo under Sebetwane, the Shangaans under Soshangane, the Ngoni under Zwangendaba, and the Swazi under Queen Nyamazana. Out of these migrations emerged new political formations like the Ndebele state, that eventually inscribed itself by a combination of coercion and persuasion in the southwestern part of the Zimbabwean plateau in 1839-1840. The migration and eventual settlement of the Ndebele in Zimbabwe is also part of the historical drama that became intertwined with another dramatic event of the migration of the Boers from Cape Colony into the interior in what is generally referred to as the Great Trek, that began in 1835. It was military clashes with the Boers that forced Mzilikazi and his followers to migrate across the Limpopo River into Zimbabwe.

As a result of the Ndebele community's dramatic history of nation construction, their association with such groups as the Zulu of South Africa renowned for their military prowess, their heroic migration across the Limpopo, their foundation of a nation out of Nguni, Sotho, Tswana, Kalanga, Rozvi and 'Shona' groups, and their practice of raiding that they attracted enormous interest from early white travellers, missionaries and early anthropologists. This interest in the life and history of the Ndebele produced different representations, ranging from the Ndebele as an indomitable 'martial tribe' ranking alongside the Zulu, Maasai and Kikuyu, who also attracted the attention of early white literary observers, as 'warriors' and militaristic groups. This resulted in a combination of exoticisation and demonization that culminated in the Ndebele earning many labels such as 'bloodthirsty destroyers' and 'noble savages' within Western colonial images of Africa.

Ndebele History

With the passage of time, the Ndebele themselves played up to some of the earlier characterizations as they sought to build a particular identity within an environment in which they were surrounded by numerically superior 'Shona' communities. The warrior identity suited Ndebele hegemonic ideologies. Their Shona neighbours also contributed to the image of the Ndebele as the militaristic and aggressive 'other'. Within this discourse, the Shona portrayed themselves as

victims of Ndebele raiders who constantly went away with their livestock and women—disrupting their otherwise orderly and peaceful lives. A mythology thus permeates the whole spectrum of Ndebele history, fed by distortions and exaggerations of Ndebele military prowess, the nature of Ndebele governance institutions, and the general way of life.

My interest is primarily in unpacking and exploding the mythology within Ndebele historiography while at the same time making new sense of Ndebele hegemonic ideologies. My intention is to inform the broader debate on pre-colonial African systems of governance, the conduct of politics, social control, and conceptions of human security. Therefore, the book The Ndebele Nation (see: below) delves deeper into questions of how Ndebele power was constructed, how it was institutionalized and broadcast across people of different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. These issues are examined across the pre-colonial times up to the mid-twentieth century, a time when power resided with the early Rhodesian colonial state. I touch lightly on the question of whether the violent transition from an Ndebele hegemony to a Rhodesia settler colonial hegemony was in reality a transition from one flawed and coercive regime to another. Broadly speaking this book is an intellectual enterprise in understanding political and social dynamics that made pre-colonial Ndebele states tick; in particular, how power and authority were broadcast and exercised, including the nature of state-society relations.

What emerges from the book is that while the pre-colonial Ndebele state began as an imposition on society of Khumalo and *Zansi* hegemony, the state simultaneously pursued peaceful and ideological ways of winning the consent of the governed. This became the impetus for the constant and ongoing drive for 'democratization,' so as contain and displace the destructive centripetal forces of rebellion and subversion. Within the Ndebele state, power was constructed around a small Khumalo clan ruling in alliance with some dominant Nguni (*Zansi*) houses over a heterogeneous nation on the Zimbabwean plateau. The key question is how this small Khumalo group in alliance with the *Zansi* managed to extend their power across a majority of people of non-Nguni stock. Earlier historians over-emphasized military coercion as though violence was ever enough as a pillar of nation-building. In this book I delve deeper into a historical interrogation of key dynamics of state formation and nation-building, hegemony construction and inscription, the style of governance, the creation of human

rights spaces and openings, and human security provision, in search of those attributes that made the Ndebele state tick and made it survive until it was destroyed by the violent forces of Rhodesian settler colonialism.

The book takes a broad revisionist approach involving systematic revisiting of earlier scholarly works on the Ndebele experiences in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and critiquing them. A critical eye is cast on interpretation and making sense of key Ndebele political and social concepts and ideas that do not clearly emerge in existing literature. Throughout the book, the Ndebele historical experiences are consistently discussed in relation to a broad range of historiography and critical social theories of hegemony and human rights, and post-colonial discourses are used as tools of analysis.

Empirically and thematically, the book focuses on the complex historical processes involving the destruction of the autonomy of the decentralized Khumalo clans, their dispersal from their coastal homes in Nguniland, and the construction of Khumalo hegemony that happened in tandem with the formation of the Ndebele state in the midst of the *Mfecane* revolution. It further delves deeper into the examination of the expansion and maturing of the Ndebele State into a heterogeneous settled nation north of the Limpopo River. The colonial encounter with the Ndebele state dating back to the 1860s culminating in the imperialist violence of the 1890s and the subsequent colonization of the Ndebele in 1897 is also subjected to consistent analysis in this book.

What is evident is that the broad spectrum of Ndebele history was shot through with complex ambiguities and contradictions that have so far not been subjected to serious scholarly analysis. These ambiguities include tendencies and practices of domination versus resistance as the Ndebele rebelled against both pre-colonial African despots like Zwide and Shaka as well as against Rhodesian settler colonial conquest. The Ndebele fought to achieve domination, material security, political autonomy, cultural and political independence, social justice, human dignity, and tolerant governance even within their state in the face of a hegemonic Ndebele ruling elite that sought to maintain its political dominance and material privileges through a delicate combination of patronage, accountability, exploitation, and limited coercion.

The overarching analytical perspective is centred on the problem of the relation between coercion and consent during different phases of Ndebele history up to

their encounter with colonialism. Major shifts from clan to state, migration to settlement, and single ethnic group to multi-ethnic society are systematically analyzed with the intention of revealing the concealed contradictions, conflict, tension, and social cleavages that permitted conquest, desertions, raiding, assimilation, domination, and exploitation, as well as social security, communalism, and tolerance. These ideologies, practices and values combined and co-existed uneasily, periodically and tendentiously within the Ndebele society. They were articulated in varied and changing idioms, languages and cultural traditions, and underpinned by complex institutions.

Cecil John Rhodes

The book also demonstrates how the Ndebele cherished their cultural and political independence to the extent of responding violently to equally violent imperialist forces which were intolerant of their sovereignty and cultural autonomy. The fossilisation of tensions between the Ndebele and agents of Western modernity revolved around notions of rights, modes of worshiping God (religion and spirituality), concepts of social status, contestations over gender relations, and general Ndebele modes of political rule. Within the Ndebele state religious, political, judiciary and economic powers were embodied within the kingship, and the Christian missionaries wanted to separate the spiritual/religious power from the political power. This threatened Ndebele hegemony and was inevitably resisted by the Ndebele kingship. In the end, the British imperialists together with their local agents like Cecil John Rhodes, Charles Rudd, John Smith Moffat, Charles Helm and many others, reached a consensus to use open violence on the Ndebele state so as to destroy it and replace it with a colonial state amenable to Western interests and Christian religion. The invasion, conquest and colonisation of the Ndebele became a tale of unprovoked violence and looting of Ndebele material wealth, particularly cattle, in the period 1893 to1897.

