

https://dspace.org/

Mining, social change and literature: an analysis of South African literature with particular reference to the mining novel, 1870-1920

Hofmeyr, Isabel

2015-01-27
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/16797

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER TWO

1. Philip Bonner, "The Decline and Fall of the I.C.U. - a case of Self-Destruction", in Eddie Webster, op.cit., p.114
2. Shula Marks, Reluctant Rebellion, (1970), p.76
3. G. Heaton-Nicholls, Bayete! (1923)
4. Bozzoli, op.cit., p.76 ff
5. For a discussion of this type of novel see B.V. Street, op.cit.
6. Ibid.
7. It is interesting to speculate further on the connection between metropolitan anthropological studies and colonial literature. The vogue of the 'Hottentot', 'Bushman' and 'Zulu' within popular English anthropology would go some way towards explaining the preponderance of these three 'racial' types, in South African literature.
8. B.V. Street, op.cit., p.56
9. For a fuller discussion see the last section of this chapter.
10. F.C. Slater, "Mr. Perceval Gibbon's New South African Novel", in South African Bookman, No. 5 April,1912, p.12
11. F.C. Slater, "The Dictionary", in South African Short Stories ed. E.R. Seary (1952), pp.69-70
12. Ibid., p.70
13. Ibid., p.71
14. Ibid.
15. J.P.L. Snyman, op.cit., p.63
16. For a discussion of Scully's work see Chapter Three.
17. W.M.Freund, "Race in the social structure of South Africa, 1652-1836", in Race and Class, 18(1976-7), p.56
18. Sol Plaatje, "The Mote and the Beam an Epic on Sex Relationship Twixt White and Black in British South Africa", reprinted in English in Africa, Sept, 1976, Vol.3., No.2., pp.85-92
19. Ibid., p.86
20. Ibid., p.87
21. Ibid., p.88
22. J.P.L. Snyman, op.cit., p.53 n
23. Sheila Rowbotham, Women, Resistence and Revolution, (1975), p.202
24. Charles van Onselen, "The Witches of Suburbia: Domestic Service on the Witwatersrand 1890-1914," mimeo, p.51

25. See The Star, Aug.31 1906

26. This trend is clearly illustrated in the following passage from Anna Howarth's novel, Sword and Assegai (1899) dealing with the frontier wars in the Eastern Cape.

> We must now pass over a period of seven years, during which the stream of life flowed peacefully...Only disturbed by those domestic events which mark the flight of time without leaving any void in the heart or wrinkle in the brow. (p.48) (my emphasis)
>
> Happy sunny days of peace, after the weary days of storm and war! No treacherous foe to descend and devastate the cheerful home, no hidden death lurking behind the bush and the rock; no final parting to crush the life out of young hearts, but instead, sunshine on the broad plain and the pleasant homestead. (p.303) (my emphasis).

In addition to Howarth, there was a glut of women's fiction coming from commercially successful writers like Cynthia Stockley, Gertrude Page and F.E. Mills Young, all of whom appear to have been the Barbara Cartlands of their day. Their works also centre around the family, and whilst they might dwell on titillating affairs, this is in fact no alternative as all their women protagonists ultimately settle down to the security of the nuclear and colonial family.

27. Jenni Calder, Women and Marriage in Victorian Fiction, (1976) pp.13-14

28. M. Carey-Hobson, The Farm in the Karroo, (1830), p.96

29. S.G. Millin, God's Stepchildren (1951)

30. Olive Schreiner, "The Problem of Slavery" in Thoughts on South Africa (1976) pp.106-147

31. Ibid., p.125

32. Ibid., p.124

33. Ibid., p.132

34. Ibid., pp.139-140 Emphasis original

35. Perceval Gibbon, Souls in Bondage, (1904), pp.3-5

36. Douglas Blackburn, Love Muti, (1915), p.16

37. George Shepperson, "Ethiopianism and African Nationalism", in Phylon, Vol.XIV,(1), 1953, p.9

38. Paul Rich, "Black Peasants and Ethiopianism in South Africa: 1896-1915", paper given at the conference on the History of Opposition in Southern Africa, (1978), mimeo, p.4

39. See, for example the work of Shepperson op.cit., Rich, op.cit., Eddie Roux, Time Longer than Rope (1972) and B. Sundkler, Bantu Prophets in South Africa, (1961)

40. George Shepperson, op.cit., p.11
41. George Shepperson, "Ethiopianism: Past and Present" in Christianity in Tropical Africa, ed. C.G. Baeta, (1968), p.252
42. These would include John Chilembwe's uprising in Nyasaland, the Mwana Lesa movements and the Bulhoek Rebellion.
43. Heather Hughes, ' "A Warning to White South Africa" : G.N. Nicholls and his novel Bayete!' in Inspan, Vol.1, No.2, p.54
44. Paul Rich, op.cit., p.6
45. Bertram Mitford, The White Hand and the Black, (1907), p.8
46. Ibid., p.9
47. Heather Hughes, op.cit., p.56
48. Bertram Mitford, op.cit., p.53
49. Ibid., pp.53-54
50. Ibid., p.53
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., p.51
53. G. Heaton-Nicholls., op.cit. p.221
54. Bertram Mitford, op.cit., p.58
55. J.P.L. Snyman, op.cit., p.62
56. Bertram Mitford, op.cit., p.270
57. Ibid., p.269

CHAPTER THREE : SOUTH AFRICAN LIBERALISM AND LITERATURE

Introduction

The precise meaning of South African liberalism is very difficult to pin down exactly, since it has come to assume a vast range of suggestion that includes notions of 'tendermindedness', paternalism, and in certain senses, any radical left-wing policies. However, in amongst all this semantic multiplicity, it is possible to locate a certain fixed core of meaning, which Legassick has set out as follows. According to him, liberalism in South Africa is

> a force trying on the one hand to minimise or disguise the conflictual and coercive aspects of the social structure, and on the other hand to convince selected Africans that the grievances they felt could be ameliorated through reform which liberals could promulgate. (1)

The genesis and development of liberalism in South Africa is a complex story, the detailed intricacies of which do not concern me here. But very briefly and crudely, its development is tied up with the growth of certain social and economic forces the most notable of which is secondary industry.

Originating in the Cape Colony in the nineteenth century, liberalism, to begin with, approximated closely to traditional liberal political philosophy, predicated on beliefs in individual rights, equality of opportunity, freedom of press, speech and association, the rule of law and so on. However, with changing social conditions in South Africa, liberalism, too, changed its assumptions and progressively moved away from concerns with a non-racial franchise for all, to a tacit acceptance whereby it was recognised that large numbers of blacks would not have access to the State. The white liberals or 'friends of the natives' as they termed themselves, then made it their concern to see that these excluded Africans would be charitably and justly 'administered'. Alongside this move towards separatist philosophies, was a growing

acceptance and support for pieces of legislation like the Glen Grey Act, which specifically stated that Africans would not be given the vote and would instead be given local representation on councils. And it has been this particular brand of 'liberalism' which has persisted strongly and, in addition, exercised an almost disproportionate influence on the studies of South Africa - social, political, economic, cultural and historical. In terms of these perceptions, South African history comes to be remembered as one long struggle between the 'enlightened' forces of liberalism and the reactionary forces of racism.

