Broaching Frontiers, Shattering Boundaries

T. E. Knight
Editor

PETER LANG

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T. E. Knight (ed.)

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On Tradition and Culture at the Dawn of the Third Millennium

Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of F.I.L.L.M. held in Harare, Zimbabwe, 26–30 July 1999

PETER LANG
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Preface

The Fédération Internationale des Langues et Littératures Modernes (FILLM) is the parent organisation for a host of philological and literary affiliations worldwide. Founded in 1928 as the Commission Internationale d'Histoire Littéraire Moderne and reorganised in 1951 as a branch of UNESCO, FILLM has among its missions the protection and promotion of language and culture in the world community. Since its foundation, some of the twenty 'daughter' groupings under the aegis of FILLM – such as the Modern Language Association, the Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée and the Association of Commonwealth Literatures and Language Studies – have grown to be very large 'umbrellas' in their own right. Together with this growth of the constituent parts of FILLM has come an extraordinary increase in the levels of specialisation in the philological disciplines, with a proliferation of new paradigms, new interests and new areas of study. As a consequence, the more recent triennial meetings of FILLM have tended to be less frequented than those of its often more conspicuous affiliates. The latter now thrive in their respective domains, and the limelight of the academic world falls on them for the most part. None the less, FILLM's role as the all-encompassing 'umbrella' of the philological community – overarching, unifying, co-ordinating – remains as crucial today at the beginning of twenty-first century as at its inception.

With the FILLM Congress in Islamabad, Pakistan, thirty years ago, the Federation stepped away from what outgoing President Eva Kushner, in her welcoming address, called 'the European and North-American orbit'. Since that time, the philological enterprise has diversified, and multitudes of peripheries have proclaimed their own centrality. In this context, the mission of FILLM has had to adapt itself to a rapidly changing academic climate. Long since has 'protecting and promoting language and culture' ceased to refer exclusively to the inherited paradigms of European philology. With the shift of emphasis, the import of the triennial FILLM congresses also has shifted, and so in recent years the congresses have tended to serve a two-fold

purpose. On the one hand, they emphasise the universal themes that unify the various disciplines under the FILLM umbrella. On the other hand, as the venues for congresses become increasingly diverse – Brasília in 1993, Harare in 1999, Bangkok in 2002 – they stimulate local scholarship while bringing the 'regional philologies' into higher international prominence. Such a welcome and stimulating effect was certainly the experience of our colleagues at the University of Zimbabwe, which hosted the 1999 FILLM Congress.

The Harare Congress was the first such meeting that FILLM has held in Africa. The theme of this, the Twenty-first Triennial Congress, was 'Third Millennium, Third World: Retrospect, Introspect, Prospect'. The suggestive understatement of the primary theme might, for some, admit of the sometimes-uncomplimentary flavour of the term 'third world'. This the outgoing president acknowledged in her welcoming address, in stating that the phrase 'third world' at first seemed to her 'arbitrarily … [to] designate these countries as different'. Another, more positive 'reading' occurs upon reflection, however, when one considers the possibility that the 'third world' belongs, as does the third millennium, to our collective future. In this sense, the 'third world' may be said to constitute a sort of synthesis to the thesis and antithesis of 'first' and 'second' worlds – whatever these terms may now mean in the post-cold-war cultural landscape. The world of the new millennium must allow a sort of global synthesis of culture that none the less preserves the local autonomy upon which distinct cultural identities depend.

It is the subthemes of the congress, however, that seemed to have appealed most to the imaginations of the delegates: a looking back, a looking within, a looking ahead. The fascination of these themes perhaps lies in the collective awareness of the looming frontier of the new millennium, and in the conflicting feelings that such an awareness naturally entrains. Indeed, metaphors of boundaries, horizons, borders, frontiers, limits, ends and beginnings seemed to abound in the papers presented. With the approaching milestone comes reflection – and perhaps not a little anxiety – both about the road traversed and about the road ahead. The future of an increasingly closely-knit world can at times seem frightening to contemplate for those who care about language, culture and literary traditions. Does this ever-growing integration into a 'world culture' tend toward a suffocating and superficial homogenisation of human experience? What role do the increasingly specialised and

particularised philologies play in redeeming meaning in and for such a world? As one surveys the road travelled, one sees that the experience of colonialism has left behind the trail of its passing, and one notes that all cultures it has touched are altered. The metropolitan cultures themselves have been irredeemably transformed by these very contacts. The one universal fact that emerges from the experience of the colonial enterprise seems to be that of social frontiers shattered and of cultural boundaries violated. Not a small portion of this heritage is the phenomenon of the diaspora. The diasporic project of redeeming identity and preserving traditions has now become a common human legacy. It is a quest that leads from the experience of community scattered, of disruption and translocation, to the struggle to contain or assimilate 'alien' cultural irruptions. Is the third millennium, which is now upon us, the ultimate new frontier, the final shattering of boundaries? Can identity – both collective and individual – survive such a global encounter?

The papers in this collection document a representative selection of those delivered at the Harare Congress. In her presidential address, outgoing FILLM President Eva Kushner considers the future of FILLM and of the scholarship it fosters in an increasingly intercultural world in which the quest for a unique identity has attained the value of a universal motif. Dieter Sevin's survey of the German literary diaspora of refugees from Hitler's Reich recounts the high cost – in both cultural and human terms – of Nazism, the Second World War and the rupture of the cold-war experience. Luc Renders presents a sobering survey of the themes of disruption, alienation and scattering in the recent writings of South African authors whose lives Apartheid has touched and altered. Geoffrey Davis considers the difficult role of live drama in reconstructing the rupture, and in addressing the outraged feelings, caused by the crushing authoritarian regime that was Apartheid. Esther V. Schneider Handschin evaluates the struggle of the Jewish writers Hermann Broch and Stefan Zweig to use a pan-European identity as a shelter against the disruption and loss of enforced exile. Véronique Wakerley discusses Jules Romains' treatment of the heroines in his novels as an early attempt to rethink the limits of social experience of the modern post-industrial city. Patricia O'Flaherty analyses the writings of Albert Camus and Marie Cardinal to disclose the difficult quest of *pied noir* authors – the progeny of expatriates in an alien land, with no homeland apart from the land of their birth – to find

home, *patria* and a voice of their own. HENRIETTE ROOS uses her discussion of Christopher Hope's *Darkest England* as a vehicle for considering how, in the era of postcolonialism, the gaze of the colonial subject is redirected critically back upon its former colonial master. HEINZ WETZEL discusses the problematical and disturbing image of the so-called 'third world' as the perceived source of threat and danger for the 'first world' in contemporary German literature. T. E. KNIGHT gives the theme of the 'other' a universal dimension by exploring the image of the 'alien encounter' as mythic motif through a comparative study of the ancient Greek myth of Oedipus and an African myth. LIGIA VASSALLO traces the origins of a living oral tradition in modern Brazil back to the mediaeval exploits of Charlemagne. She shows that modern rural Brazil replicates the social and economic context of mediaeval Europe and that this fact favours the persistence of 'literary' – or preliterate – traditions. ANTON JANKO considers the case of the nineteenth-century Romantic transcription of the mythic motif of the 'exotic stranger' in the Slovene tradition, and how the tradition was thereby altered. Finally, there are two complementary papers on the challenge of providing literary translations for a modern readership. META GROSMAN proposes a strategy for translating cultural 'masterworks' that would challenge readers, exposing them to the multicultural experience by letting them taste 'directly' the flavour of the cultural 'other'. JOHN MILTON, on the other hand, tells the sad but instructive tale of how the 'masterworks' of the European tradition have been systematically rendered – as pork is rendered into sausages – into facsimiles of pulp fiction to suit the tastes of a mass readership in the Brazilian market.

A second volume of papers from the Harare Congress is planned to appear in 2002. This will be a selection of papers devoted to the more narrowly regional interests of language, education and culture in Southern Africa at the turn of the new millennium.

T. E. Knight
Harare, December 2000.

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NOTE: Numbers in square brackets in the footnotes refer to a previous footnote within the paper wherein the first citation of a reference work occurs.

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Eva KUSHNER

Presidential Address

Delivered in Harare 25 July 1999

For the past few days, I have heard references to and jokes about how innocent bystanders react to the five letters in the name FILLM. What film? Are we going to be watching movies? Will they be entertaining and maybe a little risqué? Well, I am afraid that these expectations will be disappointed. By now, thanks to the excellent presentation of Professor David Wells – and I hope that the media of Zimbabwe will be carrying the message to this city and this country – you know that the acronym stands for the International Federation for Modern Languages and Literatures – in French, *la Fédération internationale des langues et littératures modernes.* You also know that we are here as representatives of a number of associations studying various aspects of many languages and literatures, and as a community of scholars from many countries.

Our purpose is to study and to learn from one another about problems that we have in common. Our being here is thus a unique opportunity for me and for us all. It is an opportunity for me to tell you what FILLM has meant to me over time and in many connections. It is also an opportunity for us all to acknowledge the extraordinary circumstance which assembles us here today: the opportunity to bring our international scholarly fellowship to Africa for the first time, and more particularly to this beautiful part of Africa, Zimbabwe, and to do so at the turn of both the century and the millennium. I wish first of all to express my gratitude to all the colleagues who for some years now have envisaged this occasion and worked toward this end and who finally decided in Regensburg three years ago to hold the next congress here in Harare.

Exactly thirty years ago, another groundbreaking congress away from the European and North-American orbit took place in Islamabad. For those of

us who came there from Europe or North America, it was an extraordinary discovery. It embodied FILLM's first endeavour to leave resolutely the European and North American orbit so as to make concrete its claim that all languages and literatures belong to its field of inquiry. Also, a considerable effort was made by our hosts to acquaint the European and North American contingent with the political problems of the country. Friendships began to flourish. Yet, all in all, it was my impression that the structure of the congress was still very British. Even as we explored the Khyber Pass, shared a meal with a warrior tribe, visited a village where buffalo swam in the pond, and studied the plan of the new city of Islamabad, we were still very much outsiders rather than partners in a shared enterprise. Another 'exotic' congress was held in Sydney, Australia, which, regrettably, I did not attend for entirely personal reasons. Eighteen years later, in 1993, we met in Brasília, once again away from Europe and North America. By that time, waves of postcolonialism had washed over our horizons and fertilised our imaginations. We had entered the era of difference. We knew among other things that the human sciences could not exist – that is, that they could not really be fully human sciences – unless and until they became pluralistic in their construction of the representation of humanity. This is why the Latin American aspect of the Brasília congress was so crucial. Its significance, however, lay not only in the fact that it was held in Latin America. The Brazilian congress also marked the movement toward 'de-centring' the universal. If post-modernity has proven anything, it is that the universal cannot flow from one source alone, geographically, historically, culturally, ethnically. Universality cannot be simply the extension of one set of definitions, axioms or values to everyone, regardless of when, where, how. Universality can only come from a mutual gaze, a mutual regard – or *regard* in the French sense, if you will – from a confrontation of alterities, even if it has to be adversarial. This, incidentally, is why the concept of globalisation – *mondialisation* – cannot be uncritically accepted by the human sciences. It implies a certain kind of economically determined uniformity, often at the expense of local or regional distinctiveness. Globalisation, as an economic fact, often comes at the cost of the loss of local resources and personal well being for those who are its objects. I would go as far as to say that globalisation is a distortion of universality.

Now, I have not forgotten that what brought about this digression was the emphasis that the Brasília FILLM meeting of 1993 had put upon the decentring process. The fact that the following congress, which was in Europe, in Regensburg, was devoted to the literatures of youth contributes to the change in our collective profile that I have been attempting to describe. Not just our profile as FILLM, but as an international academic community. This shift comes not just in how the paradigm by which we are defined as objects or bystanders changes, but as a process that we welcome, in which we are consciously and, I dare say, proudly participants. This is a process of reflection upon, and challenging of, hierarchies, be they North vis-à-vis South, age vis-à-vis youth, gender vis-à-vis gender, culture vis-à-vis culture, language vis-à-vis language. Welcoming children's literature into the orbit of literary studies has been very much part of this decompartmentalising. Not only is children's literature no less literature because it is destined for child readers, but works for children and youth can now be specifically read for their literary qualities and functions.

This widening of the horizon of literature is one of the steps on the road towards one of the underlying ideas of the congress in which we meet today. By meeting here we signal the African presence in the world, with the African diaspora as counterweight, or counter-movement, or even simply as a more fruitful metaphor, in relation to more traditional trends in literary studies of the past. Rather than focus on the spreading of European languages, literatures and cultures, and the manner in which they influenced, shaped, dominated other, younger literatures and eventually were countered by their ideas and aesthetics, we are made aware of a multiplicity of diasporas. There is the spread of the Graeco-Latin tradition throughout Europe, the Americas and eventually the rest of the world. The various Asian and African diasporas as well provide fertile ground for scholars of literature and culture. The most striking instance in the transfer of cultural phenomena is, not the mobility of cultural artefacts, but the manner in which they move: what is preserved, how it is preserved, how it is transformed; how, in particular, cultural identity has a way of surviving and appropriating that which feeds into it. Gradually, one gains the vision of a far more complex cultural map of the world. And what matters in this more complex picture is not what is quantitatively massive. It is rather the mystery and the uniqueness of identity which paradoxically

appears to dominate the scene to the point of being universal. It is universal and yet nowhere the same as we come to understand what identity is and how it works as the aspiration of persons and groups to share in a culture uniquely their own in order to fulfil themselves.

When we first started discussing the Harare congress, and the theme 'Third Millennium, Third World' was proposed, I felt that the third world concept does an injustice to the peoples of the countries concerned. It seemed to me that the term arbitrarily designates these countries as different, relegated to a less happy, less prosperous, less fulfilling future than others for a range of economic and political reasons. 'Third World' carries with it comparisons with what had been designated, because of the Cold War, the first and second worlds. I thought to myself that at the threshold of the third millennium all our aspirations should go towards – at last – one world that could be comfortably perceived by all as their own. I still think so, and I do not think that anyone would disagree about this as an ultimate ideal. On further reflection, however, I could better see the reasons of our Harare colleagues' insistence on the concept of the third world. This was because universality would be very insubstantial if it were not built upon the fulfilment of difference. In fact, we will be building on sand if we do not acknowledge distinctness and make the knowledge of it our priority. Perhaps the third millennium will not entirely go by without this imperative no longer being a priority, because distinctness will at last be recognized as riches to be prized. Meanwhile, however, the emphasis should be on that distinctness, on the knowledge of and pride in that which we are in our differences and which historically, psychologically, anthropologically has created these differences. It is this attention to the past, present and future of the many identities at stake that seems to me to form the underlying philosophy of the congress theme. In that sense, you have to combine it with the idea of diaspora to understand that the third world (and for that matter the first world) is not just here or there but everywhere, that you can be an exile in your own country or somebody else's. There is German colonial literature in Africa and there is African literature in Germany but each gives rise to new creations. Children's literature is a dynamic carrier of wisdom in a great variety of cultures, just as the hitherto unheard voices of the weak, the humble, the persecuted, the stranger can acquire form and make their way through the interstices

of literatures recognized or unrecognised, canonised or non-canonised. All languages, whether spoken by few or by many, have the potential to encapsulate all the beauty of which these voices are capable, though such beauty may require subversion of the language. Almost every paper on the congress programme promises to show an aspect of that third world, taken in a wider sense, making its way towards self-expression and cultural preservation, so that others, wherever they are, may also participate in this mutual discovery of identities.

There is something else that FILLM carries in its very name and which is strongly emphasised in this congress: the inseparable closeness of language and literature. Literature is art made of words. One may have to be in a multilingual country such as Zimbabwe to realize what an ambition it is to attempt to make general statements about stories and how they are put together and how they work; about poetry and how it makes magic out of the sound and meaning of words; about theatre and how it uses language in combination with all the visual trickery of performance to make its verbal message come alive. To realize also the part that oral traditions play not just in the development of written literature but, in certain times and places, in being part of literature. Yet, FILLM programmes do not limit themselves to considerations about language in relation to literature. You will notice, in the congress programme, papers and discussions about linguistic theories and practices, and of course about the relationships among languages; in particular about how much progress is being made and how much still has to be discovered in the teaching of languages, particularly to children. Possibly, you will also notice that by reflecting on the life and death or survival of languages, and on the impact of languages upon one another, we come back to the subject of identity that I mentioned earlier. If it is true that communication among human beings is the function of language, but also of literature, in human life, we are also students and keepers of that function, and perhaps, occasionally, defenders against what obstructs the fulfilment of that function. We cannot, in this world, forget that access to communication is a human entitlement and that there is frustration and suffering involved in being deprived of communicating in one's language. This is why UNESCO, of which FILLM is a part, has as one of its missions the protection of endangered languages. At the same time, that protection cannot be an end in itself, since

linguistic groups, especially minority linguistic groups, need contact with the wider community. This is also why in our studies the theory and practice of translation plays such an important part: the transfer of meaning, let alone of aesthetic qualities, calls upon all the intellectual resources of the translator to preserve and enhance communication.

All this may sound very self-congratulatory: we cover so many fields and interrelationships, we are so international, we are so skilled in making theory into application, and practice into theory. And yet what often predominates in our discussions – and it would be dishonest of me to try and underplay it – is our weakness in society as practising humanists. It is because the humanities – and at their core literary and linguistic studies – are, or at least appear to be, so defenceless that learned societies such as ours almost necessarily add to their mission of acquiring and transmitting knowledge the mission of advocacy. I daresay that most of us would not be here if the university were for him or her just the proverbial ivory tower. We participate in learned societies, and in this particular international learned society *because* we believe that the humanities – or, let me put it more widely, the human sciences – have much to contribute to our various countries and also to international understanding.

But as we talk among ourselves about our various experiences, we find that our institutions, and occasionally our governments and our media, will pay lip service to the importance of research in the human sciences for solving social problems, and to the importance of a liberal education for developing the young. Yet indicators such as the proportion of the gross national product spent on higher education and/or on research and development often belie these affirmations. In my own country, Canada, attaining and maintaining that one-something per cent of the gross national product has been an unending saga and, even when that modest goal is reached, the sharing of resources among the humanities, the social sciences and the exact sciences tends to be a foregone conclusion. In Canada this slice of the budgetary pie is divided among the Humanities and Social Sciences Council, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and the Medical Research Council. As another example, in the United States I have witnessed some anxious moments in the life of the American Council of Learned Societies, dependent for its budgets on the National Endowment for the Humanities, which in

turn is totally dependent on federal budgetary decisions. None the less, in some countries our North American poverty would still appear as riches, while there are other countries where our disciplines do enjoy an element of stability, or at least of budgetary protection: the Academy of Finland and the CNRS in France may be among the happy exceptions. Thus, by and large, our disciplines have learned, as the saying goes, to do more with less. Our lives and those of our colleagues, especially persons with administrative responsibilities, face the daily challenge of stretching the means to cover the needs. But, although we often share these concerns, the meetings of our learned societies are only to a very small extent 'beefing' sessions and to a large extent sessions designed to exchange information and the results of our researches. The privilege of participating in the meetings of international learned societies such as this one is that by sharing information and by discussing our approaches, theories and methods, we gain better chances at achieving innovation.

But there is an additional, overarching reason for being here together, which goes far beyond our individual interests or even our collective interests as a profession. It flows from our mission under UNESCO within what I have been calling the UNESCO pyramid of learned societies. A little over fifty years ago UNESCO created a network of organisations in the three clusters of disciplines – the exact sciences, the social sciences and the humanities – that would federate a number of international associations of learned societies, of which FILLM is one, under the umbrella organisation for the humanities called the International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH). These were to encourage all the relevant disciplines by funding programmes for their publications and statutory congresses. Now, this intent remains, but in relative terms the funding has decreased and has become programme-based rather than discipline-based; and although the grants still exist and are still helpful to many projects, I believe it to be the case that we exist less and less as intermediaries for the allocation of these grants.

It can also be observed that under UNESCO another evolution has taken place, which I mention, not in order to deplore it, but simply to explain why the situation of FILLM has become less clear. This is the sharp increase of so-called NGOs – non-governmental organisations – under UNESCO, which makes for greater diversity of activities supported: distance learning, greater

emphasis on preserving the local heritage, etc. The result is that the support for the advancement of learning in the various disciplines has lost its coherence.

However, we have not lost that which has always been germane to the orientation of anything relating to UNESCO: attention to academic sharing with the third world. When we receive support for congresses or publications or any other project, the implication and the expectation are that third-world scholars will enjoy the benefits. Obviously, this does not just mean travel by, let us say, exclusively European or North American scholars to third-world countries. It also means the obverse, that scholars from the third world travel to Europe and North America, as well as that there should be exchanges among scholars within the third world. Indeed, travel is only one aspect of scholarly communication. Now, the modes of allocation and even the nature of the programmes may at times be deficient, and the funding may be considerably weakened by the abstention of certain major countries from funding UNESCO. But if the intention is still to enable scholars of the third world to take part in scholarly communication on a global scale, we should still be in support of the UNESCO ideal and its contribution to world unity and peace. In our meetings, it has been said on occasion that even if the link with CIPSH weakened, or disappeared altogether, FILLM should continue to exist on its own as a unique interdisciplinary meeting ground for scholars working in languages and literatures.

But here we must return to the problem of the vulnerability of the values we defend. Their results are seldom immediate; their power seems very fragile in a world of apparently insuperable economic forces that transcend even the power of nation-states. It is a world beset by a brutality that seems to defy international law. None the less, it was the humanistic jurists of the Renaissance who framed our current international law, and it is the humanistic tradition that today still has a vital role to play in the future: improved and widespread education will bring about progress in nutrition, health, productivity and yes, even conflict-resolution. Last October I had the privilege of participating at Naples in the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the International Federation for Philosophy and the Human Sciences and to give a keynote address about the literary and linguistic disciplines at the threshold of the new century. I traced various evolutions in several disciplines, but above all,

I focused on the nature and role in life of what some people call symbolic goods. I argued that our 'wares' are only symbolic, which may make them seem of little worth in the face of starvation and many other economic plights rampant in the world. It may seem invidious to affirm that symbols are nourishment of another kind. Yet we also know that we do not survive 'by bread alone'. Symbols are shared spiritual possessions for which people are willing to live and die.

How does FILLM, with limited means, achieve all it hopes to achieve? My colleagues of the Bureau know that I have been calling upon FILLM to become less bureaucratic and more focused on continuous networking by small international groups on projects favourable to dialogue, not as something in lieu of our beloved congresses, but in addition to them.

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Dieter Sevin

The German Literary Diaspora:

Return and Reception in Post-War Germany

Much scholarly attention has been paid to the German-speaking exiles. Fleeing Nazi fanaticism, these authors – the German literary Diaspora of the twentieth century – had scattered from Moscow to Hollywood and from Buenos Aires to Shanghai. In contrast, very little research has been devoted to the dimension and the problems related to a possible return of German-speaking exile authors after World War II and the reception or non-reception of their works in post-war Germany.

Return and reception must be considered as two sides of the same coin. Exiled authors anticipated the end of the Nazi regime of terror with high expectations. They still identified strongly with the German-speaking world, and most of them considered returning to their cultural roots. They hoped to re-establish themselves and to contribute in the building of a new democratic Germany. While the prospect of a new beginning for their own literary careers was foremost on their minds, many had second thoughts about returning to a destroyed and hungry post-war Germany, especially those living rather comfortably in the United States.

Going home presented less of a problem for those authors whose political orientation attracted them to the Soviet zone of occupation, the later East Germany, where they went usually for ideological reasons and where they were received with open arms. A small number of them also moved to Switzerland; others never returned to any German-speaking country. Indeed, a number of prominent authors remained permanently in the United States. Some of them died early, such as Franz Werfel (1890–1945) and Heinrich Mann (1871–1950), which explains to some extent why their works were received only partially and at a much later date in post-war Germany. An exception were those few who had become very successful in translation, such

as Thomas Mann (1875–1955), Erich Maria Remarque (1898–1970), and Lion Feuchtwanger (1884–1958). They did not feel the urgency to return, as they were less dependent on re-establishing themselves in Germany. Other authors such as Oskar Maria Graf (1884–1967) had financially no choice but to continue to live and write in New York, which certainly had a direct impact on the reception of their *oeuvre*. The task of this paper will be a paradigmatic examination of this phenomenon of the German Diaspora, concentrating on why certain authors returned or did not return to Germany, and on the impact of this on the reception of their works, in the East and in the West. The paper is divided into four parts, based on the residence of authors in the post-war years.

1. The Situation in the Federal Republic

Relatively few exile authors returned to the western zones of occupation, the later Federal Republic, as the situation in West Germany was not favourable to them. Right after the war, the literary scene was dominated by foreign literary works not previously available. Furthermore, German authors of the so-called 'inner emigration' – such as Gottfried Benn, Ernst Jünger, and the so-called 'Group 47' who did not leave Germany during the Nazi years, but refused to write in the ideologically accepted fashion. Often these authors did not accept the argument that the only way to have dealt with the criminal regime of Nazi Germany was to leave the country. West German publishers struggling to re-establish themselves were frequently reluctant to publish exile literature. One reason was their concern that works written in exile – which often reflected strong anti-fascist sentiments and not the Cold War, anti-Communist views prevalent in the media of the times – might not find sufficient readers. The situation was aggravated by the fact that West Germany, in contrast to East Germany, had no official cultural policy in regard to the exiles and, thus, no co-ordinating agency that might have helped interested authors to re-establish themselves. In short, the attitude toward exile authors and their works in the immediate post-war years can be characterized as sceptical, even antagonistic –

a sentiment that did not change significantly until the 1960s. The election of Willy Brandt – himself an exile in Norway during the war – as the first Social-Democrat chancellor might well be considered a symbol of this change.

Considering the situation in West Germany up to this point, it is not surprising that few authors ultimately returned permanently to the Federal Republic, a fact that in turn did have an impact on the publication of their works. A few, however, did return, at least temporarily. One of the first ones was Alfred Döblin, famous for his novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929), who returned right after the war and started a new literary journal, *Das goldene Tor* (*The Golden Gate*), to help re-establish neglected works of German literature, such as works written in exile. However, this attempt was resented by a number of younger authors who saw it as an interference with the new literary scene of post-war Germany; thus, the journal was discontinued. Döblin's own new works, such as *Hamlet or the Long Night without End* (1956), could only be published in East Germany. Disappointed, Döblin left Germany for France in 1953 – only to return to be buried.

There were several other authors who returned but failed to succeed. This holds true especially for those who were just at the beginning of their literary careers before leaving Germany, such as, for instance, Joachim Maass who had written only one major work (*A Will*, 1938) before the war. He returned after his post-war novel *The Case Gouffé* (1951) had become an international success, but was unable to adjust to post-war German society, a society preoccupied with rebuilding the country and trying hard to forget the immediate past. Maass interpreted this attempt to ignore the Nazi past as moral indifference, which to him was unacceptable. Totally disillusioned, he left Germany and returned to live in New York for the rest of his life. Later he was honoured with several literary prizes in the Federal Republic. He also had a very good relationship with his West German publisher, Kurt Desch, who published most of the works of his exile, although not in large editions.

It should be emphasized that the reasons for determining where to reside after the war were usually quite complex and based on a variety of considerations. Frequently family, health and economic considerations, or even the climate, played an important role in such decisions. One author, who fully succeeded in integrating into the West German literary scene and who developed into a successful lyric poetess and theoretician, is Hilde Domin. She and

her husband returned in 1954, after 22 years in the Dominican Republic – therefore her pen name Domin. In contrast to many other authors, she came back with an unusually positive attitude toward the new West German State – maybe because she belonged to a slightly younger generation and because her works were very favourably received.

2. Permanent Exile in the United States

A relatively large number of prominent exile authors who sought refuge in the United States remained there permanently. Some of them died early on, such as Franz Werfel (1890–1945) and Heinrich Mann (1871–1950). A few of them, usually those who were already well known before 1933, had become very successful in translation in the United States. One of these was Thomas Mann (1875–1955) who had received the Nobel Prize for his novel *Buddenbrooks*; he finally decided to move to Switzerland. Another one was the dramatist Carl Zuckmayer (1896–1977) whose *The Devil's General*, written on his farm in Vermont during the war, had become one of the most performed German stage plays in the post-war era. The film version of it was also a tremendous success.

For those authors who were financially secure, German-speaking and politically neutral Switzerland was the preferred choice. They could afford to live in this relatively expensive but beautiful little country, physically unscathed by the war. Erich Maria Remarque (1898–1970), famous for his novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929), continued to be one of the most renowned German authors in the post-war era. His post-war novel *Arc de Triomphe* (1946), translated into all the major world languages, became an international success and was made into a Hollywood film. Remarque, a US citizen since 1945, had no problem to maintain two homes – one in New York and one in Switzerland – but he was really the exception. Other successful authors, as for example Lion Feuchtwanger (1884–1958), made a conscious choice in favour of just one country. Though Feuchtwanger's translated novels sold very well in the US, he remained until his death in his beautiful house overlooking

the Pacific Ocean in Southern California. The reception of his works was quite different in the two German states. The fact that from the beginning he had enjoyed a large following as an anti-fascist author in East Germany dampened the enthusiasm among West German publishers, where his works were not published on a larger scale until the mid-1970s.

The decision of an author to return to Germany or not appears to have had a definite impact on the reception of his or her work. Such is the case of the Bavarian author Oskar Maria Graf (1884–1967), who continued to live and write in New York and whose large *oeuvre* did not have a renaissance in West Germany until in the 1970s after his death. Until then, Graf continued to be known primarily for his pre-war *Bavarian Decameron* (1929). The Nazis had initially excluded him from the book burnings in 1933, but Graf protested that 'such a dishonour I do not deserve', resulting not only in a special burning ceremony for his works, but also in his losing his German citizenship. That episode constituted one reason for not travelling to Germany until 1958, when he became a US citizen, as he was afraid that without a valid passport he would not be able to re-enter the US. Another reason for not wanting to leave New York was the permanent job of his second wife who supported them. The security of such a job was critical, as he could not live on his West-German royalties alone, and his initial success in East Germany was, after all, no financial help, since his royalties from the GDR could not be transferred.

3. Exile Authors in European Countries

We now shall briefly direct our attention to the phenomenon of some prominent German authors living in various European countries. As already noted, Switzerland had become the preferred country for the well-to-do exiles. In contrast, very few authors chose to take up residence in Austria. Bertold Viertel (1885–1953), who came back from New York to Vienna, was the exception. One reason that so few of the prominent Austrian exile authors returned to their homeland was the fact that several of them had died in exile – Joseph

Roth (1894–1939) in Paris, Robert Musil (1880–1942) in Geneva, and Stefan Zweig (1881–1942), who committed suicide, in Rio de Janeiro.

Significantly, many authors residing in non-German-speaking host countries remained where they had found refuge before 1945; and most of them rose to prominence in Germany only relatively late. Among them were two of three post-war Nobel Prize winners in German literature, Elias Canetti and Nelly Sachs.

Elias Canetti (1905–1995) continued to reside in London. After having received his Doctorate in Chemistry in 1929, he was forced to leave Vienna in 1938 after the Nazis take-over. Living in London and writing in German – a language he had learned only at the age of eight, as he was born in Bulgaria, German, in fact, being his fourth foreign language – Canetti was discovered in Germany only in the 1960s. His early novel, *Die Blendung* (1926), was first published in Germany in 1948, but only with the new 1963 edition – published in conjunction with his theoretical work *Crowds and Power* (1960), a study of mass behaviour and totalitarianism – did he rise to be one of the pre-eminent German-speaking authors. In spite of being honoured with every major German literary prize – such as the Georg Büchner, the Nelly Sachs Prize, the Kafka Prize, and the Nobel Prize for literature in 1991 – his intellectually demanding works sold only in limited quantities.

Nelly Sachs (1891–1970), who lived until her death in Stockholm, was the only other German-writing author besides Heinrich Böll upon whom the great honour of the Nobel Prize was bestowed. Being Jewish, Sachs was able to escape Nazi Germany in 1940, and only in exile did she develop into one of the most important lyric poets in the German language. Another poetess who might well have received the Nobel Prize was Else Lasker-Schüler (1886–1945), who died in Israel in 1945, and whose works were published posthumously only in the late 1950s. A popular paperback edition followed shortly thereafter.

4. East Germany: Social Utopia for Exile Authors?

Finally, it was not surprising that many authors with socialist leanings chose the GDR as their post-war residence for ideological reasons. Many of them had waited for the end of the war in the Soviet Union and were flown in early after the surrender of Germany. There has been the perception in scholarly circles that life in East Germany was more or less without problems for those authors who chose to reside there. However, my analysis reveals that, although it was true that the new Socialist state held them – and authors in general – in high esteem, and took good care of their physical needs, even pampered them in comparison to West Germany, it was equally true that even the very famous among them suffered under official restrictions. For example, Bertolt Brecht (1889–1956), who returned from the US, Johannes R. Becher (1891–1958), who moved back from the Soviet Union, or Anna Seghers (1900–1983), who decided to exchange her beloved Mexico for the new German Socialist Republic, all encountered significant difficulties in spite of much official praise.

Censorship was a real problem for even the most successful writers. Therefore it should not come as a great surprise that Bertolt Brecht, a very prolific dramatist until his decision to go to the GDR, wrote relatively little in his new surroundings. His works were performed extensively, but he spent most of his time as a stage director. Theodor Plievier, who returned from Moscow right after the war and whose exile novel *Stalingrad* was very popular in East Germany, as it was based on interviews with German POWs in Russia and portrayed the turning point of the war in 1943, also felt inhibited in the GDR. Therefore, he left for West Germany. But there, too, he did not feel comfortable, and eventually he settled in a little village in Switzerland in order to finish his trilogy with the novels *Moscow* and *Berlin.* His novels were published in multiple editions and in translation in both the East and West.

How difficult the situation in East Germany was can be seen best by the fate of those authors who were less known at the time of settling in East Germany, such as Stefan Heym (born 1913). Protesting the Korean War, Heym left the US, where he had been quite successful as one of the very few German authors writing in English. Even though as an exile and Jew he was

accorded more freedom than most in the former German Democratic Republic, he encountered immense difficulties in the new country of his choice. In fact, many of his books were published only in the West; this was made relatively easy in part because Western publishers liked that Heym could not be published in the GDR. Thus, cultural politics played a significant role in the publishing history of these authors; and only very few, except for the very famous, were able to avoid being labelled as belonging to one of the two German states.

Anna Seghers, for instance, tried in vain to avoid that fate. Famous for her novel *The Seventh Cross* (1942), which had been turned into a very successful Hollywood film already during the war, Seghers initially lived in West Berlin in spite of her early devotion to socialism. At that time, her works were published in the East and West alike, until she moved permanently to East Germany during the intensifying Cold War that led to the Berlin Blockade in 1948. After that, her works were published almost exclusively in the East. The official expectations of the socialist state, however, presented her with a dilemma, as she wanted to create timeless literature independent of the dictates established by 'socialist realism' – a dilemma which later generations of GDR writers experienced even more intensely. One author, who probably felt the consequences of taking up residency in the GDR most decisively, was Arnold Zweig (1887–1968). In 1949 Zweig, then almost blind and sixty years old, decided to leave Palestine for the GDR. While highly honoured and one of the most read authors in the GDR – an astounding 2.8 million copies of his 16-volume collected works were sold by the time the GDR collapsed in 1989 – he was more or less ignored in the West, a situation which changed to some extent only in the 1970s and 1980s with a new generation of readers.

In this overview of the phenomenon of the German literary Diaspora in the twentieth century, I have been able to point out some of the possible factors working for and against the return of German-speaking exile authors and the reception of their works. The cultural tensions and personal problems resulting from having lived within a different cultural environment and with other than their native tongue were considerable, complex, and quite different for individual authors. Among the barriers to an early post-war publication of exile works were the lack of interest by the public in many of the topics addressed by the exiles; latent anti-Semitism in the media; the unwillingness to

face up to a guilty past; the politics of the 'Group 47' and of major publishing houses; and finally the fact that authors who did not return to Germany were just not favoured in the media and, most importantly, were ignored by publishers. On the other hand, the discovery of women exile writers such as Hilde Domin, Nelly Sachs, Else Lasker-Schüler, and younger exiles such as Peter Weiss as well as the election of Willy Brandt as chancellor – himself a former exile – definitely had a positive impact. In addition, several major postwar German authors, such as Günter Grass, worked hard for the acceptance of exile literature as a most significant dimension of twentieth-century German literature. The process of German exile literature achieving its deserving place in the German literary canon is as yet not totally complete, but is ongoing and inevitable.

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Luc Renders

The Diaspora Motif in Recent Afrikaans Prose Texts

1. Introduction

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines 'Diaspora' as

> 1. a. the dispersion of the Jews among the Gentiles mainly in the 8th – 6th c. BC; b. Jews dispersed in this way. 2. (also *diaspora*) a. any group of people similarly dispersed; b. their dispersion.[1]

The above makes it clear that the original meaning of the term 'diaspora' has been broadened to encompass any dispersion of a people resembling the Jewish one. Accordingly, 'diaspora studies' are not limited to the study of the Jewish Diaspora but also cover similar displacements of other peoples. In the mission statement of *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* the generic use of the term 'diaspora' is explicitly recognised:

> *Diaspora* is dedicated to the multidisciplinary study of the history, culture, social structure, politics and economics of both the traditional diasporas – Armenian, Greek and Jewish – and those transnational dispersions which in the past three decades have chosen to identify themselves as diasporas. These encompass groups ranging from the African-American to the Ukrainian-Canadian, from the Caribbean-British to the new East and South Asian diasporas.[2]

Especially the African or black diaspora, with its roots in the slave trade, features prominently in recent diaspora research.

