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# Perspectives in Education

Volume 7 Number 2 October 1983

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# Perspectives in Education

**Volume 7 Number 2 October 1983**


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# Editorial

Education in South Africa, and its study, persistently face two major obstacles. One of these, the more traditional, one might say, can be called the tyranny of orthodoxy. The other, more recent, is the idea that the problems of education are largely technical, to be solved by 'experts'. These obstacles face the editors of *Perspectives in Education* and in this Editorial we would like to raise the issue with our readers and contributors.

The policy of this journal has been to foster, and to give prominence to, discussion. This policy had its embodiment in our, previously, placing the Discussion section at the start, and in our having Interchange sections in which we explicitly set out to promote discussion of some topic of importance. In the current issue we have placed an Article at the start, and our reason for doing so lies in our intention to achieve formal academic recognition. This does not imply a shift in our underlying policy.

We still regard ourselves as opposed to the promotion of an orthodoxy (of any hue) or the adulation of 'experts'. We still see ourselves as trying to achieve, against heavy odds, an approximation of Habermas's 'ideal speech situation', free of arbitrary restraints, a situation in which:

> All the participants . . . have the same right, and in practice an equal chance, to begin a discussion and to keep it going, so that no opinion or point of view (is) denied expression and full consideration.[1]

It might be said that given the current situation in South Africa such a policy is not only quintessentially 'liberal', and thus out of step with the times, but also more than marginally Quixotic. But such a response is disturbing.

For one thing it flies in the face of the conviction that critical discussion is the key to our trying to articulate the problems facing education in South Africa and our beginning to find out how to solve some of them. For another, polemical labelling inhibits, rather than advances, discussion. And for a third, the alternative to genuinely open critical discussion is the view that some kind of technical expertise is the qualification for the right

My examples of working-class culture are highly selective. In South Africa race serves as a powerful determinant of consciousness as well as class, and I have concentrated on the black working-class. I focus on the way in which members of South Africa's pre-colonial societies built up, after the advent of colonial capitalism, a distinct set of cultural responses to proletarianisation and urbanisation. Lower class culture, as you will see, does not take place in a vacuum; it is a creation and product of people acting on their social circumstances at the same time as it is limited and shaped by the overweening agency of capitalism and the historical manner in which black people were made into workers and wage-earners after the mineral discoveries of the 1870s and 1880s. People shape their own cultures; but they are also shaped by commercial, political, culturo-ideological and other interests from outside.

Furthermore, the examples in this article deal mainly with the urban Witwatersrand area, and only occasionally with other geographical areas or with South Africa as a whole. The historical circumstances and cultural forms described cannot a *priori* be assumed to be valid for other parts of the country. For instance, I do not deal with the creation of a class of rural wage labourers at all. Nevertheless, through application of the methodologies of ideological and cultural analysis to a concrete situation I hope to give some idea of the processes at work forming black workers' consciousness in the last hundred years.

**Consciousness in Society**

> In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness[2].

Cultural studies are part of the general field of ideological studies[3]. If one reads recent articles and books on South African history and politics the words 'ideology' and 'culture' crop up fairly often. But these words are now being used rather differently from the 'common sense' version of what these words mean. In the past, among many people the word 'culture' has come to signify either a type of rarified sensibility — this or

that person is cultured because they listen to Mozart or read Marcel Proust or watch art films — or it signifies a type of timeless anthropological entity — 'the culture of the Zulu', 'Indian culture', 'Portuguese culture' and so on. To many people, too, the word 'ideology' means something like 'propaganda': something that can be opposed to the 'truth'. So they talk about 'Nationalist Party ideology', 'communist ideology', 'capitalist ideology' and so on, implying a deliberate and systematic manipulation and misrepresentation of objectivity.

However, I will use these words in a different way. My central belief will be that *nobody* has privileged access to 'facts' or 'the truth'. All men and women have consciousness, and perceive the social reality of their world in different (even contradictory) ways. We all *interpret* the world around us in different ways. We are bombarded by meanings, signs and value-systems from outside, which we weave into the fabric of an orderly lived experience and act upon. This must be stressed: we are not simply thinking beings but creatures who give sense to the things around us; we *produce* meaning and then act upon our understanding to change the world around us, either as individuals or as agents within larger social groups and classes.

Central to this article is also the tenet that men and women do not simply pluck the ideas and assumptions they hold dear out of the air. Rather, both the experiences of the world we gain and the ideas we formulate from these experiences are a function of the way the world actually is. One can then reformulate the common sense idea of 'ideology' outlined above to say that consciousness and ideology are not illusory representations of the world but partial, ultimately inadequate but nevertheless functioning representations. An individual's consciousness derives from the way the world presents itself to him/her and this is a product of social placement and the way the individual experiences reality. If our ideas contradicted our lived experiences, we would soon change our ideas!