> Liberals have tended to present the story of South Africa as an idealistic battle between the forces of evil and the valiant minority of good. From Maynier the torch passes to the London Missionary Society and John Philip. From there it is handed via Fairbairn to the Cape Parliamentarians and the entrenchment of British humanitarianism as Cape liberalism. With Union, liberals took the fight from the Cape to a nation-wide basis with the first major battle usually regarded as that against the removal of the Cape Franchise in 1936. Then there are the activities of the Native representatives - the Ballingers, Brookes and so on - in Parliament - and alongside them the sustenance of liberalism by the churches, the universities, and other institutions. (2)

As far as South African literary studies are concerned, this liberal ethos and ideology has left a well-nigh indelible legacy that has been analysed by Kirkwood in his article 'The Coloniser: A Critique of the English South African Culture Theory'. (3) Kirkwood sees the basis of this cultural theory as lying in a radical misconception regarding history. For in terms of liberal historiography, English South African ideologues, taking their model from an erroneous understanding of the 1820 **Settlers** and the **Eastern** frontier, have seen themselves as in the 'middle' between Africans 'below' and Afrikaners 'on top'. And from this perspective they have seen culture in a peculiar way. Culture, for them becomes a missionary-like task of spreading elitist and highly evaluative assumptions with strong Eurocentric overtones.

Olive
Schreiner and
Samuel
Cronwright-
Schreiner



From this perspective, South African literature has often been distorted, since liberal ideologues have created a selective South African literary 'tradition' - a tradition based on elitist, evaluative and often racially exclusive assumptions, which combine to celebrate those writers who mesh in comfortably with its worldview. I find it no coincidence that writers like Paton and Schreiner, for example, both orthodox liberals, should be remembered as the 'greatest' or most well-known South African authors.

In order to attempt to cut through this ideological distortion, I have focused on two nineteenth century 'Cape liberals' - Olive Schreiner and William Scully. By illustrating the extent to which their work was embedded within the precepts of South African liberalism, I wish to show that their literary production (particularly Schreiner's) is by no means as universal or metropolitan as certain critics by dint of ideological redefinition, would have us believe.

1. Olive Schreiner

In looking critically at South African literature, possibly one of the most difficult tasks is to deal with Olive Schreiner, for of all South African writers, none has been more mythologised than she. She is often remembered as the 'only' South African writer of any 'worth' or 'quality' and is generally understood as a freak manifestation amongst an otherwise non-existent body of writers. In looking at this critical treatment, it is not surprising to find that she often tends to be portrayed as a 'genius' (4), a critical category that obscures the extent to which she was rooted in nineteenth century society, and her works coloured by its assumptions. Accompanying this 'genius' interpretation, has been a body of formalistic criticism which has portrayed the value of her work as lying in its 'universality' and 'timeless' status. (5)

Against this body of critical theory, it becomes necessary to change the emphasis by stressing the obvious, but often forgotten fact ,that Schreiner was a nineteenth century middle class colonial woman, whose

views were neither isolated nor aberrational. Politically, her views on South Africa bore the stamp of an orthodox South African 'liberalism', while her views on women bear the shortcomings and insights of nineteenth century feminist thinking. Her fiction, whilst out of step with the dominant literary fashion of sensational adventure writing, arose out of her political and feminist views and hence indelibly bears the stamp of her position and her time. And it is to these three areas - politics, feminism and fiction that we now turn.

Political Views

During her life, Schreiner lived through a period of massive social upheaval and turbulence, occasioned by the impact of mining on a largely pre-industrial and agrarian society. She, often at first hand, witnessed the spread of the mining industry, and watched, with a growing sense of horror, its social and economic hegemony penetrate further and further afield. Part of this penetration involved the erosion and dislocation of African and Afrikaner societies through conquest which changed hitherto independent tribesmen and farmers into a powerless urban proletariat. Schreiner was well aware of the ineluctability of this historical change and because of this awareness devoted a large deal of her energies to studying these vanishing pre-capitalist societies, most apparent in her analysis of the 'seventeenth century Boer' - a study tinged with a certain nostalgia and sentimentality. (6)

However, any vestiges of sentimentality in Schreiner's analysis were tempered by her realisation of the historical impact, importance and effects of the mining industry, or as she termed it, the forces of 'the foreign Speculator, Capitalist and Shareholding class'. Coupled to her historical acumen was a clear understanding of the methods of operation used by mining capital.

> the passing of laws dispossessing the native by indirect means of his hold on the land and breaking up his tribal tenure, and...making of direct wars upon him (so that)

> the native, at last being absolutely landless, may be unable to resist any attempt to lower wages, and may then sink into the purely proletariat condition of a working class always on the border of starvation, and therefore always glad to sell his toil for the lowest sum that will maintain his life. (7)

She also had an acute understanding of the political patterns that were to accompany this economic change - a strict 'colour bar' that was to exclude all Africans from access to the State, and coercive methods of control to suppress resistance to these measures. To Schreiner, arguing from a perspective of 'liberalism', this policy was anathema.

> If it should be possible for the international Speculator and Capitalist to carry his dream to break down the autonomy of the different African states, ...crushing us into one structureless whole, to introduce "A uniform native policy", dispossessing the natives wholly everywhere of their lands by means of labour, taxes and other devices, and bringing them down to the lowest wages on which life can be sustained; then...we shall be left with a great, blind stupefied Sampson in our midst who will assuredly some day stretch out his mighty much-wronged arms, and bring down upon our descendants the social structure which we are to-day with so much labour attempting to rear. (8)

Instead of the twin mechanisms of exclusion and coercion to control the 'blind Sampson' of the working class, liberal thinking favoured a policy of assimilation based on ideals of 'civilisation' rather than race. In terms of this policy, a small strata of African society were to be given limited rights, which 'liberals' hoped would avert class conflict. Attendant upon this view, were the theoretical appurtenances of nineteenth century liberal political philosophy. And it was largely this variant of social and political theory that Schreiner espoused throughout her life, believing that it would come to triumph because of its 'reason', 'rightness' and 'justice'. The 'liberal remnant', according to Schreiner, that was to make this view prevail, was made up of a small middle class community comprising farmers, landed proprietors and a handful of skilled artisans. This

group, in turn, represented the very antithesis of the mining capitalists and speculators, with their violent, destructive, free-booting methods of colonisation and their repressive political policies. The struggle between these two groups was to determine the future of South Africa.