The book ends by grappling with some of the complex ambiguities and contradictions of the colonial encounter and the equally ambiguous Ndebele

reactions to early colonial rule during the first quarter of the twentieth century. Thus, from a longer-term perspective, the issues raised in this book have important resonance with current concerns around nation building, power construction, democratization, sovereignty, legitimacy, and violence in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular.

Milton Keynes, United Kingdom, February 2008

Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni

Hegemony, Memroy and Historiography

Our kings were sympathetic to their subjects. They tried to ensure happiness for their people. A hungry person is a disgrace in any kingdom… Today leaders never come out to hear voices of their people so that they can know how they are living. Our government is not like it was in the kingdoms of Lobengula, Mzilikazi, and Shaka. Chiefs had power then to say and change the lives of their subjects.

There is an indigenous philosophy deeply embedded in, and inextricably woven with, our culture [which] radiates and permeates through all facets of our lives… It is not necessary for Africans to swallow holus bolus foreign ideologies…It is the duty of African scholars to discern and delineate African solutions to African problems.

If an African statesman concludes today that the wind of democracy is now blowing through Africa, he must be referring to the wind of European democracy. For Africa developed its own democratic principles, yet these were never recognised as such by Europeans or by Africans educated in Europe.

One of the problematic arguments in African studies is that which views nations, nationalism, good governance, democracy and human rights as phenomena that Western societies invented and that African societies were incapable of inventing. This argument has created a pervasive belief of the West as a zone of '*haves*' and Africa as the zone of '*have nots*' not only in material terms but also in terms of positive history, positive ideologies, progressive human practices and other human inventions like nations. As noted by Ramon Grosfoguel, this is an epistemic strategy crucial for sustenance of Western hegemony, and its genealogy and development has taken the following trajectory:

We went from the sixteenth century characterisation of 'people without writing' to the eighteenth and nineteenth century characterisation of 'people without history,' to the twentieth century characterisation of 'people without development' and more recently, to the twenty-first century of 'people without democracy'. We went from the sixteenth century 'rights of people'... to the eighteenth century 'rights of man' ... and to the late twentieth century 'human rights'.

The net effect of this trajectory on African scholarship is timidity when it comes to discerning such phenomena as nations, human rights, and democracy organic to African history and African experiences. This book challenges such timidity as it makes sense of the key ideological contours of the Ndebele nation and its notions of democracy and human rights.

The Ndebele were a formidable nation in the nineteenth century, with unique institutions of governance, distinct political ideologies, and a worldview that was shaped by their specific historical experiences. The Ndebele nation was a multinational one comprised of Nguni, Sotho, Tswana, Kalanga, Shona, Venda and Tonga ethnic groups. The national language was *IsiNdebele*. Its founding father was Mzilikazi Khumalo, a charismatic leader and a competent nation-builder.

Pre-colonial nations such as this were not products of 'modernity' in the sense of the word as it is used by modernists like Eric J. Hobsbawn, Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson. It was a product of what John Omer-Cooper described as a '*Revolution in Bantu Africa,*' and chapter two of this book provides details of this revolution. What emerged from this revolution as an Ndebele social formation was characterised by a far more self-conscious spirit of community that transcended a parochial ethnicity. Many ethnicities coalesced in the constitution of the nation to create an Ndebele political identity that unified the people under one leader.

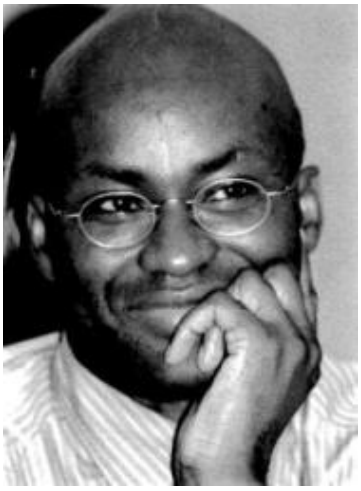
The Ndebele nation is one of the most misunderstood polities in Africa. It was described as a unique social formation underwritten and underpinned by a militaristic state. Its government was represented as autocratic and barbaric with all its activities revolving around raiding of its neighbours. To the early missionaries it was an abomination that needed destruction as it stood in the way of Christianity, Civilisation and Commerce. Like many other pre-colonial political formations, it was sometimes described as a '*kingdom,*' or a '*chiefdom,*' or even a

'tribe'.

The book challenges some of these representations of the Ndebele nation and provides a new understanding of the institutional and organisational set-up of this pre-colonial nation, revealing and making sense of key ideologies that sustained it. The story starts off with explorations of how Mzilikazi Khumalo was able to build a nation out of people of different ethnic backgrounds and why he was successful in constructing a particular national identity out of people of different ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds that still endures today in Matabeleland and the Midlands regions of Zimbabwe.

The book makes a direct contribution to studies of pre-colonial systems of governance, pre-colonial notions of democracy and human rights, that have remained prisoner to mythologies, stereotypes, colonisation and romanticisations. There is a major challenge in studies like this one focusing on interrogation of pre-colonial systems of governance and deciphering pre-colonial practices of rights, entitlements and demands that can collectively give us a picture of notions of democracy and human rights. The key challenge is imposed by sources of information. Colonial archives keep mainly those written documents created by colonial officials whose agenda was to deny the existence of orderly government, let alone democracy and human rights, in pre-colonial Africa.

The other challenge is that of reluctance by non-Africans as well as some Africans to recognise that African pre-colonial people, just like people elsewhere in the world, were capable of building nations, of constructing orderly governments and creating democratic and human rights space for their people. We need to critically engage those scholars who presented pre-colonial Africa as dominated by *'martial tribes'* with their 'warrior traditions' always out to harm others, to steal cattle and women and to enslave those communities that were weak and vulnerable.



Achille Mbembe

Amudou-Mahtar M'bow, the Director of the United Nations Education and Scientific Council (UNESCO) from 1947-1987 wrote that all kinds of myths and prejudices concealed the real, key contours of African life and institutions. Achille Mbembe, a respected African scholar and brilliant postcolonial theorist, added that:

The upshot is that while we now feel we know nearly everything that African societies and economies are not, we still know absolutely nothing about what they actually are*.*

This ignorance has given birth to an *'African exceptionalism'* paradigm of various hues, within which everything in Africa is found to be weird and incomprehensible if compared with other parts of the world. This *'African exceptionalism'* thinking is partly fed by the fact that despite numerous burials of the body of prejudices about Africa and Africans, *'the corpse obstinately persists in getting up again every time it is buried and, year in and year out, everyday language and much ostensibly scholarly writing remain largely in thrall to this presupposition'.*

Mbembe noted that writing and speaking rationally about Africa *'is not something that has ever come naturally'.* The *'African human experience constantly appears in the discourse of our time as an experience that can only be understood through* a negative interpretation*. Africa is never seen as possessing things and attributes properly part of 'human nature'*. However, some scholars like Alex Thompson began to study Africans and their politics from a positive perspective with a view to making sense of all of the types of behaviour manifested and the character of the institutions built. To him:

Africans are innately no more violent, no more corrupt, no more greedy and no more stupid than any other human beings that populate the planet. They are no less capable of governing themselves. Not to believe this is to revive the racism that underpinned the ethos of slavery and colonialism. In this sense, African political structures are as rational as any other system of government. If there have been more military coups in Africa than in the United States, then there has to be a reason *for this. An explanation also exists for why the continent's political systems are more susceptible to corruption than those of the United Kingdom. By applying reason, the worst excesses of African politics (the dictators and the civil wars) can be accounted for, as can the more common, more mundane, day-to-day features of conflict resolution on the continent.*

