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MINING, SOCIAL CHANGE AND LITERATURE. AN ANALYSIS OF SOUTH AFRICAN LITERATURE WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE MINING NOVEL 1870-1920.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis deals generally with South African literature between the years 1870-1920 and specifically with mining fiction during this period. Based on a sociological approach and working from the premise that the revolutionary impact of the mining industry constituted the most important event of the period, the literature has been analysed as it was shaped and affected by this radical social upheaval, occasioned by the genesis of mining. The first chapter deals with the image of mining in South African literature. The earliest literature of this type was largely oral in character and emanated from early digger society, which was soon to be eradicated by the formation of monopoly. Their fictive lore, however, survived, and was adopted and reformulated by later white writers, who sentimentalised the image of the digger in order to create a favourable image of the mining industry. However, not all literary representations of the mines were favourable and some white writers questioned the social toll caused by the industry. But the strongest criticism of the mines was to come from those who suffered most under them - the working class, made up of Africans and Afrikaners, and this thesis includes an analysis of their writing. The thesis also attempts to take the analysis of mining a step further by looking at how it indirectly affected other literary developments, not directly thematically concerned with mining. The first of these relates to the representation of Africans in South African fiction. And as the mining industry altered class and social relations, so too did many writers' perceptions change. Secondly, the thesis also looks at the effects of liberalism on South African literature, and attempts to trace the influence that the forces of mining and foreign capital exerted on liberal thought, by analysing the way these pressures mediated themselves in the work of two noted liberals, Olive Schreiner and W.C. Scully. Thirdly, the thesis concludes with a consideration of a major trend within colonial fiction - romance writing. In analysing this literary form, an attempt has been made to show how it, too, bent to the prevailing social and political wind. In order to illustrate this development, an analysis has been done of the work of H. Rider Haggard and Bertram Mitford, another prolific romance writer.

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INTRODUCTION

I

The mining industry in South Africa exploded with a revolutionary impact during the closing decades of the nineteenth century, bringing with it radical changes that were to be felt throughout the sub-continent. In a matter of a few decades, South African society, under this onslaught had changed from a largely feudal and agrarian order to one dominated by capitalist social relations. Subject always to rigorous cost constraints, mining capital, with its insatiable demand for cheap labour, penetrated deeply into the fabric of African and Afrikaner peasant societies, and with a battery of economic pressure and military coercion sought to 'free' these peasants from the land, in order to bring them to the city as workers. And as these early migrant labourers began setting the routes and patterns that many of their kin were to follow, they left behind them societies that had been irrevocably altered under the impact of mining capital - societies that were often totally destroyed or remained as grotesque travesties of their former selves. Once in the city, these worker/peasants were to be subjected to rigorous forms of labour control, sophisticated by the imperatives and exigencies of the monopolistic industry. These controls, today so characteristic of labour relations - the compound, migrant labour, the segregated 'township' - constituted, as one critic has said, 'the most theoretically perfect system of labour exploitation yet devised'. (1)

But the story of mining is not only one of domination by a small clique of powerful magnates backed by foreign capital and resources; it is also a tale of resistance and class conflict, that propelled the system forward. And this resistance was to include, on the one hand, a civil war in which the Transvaal State attempted to repel the foreign capitalist encroachment and on the other, internal class conflict of a violent and often bloody nature, that culminated in the 1922 strikes.

Alongside and linked to this radical social, political and economic change, which I have sketched impressionistically, was, in addition,

cultural change. For as the revolutionary impact of the mining industry made itself felt, so too did the aggressive and individualistic urban culture, that accompanied the rise of mining, register itself as a brash and intrusive force on the existing, largely rural societies of South Africa. Consequently, this conflict affected the cultural production of all classes, which tended to shape itself, like a magnet, around the new social relations brought into being by the mining industry. And it is to this process of cultural change, that I address myself in this thesis, by focusing on the social image of mining as it transported itself into South African literature during the period of the mining industry's dominance - 1870-1920.

In dealing with South African literature between these years, one is invariably forced into a degree of selectivity, as the amount of literature produced - over 300 novels, not to mention drama, poetry, short stories, sketches, essays and articles in newspapers and journals - precludes a complete synopsis. Consequently, to deal exhaustively with all this literature is beyond the scope of such a thesis.

In selecting my material, I have chosen to focus generally on the novel, and specifically on the narrative tradition dealing with mining, by following it from its oral beginnings to its subsequent printed forms and permutations. In tracing this development through its various trends, genres and subject matter, I hope to establish it as paradigmatic. That is to say, the narrative tradition of mining will hopefully throw some light on the way other types of literature during the period developed.

In addition to this specific study I have appended other major literary figures and trends, which, although often not directly related to the topic of mining, played a crucial part in the development of South African literature during these years. In their totality, these two strands will hopefully provide an overview of the trends, diversities, differences, similarities and substantiality of South African writing at the turn of the century.

I have chosen mining as a central image of analysis because the development and history of that industry undeniably constitutes the most important event of the period, if not of South African history. For as O'Meara has said, 'Since the discovery of diamonds in the late 1860's, South Africa's social history has been dominated by the needs of, and the conflicts surrounding the mining industry, particularly gold mining' (2). And indeed mining did come to play an important part in the history of South Africa, dictating as it did class formation, labour relations and the re-shaping of pre-capitalist social formations. This crucial and central impact of mining is not surprising when one considers that the mining economy was to become the mainstay and backbone of the colonial economy. Furthermore, the mining economy could also exercise extensive control of those that came within its ambit, since the industry in South Africa has always functioned through monopoly. In the case of diamond mining, monopoly arose because of the marketing imperatives of the industry. In the case of gold, the fixed price of the metal in the world market, and the low grade ore and deep levels at which it was located also necessitated the formation of monopolistic companies. Consequently, in Johannesburg, mining came to be dominated by a handful of men, backed by foreign capital, who formed themselves into a protective combine known as the Chamber of Mines.

This tiny bourgeois core in Kimberley and Johannesburg came to dominate economic and political life in those centres, which, in turn, came to be regarded as the 'centre' of South Africa. And their control was indeed complete and far-reaching, as they dominated every aspect of the urban and national economy, the executive, judicial and legislative machinery and the military. In short, mining capital and the men that owned it controlled the State itself. This economic and political power of the Randlords was more than matched by their social power. They were at the very pinnacle of social life in early Johannesburg and consequently their opinions, prejudices, tastes and preferences came to be the prevailing ones and even when they had left the country for their palaces in Park Lane, their attitudes were to be held up as the models for those who followed them. (This unquestioned social, political and economic sway was to persist until well into the twentieth century and was finally only to be partly broken by the rising captains of secondary industry).