> The future of South Africa depends largely on the result of this struggle. If the financial attitude predominate absolutely, and the native be dispossessed of his land by wars and the skilfully devised legislation, which, breaking up his tribal tenure everywhere, throws him and his lands entirely into the hands of the financial speculator, and if low wages at the same time deprive him of the means of education, he must become a helot, having no stake in the general welfare of the land of his birth - always its menace and at length its downfall. (9)

To prevent this 'menace' of class conflict, Schreiner posited a 'native policy' based on ideal of 'enlightened trusteeship', noblesse oblige , and moral imperatives

> The man compelled by his mental organisation to take this view is of necessity obliged to regard the native not merely as a means to an end, but as an end in himself. Consistent with his whole view of life, he cannot regard the native merely as a 'commercial asset'; he is compelled to apply to him the categorial imperative; "Deal with thy fellow man as, wert thou in his place, thou wouldst have him deal with thee". He does not write up the motto which is to govern all the relations of black men with white: "Cheap Labour", but rather keeps before him the moral fact that, if the native be his equal in mental power and moral vigour, his place is beside him; but, if the African be not his equal in mental power and moral vigour, then there rests upon him the mighty obligation of all strength towards weakness, of all wisdom towards ignorance, of the God towards the man: "Rank confers obligation". (10)

Consistent with her ideas of moral obligation, Schreiner believed that this 'liberal' policy would come to triumph because of its justice, bringing in its wake a type of Imperialism that imparted 'the love of freedom' to all men. This particular social and political dispensation, according to Schreiner, would come to prevail in a spontaneous outburst of liberal humanism.

> We may call it the love of freedom, of justice, but neither of these quite defines it; it is something more; it is the deep conviction buried somewhere in our nature, not to be eradicated, that man as man is a great and important thing, that the right to himself and his existence is the incontestable property of all men; and above all the conviction that not only we have the right and are bound to preserve it for ourselves, but that where we come into contact with others we are bound to implant or preserve it in them. It is a profound faith, not in the equal talent, virtues, and abilities of men, but in the equal right of the poorest, most feeble, most ignorant, to his own freedom and to a perfect equality of treatment. (11)

Although Schreiner was cognisant of the power of the speculators and capitalists to triumph because of their access to power, she nonetheless continued to harbour a tenuous optimism that the justice, equality and rightness of liberal democracy would come to triumph via the operation of the 'enlightened' liberal remnant of the English community.

Of course it did not, and the bourgeois democracy that Schreiner had hoped for soon developed into the repressive colonial state. This development is significant in so far as it shows the weaknesses in the thinking of Schreiner and her class. Consistent with later white liberal thinkers, they pinned their hopes on the efficacy of ideas to convert the 'unenlightened' and bring about change. However, against this tenet of idealist thinking that runs through Schreiner's thought, is a counterstrand of materialist analysis, (12) that often tempered any optimism she harboured about the efficacy of ideas. And, although in her political writing, she always opted for a tenuous hopefulness, in her fiction, as we shall see, she dispensed with all vestiges of optimism, as again and again we see the structure of the powerless, but 'enlightened' and 'liberal' protagonists, being destroyed by stronger forces with access to power.

Feminism

Alongside Schreiner's preoccupation with the implementation of liberalism in South Africa, was an equally pressing concern with

feminism and the position of women. Her dedication to the cause of women's liberation was to become a life-long task that in many respects shaped her life.

> Her commitment to the liberation of women was not so much a political decision as part of her whole being and life. Because she could not restrict her conception of liberation to political reform, she was forced to live out the tragic contradiction of emancipation... She shared the intellectual loneliness, the emotional despair and the nervous diseases and tensions common to women of the period, who broke away from convention not only politically, but socially and sexually. (13)

Having partially formulated her ideas in South Africa, she was able to refine them and find radical alternatives in London, where she moved in a milieu of popular radicalism characterised by cross currents of Socialism, Fabianism, progressive cultural thinking and a heightened awareness of women's emancipation. It was at this time of her first visit overseas (1881-1889) that she started work on Woman and Labour, the published version of which represents only a fragment of the original work that was destroyed along with her other papers during the Anglo-Boer War.

The work itself, in approach and style similar to Engels and Bebel, is an historical analysis of the changing position of women under feudal and capitalist societies. Under feudalism, woman still had limited access to production means which conferred on her a certain amount of power and recognition. Under capitalism, however, this access to labour has been severely eroded so that working class women come to fulfil poorly paid and drudging jobs, whilst upper class women end up being parasites and sex objects. The privileged position of the latter depended on the exploitation of the former.

> Beneath the body of women of the dominant class or race, who did not labour either mentally or physically, there has always been of necessity a far more vast body of females who not only performed the crude physical toil essential to the existence of the society before the introduction of mechanical methods of production, but who were compelled to labour the more intensely because

> there was a parasite class above them to be maintained by their physical toil. (14)

For Schreiner, the solution lay in giving all women equal access to labour on a par with men. This equal opportunity, she believed, could then emancipate women from their subsidiary roles by giving them the necessary economic independence. Furthermore, this equal opportunity would also eradicate other forms of discrimination. Marriage, for example, would become a partnership of equals and women would no longer be regarded as sex objects.

Whilst Schreiner was correct in insisting on economic independence as the precondition for liberation, her optimism in the ability of equal access to labour, as the ultimate vehicle for women's emancipation, was unfounded. For given the class-divided nature of capitalist society, this equality could never come to prevail.

Furthermore, her analysis often emerges as unsystematic, and while she is at pains to point out the class antagonisms that divide women and their respective interests, she at times forgets this crucial distinction, to posit instead a romantic conception of the women's movement as a populist struggle. Consequently she believed that the movement, inspired mainly by bourgeois women, would come to assist women of all classes.

> ...The Women's Labour Movement of our day, which has essentially taken its rise among women of the more cultured and wealthy classes, and which consists mainly in a demand to have the doors leading to professional, political, and highly skilled labour open to them, will undoubtedly tend to the material and physical well being of woman herself, as well as that of her male companions and descendants. (15)

And instead of pointing to the fact that a movement which sprang from upper class women would only be designed to aid their particular interests, she chose instead to celebrate a mystical conception of women's struggles as a spontaneous and sporadic groundswell arising from the dissatisfaction of women from all classes.

> It is the fact, the consciousness on the part of the woman taking their share in the Women's Movement of our age, that their efforts are not, and cannot be, of immediate advantage to themselves, but that they almost of necessity immediately lead to loss and renunciation, which gives to this movement its very peculiar tone; setting it apart from the large mass of economic movements, placing it rather in a line with those vast religious developments which at the interval of ages swept across humanity, irresistably modifying and reorganising it. (16)

And it was largely this type of mysterious and spontaneous movement that Schreiner was to celebrate in her novels. The following passage stands as a summary of much of her fiction.