Indeed an understanding of the African condition today is never complete without digging deeper into the remote history of the continent and its people. Just like all other people elsewhere, Africans created durable states and ceaselessly struggled to create stable nations and to construct democratic modes of rule and governance. Within African societies there was dynamic social and cultural life besides military engagements. Historically grounded approaches are very useful in discerning and delineating those ideologies and those principles that made pre-colonial societies work. Dialo Diop has said clearly that *'some historical depth is a prerequisite… and is indispensable if any prediction about Africa's possible future… is to be made'.*

Africa is today toying with the *'African Renaissance'* as the nodal point around which African unity and development could be achieved. The philosophy of an *'African Renaissance'* foregrounds African history as a resource through which positive values could be discerned and delineated – values that are useful for a new and positive re-imagination of the African continent and the identities of its people. This cannot be achieved without African historians engaging in nuanced and critical interrogations of the continents' past with a view to recovering those values desperately needed for the self-definition of Africans and the re-centring of the continent within global politics.

The agenda of the *'African Renaissance'* and its emphasis of discerning and delineating positive aspects of African history and African civilisation constitute a current broader context justifying the need for nuanced studies with a particular focus on pre-colonial societies like the Ndebele of Zimbabwe.

However, there is a danger in aligning historical studies and research too closely to politically driven agendas like the *'African Renaissance'*. The danger is that of ending up reviving the orthodox nationalist paradigm. This paradigm was in vogue in the 1960s and is well critiqued by Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, a brilliant African scholar and an able critic of nationalist historiography. According to Zeleza, nationalist scholarship shot itself in the foot. As he puts it:

Nationalist historiography has been too preoccupied with showing that Africa had produced organised polities, monarchies, and cities, just like Europe, to probe deeper into the historical realities of African material and social life before the advent of colonialism. As for the colonial period, nationalism was made so 'over determining' that only faint efforts were made to provide systematic, comprehensive, and penetrating analyses of imperialism, its changing forms, and their impact, not to mention the process of local class formation and class struggle. By ignoring these themes, nationalist historiography overstated its case: the overall framework in which the 'heroic' African 'initiatives' were as lost, and, in addition, African societies were homogenised into classless utopias.

Thus, nationalist historiography had failed to provide its own 'problematic' … it took over questions as they were posed by imperialist historiography: to the latter's postulation of African backwardness and passivity, nationalist historiography counterpoised with notions of African genius and initiative.

I deploy critical analysis here to avoid this nationalist historiographical pitfall, and I take into account the complexities, contradictions, and ambiguities apparent within the evolution of Ndebele history to ensure that African pre-colonial past is not romanticised but critically examined. I engage here *'disloyally'* even with those issues habitually ignored by nationalist historiography, such as forms of oppression and exploitation within the Ndebele state, as well as with the complex cleavages fashioned by local processes of '*class*' formation and '*class*' dualities, pitting the royals against the non-royals, and the Nguni stock against the captives, for instance. The historical realities of Ndebele material and social life before colonialism are subjected to critical social theoretical interrogation.

There would be no purpose in unpacking and exploding those notions created by early travellers, missionaries, explorers and colonial administrators only to replace them with nationalist-inspired notions that are equally problematic. A new historiography must transcend both. The intellectual endeavour is not to

mythologize African realities, but to make new sense of them.

The other pre-occupation of this book is with forms of governance, human rights and democracy as manifested in pre-colonial and early colonial states. The World Bank has formulated a functionalist and instrumentalist definition of governance as:

… the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised for the common good. This includes (i) the process by which those in authority are selected, monitored and replaced, (ii) the capacity of the governments to effectively manage its resources and implement sound policies, and (iii) the respect of citizens and the state for the instruments that govern economic and social interactions among them.

This definition is cast in modernist and managerial terms but is useful across contexts and historical epochs, as governance is basically about management of public affairs—be it by pre-colonial, colonial, or post-colonial African leaders. Governance is about how power is configured and exercised within a polity. It is also about the issues of delivery or non-delivery of public goods by those in power to the governed. This is central to the accountability of the leadership to the governed. There are various ways of measuring this within the context of a pre-colonial polity. Chapter Three of this book provides details on the nature and dynamics of the Ndebele style of governance in the nineteenth century.

Colonial justifications for the imperial destruction of the Ndebele state in the late nineteenth century brought the discourse of human rights and democracy into the colonial discourses of cultural domination. In the first place, African pre-colonial societies in general and the Ndebele society in particular were said to be bereft of any traces of democracy and human rights. What was said to be at the centre of Ndebele governance was the notion of *amandla* (power). The exercise of this power manifested itself in the raiding of weaker polities and the enslavement of those who were unfortunate enough to be captured. Such colonial notions of Ndebele governance and politics cannot go unchallenged, as they distort the realities on the ground.

The colonial encounters could justifiably be described as a meeting of two hegemonic worlds with differing worldviews. At the centre of the contestations, the negotiations, the blending of peoples, the siphoning off and appropriations of

the riches of the land, and even of the different readings of the meaning of the encounter, were issues of rights (individual and collective), entitlements and claims to certain things and certain commodities within the state. Western observers thought that human rights values and the capacity of individual to make choices were absent from and had to be introduced into Ndebele society. Here was a clear case of confusing the lack of a word or a close synonym for it with the lack of what it ultimately signifies. The Ndebele did not use the terms human rights and democracy as the missionaries used them, but they had notions of *amalungelo abantu* (rights, entitlements and claims of the people) which informed their society and their actions as they governed their state. I therefore introduce a theoretical discussion of human rights discourse in Chapter One of the book, after which I proceed to deal with rights, claims and entitlements in Chapters Three, Four, Five, Six and Seven.

The book reveals how early Christian missionaries tried to proselytise the Ndebele people into Christianity through preaching a gospel that emphasised issues of equality, accountability only to God, and other human rights principles as part of a new religious doctrine in the Ndebele state. In other words, it was the Christian missionaries who popularised the liberal-oriented ideologies of Christian civilization as an alternative to the assumed autocracy, barbarism and militarism of the Ndebele state. However, the behaviour of the early Rhodesian settler state, particularly its excessive violence, its militarism and its general disregard for Ndebele rights to land and to their cattle, revealed to the Ndebele the apparent lies and hypocrisy hidden within the professed ideology of Christian civilization and its human rights doctrines. These issues are detailed in chapter seven, where the emergence of what I term *'Ndebele Christianity'* is discussed. It was indeed the despicable behaviour of the early colonial state that caused disillusionment among those Ndebele who had embraced Christianity and who were beginning to accept the professed ideologies of colonial civilization and commerce.

The Ndebele as a Nation

The theme that is dominant throughout this book is that of the Ndebele as a nation with its own ideologies and values of governance. But the questions of what is a *'nation'* and when the nation began to exist have dominated the related debates on nationalism and identity.

To me the fashionable phrases dominant in mainstream discourse relating to the birth of nations and the rise of nationalism, such as the *'invention of tradition,'*

'imagined communities,' and *'constructed identities,'* are clearly intellectual endeavours to theorise the importance of human creativity in the foundation of nations and nation-states. Taken together, they express the important point that humanity throughout history has had the power to create its own preferred forms of associations, institutions and identities. They also allude to the creative power of the human mind and the centrality of human agency. But in the course of advancing the frontiers of this intellectual enterprise, the major theorists of the nation and nationalism faltered, as some began to deny this creative power to some civilisations and some people and assign it to some other civilizations and people.