The extent to which the views of the mining bosses saturated the society they controlled was nothing short of hegemonic, a structure which one critic has outlined as follows. It is

> an order in which a certain way of life and thought is dominant, in which one concept of reality is diffused throughout the society in all its institutional and private manifestations, informing with its spirit all taste, morality, customs religious and political principles, and all social relations particularly in their intellectual and moral connotations. (3)

As seen from the above quotation, hegemonic views of reality approximate closely to commonly accepted conceptions of culture, as Raymond Williams has pointed out.

> (Hegemony) thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society, a sense of absolute because experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move, in most areas of their lives. It is, that is to say, in the strongest sense, a 'culture', but a culture which has also to be seen as the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes — (4)

Hence the very basis, conception and understanding of what culture is, relates to the hegemonic fraction's view of reality and through hegemony we can begin to approach the complexity of literature; what it signifies for a society, how it is practised, received, its effects and so on will be affected by the character of hegemony. Effective hegemony will set limits and parameters to what people in any society will believe in or expect, and from here we can broadly ascertain what their literature will deal with and include and what formal expression this will assume. Analytically, there will be parameters within which literature can be located, situated, explained, and understood.

But like all concepts, hegemony is not a fixed and inert category, but must be able to account for the multiplicity, variety and irreducible individuality of literary and cultural expression. Hegemony in any society can never be exhaustive and all-inclusive, and will always have elements of opposition, contradiction and counter-movement within its parameters - impulses which will affect and change the course of hegemony itself as it attempts to control, coerce and co-opt oppositional tendencies within itself.

> The most interesting and difficult part of any cultural analysis, in complex societies, is that which seeks to grasp the hegemonic in its active and formative but also its transformational processes. Works of art, by their substantial and general character, are often especially important as sources of this complex evidence. (5)

The specific structures that constituted mining hegemony in South Africa have been extensively dealt with by Bozzoli, and this thesis is indebted to her work. (6) According to her analysis, the kernels of this hegemony were a racist jingoism, a view of society and its classes visualised in terms of a caste-like hierarchy based on coercion and control, all of which were contained, encapsulated and ratified under the umbrella of British South Africanism. These ideological structures may well seem like the legacy of British Imperialism, but as Bozzoli has shown, they are structurally related to specific conditions within South Africa itself. And essentially, these ideological structures arose directly out of problems and conflicts that assailed the mining industry that was seeking economic dominance. And it was the way in which these problems were dealt with that affected the character that mining hegemony was to assume.

Firstly the ideological emphasis on 'racial superiority' and 'Britishness' arose as a result of the mining economy's position as a monopoly industry, situated within the British Imperial economy itself. Secondly, the model of a diverse and caste-like hierarchy came to encapsulate and ratify the peculiar organisation of classes within the labour process. For, in order to organise subordinate classes into as profitable a structure as possible, mine management had created a racial division of labour. This division in turn had arisen largely as a result of the peculiar structural position of Africans predicated on a combination of capitalist and pre-capitalist modes of production, a position that placed them in a situation of ultra-exploitability, and hence supposed inferiority. White wage earners, on the other hand, came to perform the role of overseers, consistent with their superior political leverage. Thirdly, the attitudes to Afrikaners arose as a result of the interaction between the mining economy and the Afrikaner

state, predicated largely on farming and small industrial interests, and hence enjoying aspirations inimical to the mining industry. This conflict registered itself at an ideological level as a rejection of the Transvaal state as an embodiment of 'Boerness, backwardness, ineptitudes and non-Britishness' (7), an attitude which was extended to Afrikaners in general.

In creating a society suited to its needs, the gold mining industry drew substantially on the experience of Kimberley, where a social structure of mine owners, white overseers and black labourers, subject to forms of rigorous labour control, had first been implemented. Out of the joint experience of the two types of mining industry arose a view of life whose 'frontiers' extended only to that which was 'British' and 'mining'. The core of reality and civilisation constituted a racially and nationally cohesive centre, united by its 'Britishness' - an ideological category that bore at best tenuous connections to the realities of contemporary British society, but rather signified class-based aspirations that saw Britain as their social and cultural point of reference, a necessity arising out of the mining industry's location in an Imperial Free Trade circuit.

The groups outside the frontier of 'Britishness', (those groups inimical or troublesome to mining interests) ideologically failed to qualify as full people in terms of their 'non-Britishness'. And whilst they were not excluded from the scheme of things, they came to be contained within a caste-like hierarchy that readily conceded social contradiction and inequality, but contained and ratified economic exploitation by ideologically positing an immutable hierarchy of superiority which froze social classes into a 'natural' order of difference and diversity.

The extent to which this view became hegemonic can be gauged from the way in which contradictory economic groups - mine owners, and the working-class made up of black, British, Afrikaans and Chinese members - were contained. Each of these groups was given an allotted and explicit place within a two-dimensional scheme. At the top and in the middle were the mine owners, British and white. Enjoying an

intermediary status, were white workers located somewhere between blacks and mine owners, and on the periphery and at the bottom were black workers. The encapsulating umbrella for this diverse hierarchy became the concept of 'British South African', a blanket term that could maintain a necessary sense of unity and cohesion. And it was to be this structured view of the world that was to saturate South Africa's social fabric. Indeed, for many it was the social fabric, seen as 'natural', eternal and unchanging.

As regards the literature of the time, the structures of reality, feeling and experience that constituted mining hegemony, were to register a profound influence upon it. And in studying the way in which the social image of mining perpetuated and reproduced itself in literature, I hope to show the way in which the hegemonic views of reality influenced the literary expression that grew up under it. For whether writers endorsed the structures and ideas of hegemonic reality uncritically; whether they questioned it and attempted to rebut it; or whether they parodied and lampooned it, the new mining order of South Africa shaped cultural production around itself and its imperatives.

II

In using the analytical concept of hegemony, I hope to begin to approach the protean complexities of a 'culture', understood not as a matter of upper class taste, but as the collective endeavour of all members and classes of society, whereby they attempt to make sense of their lives. This approach will hopefully provide an alternative to the existing and often scanty studies of South African literature. Generally speaking, such literary criticism has been dominated by a Eurocentric, ahistorical formalism, which is incapable of either acknowledging or realising its ideological underpinnings. The defects of this type of literary theory have, for a long time, been under heavy fire elsewhere, but it is only recently that the 'hegemony' of formalism is being challenged within South Africa. Using as its 'method' a naive sensuous empiricism, formalism has been unable to

recognise its theoretical assumptions or ideological limitations, and its exponents have, like a type of hegemonic fraction, tried to pass off their class-based senses and procedures as universal.