Not only along the main slave routes in Africa and beyond but also on the southern tip of Africa, a wealth of fascinating diaspora material can be

1 Eighth edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) 322–323.

2 *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, ed. Khachig Tölölyan: no pagination, online, University of Toronto Press home page (www.utpress.utoronto.ca/journal/jour5/dias), 1 Aug. 1999.

unearthed. This is certainly the case if the term 'diaspora' is applied not only to the dispersion of a people but also to the divorce between individuals and their people as a result of political-ideological differences.

The texts under scrutiny here, written by Afrikaans authors living abroad or residing in South Africa, either concern people wanting to leave the country, living in exile, or returning to South Africa, temporarily or permanently after a stay abroad. Most texts are written by white authors and have white, Afrikaans-speaking main characters; hence they largely focus on the problematic relationship of the dissident Afrikaner with his community. It should be kept in mind, though, that Afrikaans literature is part of a much bigger mosaic. What sets Afrikaans literature apart from the other South African literatures is the fact that the Afrikaans author belongs to the community of the oppressor.

2. 'I Don't Belong to this People'

Some writers have left. A few years ago Eben Venter emigrated to Australia. The same decision is taken by Konstant Wasserman, the main character in Venter's latest novel *Ek stamel, ek sterwe* (*I Stutter, I Die*). Wasserman is sick and tired of his fellow Afrikaners. Their rituals, their self-righteousness, their pettiness, their insularity and racism have become intolerable:

> I have to get away from here, no, really. Moreover, I do not belong among these people. They are not my people. Away? … What am I still looking for here? (9)

Wasserman's disaffection with his people does not allow for compromise. His world is completely different from theirs. His departure for another continent symbolises an unbridgeable divide.

Disillusionment with one's fellow Afrikaners, the realisation of not sharing the same values, is indeed the main reason why the decision to leave the country is taken. The historical novels *Kikoejoe* (*Kikuyu*) by Etienne van Heerden and *Die reuk van appels* (*The Smell of Apples*) by Mark Behr indicate that this is not a recent phenomenon. Both novels evoke the harsh apartheid

years: they are situated in 1960 and 1974 respectively. They are told by child narrators, both of whom have an aunt living in Europe. In *Die reuk van appels*, Aunt Karla's attitude is sharply contrasted with her sister Leonore's, who is married to the youngest general in the South African army. Karla, despite her conservative upbringing, rebels against the traditional Afrikaner values; Leonore in contrast is a picture of social conformity. Karla's departure for England underlines her estrangement from her family and her rejection of racism and of the dictates of patriarchy:

> Are even the ideas I have then such a threat? My dearest Leonore, if my ideas about what is wrong in our country frighten you, then I cannot but dread the day when you will find out what most black people think. (117)

The intransigence of the conservative Afrikaners does not bode well for the future. They feel constantly under threat from the so-called 'black danger'. In contrast, the dissident Afrikaners try to break free from the ideological *laager* which divides the world into an 'us' and a 'them'. They see the 'others' as human beings, not as a faceless underclass:

> Leonore, for once listen to me! Forget about the Coloureds and the Bantu and let's talk for once about the two human beings who are working around your house. (113)

Their views are rejected as the opinions of communists and liberals or dismissed as out of touch with reality and Afrikaner history and tradition. They are seen as quislings. In *Kikoejoe* the following comment is made about Geertruida, the cosmopolitan and lesbian – one of the cardinal sins – aunt of the narrator, who spends most of her time in London and Amsterdam:

> Ah, why doesn't Geert leave us alone? What does she know about the heat and the struggle, about the Afrikaner who had to shake off the yoke of the English? Does she have an inkling of black Africa? No, she only thinks of her restaurants and galleries in all those cities of hers. (150)

This condescending opinion is expressed time and again about the dissident Afrikaners. As their political views do not square with those of mainstream Afrikanerdom, they are ignored, ridiculed, hounded, exiled and sometimes even murdered.

Geertruida makes an indelible impression on the boy-narrator. She makes him curious about the more abundant, more sophisticated world which lies

beyond the confines of the arid Karoo. Fabian is infected by his aunt's enthusiasm. For both of them, travelling is not only a way of escaping from the insularity of Afrikaner life but also an expression of a probing mind, forever questioning traditional values, never satisfied with the obvious answers and the easy choices.

For Karla and Geertruida, Europe provides an attractive escape route. Could escaping to Europe be interpreted as shirking one's moral responsibility and therefore as too easy a way out? Apartheid impinges on everyone's conscience. Small wonder that the choice between political activism and disengagement is foregrounded in a large number of Afrikaans prose texts. This dilemma forms the core of, amongst others, the short story 'Palais Chaillot 1950' by Elsa Joubert and Karel Schoeman's novel *Die noorderlig* (*The Northern Lights*). In Schoeman's novel Paul is making a living as a marketing consultant in Amsterdam. He has cut all ties with South Africa: 'I got rid of everything when I came overseas' (31). Paul is portrayed as rather lethargic. His passivity is sharply contrasted with the activism of Estelle, a friend from his Stellenbosch university days. Estelle makes a mockery of the values that her father, a well-known National Party politician, upholds: the church, patriarchy and white supremacy. Inevitably she gets sucked into the struggle against apartheid. When her coloured lover dies while in police custody, she commits suicide. It is not an act of defeat but one of defiance, meant to signify her unequivocal rejection of the apartheid system:

> One does not have to achieve anything; that is not what is important. The most important thing is that one voices one's opposition. (113)

Paul, in contrast, chooses the line of least resistance. He has found a comfortably materialistic haven in the Netherlands.

Die noorderlig is sharply critical of Afrikaner thinking: 'It is a terrible thing when stupidity and pettiness get hold of power and fight for self-preservation' (77). Everybody is affected by the injustice and immorality pervading the country. It turns the characterisation of South Africa as 'the promised land' (62) into a bitterly ironic misnomer.

Karel Schoeman makes very much the same point in *Na die geliefde land* (*To the Beloved Country*). The story is situated in a post-revolutionary South Africa in which the Afrikaners have become second-class citizens. They are

organising underground cells scheming to overthrow the black government and restore their lost privileges. A searing portrait is sketched both of the Afrikaner community living in South Africa and in exile. Both groups desperately cling to their pipedreams in which the past is idealised. George, the Afrikaner visitor from abroad, awaits a rude awakening, as he cannot find any common ground with his people any more. As a result, the ties with his fellow Afrikaners are severed for good. With relief, he returns to Switzerland, his adopted fatherland.

The main character in the short story 'Hierdie poskaarte' ('These Postcards'), by Abraham de Vries, also leaves South Africa. She is an academic who returns, together with her Afrikaans lover, a journalist, to the Netherlands, the country of her birth. In spite of the release of Nelson Mandela, the couple see no future for South Africa, which is irrevocably sliding into an abyss of anarchy. To try to withstand the onslaught against them, all Afrikaners are expected to form a united front. Dissenters are mercilessly excluded from the fold:

> What I could sense is that in the mindset and way of living of these people there leaves no room for you and people like you. (51)

The journalist's love for a foreigner serves as an antidote to his exclusion from the Afrikaner community. As a non-Afrikaner, she shares his dissident views. 'Hierdie poskaarte' highlights the oppressive nature of Afrikaner thinking and the total aberration of Afrikaner rule.

The same desire for wholeness and love, combined with a fear of being helplessly caught in the whirlpool of violence, makes the main character in Emma Huismans' short story 'Wag op sinterklaas' ('Waiting for Santa Claus') decide to return to the country of her birth:

> 'Why have you left your country?' asks a newspaper reviewer. I mutter something about self-destruction, the army and my newly acquired son. I read her notes from a distance and upside down. 'Fleeing from violence'. From my own violence, I correct, but don't say it aloud. (11)

The female protagonist, who was actively involved in the anti-apartheid struggle, ultimately puts her longing for a normal life and for love above her political aspirations:

> 'Would this be treason?', I wonder aloud. The personal love, the personal fear? Above the group, the cause? 'Do not whine!' the barstool answers with inebriated sobriety. About love you do not have a choice. (17)

The main character puts personal fulfilment above commitment to the liberation struggle. It is a choice forced upon her by the political situation; South Africa does not offer the luxury of a withdrawal into a private cocoon.

Apartheid intrudes on all domains of life. Racial segregation is strictly enforced. Love across the colour line is absolutely forbidden. Racially mixed couples have no option but to flee the country. In South Africa a normal life is impossible for them. This is a central issue amongst others in A.P. Brink's *Die muur van die pes* (*The Wall of the Plague*), Corlia Fourie's *Die oop deur* (*The Open Door*) and E.K.M. Dido's *Die storie van Monica Peters* (*The Story of Monica Peters*).

South Africa is a society with a love deficit. Tilda Kaufman, the main character in Rina Sherman's *Uitreis* (*Outward Journey*), is living as an exile in Paris. The novel centres around a return visit to South Africa on the occasion of her father's death and funeral. It triggers a taking stock of the past. Tilda's youth was marred by an authoritarian and loveless father, a mother who was totally submissive and a brother who could not contain his bouts of violence. It can be no surprise that Tilda's parents and brother are arch-conservatives and staunch supporters of the policies of the National Party government. Their right-wing political convictions and shocking personal behaviour turn Tilda's youth into an unending nightmare. Tilda revolts against her parents and breaks free from the straitjacket of Afrikaner nationalism. She decides to leave for Paris because she has had enough:

> One day Tilda left her life. Because her dad did not love her. Because Paul beat her. Because she was ashamed of her country, her people and herself. To look for love. (21)

Uitreis is a powerful novel in which the themes of exile and the complicated relationship with family and mother-country – Tilda's feelings keep on oscillating between love and hate – are sharply brought into focus.

Afrikaners leave the promised land because they have become estranged from their people. Within the Afrikaner community there is no room for dissension. Disloyalty to the ideology and values of the tribe is considered

treason. The traitors are driven from the fold. Emigration is a way of escaping from the oppression of Afrikaner society, of distancing oneself from the ideology of the National Party government and of showing one's opposition to apartheid. It is also the only solution for people who have contravened the apartheid laws or do not want to co-operate with their enforcement. For them a normal, decent life is not possible in South Africa. Thus, forced or self-imposed exile highlights the corruption of all moral values brought about by apartheid.

3. 'There's a Place Where We Belong'

3.1 Fighting against Apartheid

While some authors have emigrated, others have returned. Jan Rabie left for France in 1948. After seven years 'the pulsating, bitter umbilical cord' (14), as he calls it in *Paryse dagboek* (*Parisian Diary*), pulls him back to his fatherland. His European stay made him realise what an abomination apartheid is and made him aware of his role as a writer:

> I now know that Europe has taught me that I have tried to find through an initial aestheticism what was my ultimate destination: *l'engagement*. Not in a party or group, but against *l'injustice et le malheur.* (14)

It can be no surprise that his opposition to apartheid runs as a consistent thread through his literary works. A number of Afrikaans writers and their fictional creations have followed in Rabie's footsteps.

Most people returning to South Africa are motivated by a commitment to the struggle against apartheid. An exception is Jan Visser, the main character in the short story 'Ontmoetinge in 'n voorvaderland' ('Meetings in an Ancestral Country') by J.C. Steyn. Visser, a journalist, spends a winter break in Amsterdam. There he is confronted with a number of people expressing their disgust at the apartheid regime. The day before he has to fly back, another South African offers him a job in the Netherlands. The latter believes there

is no future in South Africa any more as the old order is about to be swept away in a violent revolution. Visser, however, in spite of his critical stance, feels such a strong bond with his language community that he prefers to share its fate:

> But as the people dies, so do I. I am part of my people. It is my only possession, it is all I have left to care about. (145)

Visser's loyalty to his language community, in spite of his criticism of the racial policies of the National Party government, is mirrored in the selfless commitment to justice and democracy by the opponents of apartheid. They dedicate their lives to the fight against the suppression of the black peoples.

The main character of *Kennis van die aand* (*Looking on Darkness*) by André Brink is Josef Malan, a coloured. He left South Africa to pursue a promising stage career in England. However, the injustices his people are suffering spur him to return home. Within the apartheid context, this means putting one's life at stake. To Josef, it is a risk worth taking. The coloured Andrea Malgas, the main character in *Die muur van die pes* (*The Wall of the Plague*), also by Brink, faces a similar choice. Ultimately Andrea decides to join the liberation struggle. The self-sacrificing stance of both her and Josef is inspired by idealism and a deep sense of responsibility towards their downtrodden communities.

The choice between love and commitment also lies at the heart of Emma Huismans' novel *Requiem op ys* (*Requiem on Ice*). Chris Bouman, a female journalist and editor of an encyclopaedia makes a trip through Europe. In Denmark she meets and has a passionate love affair with Inger. After a few weeks, Chris returns to South Africa where Inger joins her. Together they make a trip to the Drakensberg during which the inequities of the apartheid system become glaringly obvious. After Inger has left, Chris once again gets an opportunity to follow her lover to Europe.

The confrontation between Europe and Africa is a prominent theme in this novel. Chris with her Dutch roots is pulled between Europe and Africa, 'more uncertain than ever about which part of me belongs to Africa and which to Europe' (81–82). It leads to a crisis of identity and a harrowing choice between personal fulfilment, a life with Inger, and social commitment, i.e. involvement in the process of change in South Africa:

> I don't know how to choose for her and also for an honest life which surpasses my own personal needs. (134)

She sacrifices her personal happiness for 'engagement' in Africa. It implies that she severs her ties with Europe. The fact that a love relationship lies at the basis of Chris's dilemma highlights her predicament.

A decision to return to his home country was also made by the writer Karel Schoeman, after having lived in Europe for quite a number of years. In his *Afrika: 'n roman* (*Africa: A Novel*), the main character is Gisela, a photographer born in South Africa. In Glasgow she lives an isolated existence, taking photographs of the seedier sides of the urban landscape. After a stint as a volunteer in North Africa, she leaves for South Africa in order to 'take pictures, testify' (139). Her whole life has inexorably led to this elementary insight.

Gisela's dedication contrasts sharply with the non-involvement of her lover Philip, another expatriate South African. He left because 'life became too constricting' (33). He now lives a rather sophisticated but sterile existence surrounded by European works of art. Gisela, like Andrea and Chris, does not want to commit herself wholeheartedly to the relationship. Her artistic calling, which Gisela puts above everything else, does not allow for any long-term emotional attachments. The artist's effort to capture 'the essential things that remain when all externalities have been stripped away' (57) requires the utmost dedication and total self-sacrifice. Carrying out her social responsibilities dooms her to a life of loneliness. Implicitly, *Afrika: 'n roman* makes it abundantly clear that the writer, through his literary works, has an important role to play in denouncing the apartheid ideology.

During the apartheid era both black and white opponents of the government returned to South Africa. Their aim was to make a stand against apartheid and to bring about its downfall. The returnees, even when white and Afrikaans-speaking, identified with the disenfranchised groups They were committed to fight for a just, democratic South Africa and were fully prepared to make personal sacrifices, even to face death. For them, not a particular people but the ideal of a non-racial, colour-blind society was paramount. Whether this goal might be achieved is left an open question by these authors. This is not surprising, as most of the novels discussed above were published under a National Party government.

3.2 Building a Multi-racial Country

The advent of black majority rule was a watershed in South African history. The old order was summarily dismissed. Inevitably a completely new light was thrown on the issue of leaving or returning. While during the apartheid era, leaving was a signal of protest, and returning an act of defiance of the government, leaving is now seen as an expression of one's unwillingness to accept black majority rule and the new democratic order, and returning is a sign of support for the government and the new non-racial South Africa. Returning is the 'politically correct' option.

In *Sandkastele* (*Sandcastles*) by André Brink, Kristien flies back from England, where she has been living in voluntary exile, after receiving the news that her grandmother is on her deathbed. Upon her return to South Africa, Kristien is confronted with the worst excesses of the Afrikanerdom she has run away from. They are personified in her brother-in-law, Kasper, an extremely racist, authoritarian, violent and bigoted man.

Back at her grandmother's, Kristien faces a crisis of identity. As a result of the stories her grandmother tells her, she comes to the realization that she is inseparably tied to her country by the history of the women of her mythicized family: 'Yes. Despite everything. In spite of everything. This is my place' (444). This insight allows her to find her mission, namely to encourage women to fight against male domination and in doing so to make a substantial contribution to the building of a new, peaceful future. Simultaneously, Kristien rediscovers her capacity for an all-embracing love. Significantly, the novel ends with the first democratic elections which open the door onto a new, exciting future.

Freeing Nelson Mandela and legalizing the ANC was a decisive step in the creation of a new country. The exiles were allowed to return home. This is the case with Eric Richmond and his black wife Monica Peters in E.K.M. Dido's novel *Die storie van Monica Peters* (*The Story of Monica Peters*). Once back in South Africa, they continue their work as activists for the ANC. This commitment costs Eric his life. Nevertheless, with the election victory of the ANC and the appearance of Mandela in Cape Town, the story ends on a positive note. The struggle has not been in vain: 'All those who have sacrificed their lives for their country, are happy today' (12). South Africa is a country

which fulfils God's purpose by demonstrating 'how people from different races, cultures, customs and religious convictions can live together in love and peace' (15). The whole story is an ode to love: love between Eric and Monica, love for South Africa, and the love between the different peoples of South Africa. Through the power of love, the barriers between the different races are removed.

The novel *Pouoogmot* (*Peacock-Eye Moth*) by Rita Gilfillan centres on the same theme. Different women, convalescing in a hospital ward, take turns to tell each other stories about a piece of clothing, while outside the hospital walls the country is in turmoil: it is gripped by the testimony of the victims of apartheid before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. One of the patients is sister Precious Mafokeng, who holds a key position in the provincial administration. She strives to heal the divisions in the country:

> She prays that love may come in her heart. Foremost love, because forgiveness will flow from it. She begs this not only for herself, but also for all the inhabitants of her wonderful and terrible country. (55)

Sister Precious becomes the embodiment of this love. While she was living in exile, she made a quilt with bits of cloth, sent to her by her relatives, representing key events in their lives. She made them into a rainbow coat, which she wore on her return and at the occasion of Mandela's inauguration. Despite the sadness felt because of the needless suffering and the loss of so many loved ones, the future can be looked forward to with hope.

The situation in the multi-racial hospital ward is symbolic of the new South Africa. The walls between the races have been torn down and new bonds are forged on the basis of a common humanity. South Africa is becoming a rainbow nation. To the creation of this new country the returnees want to lend a helping hand. They are not returning to the fold of their own people, but they wholeheartedly embrace all the peoples of South Africa. The paranoic, claustrophobic focus on one's own kind is replaced by an unreserved reaching out for the other. Exclusivity has made way for inclusivity.

4. Conclusion

Diaspora literature in Afrikaans gives expression to the desire to establish a just, non-racial society. During the apartheid years, leaving the country was a sign of protest against the segregationist policies of the National Party government. The dissidents returned to join the liberation struggle. The diaspora motif signals a complete break with the Afrikaner tribe, whose values are rejected out of hand. With the prospect of democratic elections and majority rule, exiles were allowed to return home. The returnees did not rejoin their tribe, but engaged in the effort of building a united, multi-coloured nation.

Afrikaans diaspora literature demonstrates the Afrikaans writers' opposition to apartheid and their commitment to exposing its untenability and immorality. In Afrikaans diaspora literature the traditional tribal alignments are forsaken. Group identity has to make way for a reaching out to the 'other' on the basis of a shared humanity. In almost all of the diaspora texts, love is a central theme. While the conservative Afrikaners are portrayed as heartless and cold – which is why the aberrations of apartheid were possible – love will put the country back together again. Despite all the doom-and-gloom, Afrikaans diaspora literature is ultimately about hope and reconciliation. It is a celebration of the shared destiny of all South Africans as expressed in the slogan 'Simunye' or 'We are one'.

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Geoffrey V. Davis

Addressing the Silences of the Past:

Truth and Reconciliation in Post-Apartheid Theatre[1]

Let me begin by quoting a few extracts from a text by the Afrikaans poet Antjie Krog:

> I am not made to report on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. When told to head the five-person radio team covering the truth commission, I inexplicably began to cry on the plane back from Johannesburg. … The months that have passed proved my premonition right – reporting on the truth commission has indeed left most of us physically exhausted and mentally frayed. Because of language.
>
> Week after week, from one faceless building to the other, from one dusty godforsaken town to the other, the arteries of our past bleed their own peculiar rhythm, tone and image. One cannot get rid of it. Ever.
>
> It was crucial for me to have the voices of the victims on the news bulletins. To have the sound of ordinary people dominate the news. No South African should escape the process. In the second week of hearings … the truth commission sends one of its own councillors to address the journalists. You will experience the same symptoms as the victims. You will find yourself powerless – without help, without words. … I sit down on the steps and everything tears out of me, flesh and blood can in the end only endure so much. …
>
> Every week we are stretched thinner and thinner over different pitches of grief. … [H]ow many people can one see crying, how much torn-loose sorrow can one accommodate … and how does one get rid of the specific intonation of the words? It stays and stays. … No poetry should come forth from this.[2]

These words are taken from Krog's 'Overwhelming Trauma of the Truth', one of the most moving articles I have ever read on South Africa, the full text

1 This paper is an edited and abridged version of one originally written for the German Society for Contemporary Theatre and Drama in English.

2 Antjie Krog, 'Overwhelming Trauma of the Truth', *Mail and Guardian* [South Africa] 24 Dec. 1996: 10–11.

of which, however, remains deeply distressing to read, since by quoting testimony from victims and by searching tentatively, falteringly even, for words to respond to their, and her own, experience, it manages to communicate in a manner which involves, indeed implicates, the reader wholly, both in the enormity of the tragic events being unfolded and in the almost unbearable psychological stress of reporting on them.[3]

Krog's report describes – definitively, I think – the measure of the task before any writer who seeks to deal with material of the horrendous kind laid before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

In this paper, I want to consider how South African writers have responded to the need to 'do justice' – in William Kentridge's phrase[4] – to the stories issuing from the TRC. Although much has been written on the topic of reconciliation, I will, for the purposes of this paper, restrict myself entirely to one play that pertains directly to the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Hopefully my discussion will provide some idea of how, over the period of transition to post-apartheid society, South African writers have been exploring their country's racial heritage and seeking to come to terms with the past.

As several commentators have pointed out, it is perhaps not surprising that this challenge was taken up first by theatre practitioners, since the proceedings of the Truth Commission have themselves been characterised by their 'inherent theatricality'. Indeed, it is the view of one commentator that '[t]he current imperatives of dealing with history have provoked the first real surge of politically engaged post-apartheid South African plays'.[5] Of the three plays he names – Paul Herzberg's *The Dead Wait*, the Handspring Puppet Company's *Ubu and the Truth Commission*, and *The Story I'm about to Tell* by the Khulumani Support Group – I propose to discuss only *Ubu* here.[6]

3 Since writing this article, Krog has published a book-length account of her experience covering the TRC: *Country of My Skull* (Johannesburg: Random House, 1998).

4 Quoted from my notes of William Kentridge's lecture given at the National Arts Festival Winter School in Grahamstown, South Africa, 10 July 1997.

5 Mark Gevisser, 'Setting the Stage for a Journey into SA's Heart of Darkness', *Sunday Independent* [South Africa]: 10 Aug. 1997: Supplement, 4.

6 I have not been able to see a performance of the Khulumani play, directed by Robert Coleman and Ramolao Makhene with texts by Lesego Rampolokeng. In contrast to

Before embarking on such a discussion, it is perhaps useful to remind ourselves, however briefly, that the whole exercise is grounded both in Christian theology and in African communalism or *ubuntu*. Since justice and reconciliation are basic tenets of Christian theology and since compassion and respect for the personhood of others are concepts fundamental to *ubuntu*, they have been central concerns of the chairperson of the TRC, Archbishop Tutu, whose speeches and writings not only expound these notions at length but also abound in evidence of his desire to see them realised amid the trying and difficult circumstances of South Africa.

In a sermon given in 1990, for example, Tutu pointed to the need for a process of mutual apology and forgiveness:

> The victims of injustice and oppression must be ever ready to forgive. That is a gospel imperative. But those who have wronged must be ready to say, 'we have hurt you by this injustice, by uprooting you from your homes, by dumping you in poverty-stricken homeland resettlement camps. By giving your children inferior education. By denying your humanity and trampling on your human dignity and denying you fundamental rights. We are sorry, forgive us.' And the wronged must forgive.[7]

It is perhaps also advisable here to recapitulate the legislative steps taken to establish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and to determine its brief. The first legal step towards the establishment of the Commission was the provision in the Interim Constitution of 1993 for the promulgation of an Act of Parliament, which would serve the twin aims of reconciliation and reconstruction. The section that sets out the broad aims of the measure reads in part:

> This Constitution provides a historic bridge between the past of a deeply divided society characterised by strife, conflict, untold suffering and injustice, and a future founded on the recognition of human rights, democracy and peaceful co-existence

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the other two productions, *The Story I'm about to Tell* incorporates testimony by the victims themselves (rather than by actors playing them). Mark Gevisser's article [5] includes a report of this production. See also Kentridge's 'Director's Note' in Jane Taylor, *Ubu and the Truth Commission* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1998): xiii–xv.

7 'We Forgive You' (1990), in: Desmond Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God. The Making of a Peaceful Revolution* (New York: Doubleday, 1994) 222.

> and development opportunities for all South Africans irrespective of colour, race, class, belief or sex.
>
> The pursuit of national unity, the well-being of all South African citizens and peace require reconciliation between the people of South Africa and the reconstruction of society.
>
> The adoption of this Constitution lays the secure foundation for the people of South Africa to transcend the divisions and strife of the past, which generated gross violations of human rights, the transgression of humanitarian principles in violent conflicts and a legacy of hatred, fear, guilt and revenge.
>
> These can now be addressed on the basis that there is a need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not retaliation, a need for *ubuntu* but not for victimisation.
>
> In order to advance such reconciliation and reconstruction, amnesty shall be granted in respect of acts, omissions and offences associated with political objectives and committed in the course of the conflicts of the past.[8]

The act subsequently adopted by parliament was known as *The Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act of 1995*. Its purpose was 'to bring about unity and reconciliation by providing for the investigation and full disclosure of gross violations of human rights committed in the past'.[9] The basic principle informing the act was 'that reconciliation depends on forgiveness and that forgiveness can only take place if gross violations of human rights are fully disclosed. What is, therefore, envisaged is reconciliation through a process of national healing'. It was regarded as necessary that 'the truth about gross violations of human rights' should be not only fairly established and acknowledged, but also 'made known to the public, together with the identity of the planners, perpetrators and victims'.[10]

The precise definitions of the two concepts involved in this process are important. Thus, *gross violations of human rights* was specifically understood as 'the killing, abduction, torture or severe ill-treatment of any person by

8 Quoted from 'Message from Mr Dullah Omar, Minister of Justice', *South African Outlook* 126.2 (April–June 1996): 18.

9 Quoted from the 'Memorandum on the Objects of the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Bill, 1995', *South African Outlook*, 126.2 (April–June) 1996: 20.

10 Kader Asmal, Louise Asmal and Ronald Suresh Roberts, *Reconciliation through Truth. A Reckoning of Apartheid's Criminal Governance* (Cape Town: David Philip, with Mayibuye Books, U. of the Western Cape, 1996) 215.

someone acting with a political objective. It includes, among others, the planning of such acts and attempts to commit them'. *Amnesty* was to be granted only to acts regarded as being associated with a political objective and only to those acts committed between March 1, 1960 and December 5, 1993.[11]

In the light of subsequent events at the hearings and of public discussion, it is necessary to stress that the legal provisions required *full* disclosure of one's acts and restricted the granting of amnesty to acts *associated with a political objective* only. To account for the evolving character of the hearings and for their reception by the media and the public, we should also note that they began with statements by victims or survivors and continued with amnesty applications by perpetrators.

The whole process is informed both by President Mandela's challenging conviction that in the circumstances of South Africa 'personal bitterness is irrelevant. It is a luxury that we, as individuals and as a country, simply cannot afford',[12] as well as by the view that '[t]he exercise of facing the South African past, is … a cornerstone of reconstruction'.[13]

The legislators chose to establish a commission of reconciliation rather than to institute criminal proceedings. The judicial option was rejected because it 'could have involved holding Nuremberg-style trials of the officials of the old order', a process which would not have accorded with the expressed South African 'ideals of nation-building and reconciliation between the oppressors and the previously oppressed' and 'would have focused too much on the perpetrators to the exclusion of the victims'.[14]

What many of the survivors seem to have wanted was *not* that the perpetrators should be brought to justice, but that the actual fates of the victims should be revealed through the telling of the truth. This process required enormous fortitude, as the survivors came face to face with the perpetrators in public, and confronted for the first time the truth about how their loved ones had died. How were they to cope with what was being revealed? How were they to summon the moral strength to forgive? Moreover, the nature of

11 This cut-off date was later extended to May 10, 1994.

12 Nelson Mandela, 'Foreword', to Asmal *et al*. [10] viii.

13 Asmal *et al.* [10] 11.

14 Asmal *et al*. [10] 18–19.

the truth that came to light during the hearings was often so unimaginable as to be almost beyond the endurance of those forced to listen to it. So, too, was the scale of activities undertaken and the number of killings committed by the police and in clandestine 'third force' operations. Not only the facts of political assassinations, but the appalling details of the wanton cruelty and torture which often preceded them were such as to strain all faith in human nature.[15] Much of what was revealed made a mockery of any political objective and thus not only rendered the perpetrators totally unfit for amnesty; it also gradually undermined the belief of many that amnesty should in fact be granted for such crimes at all, for, as many people came to believe, '[t]he reality is that, when you trade amnesty for truth, murderers get away with murder'.[16]

In spite of the fact that it is a flawed process, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been extremely effective in laying bare much of the truth about the apartheid system that would never otherwise have come to light.

Ubu and the Truth Commission

In theatrical terms, *Ubu and the Truth Commission* is a work of spectacular theatricality which will surely go down in the annals of South African theatre as one of its most significant landmarks,[17] and which triumphantly demonstrates how formally innovative South African drama which addresses issues of great moral complexity and social moment can capture the imagination of audiences across the world.

15 Many commentators have noted how reluctant those who readily confessed to murder were to admit to having tortured their victims as well.

16 Michael Ignatieff, 'Digging up the Dead', *The New Yorker* 10 Nov. 1997: 93.

17 South African reviews confirm this view. See, for example, Garalt Macliam, *The Star*, 5 Aug. 1997: Tonight Supplement, 3, who speaks of 'near-genius', and Mark Gevisser, who in an excellent piece for the (South African) *Sunday Independent* [2], writes of a 'benchmark for post-apartheid theatre'.

The play brings together basically the same group of artists as had worked on two previous productions, *Woyzeck on the Highveld* (1992) and *Faustus in Africa!* (1995). Premièred in July 1997, it was directed by William Kentridge, who also created the animation. The puppets, which were made and manipulated on stage by members of the Handspring Puppet Company, were also cast as puppet characters together with Louis Sebozo and Busi Zokufa, who in addition assumed the acting role of Ma Ubu, while Pa Ubu was played by the actor David Minnaar.

Unlike the two previous productions, which were adaptations of well-known German classics – Büchner's *Woyzeck* and Goethe's *Faust* – *Ubu and the Truth Commission* is an original play by Jane Taylor,[18] which makes use of the characters of Pa Ubu and Ma Ubu from Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi* of 1896, as well as alluding to characters in other Jarry plays.[19] It also differs significantly from its predecessors in that during the workshops it was decided 'that Pa and Ma Ubu would be played by live actors with no puppet equivalents'.[20] This

18 The text was later published (see *Bibliography*). It is illustrated with production photographs and Kentridge's designs, and also contains the 'Writer's Note' (Taylor), a revised version of the 'Director's Note' (Kentridge), and the 'Puppeteers' Note' (Jones and Kohler) included in the original programme. Where appropriate, I give both references.

19 For the original Jarry texts, see the edition by Arnaud and Bordillon. *Ubu Roi* (1896) is a satirical farce by Alfred Jarry (1873–1907). The play, which began as a lampoon by a schoolboy caricaturing a grotesque school master he loathed, was originally conceived as a puppet-show (surely one of its attractions for Kentridge and Handspring), was first performed under the title *Les Polonais* and was succeeded by three other plays: *Ubu cocu*, *Ubu enchaîné* and *Ubu sur la Butte*. The performance achieved a *succès de scandale*, not least because of the extravagant absurdity of the many comic literary parodies it incorporated, the notorious vulgar exclamation *'Merde'* ('Shite') with which it opens, and the larger-than-life figure of the anarchic Père Ubu, the very incarnation of the bourgeois values Jarry detested. Ubu's eccentricity, his boundless appetites and openly despotic behaviour, unrestrained as they are by any moral sense have made him a fascinating figure for future generations of theatre practitioners to reinterpret. The iconography of the original Ubu figure has also become famous, and is much deployed by Kentridge here.

20 Jane Taylor, 'Writer's Note', in: Taylor, *Ubu*, vii and *Programme of the Market Theatre*, (Johannesburg: 31 July – 30 August 1997) 9.

represents a major stylistic departure from the company's previous practice and it serves to open out the structure of the play, thus altering the audience's experience of it.

Performances of the play were accompanied by an art exhibition of work relating to the Ubu theme by William Kentridge, Deborah Bell and Robert Hodgins. Hodgins's work is particularly crucial to the genesis of the project since it was he who had first painted images of Ubu and had drawn attention to the 1996 centenary of the first performance of Jarry's play.[21] The exhibition, its title *Ubu: ±101* inspired by that (missed) anniversary, has been well documented in a catalogue which is most informative on the iconography of the play.[22]

Both William Kentridge and Jane Taylor gave lectures at the Grahamstown Festival in 1997, Kentridge delineating the epistemological and formal problems encountered in creating the play, Taylor focusing on her debt as writer to Jarry and on 'the cultural response' to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission the play articulates. As with his previous projects, Kentridge showed himself primarily interested in the intellectual process by which 'meaning is generated'. Each work becomes for him, as creator, an exercise in 'practical epistemology' and, clearly, in multimedia works of this degree of complexity, this can become a significant problem for the audience, too. (Indeed, it is no doubt the case that the epistemological problems Kentridge sometimes places before the audience strain its capacity to absorb them, at least at a single viewing). In focusing on practical and formal problems, Kentridge formulated productive questions: how can five puppets be manipulated by three people? How can the figure of Ubu be animated if he is visually conceived as a human figure surrounded by a chalk outline? How can the worlds of the actor and the world of the puppet be brought together? How can a world of double meaning be constructed? And what meaning will emerge when the audience sees 'this double performance'?[23]

21 William Kentridge, Lecture at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival, July 10, 1997 (own notes).

22 William Kentridge, Robert Hodgins, Deborah Bell, *Ubu: ± 101*, ed. Rory Doepel (Johannesburg: French Institute of South Africa and U. of the Witwatersrand, 1997). The catalogue also contains brief extracts from the play-script (then still unpublished).

23 'Director's Note', Market Theatre programme, 2.

In his account of the genesis of the play, Kentridge explained how, after the inordinately complex *Faustus in Africa!*, the group decided to return to something simpler – perhaps an adaptation of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot.* Three factors then unexpectedly combined to give the project form: Beckett's literary executors raised objections to any change in the form of the play; the group came across Hodgins' *Ubu* pictures; and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission began its work. What would happen, Kentridge wondered, if one combined the Ubu idea with the evidence being presented before the TRC?

This is, in essence, the problem that confronted Jane Taylor when she was engaged to write the play. Aware of some of the larger issues informing the process, she wrote:

> What has engaged me as I have followed the Commission, is the way in which individual narratives came to stand for the larger national narrative. The stories of personal grief, loss, triumph, violation, now stand as an account of South Africa's recent past.[24]

The arts, she felt, could have a role to play in 'disaggregating' the material around the TRC and the resulting play suggests one idea of how this might be done. What she therefore took from Jarry was the notion that 'Ubu acts with no sense of consequence', in order, through him, to represent what she perceived as the failure of the moral imagination in recent South African history, rendered palpable through the Truth Commission. Thus, she described how in the evidence presented to the Truth Commission, she had been struck above all by the 'disjuncture' between the language and the world view of the victims and that of the perpetrators; it was almost as though the latter had no sense at all of the effect of their actions. Her purpose she defined as 'to put the consequence back into the world of Ubu', the method chosen in the play for doing this being the juxtaposition of the blustering Ubu's protestations of innocence and the testimonies of the victims, delivered in deliberate and measured tones, using actual material from the transcripts of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

24 'Writer's Note', in: *Ubu and the Truth Commission,* ii, and Programme of the Market Theatre, 8.

During the long gestation process of the play, there had occurred a significant shift in the character of the testimony being concurrently delivered to the Commission, from that of the victims to that of the perpetrators. This shift became an important constitutive element in the play, where it is reflected in the decision to have the victims played by puppets and the perpetrator (here Ubu) by an actor. In his 'Director's Note' for the performance, Kentridge suggested that in any dealing with 'the witnesses' stories on the stage' there was an 'ethical question' involved. Since it is central to the whole concept of the play, I shall quote his response to it:

> There seemed to be an awkwardness in getting an actor to play the witnesses – the audience being caught halfway between having to believe in the actor for the sake of the story, and also not believe in the actor for the sake of the actual witness who existed out there but was not the actor. Using a puppet made this contradiction palpable. There is no attempt to make the audience think the wooden puppet or its manipulator is the actual witness. The puppet becomes a medium through which the testimony can be heard.[25]

It is one of the great merits of the play that, like the Truth Commission itself, it allows the victims to be heard.

Ubu and the Truth Commission is such a richly textured multimedia theatrical event that trying to convey an adequate impression through the medium of words alone must of necessity be heavily reductionist.[26] It is difficult, at first, even to isolate a story line from the kaleidoscope of visual images with which the audience is assailed. Let me try. Pa Ubu is here cast as an Afrikaner whose wife (Ma Ubu) suspects that his frequent nocturnal excursions are occasioned by his many marital infidelities, whereas he has in fact been an undercover agent of the state responsible for the most dreadful atrocities whom political change has now rendered redundant. While Ma Ubu constantly upbraids him for his betrayals (but always takes him back), Pa Ubu, having heard of the investigations of the Truth Commission, gives way increasingly to fear and, in an effort to conceal the true nature of his activities, he sets about destroying compromising documents. Searching for the evidence of his

25 'Director's Note' xi.