This has generated heated debates. So far, the debates circulate around four key questions: the *'what,' 'when,' 'why,'* and *'how'* of nations and nationalism. In expanded form, in our context, the questions read: What is a nation? When does a nation come into being? Why was the particular nation created? How was the nation formed? The first question asks for the definition of the notion of a nation. The second asks for the provision of the date(s) and time frames of the formation of the particular nation. The third asks for the reason(s) behind the construction of the nation. The fourth asks for identification of the key paths/methodology/strategies of building the nation. The effort to answer these questions has produced four broad general paradigms: primordialism, constructivism, ethno-symbolism and instrumentalism, which are by no means monolithic bodies of thought and neat classifications of the numerous theorists. The key debate in this literature is whether the *'nation'* and *'nationalism'* are primordial phenomena or products of modernity. To primordialists, nations are seen as something intrinsic to human nature, as a type of social organisation that human beings need to form in order to survive. To primordialists nations existed in antiquity as well as in modernity. However, for modernists, nations and nationalism are a phenomenon of the modern era, where nationalism engendered and created nations. In between these two paradigms are ethno-symbolists who occupy the middle ground, accepting that although nationalism is a modern ideology, successful nations are built upon a pre-modern heritage. They also accept that nations could be found even before the onset of modernity.

Nations cannot be formed or constructed out of nothing. There is need for some foundation myth to anchor the nation. Where credible foundation myths were not found, innovative and creative nation-builders constructed these foundation myths

alongside the actual construction of the nation. But what is a nation? Anthony D. Smith defined a nation as:

… a named and self-defined community whose members cultivate common myths, memories, symbols and values, processes and disseminate a distinctive public culture, reside in and identify with a historic homeland, and create and disseminate common laws and shared customs'.

Smith's general idea is more useful than the modernists' definition. Modernists defined a nation in terms of a well-defined territory with recognised borders; a unified legal system in accord with other institutions in a given territory; mass participation in social life by all members; a distinctive mass public culture disseminated through a system of standardised, mass public education; collective autonomy institutionalised in a sovereign state for a given nation; membership in an 'inter-national' system or community of nations; and legitimation by and through the ideology of nationalism. Smith's definition is accommodative of those nations that existed prior to the modern age, although it does not fit all cases.

The western bias or orientation within these definitions reduces their power when they are applied to a pre-colonial African nation like that of the Ndebele. But, then, I do not believe that it is possible for any intellectual to come up with a '*one-size-fits-all*' definition of nationhood. Different nations have emerged in different environments and across different historical epochs with different characteristics. Also a nation as an imagined phenomenon is perceived differently by different people, including the theorists of nation and nationalism.

What is useful here, in the current theoretical discussions of nationhood and nationalism is the grasp of the '*constructed-ness*' of these phenomena. Even Smith, who is considered to be a primordialist cum ethno-symbolist, uses terms like '*create*' and '*disseminate*' in his definition, suggesting that he subscribes to the idea that a nation is a construction. Once the concept of the '*constructed-ness*' of a nation is accepted then the issues of artificiality, malleability and fluidity and even the contingency aspect of nations like that of the Ndebele easily make sense.

In accounting for the construction of nations it is necessary to integrate both their historicity and contingency, but when the Hobsbawnian modernist school extended its interest to Africa in the 1980s it provoked an attempt by some

scholars to see every African identity as a construction of colonialism. This happened as nationalist-inspired scholars attempted to trace the historical roots of tribalism and negative ethnicity. At the end of the day Europeans, missionaries, colonial officials and early anthropologists were given too much agency in the invention of tribes and ethnicities in Africa. African agency was almost denied by the early version of constructivism in shaping their identities prior to colonialism.

It took time for constructivists to realise their mistakes and for scholars like Terence Ranger to revisit their earlier propositions on ethnicity in Africa. Latter-day constructivists like Carolyn Hamilton and Bruce Berman revised and modified the thesis of colonial inventions of ethnicity, amending it in order to take into account pre-colonial antecedents which had nothing to do with the advent of colonialism. They accepted the idea of the existence of longer pre-colonial processes in which African people were active agents in the imagination and invention of their own identities. On this, Berman wrote that:

The invention of tradition and ethnic identities, along with polities, religions, trading networks and regional economies, were present in Africa long before the European proconsuls arrived to take control and attempt to integrate the continent more directly into the global economy of capitalist modernity.

The Ndebele nation is a typical example of a pre-colonially *'constructed nation'*. Prior to 1820, there was no Ndebele nation to talk of – not until Mzilikazi broke away from the Zulu kingdom to construct such an identity. Chapter Two of the book provides full details of the construction of the Ndebele nation. Memories of migration and offensive as well as defensive warfare in which the Ndebele took part either to replenish their numbers or to defend the nascent nation against other conquering groups later coalesced into the necessary myth of the foundation of the nation.

'Ndebele-ness' was a form of constructed citizenship that never stopped to be reconstructed across historical time. This is why there are numerous misunderstandings around who is an Ndebele. The discernible contours include those that reserve *'Ndebele-ness'* to the royal Khumalo family or clan. This definition is of course too reductionist and clannish in that it does not take into account the snowballing of Ndebele identity over time and space. To some, Ndebele identity is confused with broader Nguni identity, which includes the Zulu, Xhosa, Shangaans, and Swazi. This is a form of Ngunization of Ndebele

identity that is less meaningful to the specific use of the term after the Ndebele had settled in Zimbabwe. Terence Ranger saw this definition as exclusive, narrow and xenophobic.

At other times, being Ndebele is defined linguistically as one who speak Ndebele as a mother tongue. This is a linguistic definition. Yet at another level an Ndebele is defined as any person who resides in Matabeleland regions and those parts of the Midlands region where Ndebele is spoken. This is a regional-geographical definition. The important issue here is that the proliferation of these definitions indicates the contingency, malleability and fluidity of Ndebele identity across space and time, making it subject to different interpretations by even the Ndebele themselves.

The latest in this array of definitions of Ndebele identity is a very political one that emerged during the violence of the 1980s. An Ndebele was any person loyal to PF-ZAPU and Joshua Nkomo. This definition emerged within a politics that tried to '*de-nationalise*' ZAPU and Nkomo in order to '*provincialise*' and '*tribalise*' Ndebele identity. ZANU-PF contributed greatly to the flourishing of this identity, when it openly stated that: *'ZAPU is connected with dissidents and ZAPU is supported by the Ndebele, therefore Ndebele are dissidents'.* Nkomo was presented as the modern king of the Ndebele and the '*father of dissidents*' in this discourse. The Ndebele are neither a clan nor a tribe. In 1983, the ZANU-PF government made efforts to de-*Ndebelecise* the people of Tonga, Kalanga and Nambya stock in the midst of Fifth Brigade atrocities. Its propaganda was that in Binga, Jambezi and Hwange people had:

… particularly requested that the government should draw a clear distinction between them and the rest of Matabeleland. They did not want to be bothered in this talk of seceding Matabeleland [sic], emphasising that they did not belong to Zapu nor were they Nkomo's people. They would like to have their own distinct province to be called Tonga-Nambya Province.