In South Africa, this impoverished formalism has survived for over a hundred years, and added to its often Victorian ideological universe has been a colonial legacy. This means that the local has been disparaged at the expense of the metropolitan culture, the consequences of which have taken a heavy toll on South African literary studies. Within this colonial ideology, South African literature is either not recognised or is recognised in a peculiar and distorted way; South African formalist literary studies have either an inability to see South African literature or see only scanty parts of it which mesh in comfortably with its ideological universe. The former attitude is particularly acute as regards the culture of the dominated classes. In a colonial situation, where the dominated classes are excluded from the State, ideological imperatives demand that they be regarded as non-people. Hence the attitude that the working classes have no history, culture, art or humanity becomes the logical concomitant, ideologically, of their being excluded from the legitimacy of the State. The latter attitude, where selected parts of South African literature are remembered, becomes clear when one looks at the often scanty studies of local writing that have been done. (8)

Generally these studies only recognise and deal with dominant, almost exclusively white, culture and it is only recently that the existence of black culture has attracted critical attention. But even within the parameters of white writing, only certain books are remembered. Out of a whole possible range of authors and types of writing, only certain ones are preserved whilst others are excluded, ignored or sometimes changed, diluted or re-interpreted. Consequently, a selective tradition is drawn up and then passed off as <u>the</u> tradition; the significant past. Of course this partial tradition is in accordance with the ideological assumptions of formalist practitioners, and the remembered works are those which suit the highly evaluative presuppositions of a colonial Eurocentricity. Those authors who meet these

ideological standards are generally the more metropolitan-inclined, liberal writers, usually white, while working class writers, popular writers and oral literature are consigned to oblivion on the grounds that they are not 'good'. (9) In order to rebut such ignorance or partial selectivity, it has become necessary to draw up an alternative history of South African literature, and I hope this thesis can make some contribution to such a venture.

In formulating a fully social theory of literature to explain South African literature, one faces the difficulty that most theories have grown out of a study of Western European literature, and furthermore, these literary theories have arisen out of social theories pertaining to 'normal' capitalist states. While certain general abstractions from these theories remain valid for the study of South Africa as a capitalist state, it is important to subject these analyses to close theoretical and historical scrutiny before use, and often amend them. Hence whilst formulating South African literary theory, one has few precedents on which to build and secondly the literature itself remains relatively unknown, and there is, as a result, no common referent which would facilitate the formulation and sophistication of literary theoretical categories. Hence in outlining certain theoretical considerations, these remain tentative.

The major differences between South African literature and European literature lies in its degree of mediation. European art has always been construed as a 'high art' tradition of mediated works which bear a convoluted relationship to the material conditions out of which they arise. In addition, art in Europe, is often art under the 'normal' state where it is a relatively privileged, sacrosanct area of experience that is tolerated and co-opted, and hence never in direct opposition to the State, although it may present alternative views of the world. This state of affairs has often come to be regarded as normative: art is highly mediated and bears very indirect relationships to social reality. So when Raymond Williams says that 'most writing, in any period, including our own, is a form of contribution to the effective dominant culture' (10), a statement inappropriate to the bulk of South African writing, particularly black, one

realises the need to reformulate theoretical categories suited to conditions in this country.

In South Africa, most art has, in fact, been highly unmediated in the sense that it has been closely linked to political struggle. The obvious example is, of course, black writing which has, in many instances, been crucially politically linked and often closely tied to certain nationalist and populist ideologies. Afrikaans writing too, has often been associated closely with nationalism, whilst English imperial writing too has often had a fairly direct relationship to political ideology.

Having cleared the ground, we can now move on to consider certain further theoretical assumptions underlying this thesis. In doing this, I by no means wish to set out hard and fast categories or a scientific recipe or literary formula, rather, I address myself to a limited number of problems and assumptions, appropriate to the literature I am dealing with.

As pointed out above, part of the aim of writing this thesis is to provide some alternative to the present view of South African literature, whereby only selected works are enshrined at the expense of others. Not only is this view of local literature ideologically selective, it is also artificial, as with most other 'traditions'. The works that are remembered and raised to the status of classics are invariably written, and it is these written works that are hailed as models of approved literary excellence, consistent with the Eurocentric view that if anything is even to enter the qualifying stakes for literature, it must be set in Times Roman. This view, of course, precludes any notion of oral literature, or more informal types of writing like newspaper articles or pamphlets. In addition, a view of art that ensconces an artificial tradition, perpetuates a radical misunderstanding about what art is and how it works. To see works of art as self-contained phenomenal artefacts, isolated and fixed, is to manifest a reified consciousness. Rather one should understand art in a far broader context and perspective, and see it as part of a

social process, as Raymond Williams has so tirelessly pointed out.

> I am saying that we should look not for the components of a product but for the conditions of a practice...what we are actively seeking is the true practice which has been alienated to an object, and the true conditions of practice - whether as literary conventions or as social relationships - which have been alienated to components or to mere background. (11)

In the case of the novel, this means not treating a novel as an isolated artefact, but seeing it rather as part of a broader narrative tradition, which has its precedents in informal types of writing and oral literature which often influence the form that novels assume. This type of development often holds true for many types of art - drama grows out of ritual, and the movie out of primitive slide-shows - 'the work of [illegible] valuable only insofar as it is vibrated by the reflexes of the [illegible].' (12) In short, new types of art tend to arise out of previous 'motifs, styles, means of circulation that had belonged to some medium not thought of as art proper'. (13) The specific and concrete forms that art assumes will, of course, be historically variable and as an illustration, I have selected one narrative tradition and followed it from its oral versions to its eventuation in the printed work.

In speaking of the developments of various types of arts, I by no means wish to imply that art is a homogeneous and undifferentiated phenomenon, produced and enjoyed by all members of society. The simple fact of the matter is that different social groups will create different types of art for their collective consumption, and this truism in turn points to the profound effect of class upon literature; as class becomes a crucial determinant of consciousness, so class, too, functions as a vital determinant in literary production.

> The ultimate source of a literary text, then, is not the 'I' of its author, but the 'we' of the social class whose world vision it embodies, (a world vision being) the complex of ideas, feelings and aspirations that defines the consciousness of a social class. (14)

In drawing the connection between class and literary production, it can become very easy to overstate the case, and many Western European critics have voiced caveats in this connection and pointed to factors which, within a European context, may be more important determinants like sex, religion, regional culture and nationality. But within Africa, where class struggle has always been singularly pronounced, class remains a, if not the most, crucial influence. And in analyses like those of Kelwyn Sole and Tim Couzens, one can see almost unequivocally the nature of black literature being attributable to the structural position of the black petty bourgeoisie as 'repressed elite'.