26 A thoughtful early review by Michel Cournot ('Le poison d'humour') appeared in *Le Monde* (22 July 1997, 23) on the occasion of the Avignon performances.

infidelity, Ma Ubu finds documents incriminating him in torture, rejoices in the revelation that he has not been unfaithful to her at all, but has, on the contrary, been protecting her from the *swart gevaar*. This realisation prompts her to give evidence of his good character. Pa Ubu, meanwhile, betrays his accomplices, and having rehearsed a contrite statement he has agreed on with her, delivers it before the commission, and is last seen sailing off with Ma into the setting sun.

The play is, however, rendered very much more complicated than this bare outline would suggest by the interpolation of actual testimony from the Truth Commission, the use of puppets and images projected on screen, not to mention a myriad sound effects and the many ambiguities of the text itself.

Thus, the process of unravelling Pa Ubu's complicity in the crimes of apartheid is contextualised by scenes in which a succession of witnesses, represented by the puppets, describe the terrible events they have been witness to and the personal ordeals they and the victims were subjected to – the necklacing of a son, the shooting of a child, the disappearance of a husband. The extraordinarily powerful effect of these statements is heightened by what is essentially an alienation effect, for they are first given in an indigenous African language – Xhosa – and then rendered with ever more affecting clarity into occasionally faltering English by the translator. I will quote part of one such witness's evidence here:

Sebakanyana ga tsena mongwe mme a re, ba fisa ngwana wa gago
Someone came and told me, they are burning your son.
Ka simolola ka matha
I started to run.
Ke ne ke sa itse kwa ke ne keya teng, ke ne ke matha fela.
I don't know where to, I just ran.
Ebe e le gore basadi bangwe ba mpiletsa morago.
Then some women called me back.
'Tlaya kwango, ba tsene jaana'.
'Come here, they went this way'.
Ga ke fitlha kwateng ba ne ba motsentse taere mo mmeleng, ba mo tshete ka petrolo.
When I arrive there they have put a tyre around his body, they've doused him with petrol.
Ba mpha letlhokwana la metshisi le letukang gore ke le lathele kwa go ene
And then they gave me a burning match to throw onto him.

Ka letlhela letlhokwana kwa morago ga legetla me.
I threw the match over my shoulder.
Ba mpha le lengwe gape mme ba ntse be ntshosa.
They gave me one again and threatened me.
Ka le lathela kwa morago ga legetla la me.
I threw it over my shoulder
Ke dirile jalo go fitlhela bone ba lathela letlokwana le letukang mo mmeleng wa agwe.
I kept on doing that until they threw a burning match on his body.
A tshwara mollo.
He caught flame.
Ebe e legore ba tshaba.
Then they ran away.
Go ne ga salla nna go lwela bophelo ba gagwe.
And it was left to me to fight for his life (Taylor 23, 25).

It is against the background of such shocking testimony that Ubu later takes the stand to deliver his own much rehearsed, self-exonerating deposition.

The puppets who function as witnesses are gaunt, roughly carved figures, their appearance commensurate with their role. There are, however, two others which provide for lighter relief: Pa's gangling, triple-headed pet dog Brutus, which can rapidly transform itself into the 'dogs of war', and Ma's pet crocodile, which greedily gobbles up the incriminating evidence Pa guiltily feeds it.[27] A prime aspect of the visual impact of the show lies in the versatility of the puppet characters and their interaction with the actors.

Like its predecessors, *Ubu and the Truth Commission* uses as a backdrop a screen for the projection of visual images consisting of William Kentridge's animations, Brechtian captions, and documentary material including archival film-footage and press clippings.

It is primarily the Kentridge animations which determine the characteristic visual language of the production. The technique Kentridge employs here

27 In her article 'The Making of Ubu offers fragments of creative madness', *The Star*, 28 May 1997, reprinted in: *Ubu: ± 101*, Adrienne Sichel relates how the former's body consists of a briefcase given to William Kentridge's father, the eminent lawyer Sydney Kentridge, by Bram Fischer at the Rivonia Trial, while the latter largely consists of a kitbag used by Basil Jones's father in the Western Desert! See also Jones and Kohler, 'Puppeteers' Note', xvi. South African readers will no doubt notice in the use of the crocodile a reference to former Pres. P. W. Botha, 'the great crocodile'!

is *not* that of animations of charcoal drawings familiar from the two previous shows, but rather what he has described as 'crudely jointed cut-outs and white chalk drawings'.[28] These allow him to approximate to the Ubu iconography established by Jarry with considerable flexibility. The Ubu figure here takes the form of two distinct, but interacting elements: the 'diagrammatic tripod skeleton' by which he is represented on screen and the actor who plays him on stage. The screen figure is seemingly capable of infinite transformations (as camera-on-tripod, as radio, as cat with scissor-like claws, etc.).

As in the previous productions, the screen is able to represent levels of consciousness which would not be immediately apparent on stage. It can be used effectively to supplement or to contradict the words or actions of a puppet character, or, in this case, an actor. In *Ubu and the Truth Commission* Kentridge uses the screen specifically to document Ubu's guilt (images of detention, hanging, torture, parcel bombs), to evoke the fate of his victims (the recurring imagery of death: bones, skulls, skeletons, gravestones) and to suggest his fear of exposure (the watching eye, the camera).

As we have seen, however, the animations are interspersed with other sequences with which they interact, so that a composite effect is achieved. Thus, the archival footage documents resistance to apartheid over a thirty-year period from well-known events (the protests against forced removals at Cato Manor in 1960, the Soweto Uprising of 1976, and the clashes between demonstrators and police during the States of Emergency of 1985–1991), while the headlines of the press-reports hint at the counter-revolutionary activities Pa Ubu has been involved in – 'Third Force named', 'Death squads kill top lawyers' – before which the actor playing him can only cower in hiding under a chair.

The most telling moments in such a densely argued and richly structured production as this will occur when its diverse elements interact most effectively. Let me isolate one such moment in which screen and stage are successfully synchronised and multiple transformations enrich our understanding of the interrelationship of cause and effect, perpetrator and victim. The scene originates in one of Kentridge's engravings which depicts a male figure (Kentridge himself) under a shower, enveloped by the much more corpulent white chalk outline

28 'Director's Note', as printed in the Market Theatre programme, 1.

figure of Ubu. A glass shower cubicle is pushed on stage; Ubu enters to take a shower; the screen above and behind him is full of images of skulls, bones, scissors; a naked female figure dissolves into a skeleton. The caption speaks of 'The Smell of Blood and Dynamite'; the shower taps appear on screen; the water issues from the shower head, also on screen; Ubu takes a shower in a vain effort to wash away his guilt, which Ma reads as sexual. The caption reads: 'A Bath / A Bloodbath'. A puppet appears to give testimony; the actress playing Ma Ubu doubles as the translator; the shower cubicle serves as the translator's booth; and the showerhead becomes a microphone. The puppet gives her testimony in Xhosa: '*Ndaya e mortuary / Ndambona apho umntwanam*'; the translator translates: 'I went to the morgue / There I saw my child' (13).

It remains to consider the relationship of the play to the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, both in what it scenically represents and in the attitudes it articulates. The play presents the stories told to the Commission with great dignity. The four scenes in which 'ordinary people' bear witness through the puppets are moments of stillness, where sound effects are silent and the screen remains empty. And their effect is heightened by the contrast when Pa Ubu himself takes the stand to deliver his prepared testimony and at the point where he asserts 'I knew nothing' (using in the performance the voice of former President de Klerk!), the microphones assume a life of their own 'taunting and mocking Pa Ubu' (67), and all hell breaks loose.

The Truth Commission had not run its course at the time the show was conceived and performed. What had occurred, however, was that shift from the testimony of the victims to that of the perpetrators to which I have referred and which is reflected in the play through the final deposition of Pa Ubu himself. The story of Pa Ubu suggests that the TRC is, in fact, a flawed process because Ubu, true to Jarry's original, escapes the consequences of his deeds, not through confession and repentance but through concealment and artifice. In the knowledge of his deeds, Ubu fears the Truth Commission's demand for 'full disclosure'; he does not repent, he is afraid. Faced with two options – 'concealing or revealing' (33) – he chooses the former. Unscrupulously resolving 'to blame all on politics and beguile the Commission' (57), he cynically addresses his cronies ('the dogs of war') – 'boys, you'll have to clean up your act, we're going into show business' (59) – and then proceeds to betray them by planting documents on them (or rather *in* them

since he hides them in the brief case which forms the body of the puppet!) to ensure that they will be punished for his crimes (61). Since there are three of them, three differing sentences are handed down: the head of political affairs is retired on full pay; the military commander-in-chief is 'condemned' to 30 years leadership of the new state army (no doubt an echo of the 'fate' of General Pinochet in Chile); while the agent (the only one to be identified by any witness) is sentenced to 212 years imprisonment. Ubu, who has rehearsed his false statement before the dogs in a macabre cabaret, now delivers his speech before the Commission (67). It is an amazing performance. He first claims not to have known what was going on and shifts the blame on to 'those above, those below me, those beside me' (67); he then hysterically portrays himself as a good soldier who was not prepared to 'give away [his country] without a damn good fight'; before reverting to his prepared statement of remorse. After which, together with Ma, he sails off – with impunity – into the setting sun.

The end of the play brings neither truth nor reconciliation. There is, as Kentridge has said 'no correct epiphany'.[29]

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Esther V. Schneider Handschin

'For Him Exile Always Meant the Escape into His True Homeland, into the Spirit of Humanity': On the Cultural Identity of Herman Broch and Stefan Zweig

Taking Hermann Broch and Stefan Zweig as an example, I intend to explore in my paper the complex tensions between the notions of cultural identity and *Heimat* ('place of origin', or 'homeland'), as well as the positive impact these influences had on the *Produktionsästhetik* ('literary output') that shaped the writings of these two authors. I include in my argument new findings in the recent literature on anti-Semitism, alterity and exile.

As members of the assimilated Jewish upper middle-class, both Broch and Zweig are of paradigmatic importance as representatives of the anti-fascist intelligentsia of the *Wiener Moderne* ('the Viennese Modern Movement'). The quotation in the title,

> For him exile always meant the escape into his true homeland, the *Heimat* of the pan-European spirit, into the spirit of humanity,[1]

is an extract from Broch's essay on his congenial colleague Robert Musil, who escaped into exile to Switzerland. More than 60 years later, this characterisation of Musil as a cosmopolitan European writer is regaining topicality in view of the ongoing process of European integration and globalisation. For contemporary Europe, the persistence of nationalism and the attendant dangerous radicalisation of the far right, most horribly exemplified by the genocide in Bosnia and Kosovo, are strongly reminiscent of the 1930s. Although

1 Hermann Broch, 'Robert Musil im Exil' (1939), in *Hermann Broch, Schriften zur Literatur I*, *Kommentierte Werkausgabe*, ed. Paul Michael Lützeler, vol. 9.1 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1976) 96. Hereafter this work is referred to by the abbreviation *KW*.

in another essay on Musil, written in 1936,[2] Broch opposes the overheated nationalism of the Austro-Fascist state and Hitler's Germany, at that early date he was not yet ready to recognise the value of the non-nationalistic, European identity that Musil had embraced. This conclusion he reached only from the distance of his exile in the USA.

Ina-Maria Greverus' statement that

> all reflections on *Heimat* originate from experiences of strangeness or alterity, of being away from home in a strange country, and they originate in estrangement[3]

is also true for Broch. By classifying Musil as an 'epic writer of global status', whose spiritual origins lie well beyond his actual roots in Austria or Europe, Broch points to the cosmopolitanism, or even universalism, of the Jewish intelligentsia, with its humanist ideals.[4] At the same time, we get a sense of the feeling of homelessness and of the impending obliteration of these thinkers, which threatens this ideal as a result of the brutal political reality.

Broch's attempt to anchor the experience of exile in this supra-national concept of *Heimat* – and thereby to normalise it – must also be interpreted against the background of the crisis of cultural identity that he experienced during his American exile. Musil's situation becomes for him that of any author writing in the German language. According to Broch, exile for Musil always meant a symbolic escape from the physical bounds of space and time into the timeless *Heimat* of the spirit of humanity beyond Europe. For Musil, and for any author writing in German imbued with the humanist ideal and inhabiting the timeless realm of the spirit, this process of 'denationalisation'

2 Hermann Broch, 'Robert Musil – ein österreichischer Dichter?' *KW* 9.1, 95. Broch to Hannah Arendt, 22.5.1951: 'I have already spoken to you about my chthonic or indeed anti-chthonic thoughts. It disturbs me that I started it all without really being clear that I was led by actual emotional motives. One should never do this'. Unpubl. letter, Arendt to Gisela Brude-Firnau, quoted in G. Brude-Firnau, 'Hermann Broch', *Deutschsprachige Exilliteratur seit 1933*, vol.2, ed. John M. Spalek (Frankfurt: Lang, 1989) 153.

3 Ina-Maria Greverus, *Der territoriale Mensch. Ein literaturanthropologischer Versuch zum Heimatphänomen,* (Frankfurt: Athenaeum, 1972) 56.

4 Hermann Broch [1] 96.

and 'delocalisation' resonates with the position of Hermann Broch and Stefan Zweig, who have deep roots in the German and Austrian cultural traditions going back to the *Klassik* (the 'classical' era). Both authors remained committed to humanistic values until their deaths. In their view, it is the duty of the writer to defend humanism tirelessly, and to re-establish it as an international ethical imperative after the end of the war.[5] For lack of space, I can only briefly refer here to the dialectical problems arising from the categories 'European' and 'international'. Nevertheless, the difference between Broch and Zweig in this respect should not be overlooked.[6] Broch's perspective was Euro-centric and attained a more precise and differentiated articulation only in his study on Hofmannsthal, with its carefully drawn social-economic and social-historical context. Zweig, on the other hand, shows in his memoirs *Die Welt von Gestern* (*The World of Yesterday*) a subjective, more introspective and nostalgic Europe which has destroyed itself.[7]

According to Adler,[8] cultural identity can be defined as the characteristic of a person whereby the fundamental formation of the self is closely connected to his *Weltbild* or 'philosophy of life', the categories of his values, and the views and beliefs of his peers. For Broch and Zweig, commitment to their *Weltbild* and to the categories of value inspired by the supra-national ideal of humanism becomes the central component of their cultural identity. Zweig especially saw himself as a mediator between nations. His numerous translations, introductions and biographical studies helped to familiarise the German reader with western European literature. His internationalism was, however, limited to his contacts with the cultural elites, contacts which he fostered and developed on his many journeys to different parts of the world.

Stefan Zweig was born in 1881, Hermann Broch in 1886, both in Vienna, and both as sons of assimilated Jewish industrialists. Contrary to his desires,

5 Hermann Broch to Carl Selig, 10.2.1938, *KW* 13.2, 54.

6 Thomas Mann, 'Kosmopolitismus', *Politische Schriften und Reden*, ed. Peter de Mendelssohn, vol.2 (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1968) 150.

7 Hermann Broch, 'Hofmannsthal und seine Zeit', (1947/48), *KW* 9.1, 111.

8 P.S. Adler, 'Beyond Cultural Identity: Reflection on Cultural and Multicultural Men', *Culture Learning: Concepts, Applications and Research*, ed. R.W. Brislin (Honolulu: East-West Center Book, 1977) 165–187.

Broch was expected to work in industry. However, in addition to fulfilling his obligations to work and family, he studied mathematical and philosophical texts, and from 1928 onwards, he worked on his trilogy *Die Schlafwandler* (*The Sleepwalkers*). With this work, he became part of the European avant-garde in the early 1930s. Stefan Zweig, on the other hand, was able to pursue a career in literature from the start. His psychological and historical novels soon gained him an international reputation. The exchange of letters between the two men reveals that Zweig played the role of mentor for Broch. He helped him to find a publisher for his *Bergroman*,[9] and offered him constructive criticism for his drama project.[10]

Like many other members of the Jewish upper middle-class, Zweig regarded his assimilation as successful and failed to develop an awareness of the social and political tensions that already were endangering the structure of the old Hapsburg monarchy. Franz Werfel[11] rightly regards Zweig's humanistic optimism, which gave him a false sense of security, as a heritage from his father:

> In contrast to others, he was not a hanger-on, but a true and innocent believer in the humanistic religion, under the protection of which he had grown up.

In the first part of his autobiography *Die Welt der Sicherheit* (*The World of Security*), he provided a biased impression of his generation's life in Imperial Austria. His generation lived happily in a world in which art had a predominating influence, disregarding the inadequacies and hypocrisy of the political system. Even his conception of history was closely bound to art, as Zweig pointed out in a speech *Die Geschichte als Dichterin* (*History as Poet*), which he prepared for the Seventeenth International PEN Club conference in Stockholm in 1939 – a conference that never took place, however, because of the war. This conception of history also governed his approach to his autobiography. Hermann Kesten observes that

9 Broch planned to have this published in English as *Demeter's Lost Sons* or *Demeter or the Bewitchment*.

10 Hermann Broch to Stefan Zweig, 11.11.1932, *KW* 13.1, 215.

11 Franz Werfel, 'Stefan Zweigs Tod', *Der grosse Europäer Stefan Zweig*, ed. Hans Arens (München: Kindler, 1956) 280–281.

> Zweig, the admirer, pupil and patient of Freud, was far too shy to write a real autobiography. His extreme modesty made him recoil from the naked truth.[12]

Zweig's intention was to write about the world as he perceived it, but not about himself. His first choice of title *Meine Drei Leben* (*My Three Lives*) referred to the final form of a triptych. However, this title did not suit his conception that 'history must be, to a certain degree, *Gedichtetes* (the writer's invention)'. Hence, he dropped it. He wanted to combine the story of his generation with the apocalyptic moments of European history of 1914, 1933 and 1939. 'It is the third time', Zweig wrote to Guido Fuchs in 1941,[13]

> that what has been built up has collapsed behind me; and it was a pale satisfaction to preserve at least in written form the life that once we lived. What I could do for the old Austria was mainly to evoke a picture of what it was and what it meant for European civilisation.

Being more keenly attentive to his context than Zweig, Broch early on recognised that the foundations of 'the old Austria' were crumbling. This awareness expresses itself, for instance, in the fact that he changed Zweig's term *Die Welt der Sicherheit* (*The World of Security*) to *fröhliche Apokalypse* ('the merry apocalypse') in his monumental analysis 'Hofmannsthal und seine Zeit' ('Hofmannsthal and his Time').[14] Two aspects of his presentation of Hofmannsthal are eminently revealing of Broch's own cultural identity. Both of these deal with the notion of assimilation. First, there is Broch's argument concerning Hofmannsthal's assimilation to the disintegration of values; and second, there is Broch's view that Hofmannsthal was not completely successful in disentangling himself from the fringes of Austrian society to which his Jewish forebears had been relegated. It is, however, debatable whether Hofmannsthal's Jewishness actually played as central a role as

12 Hermann Kesten, *Meine Freunde die Poeten*, (München: Kindler 1959) 146. Quoted from: Donald Prater, *European of Yesterday. A Biography of Stefan Zweig*, (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 1972) 307.

13 Stefan Zweig to Guido Fuchs, undated letter (September [?] 1941) quoted from Donald Prater [12] 307.

14 Stefan Zweig, *Die Welt von Gestern,* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1984), 14; Hermann Broch [7] 145.

Broch's interpretation suggests.[15] His remark implying that Hofmannsthal's literary status was attributable to his efforts at assimilation reflects the central impetus of Broch's own drive to write, namely to the tensions between being culturally at home in Austria while being ethnically alien as a Jew. These tensions ultimately came to fruition in his literary output.[16]

With the advent of National Socialism in Germany, Zweig was forced into exile in 1933, and Broch had to escape to Great Britain in 1938. In these two authors, we can observe two different ways of coping with the situation of exile compounded by a crisis of identity. Despite his confidence that his European reputation would protect him, Broch was captured in Altaussee and imprisoned immediately after the *Anschluss*, the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany. During the three weeks of his confinement and until his departure into exile, he suffered persecution and was exposed to degrading and dehumanising treatment. Upon his arrival in Great Britain, to his surprise, he met with anti-Semitic attitudes there also. As he wrote in a letter to Stefan Zweig, in the Scottish Highlands he was

> consistently confronted with the opinion that there would be no unemployment and no danger of war, if there were no Jews.[17]

Without the danger of a German invasion, Broch would have preferred an exile in England to the one that followed in the USA. He believed that he would never feel as at home in America as he did in England. With the help of affidavits from Thomas Mann and Albert Einstein, Broch obtained a visa for the United States. In contrast to Thomas Mann and Stefan Zweig, Broch was not yet an established writer, and therefore he found himself involved in a far more gruelling fight for economic survival.[18] Although he was given financial support by exile agencies and charities right from the start, these contributions were always for limited periods only and barely allowed a subsistence living.

15 Manfred Durzak, *Hermann Broch: Der Dichter und seine Zeit*, (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1968) 169.

16 Esther V. Schneider Handschin, '"Seine wirkliche Heimat ist der Geist" – Kulturelle Identität und Heimat bei Hermann Broch', *Modern Austrian Literature*, 32.3 (1999) 64.

17 Hermann Broch to Stefan Zweig, 11.9.1938, *KW* 13.2, 28.

18 Joseph Strelka, *Exilliteratur* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1983) 161.

It seems to me that the existing literature on exile has a tendency to valorise Broch's early years in exile. Taking into account the results of research on exile and alterity, I have arrived at a more nuanced assessment of Broch's exile in America. This applies particularly to his crisis of identity, which had a major impact on his years in exile, according to his own account in *Selbstanalyse* (*Self-Analysis*) of 1942.[19] Although Broch never considered his exile in America as provisional – he even applied for American citizenship soon after his arrival – the psychological implications of what Lion Feuchtwanger and Anna Seghers have called the 'waiting room' and the 'transit syndrome' are applicable to him too.[20]

Broch tried, on three different levels, to counteract his *Existenzangst* ('existential fear') arising from his situation as an exile. Under close scrutiny, all three of these levels reveal the impetus of his need to create a new identity for himself.[21] In part, at least, this meant picking up the threads of his work on identity abandoned in the 1930s. Broch first tried to underpin his reputation as an author by continuing his work on his novel *Vergil*. He also sought economic security through his academic research on *Massenwahn* ('the theory of mass psychology'), in the hope thereby of gaining acceptance in American society. Writing *Vergil* not only allowed him to work through his own experiences of exile, but also permitted him to continue studying the disintegration of values in Europe. His political study on *Massenwahn* also has an identity-forming dimension, since he regarded it in its early stages as an effective means of combating the devastation that Hitler had let loose on Europe.[22] With the help of this work, Broch was able, on the one hand, to

19 Hermann Broch, 'Selbstanalyse', unpubl. MS, Deutsches Literatur Archiv, Marbach am Neckar, 1942.

20 Lion Feuchtwanger, *Grösse und Erbärmlichkeit des Exils*, (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1979); Anna Seghers, *Transit*, quoted in Corinna Albrecht, 'Fremdheit und Freiheit: Die Schule der Frauen. Xenologische Perspektiven der Flüchtlingsforschung', *Kulturthema Fremdheit, Leitbegriffe und Problemfelder kulturwissenschaftlicher Fremdheitsforschung*, ed. Alois Wierlacher (München: Iudicium, 1993) 289.

21 Alois Wierlacher, 'Mit fremden Augen oder: Fremdheit als Ferment', *Das Fremde und das Eigene. Prolegomena zu einer interkulturellen Germanistik*, ed. A. Wierlacher (München: Iudicium, 1985) 3–29.

22 Hermann Broch to Willa Muir, 3.12.1938, *KW* 13.2, 37.

continue his fight against fascism, and on the other, to further the process of his *Selbstamerikanisierung* ('self-Americanisation').[23] In other words, he could develop connections to American institutions and individual intellectuals. His commitment to Europe was concentrated initially on his efforts to save refugees, and after the war, he focused on providing aid for those who had to remain in Austria. His commitment also expressed itself, to a significant extent, in his prolific exchange of letters with other writers and friends. Writing up to 250 letters consisting of several typed pages apiece each month was not only a burden but to Broch it was at the same time an indispensable necessity, despite the fact that it drastically curtailed his creative writing and scientific output.[24]

The strain caused by his escape and his subsequent assimilation into American society led to a complete physical breakdown in the spring of 1939. Even ten years after the fact, Broch complained of the 'atrocious effort required to achieve assimilation' which was further increased by the strain of an excessive workload. Like the earlier process of assimilation back in Austria, the one in exile intensified Broch's creative productivity. Unfortunately, the demands of living the life of an exile made his physical collapse all but inevitable. On the other hand, we must not overlook the fact that, for Broch, work was *bergender Schutz* ('shelter and protection') from *Existenzangst*, as well as the crisis of identity and feelings of guilt about being safe while millions suffered in Europe.[25]

Stefan Zweig also needed to retreat into his *Arbeitshaut* ('work-skin'), not least because of his notorious fear of growing old and because of guilt feelings very similar to those of Broch.[26] Although Zweig did not have any material

23 Hermann Broch [19].

24 Hermann Broch to Ea von Allesch, 28.7.1947, *KW* 13.3 154: 'I can't sit, as plagued by tiredness as I am, more than 17 hours a day at a desk'. For several months Broch sent printed cards reading: 'My dear Friend (sic): As such I crave your indulgence for taking this method of communicating with you. …'

25 As Broch learned after the war: 'My mother has somehow died horribly. The feeling of shame never leaves me'. *KW* 13.3, 52.

26 *Romain Rolland – Stefan Zweig. Briefwechsel*, ed. Waltraud Schwarze, vol.2. (Berlin: Rütten and Loening, 1987) 554.

worries, and although his novels had been translated worldwide, he was very reluctant to become an emigrant.

> You will see how little by little the world refuses itself to the exiled. … You will know a life which is no longer our life, and which is hardly worth living,

he wrote in English to André Maurois in 1940.[27] The fact that Zweig had not publicly taken a stand against the Nazis before 1939 drew harsh accusations against him from other emigrants. These criticisms had a lasting effect on him, overshadowing the years of his exile and deepening his sense of his isolation.

Studies of Stefan Zweig's *Schweigen* ('silence') appear to me to be too one-sided and negative.[28] It is often overlooked that Zweig followed the advice of his friend Josef Roth and broke with the publishing house Insel-Verlag as early as in the year 1933 because the company was still publishing in Germany. 'My life lies in it [Insel-Verlag], but my honour is more important to me', he wrote to Roth.[29] This rupture with the publisher with whom Zweig had worked for twenty-eight years occurred as a result of pressures caused by his dissociation from *Die Sammlung* (*The Collection*), an exile journal edited by Klaus Mann. After the publication of the first issue, several writers, among them Thomas Mann and Alfred Döblin, suspended their support because the tenor of the journal was deemed too political and too anti-fascist. Zweig also refused to contribute to other exile journals, not least because some of the contributors were hostile to each other. However, the main reason for his dissociation from *Die Sammlung* is likely to have been, first and foremost, his well-founded fear of favouring discord among the emigrants by his participation in it. To prevent the splintering of emigrant groups, he proposed a major collective project which was, unfortunately, never realised. Second, Zweig

27 André Maurois, 'Préface', *Les derniers jours de Stefan Zweig* (Mexico: Editions Quetzal, 1944) 10–14. Quoted from: Donald Prater [12] 300.

28 See D. Prater [12]; Donald G. Daviau, 'Stefan Zweig: A Model and Victim of the Impressionistic Lifestyle of the Fin de Siècle', in *Stefan Zweig. Exil und Suche nach dem Weltfrieden*, ed. Mark H. Gelber and Klaus Zelewitz (Riverside: Ariadne Press, 1995) 167; Lionel B. Steiman, 'The Eclipse of Humanism: Zweig between the Wars', *Modern Austrian Literature*, 14.3 (1981) 300.

29 Stefan Zweig, Quoted in: Donald Prater [12] 305.

did not wish to endanger the Jews still living in Germany, nor his wife and her two daughters, who had remained in Austria.

> As far as the Jews are concerned, we must not say a single word which might endanger the hostages, since the government is constantly looking for any excuse to commit new atrocities,

he wrote to Romain Rolland.[30]

Like Broch, Zweig tried to stabilise his identity in exile through his work. He did so by tracing his European identity in his memoirs, *Die Welt von Gestern* (*The World of Yesterday*), and by writing on exile in *Schachnovelle* (*Chess Novella*). He also wrote on Jewishness in *Jeremias* (*Jeremiah*). The Nazi programme of exterminating the Jews made reassessing his Jewish identity imperative.

In the context of lives lived in the diaspora, both authors considered their homelessness to be an eminently Jewish destiny – the *Ahasver* or wandering Jew being its epitome. Broch's endeavour to uproot the *Rest-Katholizismus* ('the remains of Catholicism')[31] in himself and return to the Jewish faith remained unfulfilled at the time of his sudden death in 1951.

Stefan Zweig also had a deeply ambiguous attitude toward his Jewishness. On the one hand, he saw 'the only way of fighting the new hatred … is by finding the road back to ourselves';[32] and, on the other, he strongly criticised the ghetto-mentality and the passivity of the German Jews. In contrast to Broch, he could not reconcile himself to his fate as a German Jew. As early as 1937 he wrote:

> Today it is completely impossible for a Jew writing in the German language to earn a living.[33]

30 Stefan Zweig, quoted in Quo Qiang Ren, *Am Ende der Missachtung? Studie über die Stefan Zweig-Rezeption in der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft nach 1945*, (Giessen: Shaker Verlag, 1995) 82.

31 Hermann Broch to Else Spitzer, 15.6.1947, *KW* 13.3, 143.

32 Paper read at a symposium on the subject 'Whither Jewry', sponsored by 'Dos Yiddishe Vort', quoted in Joseph Leftwich, 'Stefan Zweig and the World of Yesterday', *Yearbook of the Leo Baeck Institute of Jews from Germany*, 3 (1958) 86.

33 Stefan Zweig, unpubl. letter to Heinrich Eisemann, 6.11.1937, quoted in Harry Zohn, 'Der tragische Lebensabend eines grossen Europäers. Zu Stefan Zweigs Briefen aus dem Exil', in Gelber and Zelewitz [28] 297.

To this he added that there is no other profession in which he saw so much misery, disappointment, despair and hopelessness as among the Jewish authors writing in German. Zweig's attachment to the German language and to German literature suffered irreparable damage in his exile when he came to realise that both victim and offender remained tied to the same idiom. The fact that 'the world of his language had disappeared' and that 'his spiritual *Heimat*, Europe, was destroying itself' deepened his depression.[34] Zweig hated Germany, though he had to use its language. His despair at having to write in German without access to German readers deepened. In 1942, after the attacks on Pearl Harbor and Singapore, with Brazil preparing to declare war on Hitler and his allies, Zweig became very pessimistic about the future. As his diaries and letters show, Zweig was not apolitical, although his lofty conception of humanity led him to take impractical and unrealistic, if not escapist, positions until his suicide on 22 February 1942. In a letter to Broch, he expresses the wish to escape from the atrocities of contemporary politics, and thereby to protect his creativity and to '*désolidariser*' ('disengage from solidarity') with Jewish emigrants.[35] His retreat into idyllic surroundings in Brazil becomes easier to understand once we recognise the reality he hoped to escape from. There he expected to continue his literary production, untroubled by his feelings of responsibility for the community of German emigrants. However, the dilemma between personal freedom and moral obligation to others remained with him. His refusal to change, to adapt to the reality of his situation[36] and to cope with it, led to his ultimate failure.

How essential it was for Broch to preserve his linguistic and cultural identity can be deduced from his steadfast refusal to accept any American influence in

34 Stefan Zweig, 'Declaraçao', 21.2.1942, titled in Portuguese, written in German; quoted in Donald Prater and Volker Michaels, *Stefan Zweig. Leben und Werk im Bild*, (Frankfurt: Insel-Verlag, 1981) 456.

35 Stefan Zweig to Hermann Broch, 7.5.1939, *Stefan Zweig, Briefe an Freunde*, ed. Richard Friedenthal, (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1978) 122.

36 Stefan Zweig to Paul Zech, 25.12.1941: 'Most try to adjust to "the American way", whereas in myself I find a determination not to change, instead to use all my effort to remain the one I was' . Stefan Zweig – Paul Zech, *Briefe 1919–1942*, ed. Donald G. Daviau, (Rudolfstadt: Greifenverlag, 1984) 151.

his work, an influence which he described as an '*unglückliche Problemstellung*' ('an unfortunate problem'). While he judged the impact of the United States on him personally, and its contribution to his understanding of democracy, to be '*tatsächlich bedeutend*' ('truly important'), he considered the American influence upon his writings to have been nil.[37] His lifelong oscillation between creative writing and science caused a painful crisis in his literary production. On the one hand, his scientific research and its results gave his writings and his work as an essayist a pragmatic, forward-looking bent.[38] On the other hand, the enormous amount of knowledge and intellectual engagement required of the reader made his writings inaccessible to a broader readership. This explains why today his readers are mostly specialists.

For Broch, as for Zweig, the *österreichische Mythos* ('Austrian myth')[39] proved much more resilient than anticipated. In the last year of his life Broch wrote:

> Whether Austria or *Heimatgefühl* ['attachment to the homeland'] – it is impossible to distinguish between them – the image of the old monarchy has survived intact.[40]

37 Hermann Broch to Hermann Salinger, 29.9.1950, *KW* 13.3, 497.

38 See Esther V. Schneider Handschin, 'Schöpfer vs. Macher – Zur Produktionsästhetik und Romanspoetik Jakob Wassermanns und Hermann Brochs', *Modern Austrian Literature*, 30.2 (1997) 95.

39 Claudio Magris, *Der habsburgische Mythos in der österreichischen Literatur*, (Salzburg: Müller Verlag, 1966).

40 Hermann Broch to Hans Winter, 14.10.1950, 'Ob Oesterreich – oder Heimatgefühl – das lässt sich kaum auseinanderhalten – das Bild der alten Monarchie hat sich unverändert gehalten', *KW* 13.3, 501.

Véronique Wakerley

Jules Romains' 'Unanimist' Heroine:

Love and the Problem of Urban Solitude

A striking phenomenon of the past century has been the demographic shift of rural populations to urban areas. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels regarded such shifts of population in nineteenth-century Europe as a welcome sign of a modernity that would rescue people from 'the idiocy of rural life'.[1] In the last thirty years, however, the growth of urban populations in poor countries is no longer seen so positively. The cities of Africa, Asia and much of South America seldom have the infrastructures to accommodate large numbers of new inhabitants, and rural poverty is merely exchanged for urban poverty. At the same time, the cultures that were based on soil and place developed new meaning in the city, and although new urban cultures take their place, the people of the city seem to be a people without a past. Iain Chambers speaks of migrant landscapes that are so striking a feature of the modern world as

> the ingression of other worlds [which] forces us to consider a rapid succession of horizons that challenge the pretence of rational transparency in our languages and communication.[2]

The migrant is forced to embrace the ambiguous knowledge of his or her new world and in that

> difficult moment of letting go … old certainties are abandoned for the uncertain outcome of continual encounters in which all worlds and chronologies become unstable, subject to question and reformulating. To rethink your time and place within

1 K. Marx and F. Engels *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, trans. Samuel Moore, 1888 (Moscow: Progress, 1977) 40.

2 Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity* (London: Routledge, 1994) 33.

> a culture, a language, an institution, a tradition, a set of histories, is to rethink the purpose, direction and limits of these very categories.[2]

Jules Romains' concept of 'Unanimism' may be regarded as an instance of 'new meaning' in the 'new urban culture'. His stance in his novels is to take a more positive view of this migratory movement that seems to be an inevitable feature of our epoch, but which, he suggests, offers an opportunity to embrace those very challenges posed by the creative adaptation of consciousness to the cultural 'challenge' of the urban environment.

It could be argued that while twentieth-century urban dwellers have enjoyed unprecedented freedoms, as individuals they feel more isolated and dislocated outside the framework of traditional rural life. The city raises new questions of individual responsibility, and human nature demands that not only should the problem of individual loneliness be addressed, but that the collective solitude of the urban community should be as well. Camus and Sartre sought in existentialist philosophy a new meaning to the solitary existence within the urban landscape. By contrast, in the early years of the century another French writer responded to the problem of individual loneliness by concentrating, not on the existentialist 'outsider', but on the individual within society. Jules Romains had a vision of how individuals could feel themselves absorbed into a harmonious social whole, understood as the collectivity of mankind, through an experience of a quasi-mystical nature, an empathic mystical union.