This propaganda strategy did not work, as ZAPU continued to enjoy support in these areas. Fifth Brigade persecutions of ZAPU supporters unintentionally brought Kalanga, Tonga, Venda, Sotho, Rozvi and Nguni close once again, in a solid Ndebele identity in opposition to Shona identity represented by the state and its violent army. Msindo observed that: *'Zapu-ness seems to have become an engraved local political identity and constituted as part of being Ndebele so much*

that is was a "till death do us part" *matter*'.

Therefore it is no exaggeration to say the Ndebele are a nation which comprises all those people whose ancestors were incorporated into the Ndebele state in the nineteenth century. These include those of Nguni, Sotho, Shona, Kalanga, Tswana, Venda, Tonga and Rozvi extraction. This is the nation which Ndebele hegemony created. This is a historical-pluralistic and inclusive definition of being Ndebele. *IsiNdebele* is the common language spoken by the Ndebele, although such other languages as Kalanga, Venda and Sotho were spoken too and are still spoken alongside *IsiNdebele*. Despite colonial efforts to provincialise Ndebele identity and post-colonial efforts to 'minoritise' Ndebele identity, it has endured and weathered obstacles to its flourishing. Ndebele identity has emerged from the atrocities of *Gukurahundi* reinforced rather than diluted. 'Minoritization' of identities has always been intrinsically linked to struggles over socio-political power, cultural domination and control. '*Minoritorization*' has no necessary factual basis in demography. It is an instrument constructed for use in pursuit of exclusionary political agendas.

Like all constructed identities, '*Ndebele-ness*' remains prone to fluidity, malleability, reinforcement, contestations, acceptance and rejections. Msindo has uncovered a strong Kalanga ethnic consciousness in Matabeleland and is of the opinion that there is a widespread illusion '*that Matabeleland is* Ndebele *land*' – an idea that deserves unpacking and explosion like all myths and illusions. This intervention, however, does not deny the historical reality that Nguni, Sotho, Shona and Kalanga groups subsisted within the Ndebele national identity throughout the existence of the Ndebele state under Mzilikazi and later under Lobengula.

The book therefore offers a nuanced, historically-grounded understanding of the existence of one of Africa's nations. It provides a clear example of where clans and ethnic groups coalesced under a charismatic leader to become over time the heterogeneous Ndebele nation. The processes involved in the construction of the Ndebele nation were diverse and complex, including raiding, and more importantly strategic and delicate deployment of coercion and consent, in a typical hegemonic fashion.

The Ndebele as a minority group

Today, the Ndebele speaking people are part of a '*unitary*' state called Zimbabwe,

which is a creation of modern African nationalism. They form about twenty percent of the population of Zimbabwe. Their long and rich history is presently overshadowed by the triumphant Shona history that enjoys state support. The Shona speaking people make up about eighty percent of the Zimbabwean population. Besides constituting the dominant '*ethnie,*' the Shona groups also consider themselves to be more indigenous to Zimbabwe than the Ndebele, who arrived in the area in 1839.

The name of the country is derived from Shona (Karanga) history. Ndebele history has nothing to do with the heritage site of Great Zimbabwe. The ruling elite are predominantly Shona. Feelings of exclusion and marginalisation among the Ndebele have reinforced a particularistic identity. However, it is important to note that the initial version of nationalism of the period 1957-1962 was inclusive of both Ndebele and Shona as oppressed Africans.

This led Msindo to argue that ethnic groups do not always stand as opponents to the development of a nation and that they sometimes complement efforts at developing an inclusive nation. Basing his analysis on ethnic-based societies, clubs and unions formed in Bulawayo, such as the Sons of Mashonaland Cultural Society, the Kalanga Cultural Society and the Matabele Patriotic Society, Msindo concluded that ethnicity and nationalism positively supported each other in the period 1950-1963.

It was during this period that ethnic associations produced nationalist leaders, and while ethnicity provided the required pre-colonial heroes and monuments the name 'Zimbabwe' was adopted by nationalist liberation movements for their imagined postcolonial nation. Leading nationalist political formations such as the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress (SRANC), the National Democratic Party (NDP) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) used ethnicity positively to mobilise the African masses. The ethnic cultural symbols used to this purpose included the traditional leopard skins worm by pre-colonial Shona and Ndebele chiefs and the Nguni hats worn by Ndebele chiefs, which early nationalist leaders like Nkomo, James Chikerema, George Nyandoro, Jaison Moyo and Leopold Takawira used to wear when addressing mass rallies. The 'grand' nationalist split of 1963 that saw the birth of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) as a splinter party from ZAPU initiated the negative mobilisation of ethnicity that characterized the whole of the liberation struggle period and beyond. The Ndebele-Kalanga group constituted the largest supporters of ZAPU

until its demise in 1987, whereas ZANU was supported by the Shona groups. This evolution of nationalist politics in an ethnically bifurcated form had devastating implications for identities and nation-building within the postcolonial state. Within two years of independence the Shona-dominated state unleashed its military forces on the Ndebele, under the guise of flushing out some dissidents in Matabeleland and the Midlands regions of Zimbabwe. The *'ethnic cleansing'* raged on from 1982 until 1987, claiming the lives of an estimated twenty-thousand Ndebele speakers. Bjorn Lingren has noted that one of the most serious and long-term consequences of the *Gukurahundi* atrocities has been to solidify the feeling of *'Ndebele-ness'* among the people—*'the people in Matabeleland accused Mugabe, the government and the "Shona" in general of killing the Ndebele'.* Only with the Unity Accord of 22 December 1987 did the atrocities in Matabeleland and the Midlands regions come to an end. But the violence had already polarised the nation beyond repair.

The turn of the millennium saw the state of Zimbabwe shifting its attack to the minority white citizens. Earlier civic forms of nationalism that gave birth to the policy of reconciliation were quickly forgotten and the policy of reconciliation was repudiated. Brian Raftopoulos has noted that *'a revived nationalism delivered in a particularly violent form, with race as the key trope within the discourse, and a selective rendition of the liberation history deployed as an ideological policing agent in the public debate,'* took centre stage in Zimbabwean politics at the beginning of the new millennium. In all of this, the question of who is a Zimbabwean gained new resonances and permeated the wider process of nation-building and re-imagination of the nation. All of this took place as Zimbabwe veered and plunged into unprecedented political and economic crisis.

Zimbabwe crisis and its historiography

The descent of Zimbabwe into an unprecedented crisis at the beginning of the Third Millennium has provoked new research into questions of nation-building, ideologies like nationalism, state-consolidation strategies and modes of rule, as the search for the roots of the crisis became the focus of political and policy analysis. The book, written at a time when Zimbabwe is undergoing one of its worst, multi-level and multi-layered crises engages with similar issues, but deals with a pre-colonial period leading up to the mid-colonial period.

The current crisis pervading Zimbabwe has elicited various interpretations that have yielded various descriptions of the nature of the meltdown. Scholars have

competed to generate different epithets for the crisis, ranging from '*state failure,*' '*governance crisis,*' '*exhaustion of patriarchal model of liberation,*' '*malgovernance,*' and '*unfinished business,*' to '*economic crisis*'. Indeed, by 2000 the state and its people found themselves on the edge, marked by serious governance deficits and humanitarian disasters as the state failed to deliver on every front. The crisis became so pervasive and devastating that it puzzled many an academic.