In keeping with this framework, I have attempted to analyse a lot of the literature in terms of its class origins. And in emphasising class as a determinant of the structure and content of South African literature, I hope to cut across the notions of race, which until very recently, constituted the major analytical category for the writings of this country. This emphasis on racial categories has often severely debilitated South African literary studies by compartmentalising the literature into exclusive and self-contained racial categories - an approach that obscures the fact that all South Africans and their cultural expression belong to one common society and economy. While the traditional ethnic division of white and black English writers, does in certain instances have a limited validity (15) it often emerges as an unhelpful analytical category. South African literature could consequently be more profitably conceptualised as a composite whole manifesting crucial similarities that often have more to do with the class position of an author than his/her 'colour'.

But, however crucial class is in determining the parameters of literature, there still are other factors operative, and I will single out those of importance. Possibly one of the most important is literature itself, and it always has been a vital determinant within writing. Francis Mulhern has pointed in general terms to the importance of literary form 'which imposes itself upon the writer, defining in advance the range of his creative freedom and even the very meaning of "being a writer" in the given historical circumstances'. (16)

Specifically, in a colonial situation, the writers of the dominant classes will see the meaning of 'being a writer' in terms of the dictates of the metropolis, and literature will assume an actively ideological status.

Finally, consideration must be given to the relationship between literature and ideology itself, at best a complicated theoretical issue to formulate. Terry Eagleton, in his discussion of ideology and literature, points to two major ways in which ideology interacts with literature. The text can either introduce ideology 'in relatively unprocessed form', or it can 'displace or recast' ideology. The former would be characterised by discussions of 'political questions'; the latter could assume a variety of forms like displacing social conflict, by seeing it in terms of personal or psychological conflict, or by freezing it in terms of allegory or fable. Ideology, by its nature is structural and epistemological, but it does not present itself as such to literature, which perceives ideology in terms of 'life' or a series of codes or practices which are 'natural', 'commonsensical' and hence taken for granted. The way that this ideological life is incorporated into the text, or finds formal expression will vary, and will depend on the historical nature of the factors outlined above, like class position, the view of 'literature', and the relationship between writer and audience.

Bearing these relationships in mind, I have, in this thesis, attempted to draw out the connection between ideology and literature as it manifested itself in the period under consideration. I have particularly sought to analyse the specific ways in which dominant ideology mediated itself into literature, whilst also looking at specific events, and the beliefs surrounding them and their transportation into writing.

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III

Finally, in concluding this introduction, mention must be made of South African literature as part of a wider Imperial dispensation that brought in its wake of expansionism and conquest, a fictive acceleration throughout Africa, which spawned a plethora of imperial writing that portrayed Africa through the eyes of its white overlords.

In South Africa this fictive acceleration was apparent during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, from the increase of the number of novels that were produced. What figures there are available for the nineteenth century, tell us that during the last two decades of that century, the number of novels produced increased tenfold. (17) Commentators, too, refer to the latter years of the last century as 'a revival of South African literature' (18) or as marking 'the beginning of the novel'. (19).

In order to explain and understand this upsurge of fictive production in the dominant classes in South Africa during the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is necessary to look briefly at the literature of imperialism, of which South African writing forms a part. The literary production of Empire is a vast topic and here I merely wish to point to various salient features appropriate to an understanding of South African literature, and the factors which concern me are the conditions in England and the imperatives of imperialism, both economic and ideological, as they affected the character and form that the massive output of imperial writing was to assume.

The metropolitan society firstly provided an important stimulus to the production of imperial literature, by providing a large market for books produced within the colonies. (20) As British expansionism increased, so did the desire for literary material on the colonies; a desire well-nigh insatiable for stories which could provide an affirmation of British superiority. The size of this market can be gauged from the phenomenal sales which colonial literary production enjoyed, and to take a famous example, King Solomon's Mines sold 31 000 copies in the first year of its publication. At the same

time, writers within Britain were producing their fair share of imperial chest-beating. The glorification of Empire and imperial aims stretches back to mid-century writers like Tennyson and Longfellow, who were followed by a host of other writers, propagating the doctrines of imperialism by dwelling on

> the moral virtues of expansionism: its challenging effects on British manhood; its invigorating therapy for a nation in danger of becoming supine with success; its provision of visible proof that Englishmen were chosen to conquer and rule; its value as a secular religion in the service of which men could exercise their idealism, duty, ambition, and near-Arthurian devotion to a cause...(propagating) an ethos of public school, chivalry, army, church, colonial service and empire... (21)

These general characteristics of imperial writing are useful in providing an understanding of a broad literary trend under which the writing of the South African ruling class can be subsumed. But one must exercise care not to over-generalise at the expense of obscuring the variety and specificity of any particular colony's literary production. One such generalisation has been the tendency to characterise all manner of colonial writing as romance. (22) This inaccuracy presumably arises from the popularity of romance within Victorian society itself, a popularity which relates in turn to the specific conditions within the metropolitan society.

Another important influence on the character and shape of imperial writing relates to the concrete imperatives of Empire. The seeking of foreign markets and raw materials, and the consequent subjugation of African societies, shaped and imposed limits on the literature of empire, making of it a far-reaching and ideologically potent PRO network. Imperialism created for itself an unmediated literature which served its ideological imperatives in a fairly direct and transparent fashion. This trait becomes clear when one studies the way in which imperial societies drew the distinction between art and life, a factor that will always shed light on the society concerned. Literature was conceived of as being didactic, instructive and as having a lofty purpose. For example, one imperial author set out her function as

follows:

> I feel that the words of one who has spent a quarter of a century in the colony cannot fail to interest the rising generation many...who themselves hope one day to seek a life of adventure among the snakes, elephants, tigers and baboons of the great continent. (23)

Structurally this view of literature manifested itself in a variety of formal strategies, three of which I would like to isolate and discuss.

Firstly one finds that ideology is transported into the work in a direct, pure and unmediated form, and ideological categories and questions are rehearsed in a way that often demarcates them from the flow of the narrative. Most critics have regarded this structure as a weakness and generally dismiss it as a 'recital of political grievances' and hence a marring of the text as a whole. But rather, one should attempt to understand it as an integral structure of the work, and a type of literary discourse and significance in its own right. The second major strategy of imperial didacticism relates to its use of spatial detail, a formal category that is foregrounded and articulates certain types of ideological displacements. This formal category derives from pre-existing forms of imperial writing like the travelogue, memoir, ethnographic report and missionary writing. These types of works created images of Africa that were to be adopted, reformulated or changed to meet the needs of a more aggressive expansionism. The epistemology of this 'eye-witness account' derives from a naive empiricism and a belief in experiential evidence, apparent in the extent to which writers will assure their readers that their 'facts' are 'true'. These early imperial chronicles functioned as a type of latter-day Guinness Book of Records, where disparate facts - the insignificant, the important and the humanly degrading - rub shoulders, their coherence being their status as 'facts'. But unlike the Guinness Book, all this cataloguing had a purpose, in short, it functioned as a type of appropriation. These details in the colony had been

seen, recorded and often 'discovered' by the Anglo-Saxon coloniser, hence they belonged to him. He could catalogue its plentitude with encyclopaedic thoroughness and hence re-invent the colony in Anglo-Saxon terms. Part of this appropriation, of course, involved African societies, and whilst their land and labour were being appropriated by forces stronger than the artist, fictively the African was being appropriated by writers as a picturesque oddity for consumption in the Victorian literary market.