When one starts looking beyond the individual to the larger social groups and classes which make up society, the same principle applies. Societies are not simply economic systems in which people produce, distribute and appropriate goods. Societies also have to *reproduce* their conditions of existence. What is meant by this is that in all societies ways of living, looking at and dealing with the world — effecting political life, consciousness, laws, ways people relate to each other and organise themselves — grow up around the basic mode of production and distribution to keep that mode operative and functioning with as little contradition as possible. Social consciousness, which is present in all forms of experience and organisation, cannot consequently ever be isolated from the political, social, legal and economic configurations of which it is a working part.

When one talks about capitalism, for instance, one does not only mean a certain way of organising production and distribution and appropriating labour power, but also a system which has brought into being and tries to control a whole mode of social life, thought and interaction. Moreover, capitalism is a system in which the means of production are owned by the few. In it, the lower classes are constantly struggling in various ways to break this stranglehold of the owning classes, the bourgeoisie. And so capitalism as a system is marked both by a *class* society and *struggle* between the classes. While those in control of capitalist society (the bourgeoisie) attempt to make everyone believe their version of reality so that everyone will accept capitalism as a natural and obvious way of life, other classes which are exploited by capitalism (the working-class in particular) may struggle for power against the bourgeoisie *and* attempt to impose and make real different ways of looking at the world and a different form of production and social life.

In capitalist society, in other words, class struggle is not only for economic control of factories, mines, farms and political control of the government. It is also a struggle of consciousness between world-views of different classes (and other groups not directly constituted as classes). Group and class ideologies cannot eventually be properly understood in isolation from each other and the effects of the wider socio-economic reality of which they are a part. In a nutshell, consciousness and ideologies become part of the struggle to maintain the world in a desired state of being, or to change it. But, as we have seen, ideologies do not contest within a vacuum nor do they arise at will. They are connected to economic and political practices in various ways which are often extremely complex and mediated by all sorts of factors. These economic and political practices both shape and are shaped by the ideologies of consciousness with which they are intertwined. This is also an important point to remember: consciousness not only 'reflects' social life in a passive way but is also an activating force, in that we act to change social reality to fit in with and extend our perceptions and ideas.

Yet even if ideological and cultural practices cannot be too closely or too mechanistically tied to economic practices, the dominance of capitalism over all spheres of social life, rural and urban, eventually delimitates and effects the forms of consciousness which occur in South Africa today. Economic and political life limit and constrain the way categories of thought emerge, but cannot fix or guarantee particular thoughts to particular groups at a particular time, or provide a list of contents of consciousness for anyone either individually or collectively. Capitalism and its economic and social relationships have changed the way of life and thought of all South Africans; but this fact cannot adequately explain either the forms or content of thought used by contesting groups and classes

today (if so, the South African working-class would, for example, think more or less the same as the Chilean or Japanese working-class, an obvious fallacy). To find out how and what people think, we have to apply a theory of consciousness to actual material and historial situations.

**Ideology**

Ideology therefore comes to signify the way men and women live out their values, ideas and images of reality in class society. Ideology is essentially practical: it starts off with the 'common sense' of everyday experience. In our daily lives we often accept the 'obvious' nature of race, nation and the market economy. These 'obvious' starting-off points help mould our experiences and interpretations of South African society.

No person, no class, no social group has privileged access to reality. Such 'obvious' everyday experiences and formulations are neither the same as, nor do they necessarily evoke, the actual ensemble of material and social relations and contradictions which make such experiences possible[4]. We create a system of ideological values which make sense of and interpret our 'reality of experience' for us. For instance, the economic problems of independent Africa are, for a racist, the result of the backwardness of Africans; for a white (or even black) liberal they are the result of socialist policies and not allowing free enterprise to operate properly; for a socialist they are the result of neo-colonialism and the expropriation of Africa's wealth by European and American companies and the small African ruling class[5].

Therefore we all participate in ideology. Our lives are saturated by the effects of different and disparate ideologies. We acquire consciousness of our time and its conflicts through ideology. In both individuals and larger groups seemingly inconsistent views on politics, religion, family matters, art and the like are welded into an ideological whole which appears perfectly logical and natural to the groups or persons who hold them (or, in conceptual language, the individual or group is *interpellated* by different ideologies and becomes the unifying focus holding these ideas and perceptions together in an apparently natural way). An ideology can contain scattered and self-contradictory elements and yet appear perfectly well-explained within its own framework. Just by looking through history texts one can find countless examples of this phenomenon. The slogan 'Workers of the world unite and fight for a White South Africa' used in the 1922 strike is just one; here is another, articulated by the middle class President of the ANC (then the SANNC) in a 1920 speech:

> The International Socialists . . . and the Labour Parties are all white people. I understand they want the natives to strike. If you listen to them and go out on strike they will be the very

> persons who will be around with rifles to shoot you in the street. I am absolutely opposed to the idea of a strike. I maintain that we shall get our grievances rectified if we only ask through the proper channels . . . I tell you we are not afraid of white people. We can destroy Johannesburg in a day; we can stop the mines in an hour. But we respect the Union Jack and are loyal to the British Government[6].