> It is this consciousness which renders almost of solemn import the efforts of the individual female after physical or mental self-culture and expansion; this, which fills with a lofty enthusiasm the heart of the young girl, who, it may be, in some solitary farmhouse, in some distant wild of Africa or America, deep into the night bends over her books with the passion and fervour with which an early Christian may have bent over the pages of his Scriptures; feeling that, it may be, she fits herself by each increase of knowledge for she knows not what duties towards the world, in the years to come. It is this consciousness of great impersonal ends, to be brought, even in slowly and imperceptibly, a little nearer by her action, which gives to many a woman strength for renunciation, when she puts from her the lower type of sexual relationship, even if bound up with all the external honour a legal bond can confer if it offers her only enervation and parasitism; and which enables her often to accept poverty, toil and sexual isolation, (an isolation even more terrible to the woman than to any male), and the renunciation of motherhood, that crowning beatitude of the woman's existence, which, and which alone, fully compensates her for her organic sufferings of motherhood - in the conviction that, by doing so, she makes more possible a fuller and higher attainment of motherhood and wifehood to the woman who will follow her. (17)

Fiction

In her fiction, Schreiner grafted her concerns with the women's question on to her views on South Africa. In order to achieve this synthesis, Schreiner realised that she would have to adopt a socially realistic method of composition, for the dominant fashion of writing sensational adventure tales of South Africa could never have accommodated her concerns. As she herself said

> ...a history of wild adventure...of encounters with ravaging lions and hair-breadth escapes...such works are best written in Piccadilly or in the Strand; there the gifts of creative imagination, untrammelled by contact with any fact, may spread its wings. (18)

Instead of this 'romantic' mode of writing, Schreiner opted for one that could reflect the social 'problems' of her time, or as she put it

> ...the art of our age tends persistently to deal with subtle social problems, religious, political and sexual, to which the art of the past holds no parallel; and it is so inevitably, because the artist who would obey the artistic instinct to portray faithfully the world around him, must portray that which lies at the core of its life. The "problem" play, novel, and poem are...inevitable in this age...(19)

In order to portray South Africa faithfully, she turned to that part of it she knew best - the Cape Colony of her childhood, which becomes in her fiction a symbol of the major conflicts as she understood them.

The Cape she depicts in The Story of an African Farm, for example, is a pre-industrial one, just beginning to feel the impact of an intrusive and free-booting imperialism. The rural farm community that provides the background for the novel, is an isolated one whose contact with the outside world consists of rare visitors and three-week-old newspapers. But this tranquillity is beginning to alter as the first eddies of social change make themselves felt. A contemporary reviewer outlines this process of change.

> On our Middle Karroo the slow centuries had produced certain manners and characters which flowered in Olive Schreiner's Story and are now passing or have already

> passed away. Even as she wrote, the surveyor was drawing the lines of the Spoorweg across the farm, and the ox-wagon was being warned off the dusty and crooked red roads. The postman, the telegraph messenger and the newspaper were replacing the tramp and the trader and the Nacht Maal as news agents. (20)

Into this rural society, Schreiner puts her characters and conflicts, which in The Story of an African Farm emerge as two groups made up of adults and children.

Heading the group of adults is the redoubtable Tant' Sannie, ruling her farm like a feudal fief and adopting a pragmatic approach to both marriage and religion, both of which are seen in terms of economic imperatives. Opposed to her is the character of the German overseer, Otto, commonly taken to be based on Schreiner's missionary father. Out of this character Schreiner makes a complex amalgam of authorially admirable and inadmissible traits. On the one hand Otto emerges as a sympathetic character lauded for his 'tenderminded' propensity for paternalistic compassion. But on the other hand, his religious epistemological premises come into conflict with the authorial spirit of liberal humanism that informs the work. The character of Otto meets his nemesis in the philistinism, cant and violence of the imperial interloper, Bonaparte Blenkins. Lacking every vestige of altruism, dedication and a sense of noblesse oblige which Schreiner considered vital pre-requisites for the empire-maker, Blenkins emerges as the inimical antithesis of his empire-making opposite, Napoleon Bonaparte. Furthermore, Blenkins comes to represent the brand of colonisation to which Schreiner was vehemently opposed. This free-booting and violent conquest she termed the upas-tree theory of imperialism, which

> regards the inhabitants of the British Isles as a kind of growth which is bound to kill out and destroy by its mere existence all the other infinitely complex and interesting forms of human life on all earth's vast continents, and exist alone monarch over a bared earth, like a colossal upas-tree under whose shadow or among whose branches, according to the old fables, it was impossible for plant to flower or bird to breathe. (21)

And Blenkins conducts himself along these upas principles, killing Waldo's nascent creativity and thirst for knowledge.

Opposed to this adult world which wields the power, are the three children - Otto's son, Waldo, and the two cousins Em and Lyndall - all orphaned. Together, these three represent an embattled minority of enlightened opinion and thought, similar in outline to Schreiner's conception of the liberal remnant in South Africa. Her description of this remnant could equally well apply to the three children.

> So small in number is this body of persons holding this attitude, that again and again have men and women belonging to it felt inclined to draw aside, and in bitterness of spirit cry with the ancient Hebrew at the door of his cave: "I, only I, am left". (22)

In this threatened position, the children attempt to reject the philosophies of their forebears, in a mood of doubt characterised by the statement, "We of this generation are not destined to eat and be satisfied as our fathers were; we must be content to go hungry'. (23) Waldo consequently rejects the narrow theology of his father in favour of a transcendental idealism, coloured by a religious emotion - a philosophy close to that of his namesake, Ralph Waldo Emerson. Lyndall, on the other hand, as the spirit and apotheosis of the 'New Woman', passionately rejects her traditional woman's role. And in this connection, Lyndall launches on a lengthy discussion on the woman's question - a discussion that reflects Schreiner's ideas that she was subsequently to set out in Woman and Labour.

In keeping with these ideas, Lyndall repudiates the traditional socialisation of women which fits them only to be decorous objects and dissemblers and she rejects the property relations that underpin marriage to make of it a commercial transaction with women the commodities being bought and sold. Her fate in the novel is to try and resist these social and economic pressures which drive women to marriage, but this can never be. Instead Lyndall can only dream of a time when women will be free and marriage will be a union of equals

> 'Then when that time comes,' she said slowly, 'when love is no more bought and sold, when it is not a means of making bread, when each woman's life is

> filled with earnest independent labour, then love will come to her, a strange sudden sweetness breaking in upon her earnest work, not sought for, but found. Then, but not now -' (24)

The ideas expressed in this passage represent the core of Schreiner's view on women's emancipation, and also the core of the novel. Before woman could become conscious of the injustices of her position and attempt to remedy it, there must exist the necessary preconditions of economic independence which Schreiner saw as coming from equal access to labour.

To adumbrate these views on women in the novel, Schreiner draws an implicit parallel between Tant' Sannie and Lyndall. The theoretical base of the character of Tant' Sannie lies generally in Schreiner's discussion of the seventeenth century and feudal Boers, and specifically in an article on 'The Boer Woman and the Modern Woman's Question'. (25) In this article, heavily influenced by Spencerian notions of organic evolution, Schreiner compares the position of the 'primitive' Boer Woman to the 'modern' woman under capitalism. In analysing the position of Afrikaner women, Schreiner sees them as contented souls, living in a stable society, with access to certain types of labour that confer on them a certain type of status and recognition. (26) This type of woman, according to Schreiner, is untroubled about any doubts or awareness as to the injustic of her subordinate position. She is also, unlike the nineteenth century 'modern' Lyndall, oblivious of any feelings of angst about her personal and sexual life, and does not seek a union of equals.