The idea of a collective spirit that transcends the crowd itself was not new. With the advent of the twentieth century, the demographic shift to the city and the mechanisation of life in general, the Romantic concept of solitude, and the love of nature that accompanies it, seemed no longer relevant. There was a trend away from preoccupation with the individual and his personal universe, in favour of a more outward-looking and less introspective view of the role of the individual in society. The concept of the crowd, as distinguished from the concept of Romantic solitude, was a product of the new age of industrialism – in literature most obviously chronicled by Zola; in philosophy, treated at length by Le Bon and Tarde,[3] both of whom, however,

3 G. Le Bon, *La Vie*, (Paris: Alcan, 1872); *La Psychologie des foules*, (Paris: Alcan, 1895); and *L'Opinion et la foule*, (Paris: Alcan, 1901) G. Tarde, *Les Crimes des foules*, (Paris: Alcan, 1892).

emphasised the negative aspects of crowd psychology, as of course to a large extent did Zola. Romains moves much closer in his ideas on the positive nature of the collective consciousness to Durkheim, and even more especially to Bergson. Both Durkheim and Bergson explored at length the concept of *la conscience collective*. Durkheim saw 'in Divinity only society transfigured and symbolically expressed'.[4]

For Durkheim, *la conscience collective* denotes shared moral rules and maxims, claiming as he does, in *Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, that

> society is not only the source of impersonal rules and values, but it possesses all the spiritual characteristics necessary to arouse in an individual the sense of being in relationship with a morally superior being.[5]

He further states:

> The collective force is not entirely outside of us; it does not act upon us wholly from without; but rather, since society cannot exist except in and through individual consciousness, this force must also penetrate us and organize itself within us. It thus becomes an integral part of our being, and by that very fact is elevated and magnified.[6]

The young Jules Romains was brought up by his religious mother in the Catholic faith, and though he rejected Catholicism in his teens, he had concluded that in order to survive, man needs the presence of an other in his life. His rejection of God and organised religion led him to search for an alternative to fill the uncomfortable void; his search coincided with his studies in *khâgne* at the Lycée Condorcet, first under Léon Brunschvicg and then under Albert Bazaillas.[7] Already, in the course of his study of Latin, Louis had discovered Epicureanism through Lucretius, who, in *De Rerum Natura,* describes suffering humanity as

4 E. Durkheim, 'La Détermination du fait moral', *Bulletin de la société française de philosophie*, 6 (1906) 16–27.

5 Quoted in E. Wallwork, *Durkheim, Morality and Milieu* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U. P., 1972) 63–64.

6 E. Durkheim, *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* (Paris: Alcan, 1912); *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. by J.W. Swain (New York: Free Press/Macmillan, 1965) 240.

7 For a very lucid account of the influence of these two teachers on the development of Jules Romains' thought, see O. Rony, *Jules Romains, ou L'Appel au monde*, (Paris: Laffont, 1992) 50–59.

being crushed by religion. Lucretius declares that relief – indeed, true pleasure – is to be found in the communal spirit of an enlightened collectivity. In his critical biography of Romains, Olivier Rony suggests that the young Jules Romains perceived that the *moi* can be released from its burden of individual guilt by being recreated through the fusion between the self and the *unanime*, a union with the greater whole, though at first Romains could not see how precisely this could be achieved.

As a corollary to the rejection of the control of human lives by a Divine Being, Romains experienced the necessity of taking responsibility for himself, whether consciously or unconsciously. The young Romains conducted his search for self-realisation through communion with others, but a communion beyond what is created by organised society in the form of governments, churches and imposed conventions of behaviour. He considered that, within the framework of such institutions, human contact is limited to strictly external needs, and can offer no nourishment to the inner, spiritual life. Bazaillas taught that: 'the inner life … exists only through the acceptance of a subjectivity which welcomes the other'. He also, according to Rony, insisted upon

> the regeneration of the spirit by adhering to a faith and an order of certainty, whatever they may be, provided that the consciousness gains from this a direction, a route.[8]

Such ideas may well have helped to orientate the young Romains' thoughts in the direction of what came to be known as Unanimism.

In 1903, Jules Romains and his friend Léon Debille (later known as Georges Chennevière) were walking together along the rue d'Amsterdam and, as Rony puts it, they, underwent 'an experience that cannot be expressed in words',[9] an intuitive moment of union with the street, the crowd, of 'friends turned towards something which is not themselves'.[10] Chennevière later described it as their 'real birth into the world'.[11] It takes the form of the union of the individual self with the external world, crystallising what is claimed to be the reconciliation between

8 Rony [7] 59. Translations are the author's own, unless otherwise stated.

9 Rony [7] 63.

10 J. Romains, *Les hommes de bonne volonté*, 4 volumes (Paris: Flammarion, 1958) I.2, 274; orig. pub. in 27 vols. Paris: Flammarion, 1932–1946.

11 G. Chennevière, in an interview on 18 September 1926 in *Bulletin des Amis de Jules Romains* 10 (1977) 14.

human and 'divine'; the divine is represented by the street, the crowd, the city, of which the two young men formed a part. In the words of Maurice Roncayolo, in an article entitled 'Jules Romains et la ville', 'the street is the privileged locus of encounter for the individual and the collectivity'.[12]

The Unanimist moment is shared by two (or more) who are henceforth linked by their moment of *témoignage* ('witnessing'), so succinctly defined later by Jallez in conversation with Jerphanion: 'We mutually experience a moment of the world's existence.'[13] The experience of Jallez and Jerphanion confirms that a group as small as two people can form a Unanimist collectivity, for the defining element is that of simultaneous experience, whether shared consciously or not, a simultaneous experience, created by the possibility of what Rony refers to as the 'porousness of being'. Both Romains and Chennevière were aware of their moment of mutual experience, but Romains does not suggest that its validity depends on such joint consciousness. The effect is created whether or not the participants share that experience on a conscious level, though the *être supérieur* ('superior individual') is marked by his or her ability to experience consciously this moment of union.

For the effect of this union, Romains coins the term *dieu* ('god') which, according to Romains, was composed of all those elements that had been involved in that momentary absorption of self, creating a far greater whole than the sum of its parts. As we have seen, such a concept relates entirely to a secular notion of human connection, though frequently the language in which it is expressed belongs to religious orthodoxy. Such union was created from a moment of openness towards others, from an intuitive willingness to belong to the *milieu*, without that detachment occasioned by intellectual reflection. The spirit (*âme*[14]) takes over from the mind, and the element of the 'divine' can

12 M. Roncayolo ''Jules Romains et la ville', *Cahiers Jules Romains* 8 (1990) 43.

13 Romains [10] I.2, 273.

14 What does Romains intend his reader to understand by *âme*? This is a word that he uses repeatedly to indicate the seat of human emotions and intuition, *used in direct opposition to the intellect*, and as a means of access to a spiritual reality which is not dependent on a conventional religious faith. Thus *âme* in the Romainsian context refers not to any immortal essence of self deemed to exist before and after physical death, but to the affective and intuitive self which makes contact with the invisible reality inside the material reality accessible to sight and hearing.

be discerned in each individual. The barriers of time and space are dissolved, each individual acting as a membrane, through which the external becomes internalised, as through a form of osmosis. The separation between the external and the internal no longer exists, however momentarily, and the feeling of isolation of the individual self melts away as the barriers of space are removed. Each is absorbed into the other and all become one. Romains does not, however, suggest that the intuitive moment signifies a *loss* of self. On the contrary, by becoming part of something greater, he believes, one is oneself made more whole. Such an experience may be characterised as essentially mystical,[15] taking mystical to mean the capacity to achieve 'the spiritual apprehension of truths inaccessible to the understanding'.[16] There is no doubt that Romains, as a result of such 'epiphanies', replaced God with gods, the 'gods' of the Unanimist experience. For him it represents the pinnacle of human experience, a spiritual triumph resulting from human interaction.

It is perhaps to Bergson that Romains draws closest.[17] In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson formulated the idea of a *continu psychique* (a 'psychic continuum') which Romains would take up. Bergson postulated that the inner core of reality, the *inconnaissable* ('unknowable') is in fact accessible by means of what he called 'intuition'. He makes a very important distinction between intelligence and intuition – the unconscious mind – where rationality may operate but without being hindered by barriers of apparent logic.[18] Reality as materiality is knowable to the intellect, but because it is therefore a reality resulting from a

15 Mystical union may be the result, but it is worth bearing in mind that the access route to such mystical union is through the senses of sight, sound, smell and touch, that is, through *physical* means. In fact, the body must be *in harmony* with its external surroundings for such union to be possible. As Rony has said, Romains proposes nothing less than a new adaptation of the body to the world.

16 *The Shorter English Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1978) 1380.

17 Interestingly, in *Les hommes de bonne volonté* [10] II.14, 1144–1146, Germaine Baader announces her intention of attending a series of lectures to be given at the Sorbonne by Bergson. She has become interested in a form of spiritualism, and not being a woman to 'se jeter dans n'importe quelles superstitions …' is seeking knowledge. She has also, she says, been reading Maeterlinck. Odette, wife of Jerphanion, admits to admiration for both Bergson and Renan (III.22, 73).

18 H. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. A. Mitchell (London: Macmillan, 1928).

knowledge of facts, of an external world, it is necessarily static and inert. The conscious mind intellectualises all that it knows, and it ceases to *become*, which is a condition of the generative act of creation that leads to a metaphysical reality. Reality, therefore, may be extra-intellectual, that is to say, either infra-conceptual or supra-conceptual, and yet knowable. We may install ourselves in this extra-intellectual reality by an effort of intuition, which Bergson defines as

> that kind of *intellectual sympathy* by means of which one transports oneself to the interior of an object so as to coincide with that which constitutes the very reality of the object, its *unique* and consequently inexpressible reality.[19]

By a literally superhuman effort, the philosopher may transcend the point of view of intelligence, and by a stroke of sympathetic insight, perceive or feel the impulsion at the heart of reality.

Metaphysical reality, essentially the *inconnaissable*, so often explained away as religious mystery, can be apprehended, momentarily, through a suppression of intellect, or at least by using the intellect to complement intuition. But the individual consciousness is not necessarily isolated within its own apprehension of a psychic reality. According to Bergson, there exists a fundamental empathetic *ambiance* that allows for the possibility of an osmotic effect between consciousnesses.[20] Thus no consciousness is or can be entirely alone, for there are no clear hard edges that can prevent penetration by another consciousness, collective or individual. In this way, too, the boundaries of time and space can no longer be said to exist; hence the idea of the *continu psychique*.[21]

It is important to acknowledge that the creation of Unanimism is a direct result of Romains' rejection of religion – specifically Christianity, with an omnipotent God as its head – as a means of creating order and meaning out of the confusion of human existence. He seeks a purely human understanding. As we have seen above, early in his life he had rejected organised religion with a single Deity. In propagating Unanimism, Romains created a surrogate

19 H. Bergson 'Introduction à la métaphysique', *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, January 1903, 3.

20 O. Rony, Introduction to Romains [10] viii.

21 The blurred edges of time and space resulting from osmotic penetration are shown to great effect in Romains' work in *Mort de Quelqu'un* and in the third volume of the *Psyché* trilogy, *Quand le navire …*

religion that shares with Christianity the difficulty that it is not readily understood by the unconverted in purely intellectual terms.

Romains postulates two 'articles of faith' for Unanimism: a belief in a reality of a spiritual nature; and a willingness to accept the possibility of an intuitive communication between the human soul and this 'spiritual' reality. It is the concept of a 'spiritual' reality that gives rise to so many problems of interpretation. The primary aim of Unanimism is to act as a defence against individual solitude. Using language appropriate to describing a religious experience, Romains observes:

> [T]he spirit had to become open to certain impressions … to enter into an immediate and intuitive contact with an order of unrecognised realities, knowing how to bring them into the light of the conscious mind and within the grasp of language; in a word, to have a new experience and the means to express it.[22]

It is in the city that he situates such experience, specifically, in the street:

> The street, an enormous unknown space, is transformed into a cosy, warm, triumphant interior, filled by a sensation of a snug intimacy. There is a feeling of being turned upside down, a tipping of the scales of reality and an appropriation of the space by the body. Total absorption of the street, but also acceptable loss of self within the urban expanse. What the spirit registers is a new porosity of being, where the boundaries of the body lose their clarity.[23]

Romains welcomes the crowd as a potential source of salvation. His poems in *La vie unanime*, for example, celebrate the union of the crowd with the city and the consequent feeling of well being and community. He does not characterise the collectivity as 'society', which is a term open to too many interpretations to suit the purposes of Unanimism. His collectivities are the result of communion momentarily outside time and space of a group united by an activity in a particular place, or by a common thought, created by a particular circumstance.

As he wanders the streets of the city, the Unanimist finds that he is no longer alone, and that the solitude of spirit often feared by many humans

22 J. Romains, 'Petite Introduction à l'Unanimisme', in *Problèmes d'aujourd'hui,* (Paris: Kra, 1931) 159.

23 Rony [7] 67.

is banished by the feeling of solidarity with others through the moment of Unanimist illumination. Unanimism demands the acceptance of the premise that the whole forms a *dieu*. Once this is accepted, each constituent part of the Unanimist experience must be accepted as an element of the divine. As Rony puts it, the Unanimist individual

> admits that he is no longer alone, that he has become a divine element of the whole, from which he cannot withdraw without committing an act of profanity. A paradoxical conclusion of a unique journey: the powers of an individual are never so strong as when he is willing to see himself as an element (*une unité*) and as the forgotten intercessor of a new religion: both priest and devotee simultaneously.[24]

At this point, it is useful to summarise Romains' view. In order to banish human solitude, Unanimism demands that we create gods who *are* us, that is to say, of whom we form an integral part, and which cannot exist without us, indeed, are born of us. We call them into existence by our openness to such a possibility, and our apprehension of a spiritual truth. Such union, which may be formed by a group as small as two, takes us from the *moi*, necessarily alone, to the *nous* that is one of the fundamental attractions of any religion, enabling us to feel part of something greater than ourselves, which will, in a sense, protect us from ourselves. The moment of self-abnegation permits the creation of a new self, and the *moi* re-emerges, like a phoenix reborn from the ashes. Once understood, such a spiritual truth becomes an intuitive rather than an intellectual reality which allows interaction between our material lives and our deep-seated need to experience something beyond that. This is the 'religious' aspect of Unanimism, the religion of man-as-god who is thus able to control his own destiny. (Or, as a simplistic paraphrase of Durkheim would have it, God *is* society.) What Romains proposed – it cannot be too often stressed – was a new vision of reality, of this world, of the here and now, as our only path to personal and immediate salvation. Once God has been disposed of, the way is clear for the creation of some new mythology that will make human life tolerable. A new mythology requires new gods; without gods, mankind cannot ascertain his own place within the universe.

24 Rony [7] 78.

The city was for Romains the temple of his 'religion', where worship leads to divine Knowledge and Power. It represents the movement of a soul from darkness to light – the darkness of the soul in torment after the loss of faith, the blind search for a replacement, gradually illuminated by the realization that '*quelque chose s'est mis à exister*': 'something has come into existence'.[25] That 'something' is called into existence by contact between humans, a communion creating a divine entity.

> In contact with others, with the movements of the city, reality is crossed, 'illuminated', by the intangible radiations of a 'presence' that must be named and created by being named.[26]

One of Romains' definitions of Unanimism is as an acceptance of the idea that 'human reality is not an archipelago of individual solitudes. Unanimism is above all a form of anti-monadism'. In this context, I propose that, in his treatment of his heroines, Jules Romains may be said to have rethought one of Chambers' categories: the position of the woman within the industrialised cities. The privileged power of men in rural society may be somewhat diminished in the urban environment, but women are particularly marginalised in the cities. Although Romains' view of the city as offering an escape from urban solitude applies to both men and women, in his novels he represents women as the agents of 'spiritual' union. It is they who can make the city a place of reconciliation among human beings alienated from each other. In almost all his writing, Romains propounds the city as the site on which new meaning may be established. Indeed, for Romains, the city is, as Chambers suggests, the locus of that 'difficult moment of letting go' and embracing new meaning. It is the essential element in the relocation of human identity.[27] Almost all of Romains' work is set either actually in Paris, or in a specifically urban environment, a positive to the negative of any other location, with Paris as the implicit ideal. All his proposed solutions to the 'problem' of urban

25 Rony [7] 114.

26 Rony [7] 114.

27 See V. Wakerley, 'Paris as Unanimist Hero in the Work of Jules Romains', *Romance Studies* 23 (1994), 105–117, which discusses the interdependence of city and individual as tools for mutual development.

solitude are based on his moment of 'revelation' experienced in an instant of 'fusion' with the city, which creates identity and 'at-one-ment'. This is what Romains meant by 'Unanimism'.

I am suggesting that Romains privileges the male/female couple as the chief means of access to the *univers unanime*, and that it is the woman who determines the success or failure of such a union. The pre-eminence accorded by Romains to the female half of such a union, particularly in the trilogy *Psyché*,[28] but also in his best-known work *Les hommes de bonne volonté*, is due to the particular role ascribed to the woman within the male/female relationship. To understand this, it is necessary to recognise the importance of *lieu* ('place') in Unanimism, for union with one's surroundings is one of the key elements of the Unanimist experience. The *êtres supérieurs* of the Unanimist universe are extraordinary individuals who within the context of their perfectly ordinary lives, achieve perfect union with their environment. Interaction with the city, therefore, is an essential part of the Unanimist experience, and interaction of this kind is specifically demonstrated in the relationships of Jallez and Françoise in *Les hommes de bonne volonté*, and in the experiences of Antonia and Jallez and Marie de Champcenais.

Unanimist union can only be achieved through the interpenetration of place and person. One of the key features of Unanimism, particularly in relation to *Les Hommes de bonne volonté*, is the concept of *témoignage*, the sharing of a moment of Unanimist union, union of person and place, by two individuals who are bound forever by their penetration of the mystery of communion. Added to this is the idea of *le vécu ensemble* ('shared experience of life'), which creates a relationship and an empathy between individuals, an empathy born of mutual experience which affords a suitable ambience for Unanimist union. As Jallez puts it to Jerphanion in *Les hommes de bonne volonté*: 'This is the cement out of which humanity is constructed'.[29] Time and again in Romains' work, instances of the *vécu ensemble* occur as the most exalted form of Unanimist union, which is only experienced by those whose sensibilities have been heightened, so to speak,

28 J. Romains, *Psyché: 1. Lucienne* (Paris: Gallimard, 1922); *2. Le Dieu des corps,* (Paris: Gallimard, 1928); *3. Quand le navire …* , (Paris: Gallimard, 1929). The edition referred to in this article is the collected volume, (Paris: Gallimard Folio, 1985).

29 J. Romains, *Les hommes de bonne volonté* [10] I.1, 85.

by being open to another 'soul'. To open one's 'soul' to another allows the world to enter, through and together with that other. The supreme form of the *vécu ensemble* is the complete union of male and female in a relationship combining love and place. *Psyché* is an extreme example of the power of place and emotion to intermingle to form a new whole. In *Les hommes de bonne volonté*, various female characters, such as Françoise, Antonia and Marie de Champcenais, are all agents of Unanimist union within the city. Through their relationships with their male partners and their environment, they create a new Unanimist entity.

Romains' ideas regarding the *univers unanime* changed significantly between his early years as a poet and his later career as a novelist, as Marie-Claire Blancquart has argued convincingly in an article entitled 'De la déification à la bonne volonté'.[30] In his poetry, particularly in that related to his love affair with Gabrielle (later his first wife), he shows the couple as a possible danger to an open and liberal view of the world, as it may be too restrictive. Later, however, Blancquart suggests that a less rigorous conception of the distinctions between Unanimist groups allowed him to present the couple as a basis of security from which to interact with the world more positively. Specifically, she identifies *Psyché* as a turning point, and goes on to observe that

> the intimacy of a relationship between two people is considered as positive, and not limiting. [31]

In his later novels, Romains proposes that the 'divine' element is at its apogee in the union of the couple, and that the woman is the instigator and catalyst of such divinity. The intention of Unanimism was to create an understanding among all human beings by the elimination of their isolation. Romains suggests that women have an indispensable role to play in ending human conflict by the formation of a unit that can offer an alternative to isolation while simultaneously opening the individual to contact of the most intense kind with all other members of humanity. In *Psyché*, the writer explores the possibility of creating with the other a psychic reality that replaces material

30 M-C. Blancquart, 'De la déification à la bonne volonté', *BAJR* 55–56 (Autumn 1990) 5–14.

31 Blancquart [30]10–11.

reality, even when the one is physically apart from the other. Unanimist union, in its most perfect form, consists of lovers who are continually present for each other, and it permits complete presence, regardless of physical limitations.

Human isolation is ended by the union of souls in the *continu psychique* through love. The heroine of *Psyché*, Lucienne, makes sexual union a rite of passage, an initiation not merely into sexual experience, but into a world of worship through and of the body, making it an explicit moment of communion with the divine. Romains gives supreme importance to the act of union, affording it the status of a religion, with rites of worship to be observed. The god to whom these acts of worship are addressed is the Unanimist *dieu* created by the pair of lovers in the universe of love. Romains' use of terminology with explicitly religious overtones reveals Unanimism as a 'religion', in the sense of having a set of precepts by which to give life a significance beyond mere existence.[32] It is entirely in accordance with the precepts of Unanimist fusion that sexual union is characterised as a religious experience, leading to the same kind of ecstasy of communion with the godhead as obtains in many forms of transcendental mysticism.

The sensation of completion described here is the very antithesis of the empty solitude of a world without God, which Unanimism was designed to counter. Woman, as the Other, as *ce qui n'est pas toi* – 'that which is not yourself' – facilitates entry into that other world of union. Love is a religion, with not another person as the object of adoration but rather with that single entity created by fusion with the Other – whereby Other becomes Self – as deity. All rites thereof, all prayers, all worship are directed towards the release from isolation, which is the object of any *unio mystica*. The omnipresence of God is replaced by the omnipresence of the entity created by union between Self and the Other. Though Romains deems friendship tremendously important in gaining access to the *vie unanime*, for him it does not have the power of the emotional and sexual fusion of man and woman. In his *Psyché* trilogy, Romains makes the Other as woman the essential component that permits

32 Romains distinguishes between *vivre* and *exister* – the former being simply 'dull meaningless life unilluminated by Unanimism, which alone can raise it to the superior level of *exister*'. D. Boak, *Jules Romains*, Twayne's World Author Series No. 280 (New York: Twayne, 1974) 26.

completion of the Unanimist whole, comprising two individuals united in emotional, sexual and spiritual fusion.

In her article 'Luce Irigaray and Divine Matter', Alison Martin observes that it has generally been the preserve of the more conservative thinker to promote the idea of a divine existence, 'clinging defensively to the certainties of a guaranteed order'.[33] She goes on to say, however, that for Luce Irigaray, the attempt to 'envisage a beyond to the confines of patriarchy and indeed, to envisage an ethic of sexual difference' has led to the postulation of a female divine, which represents a clear break with that 'guaranteed order'. The notion of the female divine necessarily demands the abandonment of traditional Western religious beliefs, which, as we have seen, Romains rejected early in his life. In the Christian tradition, until very recently, the notion of any female part in the Trinity has been deemed little short of blasphemous. Irigaray suggests that the only access for woman to the Trinity is through the son, 'to become (*devenir*) divine … through her son'[34] – that is, that maternity is the only means for a woman to fulfil her role. But instead of reinforcing the idea of the desirability of perpetuating society through marriage, procreation, and general maintenance of the status quo, Romains in his narrative effectively excludes the family as the basis for society. Romains explicitly rejects maternity as the female role, and offers instead the opportunity, not to give birth to God, but to *become* that god, in a process that Irigaray so often refers to as *devenir*.

Martin suggests that Irigaray is 'setting out the structural possibility or necessity of the divine'.[35] Romains can be seen to be offering that divine which Irigaray posits as necessary, if not in an exclusively female form, then at least approaching some kind of 'equality of opportunity' for women in that regard. While the divine has not been exclusively appropriated for the female in his work, Romains was able, in the gap created by sexual difference, at least to envisage the possibility of a transcendent feminine power beyond what

33 A. Martin, 'Luce Irigaray and Divine Matter', *Women and Representation: Women Teaching French Series of Occasional Papers*, vol. 3, ed. Diana Knight and Judith Still (Nottingham: U. of Nottingham, 1995) 132–141.

34 L. Irigaray, *Ce Sexe qui n'en est pas un,* (Paris : Minuit, 1977) 141.

35 Martin [33] 133, 135.

Martin refers to as 'images of weekend Mother Earth cults'.[36] In an interesting way, by giving his female characters access to the divine of the collective consciousness, Romains anticipates Luce Irigaray's more recent conception of the female divine. Irigaray proposes that woman must, in order to access the female divine, define herself according to her own *genre*, as man does. In the possibility of forming part of the Unanimist *dieu*, Romains offers to male and particularly female characters a form of what Irigaray calls *devenir*, which she says, means 'to fulfil the fullness of what we are capable of becoming'. This is what Romains intends Unanimistic union to be.

By demonstrating that each individual, female and male, may form part of the Unanimist union, implicitly Romains offers a new vision of society. By elevating women to a role equal to, though different from, that of men within the city, Romains has revalorised the urban space. By making the city the site of his new vision of society, he envisages an urban space that does not destroy communities and alienate people from one another. What Romains proposed to find in the French city may be regarded as an attempt, in the words of Chambers, to 'rethink the purpose, direction and limits' of modern life.

36 Martin [33] 133.

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Henriette Roos

Revising Stanley's Footsteps:

Encountering the 'Other' in *Darkest England* (1996) by Christopher Hope

1. Introduction

Surely the best known phrase in nineteenth-century travel writing is Henry Stanley's rhetorical question: 'Dr. Livingstone, I presume?' – a phrase dating from 1871, and one to which many facetious and trivialized meanings have been attached ever since. But from a current point of view, there is also much more to it than just being an idiomatic cliché. Within the context of its historical and geographical origin, the social and political status of the original speaker and of the one he addressed, and because of the cultural and ideological echoes resonating through the ensuing century, these four words encapsulate the tone, attitude and perspective which not only characterize colonial history but also suggest some of the complex issues surrounding postcolonialism today. In 1996 Christopher Hope, a South African expatriate living in London, published *Darkest England*, a text which inverts the whole literary tradition – a tradition which can be called 'the rhetoric of Empire'[1] – epitomized by Stanley's writing and especially that of his most famous book, *In Darkest Africa*. Hope's inversion is based on the satirical recreation of voyages and discoveries, of barbarians and colonizers, heathens and missionaries as seen through the eyes of a modern day Dr. Livingstone.

1 David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing and Imperial Administration* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

2. Narrator and Narrative

Darkest England is structured as a multi-layered narrative. The 'Foreword', signed and dated (March 1995) by Christopher Hope, and the 'Postscript' form an encompassing frame. In these two framing parts a narrator speaks in the first person of how he was given a torn parcel containing two notebooks written by one David Mungo Booi, of what he did with these notes and how he disposed of Booi's tattered hat which was also included in the package of books. Within this frame, a second narrative unfolds. The contents of the notebooks are presented in eleven separate chapters, edited by Hope in the form of footnotes and the implicit translation of some passages originally written in 'the vivid, earthy Afrikaans of the Karoo nomads',[2] but now with David Mungo Booi as the first-person narrator.

The story-line can be summarized as follows. On a visit to a small Karoo town in South Africa during that country's first democratic elections of 1994, a narrator called Christopher Hope is given two notebooks by a group of impoverished Karoo nomads who, like David Booi, regard themselves as the descendants of the already extinct San people. Hope hears from them and reads for himself how David, a foundling adopted and educated by an 'English Boer', was delegated by his people during 1993 to travel to England to carry back the treaty granted them in 1877 by Queen Victoria, the 'Old Auntie with Diamonds in her hair' (xiv), and now to seek the patronage of her great-granddaughter the Queen, because their 'lives were trampled like those of dung beetles by black people and whites and browns' (13). The notebooks chronicle this mission he undertook in the name of the 'Bushmen Society for promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of England', a journey also intended to explore the possibilities of establishing a colony there and exploiting its commercial possibilities for his people 'back home'. On arrival David is jailed as an illegal immigrant while he imagines himself to be a respected guest of the Queen, and just before forced deportation he is released into

2 Christopher Hope, *Darkest England* (London: Macmillan/Picador, 1996) xviii. All parenthetical notes refer to this text.

the hands of a wacky, defrocked bishop with whom he stays amongst the strange people of the village of Little Musing. Here he revitalizes the life of the bishop's daughter Beth, a woman who, because of her huge, swaying posterior, lives as a recluse in England, but whom David regards as a remarkable beauty. He is stalked and poached for a mad peer's safari park, fox-hunted but noisily rescued by Green activists, detained in a madhouse but then released into the community without receiving any treatment. He exchanges his little bag of uncut 'star stones' for far too little money, outwits the security at Buckingham Castle by posing as a fruit dish, and finally, sadder and wiser, has a gratifyingly frank discussion with the monarch and her spouse. In sympathy with their reduced position, he offers them sanctuary in the Great Karoo, in a kind of Royal Game Park, where their heritage and person will be respected, an offer which they seriously consider but in the end regretfully decline. David never returned from this trip to England; his final whereabouts and fate remained unknown. His notebooks and hat were returned in a mysterious way, the latter eventually 'buried' along the lonely Karoo roadside by 'Christopher Hope'. The inscription on the pile of stones above it is the same as that on Livingstone's monument in Westminster Abbey.

Christopher Hope is mainly known as a novelist and has been awarded some of the most prestigious literary prizes in Britain and South Africa, although his best-known works have been published since he settled in England at age 30 in 1974. Themes of exile, of isolation within refugee communities and of existential loneliness permeate his works. His characters can be summarized in the same way as he has described himself, namely as 'one who would inevitably end up a stranger in his own country'.[3] However, the images of alienation and disillusionment are usually couched in witty, even 'hilariously funny' terms (as claimed on the book cover). And it is with this same satirical perspective that Hope exposes in *Darkest England* the ridiculous cruelties of the colonial mind, a book described in the *Times Literary Supplement* as 'often entertaining, more often angrily moving'.[4] Most

3 Pamela S. Dear, ed., *Contemporary Authors. New Revision Series,* Volume 47 (New York: Gale Research Inc., 1995) 200.

4 Eric Korn, 'Heart of Whiteness', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 22 March 1996: 4851, 25.

reviewers, however, have described the novel as a modern traveller's tale, written in the mode of *Gulliver's Travels* or even the works of Henry Fielding.

3. Postcolonial Experiences

The complex nature of postcolonial writing, and the disparate nature of what constitutes settler and postcolonial experiences, are startlingly revealed in this text. Hope himself was in his childhood part of the internal colonialism of Apartheid South Africa, though he became a refugee from this state through self-exile. But he also is a settler/colonial who migrated to the metropolitan capital, and one who – like the conquered others – rails against the colonial power which in Africa colonized both black and white, though in different ways. He uses the freedom of expression that the English language and the English culture permit, to – as has been said of V.S. Naipaul[5] – articulate the 'fractures' and 'discordances' caused by his personal experience of constant transition, failed acculturation and underlying alienation in the new English life. In the person of the 'bushman' David Mungo Booi, a representative of that most reviled and mistreated of all colonized peoples, Hope develops as the central idea of his book the theme of how bankrupt and ridiculous, but also how long-lasting, the notions of Empire and Colonialism are. Booi becomes a present-day version of the Imperialist explorers, thus displacing the conventional representations of Western authority by the 'act of doubling the white man's image'.[6] Being mimicked, the colonizer is cut down to size in crafted and complex ways.

The novel is developed within a familiar socio-political context in South Africa and Britain during 1993–1994. Through allusion and direct references, the South African history of racial conflict is part of Booi's narrative. This in-

5 Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors.* (Oxford/New York: Oxford U. P., 1995) 177–179.

6 Boehmer [5] 172.

cludes the many wars between black and white and between white and white, and with both groups participating in the genocide of the San people. The historical *motif* culminates in the democratic government elected in 1994, an event of which Booi only hears when he is 'found' deep in the English countryside by a latter-day Stanley, who greets him with the words 'David Mungo Booi, *ek sê* (I presume)' (185). This is also an event that brought these descendants of the San – in fiction and in fact – very little of a new lease on life. From David Mungo Booi's perspective, it is the timeless wanderings of the Ash people (the *'karretjies mense'*), the anonymous nomads who criss-cross the Karoo on their little donkey carts in search of piecemeal employment on the isolated farms, which give history focus. He recaps their history by recalling

> [the ancient 'First Best Time'] when the land was fat and all the fountains flowing, loved by the she-rain falling softly from heaven … [when they] roamed as wide as the wind (4),

an age followed by the times of being hunted and killed by the whites. Then came the short-lived joy of the 'Second Best Time', that season when the red-clad soldiers from Britain '[k]icked the arses of the Boers all the way from the Snow Mountains to Murderer's Karoo' (4). In describing the typical 'rhetoric of Empire', Spurr identifies a 'discourse of negation', that is, the colonial text portraying Africa as having no history before the colonizers arrived.[7] This 'absence of history' is starkly corrected when it becomes evident that from David's point of view, the arrival of the colonizers caused the ancient and rich San history to be destroyed.

David's travels through England are contextualized by a dismal social structure characterizing the early nineties: the bankruptcy and suicide of fraudulent businessmen, the vicious murder of little Jamie Bulger by his young playmates, the soccer violence, the race riots, the burning down of Windsor Castle, the conflict and chaos in the Conservative Party and the Anglican Church, the Royal divorces. In short, that period referred to by Queen Elizabeth as her personal *annus horribilis*, and experienced and described by a perplexed Booi as the 'true and accurate portrait of this near-mythical island race' (99).

7 Spurr [1] 98.

4. Text and Intertext

The intertextual references in *Darkest England* are organized into an extremely dense and multi-layered structure. The nineteenth-century travel books of David Livingstone, Henry Stanley and Mungo Park, and the writings of 'imperial' authors such as Kipling and the poets Keats and Shelley, form the most important strain of intertext. But numerous idiomatic clichés also intersperse his narration: like Booi's speculation whether 'there were corners of foreign fields that were for ever England?' or his reaction during a sexual 'assault' to 'lie back and think of Bushmanland' (100, 179). These references illustrate the story line of the baby David Mungo Booi being educated as a little Englishman by his Redneck master, an education based on his master's own lonely and drunken delusions about a far-off civilized European culture.

> From his old, rich books he taught me to say my letters, and told wonderful stories of horrible darkness and violent death, heathen tribes and disgusting savagery, as related by the great English explorers on their travels through darkest Africa from Bushmanland to Stanleypool, from Bonga's country to the mountains of the Moon.
> Their names became my hymn; I still mutter them to myself when I wish to sleep: Baines, Baker, Bruce, Burton, Grant, Kingsley, Livingstone, Speke and Stanley. … Even now they make, when strung together like beads, a little Anglican necklace (7).

The passages on pages 112 and 214 give but a few more examples of this frame of reference. But, in Boehmer's terms, it is through 'ventriloquizing the colonizer's voice',[8] that David Booi subverts and upturns the dominant meanings. Passages from the great travel writers taken over verbatim or in a slightly rewritten form appear throughout the narrative, and Mungo Park's *Travels in the Interior of Africa* (1799) especially provides a significant source of information.[9] The lofty aims of the Africa Association, that venerable institution underwriting the fixation with British Imperial Discovery, which sent

8 Boehmer [5] 173.

9 Mungo Park, *Travels in the Interior of Africa.* (London: The Folio Society, 1984 [1860]).

Mungo Park on his tragic way, are renewed in the words of the wily but illiterate Karoo Nomads when they decide to send David overseas. When Booi is almost raped by the frustrated bimbo wifelings of his captor, the eccentric Lord Goodlove, the whole of Chapter 7 in Park's classic book is re-created in Chapter 8 of *Darkest England.* The similarities continue – David Booi, like Mungo Park, never returned from his trip; both were evidently drowned in the great rivers they wanted to explore (the Thames, the Niger), and all that remained of both men's belongings were their notebooks and their hats. Through these references, conventional meanings are destabilized, generating new and ironic interpretations. Once again, the reader recognizes binary stereotypes such as self/other, hero/victim and civilized/savage – but now the traditional roles are reversed. And in the reversal, a sad awareness is conveyed of not only how senseless, but also how enduring these stereotypes are.

There is, however, a second text that resonates through David Booi's tale. This is a collection of poetry, which, according to the publication date, he could not likely have known about, but which Hope in his role as editor, refers to several times. The text is *Return of the Moon. Stories from the //Xam*, Stephen Watson's rewritings of nineteenth-century prose narratives by the San.[10] Watson based his poems on the famous Bleek and Lloyd transcriptions of folklore, songs and other stories told by Bushmen convicts languishing in the Breakwater Prison in Cape Town during the 1870s. By referring to people and places and terms appearing in Watson's poetry, the ancient narratives of a people almost completely extinct are once more recalled. By recreating in a different context the same mood of those early lyrical expressions, now devoid of all satire and sneering, the idea that David indeed speaks for his long-gone ancestors (and does so in a similar mood of nostalgia, with a great sense of loss and by means of beautiful imagery) is firmly set. A pervasive sense of doom is also established through these words: what happened to his forebears foretells his own fate. At the beginning of the last chapter, David's weariness and disillusionment are evident in his description of the wet and dark English park:

10 Stephen Watson, *Return of the Moon. Versions from the //Xam.* (Cape Town: The Carrefour Press, 1991).

> Too much water is never good; it sends people mad. !Kwala gave his creatures dry seasons, deserts, thirsts, so that they should ache for the love of the All-High and pray for his gift, the sweet she-rain to fall and make all below grow fat and moist. For everything God loves is wet.
> In my country when it rains all creatures pray, for then all the world is holy. The green succulents step closer to the edge of the old dam that has not seen water in living memory. … But in England their rain means nothing to them; they consider it merely water. …
> I slept as I imagine one will sleep at the last, when the after-world awaits, a land – it is said – of locusts and honey. Those of my family, knowing that water and melons and meat cannot last, will build me a shelter against wind and sand and hyena, and, leaving what little they can in the way of wild onions and brandybush berries, slip away for ever. (247–49)

These lines are in imagery and theme – and sometimes even in the use of specific phrases and words – directly linked to poems like 'The abandoned old woman' and 'The rain that is male'.[11]

Through these and many other such passages the 'colonial rhetorical tradition in which non-Western peoples are essentially denied the power of language and are represented as mute or incoherent',[12] is completely annulled. An alternative rhetoric, that of the 'power, depth and beauty of the oral traditions of the San'[13] is recognised and revived.