The third characteristic of Imperial literature relates to its self-appointed status as 'history', a spurious claim that it could make on the basis of its 'factual' status. Consequently many writers saw themselves as popular historiographers, documenting in fiction, the official white histories of their respective colonies. (24) And in terms of this framework, the novel could become history and history, fiction, as writers continued to send 'home' 'true' fictive accounts of their surroundings.

This 'historical' and 'factual' basis is nowhere more apparent than in the major aesthetic criteria used to evaluate Imperial fiction. And in terms of these criteria, the extent to which any work was good or beautiful depended on how much 'historical fact' and 'local colour' and paraphenalia could be incorporated into the story. Contemporary book reviews unceasingly lauded the use and veracity of local colour and detail and praised the author's capacities for 'knowing-his-South-Africa'. The 'historical' side of these works came to be celebrated for the extent to which they faithfully portrayed the colonial spirit, or as one critic put it,

> the life of the Anglo-Saxon race, when the blood of its sons is stirred with strife, and their faces are flushed with the victory over the forces of nature and alien races, or their teeth set in defiance of the inevitable. (25)

The appropriation implicit in this type of 'factual' and 'historical' writing matched neatly the needs of an imperial mission, and became

one of the many strategies that ratified colonisation, conquest and expansion. Taken in their totality, imperial novels are about or signify white supremacy. They drew on a body of doctrine based on pseudo-Darwinism and divinity that assured imperialists that inalienably higher qualities, not merely better weapons, had brought them to the top. This doctrine could be imported wholesale and discussed in their work, or their belief in white superiority would be displaced onto spatial detail which indirectly celebrated their supremacy by its plentitude, diversity and substantiality. Either way, fiction was a didactic hymn to being British, Christian and White with a smug acceptance that not only would this qualify one for paradise, but it entitled one to foreign markets, countries and peoples disguised as terrestrial paradises given by God, and not an aggressive expanding capitalist economy, to the 'highest race' on earth.

FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. E. Webster, "Background to the Supply and Control of Labour in the Gold Mines", in Essays in Southern African Labour History, ed. E. Webster, (1978), p.12.

2. Dan O'Meara, "White Trade Unionism, Political Power and Afrikaner Nationalism", ibid. p.167.

3. Quoted in Belinda Bozzoli, The Roots of Hegemony: Ideologies, Interests and the Legitimation of South African Capitalism, 1890-1940. Ph.D. Thesis, Sussex University, (1975), p.8.

4. Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature, (1977), p.110.

5. Ibid., p.114.

6. B. Bozzoli, op. cit.

7. Ibid., p.66.

8. The major of these would be, M. Nathan, South African Literature: A General survey, (1925). S.S. Dornan, "South African Literature Past and Present" in the 15th Report of the Bulawayo Public Library, (1910) and more recently J.P.L. Snyman, The South African Novel in English, (1952), and A. Lennox-Short, English and South Africa (1973).

9. See, for example, the way in which Nathan ignores Blackburn, whilst Snyman gives scant attention to seminal writers like Black and Gibbon.

10. R. Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory" in New Left Review, No. 85, p.13.

11. Ibid., p.16.

12. Quoted in Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in and Age of Mechanical Reproduction", in Mass Communications, (1977), p.403.

13. D. Craig, "Towards Laws of Literary Development" in Marxists on Literature, ed. D. Craig, (1975), p.60.

14. Francis Mulhern, "Introduction to Goldman", in New Left Review, No. 92, p.36.

15. Black literature, for example, often has its own distinctive styles and conventions, which are, no doubt, related to the structural position of the black petty bourgeoisie, which is a privileged strata, but is at the same time "squashed" back into the working class

16. Francis Mulhern, "Ideology and Literary Form - A Comment", in New Left Review, May/June, 1975, p.87.

17. S. Mendellsohn, Mendellsohn's South African Bibliography, (1910) The books he lists and uses as a basis for arriving at his figures are by no means complete, but I have used his figures on the basis of their validity as a random sample.

18. S.S. Dornan, op.cit., p.28.

19. J.P.L. Snyman, op.cit., p.32.

20. The majority of these novels were also produced overseas, as heavy taxes on raw material for the publishing industry precluded the possibility for the growth of large scale local publishing houses.

21. Malvern van Wyk Smith, Drummer Hodge The Poetry of the Anglo-Boer War, (1978), p.38.

22. See particularly G.D. Killam in Africa in English Fiction 1874 - 1939, (1968), who seems to work on the assumption that all English fiction from Africa is 'romantic'. See especially pp. 6-7.

23. M. Carey-Hobson, The Farm in the Karroo, (1883), p. ix.

24 I am thinking here of authors like Haggard who attempt to give their works a scholastic gloss. For a fuller discussion of this see Chapter Four of this thesis.

25. W.B. Worsfold, "South African Literature", in South Africa A Study in Colonial Administration and Development, (1895), p.187.

CHAPTER ONE : THE IMAGE OF MINING IN SOUTH AFRICAN LITERATURE

Introduction.

Alongside the development of the mining industry, there grew a body of literature that provided both local and overseas audiences with a social image of the new industry, and it is with the development of this image that this chapter will be concerned.

The earliest fictive lore concerning mining was to emanate from the small claimholders or alluvial diggers in Kimberley, and subsequently in Johanneburg. This group of small claimholders was able to exist from about 1870 - 1890, but was subsequently superseded by the formation of monopoly, and greater forces of capital and technology. However, they did leave behind their literature comprising oral lore, stories and poems in newspapers and other types of informal literature like pamphlets and broadsheets. This body of literature of the diggers was closely related to their social conditions, which given the uncertainty and poverty of alluvial mining, were always insecure. Hence their literature tends to mediate a world view of pessimism, superstition and an immutable belief in fate, luck and chance, all beliefs that come to function as a rationalising ideology, arising out of their material condition.