> That essentially modern condition of mind, in which an individual remains sexually solitary and unmated because no other is found who satisfies the complex intellectual and emotional needs of a nature in which these needs are as imperative as the physical, and in which union with an individual not singled out by an almost immeasureable sympathy from the rest of their sex would be abhorrent...this is a condition of mind unintelligible to the primitive Boer. (27)

In contrast to this 'modern' nineteenth century attitude, exemplified in Lyndall, the Afrikaner 'seventeenth century' woman regard marriage

and sex in a spirit of economic pragmatism, looking for the man who can tend the common stock and give her children. Consequently Tant' Sannie buries husbands one after the other, and folds her hands resignedly, saying, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord', while she looks for another mate. (28) However, to Lyndall, this attitude is anathema. She can neither conform to this 'feudal ' conception of marriage nor to the 'modern' norm of conjugality, whereby women are bought and maintained as useless objects. Aware of the injustices of her position she is powerless to alter them and is forced to live out the tragic contradiction. She can choose marriage without love to Gregory Rose, or love without marriage to the stranger, a union that ultimately destroys her. In contrast to Lyndall, her cousin Em survives, largely because she submits to a traditional role of women in accepting a position as Rose's wife.

Schreiner was later to use this structure of tragic contradiction and of being situationally caught in a later novel, Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland. (29) Here she again launches an attack on the upastree theory of imperialism and specifically on the way it was manifesting itself in the Matabeleland campaign in 1896-97. With this framework, she implements her concerns in fiction by working through the individual and confused consciousness of the ignominious Halkett, a victim of colonial ideologies and structures. Caught in a violent situation he neither fully understands nor has any control of, harbouring ridiculous notions of becoming a colonial 'superman', Halkett slowly comes unhinged under the pressure. His only alternative is to choose a path of martyrdom and die at the hands of his military superiors - a victim of the powerful structures of colonial society that Schreiner understood so well.



W.C. Scully

2. W.C. Scully

In tone and content, William Charles Scully's work stands as a monument to a certain type of liberal thought in South Africa. The structure and themes of his work consistently dwell on concerns of the white liberal, whilst his life as a Cape civil servant, and his friendship with people like W.P. Schreiner, J.H. Meiring-Beck and James Rose-Innes, attest to the ideological milieu in which he moved.

As pointed out above, liberalism in South Africa has a wide meaning, and Scully's particular brand is hall-marked by notions of paternalism, 'tendermindedness', trusteeship and elements of separatism. This mixture of thought emerges clearly in Scully's admiration and active support of things like the Glen Grey Act, that separatist piece of legislation which provided local councils for African representation. Furthermore, he also supported industrial education, another facet of separatism, which concentrated on the training of the many in vocational skills rather than the training of the few for equal participation in society. (30) These particular strands of Scully's thinking were to have a marked influence on his fiction, as I shall show later on. In addition to this specific political thought, Scully's work, too, seems generally to have been informed by the assumptions of nineteenth and twentieth century South African liberal thought. Hence, a lot of his work, particularly his later novels Daniel Venanda and The Harrow, base themselves on the assumption of the power of 'factual' information to 'convert' prejudiced people, a strategy much used in liberal circles.

Another aspect that ties in with this liberal perspective, are his views on art. In keeping with other Cape thinkers, like Rev. T. Lloyd, Laurence, Kolvin, Kolbe and Hunter, Scully tended to see culture and artistic endeavour in terms of a tradition of 'high art'. (31) Within this framework, South Africa was generally seen as being devoid of any literature, a task which Scully set about rectifying. He not only wrote fiction and poetry, but also attempted to create an awareness of a South African 'tradition', an end, no doubt, towards which

he wrote his history of the country. (32) His views on South African art and his self-appointed role within it, emerge clearly from the preface to one of his poetry volumes.

> South of the Line, literature, and more especially poetry, does not luxuriantly flourish. The reasons for this are not far to seek: the literature of the imagination can develop to any great extent only in countries that have a history flecked with the light and shade of great national and individual virtues and vices, crimes and misfortunes. Poetry to be national must stand out from a past that the people feel to be their special heritage and which, as it were, permeates the air they breathe. In offering this work to the public, the writer trusts that it will be accepted as an honest attempt to develop some of the latent poetical abilities of our too practical colony. (33)

This idea of 'literary pioneering' in an otherwise barren territory, was also one in terms of which Scully saw his early life, spent as a shepherd and digger in Kimberley and Pilgrims Rest. He was later to look back on himself, during this period, with a certain degree of sentimentality and ideas of 'pioneering'. He characterises himself as one of a band of

> light-hearted, haphazard pioneers who, rejoicing in youthful energy and careless of their own interests, unwittingly (lay) the foundation upon which so many great fortunes have been built. (34).

At an age of twenty-one, Scully forsook his life of 'roving' and 'rugged individualism' to join the civil service, a decision he characterised with a tone of irony and nostalgic individualism, as follows

> Thus it was that I after a strange and varied apprenticeship in some of the roughest of life's workshop, became clogged down as a wheel in the clumsy, expensive, and circumlocutory mill, which consuming much grist, but producing little meal, is still believed to be an indispensible adjunct to our civilisation. (36)

In the civil service, Scully was to become a magistrate and was posted to many areas in South Africa, most notably the Eastern Cape and Namaqualand. It was also during this period (1876-1914) that he produced the bulk of his fiction.

As a magistrate in the Eastern Cape, Scully was one of the many officials who administered British policies of indirect rule in the Transkei, which by 1894 had come completely under British control. In terms of this policy, Scully administered a magisterial district divided into locations under headmen. These headmen in turn ruled with severely circumscribed power, a position that was to be legally ratified in the Glen Grey Act of 1894. In terms of this act, Africans were given representation on local and regional councils. In addition, the Act introduced individual land tenure, a factor which had the net result of speeding up the flow of labour to urban centres. Scully had infinite admiration for this Act, which he described as producing 'the most excellent results', (37) so that under this dispensation Africans could be 'easily governed - probably as easily as any people in the world'. (38) And it was to be out of his experience as a magistrate that Scully was to produce several short stories dealing with African societies under English indirect rule, stories that are very much tied up with his position as a magistrate.

This ideology mediates itself most strongly via a recurrent structure of conflict that one can trace in his stories - a conflict between a 'faithful' chief or headman and his recalcitrant and reactionary successor or between a Christian African and his heathen counterparts. This former conflict provides the basis for a story like 'The Vengeance of Dogolwana'. (39) In this story, a chief, Umsoala, who has proved consistently friendly and helpful to the authorities and the magistrate is dying. His son, Songoaza, takes over the chieftainship and becomes the villain, because of his opposition to the English authorities. Allied to this resistance are his reactionary tendencies of superstition which oppose the implementation of 'civilised methods and ideas', a combination that provides the model for many of Scully's villains. In terms of this perception, the villain is primarily

scurrilous in so far as he opposes English authority, his reactionary superstition often being axiomatic and corroborative. An analagous type of conflict emerges in another story, 'The Seed of the Church', (40) in which Matshaka, a newly-converted Christian attached to the local mission station, is killed by 'heathens', not, however, before he has put up a brave fight in a good Christian tradition of martyrdom.