A historiography of the crisis has emerged that has a bearing on the current book. The first body of literature came from journalists with their propensity for instant analysis of grave situations and instant apportionment of blame for the crisis on particular political actors and institutions. Robert Mugabe, the President of Zimbabwe, was personally blamed for the crisis. The second body of literature came from political scientists with their deeper analysis of the murky present, with a view to prescribing the mysterious future. To some scholars, it was a '*mutating millennial crisis,*' '*generated by and generating particular ensembles of politics and practice related to at least three interweaving analytical themes and empirical arenas:* the politics of land and resource distribution; reconstruction of nation and citizenship; and the making of state and modes of rule'.

Historians have not contributed directly to the historiography of the crisis save for one influential article and an edited volume by Terence Ranger. In the edited volume, Ranger directly explores a number of questions on nationalism, democracy and human rights, and makes the following useful observation:

But perhaps there was something inherent in nationalism itself, even before the wars and adoption of socialism, which gave rise to authoritarianism. Maybe nationalism's emphasis on unity at all costs—its subordination of trade unions and churches and all other African organisations to its imperatives—gave rise to an intolerance of pluralism. Maybe nationalism's glorification of leader gave rise to a post-colonial cult of personality. Maybe nationalism's commitment to modernisation, whether socialist or not, inevitably implied a 'commandist' state.

Ranger was concerned to explain the failure of democracy in Zimbabwe and why this failure was attended by the transformation of the state into a militarised and intolerant leviathan. He put the blame at the door of the nature of Zimbabwean nationalism and its manifestations, which were not amenable to democracy and human rights.

In the article entitled Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation: The Struggle over the Past in Zimbabwe, Ranger dealt with the historiographical implications of the crisis. He noted that:

There has arisen a new variety of historiography … This goes under the name of 'patriotic history'. It is different from and more narrow than the old nationalist historiography, which celebrated aspiration and modernisation as well as resistance. It resents the 'disloyal' questions raised by historians of nationalism. It regards as irrelevant any history which is not political, and is explicitly antagonistic to academic historiography.

The subject matter of the book counters the current, dominant, state-sponsored narrative of 'patriotic history' and challenges the problematic mantra of '*Zimbabweanism*' based on Shona hegemonies, where there is very little space for articulation of Ndebele hegemonies. The book deals with some of those 'disloyal' questions that are not in tandem with the dictates of '*patriotic history*'. In '*patriotic history*' only race is a problem and ethnicity is never subjected to similar attention. One who raises issues related to ethnicity risks being '*othered*' as unpatriotic. Venturing into research on Ndebele history is automatically considered to be an '*unpatriotic*' exercise within state circles, as it is presumed to raise divisive ethnic problems and dirty histories not useful for nation-building imagined around the Great Zimbabwe heritage site.

The current debates on the crisis are clearly engaging with the issues of nation construction, the difficulties of forging common citizenship out of different racial and ethnic groups, the authoritarian methods of post-colonial state consolidation, and power-building. The study of the case of the formation and expansion of the Ndebele state into a nation reveals arts of nation-building that could be emulated, as well as negative tendencies that sound a warning to current African leadership in general and Zimbabwe in particular.

Based on his observations of how the leaders of Zimbabwe have struggled to build an enduring and stable nation since 1980, Eldred Masunungure wrote: '*Nation-building, like state-building is a work of art and many African leaders have proved to be good state-building artists but poor nation-builders*'.

Nation-building is not about exclusions. It is about inclusions. The Rhodesian state collapsed because it failed to build a nation. It used race as the criterion for

excluding all black people from the enjoyment of civil and political rights. Are Zimbabwean leaders not repeating the same mistake by openly excluding whites as foreigners from the nation? What implications and signals does the exclusion of whites provide to such people as the Ndebele, who have not yet been fully integrated into the *'Zimbabwe nation'* ? For how long will minorities be sacrificed at the altar of political expediency and majoritarian politics? Mahmood Mamdani argued that in many postcolonial African societies there is a general failure to transcend colonially crafted political identities to the extent that in engagement with citizenship issues, African regimes only turn the *'colonial world upside down'*. This marked by the fact that the *'native'* now sits on top of the political world designed by the settler.

The civil war of 1982-1987 magnified and reflected the dangers associated with imagining a nation and state in terms of the vision of one ethnic group in the midst of a multiethnic society. If one ethnic group ascends to state power, as was the case with the Shona in 1980, do the other ethnic groups inevitably have to suffer exclusion and marginalisation? Even more dangerous, the ethnic group that had captured state power proceeded to use the state in violently dealing with Ndebele-speaking people. The ethnicised violence of the 1980s left an estimated twenty thousand Ndebele-speaking people dead. *Ndebele-ism* was under state-sanctioned attack. This *Ndebele-ism* was a form of nationalism that was considered to be antagonist to the form of nationalism popularised by the triumphant ZANU-PF around Shona languages, Shona history, Shona heroes and Shona symbols. The ZANU-PF-inspired nationalist idea was to make sure, by all available means including violence, that Ndebele identity was dead.

Up to now, the issue of the Ndebele identity in Zimbabwe remains a potential source of national tension in the country. In 2005, the Vice President of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), Gibson Sibanda, was quoted by the *Daily Mirror* as arguing that there was a need to re-build the Ndebele state along the lines of the single-tribe nations of Lesotho and Swaziland. He was quoted as saying *'Ndebeles can only exercise sovereignty through creating their state like Lesotho, which is an independent state in South Africa, and it is not politically wrong to have the State of Matabeleland in Zimbabwe'.*

Despite the fact that Sibanda later denied ever saying this, the statement

encapsulates some emerging sentiments that are common among Ndebele-speakers in Zimbabwe. Since the achievement of independence in 1980, the Ndebele-speaking people have constantly been complaining of exclusion and marginalisation. A group of Ndebele-speaking people based in London calling itself the *Mthwakazi People's Congress* (MPC) has openly called for the creation of a separate Ndebele state to be termed the United Mthwakazi Republic (UMR) comprising of the Matabeleland provinces and the Midlands. They noted that:

… for our part, for our present generation, this Zimbabwe, and any attempts to maintain it in any guise in future as a state that includes uMthwakazi, is as false as it is silly. It is only part of the grand illusion of the whole Zimbabwe project created in 1980. … What we have at the moment, courtesy of Robert Mugabe … is their Zimbabwe, of Shonas, and a fledging state for UMthwakazi which we have called UMR.

Moderate Ndebele politicians inside the country have also clamoured for a federal state within which Matabeleland would run its own political and economic affairs. All of these sentiments indicate the challenges of nation building in post-colonial Zimbabwe that need to be carefully historicised. The significant question is what lessons could post-colonial African leaders learn from pre-colonial leaders like Mzilikazi Khumalo, who created the Ndebele state in Zimbabwe?

Jeffrey Herbst has noted that African leaders across time and space have faced certain similar problems when trying to rule. The key problem was how to broadcast power and to build nation-states. Nation-building and governance remain major issues in post-colonial Africa and one wonders how pre-colonial leaders managed to build nations like that of the Ndebele, and what forms of governance kept the nation together. The choice of mode of rule is a central aspect of state-building and nation-building projects in Africa. The Ndebele state emerged and crystallised around a small Khumalo clan, and eventually matured into a heterogeneous nation incorporating different ethnic groups before its violent destruction by colonial forces in 1893 and 1896. This reality raises a number of relevant questions, which have been taken for granted for too long: How did one qualify to be a Ndebele? Was the Ndebele nation a civic nation or an ethnic nation? How was power configured in this nation? How accommodative was this state? How did the Ndebele elite deal with tensions of centralisation and decentralisation? How was power distributed? How did the 'citizens' access resources like land and cattle? How was coercion and consent balanced? These

are indeed some of the key questions dealt with in this book.