This stock of lore, myth and image from the diggers' literature was to be taken up by novelists who from the 1880's and 1890's began producing books concerned with mining. (1) In utilising this diggers' lore, the novelists did not reproduce it in the same form, but in many instances crucially reformulated the earlier mining images to suit their own ends. The major strategy in this reformulation hinges around their utilisation of the figure of the small claimholder, whom many novelists were to sentimentalise as the 'pioneers' of mining. Another guise that later novelists were to use was that of the digger as 'gentleman'. Certain novelists recurrently made use of these portrayals of 'pioneer' and 'gentleman' for in them they could find a range of extensive suggestion and signification, for the two figures were not only well-

recognised stereotypes of Imperial literature, but could also provide a favourable image and history of the mining industry. The concept of the 'gentleman' could transfer onto mining a veneer of 'Britishness' and respectability, whilst the figure of the small claimholder as 'pioneer' could give a ratification of free enterprise and equal opportunity to an industry that was rapidly developing into a monopoly. The extent to which these stereotypes of the mining industry were used can be gauged from the number of overseas novelists who used them in their work - often without ever having come to South Africa themselves. By creating this sentimental historiography, novelists often indirectly aided the interests of the mining economy, by creating a social image, disseminated both in South Africa and overseas, that obscured the violent and often bloody class conflict that was to characterise mining.

However, not all writers dealt with the new industry in these sentimentalised terms, and many turned their attention to the 'social problems' that followed in the wake of the revolutionary impact of mining capital. And these 'problems' were many: prostitution, large-scale alcoholism amongst workers, gold theft, diamond theft, desertion, unemployment, marginalisation and so on. Whilst many writers, who turned their attention to these social disruptions, were to trivialise them, a small handful of writers dealt seriously with these social developments, providing often effective works that movingly documented the suffering, exploitation and degradation of large numbers of people under capitalism in South Africa.

However, the major thrust of this documentation of life on the underbelly of a mining centre was to come from those that experienced it - the working class, made up predominantly of Africans and Afrikaners. Whilst the members of the working class themselves had neither time nor the skills to produce literature, their lives were yet documented by the 'educated elites' of their respective communities. And it is with this documentation that the final part of this chapter deals.

Section I : Beginnings of Mining Literature : The Culture of the Diggers.

Introduction

The formation of digger society dates back to 1870 and the beginnings of Kimberley. Here a variety of people, from all occupations, black, white and immigrants (mainly Australian and American) who came prospecting, constituted themselves as a relatively dominant force. Initially the surface nature of diamond mining allowed for the digger with black wage labour to work as the major production unit. With the transition from surface to subterranean mining, ever greater technical and capital resources became necessary and the 'old diggers' with primitive methods and at best, tenuous access to land and resources, were squeezed out. In addition, the immanent monopoly, inherent in the diamond market, ever dependent on a regulated scarcity of the luxury commodity, undoubtedly spelt the end for the 'individual digger', and by 1890, with De Beers in control, the inevitable demise of digger society was sealed. This progressive move towards monopoly on the diamond fields encouraged large numbers of diggers to migrate to the nascent Johannesburg goldfields, and so on the Rand a similar class with limited access to production means arose. However, the existence of the small claimholder on the Rand was to be shortlived. The depths at which gold deposits were located, did not allow for surface or alluvial mining and hence the 'pick-shovel-prospecting-pan-man' was virtually out of the question right from the beginning and small company mining from a very early date constituted the method of operation.

During their heyday in Kimberley (1870-1874) the diggers constituted a large group that numbered 10 000 of which just over half were whites. Their forms of social organisation consisted of elected committees which enforced regulations pertaining to alluvial mining. These regulations stipulated that claims were to be 30 square feet and were limited to one per digger; absence for more than three working days entailed forfeiture of one's claim and access to the waterfront for washing remained open to all. No more than five labourers per digger were permitted. (1)

This halycon 'democracy' was not to last long, and by 1874 the small claimholder had been superseded by companies. This process of inevitable marginalisation was halted for a short while when an improved water supp permitted diggers to wash the debris heaps with adaptions of the gold diggers' cradle and puddling machines, but this innovation could only stall for a short while the march towards obsolescence. New legislation also undermined the former basis of the digger and by 1874 parties were permitted to own two claims. By 1876 the restriction on the number of claims had been completely removed. As one commentator has said:

> What had changed profoundly was the economic and social system. On the river diggings, on a few smaller mines in the Free State territory, the individual miner still worked away...But the.... society that had been brought to the diamond fields by the first rush had passed away: in its place was a rigorously controlled society, equipped with a scientifically managed industry, watched by a secret police, and dominated by a benevolent autocrat. (2)

In Johannesburg the life of the 'individual digger' was even briefer. Not only did the depth at which gold was located prejudice his chances, but the capitalists on the Rand had come from Kimberley and hence had a prior advantage. As one commentator has said, 'the Rand imported its capitalists ready-made from Kimberley. The goldrush to the Rand was from the first dominated not by a crowd of men who wished to make their fortunes, but by a few who had already made it'. (3) These capitalists with their economic power could flex considerable political muscle and the Kruger regime complied to a certain extent with their needs by promulgating regulations that encouraged large-scale mining. In keeping with this policy, provision was made for ownership of up to twelve claims with no limitations on the purchase of further claims, emphasis was on protection of claims for the absentee owners, rather than on 'jumping' which had been the case in early Kimberley. Finally the Chamber of Mines replaced the Diggers' Committee in 1889. (4)

The tendency in looking at this digger society, like so many writers who dealt with them, is to sentimentalise their plight and overemphasise the egalitarian and democratic nature of their society. In South Africa this putative equality, was a strictly whites-only affair, and although there was a substantial number of African diggers, they were progressively

squeezed out by white miners. The prospect of having Africans as skilled artisans was not one that white diggers were prepared to contemplate and prompted one claimholder to predict

> Ruin, financial ruin for the whites, moral ruin for the natives, these are the results of the attempt to elevate in one day the servant to an equality as regards the right to hold property with his master. (5)

In order to deal with the threat of the black digger, whites made of him a scapegoat by levying all manner of accusation at him. African diggers were reputed to be more successful than whites; they were blamed as the sole cause of IDB in that they received stolen gems from black middlemen and then sold them legally; and finally, because African claimholders could legally employ servants, they were accused of creating a class of 'vagrants' by giving passes to Africans who then 'loafed about'. (6) When allegation proved insufficient, white diggers took to lynch law directed against black claimholders. They took this lynching a step further when in 1874 they resorted to rebellion. Dissatisfied with the 'colour-blind' policies of the British administration that controlled the fields, the diggers formed themselves into vigilante groups and assaulted Africans in an incident known as the Black Flag Rebellion.

This struggle between black and white diggers, however, soon disappeared from prominence, as the mining industry itself changed to render obsolete all diggers. However, the major point to be observed here is that there were black as well as white diggers, a factor almost always ignored in the early literature of the diggers and also by subsequent writers. The white diggers, anticipating later mining policies, wished to maintain a strong 'colour-bar' and would not countenance Africans as being anybody besides servant and labourer, and it is as servant and labourer that they are portrayed in the literature of mining.