These and other stories are often set in Pondoland, an area in which Scully, at the behest of Rhodes, assumed a magistracy on its annexation in 1894. Scully's description of Pondoland provides a fitting background for the conflict of 'faithful' / Christian / 'educated' versus recalcitrant/'heathen' /'uneducated'. He characterises Pondoland as follows

> Pondoland, like every state under savage rule, was the scene of cruelty, oppression and misgovernment in most forms. Exposed to the unchecked rapacity of the chiefs, the unhappy people were always in danger of death, or confiscation of their property upon some puerile pretext. The one quality which was of advantage to its possessors was cunning. Frugality and industry resulted in the amassing of wealth, and wealth excited the envy and cupidity of the rulers, who, through the agency of witch doctors were never at a loss for a pretext for "eating up" the owner. (41)

With this as his perception of the state of affairs, Scully can then posit the annexation of Pondoland as an act that was welcomed.

> The people generally were glad of the change from the harsh, arbitrary and irresponsible rule of the native chiefs to the settled and equitable conditions of civilised government. (42)

After having produced the bulk of his fiction between 1896-1898, Scully largely forsook it in favour of non-fiction, reminiscences and a history of South Africa. Twenty years later, however, he again turned to novel writing to produce The Harrow and Daniel Vananda both of which are informed with the sense of a mission or duty to inform the public of facts that they did not wish to know or that were being suppressed. The Harrow for example, which deals with the

atrocities perpetrated by the British in the Cape during the Anglo-Boer War, was written as a direct response to the decision of the Cape government to suppress details relating to British actions under martial law, revelations that it had previously promised to make known. (43) However, the novel that mainly concerns us here is Daniel Vananda, Scully's contribution to the 'Jim goes to Jo'burg' genre, and a novel that should be read in conjunction with his work on the Rand - The Ridge of White Waters. Like later liberal writers who turned their attention to urbanisation, Scully's work, written in the heyday of white liberalism, tends more towards documenting, often in moralistic terms, the subordination of Africans, than analysing the conditions that create such subordination. In addition, this type of writing focuses exclusively on the African as victim, without ever turning to the positive contribution that he made in adapting to changing social conditions, and the extent to which African responses have shaped the course of history.

Also in keeping with liberal orthodoxy, Scully attempts to argue from the perspective of the 'educated African', a class that liberals realised had to be given political expression in order to divert conflict. Hence in his preface Scully says

> Many Europeans in South Africa are voluble in denunciation of the "educated Native", and in expressing preference for the "raw" article. This sort of talk is the outcome of a strange degree of ignorance; those indulging in it blindly ignore the most important features of the case. These are (1) there are no "raw" (that is unsophisticated) Natives left; I am referring to the Natives inhabiting the Cape Province and its adjacent territories, to Natal and to Zululand; from the remotest corners of the Native territories the men flock to the mines in their tens of thousands, - and (2) for every pound of influence the mission schools exercises, the brandy-seller, the dishonest lawyer and storekeeper, and the mine compound exercise a ton. (44)

Scully puts his point forcibly with regard to Vananda, the mission educated protagonist.

> ...He had been met with a sneering hostility by all the Europeans to whom he had revealed that he was other than savage.
> This appeared by the attitude almost invariably adopted by the ruling race, towards Natives who were educated.
> From the social and official advancement the Natives were absolutely cut off, their often pathetic efforts to imitate the ruling race instead of being generously encouraged, were mocked at. Politically, the Natives possessed a nominal equaliy, but the slightest attempt to assert themselves in this direction caused the press to ring with expressions of anger and panic. (45)

The novel itself focuses on the odyssey of Daniel Vananda through the vicissitudes of the South African political economy. Vananda begins his life somewhere in the 1870's in the Eastern Cape when sections of the Nguni nation were attempting to put up a last ditch stand against encroaching British dominance. The book opens in the midst of a war between the Mfengu and British against the Tembu, and against the background of a war-ravaged countryside, Vananda meets an Englishman, Stephen Vardy, under whose tutelage, he goes to mission school. Here he is socialised into mission attitudes and ideologies, reads Soga's translation of Pilgrim's Progress, learns to sing hymns and is given a Christian name, Daniel. From this mission school, he proceeds to King William's Town to work as a 'storeboy', and here too he mixes with 'the better class of local Native society'. However, because of unrequited love, he turns to drink, a factor much lamented authorially for it represents a casting off of mission respectability and a return to 'savage' custom.

> But Daniel had thrown respectability from him like a despised garment. The savage in him more and more dominated the man's personality, he craved for violent excitement. The desire he had conceived for one woman turned to women, love changed to lust. (46)

His drinking habits soon land him in gaol, and he emerges chastened and a teetotaller, thence to become a squatter and sharecropper on Vardy's farm. On Vardy's death, the new owner forces him off the land to leave Vananda to wander in the countryside where he can find neither

land nor succour for his cattle. Under these straitened circumstances he is forced to move first to Port Elizabeth and then to Johannesburg to work on the mine.

In dealing with these urban centres, Scully often renders effective descriptions of an industrial landscape and the urban patterns of residence accompanying it - slums and segregated 'locations'. Hence Port Elizabeth's geography is characterised as follows

> Beautiful and substantial buildings stood on each side of the portion of the main street virtually forming the centre of the city. But the majority of the human beings who created the wealth which paid for these buildings occupied miserable slums on the city's outskirts near the sea...a city which considered itself to be a centre of light...a city which was an emporium of commerce...and those whose labour built up the fortunes were left to rot in a pit of the white man's contriving. (47)

Similarly with Johannesburg, Scully provides a description of an industrial geography which in tone and image sets the pattern for later writers dealing with Johannesburg.

> Far and near could be seen the tall chimneys vomiting smoke, the lofty headgears with their interesting wheels - the...shapeless dumps. Around the latter clustered the squalid dwellings, half-hidden in choking clouds of dust. (48)

With the mining industry and the ghettoes of Johannesburg as a background, Vananda passes through various sectors of the economy, becoming adept at the art of survival like Blackburn's Bulalie had done before him. He first sweats underground as a mine worker, and then works as a 'houseboy' eluding the perils of the white mistress who, Potiphar-like, systematically seduces her servants. Ultimately, Vananda returns to his home where he encounters a changed environment of a collapsing reserve economy characterised by drought, overcrowding and erosion. The novel ends by pointing to the ineluctability of migrant labour.

> with deepening sadness they realised that it was only by sending forth their youth wholesale to the corrupting Rand that they could hope to win the means of bare existence - to say nothing of paying the taxes imposed by the Government. (49)

Possibly one of the greatest ironies concerning Scully's novel lay in its reception. While he had been at pains to point out in his preface that the book had been manufactured from factual information which he hoped would 'convert' people, the majority of his readers remained unconverted. Hence Sarah Gertrude Millin, a writer whom Scully had encouraged in her youth, rejected those sections of the book specifically made up from documented evidence.