5. Colonial Counter-Discourse

An absorbing counter-discourse to the conventional colonial rhetoric takes shape in *Darkest England* – a discourse developed on many different narratological levels. The authorial text – which I see as including the title, the cover illustration, the subtitle and motto, the detailed subheadings of each chapter, the contents of many of the footnotes and the direct comparisons

11 Watson [9] 43 and 48.
12 Spurr [1] 104.
13 Watson [9] 9.

made in the final 'postscript' – gives perhaps the clearest indications that it is with the eyes of the postcolonial, mostly cynical author at the end of the twentieth century that the 'great' colonial accomplishments of the West are seen and evaluated. The well known typographical style of early travel books and novels is visually recreated with surprising effects, as can be seen in the subtitle:

> The Life and Strange
> Surprising Adventures
> of David Mungo Booi
> who lived among
> the English.
>
> As told in his own
> Words and written
> down by Himself. (1)

and the subheadings of the chapters:

> Chapter One
> The author tells something of himself,
> his people and the great Promise made by Old Auntie
> with Diamonds in Her Hair; his expedition abroad
> and arrival among the English (3)

The illustration on the cover mockingly uses the image of that other intrepid colonial, the Belgian comic book character Tintin in the Congo, showing four sturdy, bowler-hatted Englishmen carrying a black explorer in a sedan chair into the mysterious Heart of England. The travel writings of Livingstone, Stanley and Mungo Park are 'resurrected' in style and content (see e. g. 1, 3, 187, 112), but by their use in a fictional work and in the portrayal of a fictional character, simultaneously diminished to fictions themselves.

Many of the rhetorical features recognized as characteristic of colonial discourse appear in this novel, startling in their anachronistic bluntness, but also with an unsettling and ironic impact on the reader of today. I found it revealing to read *Darkest England* alongside David Spurr's *The Rhetoric of Empire. Colonial Discourse in Journalism: Travel Writing and Imperial Administration* (1995) in which he analyses modern European colonial discourse. Hope's satiric adherence to this kind of rhetoric is obvious. For instance, both

Spurr and Mary Louise Pratt refer to the rhetorical convention based on the visual mastery of a scene, the monarch-of-all-I-survey gesture, typical of all Victorian explorers and especially dear to Henry Morton Stanley.[14] This surveillance implied that the explorer, filled with self-satisfied pride in the advantages and innate superiority of Western ways, saw Africa as it might become under colonial rule. With this same eye of appropriation, the explorer/author also invaded the dwellings of the primitive and exotic 'heathens', regarding these as the lowly locations of their inferior cultures, always comparing them unfavourably with civilization 'back home'. As a final stage in this visual penetration, there is the minute observation of the human (African) body itself. Stanley, for instance, continually comments on the bodies of the Africans he encounters, describing them in the same quantifying way as one would do with landmarks on a piece of land.[15] When David Booi travels through England, he observes and is observed by others in an almost exact repetition of Stanley's original 'imperial gaze':

> Their land is a world made of grass, monotonous, broken by trees or small woods with bulges here and there that pass for hills and a few mountains. I estimated that one cannot run in any direction for more than an hour without coming across a batch of little huts that seem to burrow into the cracks and creases of the green, grassy skin like fleas in an old springbuck pelt. The natives, on this island, are less occupants than infestations. It is clear that they breed like rock rabbits, and have done so since the beginning of time. If you were to slice through the centre of a tall standing ant-heap in the Karoo and examine the writhing life inside, you might have some idea of their clustering, scurrying, teeming millions. So it is in England (75). …
> Here we approach the primitive origins of the famous 'stiff upper lip'. This may even be a form of penile substitution. Perhaps their peculiarly repressive sexual culture allows stiffening of the lip, where it frowns upon tumescence in other procreative organs? (77; see also e. g. 113–114).

Through parody, the arrogant stare of colonialism is mocked in front of the more tentative readers who are now watching with end-of-the-twentieth-

14 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. (London: Routledge, 1992) 201; Spurr [1] 17.

15 Henry M Stanley, *In Darkest Africa, or the Quest, Rescue, and Retreat of Emin Governor of Equatoria*. (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1890) 361–365.

century eyes. The brutal judgements of what Pratt calls 'imperial eyes' are thrust into our politically correct intellectual lives, not only causing discomfort because the colonial roles are now reversed, but also because the harshness of the description reveals a narrative perspective directed by disdain. A puzzling ambiguity is implied: David can be praised or pitied, but also feared.

Other rhetorical conventions are exploited in a similar way. To mention but a few: colonial texts repeatedly explain the characters and morals (or, more usually, the lack of them) of the primitive people in terms of nature and the climate.[16] This view also sees Africa as a hotbed of sexual passions and excesses, one big erotic swamp, a manifestation of primitive subordination to natural forces. To David such a synergy also seems a given: the outer appearance of the English with their pustular faces, bad teeth, long noses and long lower lips, their inability to pronounce sounds properly and their repressive sexual culture, he naturally ascribes to their grey climate and choked countryside (30, 75-77). The allegorization of colonized nations in terms of the female figure, of an exotic mistress and harems full of willing wives, and of the trans-racial love affair as the pinnacle of a colonial adventure, are well-known nineteenth-century clichés.[17] David also becomes involved in a related form of discourse, as the seducer and the seduced. The sight of his permanently erect *qwai-xkhwe* drives Beth and her father wild and causes three frustrated 'wives' of the mad Lord Goodlove to throw themselves at David with glee. These 'seraglio scenes', where the traveller is inspected by foreign females with a scientific-erotic gaze, are repeatedly described in *Travels in the Interior of Africa* by Mungo Park.[18] Although David tries to behave like a gentleman (also taking into consideration the growing jealousy of the young soccer-hooligan warriors of Little Musing) and treats Beth with great courtesy, she stalks him as a hungry hunter does a fat eland. She goes 'native' for a while, bare breasted and wearing grass skirts, camping in the rectory

16 E. W. Said in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, eds., *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader* (New York: Harvester/Wheatsheaf, 1993), 145; Spurr [1] 180.

17 Spurr [1] 171; Pratt [14] 81–85.

18 Pratt [14] 82.

garden and singing to the moon. David is left musing about how this attraction would annoy his people back home, and wondering if by such an intimate relationship with one of the locals, 'some of their less admirable qualities would not rub off on one?' (124–125). These words echo Stanley's warnings about African women, whose sexual attractions he saw literally as a threat to the white man's life.

In the medium of language and literature, assimilation, or subversion by imitation has remained to anti-colonials an important mode of resistance.[19] In *Darkest England* a resistance to the standard colonial binary notions (e. g. Primitive/Civilized, Africa/the West, Margin/Metropolitan and Self/Other) steers the development of the narrative structure and of the ideological stance. But it is a process of assimilated resistance during which these notions acquire complex and relative meanings, their frames of reference often changed and even undermined. For instance, even in a postcolonial world, London and the monarchy still constitute to many once colonized communities the metropolitan power, one that David respects and upon which he depends. But this 'power' reveals itself to a gullible David as corrupt, crumbling and disdained. David's offer to relocate Queen Elizabeth to the Great Karoo, where respect for age and tradition still exists, implies that it is in the so-called margins, however impoverished and isolated they are, that meaningful life can be found. In the termite-like suburbs of the big cities, the new primitives reign, while among the nomads there are civilized neighbourliness, caring and love. The conventional clichéd distinction between Self and Other is given a new significance when examined from David's point of view. The bishop addresses him as 'my poor, deluded son', and David's response to this patronising attitude is:

> They refer to all and sundry in familial terms: father, son, sister, mother – kinship terms used in a very casual fashion. Yet, I soon realized that they have a very vague idea of the patterns of kinship. Perhaps they understood something of them once, but the memory has faded like the duiker's urine in the desert. For instance, they know nothing of joking partners, as we do. Their system appears functional to the point of awkwardness: all foreigners are regarded as avoidance partners; all related natives are

19 Boehmer, [5] 174.

> held to be close partners, or kith and kin. Or, as they say in their economical way, the world is divided into 'Them' and 'Us'. This is, in our terms, a crude distinction, but it seems they know no other. (p. 72)

Mary Louise Pratt uses the 'idiosyncratic' term *autoethnography* to refer to 'instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that *engage with* the colonizer's own terms'.[20] By this she means that the former subject, the 'other', uses the traditional genres and narrative structures of the metropolitan culture, and that the idioms appropriated and transformed are often those of travel and exploration writing:

> Autoethnographic texts are typically heterogeneous on the reception end as well, usually addressed both to the metropolitan reader and to literate sectors of the speaker's own social group, and bound to be received very differently by each.

I would use this term to describe what Hope does in *Darkest England*, in this case, however, dealing with an unusually complicated version of the conflict Colonizer/Colonized. The part of colonizer should obviously be awarded to Britain and that of the colonized to David Booi, even though David intends at the outset of his journey to be just the opposite. But as I have argued above (Section Three: Postcolonial Experiences), Hope himself can be viewed as both colonizer and colonized – once part of a colonial settler community, but eventually settling uneasily in the superior metropolis. Putting David Booi in Stanley's shoes is thus not merely satire. Debunking nineteenth-century travel writing and therefore the rhetoric of Empire, also implies a questioning of the (metropolitan) literary culture with which Hope himself has become identified, and therefore reveals the author's unease with his adopted identity.

20 Pratt [14] 7.

6. Conclusion

One could say that in telling the story of David Mungo Booi, Hope also perpetuates a colonial stereotype; that the white male author still manipulates the uncomprehending native whether he is presented as a 'noble savage' or as the 'stooge from Bongo-Bongo land' (44).[21] Indeed, it is true: David is mistreated and appears to be outsmarted at every turn; in the end he is even killed, probably by the kind of young thug he often pitied but in the end misunderstood. This fate, however, mirrors more than the face of a typical colonial victim. He also becomes representative of all modern-day minorities, going down fighting against the vitiating effects of globalization and neo-colonialism. But as an individual, David never loses faith in himself or his beliefs – a very remarkable revision of nineteenth-century self-assurance – and perhaps that is why he is no stereotype. His reflection of his relationship with Beth verbalizes this attitude:

> But the strength of the attraction was there, and it can be explained, I believe, by very compelling characteristics we held in common: in a world where others found us odd, we saw that we were beautiful; and in a world dominated by height, two smaller persons found each other truly towering (125).

It is also possible to read the book as a personal, rather truculent attack on a society that is in fact much bigger and more complex than the selected slice portrayed in Hope's text. The reader may see the railing against an England of 1993 and the Old South Africa before 1994 as an outdated fight, and decide that the editor/narrator speaks too loudly from an individual, highly subjective point of view. Both Hope and his character David Mungo Booi can be called cultural half-breeds in Derridean terms, 'displaced identities belonging to the margins of two worlds'.[22] Revising Stanley's footsteps from the streets of the London of today speaks of a simultaneous nostalgia for and disdain of the absolute certainties of an epoch long gone. *Darkest England* in many

21 Boehmer [5].
22 Spurr [1] 196.

ways reflects the disappointments, quirks and tensions characteristic of our late postmodern age, and these general ailments surface clearly and often in the book.

But in acknowledging its signal excesses and limits, I read *Darkest England* primarily as a particularly interesting and very topical postcolonial text. It is a hybrid work, both factual and highly imaginative, displaying bitter satire as well as moving, lyrical lines. It appears culturally heterogeneous, structured by means of multi-layered images, and is always subversive in its intent. The specific postcolonial questions of Race and Politics and Power form the centre of the book.

To the readers not part of once-British-dominated Africa, many obscurities and silences exist which will complicate their comprehension of and grip on the text. The South African family and place names – e. g. Prettyman Lottering and his wife Niksie, the farms Alles Verloren and Abraham's Grave in the Murderer's Karoo – are in many instances fictitious, but always recognizable as absolutely regional, and mostly emotionally and politically loaded as well. The idiom is very often locally rooted and represents distinct perceptions of a uniquely South African world: the policemen and shopkeepers of the small Karoo towns; the inter-racial snobbery and strife; the anti-British sentiment; the delusions and idealism which form part and parcel of our political life. The postmodernist notions of meaning as something arbitrary, of identity as an illusion and of value as relative at best, are resisted and rejected in this text. To David and the Ash People of the Karoo, life is certainly capricious, but hunger and poverty and a history of pain are realities which they experience every day. Being part of the postcolonial discourse would have very little practical impact on their still colonized world: 'The word of white people … was worth no more than sheepshit' (16).

Darkest England is a text that belongs to the grainy, agitated and sometimes contradictory writings of most once-colonized literatures, a creative contribution to the differentiated postcolonial discourse of our day.[23] This is a discourse understanding and aware of the particularity of different textual

23 See Boehmer [5] 248 and Spurr, [1] 184–201.

situations, of locating texts in their specific worlds of meaning, of resisting formulaic, and thus restrictive, views of our world. It makes possible the encountering of the 'Other', respecting and getting to know more about that 'Other', recognizing the complexities and contradictions and not trying to construct only more copies of an idealised 'Self'.

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Patricia O'Flaherty

'Which Native Land?':

The *Pied Noir* Writer in Exile

Edward W. Said situates Camus in a history of French colonial writing, identifying his works 'as a metropolitan transfiguration of the colonial dilemma', and referring to the *colons* as a 'community with nowhere to go'.[1] This phrase encapsulates the subject of my paper: how does the white African writer, in this case specifically the *pied noir* writer, react when he or she has nowhere to go? The two writers who form the object of this study, Albert Camus and Marie Cardinal, together with many others, write in the space between colonial centre and postcolonial periphery, a gap in which the *pied noir* writer is acutely aware of the sense of void. Each author seeks a reason for his or her displacement in space and time (having become an anachronism in the postcolonial situation and an absence in the geography of the colonial centre), and attempts to explain and fill the vacuum of existence, finding consolation in psychoanalysis in the case of Cardinal, or in an appeal to history, geography and tribe, as Camus does. Ultimately both authors find a home or a substitute for home in the act of writing.

In describing the violence of the colonial situation, Frantz Fanon explains that

> [t]he violence of the colonial regime and the counter-violence of the native balance each other and respond to each other in an extraordinary reciprocal homogeneity.[2]

He goes on to conclude that the only resolution to the colonial problem is for the colonist to leave the colonized country. It seems to me that, in the light of

1 Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1994) 184.

2 F. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (London: Penguin, 1990) 69. Translation of *Les damnés de la terre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961) 122.

the literature before us, Fanon's argument is accurate but cannot take account of the situation forty years on. Fanon is evidently concerned with the terrible violence of colonialism and its horrific consequences. His view is naturally focused on the victims of colonialism, and not on the trauma experienced by the perpetrators or their descendants. Fanon, therefore, is not interested in the fate of the *colon* and takes no account of the fact that the colonialists or their descendants have nowhere to go, as they belong neither in the newly independent country nor in the metropolis. Published in 1961, Fanon's *Les damnés de la terre* looks to the end of colonialism; at the beginning of the millennium, I am interested in considering the problems raised by the *pied noir* writer because these problems have repercussions today in postcolonial African writing and in African society.

When the *pied noir* writer does re-emigrate to the metropolis, the violence of departure and the trauma of arrival create a feeling of desperation born of homelessness, which is explored by the writer in terms to be discussed. The question of where to go is of interest because it has generated a body of literature, to which belong the two texts to be examined here, Camus' *Le premier homme* and Cardinal's *Les mots pour le dire*. The *pied noir* writer is born of violence; the disorder and chaos surrounding the *pied noir* writer is related to his or her writing, as it is to that of other authors born of colonialism. Severe disturbance is directly linked to writing through the process that Derrida describes as the rupture of writing.[3] Cardinal and Camus use memory to inquire into their personal past and into the history of the colonial enterprise; through writing they enter into a process of healing, whereby a new nation is created in the mind. Cardinal's attempt to heal herself is apparently successful, but Camus' must be judged to be a failure since *Le premier homme* is an unfinished text.

Current postcolonial criticism emphasizes the heterogeneity of the postcolonial enterprise. As Bill Ashcroft observes,

> We are not stuck with a simple binary opposition of colonizer and colonized, but a 'heteroglossic' overlapping of perspectives.[4]

3 J. Derrida, *L'écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967) 317.

To this extent, Camus and Cardinal are doing the same as other writers living in – or in exile from – the Third World: exploring identity in terms of 'nation and narration'. I wish to examine the 'postcoloniality' of the *pied noir* writer's situation and his or her attempt to search for 'rootedness in [a land] where they are forever seen by the indigene as immigrants'.[5] How does this group of writers, represented here by Camus and Cardinal, see itself? How do these writers conceive of nation and native land? How do they view colonialism and postcolonialism? How do they define themselves? Is the white or *pied noir* writer necessarily outside the postcolonial arena? Can we define writing in binary terms? Are Camus and Cardinal writing from inside or outside Africa?

Camus and Cardinal may be examined as the male and female specimens of the *pied noir* writer. Both were born in Algeria, Camus in Bône in 1913 and Cardinal in Algiers in 1929. Both writers have roots in Algeria. Cardinal was brought up there and lived through the Algerian War (1954–1962); she emigrated to France with her family after the war. Camus lived as an adult in France and died in 1960, without completing his autobiographical work, *Le premier homme*, written in 1959, during the Algerian War, and published for the first time in 1994.[6] The violence they experience in the colonial situation marks both writers and is reflected, in different ways, in their writings. They are nevertheless drawn inexorably back to the land of Algeria (both literally and in the realm of imagination), with which they feel a sensual affinity never experienced with the so-called 'motherland' of France. Physicality distinguishes the writings of these two authors, the body constituting an essential element of the text. In Camus' *Le premier homme* and Cardinal's *Les mots pour le dire*, family is one of the overriding issues, as is the search for identity in terms of the parent; the mother is an important figure in both texts, and the father is also pivotal in spite or because of his absence. They differ,

4 B. Ashcroft, 'Against the Tide of Time: Peter Carey's Interpellation into History', *Writing the Nation: Self and County in Post-Colonial Imagination*, ed. John C. Hawley (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1996) 205.

5 Ashcroft [4] xvi.

6 Albert Camus, *Le premier homme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994). Quotations are indicated parenthetically as *PH*, with page number. Translations are my own.

however, in social background and political orientation. Cardinal comes from a privileged social class of landowners and is pro-independence, whereas Camus' well-known family situation is poor and working class, and his ideological stance is essentially reactionary. None the less, the autochthonous people of Algeria are present in both texts, and both authors feel greater affinity for the Arab than for the French.

Les mots pour le dire[7] is an account of psychoanalysis, during which the narrator is cured of a physical ailment (continuous bleeding) and a psychological complaint (a type of madness, which she refers to as 'La Chose'). The narrator discovers through psychoanalysis that the damage to her psyche, as a child, is caused by her mother's declaration that her birth was the result of an unwanted pregnancy, which the mother did everything possible, except actual abortion, to terminate. The experience of childhood and adolescence explored through psychoanalysis is situated in French Algeria. Cardinal's formal exploration of her roots is recounted in *Au pays de mes racines*,[8] a travel-journal relating the author's visit to post-independence Algeria, analyzed by Lucille Cairns, who identifies problematic biculturalism, nationalism, Arab autonomy, Islam and women as the principal elements of the text.[9] Cairns notes Cardinal's recognition of neurosis as a result of her bicultural experience. Cardinal and Camus both seek a wholeness in terms of identity, a wholeness which is forever elusive, because of the fragmentation of identity caused by the loss of native land, the loss of people with whom to feel an affinity, the loss of parents and, finally, the loss of self.

I would suggest that, although *Les mots pour le dire* gives an account of therapy made necessary because of the narrator's mother, the neurosis being dealt with is also due to the narrator's finding herself caught betwixt and

7 Marie Cardinal, *Les mots pour le dire* (Paris: Grasset, 1975). Quotations from this text are indicated in parentheses as *MD*, with relevant page numbers. Translations are my own.

8 Marie Cardinal, *Au pays des mes racines* (Paris: Grasset, 1980.) Quotations are henceforth parenthetically indicated as *PR*, with the relevant page numbers.

9 Lucille Cairns, 'Roots and Alienation in Marie Cardinal's *Au Pays de mes racines*', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 29.4 (1993).

between two worlds, neither of which she can call home. This premise is based on Cardinal's reference to Algeria as her mother:

> My beautiful land, my mother, my parent, I have lost you in such a vile and shameful way. (*PR* 61)

It also rests on the positive connotations of this metaphor:

> My happy memories, my true roots, cling to the farm, like garlands to a Christmas tree … On the farm was Algeria, in town was France. I preferred Algeria. (*MD* 105)

For Cardinal, Algeria is what Melanie Klein calls the 'Good Mother' whilst her natural mother is the 'Bad Mother'. Thus, the loss of the good mother provokes the narrator's crisis and illness; the grown woman is forced to examine her past rejection by her natural mother, because she has lost her place of sanctuary – the good mother represented by the land and people of Algeria. The dichotomy between good and bad mother is explored in the process of psychoanalysis and, although the narrator does not expressly articulate the comparison, she associates her relationship to Algeria with that between mother and child:

> It seems to me that the thing took root in me permanently when I realised that we were assassinating Algeria. Because Algeria was my true mother. I carried her with me as a child carries the blood of his parents in his veins. (*MD* 112)

The author feels herself to be torn apart, just as the land of Algeria is torn by conflict; there is a visceral tie between the woman and the country, just as there is between child and mother.

Camus puts the same feeling into words:

> I have loved this country of my birth passionately; all that I am is drawn from her … for me she is the land of happiness, energy and creation. I cannot resign myself to seeing her become the land of unhappiness and hatred.[10]

Camus identifies with Algeria's pain, as if the country were a parent. Both Camus and Cardinal see France as the homeland; both view Algeria as a beloved land, which is forever lost, and which has been torn from them, not by the people of Algeria, but by the inevitable circumstances of conflict. Camus

10 Albert Camus, *Essais* (Paris: Gallimard, 1965) 998. My translation.

also seeks a mother and a native land in *Le premier homme*, an autobiographical work, in which the hero, Jacques Cormery, explores his roots and family ties in French Algeria. The mother here is a benevolent, but silent, figure, for whom, as in *Les mots pour le dire*, the young child feels an overwhelming and frustrated love:

> She did not light the oil lamp, letting the night slowly invade the room, herself like a darker and denser shape, watching pensively from the window the animated movements of the street, silent for her. The child stopped then on the threshold of the door with a heavy heart full of hopeless (*désespéré*) love for his mother and for that in his mother that did not belong, or no longer belonged, to the world and to the vulgarity of its days. (*PH* 159)

The adjective *désespéré* ('hopeless') is used frequently to describe the love felt by the child for his mother. There is no direct rejection of the child in *Le premier homme*, but neither does the mother make any overt gestures of love; she expresses her love in quiet smiles and slight movements, allowing herself to be dominated by her mother and brother. The impression of the mother is of a figure who is distanced not only from her son, but from the world. She is darkness itself, unknowable by the child who suffers, just as the narrator in *Les mots pour le dire*, because his love is not returned, or is not shown to be. Darkness is a recurring motif in the text, a phenomenon that makes Jacques Cormery uncomfortable; he feels suffocated by the swift darkness of the African night, which is his mother's element, and in which he loses her, being unable to penetrate that night (*PH* 171).

The mother in this story is related to the country of Algeria and to the Muslim people through the hero's desire to know better and finally to possess these elements of his life, which remain forever out of his reach:

> Cormery's search for himself becomes indirectly … a search for the mother … and, at one remove, a search for the ethnic Other, from whom he has been separated.[11]

Love of the land of Algeria is related to the body and the senses, represented in Camus' text by Jacques Cormery's love and admiration for one of the father-

11 Edward Hughes, *Le premier homme*; *La peste. Glasgow Introductory Guides to French Literature* (Glasgow: Glasgow U. P., 1995) 29.

figures of the 'recherche du père' section, his uncle Ernest, who turns into a kind of god when hunting, communing with men and with the land itself. One example of the longing for communion with the ethnic Other, expressed several times, is a passage describing an obscure tribe, the Mzabites, living in

> the five towns of the Mzab, in the middle of the desert, where the tribe of heretics, sort of Islamic puritans, persecuted to death by orthodox believers, had settled centuries ago in a place which they had chosen because they were quite certain that no-one would dispute ownership. (*PH* 112)

I would suggest that the Mzabites are cited as one example of a 'courageous' minority group, comparable to Jacques Cormery's own tribe, the French peasant farmers and working class people who arrived in Algeria after the 1848 revolution. For the characters of *Le premier homme*, the name Mzabite is a term of abuse. In other words, there is an important denigration at work, as well as a commemoration of the group. The narrator distinguishes between his own point of view and that of the working population of the town: they see avarice, whereas he (by implication the better educated person) sees 'the Spartan lifestyle, the fierceness (*l'âpreté*)'. He views this obscure tribe as ascetic, but at the same time as a people ruthless about their own survival.

Le premier homme is an appeal on behalf of Camus' people, in effect a defence of colonialism, re-written as an accidental fact of history. The author uses various methods to support his appeal. First, the tribe of white *colons* is, as I have indicated, assimilated in the hero's sentiments to other minority ethnic groups. Second, Camus attempts to explode what he sees as the myth of the conquering, omnipotent colonist by inserting an ironic tone into the historical account, referring to 'the conquerors [as] sick to dying, vomiting over one another and wanting to die' and 'greenish adventurers, come from so far' (*PH* 173). Camus takes up a position of unequivocal defence, by inscribing into *Le premier homme* an historical epic of his own people, the lost tribe of North Africa, while accepting violence and conflict as a fact of history. Siding politically with French Algeria, Camus naturally does not blame colonialism for the ills of Algeria, but neither does he blame Algerian nationalism. Violence is accepted as an inescapable fact of history, through which, Camus believes, Arab and French Algerian will be united in what

Hughes refers to as an 'imagined community'. Essentially, however, unity between the two peoples is an illusion, a dream that will never come true. Camus, like Cardinal, fantasizes about a cohesion that can never take place.

A similar tendency toward apology appears in Cardinal, who, although favouring independence and constantly critical of the colonial enterprise, attempts to gain the reader's sympathy for the settlers by emphasizing the deprivation and adversities they encountered. Cardinal's attitude towards her own ancestors is at the same time accepting and critical. This ambivalence is present in the descriptions of everyday life on the family farm in Algeria:

> The slow, attentive service was provided by the Arab servants … their hands, red with henna, respectfully (*respectueusement*) handled the family silver. (*MD* 106)

The adverb '*respectueusement*' subverts the rest of the sentence, underlining the injustice of one group of people having to be respectful towards another. Values have been turned upside down in this society; legitimacy and authority are distorted. The beloved grandmother is also the colonial who exploits the small farmers:

> When she was young, she traded her rings and bracelets for *mokroutes* or rye bread, which they brought in a big square handkerchief. They had kept up the practice of exchanging their treasures. Today they traded their reason, that is their year's work, for a few (*quelques*) bank notes and a few (*quelques*) coins. (*MD*, 157).

The unnecessary repetition of the qualitative '*quelques*' ('a few') loads the account against the grandmother and her way of life.

Like Cardinal, Camus expresses a visceral bond with the land: 'yes, these dark, entangled roots […] bound him to this splendid, frightening earth' (*PH* 258). Peril is ever present, as is threat of loss, insecurity and instability, and, finally, all these childhood fears are confirmed when the land, people and mother are forever lost in adulthood. Jacques Cormery is conscious of his difference from the other boys at school, who are not *pied noir*, but were born in France and will soon return there. They have a past and a future and have memories of their homeland, whereas the *pied noir* child is distinguished above all by lack. These *pied noir* boys, Jacques Cormery and his friend, Pierre, are 'theoretically citizens of a vague nation where snow covered the roofs, whereas they themselves were growing up under a relentless, brutal sun' (*PH* 192). According to the narrator, the child born in Africa has no

morality to speak of, and no religion; his actions are governed primarily by his senses and by his reaction to the three 'indifferent divinities of sun, sea or poverty'. Lack of history, lack of family background, lack of nation mean that the child lives for the moment; his actions are governed by his senses. The quest of *Le premier homme* is to fill the void in a search for roots, for family, for native land. Jacques Cormery and the narrator of *Les mots pour le dire* both turn away from France, which they regard as Other, and seek the Self in the land of their birth. Forever in exile from this land, the *pied noir* writer is condemned to wander in a kind of purgatory, seeking the Self in constant, restless motion. The dialectic of desire is based on a subject in search of nation. None the less, whilst the *pied noir* writer seeks a native land and roots, he denies roots to the Arab population of Algeria, the Other to his Self.

In Cardinal, the tie to the land is much less problematical. The land of Algeria nurtures the narrator of *Les mots pour le dire*, as do its people:

> I would take the path to the kitchen, the stables, the garden or the cellar, and, there, I managed to live. I was going to join those who made life for me good, those I loved and who loved me in return. (*MD* 114)

The child escapes from the stifling rules of French colonial society and finds love and comfort through complicity with the Spanish and Arab workers employed by her family: 'Benaouda closed the shutters, making a face at me at each window: it was our evening game' (*MD* 213). The narrator feels more at home going to school with the children of the farm workers than she does with those of her own class, and she prefers to listen to the oral recitations of tales around the fire than to read the fairy stories which make up the usual fare for readers of her age, race and class.

Cardinal's text shows an awareness and acceptance of multiplicity that is absent from *Le premier homme*. She is conscious that she is writing an illusion in evoking this time of quiet, when dissent was just over the horizon, whereas Camus, perhaps because he did not live to see Algerian independence, is nostalgic for a colonial past without a critical distance underlying the idealism of his description. Camus' evocation of the fantasy of brotherhood between *colon* and Arab, whether conscious or not, is part of the attempt to heal the wounds inflicted by the violence most ably represented by Fanon:

> The native's work is to imagine all possible methods for destroying the settler. On the logical plane, the Manichaeism of the settler produces a Manichaeism of the native. … For the native, life can only spring up again out of the rotting corpse of the settler. This, then, is the correspondence, term by term, between the two trains of reasoning.[12]

Fanon relates the reality of the colonial situation, with specific reference to Algeria. On reading his words, one realizes that reconciliation is indeed a fantasy; the childhood memories cited above represent what is irrecoverable because they take place in a world that is forever lost. The kind of fraternity evoked by both writers to console themselves for a terrible loss is unlikely ever to be achieved. In fact, each text works through a process of grieving, including stages of denial and gradual acceptance.

Cardinal's relationship to the Arabs is more natural and less forced than is Camus'. Her use of Arab words (*chibania, raïma*) reinforces her identification with Algeria. She uses non-European words in the same way as many postcolonial African writers do, making their meaning clear to the European reader through the context. This feature is almost totally absent from *Le premier homme*, whose author is close to the Arab people, yet more distant from them than is Cardinal. Jacques Cormery longs for a closer bond with Arab Algerians (*PH* 257–8). The hero of *Le premier homme* only imagines the communion that the narrator of *Les mots pour le dire* achieves in her use of the Arab language. None the less, there are attempts in *Le premier homme* to explore language as a possible vehicle for communication between French settler and Arab. Like Cardinal, Camus is interested in the Arab language. Reflecting on the Arab word *mektoub*, in a footnote he explains its meaning as 'it is written' (*PH* 170). The use of this word takes place in a scene demonstrating hospitality and friendship between a *pied noir* and an Arab farm manager. The farmer states that his closest kin are the Algerian Arabs. The use of the word *mektoub* states a recognition of the common destiny of the *pied noir* and the Arabs: they have a common, violent fate, since the country itself will absorb them in its bloody embrace: '*C'est le pays qui veut ça*' ('It is the country which wills it', *PH* 169). The *pied noir* and the Arab are brothers

12 Fanon [2] 73.

who kill and torture one another, united in their hostility against the French and in their shared experience of violence. This presents a contradictory, but somehow rational position, whereby two groups are opposed to one another, but have a common experience which links them. Fanon's prediction of violence as the only possible solution to colonialism has come to pass.

Cardinal, on the other hand, makes much of her family's closeness to the people of Algeria. Like Camus, she says that there is a shared history between the *pieds noirs* and the Arab Algerians which unites them against the mainland French. The narrator's grandmother is received by her Arab workers as a matriarch: 'She was born here, exactly like those around her; they had known one another forever' (*MD* 155). Cardinal's condemnation of colonialism and paternalism is interspersed with occasional romantic imaginings of an idyllic era of harmony, distant in time, which contrasts with her critique of her mother's patronizing words and attitude, transposed as direct speech and implicitly condemned by the daughter:

> Our fortune is not immense but it is of long standing. The first grandfather who came here was a poet. He lost more money than he made in this country. We must preserve what remains. With it, we can still do good, help our workers. (*MD* 153)

Cardinal is conscious, even when very young, of difference in the treatment meted out to the Arab children and herself:

> [Aoued] threatened us with his whip that he cracked above our heads and called us sons of dogs and children of whores. But as all this was in Arabic, it was understood that it was not addressed to me. (*MD*, 157)

Cardinal's point of view is more complex than Camus' in that her appeal is tempered with criticism of her caste and race.

Violence permeates both texts. Edward Hughes relates the violence of familial relations in *Le premier homme*.[13] Both inside and outside the home environment, violence is never far from the ordinary, commonplace events of life. Blood and violence are a recurring motif in both texts. The young hero

13 Edward Hughes, '"Tranquillement monstrueux": Violence and kinship in *Le Premier Homme*', *Constructing Memories: Camus, Algeria and Le Premier Homme* (Stirling, Scotland: Stirling French Publications, 1998).

of *Le premier homme* is made to watch his grandmother cutting the throat of a chicken and sees it 'as if it was his own blood which he felt flowing from him' (*PH* 215). He witnesses the death of a customer outside a barber's shop after his throat has been cut by the deranged shop-owner (*PH* 239). In *Les mots pour le dire*, on the other hand, the child is made to eat vegetable soup until she vomits, and then is made to eat the vomit. The 'civilized' violence of bourgeois society mirrors the events in the streets outside this supposedly safe interior:

> And yet French Algeria was in its death throes, the defilement of everything, in the abjection and blood of civil war, the fat pools of which trickled over the pavements onto the roads flowing along the geometrical pattern of the cement of civilisation. It was an end of the basest kind with time-honoured counter-attacks by the Arabs, with their terrible way of settling old scores: disembowelled bodies, genitals cut off, foetuses hung up, throats opened. (*MD* 112)

The violence is not only inside and outside the home environment, but perpetrated with equal brutality by French and Algerian alike. Cardinal condemns the French government, which claims that torture is not taking place. Camus attempts to explain this present violence, appealing to the reader to understand the past. I have noted that Cardinal favours an independent Algeria, whereas Camus supports the French Algerians. However, each text is, in a way and at times, a justification of colonialism, presenting the *colon*, not as a hardened conqueror, but as a simple farmer whose toil over generations brought fruit from the earth. The authors are anxious to investigate not what might have been but what is. Each states that colonialism is a fact, and then asks, where do we go from here? Cardinal's answer points mainly to the future, Camus' to the past, but each calls for sympathy for their tribe.

In the writings of both Cardinal and Camus, the narrators come to recognize the violence of their own nature. The adolescent Cormery finally rebels against his grandmother's cruel beatings: 'He tore the whip from her hands, suddenly mad with violence and rage' (*PH* 253). This gesture marks his coming of age, his pride in being free and independent. In Cardinal also, the exploration of violence reveals that the narrator's autonomous nature has been suppressed by her upbringing. During the process of psychoanalysis, evoked in the present tense of the text, the narrator sees anger as a positive attribute to be harnessed in a constructive way. The violence of Algeria is

recollected in the narrator's dreams, through which she progresses with her analysis.

Memories of an African childhood in Cardinal's work are a source not only of these oneiric references, but of metaphor, of colour and scent. The wealth of imagery employed by the narrator to convey her new-found feminine identity depends on the smells and colours of an African childhood. In *Les mots pour le dire*, the body of the female narrator is a crucial element: 'I was very preoccupied with what was happening inside my body' (*MD* 93). The place where the female writer finds refuge in this case, having lost her native land and her 'good mother', is her own body; it is in the discovery of her healthy body that she re-writes an identity and finds herself. Language allows her to explore her body, her strength, her anger. She summons up the small list of words, an esoteric language discovered by the analyst and herself, through which she understands the workings of her subconscious. There is a connection between the quest for one's native land, the exploration of language and the discovery of wholeness in the form of a new homeland of the mind. Cardinal writes her version of *écriture féminine* by celebrating the body and discovering an immense joy in exploring her own biology. Her body prior to this had been Other to her Self, the space between Other and Self created by fear. The key words discerned by the narrator during psychoanalysis, which first enable her to remember certain episodes and then come to terms with these, bring about the acceptance of difference in herself; ultimately, writing – or at least the exploration of memory through words – empowers the narrator/writer to inhabit a native land, find wholeness and return from 'exile'.

In Camus, on the other hand, the pride that the adolescent Cormery takes in the discovery of his own power is related to his place in the world. In the last section of *Le premier homme*, entitled 'Obscur à soi-même' ('Obscure to Oneself'), the narrator defines this place in the negative: 'he did not want any place' (*PH* 255). His experience of work in an office during the summer vacations has taught Jacques that he does not want a conventional place in the world. He measures the gift of poverty in valuing

> free beings, strength and all that life offers that is good and full of mystery, and which is not bought and never will be bought. (*PH* 255)

The place of the exile is, in other words, valued. To be nowhere is a worthwhile place to be for the hero and narrator of the text. This realization comes about through the use of words. The fragmented individual is made whole through the use of the word:

> Writing [is] an interruption and re-establishment of the contact between the different layers of the psyche.[14]

The subconscious is a presence in both works, and each author seeks out the word as a tool in the search for parent, native land and Self. The young Jacques Cormery discovers the joy of the word in the municipal library where he and his friend, Pierre, find the ingredients for their dreams of heroism and adventure. Cardinal's narrator is obsessed with words, since they are the keys to her subconscious, the means by which she understands her dreams and decodes the fears which torture her and cause her illness. The cipher to Cardinal's process of analysis is the sentence:

> Each word that I found difficult to pronounce, in fact, masked an area where I refused to go. (*MD* 283)

Words or *l'écriture* are the tools of the psyche. Through the process of writing, of discovery of the word, finding the right word, the various and different levels of the subconscious are placed in contact with one another. The spaces and times of experience are drawn together. Derrida's examination of Freud's metaphor of the wax writing pad, where 'the wax tablet effectively represents the subconscious', allows us to explore the possibility of writing, the use of the word, as a means of rebuilding the fragmented self in the work of Cardinal and Camus. The act of writing itself serves as a means of bringing the various 'broken' parts of the whole together, in what Derrida refers to as the space, extent, volume, heights, depths and time of writing, to construct, organize, confirm and solidify the parts.