Today the Ndebele suffer from both the perception and the reality of the marginalization of their past. They face the daily reality of playing second fiddle to the majority Shona ethnic group in the economy and in politics. They endure the daily reality of their history, their heroes, and their participation in the liberation struggle being consigned to a secondary role behind that of the triumphant Shona. That they were once a powerful, independent nation created out of migration, bloody wars, courage, resilience, and sacrifice is quickly losing its significance. The imagination, construction, and making of Zimbabwe in 1980 excluded the insights from Ndebele past. A cabinet minister and a historian, Stan Mudenge wrote that:

Present day Zimbabwe, therefore, is not merely a geographical expression created by imperialism during the nineteenth century. It is a reality that has existed for centuries, with a language, a culture and a 'world view' of its own, representing the inner core of the Shona historical experience. Today's Zimbabwe is, for these reasons, therefore, a successor state. As successors to all that has gone before, present Zimbabweans have both materially and culturally, much to build and not little to build on.

The resilient Ndebele language, memory and history were negated in Zimbabwe, since they constituted a '*sub-hegemonic*' wave in the midst of Shona '*hegemony*'. The Shona-dominated ruling elite in Zimbabwe felt that for purposes of nation-building, Ndebele history had to be forgotten – particularly the fact of Ndebele raids on the Shona polities. Ndebele history has therefore been silenced as the Ndebele themselves are written out of the Zimbabwe nation. This silence on Ndebele history led Jocelyn Alexander, Joan McGregor and Terence Ranger to write that:

We wanted to write about Matabeleland in part because silence has surrounded the history of this region of Zimbabwe. As we talked to the people in the districts of Nkayi and Lupane (into which the old Shangani Reserve was divided in the 1950s), we found that this silence had produced a profound sense of exclusion from national memory, and that idea of writing a history of Shangani inspired great enthusiasm.

One also needs to take into account that the sidelining of Ndebele historical

experiences in the imagination of post-colonial Zimbabwe has to do partly with what Ray S. Roberts termed the 'pervasive academic assumption of the centrality of nationalism in our history'. Zimbabwean nationalism has taken the form of majoritarian tyranny and majoritarian hegemonies crystallising in the form of what Roberts terms:

The Whiggish mould of Panglossian unilinear development—from enlargement-of-scale resistance in the 1890s, to modernising organisations of the 1940s, to radicalizing agitation in the 1950s-1960, to liberating chimurenga in the 1970s, and so unifying democracy from the 1980s: from religious-inspired unity from Matopos shrines in 1896-7 to Unity Accord negotiated in Harare in 1987—in short from Mkwati to Nkomo/Mugabe.

Throughout this continuum, Nkomo is a recent addition. Ndebele experiences are just an inconvenience that needed to be crushed if Shona triumphal history was to flow smoothly.

It is no wonder therefore that since 1976 when Julian Cobbing produced his doctoral thesis on Ndebele history no major study has been produced on the pre-colonial history of the Ndebele, as though Cobbing had answered all of the questions and addressed all of issues pertaining to Ndebele ideologies. Cobbing's thesis was never revised into a book, and it remains known only to those in the academy.

On the other hand, the book broadly covers three broad phases of Ndebele historical experience, beginning with the period 1818 to 1842. This is the period of the *Mfecane*, migration, state formation, and the initial settlement of the Ndebele on the Zimbabwean plateau. The second phase is traced from 1842-1893. It is the period of settlement dominated by coalescence of various ethnic groups into a united and heterogeneous Ndebele nation, as well as the consolidation of Khumalo hegemony via the process of the ritualisation of kingship and the delicate balancing of coercion and consent.

The last phase is reconstructed from the first encounter between the Ndebele and the representatives of Western imperialism up to the mid-colonial period. It is the period of engagement with Christian missionaries, the British South Africa Company, conquest, and interactions between the Ndebele and the early Rhodesian colonial state, up to the mid twentieth century.

The significance of this study lies in its approach to the Ndebele past. It links together historical process, social practice, and cultural mediation in its reconstruction of the Ndebele history. In other words, this book goes beyond the existing increment of positivistic narratives that serve only to disguise the underlying structures of the Ndebele State. It moves away from the common approach confined to the realm of narration of events to the higher level of analysis situated in a scientific understanding of structure, social practice, and transformation.

As noted by Jean Comaroff, the socio-cultural structure and the '*live-in*' world of practice are mutually constitutive: the former, because of the contradictory implications of its component principles and categories, is capable of giving rise to a range of possible outcomes on the ground. The world of practice, because of its inherent conflicts and constantly shifting material circumstances, is capable not only of reproducing the structural order, but also of changing it, either through cumulative shifts or by means of consciously motivated action. For instance, in the Ndebele state it was clear that the pre-colonial structural forms continued to be reproduced as long as the Khumalo leadership exercised control over the primary means of production and over those centralised institutions that underpinned the division of labour.

The approach of the book, therefore, entails a comprehensive re-consideration of Ndebele historical events as the practical embodiments of a more deep-seated structural order. In a way, one significant feature of the Ndebele historical events was to reflect the manner in which the Ndebele themselves struggled to reproduce their socio-cultural forms in different environments and circumstances. In short, the theoretical innovation of this book is predicated on the realisation that there is a need to take into account the interplay of subjects and objects, of the dominant and the subservient, and treat the social process as a dialectic process which is at once both semantic and material. Thus, this book suggests that it is the Ndebele historical experience itself which constitutes the basis for understanding the dialectic in which ideology 'makes' people and people 'make' ideology.

In its endeavour to unpack the complex interactions between the state and society and to unravel cultural practice and its attendant specificities, the book combines insights from the radical materialist approach to democracy and human rights with the powerful theory of hegemony elaborated by Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci's

theory is very useful in illuminating the history of society and of cultural practice and specifities.

The book is the first of its kind to delve deeply into the ideological intricacies of the Ndebele state with a view to teasing logical meaning out of what was sometimes dismissed as autocracy, militarism, superstition or barbarism. The book addresses very fundamental questions that have direct implications for the broader debates on governance and politics in Africa: How did the Khumalo establish hegemony? How did they manage to pass their values and ideas on to other members of the Ndebele society? How successful was the Ndebele ruling elite in making the Khumalo ancestors relevant for the consolidation, legitimacy, and dissemination of ideology? How did the Ndebele ruling elite manage conflicting interests within the Ndebele society? What strategies were used to gain support from the people who became part of the new Ndebele nation? What was the content and meaning of Ndebele oral literature? What was the nature of the relationship between the state and society among the Ndebele?

These are indeed fundamental questions whose answers are situated in a deeper reconstruction of the Ndebele history beyond the common narrative and ordinary 'event history'. Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony is effectively employed to penetrate the body politic of the Ndebele state and society. Deploying this theory enabled this book to deal with such new questions as: How, precisely was Ndebele consciousness made and remade? How was it mediated by such distinctions as class, gender, age, and ethnicity? How did some meanings and actions, old and new alike, become conventional – either asserted as collective Ndebele values or just taken for granted – while others became objects of contest and resistance. How, indeed, are we to understand the connections, historically and conceptually, among culture, consciousness, and ideology in the Ndebele context?