> ...in "Daniel Vananda", through the very vehemence of his sincerity, he has defeated himself by over-stating his case. Not only has he loaded on one poor man all the trials of a whole nation, but, where plain facts were at hand sufficient for any negrophilist's purposes, he has gone out of his way to use questionable material - extraordinary instances of the torturing of Kafir criminals, a most perversely imagined "Black Peril" affair in Johannesburg, indeed, he allows himself to fall before his own prejudices. He formed his opinion of it many years ago and unsoftened by time, circumstances and change, maintains that it is a wicked place. (50)

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER THREE

1. Martin Legassick, "The Rise of Modern South African Liberalism: Its Assumptions and Social Base", Institute of Commonwealth Studies, (1972), p.1

2. Ibid.

3. M. Kirkwood, "The Coloniser: A Critique of the English South African Culture Theory", in Poetry South Africa, ed. Peter Wilhelm and James Polley, (1976). pp.102-133

4. It is interesting to note that this 'genius' interpretation seems to have begun with Samuel Cronwright-Schreiner's biography of Schreiner, The Life of Olive Schreiner, (1924)

5. See for example Ridley Beeton, Olive Schreiner A Short Guide to her Writings (1974) and J.P.L. Snyman's critique of Schreiner, op.cit., pp.1-27

6. Olive Schreiner, "The Boer", "The Wandering Boer", "The Boer and His Republics", "The Psychology of The Boer", in Thoughts on South Africa, (1976) pp.65-105, pp.148-190, pp.221-248, pp.249-320

7. Ibid., p.312

8. Ibid., p.316

9. Ibid., p.318

10. Ibid., pp.317-318

11. Ibid., p.351 Emphasis original

12. This tendency is nowhere more apparent than in her vacillation between a race and class analysis of South Africa. Compare the following statements.

> This question of the relation between the foreign speculator Capitalist and the Shareholding class, and the black labouring class, is the very core within the core and the kernel within the kernel. [Thoughts on South Africa pp.316]

> Social instinct has never in the past, and does not today, except in a few instances spontaneously tend to cross the limits of race. The sooner this truth is realised as axiomatic by all who attempt to deal with problems of race, the greater the possibility of there being dealt with them in a spirit of wisdom. (ibid., p.216)

13. Sheila Rowbotham, op.cit., p.93

14. Olive Schreiner, Woman and Labour, (1978), p.113

15. Ibid., pp. 124

16. Ibid., pp.124-125

17. Ibid., pp.126-127
It is interesting to note that this often mystical conception of the woman's movement, was matched by Schreiner's reluctance to actively support any organisations on the left.

18. Olive Schreiner, The Story of an African Farm, (1971), Preface pp.27-28. In this connection, it is interesting to note her meeting with Haggard in London in 1885. Haggard suggested that she might make her work a bit more cheerful, an opinion Schreiner considered ill coming from one who had 'a murder or suicide on every other page'. Quoted in D.L. Hobman, Olive Schreiner Her Friends and Times, (1955), p.42

19. Olive Schreiner, (1978), op.cit., p.269-270

20. G.W. Cross, "South African Literary Portraits No VI Olive Schreiner", in The South African Bookman, No.1, Jan,1911, p.66 emphasis original.

21. Olive Schreiner, (1976), op.cit., p.333

22. Ibid., p.317

23. Olive Schreiner, (1971), op.cit., pp.172-173

24. Ibid., p.195

25. Olive Schreiner, "The Boer Woman and the Modern Woman's Question" in Thoughts on South Africa, op.cit., pp.191-220

26. This view of feudal women tends to err on the side of sentimentalisation. Schreiner, for example, never mentions the complete lack of rights they had over property and person.

27. Olive Schreiner, (1976), op.cit., p.194

28. Olive Schreiner, (1971), op.cit., p.195

29. Olive Schreiner, Trooper Peter Halkett of Mashonoland, (1959)

30. See W.C. Scully's History of South Africa from the Earliest Days to Union. (1915), pp.304-305 and Daniel Vananda, (1923), p.ix

31. Compare for example, Scully's views on 'culture' with Rev. T. Lloyd's (a friend of Olive Schreiner's), "Literary Culture in South Africa" in DFA, October 13, 1892, or F.C. Kolbe, "Hopes and Fears for South African Literature", in The South African Bookman, No.1, August, 1910, pp.7-8 and or any of the articles in Perceval Laurence, Collectanea (1899)

32. W.C. Scully, (1915) op.cit. It is also interesting to note that Scully's views on the 'frontier' conforms closely to the traditional liberal historian's interpretation of this phase of South Africa's history.

33. W.C. Scully, Wreck of the Grosvenor, (1886), preface

34. W.C. Scully, Reminiscences of a South African Pioneer, (1913) Foreword

35. Ibid., p.179
36. Ibid., p.311
37. W.C. Scully, (1915), op.cit., p.273
38. W.C. Scully, (1923), op.cit., p.ix
39. W.C. Scully, "The Vengeance of Dogolwana" in The White Hecatomb and other stories, (1897), pp.17-46
40. W.C. Scully, "The Seed of the Church", in ibid., pp.99-112
41. Ibid., p.93
42. W.C. Scully, "Umtagati", in Kafir Stories, (1896), p.189
43. W.C. Scully, The Harrow, (1921)
44. W.C. Scully, (1923), op.cit., p.viii
45. Ibid., p.139
46. Ibid., p.179
47. Ibid., pp.171,177
48. Ibid., p.188
49. Ibid., p.218
50. UWL, A539:P2. Millin papers 1903-1968, Collection of Press clippings "The Native in Literature" n.d.

CHAPTER FOUR : ADVENTURE TALES AND ANACHRONISMS

Introduction

In dealing with South African literature, consideration must be given to the adventure/romance novel, since it is a form that baulks so large on the literary horizon. Furthermore, it has also often erroneously been seen as the only type of literature to emerge from colonial Africa, a conception that is reinforced by the massive popularity and readership that romance enjoyed both in South Africa and England. As Gray has said, 'Britain itself elected to nominate the form of the long-lasting adventure novel, which is officially celebrated in South Africa to this day as its finest statement in literature.' (1)

The incidence of adventure tales and records goes back a long way and appears as an inevitable concomitant of white penetration into Africa, which attracted a fictive mystique of adventure, manliness, valour, courage and sportsmanship, which came in fiction to stand as a surrogate for expansionism. The form, as Gray has pointed out, which provided the groundwork and reservoir of reference on which later writers could draw, was the hunter's tale and record.

> The hunters' records, invariably, full of non-stop action sequences and spartan hardship in the field, conform to a stereotype: trophy hunting is justified on a scale which approximates to extermination on the grounds that male virility has to be proved and that nature is infinitely bountiful...The hunters, with their belief in an infinite and unsullied horizon, contain the seeds of an ethic of expansionism which stresses the superiority and right of arms, and which eschews any concern for the adversary whom, with an unconscious recognition of their rights, they named 'natives'.
> Out of their lone treks through one of the greatest happy hunting grounds that the world ever provided Western fire-arms with, emerged a modulation of the hunter's records: the birth of Victorian adventure fiction, written usually especially for 'boys'. Throughout the nineteenth century, boys' adventure fiction poured out of the Cape: decade by decade the terrain reached may vary, but the essence of the form does not. There is

> no essential artistic distinction in type to be made with regard to this particular genre, as it rises and endures with notions of British supremacy over both the animal kingdom and everyone non-British, not only in Africa, but in all of the colonised world. (2)

That romance should emerge as one of the major fictive forms of Imperialism is not surprising, given the extent to which structures within the adventure tale mediate and express the cornerstones of Imperial thought.