It is, therefore, the book, the word, the act of writing that makes up nation for the *pied noir* writers of this study. Camus once referred to his homeland, not as France or Algeria, but as *'la langue française'*. The act of writing creates a new country, a country of the mind. Camus' *Le premier homme* was

14 Derrida [3] 333; my translation,

written before Algerian independence, and Cardinal's *Les mots pour le dire* was written twenty years after the signing of the peace accords. Both writers, however, are primarily concerned with the disruption of the colonial period and are, therefore, related to other postcolonial writers seeking identity and nation through and in the written word. The concepts of nation and native land at the beginning of the third millennium are multifarious and call for an eclectic approach from writer and critic. My conclusion may best be summarised in the words of André Brink:

> I think [culturally exclusive notions of 'pure African' identity are] regrettable. … One can understand that, at a certain phase of a society's development, or even an individual's private philosophical development, it can be useful and necessary. … In the end, I think hybridity better describes what we are. … You can't go back to a precolonial innocence, which in any case probably never existed.[15]

15 'A Visit to the Subconscious', interview with Andre Brink by John Higgins, *Guardian Weekly*, 23 August 1998.

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Heinz Wetzel

Mythic Imagery about the 'Third World' in German Literature

In most German fiction dealing with the problems of the 'Third World',[1] the protagonists are Germans who visit 'Third World' countries. *They* are the foreigners, and they find themselves in an environment that they cannot understand and in which they can only exist with difficulty and for short periods. These texts are usually, and quite openly, based on the authors' own experience of the 'Third World', and they have been motivated by their desire to overcome their own inability to understand what they see, hear, feel, taste and smell. As a result, the dividing line between fictional writing on the one hand, and documentary works like travelogues, diaries, and reports on the other, is not easily recognizable. There are travelogues in which the authors' subjective reflection of their experiences goes far beyond the usual confines of this genre, and there are novels that make hardly any attempt to disguise the identity of protagonist and author.

Most of these travellers experience a severe shock when they first encounter the extreme poverty and the conspicuous social injustice; they do not understand how people can survive in it, and they feel unable to convey not only the living conditions they observe, but also their own feelings of guilt, their disorientation and their lack of comprehension.

Still, the motivation to communicate their experience is strong. The reason for this is best explained by reference to an essay by Franz Fühmann, a German writer who died more than a decade ago. Fühmann did not write

1 This term is problematical for various well-known reasons. Since there does not seem to be a better one it will be used here, but it will always appear in quotation marks so that the reader remains aware of its shortcoming.

about the 'Third World', but in his paper entitled 'Das mythische Element in der Literatur' ('The Mythic Element in Literature'), he explained one of the important motivations for writing fiction or poetry.[2] He claims that people who have undergone extreme experiences that are beyond their rational comprehension, and the emotional impact of which they cannot cope with, feel a strong need to communicate, to share these experiences and the resulting emotions, such as extreme joy, grief, anxiety, disorientation or loneliness. Writers try to share these reactions with imagined readers, even if these readers may be far removed from them, in terms of time and space.

In such situations, Fühmann says, writers refer to earlier formulations of analogous experiences, preferably to the mythic images and motifs with which they, as well as their presumed readers, are familiar. In his view, myths, or stories and images based on mythical traditions, are formulations of the accumulated experiences of specific communities of people. If, for instance, reference is made to Odysseus or Ulysses, the implications are immediately understood by most people with a Western education: Homer's Odysseus embodies the experience of being uprooted and of drifting through the world in search of an elusive home. When James Joyce set out to formulate an analogous experience for twentieth-century humans, he based his novel on this model, thus demonstrating its continued relevance as well as its adaptability to changing realities. Myths, together with stories connected to mythic traditions, serve as paradigms, and the culture of any given community is based on such paradigms.

A specific myth to which German writers refer repeatedly in their attempts to convey their experience of the 'Third World' is that of the apocalyptic flood. During the 1980s, the decade in which the arms race was at its height, weapons of mass destruction were concentrated in both parts of Germany, where the two major nuclear powers confronted each other. At that time, references to the apocalypse abounded in German literature. Through them, writers articulated their existential fear – *Existenzangst* – shared by most Germans, and in doing so, they, as well as their readers, felt that they were not

2 Franz Fühmann, *Essays, Gespräche, Aufsätze 1964–1981* (Rostock: Hinstorff, 1983) 82–140.

alone with their anxiety. According to Fühmann's theory, this made it easier to endure. These references to the apocalypse could serve as a means of communication, since they were understood by all who were part of the same cultural community. The 1980s were also a period in which people became increasingly concerned about impending ecological disaster and the related problem of overpopulation.

The anxiety that resulted from the awareness of these three potential causes of an apocalypse reached very high levels; this was the time when the German term 'Angst' became popular in the English language. The perception of the 'Third World' was caught up in this syndrome: together with nuclear holocaust, ecological disaster, and overpopulation, the 'Third World' seemed to threaten the Western World through the enormity of its problems. In the 1980s, a number of books on encounters with the 'Third World' appeared in German-speaking countries.

There is another reason why the threat of the 'Third World' was felt so intensely. Because of growing unemployment, middle- and working-class Germans became alarmed about the increasing number of foreign 'guest workers' in Germany, and although most of them had not come from the 'Third World', the eight or nine percent of the total population of West Germany made up by foreigners were subconsciously linked to the universal problem of overpopulation which was known to be especially acute in some 'Third World' countries. This also influenced the perception of the 'Third World'.

The following is a concrete example: Günter Grass, whose *Show Your Tongue* (*Zunge zeigen*) [3] will be discussed later, spent time in Calcutta from August 1987 to January 1988. After his return to Europe, he gave lectures and published essays, and one of the phrases he used repeatedly was: '*Calcutta wird über uns kommen*'. This sentence means that, in the long run, there can be no island of affluence. The 'Third World', the phrase implies, will ultimately

3 Günter Grass, *Show Your Tongue*, trans. John E. Woods (San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1989); originally *Zunge zeigen* (Darmstadt: Luchterhand 1988). Since Grass' work is made up of reports about Calcutta, and consists of diary entries together with graphic art and poetry, I will refer to it by the extremely generic term 'book'.

overwhelm, suffocate, crush the Western World by the sheer enormity of its population and its problems.[4]

Since Grass realized that this event could not be averted, he tried to communicate his fear of the advent of the 'Third World' in Central Europe in order to share it, and thereby make it more bearable for himself. Although the phrase does not make reference to any myth, the biblical quality of the formulation subconsciously refers his German listeners and readers to one of the foundations of the cultural community of the Western World.

In *Zunge zeigen* he also makes *conscious* use of mythical subject matter, as does Uwe Timm, whose novel, *Der Schlangenbaum*[5] (*The Snake Tree*[6]), is, along with Grass' book, one of the best German novels on the encounter between Europeans and the 'Third World'. Both titles refer to myths of non-European communities, and both books end with a vision of a Great Flood, an obvious reference to the biblical apocalypse. Timm has one of his characters refer directly to *Sintflut*, a term which is reserved for the biblical flood. These two books rank among the best on their theme, not *because* of but *in spite* of these endings which, upon close examination, turn out to be rather problematical.

Both Grass and Timm, like most well-known German writers after the Second World War, are known as highly rational and critical observers of unchallenged ideological and philosophical traditions of the kind that had led Germans into the moral catastrophe of the 1940s. Considering themselves heirs to the traditions of the European Enlightenment, Grass and Timm have been increasingly intense critics of a more and more saturated, self-indulgent

4 The archaic phrase '*über uns kommen*' is remembered from a biblical passage in Matthew (27.25) where the Jews want Jesus condemned by a reluctant Pilate, and where, according to the King James version, they shout: 'His blood be on us, and on our children'. Martin Luther translated the passage: '*Sein Blut komme über uns und über unsere Kinder*'. In order to render Luther's image in an English translation one would have to say something like: 'Let us and our children be overcome by his blood'. With this association in mind, Grass' phrase might be better translated as 'Calcutta will descend on us'.

5 Uwe Timm, *Der Schlangenbaum* (Köln: Kiepenheuer und Witsch: 1986).

6 Uwe Timm, *The Snake Tree* (London: Picador 1986).

new generation of Germans. When they visited the 'Third World', they were motivated by a desire to understand and to enlighten their fellow Europeans about neo-colonialism, which they saw as the main reason for the misery and injustice they witnessed. Their texts are, among other things, highly differentiated presentations of neo-colonialism and of the accompanying mentalities. (At the same time, both these presentations are most admirable from a literary point of view, an aspect that will not be discussed here.)

Grass and Timm take the presentation of the 'Third World' a step further. Once the protagonists of both texts experience the 'Third World', once they become engulfed in the intensity of its images, sounds and smells, and once they realize the extent of the suffering, they lose their orientation, they try to shed their European identity and to become part of the society they observe. In this, they fail. In spite of their various and intense efforts, they remain outsiders. Finally, not being able to accept the continuity of the status quo in the 'Third World', but equally unable to imagine, or even work for, any decisive change, the only future development they foresee is an overall destruction, an apocalypse.

Where an author finds neo-colonialism to be the basis of misery and injustice, he or she will not see the solution in universal destruction, but rather in the end of the *Western* world. In this sense, the term 'apocalypse' is used with its original biblical meaning: rather than signify, in the more popular sense, the end of everything, it points to a destruction which is less than universal and which is, at the same time, a condition, as well as a chance, for renewal, as in the case of Noah and his ark. In this sense, the apocalypse also retains its original ethical foundation: through the destruction of the society that has practised neo-colonialism, the world is purified, and a future with just and humane conditions becomes possible.

This is implied in the flood at the end of Uwe Timm's novel *The Snake Tree.* Timm describes a society of foreigners in an unnamed South American country: engineers and executives of European companies, political emigrants, special police officers who have been educated at German police academies, North American military advisers, and so on. These people, who obviously represent Western society at large, are greedy and unscrupulous. Their obscene affluence in the midst of general poverty is the result of their cunning exploitation of the native population. The protagonist, a newly arrived

German engineer, refuses to become part of this corrupt society, but is incapable of changing the conditions under which he must live and operate, and finally he cannot remain innocent either; he resigns.

At the end of the novel, a torrential rain of biblical dimensions inundates the country, and at the same time, the long-expected armed revolt of the local people is about to overrun the fortified enclave of the Europeans. The German engineer observes how his house and garden are invaded by multitudes of enormous cockroaches and rats; since the Revelation of St. John, such pests have been associated with the apocalypse. At the same time, he watches with complete resignation as his world is overrun by masses of destitute people. In the darkness, he is unable to distinguish any individuals. He has come to realize the profound corruption of his own society; it has long lost its values, and its gradual sinking into the flood is merely the consequence of its moral decay.

The local people in their revolt appear as a shapeless, amorphous mass, which, much like the simultaneous torrential rain, inundates the land, and in so doing, purifies it. This vision concludes the novel. Because the flood is so prominent in the closing images, this is a highly moralizing and, at the same time, symbolic ending.

The obvious parallel between the masses of destitute people and the torrential rain, as well as the many metaphors and comparisons, suggest an affinity between them, which is problematic. The close connection between myth and the actual event, which the author establishes in order to communicate his experience of the latter, changes the perception of it by bringing it into line with the characteristics of the myth. While the simultaneity of the uprising and the torrential rain appears, from a rational point of view, as strictly coincidental, Timm, by associating the insurgents with the rain, makes them appear as one shapeless mass which, like the rain, will flood the territory of the corrupt Europeans.

This metaphor undermines the authenticity of the *real* rain as well as of the *real* insurgents. Being related to their common denominator, which is the purifying flood, they assume an increasingly literary function, a moral as well as an aesthetic one. This reduces the possibility of conveying their reality. It is indeed obvious that Timm, towards the end of his novel, turns away from his previous narrative analysis of neo-colonialism, and instead

establishes his mythical vision of an apocalypse that is about to annihilate the perpetrators. The flood – the human flood as well as the torrential rain – has become an instrument of moral retribution. This ending, non-productive and controversial as it may be, is nevertheless legitimate: the moral function of the flood is central to the perspective of the novel on the future relationship between the Western and the 'Third' Worlds.

However, the appearance this forces upon the insurgents gives cause for concern. In presenting them as an amorphous, unlimited and overwhelming mass, Timm creates an image that must remind many of his readers of another vision, one that has had a firm place in German political propaganda. It is the vision of foreigners who will come and overwhelm the German people by their sheer numbers. Since the late nineteenth century, this vision has been dubbed *'die gelbe Gefahr'* ('the yellow peril'), a phrase which became famous after it had been used by Germany's last emperor, Wilhelm II, when he foresaw masses of Asians overrunning Central Europe. More recently, this fear has resurfaced among Germans due to the birth rate of guest workers, which by far exceeds that of native Germans.

Such fears breed hatred and aggression, as recent manifestations of xenophobia in central Europe demonstrate, and a mythic image as the one Timm uses at the end of his novel in order to communicate a specific vision, can add to such feelings because it can be effective in unforeseen and unintended ways. By turning away from his detailed rational presentation of misery and social injustice towards the end of his novel, and by turning to mythic narration as a means of communication, as described by Fühmann, Timm has unwittingly conjured up the old fear of a human flood which originates in the 'Third World', and which will eventually submerge the Western world. This is certainly not the effect he intended, and one may also argue that many readers will not even become aware of the negative implication. This is, however, the kind of archaic image that easily has an effect on the subconscious.

Grass, in *Show Your Tongue*, tries to avoid this danger. The book consists of three parts: a chronological report about his stay in Calcutta, written in the first person; a series of drawings, illustrating such episodes from the report for which, according to Grass, words were insufficient; and, in conclusion, a long visionary and rhapsodic poem which again is based on individual passages in the report. Grass' desire to find alternatives to mere objective reporting,

which has proved itself to be an inadequate medium for communicating his experience of the 'Third World', is obvious.

In the opening pages of his report, he mentions a trip that he and his wife made from Calcutta to the state of Orissa. While he is there, the narrator, Grass himself, reads in the newspapers about a torrential rain that floods Calcutta in the meantime. He underlines one detail:

> A special report on the Kamartuli quarter of the city, where the ceramic workers have their workshops: the persistent rains have ruined many figurines of the Gods – with Durga Pujah upon us – dissolving them'.[7]

Durga Pujah is an annual festivity, a procession in honour of the terrible Goddess Durga, wife of Shiva. She is painted on temple walls wearing human skulls and severed hands around her neck or hip. She often appears in the guise of Kali, an old Dravidian fertility goddess who has gradually become a goddess of destruction. The coincidence of the Durga or Kali festival and the heavy rainstorms, which Grass only read about while away from Calcutta, must have seized his attention, for the episode – which the chronological report only mentions in passing – becomes the finale of his concluding poem, while in all other instances the chronological sequence of events remains the same, both in the report and in the poem.

In the vision in the last part of the poem, Kali (or Durga) identifies herself with the flood. This long poem is based on Grass' realization that rationality, enlightenment, and the idea of progress, indeed, Western civilization, have all become meaningless in view of the horrible reality of Calcutta, which has been created by Europeans. It is Kali herself who speaks in the following passage. The Goddess, whose usual attribute is the sickle with which she cuts off male heads and hands – symbols of rationality and progress in a paternalistic society – now sees herself as flooding all delimitations, and overwhelming everything that is directed towards a goal:

> I, numberless, from all the gutters
> and drowned cellars, I,
> set free, sickle-sharp I.
> I show my tongue, I cross banks,

7 Grass [3] 31.

I abolish borders.
I make
an end.[8]

One can hardly miss the parody of Descartes that is even more obvious in the German original. In Descartes' philosophy, the individual constitutes himself through rational thinking, the preconditions of which are delimitation and differentiation. As the sickle-sharp speaker in this passage, Kali allegorizes such rationality. But as the great flood, she also symbolizes the opposite kind of destruction: as she floods railway tracks, river banks and abolishes borders, she merges the separate entities of the real world into one all-encompassing whole. She represents both these opposite ways of annihilation: the destruction through fragmentation, symbolized by her sickle, and the inundation and dissolution brought about by the torrential rains with which she identifies herself.

This opposition and, at the same time, unity of mythic elements – the flood on the one hand, and the sickle on the other – cannot be understood rationally. But the context makes it clear that Grass deliberately aims at transcending the confines of Western rational thought. By bringing together the two opposite elements in the figure of Kali, the foreign myth appears more familiar, and the familiar one of the biblical Flood, foreign. Since the reader is forced to contemplate the foreign image together with the familiar one, he must extend the limits of his own understanding. This in turn reduces the danger of his distorting an originally inaccessible foreign reality by adapting it to the peculiarities of his own mythical images and their meanings, the danger of which is apparent at the end of Timm's novel.

Thus, Grass's text goes beyond the merely affirmative use of familiar myths, although in fairness it must be added that Timm had also at least emphasized the need for the 'First' and 'Third' Worlds to understand each other's mythic visions and imagery. The very title of Timm's novel, *The Snake Tree,* refers to a belief developed by the oppressed local people in the unnamed country where the novel is set. They believe that a large tree growing in one of the yards of the police headquarters is inhabited by snakes, and that political

8 Grass [3] 214–15.

prisoners who have disappeared have been killed by them. This belief unites the people and undermines the effectiveness of police terror: not being sufficiently enlightened to understand the danger posed by a police force, whose leaders have been trained in Germany and which is equipped with the most advanced computers, the people cannot be easily intimidated. Eventually, the authorities have the 'Snake Tree' felled in the interest of public 'education'. Like Grass in *Show Your Tongue*, Timm questions the value of enlightenment and progress, which he contrasts with the creative, imaginative power of an unenlightened 'Third World' people.

In a different episode of Timm's novel, Wagner, the German engineer, inadvertently kills a snake without being aware of the religious significance of this specific kind of snake to the local population. As a result, they reject him even after he has realized that the German company for which he works profits from the misery of the people, and after he has tried to change sides. He is forced to remain a Westerner, in spite of his recognition that he must leave his former identity behind in order to live in accordance with his moral principles, and in spite of his readiness to do so.

Unfortunately, the reception of *The Snake Tree*, and even more so of *Show Your Tongue* – with reviewers often reacting with outright hostility – does not justify the hope that such publications will motivate many readers to transcend their particular ways of understanding themselves and their world, especially the 'Third World'. But these books, unsatisfactory as they may be in some ways, have established the need for breaking out of such confines and opening up to foreign cultures in order to overcome anxiety and, ultimately, hatred and aggression.

T. E. Knight

An African Oedipus:

The Alien Encounter as Mythic Motif

In the European tradition, the interpretation of the story of Oedipus has long expounded the themes of divine retribution, human fate, flaws of character, and, of course, the tragic rivalry between father and son. These themes are taken to be the universal hallmarks of 'the Oedipus myth'. This school of thought reads the myth as a persecution fantasy that, in its simplest form, might run as follows: 'Oedipus was punished by the gods (by unwittingly killing his father and marrying his mother) because he tried to avoid his destiny (which was that he should kill his father and marry his mother)'. As I hope to show, such a 'reading' of the myth is overlaid with an accretion of deeply Christian notions of guilt, punishment and sin. Unfortunately, the persistence of this textbook 'reading' makes it difficult for those schooled in it to recognize what is truly 'universal' in the myth of Oedipus. As an approach to discovering the 'universal' elements in the Oedipus myth, I would like to compare the Greek story of Oedipus with something radically alien to it, but also, I think, profoundly resonant with it. I adduce a story told among the Sena people of southern Malawi.[1]

I shall start with the Greek myth, however, which is well enough known that a summation of certain narrative details will suffice. The first point I wish to make is that the myth pits the judgement of a clever individual against what we might call the laws of probability. An oracle advises Laius the king of Thebes that he risks murder at the hands of a child by his wife Jocasta. To obviate this happening, Laius orders the infant destroyed by exposure in the

1 The Sena tale cited herein is attested by J.M. Schoffeleer and A. A. Roscoe in *Land of Fire: Oral Literature from Malawi* (Limbe, Malawi: Popular Publications, 1985).

wilds. As a form of population-control, exposure in ancient Greece meant that whether the child lived or died was regarded as so far beyond human control, because of the play of chance, that the parents bore no responsibility for the child's death *should* it die. For Laius, this seems a safe and sensible solution. Laius's intention to control probability is, however, complicated by the calculations of his slave, whose task it was to expose the child. For, rather than expose it, this slave reckons that by giving it to the slave of another man in another kingdom, the child is unlikely to return to Thebes. This is another calculation of probabilities.

The child in his turn, upon reaching adulthood, himself makes a crucial calculation of probabilities. Raised as the son of King Polybos of Corinth, whose slave rescued him from exposure, Oedipus grows to manhood ignorant of his origins but shadowed by rumours of adoption. In a bid to attain something impossible in human experience – absolute certainty – Oedipus approaches the oracle at Delphi to put an end to doubts about his birth, only to meet with an oblique rebuff from the god. In the Sophoclean play, the god's reply, Oedipus says, was a horrifying tale of how 'I must marry my mother, and become the parent of a misbegotten brood, an offence to all mankind – and kill my father' (791–793). The word here translated 'must' (*khreiê*) does not mean predestined or fated, as is commonly supposed, but rather suggests the appropriate and necessary outcome of one's circumstances. The oracular response is the *needful* response (*to khrêsthen*, from the same verb); it is that which the god deems it fit for one to know. In the strategy of seeking oracles, the fitness of the response matches the fitness of one's question. This is why there can be no absolute certainty in the consultation of oracles, since the suitability of the question and the state of mind of the questioner affect the response. Confronted with this oracle, Oedipus hazards a calculation: faced with the risk of killing his father and marrying his mother, he reckons that he must not tempt chance by returning to Corinth. He is so certain in his knowledge that he is the son of Polybos and Meropê of Corinth (though ironically this is the one thing he sought to clarify), that he decides not to return to Corinth for fear of committing patricide and incest. His is a calculation of probabilities, like those taken earlier by Laius and by Laius's slave. It is very unlikely that Polybos is *not* his father, and on the strength of this reckoning, Oedipus quite sensibly resolves to avoid Corinth and seek his fortune elsewhere.

The difficulty with trying to calculate probabilities is, of course, that absolute certainty is impossible in human affairs. One's finest calculations can be confounded by the odd anomaly. The anomaly steps into the story of Oedipus in the figure of the Sphinx. The Sphinx is an anomaly indeed – a veritable enigma. She is neither human nor animal but a bit of both: she has the head of a woman, a lion's body, the wings of a bird and a serpent's tail. She confounds the calculations of both Laius and Oedipus. Laius she affects by besieging his city. She confronts all who would enter or leave Thebes by posing difficult riddles – a wager undertaken at the cost of one's life. For relief, Laius takes recourse to Apollo's oracle at Delphi. Unfortunately, he never arrives there, because he is beset by another unlooked-for event, an encounter with a stranger on the road at a forked junction. The stranger refuses to yield the right of way to the king's retinue, and Laius in turn refuses to yield; both men are in fact of royal blood. When the stranger defends himself from the assaults of these men, he comes to blows with Laius and kills him outright – in self-defence, of course. He does not know that the man he has killed is his own father. The improbable has caught up with both Laius and Oedipus.

Blithely unaware of the enormity of his deed, Oedipus continues on to Thebes, where he is accosted by the Sphinx with her riddle. As chance – or luck – would have it, he answers her riddle correctly, causing her to destroy herself. For hitting on his clever answer, Oedipus wins the hand of the queen, Jocasta, who is also, unbeknownst to him, his own mother. So his own cleverness at solving riddles cannot save him from himself becoming an anomaly – husband to his own mother, father of his own siblings. The day finally comes when he is forced to discover the truth about himself, and in the Sophoclean story, Oedipus goes into exile as a wanderer among men.

Before venturing into the African tale, let me briefly remark on certain 'generic' attributes that Oedipus shares with other figures in the Greek mythic tradition.

First, there is Oedipus's cleverness, for which he is renowned. He is the solver of riddles and the slayer of the Sphinx. In his play, Sophocles makes a great deal of Oedipus's intellect, with which he will save Thebes by discovering the murderer of Laius. His cleverness brings Oedipus into the ranks of the type known sometimes as the Culture Hero, the clever inventor and benefactor of humankind, whose services include the slaying of monsters of nature.

Though not explicitly an inventor, Oedipus destroys the Sphinx by solving her riddle – knowing riddles and solving them is in fact an arcane art valued by preliterate peoples. In gratitude for this achievement, the citizens of Thebes offer him the crown. Oedipus shares this trait with Prometheus (who outwitted Zeus to benefit humans), with Hephaestus, the craftsman of the gods, with Odysseus and others.

Second, Oedipus belongs to a type that I call the Wounded Hero. This figure has a significant wound inflicted to a vital organ or to his legs or feet (the symbols of mobility and strength); his wound is associated with the acquisition of power, mastery and knowledge. Prometheus has his liver devoured by a vulture as payback for his cleverness. Heracles, the Tamer of Animals, is bitten in the heel by a giant crab, and his flesh is consumed by the blood of the hydra. Philoctetes, the master of Heracles' wondrous bow, suffers from a snakebite to his ankle, which festers for years and enforces a prolonged banishment. As a youth, Odysseus received a wound, as well as an identifying scar, to his knee on the occasion of his maiden boar-hunt, just as Oedipus is identified by a childhood wound to his foot. Then there is Achilles, who is mortally vulnerable in the heel. The association of the wound, and its scar, with knowledge derives, I think, from rites of initiation. As an imprint of the process of acculturation, the initiation wound (circumcision, the warrior's first scar, etc.) is intended to shape the consciousness of the youth for social ends. The scar is a living memento of one's new social identity, and of the power and knowledge acquired with entrance into adult society.

A third 'mythic type' that applies to Oedipus is that of the Wanderer. In part, this figure derives from rites of initiation, as do certain details associated with the wanderings of Odysseus (e.g. the 'invention' of the spear in the cave of the Cyclops, and the 'ritual banishment' that results from the 'crime' committed with it).[2] Rituals of initiation often enact 'mock' violations of taboos, and enforce periods of 'ritual banishment' upon the initiands. The motive of such 'traumas' is to shock the consciousness as it transits from one state (childhood) to another (adulthood), with the intention of impressing

2 Cf. Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*, tr. Peter Bing (Berkeley: University of California, 1983) 83–93, 130–134.

upon it a new awareness. More fundamentally, however, the Wanderer relates to rituals of purification and rituals associated with violating a taboo. A real communal crisis may result from some contact with the 'alien', the 'other', the 'impure', the 'dangerous', i.e. from the violation of a taboo. In such a crisis, one person may be singled out as a 'carrier' or scapegoat, intended to remove the 'pollution' of such contact by embodying it himself.

In the Greek tradition, this is the institution of the *pharmakos*, a person who, as the name implies, was intended to *cure* the people of collective ills by taking them upon his own person and disappearing with them into the 'wilderness'.[3] The *pharmakos* – often, in ritual, a 'royal' person – embodies the 'uncleanness' that results from contact with a polluting anomaly. Oedipus is like the *pharmakos* in that he embodies a pollution, and he rids the city of it by going into exile. The 'pollution' generally takes the form of physical contact with some alien 'other': blood, a stain, the ritually 'unclean' or the 'proscribed'. In myth, Oedipus resembles other 'exilic' figures who are polluted by some 'violation' and who are often 'scarred' by a sudden stroke of madness: Heracles' labours expiate the slaughter of his own children; Orestes is pursued by Furies after murdering his mother; and Adrastus, whose story Herodotus tells (*Histories* 1.35–45), slew himself, proclaiming himself the most wretched of mortals. He had wandered as an exile after accidentally killing his brother, and was ritually 'cleansed' by King Croesus, only to kill Croesus's son in a hunting accident. The most extraordinary misfortune had unaccountably 'touched' him through no fault of his own, and in the end, he could not endure his lot. The biblical figure of Cain also comes to mind: a Wanderer among men, he was marked out, but also protected, by the enormity of his crime. Having been touched by something awesome and 'supernormal' – the anomaly of madness and fratricide – Cain, like Oedipus, wanders the earth as a living taboo. The connection among these themes of taboo, cunning and feelings of guilt will be explored shortly.

For the moment, however, I wish to consider a story that comes from the Sena people in southern Malawi. This story is set in the remote past, in a

3 Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, tr. John Raffan (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1985) 82–84.

sort of Saturnian Age before the loss of innocence, in Eden before The Fall. Stories that claim this setting are always interesting because they relate to the fundamental preconditions of culture.[4] The setting is a village called Chitomeni. For the villagers the surrounding countryside provides a bounty of food: if they want fish, they have but to wade into pools to catch it; if they want meat, they have but to enter the forest to catch it. Man does not need ingenuity because the world is like a mother's breast: he may have as much as he wants whenever he wants it, without work.

But one day an anomalous thing occurred. The men went out into the forest as a group, to get meat for a great feast. They were prepared for the hunt as usual, and they had even given their dogs a strong medicine (*muti*) to make them go wild at the sight of game. This detail of the medicine is a curious intrusion into this age of innocence: it is an artefact, a clever stratagem, which is out of place in these primal conditions. To their dismay, the narrator tells us, they saw not a single animal, though they trudged through the forest all day. Just as the hunters are about to abandon the hunt, they espy a strange animal in the distance, and already the dogs, made mad by the medicine, were upon it. They seized it by the throat and killed it before the hunters could intervene. But this beast was like none they had ever seen: it had five legs and two snouts, and it was hairless with skin like a fish. Custom knew of no prescribed way to share out such a beast, so they carried it back to the village to consult the elders.

The most senior of the wise men in the village declared that the beast had a name: it was called *phasulo*, meaning division, because if it is not properly prepared it will cause dissent among the people. Its meat is to be cooked, he declared, and by no means roasted. The danger about roast meat is that it is neither fully raw nor fully cooked; it is a dangerous ambiguity that defies definition, and that may attract other anomalies, such as disease and disaster.

So, when the old man told how the beast was to be properly prepared, its flesh was shared out among the villagers, among whom was a clever man

4 What Marcea Eliade calls *illud tempus*, in e.g. *Myth, Dreams and Mysteries: The Encounter between Contemporary Faiths and Archaic Reality*, tr. Ph. Mairet (Glasgow, 1968) 48.

named Famba-uone, meaning Travel-so-you-may-see – in other words Wanderer. Famba-uone's task of preparing the *phasulo* is compounded by another anomaly – his wife is pregnant. By calling this condition an anomaly, I mean that she does not fall into one of the simple categories which humans establish to make life manageable. The unborn child in her womb is neither fully human nor fully animal, though it is a spirit, an *mzimu*. Pregnancy involves these dangerous confusions and constitutes a moment of crisis that must be handled cleverly, or else disaster may ensue. Now, Famba-uone's wife announces that she must have roast meat, not cooked meat, for this is what the spirit in her belly craves. If the husband cooks the *phasulo*, he will starve the being in her belly, and his wife will miscarry.

Solving this riddle calls for much intelligence on Famba-uone's part. He must find a way to cook the *phasulo* as prescribed, but he must also let the unborn *mzimu* have its fill of roast meat. As he thought about his problem, Famba-uone became convinced that the elder had not actually forbidden the roasting of a little bit of the *phasulo*, just the greater portion of it. So having cooked most of the meat, he cuts up a few bits, skewers them on a spear and proceeds to roast them over an open fire. But the roasting meat sputters and causes the embers of the fire to send up shooting flames, which reach up to the thatched roof of the hut. Soon the entire hut is ablaze, and Famba-uone and his wife barely escape with their lives.

Trying to contain the fire, Famba-uone rushes to get water to douse it, but water only makes the fire worse, since, most extraordinarily, the water has the contrary effect and causes the fire to spread furiously from hut to hut, until the entire village is ablaze. Everything in the village is burnt to cinders and the villagers have nothing left. The disaster has come at the worst possible time, just after the harvest, with no rains due for six months. The forest now no longer yields a bounty of fruit, and most of the game and fish are gone. It is impossible to go back to life as it was lived before. The villagers are faced with starvation if they remain in one place, and so the people scatter in small groups, moving farther and farther afield. This is why people no longer live together as a single village.

On the surface, this story does not readily suggest Oedipus. Yet, there is a deep resonance between the two stories that is worth exploring. The most obvious similarity is that both Oedipus and Famba-uone unwittingly violate

a taboo with disastrous effects to their communities. Both men come to harm because of their ingenuity.

This is suggestive, but let us consider the imagery of the Sena story more closely. The tale is a variation on the story of The Fall of Man, with the Tower of Babel mixed in. The setting is in that primordial age (Eliade's *illud tempus*) when man exists in perfect harmony with nature. Human ingenuity is associated with disrupting this ideal state, and with it comes the advent of toil and suffering in human life. In the Sena story, the introduction of the hunting *muti* into the paradise in which these villagers live has the effect of disrupting the perfect balance between man and his environment. When man becomes cunning, nature becomes hostile and resistant. The use of the medicine for the hunting dogs only seems to drive the game away, and when finally a beast does appear, it is like the Sphinx, posing a riddle that the hunters are ill-equipped to solve. It is interesting that the *phasulo*, this African Sphinx, challenges the customary wisdom of the village. This is a special case, a category of beast at the very limits of traditional knowledge. The elder who knows what must be done with it is a sort of Teiresias figure. In the Oedipus myth Teiresias is a blind seer, a sort of shaman, with mantic powers. He expounds the riddle of his case to Oedipus, but his explanation makes no sense to the king, whose understanding is entirely conventional and practical. Similarly, in the Sena tale, though the *phasulo* is a sort of Sphinx, the village elder *does* have a name for it, and he *can* offer a prescription for dealing with it. But Famba-uone cannot simply follow this prescription, because he must also deal with yet another anomaly – how to prepare the dangerous meat for his pregnant wife, whose condition is equally dangerous. She will not take it as prescribed, because her needs are dictated by the otherworldly thing in her belly. Famba-uone can only apply his native cunning to this problem, and he *invents* a gloss on the elder's prescription which seems satisfactory: he will cook *most* of the meat, as prescribed, and roast only *some* of it. He does not really know the consequences of roasting *some* of the meat, though he supposes he knows what *will* happen if his wife does not get *any* roast meat: she will miscarry, and the unborn *mzimu* may return to haunt him. At this juncture Famba-uone is like Laius choosing to destroy his own child or like Oedipus choosing not to return to Corinth: he is acting on his judgement that the probabilities of the case stand in his favour.

So, there are at least three separate motifs operating in this story: (a) the fall from innocence, (b) the inadvertent breaking of a taboo, and (c) the tragic miscalculation of probabilities. In the story of Oedipus, we find (b) in conjunction with (c), but not (a), though in other myths (a) and (b) often occur together, most notably in the Genesis account of the Fall. In the Sena story, all three motifs occur together.[5] What all three have in common is that they are concerned with the consequences of human cunning, human inventiveness.

First to consider taboo. In these stories, taboo occurs as a symbol of man's cunning. As an anthropological fact, taboo is an invention intended to regulate a scarce resource by restricting the use of it to certain precise conditions. The 'logic' of the taboo as a regulatory mechanism runs somewhat as follows. Man's intelligence gives him an unfair advantage over the rest of nature. When man hunts, he takes the victim's life because he is more clever than it is; he relies on his ingenuity, and on his inventions, to outwit it. In so doing, however, man feels as if he is outwitting his god. That is to say, the easy success afforded by cunning *feels* as if one is taking unfairly – taking from Nature, from the Master of Animals, from God. The taboo constrains use of 'the hunted' by restricting 'taking' to the principle of 'necessary use'. Use is accompanied by formalities and rituals designed to generate feelings of anxiety, obligation and guilt. As an institution, taboo stands as a barrier, then, ostensibly to protect humans from their angry gods. In actuality, however, it disguises the 'guilty' feelings of taking that which is not one's own, but which one must have, and must not overuse, to survive. Man's cunning therefore 'makes' him feel alienated from his gods and incurs their wrath, and for this reason, myths of origin universally attribute the gods' resentment, and the human 'predicament', to the violation of some taboo. For both Adam and Prometheus, the harsh realities of human life *feel* like retribution for being too clever. Taboo and The Fall are inextricably intertwined.