These new questions have not been covered adequately in existing historical works on the Ndebele or for other African groups for that matter. Only the works of Tom McCaskie on the Asante in West Africa and Jan Vansina in Central and Equatorial Africa have grappled with these issues in these different geographical areas. Thus, in addition to addressing these issues, the book proceeds to tease meaning and logic out of the ambiguous and contradictory colonial encounter with the Ndebele. Grappling with the colonial encounter is very important in any study of Zimbabwe because of the way colonial and nationalist history has been

appropriated by the ruling elite in contemporary political games and the emergence of what Terence Ranger terms '*patriotic history*' with its simplistic rendition of both the colonial and the nationalist history of the country.

The book is divided into seven chapters where Gramci's theory and insights from the democracy and human rights perspective are employed at various points, where and as they seem appropriate to deepen analysis. In Chapter One the main concern is with theoretical issues that underpin the whole book. It summarises Gramsci's concept of hegemony, it defines the materialist conception of democracy and human rights, and spells out the criteria of human rights adopted in this book. The chapter also discusses the contours of the post-colonial theory that helps in the analysis of the complex dynamics of the colonial encounter and Ndebele responses to it. The chapter also contains a detailed historiography of the Ndebele past, starting with early missionary and settler accounts and proceeding up to the present work of Terence Ranger and Phathisa Nyathi.

Chapter Two is devoted to the formation of the Ndebele state and the emergence and construction of Khumalo hegemony in the midst of the *Mfecane* revolution. Attention is paid to the Khumalo group's search for autonomy and how Mzilikazi Khumalo, here considered as a typical 'traditional organic intellectual' in the Gramscian sense, used the tactic of balancing coercion with consent to build his personal power base and to build the Ndebele state.

The complex processes that are teased out include migration as a tactic of preserving one's autonomy and sovereignty in the face of the violent politics of the *Mfecane* and of powerful enemies. Migration is also viewed as a voluntary enterprise undertaken by ambitious personalities who sought to establish hegemony away from powerful states and powerful leaders. The *Mfecane* is defined and understood as a product of ambitious leaders' hegemonic projects in their decisive phase. The main characteristic of this phase was the rise of new royal houses and clans that sought to challenge the status quo, and that sought to create personal power bases away from other powerful royal houses.

Zimbabwe

Chapter Three investigates the whole gamut of the constitution of a heterogeneous Ndebele nation that was by then permanently entrenched on the western part of the Zimbabwean plateau. The main focus is on how the Khumalo ruling elite was able to construct a durable though unstable hegemony over people of different ethnic groups, how they ceaselessly worked to forge alliances, and how they consistently attempted to convert sectarian ideas into universal truths. It was during this period that the Ndebele ruling elite worked very hard and succeeded to a great extent in capturing the popular mentality and imposing on the people the common conceptions of the world of the Ndebele nation and the form of governance that kept the people together.

This was achieved through various means, including a strategic shift from control by means of violence to control of the means of production, civilianisation of the main Ndebele institutions, strategic distribution of resources, full accommodation of non-Nguni groups, and – above all – ritualization of the kingship. In short, this chapter grapples and teases out the complex ideological matrix that constituted the Ndebele nation. These ideological contours included egalitarianism, clan and family intimacies, mutual assistance, welfarism and communalism, which co-existed with domination, exploitation, the violence of the leaders, insistence on seniority amounting to the entrenching of an aristocracy, authoritarianism and militaristic tendencies – all in turn underpinned by a strong patriarchal cast of mind and the all-embracing ideology of kinship.

Chapter Four takes the debate on governance further and is concerned with secular and religious control and domination exercised by the members of the ruling elite over their subjects during the settled phase of the Ndebele state. This chapter benefits much from insights from Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony, and it is in this chapter that a considerable body of Ndebele oral

literature is subjected to systematic analysis with a view to distil issues of democracy and human rights contained in them. The institution of *amabutho* is understood here as an ideological school that disseminated and reproduced Ndebele ideology. The annual *inxwala* ceremony is here presented as the centre of religio-politico and economic mingling and the renewal of the Ndebele nation, as well as the fundamental exercise in the continuous ritualisation of the kingship, with a view to constructing consent.

Chapter Five evaluates the initial encounter between European agents of colonialism and the Ndebele State. The focus is on the activities of Christian missionaries. The theoretical framework of this chapter is constructed from the ideas of Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff on the ambiguities of the colonial encounter with African societies in general. According to the Comaroffs, Christian missionaries were not only the vanguard of British colonialism, but were also the most active cultural agents of empire.

The Christian missionaries were driven by the explicit aim of reconstructing the African world in the name of God and European civilization. Unlike the mining magnates, who wanted minerals and the labour of the Africans, the Christian missionaries wanted the African soul. The whole missionary enterprise in Africa was an attempt to replace one form of hegemony with another, and this raised crucial clashes over norms, ideas and the general conception of the world while provoking resistance from the Africans.

Chapter Six is a critique of the colonial conquest of the Ndebele state and the general disregard of Ndebele economic and political rights. It highlights the violence of the imperialists and how the Ndebele tried to defend their sovereignty against the well-armed imperial forces that were intolerant of Ndebele independence. What is poignant in this chapter is how the imperialists looted Ndebele property, particularly cattle and land, in the process reducing the Ndebele to subjects of the colonial state.

Chapter Seven grapples with the crucial ambiguities and contradictions of the colonial encounter, as well as with the resonances of Ndebele memories of their past nation. The conceptual framework of this chapter is constructed from post-colonial theory as articulated by Homi Bhabha, Mahmood Mamdani and others. Mamdani’s theory about citizens and subjects in colonial societies helps to explain not only the denial of human rights and democracy to the Ndebele by the early

Rhodesian colonial state, but also the ambiguous responses of the Ndebele to their domination and exploitation by a colonial regime.

On the other hand, Bhabha and Spivak emphasise that the colonised themselves have often played a significant role in colonial constructions of the 'Other'.The chapter also benefits from the insights of the Comaroffs on the colonial encounter, which far transcend a simple paradigm of domination and resistance. Shula Marks' idea of ambiguities of dependency also contributes to the unravelling of the colonial encounter and how the Ndebele contested and adapted to colonialism.

Chapter Eight constitutes the conclusion of this book. In it further meaning, the impact of and the long-term implications of the findings of this study are expressed and related to contemporary issues of governance, power, hegemony, memory and ideology in Africa in general and in Zimbabwe in particular.

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As an essential for the execution of its research, the IIDE sustains an international North-South network of senior academic researchers and their PhD students who are affiliated with different universities and institutions in the Netherlands, UK, Sweden, and South Africa**[i].**
One of its activities is the organisation of Annual Working Conferences (AWC) at

the beautiful venue of the Emmaus Priorij at the river Vecht in Maarssen, near Utrecht, Netherlands. At these week-long events in April or May, participants present papers on their current research, receive comprehensive critical mentoring, and respond with ideas on how their research will be continued.
The formula of these AWC's has proved very successful in generating a flow of high quality papers, informing PhD research, and sharpening up ideas on a wide range of issues. The research of the past has resulted, amongst other things, in a series of Proceedings. The papers that are accepted have been sent out for a peer review. The title of each volume is borrowed from a Discussion paper which aims to foster the ongoing reflection at the AWC's on the mission of the IIDE and its broad research agenda.

NOTE

[i] This North-South network, formerly named the Centre for Philosophy, Technology and Social systems (CPTS), operates since 2010 within the organisational framewor