Firstly, the notion of adventure and the adventurer provided a vehicle that could encompass a broad spectrum of ideas and symbols to become a potent fictive expression of expansionism. As the hunter/explorer/adventurer/slave trader penetrates Africa, so,too, does he bring Empire in his wake. Consistent with the ideology of Empire-making, this task of exparsionism can only be done by a select few, possessed of certain character traits and temperament. Hence the protagonist had to be British, Christian and white. In addition his task of adventuring or exploring automatically entailed notions of sportsmanship, manliness and fairplay - all traits believed to be a prerequisite for the onerous task of expansion. The [illegible] expansionist crusading quest, traditionally across a 'frontier' where experience would be 'different' came to be seen as a game, a conceptualisation that provided a ready-made set of attitudes, by which to explain 'reality'. Also the rugged climate in which the game of expansion was played, was believed to exercise a beneficial effect of the representatives of British manhood, who found themselves in the colony. This 'outward-bound' mentality also finds expression in the youthfulness of many romance protagonists, adolescents who develop, improve and enrich themselves in Africa.

Unlike a lot of 'pioneer' literature, which manifests the ideological proclivity of creating a fictive world which is uninhabited, romance/adventure writing always takes place in an area that is inhabited. The protagonist can then penetrate/ 'discover' an area that can supply the necessary fodder or object for racial conflict, a need deeply felt by Imperialists to reinforce their superiority. In addition to being

inhabited, the ideological geography in which romance plays itself out, must be dark, mysterious, and distinctly exotic, often bordering on the supernatural, a trait which has led critics to point to elements of science fiction in the adventure world. (3) Allied to this 'otherness' of the landscape, is a cave, in which all adventure tales invariably end. The cave then comes to stand as the heart and 'essence' of Africa, which becomes both extra-terrestrial and subterranean. This ideological geography of Africa, by flaunting its 'otherness' creates the task for the adventurer who must bring it into the boundary of the known and the British. In achieving and fulfilling this quest, the protagonist invariably complies with a characteristic pattern of movement, which involved travelling through ideological space and time. The first leg of this journey from London to Africa takes only a few chapters, whilst the remainder of the novel is taken up in an arduous journey penetrating an unwilling hinterland. This onerous task was generally reserved for a Briton, for as one colonist from Central Africa said, '...only the steelhead of an Englishman could penetrate Africa.' (4)

Notwithstanding this emphasis on mystery, the supernatural and exoticism, most romance writers were to see themselves as popular historiographers, a role they accomplished by stressing the 'historicity' and 'veracity' of their tales. Sometimes this veracity lay in dealing with known historical events, or by retaining a certain geographical specificity in their works. Other strategies include Haggard's inversion techniques of presenting his books as history, the opposite of romance. Hence in She he claims to 'have the credit of presenting to the world the most wonderful history, as distinguished from romance, that its records can show'. (5) Besides claiming that his works are 'history', he also uses the sophistical inversion of claiming veracity for his fiction on the grounds that it is so much bigger and better than 'fact' and 'real life' that it must surely be true.

> Probably they would say that I was exaggerating, notwithstanding that every page of this history must bear so much internal evidence of its truth that it would obviously have been quite impossible for me to have invented it. (6)

On this fairly general and abstracted level, then, one can see that the major impetus for romance writing arose out of the nexus of ideological imperatives of Imperialism.

Turning from this general overview of romance writing as an expression of Imperialism, we turn now to look specifically at South Africa, where the output of romance literature continues unabated to this day. In its portrayal of South African society, this early romance/adventure writing continued to perpetuate an anachronistic view of the sub-continent. To these writers who worked with a mixture of nostalgia and anachronism, it was as though history had stopped happening in the eighteenth century. Hence their fictive world continued to portray a pre-imperial image of Africa, unaffected by large-scale expansion, with an odd explorer or two, moving in a world of Africans seemingly untouched by labour migrancy, landlessness and conquest. For by the 1880's and 1890's, South African society was definitely one in flux. The mining economy was making itself felt throughout Southern Africa as labour migrancy spread to most African societies in the sub-continent. Railways penetrated formerly isolated areas bringing in their wake increased numbers of settlers, immigrants and expanded trading. Agriculture, too, changed under these conditions of an expanding economy, and modernised accordingly, bringing new techniques, machinery, methods and patterns of land tenure.

This anachronism inherent in South African romance and adventure writing, emerges as a type of wish fulfilment for certain strata of white society, for in an outdated image of Africa, based on white supermen and 'noble savages', they could find a picture they very much wanted to believe in, since it could obscure the changes that were occurring in South Africa in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. The romance writer in turn could buttress this wish fulfilment by offering an essentialist portrayal of Africans in their 'natural state' - a portrayal compounded of white ideological conceits that were given implicit ratification by the romancer's role of historiographer.

The conceits regarding the 'rural African' were part and parcel of

separatist assumptions and as the reserve economy, indirect rule and territorial segregation came to play an ever more important role in the control of Africans, so, too, did beliefs about the 'savage' in his 'natural' state proliferate. These particular myths and conceits as Shula Marks has shown could effectively obscure the extent to which South Africa was becoming a common, rather than a plural society.

> This myth of "parallel development" also obscured the fundamental fact that by the turn of the century both African and Europeans were subject to the same economic vicissitudes. Despite outward appearances the two communities were interdependent, and economically and even culturally could not fail to influence one another. It was in the economic sphere that this interdependence was most marked. And there is little doubt that from the African point of view this interdependence had meant increased poverty and dependence on the white man. Whereas in the 1860's the majority of Africans had been able to withstand pressures on them to work for the white man and had been able to pay their taxes by selling off their surplus grain or cattle, by the turn of the century this was no longer possible. (7)

Furthermore, the buttressing ideologies of separatism, as Marks has shown, depended on a number of crucial reinterpretations and misunderstandings of the structures of traditional African society. Central to this reformulation was the perception of the role of the chief, king or ruler. In terms of separatist orthodoxy, the role of the chieftain came to be seen as a despotic and absolutist one entailing a degree of power unheard of in pre-colonial times, when the power of the ruler had been subject to a series of checks and balances. This supposed autocratic control could then be used as a rationalisation for the policies and practices of colonial 'native administration'. This ideal of administration was clearly set out by the Natal Native Affairs Commission of 1906 who said that

> 'the natives are a people accustomed to the patriarchal system, the leading feature of which is a paternal despotism', and that the administration of native affairs 'must be based on the autocratic principle of control.' To this they added the proviso that the

Author Hofmeyr Christine Isabel
Name of thesis Mining, Social Change And Literature: An Analysis Of South African Literature With Particular Reference To The Mining Novel, 1870-1920. 1980

PUBLISHER:
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
©2013

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg Library website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the Library website.