Exactly how long the diggers survived as a distinct social entity is hard to locate exactly. But for the purposes of this section I have made the cut-off date 1890. This year marked a severe crisis for the goldmining industry - an overspeculation in and flotation of companies coupled with

new and unexpected technical problems all of which speeded up the rationalisation of the industry and severed any remaining precarious access that the small claimholders had to ground. A handful of diggers survived on alluvial fields, as they still do today, but the majority of them no doubt became transformed into the white working class, turning to illegal methods of remuneration such as runners, fences and middlemen in the illicit liquor, diamond and gold trades.

1. Early Diggers' Literature

The literature that this group was to produce was both shaped by and shaper of the particular struggles and animosities in which they became ensnared. Their fictive products stand in a loose reciprocal relationship to their historical predicament as a marginalised group, superseded by greater forces of capital and technology. But during their brief existence as a social group, their literature and culture became an important tool whereby they attempted to carve out for themselves an identity at an ideological level. In addition, this subculture of the small claimholders manifests some of the hallmarks of a culture of a dominated group, which if not totally oppositional, is at least alternative, in the sense that it undermines dominant conceptions of what constitutes culture and art. One can expect to find alternative characteristics in factors like 'alternative perceptions of others... or new perceptions of material and media in art and science.' (7) More generally one could look for a non-uniform view of the world, and a different understanding of the function of art and the artist in the community.

This diggers' literature, though important in itself, functions as a useful paradigm to illustrate that literature and particularly literary forms tend to be class-based. Furthermore, the importance of this writing under discussion lies in its relevance as a forerunner to subsequent mining novels which were to draw on the substance of the literature of the small claimholder.

The literary sub-tradition of the diggers had been going since 1870 with the advent of alluvial mining in Kimberley. But it is by no means a mode of art restricted only to Kimberley and one can safely speculate that wherever mining centres allowed for the formation of a digger class, a particular way of literary perception would appear. (8) In fact, the legendary and mythical accretions attached to mining centres throughout the world are, no doubt, well-known, and should manifest homologous structural features throughout. In this section I will be concerned with these homologous features of the 1870 - 1890 period and will attempt to outline the features which make this body of diggers' writing peculiar.

A literary subculture of a transitional class in periods of social disintegration and uncertainty, will inevitably consist of both written and oral material, published and disseminated through informal channels like newspapers, broadsheets and pamphlets or be orally circulated by way of ballads, songs, legend, fables and narrative, and in the case of South Africa, the diggers' literature can broadly be subsumed under three categories - oral literature, poetry and journalism.

Oral literature is the most important factor which hallmarks this literary undergrowth as alternative or antithetical. Oral forms generally presuppose a contrary, non-formal conception of art and the role it plays. The concomitant aesthetic ideology attendant on oral literature stresses creative endeavour as a possession of the community and as a functional tool to serve the interests of the group concerned. Art in this situation does not inhabit an elevated or independent realm which the highly mediated art forms of dominant Western cultures seemingly do. Unlike the aesthetic ideology of late nineteenth century Western art which stressed individual creativity, originality and bestowed a privileged sanction upon the artist, oral literature eschews originality for its own sake and tends to create its own 'grammar' or structural principles, often limited and the anonymous artist draws again and again upon this reservoir of folkloric knowledge. H.J. Schepers, himself an alluvial digger in Lydenburg, has done a comprehensive study of the cultural life of alluvial diggers throughout South Africa, and characterises their poetry as follows:

> Weinig van (die gedigte) het ontstaan as gevolg van siels-ontroering. In vorm en gees is hulle volksaardig; hulle is skeppinge van die volksmens vir die gemeenskap. Slegs 'n paar stukkies is individuele kuns of openbaar 'n eiesiening. (9)

Oral narratives which make up the bulk of this oral literature, comprised a number of subsidiary forms like legend, fable, myth, and a collocation of superstitions. Like all literature, these tales emerge as an attempt of a group of people to make sense of their lives and give it, in their literature at least, some imaginative coherence. The dominant conflict as mediated through these narratives is cast in terms of man pitting himself against Fortune, an inscrutable force, external to man. This conflict reduces life to a gamble ruled by luck, chance, sheer coincidence and a fickle, arbitrary fate. Consequently in the mythological pantheon of this literature, Dame Fortune, a type of fate goddess, rules uncontested. Stories are manifold of diamonds found by acute luck and the divergent versions of how the first diamonds were discovered at Colesberg Kopje in Kimberley, or any other mining centres for that matter, are part of this code.

The resolution of the struggle between man and fortune comes about through perseverance. Stories, telling of diggers continuing despite acutely unfavourable conditions and ultimately being rewarded at the eleventh hour, provide an example towards which the remainder of the community can aspire. Allied to this narrative structure of great reward for perseverance is the story of fantastic treasures hidden in an inaccessible and dangerous hinterland. To gain this treasure, privations and hardships must be experienced and danger overcome on the way to the South African holy grail. In addition, the legends surrounding famous diamonds - for example, that half of the Cullinan diamond is still embedded in the earth - morphologically belong to these narrative homilies on perseverence.

All of this myth/legend functions as a 'charter' to uphold and reproduce the social relations pertaining in the community; to exercise a stabilising effect; and to act as a type of integration propaganda. Allied to this conservative stabilisation, a set of superstitions attached themselves to the actual process of mining. Certain diggers laid great store by signs, dreams and voyeuristic predictions. These signs indica-

ted that they were either mining in good or bad places and should accordingly move on elsewhere or stay put. Schepers mentions eggs, fishing and hunting, seductive women, horses and clear water as good signs. The bad omen category, which is acutely ideologically loaded included black labourers, gold and diamonds and baboons. (10) This type of psychic mining is, of course, patently opposed to the technologically and scientifically pragmatic methods of operation that the embryonic dominant class were beginning to use. But taken in its totality, the worldview of the diggers was essentially conservative in that it severely limited the number of ways in which they could see the world.

Besides this oral literature, the diggers produced a substantial body of poetry, which straddles both oral and literary forms. Songs and ballads appeared in contemporary newspapers and were also sung at public gatherings and any communal occasion. The bulk of the poems appears in newspapers and formed a not inconsiderable percentage of the total copy. Some of this poetry is preserved in anthologies, the major one being Diggers' Doggerel (11), whilst other poems appear sporadically in other individual collections. John Crampton, an early digger poet seems to have published a volume, but I failed to track it down. (12) Besides ballads and songs, these poems consist of occasional verse, major events turned into reportorial poems, the week's events cast into couplets and advertisements in doggerel.