Taboo is also necessarily associated with feelings of pollution, in that taboo establishes a defining border between what we know and can control, and

5 T. E. Knight, 'Invention, Guilt and the Fall from Innocence: Reflections on the Role of Feeling in Myth', *Scholia* NS 6 (1997) 19–33.

what we cannot. Rituals that create an awareness of taboos also instil in the mind an awareness of limits that are not to be transgressed, limits between 'clean', 'pure', 'acceptable', etc. and their contraries. Such awareness takes the form of latent feelings that operate as a mechanism of (self-)chastisement (i.e. guilt) that can be activated against the mind when it becomes conscious of having transgressed a boundary. Contact with some 'alien' source of contagion, some proscribed experience, some anomalous 'other' triggers a reflex of loathing and (self-)persecution. However, the social and psychic boundaries that regulate behaviour *within* the subject become established *as a fact of consciousness* in the first place through the very experience of transgression. For this reason, episodes of mock transgression figure large in rites of initiation.[6]

So much for Taboo and The Fall. The third element in these myths is a set of feelings about the place of human intellect in a universe dominated by random events. The point of myth, as I see it, is to give narrative form to perceptions that defy logical description. Such is the very nature of feelings, that they are *not* thoughts and that they cannot be exhaustively expounded in language. Images help, of course, and that is what myth does; it deploys images in the exploration of feelings. Let me attempt to expound what I think these feelings are by using a rather different set of imagery. Let us imagine a circle drawn neatly on an infinite plane. The circle represents what is known, ordered and controlled. It may be the circle of one person's consciousness; it may be the cultural and social boundaries of a community of hunter-gatherers; it may be the horizons of modern knowledge and civilization. It is in fact all of these things at once. Beyond the limit of the circle is the unknown, the unexplored, the chaotic, the anomalous. Within the circle, everything is ordered and well structured: the fine distinctions of language, the layout of our cities, the attentiveness of religion, the subtle understandings of our sciences. Beyond is where we place God, and the devil, and the source of disease and disaster. Even if we extend the boundaries of this circle to the n^{th} power, there will always be something beyond its limit, to challenge it, and

6 John Carroll, *Guilt – The Grey Eminence behind Character, History and Culture* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985).

to threaten it. We may control our human world, since we have constructed it. *Our* world is necessarily limited, and for that reason, it is orderly and suited to our purposes, but we cannot control what lies beyond it. At some point, amidst all our fine calculations, we must reckon with some anomaly coming at us from the unknown. An anomaly is a bit of intrusive lumpiness – this is in fact the original meaning of the Greek word from which the English derives – a lumpiness that disrupts the otherwise smooth texture of our human reality. Because our reality is finite and circumscribed by our understanding, at some point we must also bump up against its limits. However well-laid our plans, however fine our calculations, there is always uncertainty lurking at the doorstep: the stray monster meteor, the exotic plague, the chance encounter on the road. Statistically, anything can happen at any time, and the stray anomaly can expose our world to confusion.

This point of the limited nature of the human world-view is made in both myths by the implicit contrast between the practical understanding of the hero and the 'supernatural' knowledge provided to him by the 'wise man'. Even if (hypothetically) the hero has access to a transcendent wisdom that might save him, he would not know how to use it. He lives in a world where he must make practical choices about situations that cannot be made to conform to even a perfect paradigm of knowledge. He must invent his own solutions to real problems as they arise, and in so doing, he always risks failure. The oracular pronouncements of the Pythia, the shamanic wisdom of Teiresias and the prescriptions of the aged village elder are idealized systems of 'perfect' knowledge posited by the myth as a foil to the hero's limited, but very practical, intelligence. In the end, he must deal with the unknown through the limited agency of his human understanding.

Our world, our knowledge, our *human* reality is, then, a limited construct, and beyond its horizons, the element of uncertainty is irreducible.[7] What feelings come with confronting this fact? Resignation, annoyance, frustration, if the anomaly is something as minor as engine trouble in your car. If, however, one contemplates the place of humanity in the grand universe – the

7 My sociology of knowledge owes much to Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1967).

fact that we are *always* vulnerable to arbitrary and total disaster – and if one also happens to be the victim of such disaster, one can feel overwhelmed by anger and despair. For the victim of such disaster, the anger has nowhere to direct its blows but at oneself, and so the victim's blows fall back upon his own head. This is a guilty reflex, since guilt is ultimately self-directed anger. Particularly so if one *knows* that he is innocent. Self-punishment may even bring a perverse sort of comfort, if it allows the victim to reassert control over his own suffering. Hence, Oedipus strikes out savagely at his own eyes in a pointless but eloquent gesture of utter despair.

What Oedipus and the Sena hero Famba-uone have in common is this: both men are confronted with an anomaly; both arrive at what they consider a reasonable and probable solution; both unwittingly violate a taboo in solving a pragmatic riddle – unwittingly because they plausibly believe that they have avoided breaking the taboo; and both incur the most horrifying disaster upon themselves, their families and their community. As a result, they become wanderers and exiles for life. Both men come to this pass because they confidently relied upon a native human inventiveness. In this, their exile is like the exile of Adam and Eve, who were expelled from Eden when they discovered the deception of the taboo.[8] Human cleverness – a capacity to 'outwit' nature – condemns man to a life of drudgery, 'toiling by the sweat of his brow'. This intelligence also separates man from the world around him; it makes nature 'invidious' and his gods 'jealous'. On the one hand, one conceives such feelings of 'persecution' because this is how the terms of life feel, like retribution. On the other hand, because our intelligence cannot protect us against random disaster, we also feel 'punished' when overwhelmed by it.

At the oldest level in the Greek tradition, the myth of Oedipus becomes a vehicle for contemplating the workings of the inherited curse in human affairs. In the hands of Sophocles, the focus falls rather on the individual

8 In the J account in Genesis (Gen. 3), the serpent ('the most subtle of all wild beasts') represents the faculty of invention, with his quibbling gloss on the taboo as an injunction that may be violated: he makes woman aware of the difference between *may* and *must*: 'You *may* eat of any tree, but you *must* not eat of this one tree. If you do eat of it, you will not die'.

trapped in the unforeseen consequences of choices that arise from the make-up of his own character. The Freudian 'reading' focuses on the conflict within the male subject between the introjected image of the 'father' as psychic 'control' mechanism and the 'son' as representing the autonomy of the subject as agent. The common thread underlying these various constructions is the principle of control: the mechanisms whereby the social world exerts control over the behaviour of the human subject. In a word, this is the operation of guilt as a psychic mechanism of 'self-imposed' (if unconscious) control. What the archaic mind experiences as persecution by forces supernatural, the 'civilized' mind experiences as persecution by the imago of the father. Ideally, the internally constituted mechanisms for controlling behaviour afford the subject a sense of autonomy: both Oedipus and Famba-uone feel free to make choices for themselves. When these mechanisms run amuck – i.e. when control itself becomes an autonomous complex that interferes with the freedoms of the human subject – we have what the modern mind recognizes as an oedipal tragedy. However, the modern tendency to read the ancient myth in these terms or as a theodicy of predestined suffering merely reflects the make-up of the civilized Western psyche. It was not in the nature of the archaic Greek gods to predestine a man to commit the most heinous crimes, and then punish him for trying to avoid committing those crimes. Such exquisite persecution fantasies are rooted in 'our' experience of 'autonomy' and 'control' as defined by Judaeo-Christian notions of written law, self-conscious guilt and inherent sin.

The impulse to worry about autonomy – or creativity – in relation to the control we exercise over our human world is primordial, as reflected in a pattern of stories that trace back to man's dark pre-history. The myth of the inventor whose genius cannot save him occurs in very different and widely scattered contexts. The problem of autonomous 'control' or self-discipline – with its attendant themes of persecution and guilt – arises 'universally'. The Western mind, from its 'civilized' perspective, construes the problem from within its own cultural experience. Historically, this is the experience of innate sin, a punitive deity, a divine teleology and the rule of laws that all 'socialized' persons accept. The universal facts that underlie the emergence of this ancient theme are the feelings that it attempts to expound – feelings about man's alienation and vulnerability in an invidious universe, and his despair

in the face of utter and unaccountable disaster. It is in fact the social feelings themselves – biologically inherent in all humans and fundamental to all societies – which are universal.

Oedipus and our African hero are not punished and are not sinners. They did what their best judgement under the circumstance decided should be done, and the failure of each in his enterprise was due to the fact that they could not know *all* the consequences of the choices they made. No human can. These two men were unaccountably unlucky, as it turned out. Such disaster could have happened – and does happen – to anyone: there but for the grace of God go you or I. Oedipus embodies a truth about the extreme vulnerability of the human condition. In some sense, we are all exposed. Oedipus is potentially Everyman.

Ligia Vassallo

Charlemagne in Brazil[1]

At the present time, when television and global culture reign supreme, it is surprising to note in Brazil the existence of the world of Charlemagne and Roland, especially among the lower classes of Brazilian society, still almost exclusively the preserve of oral literature. The examination of this continued survival, reconstructed by intercultural studies, bears witness both to the stability of oral culture as well as to the way in which it has travelled across worlds as distant from each other in space as they are in time. This is a story of how historical events of mediaeval France, assimilated through legend, have crossed the Pyrenees, then the Atlantic Ocean, finally coming to rest in the Brazilian hinterland, and, more particularly, in the rural world that is so full of rather outmoded traditions.

The fame of this French tale is part and parcel of the many European cultural traditions introduced to Brazil through the memories of the first colonisers and disseminated orally by the minstrels' songs. Furthermore, it is in this form that they were already in existence in Portugal. The literature of the chap-books reached its zenith in the Iberian Peninsula during the first two centuries following the discovery of Brazil, and it was widely disseminated across the Americas. At a period when the book was still a rare and costly object, the chap-book literature acted as the short-lived intermediary between the written and the purely oral, in the opinion of the most widely respected scholar who has given his attention to this subject.[2]

This aspect of mediation is still true today under certain circumstances, which is why this literature is mostly taken up by the poor rural population.

1 Translated from the French by Véronique Wakerley.

2 António José Saraiva, *História da cultura em Portugal*, vol. 2 (Lisbon: Jornal do Foro, 1955) 67 and 139–140.

Its thematic richness and its variety of form exceed those of all the other popular arts, of which there is a significant number, all more or less on the way to extinction. These traditions were established in the first regions occupied by the Europeans – especially the Portuguese – and particularly in the Northeast of the country, for reasons that we shall see later.

The French influence noted with regard to the Carolingian theme is linked to several events that have entered into folklore, some of which have fixed calendar dates – Christmas and Saint John's Night in June in particular – celebrated in the open air almost everywhere in the rural areas. These displays have largely kept to the narrative structure of French mediaeval theatre, a cultural matrix that spread throughout all of Christian Europe, thanks to the role played by the Church and travelling minstrels.

Furthermore, other themes of the same origin were also propagated by the oral route, such as those of Robert the Devil, Pierre and Magelonne, Jean de Calais, the Empress Porcine, the Demoiselle Théodore, Charlemagne and Roland. They are thus able to confirm, once again, the cultural hegemony of France in mediaeval Europe, including the Iberian Peninsula, disputes with the Arabs notwithstanding, making Portugal the route for their onward transmission to Brazil. Even though these stories have been published, their oral narration has never lost favour with the public of Northeast Brazil, who would gather to hear them either during a performance at some form of collective activity or during leisure hours. In the second instance, these stories would be entrusted to official storytellers – a tradition inherited both from the Europeans and from the African slaves. This is a very specialised and peripatetic trade, carried out by professionals who would move among the isolated farms of an earlier era, before the advent of radio and television.

The vitality of the Carolingian *geste* in Brazil is attested by the way it flourished in the tradition of the chap-books, which is still producing several new stories on the subject even in the twentieth century. The characters of the French epic had adapted so well to Brazil that their names have taken on a paradigmatic significance. Roldão (Roland) means 'brave' – though as a common noun the word denotes something done hurriedly and carelessly. Ferrabrás means 'the quarrelsome one'. Valdevinos (Baudoin) is a 'tramp' or 'vagabond'. Galalao or Galalau (Ganelon) is someone who is very tall, thin

and clumsy. The Duke Naimes has become Nemé (by phonetic adaptation); and Baligant has become the Admiral Balbão.

Various adaptations to the local conditions have proved necessary. For example, the Twelve Peers of France are obliged to don leather garments, rather than a suit of armour, as essential protection against the vegetation, as all local cattlemen do. On the other hand, according to local ideology, the power of the landowner is always associated with Evil, and the characters populating this universe carry with them a vision of the world impregnated with Manichaeism and Messianism, as well as a very simplistic and naïve view of life in general. This phenomenon is specific to chap-book literature, but spills over and spreads across various aspects of popular traditional culture in its Brazilian context. It goes without saying that names and customs have had to take on local colour, and with this in mind we should consider the following examples.

The scholar and researcher Luis de Câmara Cascudo[3] – the most widely known folklore specialist in Brazil – was able to identify certain phenomena linked to the name of Roland. All of them occur in the Northeast, whether it be the naming of a suburb in his honour; or in twins christened with the names of the brave French knights Roland (Roldão) and Olivier (Oliveiros); or in the team-leaders of a folkloric festival that is a kind of popular tournament on horseback – itself of mediaeval origin – in which the battle between the Christians and the Arabs is played out, one team being led by Roldão and the other by Oliveiros.

Furthermore, the soldiers of the personal escort of the leader of a peasant revolt in the South of the country (known as the Contestado, 1912–1916) used to be given the title of the 'Twelve Peers of France', even though there were twenty-four of them. Moreover, the officer immediately subordinate to the leader would be known as Roldão.[4] And I have myself noted almost everywhere the presence of surnames and first names such as Rolando, Roldão,

3 Luis da Câmara Cascudo, 'Roland no Brasil', *Mouros, franceses e judeus. Três presenças no Brasil*, ed. L. da Câmara Cascudo (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1984).

4 Maurício Vinhas de Queiroz, *Messianismo e conflito social* (*A guerra sertaneja do Contestado: 1912–1916*), 3rd ed. (São Paulo: Ática, 1981).

Orlando, Oliveiros and Carlos Magno, both in the city of Rio de Janeiro as well as in the small isolated villages of the mountain country.

The Carolingian theme is the object of a rich circularity between the oral and the written, between high and low culture, from mediaeval Europe to present-day Brazil, according to the grammar of chap-book literature. So it is not surprising, then, to see all sorts of contaminations and extrapolations of the theme, which, however, do not come to us from the *Song of Roland* itself, since this text was not rediscovered until the nineteenth century in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. The source is the Portuguese prose work *History of the Emperor Charlemagne and the Twelve Peers of France*. According to Câmara Cascudo, in a publication of 1953,

> this book was until very recently the book best known to the Brazilians of the hinterland. Despite its limited popularity in the large urban centres, its influence spread to the cattle ranches, to the sugarcane plantations, to the beach houses, sometimes being the only printed book available. It was very rare to find in the wilderness a home without *The History of Charlemagne*, in old Portuguese editions. There was not a single inhabitant who was not familiar with the exploits of the Peers, or the importance of the Emperor with the Flowing Beard.[5]

Still according to the same researcher, independently of the oral tradition, *The History of the Emperor Charlemagne and the Twelve Peers of France* has nevertheless come down to us in written form, thanks to the eighteenth-century Lisbon publications translated by Jerônimo Moreira de Carvalho, a physician from the Algarve, in the south of Portugal, who included additions and embellishments, among them the Boyard fragments (*Roland in Love*, 1495) and the Ariosto fragments (*Roland Enraged*, 1532). The definitive version of *The History* is considered to have been completed in Portugal in the nineteenth century. This text is the chief source of the minstrels' songs. It is divided into two parts and nine books, to which is added *The History of Bernardo del Carpio who Defeated in Battle the Twelve Peers of France*. But the starting point for Portugal and Spain is the work entitled *Historia del Emperador Carlomagno y de los Doce Pares de Francia e de la cruda batalla*

5 Luís da Câmara Cascudo, *Cinco livros do povo. Introdução ao estudo da novelística no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1953) 441.

que hubo Oliveiros con Fierabrà, Rey de Alexandria, hijo del Almirante Balan, published by the German Jacob Cromberger in Seville in 1525, and translated from French to Spanish by Nicolas de Piemonte. We should make it quite clear here that we are only noting a few of the written stages of this long journey, begun in the eighth century, of the wanderings of Charlemagne and his band of faithful warriors.

Thus, we have confirmed that the popularity of Roland is alive and well among the poor and ordinary citizens of the rustic world in which it survives. In all likelihood, this must also have been the case in Europe before the disappearance of the practice of traditional oral literature.

Among the inhabitants of the north-eastern hinterland, who are mostly illiterate, the names of the heroes of Roncevaux act as a direct or indirect cultural reference, as a kind of role model for the brave and intrepid. They always refer to an idea of courage and intrepid behaviour, whereas the characters of the other stories offer a moral example to an entire audience who identify with these values too.

The feelings of valour and honour, in accordance with the popular representation of the *cangaceiro* (the honourable bandit), are linked to the image of Charlemagne and his Peers, a classic reference for the minstrel who celebrates the outlaw as the knight errant of the people, a kind of popular outlaw who acted like Robin Hood.[6] The close relationship between the old heroes of the traditional *chanson de geste* and the new paladins of the wilderness can be attributed to the fact that the laws of honour and courage in battle have made it possible for it to pass from the *geste* into legend. By mingling history and chronicle, the minstrels are seeking to preserve the image of the bandit and the values he represents for the rural community, always and ever engaged in dispute with the great landowners.

The permanent nature of the theme is justified, for the subject matter of the tale does not belong to a closed world. On the contrary, it is

6 Silvano Peloso, *Medioevo nel sertão. Tradizione medievale europea e archetipi della letteratura popolare del Nordeste del Brasile* (Napoli: Liguori, 1984).

> an appropriate continuance arising from an effective historicity, built on a deeply rooted cultural tradition and not on any recent fashion or literary artifice.[7]

This historicity and the aspect of collectivity explain the far-reaching influence of the Carolingian epic. The faithfulness to the ancient *geste* is maintained thanks to the meeting of the worlds of the European Middle Ages and the Northeast of Brazil. The undeniable social proximity between these two realities has brought about this continuance in a world in which they are apparently so far removed from each other – whence the archaisms – because of the conditions of seclusion and isolation prevailing in the region where such literature still exists.

This meeting between the two worlds is not enough by itself to justify the current presence of Charlemagne and Roland in Brazil. First of all, we must ask ourselves why it is more alive in the Northeast, although it is to be found almost everywhere in the country. The answer may lie in the fact that this is the first region to have prospered economically and socially after the discovery of the country, owing to the success of the system used in the great sugarcane plantations – introduced in about 1530 – and to the Portuguese monopoly of this raw commodity on the European market in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The socio-economic model set up at that time by the metropolis was very akin to feudalism. The owners of the huge estates used their authority to manage the land and make it productive, as well as to dispense justice, supported by a kind of personal army. We can see similarities and dissimilarities in this to the Europe beyond the Pyrenees, as well as a certain lag in institutional development.

As regards the Northeast, monoculture, isolation, and a patriarchal system of property ownership survived until the 1940s. This isolation, strengthened by other circumstances, created conditions favourable to the conservation of oral literature, for it perpetuates traditions predicated on a static background and cultural characteristics destined to last. The essential stability of this old-fashioned system has contributed to producing a population that is of fairly uniformly mixed race, and, similarly, to a cultural blend of an archaic and

7 Jerusa Pires Ferreira, *Cavalaria em cordel. O passo das águas mortas* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1979) 15.

homogeneous kind. On the other hand, the illiteracy of the people renders much more conspicuous any kind of oral expression.

Furthermore, there is a heavy migration within the interior of this region, caused by both climatic disasters – such as the periodic droughts – and by social causes, because often the landowner drives the peasant from the land he is occupying; or else the latter falls victim to the landlord's justice and has to seek refuge elsewhere – but not too far from his roots and his haunts. This internal migration strengthens the values of solidarity of the group in relation to newcomers, even as it creates conditions for the flourishing of historical or fictional narratives.

Before ending this account of Charlemagne in Brazil, I must draw attention to some considerations that might allow a better understanding of the continued existence of a subject so apparently removed from the South American reality of the twentieth century. Firstly, we must remember that this persistence is rooted in a space that is in many ways peripheral, starting as a colony in relation to the metropolis, and later as an independent, though underdeveloped country in relation to rich and hegemonic areas, such as Europe and the USA. Furthermore, two other important factors for the dissemination of traditional oral culture belong to the marginal space: the contrast, on the one hand, between the backward north-eastern region and the developed south-central area; and a second contrast which it echoes, on the other – that between the rural world which produces and consumes this culture versus the larger, more cosmopolitan urban centres.

With regard to the role of the periphery, we should look to the study of Peter Burke on popular modern culture.[8] According to him, this nowadays degraded space still affords protection to a culture that has become residual because it was very severely repressed by the upper social classes from the Renaissance onwards. This is true of traditional popular culture, which in fact is closely connected to the Middle Ages. As a result, the international and globalised central spaces can only admit the ideas and ways of the upper

8 Peter Burke, *Cultura popular na Idade Moderna* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1989).

social classes, together with those belonging to the hegemonic groups, that is to say, those who follow *their* rules.

Secondly, it is worth stressing that the subjects with mediaeval components that we are concerned with here could be considered a kind of living fossil and do not reflect contemporary Brazilian society as it is, since they have been borrowed from chap-book literature, most of whose texts are vehicles for values that were current in a specific kind of regional society that no longer exists. The presence of this oral literature that comes from such ancient sources exemplifies the capacity for permanence pertaining to traditional oral culture, handed down in time and space, without any material support, except the performer's memory, always following its own rules, while also admitting a few adaptations necessary for its diffusion. That means that the world of the voice, whose richness and expressiveness have been much valued in the studies of Paul Zumthor,[9] in our century only remains in secondary social and territorial spaces, marginalised and distant from the dominant culture and from the developed and cosmopolitan society.

This traditional society survived almost unchanged for a very long time, up to the period between the two world wars, when mass communication began to make its first faltering appearance in Brazil. This society is itself beginning to undergo rapid transformation, owing to a rather odd assortment of causes, be it massive investment by government with the aim of modernising, or the growing importance of tourism, which will result in changing habits and customs; or even the privileged position of television in Brazil at the end of the century. Or, indeed, change will come from all of these influences at once, and for quite other reasons besides. Consequently, it is quite possible that the behavioural models offered by television, together with those of stars of soap operas, may end by displacing, indeed even replacing, the adventures of the *preux*, the valiant knights.

In conclusion, we would do well to take into consideration some still valid clichés, remembering that Brazil is a Third World country that is distinguished as a preserve of striking contrasts that intermingle, so that the country is developed, cosmopolitan, rich and industrialised, and at the same time,

9 Paul Zumthor, *La lettre et la voix. De la 'littérature' medievale* (Paris: Seuil, 1987).

quite the reverse. In the cultural field, this is manifested as the coexistence of the most sophisticated kind of formal research cheek by jowl with the most extreme of the avant-garde, and yet again side by side with the most obvious kind of traditional production. In other words, the country lives two distinct social temporalities at the same time: one attached to the world of tradition and the past, and the other fully inserted into modernity and aiming for a future that promises problematic but rich contrasts. Thus, it is possible to consider that, on the one hand, Brazil is a land of the future and, on the other, to a certain extent, that its hinterland is still mediaeval.[10] Within such a range of possibilities, there is naturally room for the heirs of Charlemagne.

These then are the reasons for the ability of cultural elements introduced in the sixteenth century to survive into the twentieth century. They have not remained the same for four centuries. Over this period, the blending of influences from different sources has given birth to original local productions, which nevertheless adhere to a matrix deriving from mediaeval Europe. Thus, Charlemagne and Roland are just one element among other similar ones. We may well imagine that television, the changing social and political conditions, the huge rural exodus and the opening of roads linking the *latifundia* of the Northeast to the cosmopolitan south-central region, will rapidly bring about a transformation of the context, so that this traditional oral literature will also be transformed. Shall we see Roland as a Hell's Angel?

10 Ligia Vassallo. *O sertão medieval. Origens européias do teatro de Ariano Suassuna* (Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, 1993).

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Anton Janko

Vida the Beautiful and her *Zamorec*:

The Allure of the Exotic Stranger in Slovene Literature

Lepa Vida is one of the most prolific themes in Slovene literature. In order to understand why this is so, and to appreciate the reason for its prominence, a short historical introduction-cum-explanation is necessary. The figure of Vida the Beautiful first appears in a Slovene folksong that was only written down at the beginning of the last century; its origins, however, are of much greater age and are hidden in the mists of a mythological past. It is one of the true Reliques of Ancient Slovene Poetry, as Thomas Percy would say.

The narrative poem Lepa Vida, one of the best known in Slovene poetic folklore, was well known even before it first appeared in printed form in the third issue of a poetic almanac entitled *Kranjskasbelica* in 1832. After the editorial custom of the day, the poem was not printed in its authentic pre-literate form and in its somewhat vulgar linguistic constitution, but appeared with some correction and emendations, this being the consequence of metrical corruptions. In addition, the editors responsible for such corrections were persuaded that the true (as they believed) original folk song was perfect in every sense, for the folk in its composite genius could not possibly be wrong. It was the latter representatives and inheritors of that 'glorious' poetic past who were responsible for the corruptions of a less heroic and glorious time. Were they not right in their attempt to re-establish the perfection of the Golden Age?

The author of the amended version, printed in 1832, was the best Slovene poet of the day, France Preseren (1800–1849), who even in modern times enjoys the fame that proclaims him the greatest poetic genius of Slovene literature and culture.

The ballad – for the poem Lepa Vida in its basic tone is balladesque – consists of 82 trochaic (ten-syllabic) lines and begins by introducing a young

woman washing nappies at the seashore. A black *zamorec* ('stranger') comes sailing by in a boat, stops, and wonders why she is not as beautiful as she used to be in the previous years. It seems obvious that the two had met before. Vida explains why this is so: guided by ill advice, she was persuaded to marry a much older, albeit rich man. Her baby, to which she had given birth in the meantime, cries all day long, and the husband is sickly and spends nights in bouts of coughing and moaning.

The *zamorec* is quick with his advice: 'When cranes do not feel well at home, they fly away to a place beyond the sea'. He tells her that he came to her with a purpose in mind: he is the messenger of the Spanish Queen who desires Vida to nurse her infant child. 'You will have nothing to do but to suckle her prince, sing songs for him and make his bed, nothing else!' Without thinking this proposition through, that is to say without introspection, Vida steps into the boat and the messenger of the Queen immediately sets sail. The three weeks they are at sea provides time enough for Vida to regret her decision. It is, unfortunately, too late for her to change her mind, and she is in no position to return home.

Vida is not happy with her new easy job at the Spanish court. In the morning, she begs the Sun to tell her how her own child and the husband are faring. The answer is that, as far as her little son is concerned, 'last night they held the candle' (which means that he was dying); the husband and also her father were roaming the seas, looking for her. In the evening, Vida puts the same question to the Moon, and the answer is similar: the child is in the grave, her father is dead, her husband is roaming the seas looking for her. Vida bursts into tears. The queen, witnessing Vida's weeping, wants to know the reason for such a profusion of tears. Vida's explanation is a lie: while she was washing the golden dishes at a window above the sea, she let a golden cup fall into the deep waters of the sea. She could not retrieve it and is afraid of the consequences: the King's anger, the disfavour of the Queen. The Queen promises to buy another cup and avert the King's anger from her favourite maid. All this happens. Vida, nonetheless, every day spends tearful moments at the seashore, weeping for her little son, her father and her husband.

As we can see, the basic story is a simple tale, well known in the heritage of many peoples, especially those of the Mediterranean. It portrays the tragedy caused by sea pirates or robbers who, by sudden attack, enslave people and

bring them to the countries which lie beyond the sea. It tells of the sorrow and longings of such people. Our folk ballad is of the same timbre. However, Preseren, a poet of romantic profile, adds an important interpretative element to it by making the heroine of the ballad a romantic figure as *he* understood it: there is an element of rebellion in her character. Vida is not satisfied with the life she is forced to lead and is at the outset quite willing to desert her little son, aged husband father for the new and better life promised by the messenger, the black *zamorec*. The romantic rebellion suggested in Preseren's innovation finds its expression in the breaking of old social rules, defying the authorities who, for centuries, had not been questioned.

Preseren was a man of the Romantic Age, who wanted to present the drama and mystery, ecstasy or agony, of his inner life in the outward terms, the symbolic trappings, of a world very different from the one in which he and his heroine – and his readers – found themselves. The poet is sharply conscious of himself as a different kind of man compared to others. He had no well-defined and widely recognised place in the community. He was not – independent of his fame, which in his lifetime was not great – a public man in the old sense: an honoured husband, a successful merchant or even a rich factory owner of the Industrial Age. In the increasing complexity of community life, somehow he had been squeezed out. Whether he regarded himself as an exile, a rebel, or a prophet – and he, like most romantic poets, assumed all three roles at some time or other – this 'difference' compelled him to become increasingly private and personal, broadly expressing in literature the social reality of his time. He felt compelled to declare that nothing had value to him except what he discovered in the depths of his own experience. He believed in Rousseau's pronouncement that, even though man was born free, he was everywhere in chains.

The romanticisation of revolt in the ballad confirms the personal independence of the agent of such outrageous deeds, and it also attributes a goodly portion of pleasure to his person. The pleasure, in the author's words, is the result of the independent spirit that desires to rule one's life. Unfortunately, this sort of revolt does not lead to satisfactory results: the heroine is unable to construct a suitable frame for the new emotions of an independent spirit, and her attempts at doing so must end in defeat and regret. The atmosphere at the end of the ballad is one of loneliness and longing for the

once envisaged new order of things, which, as the hero realizes too late, is not within reach.

Even in the original simplicity of the traditional folksong, Vida shows some of the traits of a rebel. Preseren, however, elaborated the story by supplying an additional motivation for her behaviour. The change is a very subtle one, and yet it makes all the difference: Vida listened to ill advice and married an old man. The folk song, on the other hand, simply states that she lived with a sickly old man and had a child: there is no explanation why and how this came to pass. Vida in Preseren's version did not marry for reasons of love; she did it because she was told to do so and not because she was bound to the man she married by emotional or erotic ties. The motif of the folksong, the one that tells of a faithful wife and mother who was forced to forsake her family and her home, in Preseren's interpretation loses its ethical justification. And yet, the motif retains its poetic power, even though it is now focused on the role of Vida as mother, rather than wife.

In her emotional independence, given her by Preseren, Vida follows the call of her nature and severs the ties to the established social order of accepted moral values: in her longing for personal happiness, she abandons higher ethical principles. For disregarding these, she has to pay by being even more dissatisfied and unhappy than before, and she is forced to spend the rest of her life in sorrow and regret. Although Preseren does not falsify the simple narrative of the folksong, he nonetheless projects into the figure of Lepa Vida his own conception of women. He turns from the ordinary 'sensible' women who cannot help thinking about children, houses and a steady income, and he creates a magical image of his unconscious projection. Potentially, his beautiful, lovely Vida is a feminine creature who is anything but a 'sensible' woman: she is rather a faery being, a nymph or savage queen, a woman alluringly exotic and not to be domesticated. Love, according to Preseren's understanding, is a pursuit, a torment, an unquenchable thirst, a fleeting ecstasy, a bitter aftermath, the source of disillusion and unending regret. It is anything but the foundation of an enduring and fruitful relationship between a man and a woman. The romantic poet Preseren is not turning outward, to see and enjoy women as they are, but turns inward, lost in erotic dreams and reveries, entangled in the uncensored, unchecked fantasies of the unconscious.

Preseren's interpretation of the character and motif of the traditional Vida the Beautiful has since been taken up by many other Slovene poets and writers. In most cases, they do not concentrate on the story as presented in the original folksong. What is of interest to them is Vida as *femme fatale*, who sometimes appears as the embodiment of a woman with virtually boundless power over the men who fall in love with her and whom she enslaves. She, nonetheless, has saving qualities since she, too, is slave to her own unbounded passions and desires. She represents a person who in her egotism pursues her own goals single-mindedly. At the same time, she retains some traits of a person who understands her suitors, is good to them, but in the end cannot satisfy either herself or them. Such writers concentrate on the drama of longing: to the man who perceives in Vida the Beautiful the embodiment of all his desires and fantasies, she is a figure of the dream world, and even in this day and age she remains something that, in terms of personal motivation, harks back to the Romantic Age. The idea is that freedom has nothing to do with any appreciation of necessity or accommodation to the real world. Rather, in practice if not in theory, man comes nearest to freedom by striking the 'right' balance between the conscious mind – looking outward – and the unconscious mind by interpreting the objective world entirely in terms of the subjective inner reality of dream and desire. A man who prefers erotic reveries to living in love with a real woman will certainly have more liberty, but all that he gains is an unrewarding erotic relationship with himself. He keeps running away, refusing to be bound by any obligation, and thus he diminishes himself by depriving himself of new duties, new responsibilities, and new relationships. When the narrowing path of escape turns into a cul-de-sac, he cries out in despair that he is alone. Romanticism explodes from the unconscious in a sudden release of creative energy as an aspect of life to be celebrated in literature, as life's ultimate danger, precipitating a rush to despair and madness when it is taken unchecked as a way of life.

The list of the few protagonists in the original folksong includes Lepa Vida, her husband, her new employer and supporting figures. The writers and poets that use this theme usually do not include one very important figure in the folksong, the *zamorec*. Although his role is secondary, he is a crucial and integral part of the tale. The *zamorec* is to some extent of African provenance. The etymology of the Slovene word *zamorec* is not complicated and simply

means the one from beyond the sea. In the narrow sense of the word, it now means a black man from beyond the sea, even though the etymology at the first sight does not signify such. It has to be added that the basic morpheme of the word, *mur*, means black. In the original folksong, the *mur zamorec* is the servant of the Spanish Queen, the one who lures Vida away from her husband and child. The source for this role obviously has a real, historical background: it is the Moorish Spain that is meant and the Queen is a Moorish queen. The folksong most likely recalls an event of the distant past when a young woman was captured or lured into a Moorish boat under some pretence or other; she was not allowed to leave it again. Her grief over her captivity and separation from her infant son and husband, as portrayed in the folksong, is understandable. Vida here is not at fault, she was taken away against her will. In Preseren's version, however, as explained above, she is a willing accomplice of the messenger's scheme, and it is only at a later stage that she grasps the gravity of her decision. The *zamorec* in this case assumes an additional importance in that he is instrumental in making Vida's decision final. In this, he is successful in that he promises her a better and easier life at the Moorish palace. In my view, the *zamorec* represents the embodiment of Vida's unconscious wish to be rid of the responsibilities that she has to fulfil in her drab existence. He signifies the longings of her subconscious mind and makes them possible in the real world. That is why he has to be a very exotic stranger, a man from beyond the sea, from the other side of the sea. This significance also explains why he has to be black, the attribute which is attached to him. To the traditional Slovene, the dark, unknown side of the human soul finds its representation in the black Moor from Spain. In Slovene culture, Spain is traditionally connected with the exotic, the splendid, the opulent, as well as with the dangerous unknown.

It had to be thus in the simple folk ballad; it also had to remain so in the romantic interpretation of Preseren. Modern authors, however, whose work falls within this century, have no need for such symbolic representation of the unknown part of the human soul: they know too much of psychology and psychoanalysis and can express the same truths in ways unknown to the first half of the nineteenth century.

There is none the less a modern treatment of the theme which does away with the Spanish court and its Queen, and concentrates rather on the *zamorec*.

In a 1972 novel of Anton Ingolic entitled *Onduo, moj crni fant* (*Onduo, My Black Boyfriend*), the author narrates the story of a Slovene girl who marries a black student from Sudan out of love and willingly accompanies him to his homeland. They are both very much in love, but they are also unable to foresee the consequences of the cultural incompatibility that puts insurmountable difficulties in their way to the happiness they desire. The end of the tale is tragic. The beautiful blond girl Vida dies just when it seems that things will sort themselves out. The relationship between the two is enhanced on both sides by exotic eroticism, which, in effect, is unable to sustain the love necessary for their mutual life to continue.

If the great majority of writers dealing with this theme in modern times omit the *zamorec* because they think that such symbolic representations are no longer necessary or are out of date, Ingolic subverts the theme of exotic attraction by making the tragic end of the lovers the result of the incompatibilities of two different cultures. In this instance, the exploration of blind, impulsive passions is still served in Slovene literature by the artful evocation of the simple folksong of Vida and her *zamorec*.

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Meta Grosman

Literary Translation for the Third Millennium

Speculations about the approaching twenty-first century, the third millennium, and the future of globalization may well demand an exercise of the imagination. In so speculating, we should not proceed from the known and the already possible, but should rather try to imagine the impossible and the as yet unimagined, provided it could contribute to better international understanding between peoples. At previous turns of centuries, people naturally speculated about the future, and often their guesses fell far wide of the mark. So we must be aware of the tentative nature of any speculations about the future. Amidst such uncertainties, only one eventuality seems to be all but certain: in contrast to the expectations for the twentieth century, people of the twenty-first century will have to live in a much closer and more complicated interconnectedness. Ongoing innovations in communications technologies, and increasing ease of travel are expected to change physical, economic, political, as well as linguistic and cultural relations among peoples.

In a utopian world of peace-loving peoples, such developments could usher in a world of unprecedented cultural diversity. However, in our world of constant strife, both civil and international, the increasing interconnectedness of people gives little cause for optimism. Various conflicts seem to be reflected also in growing tensions between languages with wide currency, such as English, and those less widely used. In such a situation, any possibility of promoting understanding among peoples and then maintaining it amidst ever-expanding cultural contexts must be considered an absolute priority. In my paper, I intend to argue that literary translation could provide a medium for better intercultural understanding, in accordance with its traditional role of bridging cultural divides, provided that special attention is paid to developing this dimension. In order to achieve this end, literary translation should be supported by a translation theory explicitly aimed at promoting intercultural

understanding. Such a translation theory would have to recognize the problems of the less widespread languages that are of little interest in the current theory, which has been developed to serve the more 'dominant' languages and their powerful literary systems. In addition to this, there is a need for a theory of literature that would not restrict the reading of literature to academe and the cultural elites but that would rather attract a wider readership.

Literary translation has long provided a window into the experience of other cultures and languages. The translation offers an experience beyond the frontiers of one's own language, and it may lead to greater tolerance and openness of mind, and thus to a better understanding of one's own culture, as well as of that of the other. The world as we know it today would be unthinkable if one could somehow erase the impact of all translated literary texts. One could even claim that literary translations have greater power than original texts: they can amplify the power of the original work and introduce it to speakers of other languages. In this way they can reach cultures beyond the linguistic borders of the original text, and could reach readers in unanticipated intercultural contexts. That is why literary translation is justly described as intercultural literary communication, and why it is theorized as being the medium of intercultural literary exchange. Just think of Shakespeare: in spite of his creative imagination, Shakespeare could never have conceived that millions of people would know his plays in countless languages all over the world. Moreover, those who do not know his work from first-hand experience cannot avoid his secondary presence in frequent citations of, or allusions to, his works. What would we know about ancient Greece, if its literary texts had not been made available in translation in many different languages?

Literary translation has internationalized 'great' works of literature by making them available in many languages the world over. None the less, the consensus that defined the canon of the 'literary classics' has a marked Eurocentric bias. We have become increasingly aware of the limitations of the Eurocentric perspective, as we have also become familiar with heretofore 'obscure' literatures, many of them still untranslated. The discovery of these 'other worlds' in its turn discloses the power-relations obtaining between the 'universal' languages and their literatures on the one hand and those that are less widespread on the other. Studies have shown that the literature of traditions of wide currency – such as those of Britain and the United States – are

routinely translated into 'minority' languages on a massive scale. Conversely, the literatures of these 'minority' languages have little hope of becoming known and appreciated by readers in a 'dominant' language such as English.[1] It is even less likely that such literatures will attain translations of quality or meet with serious critical acclaim.

The speakers of 'minority' languages have called attention to the disadvantaged position of their literatures in gaining readers through literary translations. Ria Vanderauwera points out that 'small' literatures such as Dutch have little hope of making inroads into the domain of 'big' literature.[2] This is true of Dutch literature even though the expenses of translating and publishing are underwritten by the Foundation for the Promotion of the Translation of Dutch Literary Works. The Slovene and many similar literary traditions suffer an even worse fate because they do not have the support of such foundations to promote their works in translation. Literary achievements in such languages do not earn international recognition and seldom win wide readerships. Being untranslated, such works do not qualify for international prizes and cannot be made into films. None the less, no translation theory addresses this situation and the inevitable loss of cultural diversity caused by it. Current literary translation theory serves the interests of the institutions and power structures that produce it. These are universities and research centres that create and promote literary translations to be read by a national audience in a 'dominant' language. The theory of translation suits the 'system' that produces the translations and within which they are intended to be of service.

1 Even when costs of translating are paid by a foundation to promote the national literature, the translations simply do not attract American readers and reviewers. See R. Vanderauwera, *Dutch Novels Translated into English. The Transformation of a 'Minority' Literature.* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1985). Much the same is true of other literatures, for instance Slovene. See M. Grosman, 'Knjizevni prevod kot oblika medkulturnega posrdovanja', *Knjizevni prevod* (*Literary Translation*), ed. M. Grosman and U. Mozetic (Ljubljana: Znanstveni institut Filozofske fakultete, 1997), 11–56.

2 Ria Vanderauwera, 'The Response to Translated Literature: A Sad Example', *The Manipulation of Literature. Studies in Literary Translation*, ed. T. Hermans, (London: Croom Helm, 1985) 198–214.

Perhaps the most elaborate literary translation theory of this sort is that of Gideon Toury. He distinguishes between two different possibilities of translating literature, of which only one qualifies as literary translation according to him. He describes the conditions to be fulfilled by a translation in order for it to qualify as a literary translation in the following way:

> A literary text may undergo either literary or non-literary acts of translation. In order for it to undergo literary translating it must not only enter another *linguistic* system, i. e., be encoded in [the target literature's] linguistic code, but also another *literary* system, which may act in analogy to the source literary system, as a secondary modelling system (or a secondary code) for [the target text]. Thus a translation occupying no position in the target literary system will not be regarded as a literary translation simply because it is not a literary text. Hence, a non-literary translation of a literary text is nothing but a regular (interlingual) translation, the [source text] of which happens to be a literary text.[3]

In a later discussion, Toury provides a further description of literary translation as distinct from either linguistically motivated or textually dominated translation:

> Finally, literary translation involves the imposition of 'conformity conditions' beyond the linguistic and/or general textual ones, namely to models and norms that are deemed literary at the target end. It thus yields more or less well-formed texts from the point of view of the *literary* requirements of the reception culture, at various possible costs in terms of the reconstruction of features of the source text.
> Subjugation to target literary models and norms may thus involve the *suppression* of some of the source text's features, on occasion even those which marked it as 'literary', or as a proper representative of a specific literary model in the first place. … It may also entail the *reshuffling* of certain features, not to mention the *addition* of new ones in an attempt to enhance the acceptability of the translation as a target literary text.[4]

Other authors also discuss the necessity of adapting a literary translation to the target literary system. André Lefevere, for instance, considers translation to be one form of 'refraction', that is, a text produced on the basis of another text with the intention of influencing the way in which the target readers

3 Gideon Toury, *In Search of a Theory of Translation*. (Tel Aviv: Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics, Tel Aviv University, 1980) 11.

4 Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins,1995) 171.

receive it.[5] In a preface written jointly with Susan Bassnett, Lefevere says, 'Translation is, of course, rewriting of an original text'. It is, like all other forms of rewriting, basically a manipulation, 'undertaken in the service of power' and reflecting a certain ideology and poetics in order to make literature function in a given society in a given way.[6] In his first chapter, Lefevere goes a step further and states that what is usually referred to as 'the intrinsic value' of a work of literature plays much less a role in these processes than is usually assumed.[7] To gain a better understanding of these processes, one should ask the questions 'who rewrites, why, under what circumstances, for which audience?'[8] Hans Vermeer insists that, because of the radical 'differentness' of the source text, translations simply cannot give readers access to it.[9] Rather, readers must stop expecting a *translat* or translated text to give them direct access to the source text;[10] and they must stop regarding changes introduced by translators as losses.[11] We should rather see them as exciting and creative possibilities of cultural transfer.[12]

Unable to provide firm criteria and/or rules for how literary translation might work within the institutions of a national programme of literacy, such theories seem to authorize the unregulated adaptation of source texts to the target literature. Toury does not tell us whether the difference between the literary and the merely linguistic translation can be attributed to the translator's decision about how much cultural appropriation of the source text he must make, and what posture he must assume vis-à-vis the target literary system.

5 André Lefevere, 'Literature Comparative and Translated', *Babel* 29 (1983) 70–75: 71.

6 André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame.* (London: Routledge, 1992) vii.

7 Lefevere [6] 1.

8 Lefevere [6] 7.

9 Hans J. Vermeer, 'Literarische Übersetzung als Versuch interkultureller Kommunikation', *Perspektiven und Verfahren interkultureller Germanistik*, ed. A. Wierlacher, vol. 3 (Munich: Iudicium, 1987) 541–551: 545.

10 Vermeer [9] 543.

11 Vermeer [9] 542.

12 Hans J. Vermeer, 'Übersetzen als kultureller Transfer', *Übersetzungs-wissenschaft, Eine Neuorientierung*, ed. M. Snell-Hornby. (Tübingen: Francke, 1986) 30–53: 30.

This absence of determinable criteria is understandable, since even native literary texts often fail, upon their first appearance, to qualify as 'literature' by the established criteria, and only later win recognition as such. In the absence of set criteria, current translation theory effectively legitimizes the earlier practices of literary translators. These are for the most part speakers of world languages who collect interesting foreign texts for transfer (and adaptation) to the domestic culture for the (uncritical) enjoyment of readers. In so doing, these translators fail to ask whether such radical appropriation of source texts is really desirable and/or necessary, and what the consequences of it might be. If, through adaptive appropriation, the translator reduces the 'otherness' of the original text, the readers lose the chance to 'understand' the other, and to be stimulated by, and become open to, cross-cultural differences. If target readers could choose, which translation would they prefer? Would they choose the considerably adapted one with all the familiar features of their own literary tradition, or the one that offers more information about the source text and that attempts to represent its otherness, while giving insight into a different literature and culture? Readers of translated literature usually cannot choose between the two. Contrast this situation with the preference of speakers of minority languages, who are often used to dealing with, if not also living in, several linguistic contexts. As readers, such persons are more likely to prefer the 'cross-culturally sensitive' translation, simply because contact with other languages breeds openness to other cultures.

Though textual appropriation is considered to be a natural constituent of all reading, it has never been regarded as advantageous or as a practice to be promoted. It is true that, in the reader's mental picture of the text, elements deriving from the text are so closely intertwined with elements coming from his or her own experience that the two are simply indistinguishable.[13] It is also true that a strong tendency towards the cultural appropriation of stories from unfamiliar cultures was documented as early as 1932, when Bartlett, while examining the memories of readers of such stories in an experiment, discovered that all culturally alien detail was either 'disremembered' or

13 Larry, R. Brooke, 'Predicting Propositional Logic Inference in Text Comprehension', *Journal of Memory and Language* 31 (1990) 316–370: 361.

transformed into something more familiar.[14] Do such tendencies, however, make cultural appropriation acceptable without our having to question the reasons for it or examine its consequences?

In an essay with the telling title, 'Against Appropriation', Alan Sinfield furnishes the following description of readerly and critical appropriation:

> Appropriation – the attempt to juggle the text into acceptability – produces imprecise thought and emotion and encourages a complacent 'discovery' of what we want to find.[15]

He further argues that the real relevance of literature resides precisely in its *otherness*. As the most sophisticated means by which societies seek to interpret themselves, literature has a special capacity to draw us into their world. That is why – in his opinion – we should use the resources of literary translation to recreate in the imagination an alien society together with its informing ideology, and to locate the text within such structures. In short, he believes that literature will serve us better if we allow it to challenge us rather than confirm us in our complacency. Literary translation should not be an exception to this principle, especially since the translator's reading and interpretation of the source text eventually becomes the only text available to target readers.[16]

This power of literature to challenge our everyday understanding, and, in doing so, to make us see and think differently,[17] and to entice us to abandon specific beliefs and values and to adopt others, seems to become even more important in the intercultural contexts of literary translation. If the otherness and cultural specificity of the source text are carefully preserved, and not appropriated, the translation is likely to stimulate deeper intercultural

14 Frederic C. Bartlett, *Remembering. A Study in Experimental Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1932).

15 Alan Sinfield, 1981. 'Against Appropriation', *Essays in Criticism* 31 (1981) 181–195: 182.

16 Robert de Beaugrande, *Factors in a Theory of Poetic Translation* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1978).

17 David Novitz, 'The Anaesthetics of Emotion', *Emotion and the Arts*, ed. M. Hjort and S. Laver (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1997) 246–262: 247.

understanding by challenging readers. That is why many translators take such great pains to preserve the otherness and cultural specificity of the source text.

As an example of how intercultural sensitivity might work systematically in literary translations, we may consider the Slovene model. Rather than follow theories that recommend adapting the translation to specific practices within the target language, the Slovene system prefers to preserve the cultural specificity of the source text while rejecting adaptation when this involves unregulated appropriation or simply making the translation easier for readers. Several recent translation studies criticize the wholesale appropriation from English texts into Slovenian. They explain unnecessary appropriation as a consequence of the translator's insufficient knowledge of the source culture, of its particular genres,[18] and of the intertextual connectedness of the text.[19] The translator's ignorance of a single cultural feature, as, for instance, the concept of gentlemanliness in Jane Austen's novels, can result in unnecessary adaptation.[20] These studies analyze the effect that the uncritical appropriation of a source text has on comprehension in the Slovene translations of Lewis Carroll and Jane Austen, and in the staging of O'Neill's plays. They make the point that unadapted translations that give Slovene readers a better sense of the original cultural context are both more challenging and richer in meaning. Such criticism of needlessly adaptive translation seems to reflect the desire of Slovene readers to have as direct access as possible to the source text through a literary translation.

Moreover, several attempts to 'foreignize' literary translations into Slovene by a controlled effort to preserve their culture-specific otherness have met

18 Barbara Simoniti, 'Nonsens kot literarni pojav, njegovo ubesedovanje in problemi prevajanja' ('Nonsense as a Literary Phenomenon, its Verbalization Processes and Translation'), in Grosman and Mozetic [1] 75–88: 75.

19 Uros Mozetic, 'The Impact of Translation Deviation upon the Reception of Eugene O'Neill's Plays in Slovenia', *American Literature for Non-American Readers*, ed. M. Grosman (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1995) 123–138: 124.

20 Meta Grosman, 'Cross-Cultural Awareness: Focusing on Otherness', *Teaching Translation and Interpreting*, ed. C. Dollerup and A. Lindegaard, vol. 2 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1994) 51–58: 52.

with great success.[21] Is such an attitude to translation related to the 'self-image' of the literary system, or does it express the natural curiosity of readers who do not feel 'self-sufficient'? Perhaps the remarkable openness of the Slovene literary system to the 'otherness' of translated texts may be attributed to a long tradition of literary translations intended to resist a flood of readily available translations in German at a time of growing Slovene national consciousness under the Hapsburgs? Or is it to be explained by the syntactic complexity of the language and/or by the small number of its speakers? Do the literary systems of other 'minority' languages have the same or similar characteristics? Why do readers sometimes favour translations that offer an intense intercultural challenge? Why, at other times, do they prefer translations that seem familiar because they have been adapted to their own literary tastes? Such questions can only be answered when comparative studies explain how literary translations function as vectors of intercultural experience within different languages and their literary systems. However, the interest of Slovene readers in unadapted literary translations, and their willingness to cope with texts with a 'foreign' flavour certainly prove that such translations can win readers.

Since winning independence in 1991, Slovenia has sought to test the assumption that reading foreign literatures in translation and in the original languages can contribute to the understanding of other cultures. In its educational policies, the ministry of education lays strong emphasis on developing intercultural awareness and on the ability to communicate across cultural divides through the introduction of new curricula for languages and literatures at all levels. Literature in translation is not discussed as 'foreign', with an emphasis on its foreignness. Rather, young readers are encouraged to see literary texts as having intercultural contexts, with the emphasis on the intercultural arising from the contact of the reader's own culture with that of the translated text.

21 Tina Mahkota, 'Problemi kulturnospecificne obarvanosti besedila pri knjizevnem prevajanju' ('Problems of Culture-specific Features of the Text in Literary Translation'), in Grosman and Mozetic [1] 89–98: 89.

Perhaps the experience of Slovenia could serve as a model for the way forward into the Third Millennium. Slovenia seems to show how a policy of literary translation can be made to suit concrete cultural needs. When readers expect literary translations to give them a critical insight into how meanings are constructed in other languages and in other cultures; and when, moreover, they expect to be able to read dialogically – i.e. being simultaneously aware of their own perspective as well as that of the other – then theory will favour translations that embody the experience of different cultures with unreduced otherness. Theories of literary translation are thus obviously subject to change, depending on the desired function of translation in a given cultural context.

If literary translation is to contribute to intercultural understanding among peoples in the twenty-first century, then theories of literary translation must avoid Toury's prescriptions, which favour national literary systems. The theory should rather support translations that endeavour to make the 'otherness' of the source text accessible to as many readers as possible. As we contemplate the next century, it seems increasingly likely that the ever-growing community of non-native speakers of world languages such as English will demand translations of literary texts in their second language. In the case of 'international' English, most speakers of it have different mother tongues. This means that for them English is not the language of their cultural heritage; they do not use it for expressing intense personal feelings, nor is it the medium of their primary cognitive relationship to reality.[22] None the less, they do use English in innumerable daily transactions in an increasingly internationalized culture, and they also expect to be able to read English translations of literary texts not available in their mother tongues. This is all the more likely to happen if such reading were to offer a rewarding insight into the 'otherness' of different cultures. This situation is not new, since before literary texts began to be translated into 'minority' languages, readers who had such languages as their mother tongue had to read translated works in some dominant, 'official'

22 Mary Snell-Hornby, '"McLanguage": The Identity of English as an Issue in Translation Theory', *Translation into Non-Mother Tongues – In Professional Practice and Teaching*, ed. M. Grosman, M. Kadric, I. Kovacic and M. Snell-Hornby (Tuebingen: Stauffenburg, no date): in press.

language. A similar situation obtains today with the wide range of texts from African and Asian literatures that are available only in either their original, 'minority' language or in a 'world language' such as English.

For the sort of translations here proposed, the answers to Lefevere's questions – 'Who rewrites [i.e. translates], why, under what circumstances, for which audience?' – would differ markedly from the answers applicable under a national literary system. Translations for an international readership would not need to be targeted for a particular literary system and would thus be free from system-specific and cultural constraints. Under such conditions, the translator could certainly endeavour to preserve more culture-specific textual features and concentrate on offering the unappropriated otherness and differentness of the source text, thus making it possible for interested readers to experience these very qualities more intensely. Once they realize that cultural difference is not something to be eliminated by translation, readers would learn how to come to terms with the foreignness and otherness preserved in translations. Encounters with the unappropriated differentness of other cultures might then stimulate readers to read more critically and to make comparisons between cultures. By carefully reflecting on what is strange and unfamiliar in the text, readers would come to a more complex understanding of the world of the text. This sort of reading forces readers to take two perspectives at once – their own and that of the other. These two dissimilar perspectives might develop a dialectical relationship in the reader's mind, while yet remaining separate. The combination of dissimilar but co-extensive points of view would enrich the reading experience and enhance the capacity to appreciate 'otherness' for what it is. This would also make it possible for readers to come to see their own culture as but one in a world of many cultures. Such cultural multiplicity naturally calls for understanding and tolerance. Critical reading of unadapted literary translation could, in this way, contribute significantly to the development of intercultural awareness, even as increased international understanding follows from global interconnectedness. If the potential of literary translation for contributing to intercultural understanding is better known, this could stimulate a global interest in the literatures of 'minority' languages.

If the vision I have offered here seems too optimistic, I do recognize that certain conditions must be satisfied before this can come true. For instance,

there is need for commentaries of quality and other ancillary texts to accompany the translations here envisaged. Moreover, teaching literature in translation should be done in such a way that the students have the skills to extract from texts deeply personal significance. Having such literary competence as a skill for life would motivate them to continue reading with open minds after they have left school. Recommendations for such a regime have in fact been included in the new Slovene curricula for modern languages.

John Milton

The Translation of Mass Fiction:

A Study of Brazilian Pulp Fiction

1. High and Low

Translation studies have traditionally been an integral part of high culture, dominated by an aristocratic and gentlemanly coterie who have access to foreign languages and literature. One can think of the Royalist aristocrats in the seventeenth century, many of the names Tytler mentions in his *Essay on the Principles of Translation*, and the many gentlemanly discussions around translations of Homer.[1]

Many literary translations have been aimed at the learned few. This can clearly be seen, for example, in the ideas of the German Romantics. More specifically, Lawrence Venuti comments that the kind of translation that Schleiermacher recommends

> aims to preserve the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, but only as it is perceived in the translation by a limited readership, an educated elite.[2]

So, paradoxically, a translation, which should or could make a work available to all the literate members of a new language group, may be directed to a specific clique or coterie, thereby excluding the great majority of readers.

The rise of democracy, the enfranchisement of the masses and the advent of print capitalism in the nineteenth century produced a resulting cultural reaction in the intellectual elite, worried about the erosion of their privilege and

1 See, for example, T. R. Steiner, *English Translation Theory 1650–1800* (Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1975).

2 Lawrence Venuti, 'Genealogies of Translation Theory: Schleiermacher', *TTR* 4.2 (1991) 125–150: Montreal, Université Concordia.

domination. In *La deshumanización del arte*, published in 1925, José Ortega y Gasset sees modernism as a result of this reaction. He contrasts romantic art, which he calls 'popular', a child of democracy, with contemporary 'anti-popular' art, which many people found difficult to understand, when compared to the emotion and human interest central to romantic art:

> The loves, hatreds, pity and happiness of the characters move the heart: people share them, as if they were real events in life. And a work is called 'good' when it manages to produce the amount of illusion necessary for the imaginary characters to be valued as living people. In lyrical poetry, the loves and pains which beat in the poet's heart will be sought. In painting the pictures that attract will be those with men and women, with whom, in one way or another, it would be interesting to live. A painting of a landscape will seem 'pretty' when the real landscape represented has picturesque or interesting elements which could be visited on a trip.[3]

This contrasts with modern art and literature, where Mallarmé, for example, attempts to divest the poem of all human interest; this is the 'dehumanization' of art. In music, Debussy performed the same dehumanizing function against the heavily personal and associative themes of Beethoven and Wagner.

Pierre Bourdieu, in *Distinction*, surveys the cultural tastes of different social classes in France in the 1970s. He found that the intellectual classes generally believe more in the form of the representation itself, whether it be the form of the painting, the piece of music or the literary work, than what is actually represented. There is a withdrawal from the concrete. They are able to reach Kant's level of reflection as against the easy pleasure of the senses, whereas popular taste believes in the things themselves – the ethics of the object are tied in with the aesthetic, whereas they are separated for the intellectual classes. In other words, popular taste takes more interest in what is said than in the way it is said. Thus, it will prefer more straightforward situations and more simply drawn figures and will wish to become involved in the lives and moral choices of the characters of the fictional works. The two approaches to a work will be different:

3 José Ortega y Gasset, *La deshumanización del arte y otros ensayos de estética* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente and Alianza, 1983) 16.

> The popular reaction is the very opposite of the detachment of the aesthete, who, as is seen whenever he approaches one of the objects of popular taste (e.g., Westerns or strip cartoons), introduces a distance, a gap – the measure of his distant distinction vis-à-vis 'first-degree' perception, by displacing the interest from the 'content', characters, etc., to the form, to the specifically artistic effects which are only appreciated relationally, through a comparison with other works, which is incompatible with immersion in the singularity of the work immediately given.[4]

Ortega is wary of the crowd, or rather, the mob:

> The crowd has suddenly become visible; it has installed itself in the preferred places of society. Previously, it did exist but went unnoticed; it was part of the background of society; now it has come to the forefront, it is the main character. Now there are no protagonists; there is only a choir.[5]

Faced with this general levelling, the intellectual elite must trace out a path of its own. It must take the 'higher path' and distinguish itself from the masses. Far better to write, paint or compose for this elite, the 'Happy Few', the coterie with the specialized knowledge that is necessary to understand modernist art and writing. In the words of Heraclitus: 'Why do you want to take me everywhere, O illiterate ones? I didn't write for you but for those who could understand me. One person is worth a hundred thousand for me, and the mob's worth nothing'.[6]

Ortega, in his own essay on translation 'The Splendour and Misery of Translation', sees translation as a way of escaping from the crowd. It is a mysterious and impossible task in which one can attempt to bring other languages and great authors to affect one's own thought and language, and thus to rise above the cultural levelling of modern society.

I believe that the tradition of the 'foreignizing' translation, with translators emphasizing the reproduction of the aesthetic qualities of the original in the translation, is, to a great extent, the product of this strong elitist strain in modernism.

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4 Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: critique sociale du jugement* (Paris: Minuit, 1979) 34.

5 José Ortega y Gasset, *La rebelión de las masas* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente and Alianza, 1994) 47.

6 Umberto Eco, *Apocalittici e integrati: communicazioni di massa e teorie della cultura di massa* (Milan: Bombiani, 1964); citations refer to the Portuguese translation, *Apocalípticos e Integrados* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1993) 8.

Here we find Meschonnic's 'poetic translation', Berman's translation which is '*pensant, éthique et poétique*', Augusto and Haroldo de Campos transliteration – they only translate authors who have 'revolutionized poetic form'. This is also the site of Lawrence Venuti's 'resistant strategies that foreground the play of the signifier by cultivating polysemy, neologism, fragmented syntax, discursive heterogeneity'.[7]

I now move away from 'highbrow' translation to look at other categories and what happens when a translation from high culture is adapted to mass culture, specifically in the case of classic novels being adapted and cut by a Brazilian book club, Clube do Livro.

2. Kitsch and Midcult

Concepts that are useful to us for understanding this phenomenon of adaptation are those of *kitsch*, found in the work of Umberto Eco, and the *midcult*, in the work of Dwight Macdonald.

Kitsch is the imposition of the fixed effect, to be enjoyed by the consumer, who does not have to attempt to understand the more complex patterns of the operations of the artistic work. And by enjoying this effect, the reader or viewer supposes that he or she is experiencing a privileged aesthetic experience. In other words, it is an escape from the responsibilities of art. The emotional reaction of the reader/viewer is all-important, and any kind of reflection on the causes of this reaction is missing.[8]

Dwight Macdonald contrasts 'masscult', inferior literature that has no pretension to being erudite, with 'midcult', which trivializes works of art and, like kitsch, deliberately attempts to produce certain effects. Macdonald lists the characteristics of the midcult as follows:[9]

7 Lawrence Venuti, *Rethinking Translation* (London: Routledge, 1992) 12.

8 Eco, [6] 74–77.

9 Dwight Macdonald, *Against the American Grain* (New York: Random House, 1962; reprint, New York: Da Capo, 1983); compare Eco [6] 84.

1) it borrows avant-garde processes and adapts them to make a message which can be enjoyed and understood by all;
2) it uses these processes when they have been known, used and are worn out;
3) it constructs a message as a provocation of effects;
4) it sells them as art;
5) it tranquillizes the consumer, convincing him that he has encountered culture, so that he won't feel other worries.

Macdonald gives as examples of midcult the *Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, which destroys the King James version so as to make the text clear; book clubs such as the Book of the Month; and *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder, which uses Brechtian techniques of alienation for consolation and hypnosis.

Thus, we can see the complexities of the work of art reduced: mass culture makes the classics into products to be consumed rather than works to be contemplated.[10]

Herbert Marcuse regrets this loss of the complexity of classic works:

> Plato and Hegel, Shelley and Baudelaire, Marx and Freud [are found] in the drugstore. … [T]he classics have left the mausoleum and come to life again; … people are just so much more educated. True, but coming to life as classics, they come to life as other than themselves; they are deprived of their antagonistic force, of the estrangement which was the very dimension of their truth. The intent and function of these works have thus fundamentally changed. If they once stood in contradiction to the status quo, this contradiction is now flattened out.[11]

According to Marcuse, the cheapness and ready availability of the 'great' canonized works of literature lead to a certain blasé attitude to these 'greats'. They are taken down from their pedestals to become the cheapest and most available of books.

10 Arendt in Eco [6] 41.

11 Tony Bennett, Graham Martin and Colin Mercer, eds. *Culture, Ideology and Social Process* (London: Batsford, 1981) 64.

Marcuse and Macdonald look down with traditional aristocratic condescension on popular versions. But even if we do not share this snobbery, we must agree with Marcuse that this estrangement, the literary effect, is lost.

The complexity of such works is further reduced in condensations. *Wuthering Heights* and *Pride and Prejudice* become no more than the 'love stories' of Catherine and Heathcliff, and Elizabeth and Darcy; *Huckleberry Finn* loses all socio-political and ethical elements to become an adventure story for children. *Moby Dick* loses all mythical elements to become merely the fight between Captain Ahab and the whale. Stylistic complexity is lost. A single emotion – love, excitement, disappointment – is concentrated on. The classic becomes a soap opera. The reader, believing that he has read the original version – or, at least, a representation of the original version – is content with this encounter with 'culture'.

These points fit in with my studies of adaptations and condensations of abridged translations in Brazil, especially those of the Clube do Livro book club, in which I found the following to be the main changes in the book club adaptations: [12]

i) No 'sub-standard' language was accepted; Dickens' idiolects; R. L. Stevenson's Scots; Faulkner's Southern American English; Joseph's Yorkshire dialect in *Wuthering Heights* were all homogenized into standard Portuguese.
ii) Likewise, all polyphonic elements were cut. For example, extracts in French, poems and meta-narratives in Charlotte Brontë's *The Professor* were cut; the puns, word lists and rhymes go by the board in *Gargantua*.
iii) The translations are squeamish: sexual references were cut. For example, Gulliver playing on the maiden's nipples in the Brobdignag sequences in *Gulliver's Travels*. Scatological references are also cut, as when Gulliver urinates to put out the fire in the Lilliputian palace.

12 John Milton, 'A Tradução de Romances "Clássicos" do Inglês para o Português no Brasil' *Trabalhos em Lingüística Aplicada*, 24 (1995) 19–33: Instituto de Estudos da Linguagem, UNICAMP, Campinas, Brazil; and 'The Translations of O Clube do Livro', in *TradTerm 3* (1996) 47–65: University of São Paulo.

iv) There was a certain religious censorship: extracts of *Gargantua* that satirize the Catholic Church, for example, by suggesting that monks and nuns should dress nicely and be allowed to get married, were cut.
v) There is a kind of political censorship as well: Clube do Livro thrived during the years of the military dictatorship in Brazil (1964–1989). In its translation of *Hard Times*, sections that suggest the possibility of mass action are considerably weakened in translation. Similarly, 'The Red House' in *Silas Marner* becomes 'The Yellow House' in the Clube do Livro version.

3. Factory Translation

Much translation theory has worked within the framework of the faithful versus the unfaithful rendition, and style versus content. In recent years we have seen attempts to break out of this straitjacket, with scholars connecting translation with other areas such as psychoanalysis, deconstruction and philosophy. However, many of these attempts remain within the area of high culture. José Lambert has written that translation studies must break the boundaries of high culture, that translation is linked to larger series and frames of communication. He also writes about the enormous amount of invisible translation that takes place in everyday situations. For example, when one buys a packet of soap powder, the name, the instructions, the advertising, the production manuals will almost certainly have involved a large amount of translation, which is never made obvious.

This study looks at the classic as an artefact, handled and bought by the masses, used and altered at will by editors, adapters, cartoonists, film makers, the record business, the abridgers and the CD-ROM makers. To use Walter Benjamin's famous metaphor, the translation will certainly have an afterlife, but this afterlife may take on a very different form from that of the original.

Let us look at some of the characteristics of 'factory' translation:

I. Rather than being the work of an individual, the condensed or adapted translation – or, for that matter, the dubbed or subtitled film, or the translation made within industry – will be the work of a team. It is a mere part of

the assembly line. The 'name' of the 'translator' may not appear on the work. If it does, it may be a pseudonym: a highbrow translator may not wish to have his name associated with the work, or it may even be an invented name for a team. Jerusa Pires Ferreira, in her study of *O Livro de São Cipriano*,[13] shows how the 'author' of these popular collections of legends, almanacs, spells and fragments is usually a compiler, a copier, a translator, an updater or an inventor. In most cases the 'author' is anonymous or uses a pseudonym.

Historical parallels can be found in mediaeval translation, where adaptation, omissions, retellings, alterations, etc., were normal parts of what we now call translation. Edgar Morin believes that the concept of the 'creator' essentially belongs to the nineteenth century. In mass culture, the 'producer' in some ways revives the old collectivism of the oral epics, or of the workshops of famous painters such as Raphael and Rembrandt.

II. Standardization, or Fordism, is an important factor in the production of 'factory' novels and translations. Different forms of standardization can be found:

a) Theme: the work is tailored to suit the tastes of the reader.
b) Style: the work should not deviate from a strict narrative style.
c) Size: Clube do Livro publications were standardized after 1960 to a length of 160 pages.
d) Weight: a low weight to cut postal costs will be an important economic factor in many book clubs.

Translation teams or 'factories' are not at all new: they were already producing translated novels in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, translating popular French novels in many countries.

III. Commercial production ignores the so-called sacredness of the author. Walter Benjamin's well-known essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'[14] emphasizes the fact that the contemporary mechanical possibilities of reproducing the object will change our relationship to

13 Jerusa Pires Ferreira, *O Livro de São Cipriano: uma Legenda de Massas* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1993).

14 Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, tr. Harry Zohn (New York: Scocken, 1969) 217–252.

the work of art and destroy the ritualistic and magical elements surrounding the original. With film and photography there is never a single 'original'. The very nature of both arts is essentially reproductive: films and photographs cannot be collected as paintings can. Moreover, the cost of a film is so high that it must be made available to the highest number of people possible. Indeed, the nature of film is highly democratic, as it will make all myths and great authors and artists available to cinema-goers.

The fragmentation of a film is very different from the unity of a painting or a poem. The director, who is responsible for the final product, will depend on the expertise of many different areas, sound, photography, etc., of which he will have only a limited knowledge. He will be more of a manager of the final product. Compare this with the painter or novelist, who will have all elements of the work of art under his control. The final result of the film or photograph will come about as the result of the combination of a number of very different elements.

Edgar Morin points out that in spite of this standardization, the 'culture industry' does not sell soap powder, and that, within a certain framework, there is a demand for originality. 'New' products must always be invented. This, for Morin, is the 'dynamic contradiction' of the culture industry.[15]

Though Benjamin's essay concentrates on the reproducible arts of film and photography, his essay also helps us to understand the commercial translation, such as that of the Clube do Livro, where the editor will co-ordinate the work of the original author, the translator, the copydesk, the illustrator and the finance department.

IV. Definite commercial strategies will be used. The translation will be directed to a definite market. There will be markets for different segments of society. Non-condensed, carefully produced translations will be directed towards markets from a higher social class. (Adapted) translations of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Wuthering Heights* are often directed towards a market of female readers, for example. Similarly, *Moby Dick*, *Kidnapped*, *Huckleberry Finn* and *Gulliver's Travels* are usually directed towards the juvenile market.

15 Edgar Morin, *Cultura de Massas no Século XX: O Espírito do Tempo I – Neurose* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Forense Universitária, 1977).

V. Deadlines are all-important. The product must be released on time even though it may have a few flaws, particularly if is not a product which is aimed at an erudite market. Meeting deadlines is much more important than perfectly accurate copy. The monthly deadline means minimal time for proofreading, and errors abound, particularly in the names of authors: Virginia Wolff, Daniel DeFoe, Charlotte Bronté, George Elliot, and Kunt (sic!) Hansun.

A study by Anikó Sohár on translation of mass fiction in Hungary has shown considerable remnants of the translators' own notes and queries remaining in the final version, showing that absolutely no revision took place. For example, empty lines and the translator's notes, e.g., '(error in original)' remain in the published translations![16]

VI. The great novel tradition, particularly the nineteenth century novel, is particularly 'reusable', in different shapes and guises: condensations, films, cartoons, etc. Many of the most popular authors – Swift, Dickens, Jane Austen, Scott, George Eliot, the Brontës, Balzac, Melville, Stevenson – were already read by mass audiences. The nineteenth-century realist tradition was much closer to popular taste than modernism. By contrast, the twentieth-century modernist tradition of the novels of Joyce, Faulkner, Lawrence and Virginia Woolf hardly lend themselves to adaptation.

The nineteenth-century texts join other standard 'mythical' texts which have been used and reused in a variety of forms: *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, *Faust*, Shakespeare's tragedies, *Oedipus*, *Don Quixote*, etc.

VII. It may often be cheaper to recycle an already existing translation than to commission a new translation. The same novel, in the same translation, may even be directed towards different markets. Thus, we see the same (or slightly modified) translation appearing in different guises. Ediouro published two almost identical condensations of *Pride and Prejudice* in 1970. The small format edition, 'translated' by Nair Lacerda is slightly longer and its language is slightly more formal than the large-format illustrated edition 'translated' by Paulo Mendes Campos and aimed more at the juvenile market.

16 Anikó Sohár, 'The Cultural Importation Process of Popular Genres: The Case of SF and Fantasy in Hungary (1989–1995) from the point of view of Translation Studies', diss., Katholicke Universiteit, Leuven, 1997, 59.

As Viagens de Gulliver a terras desconhecidas was published in a heavily cut version by Edições Cultura in 1940, 'Portuguese translation by Henrique Marques Junior, scrupulously revised and modernized'. 'Scrupulously revised' is a euphemism for 'enormous cuts were made'. An identical translation, except for the Brazilianization of a few uses characteristic of the Portuguese of Portugal, was published as *Viagens de Gulliver* by Jackson in 1957. This time the translator was given as Cruz Teixeira.

The Clube do Livro often relies on previously published translations. The Clube do Livro translation of *Ivanhoe* (1953) – a double edition with smaller print – and the Edições Cultura translation of *Ivanhoe* (1943) seem to be heavily calqued on the Garnier translation of 1905. Similarly, the Clube do Livro translation of *Silas Marner* (1973) is a slightly updated version of the Martins version (1942). Even the misspelling of the author's name (George Elliot) is copied.

VIII. Packaging is enormously important. Figure 1 shows how adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Dombey and Son* were packaged as Mills & Boon type romances, using photos of North American 1950s glamour girls.

IX. Commercialism is not beyond a few tricks – the reader may not be treated with all that much respect. Translations were generally introduced as 'special translations', a euphemism for 'contains many cuts'.

X. A common marketing trick is that of introducing an original work as a pseudo-translation. The most famous pseudo-translation is *Don Quixote*, which Cervantes pretended to be a translation from the Arabic. Cervantes had much more freedom to make the satire of *romances de cavalaría* if he pretended it was a translation. Macpherson's *Ossian* was one of the greatest of literary hoaxes. The Scottish poet, James Macpherson, pretended to have discovered and have translated Celtic poems from the fourth century AD. For a while Macpherson was one of the most celebrated figures in the literary world.

Most frequently, the reason for pseudo-translations is commercial. Anikó Sohár documents 'The Mystery of Wayne Mark Chapman – a case of Fictitious Translation in Hungary'.[17] Wayne Mark Chapman is the name given to

17 Sohár [16].

the fictitious author of a series of best-selling science fiction novels in Hungary written by a team of authors. In post-communist Eastern Europe, popular fiction from the West has considerable prestige. Science fiction written by Hungarian authors would not be attractive to potential purchasers. Obviously, therefore, it pays to invent the foreign author, the original work, and even give biographical information on him. Wayne Chapman lives in Concord, New Hampshire (maybe a literary joke), and his first books, *Blood Season* and *Banners*, were published by Pendragon Publishing Co. Inc., London. After a considerable amount of literary detective work, Sohár managed to discover that these novels were in fact pseudo-translations, and that neither the author nor the publishing house existed. In addition, after the series began to be successful, the editors took fewer pains to insist on the fact that these books were originally written in English.

XI. Such translations are ephemeral, throwaway translations, and are not catalogued by libraries and information networks. Jerusa Pires Ferreira had little luck in her search for *O Livro de São Cipriano* in national libraries.[18] Indeed a librarian in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris was annoyed at her request and said that it was unthinkable that this kind of work should be found in the national library of France.

18 Ferreira [13] xxi.

Figure 1.
Translations of classic fiction are packaged to appeal to the readers of popular romance novels on the Brazilian market. From upper left, clockwise: Honoré de Balzac's *Eugenie Grandet*, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, and Charles Dicken's *Dombey and Son*.

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