Like the tales, the poems embody a view of life ruled by Fortune and made meaningful by perseverance. The poems, collectively, create a fictive ontology which is held up as normative, natural and common sensical. Hence the poems tend to have a broad referential potential which is created technically by shearing the verse of any specific local or temporal reference; the background to the poems could be any mining centre anywhere in the world. In addition, there is a constant emphasis on a corporate spirit of bonhomie, and team effort, by which the diggers perceived of themselves as a separate, distinctive social group.

The characters of the poems are all typological standards, usually hopelessly sentimentalised, of the average 'individual digger', invariably called 'Jack the Digger' (13) or 'The Happy Digger' (14). This standardised, 'take-your-average-man' perception creates a self-image which is held up as correct and normative - a principle which in turn provides both a sanction and motivation for the lifestyle of the diggers. A good example is 'The National Anthem' of the diggers which bestows both a natural and quasi-religious sanction upon the group.

National Anthem

Terra Nemo Grege et Lege

Nomansland, great gift divine
Unto the brave and free,
The stars their charter as they shine
In silent mysterie,
Ensign of power
In the trying hour.

The Southern Cross encircling tells
The shepherd on the plain,
Adore the spot where the rover dwells
Its freeborn right maintain
Its foes you shall
Them vanquish all.

The sun that climbs our mountains grand,
Leads in the rising day,
See on our land no tyrant stand
The 'diamonds' clear the way.
Nations us see
Victorious and free
By high decree
Long it shall be.

(15)

The early poems are all characterised by this spirit of corporate hope and group solidarity, with the motto perseverance emblazoned on nearly

every verse (16). But this optimism of 'all is well with the world and digger Jack' could not remain indefinitely. Jack's pick and spade were fast becoming obsolete and the diggers, as a class, found their interests to be ever more inimically opposed to other emergent classes and one can detect a concomitant change in their poetry. It moves away from a tone of insatiable optimism and boundless reference to a more personalised perception of local specificity. An excellent example of this artistically new way of seeing is 'An Old Diggers Ode to Fortune'.

> Ah, Fortune fickle jade, we've wandered far -
> Your siren voice still echoes o'er the Vaal -
> From each port and drowsy dorp, from the shanks to Zanzibar,
> We have trekked the land of promises and slogged through every war,
> Since O'Reilly glimpsed your beauty in that old Dutch Kraal!
>
> Ever sparing of your favours and your smiles -
> Weaving dreams of golden splendour in our brains -
> From Rush to Rush you've lured us; Oh, the long dust-devilled miles!
> To win or lose, and peg again, responsive to your wiles,
> Romance still rocks the baby, whilst Reality complains. (17)

Under the changed circumstances, the narrative ballad seems to have become more prominent. The ballad which traditionally deals with supposed universal and archetypal human concerns like death, love, infidelity and so on, provided an ideal <u>metier</u> for the digger poets. The standardisation and normative perceptions of the earlier optimistic poetry, easily translated itself into the archetypal and standard reference of the ballad. The diggers' ballads are almost uniformly concerned with death - and generally a death that coincides with a lucrative find. 'The Digger's Grave on the Vaal' concerns itself with a man dying of fever, his recent discovery of gems clutched in his hands

> ...But they will never gladden him more
> Their beauties will charm him no more.
>
> ...uncoffined, unknelled, to his grave he was sped,
> Unwept, with irreverent haste;
> No requiem was sung, nor ritual read -
> O'er his bed in the desolate waste -
> His grave on the terrible waste. (18)

Finally I would like to look briefly at the journalistic tradition of the diggers. According to official figures (19) Kimberley produced 23 newspapers between 1870 and 1890. But in fact the figure was probably far higher, as a substantial number of early newspapers have been lost and we know of them only through secondary references. This preponderance of smaller publications points to the first characteristic of digger journalism, namely the physical form and distribution avenues of these papers. It would appear that the small papers were not properly considered newspapers at all, but were rather in the line of broadsheets and pamphlets. One such publication Bean Street Capers came out as a single sheet of brown paper, whilst another, Zingari seems to have been a type of comic book consisting mostly of cartoons. (20) From this evidence one could posit the existence of an alternative 'underground' type press which provided one journalistic avenue of expression. The second characteristic of this early journalism concerns the editorial conception and canons of journalism that emerged in the more formal papers. It was a journalism that undermined in every aspect the dominant ethics of the newspaper profession. In the papers to which the diggers had access, a brand of journalism appeared which was libellous, tendentious, partisan, humorous, satirical and iconoclastic in the extreme. The diggers generally enjoyed access to these papers by way of a sympathetic editor who usually owned and edited his own paper and hence belonged broadly to the same class formation as the diggers. This type of editor usually asserted his independence by attacking anything inimical to digger interests with an acerbic and lampooning incisiveness. Editorials, satirical verse, parodical sketches, typological satires, farcical columns and in-jokes provided the usual outlets for this type of writing. This type of journalism became notorious and provoked great animosity and ill-feeling. The extent to which this ire was class-based can be gauged from the following tirade.

> ...the grossness and licentiousness of some of (the newspapers) is becoming so monstrous and so constant that it is really getting to be a repulsive duty to have to open them and glance through their contents. The indulgence is at the present moment risking

> positive damage to the whole community...It is lowering the character of the press to the people. If the editors to whom we appeal do not make a rally....the journalism of the Diamond Fields will so stink that no person will care to be connected with it...It may possibly become the duty of the Legislature to interfere and repress a literary nuisance by special press laws, or if the present law is strong enough it may be the duty of the Public Prosecutor to institute a criminal prosecution. (21)

2. Later Diggers' Literature

In Johannesburg, owing to the altered historical situation, the diggers did not constitute nearly as significant a social force as in Kimberley. And, as I have pointed out above, a small remnant of this class survived; but socially they were a spent force facing imminent obsolescence. The morphology of their literature may remain broadly unchanged, but the early years of Johanneburg represent the terminal stages of this particular artistic mode which had been going on for twenty years.

One of the major factors contributing to the sparsity of this literature is the limited access which diggers had to newspapers. Johannesburg always had and still has a press servile to dominant mining interests. In 1888, The Diggers News indignantly republished a report from a contemporary The Lantern, which claimed that Johannesburg editors were tied to the Stock Exchange, and in turn for tips were promoting companies and mining interests. The Diggers News reacted violently to this report calling it 'A LIE' to add to the 'many and repeated false statements' of The Lantern. (22) And The Lantern was in fact a prototype alternative publication. The editor, Thomas McCombie, a typical firebrand journalist, had started his publication in Cape Town. He soon ran into trouble and in 1882 was sued for libel and rather than pay the ten pound fine, he chose to go to prison. In 1888 he moved to the Rand and established The Lantern in Johannesburg. Later, an artist, Schroder, joined him and together they planned to put out The Lantern and The Transvaal Truth. The publications were noted for their partisan stance and their cartoons, an unusual feature of early Johannesburg journalism.

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