The above examples may seem inconsistent to us today but they are easily understandable within their historical contexts: they relate to the material interest and viewpoints of firstly the white worker and secondly the black petty bourgeois of the time.

Ideologies try to unify their disparate elements and either exclude or explain away obvious contradictions. Ideology is therefore the 'cement' permeating every level of society and giving force and credibility to economic, political and social activity. The very structure of capitalist society, for instance, is supported by its supposedly natural ideological language and concepts such as the separation of powers, equality of opportunity, freedom of competition and so on. These obscure the reality that it is a system of domination by the few over the many.

Ideologies do arise from and reflect the material conditions, interactions and struggle for power of different classes in society. But there are no fixed ideological meanings or class-ascribed ideological essences operating through history. That is to say, the class nature of consciousness does not mean that different ideologies are like 'political numberplates' worn on the back of different classes. There is a large area of consciousness contested between social classes which *cannot* be explained by simple and immediate references to 'class ideologies'. People within the same class do not necessarily think in exactly the same way; if they did, different ideologies would be completely closed off and opaque to each other and ideological struggles would be a purely mechanical clash of pre-determined and already understood interests. Although ideology can be loosely connected to class interests, there can be no such thing as pure ideologies belonging to any particular class. One must refer here to the ideological terrain of struggle and transformation between classes and groups, and the effectivity of historical, geographical, ethnic and other interests in class consciousness. How otherwise, for instance, would one explain the slavish admiration of the British working-class for the Queen and the large amount of working-class support the farcical war in the Falkland Islands received? How would one otherwise make sense of the support of sections of the European working class for the colonial plunder of Africa, Asia and South America during the last century? And back in South Africa, how would one otherwise explain the enduring force of black and white nationalist sentiment and the intertwining of nation and

class in many people's ideological and political beliefs? Or make sense of the way in which contesting political groups in opposition to the government these days make use of populist ideology (they see themselves as representing, and appeal to, the interests of the 'people', even when their programmes are opposed in most other areas)?

Classes cannot come to a complete, final and objective understanding of their position. Neither do all members of a class think or act in a unified way. A member of the working-class in White City Jabavu may read Karl Marx and believe in the workers' struggle; his working-class neighbour may be a Zulu nationalist who goes to Inkatha meetings; his other neighbour may be influenced by Black Consciousness, believe in 'Africa for the Africans' and read *Staffrider;* his neighbour across the street may care about nothing except Orlando Pirates and his wife care for nothing except her *manyano* group. This highlights the element of individual choice, within limits, in consciousness and identity.

The working-class (and other classes) in South Africa are fragmented with regard to self-identity not only by racial and ethnic considerations but also by sex, place of residence, type of job and other considerations. No class acts as a totally homogeneous bloc with a completely rational understanding of its position in society. People do not enter the terrain of class struggle and social interaction with fully formed and rational ideologies; rather, our ideologies are transformed by these struggles and experiences. This is what ideological theorists mean when they say that the individual human being is a *process:* during the course of our lives, the social factors working on us transform our thoughts and actions.

Furthermore, ideology can never remain in the realm of conflicting ideas. Just as people participate in economic and political activity, so they participate in religious, intellectual, artistic and other activities. Ideologies have a strongly material aspect in two ways: firstly, as already mentioned, our ideological framework and interpretations guide our participation in economic, political and other activities. Secondly, organisations and institutions grow up in society mainly concerned with ideological activities. Institutions are set up, usually controlled by the State or the dominant classes and groups in society, to influence and form the way people think. As well as its instruments of repression (the police, law courts, pass laws, the army etc), the State sets up what have become known as ideological state apparatuses: schools, universities, the church, state-controlled media and so on. Education has, for example, always been a way of controlling how people in South Africa think: early black education was almost totally controlled by the missions (in 1917 all but three of several thousand black schools in this country were run by the church). Here several generations of a new black elite were trained in the supposed superiority of Christian and European values, the English language and the

virtues of Godliness, Cleanliness, Industry and Discipline[7]. When this liberal and English educational monopoly proved inimical to the interests of the National Party which came to power in 1948, the mission schools were closed down one by one and replaced by the system of Bantu Education, which had different ideological goals. More recently, various educational initiatives emanating from big business and parts of the State structure have been agitating for an education dovetailing more closely to the needs of capital: ideologies are being put forward for black education which would inculcate the values of 'diligence, accuracy, punctuality' in workers and 'achievement and initiative' in a growing group of black managers[8]. On the other hand, opposition to ideological initiatives on the part of dominant groups also requires organisation to be effective: for example, opposition to the educational thrust of the State and big business has required the intervention of political, trade union, community and other organisations which take up and contest these ideological issues.

There are many more examples of ideological struggle in South African history; the control of the media, for one, is vital in influencing people's thought. Black newspapers in this country have, since the middle of the 19th century, provided an important forum for (usually middle class) black expression. The freedom of expression of independent and radical black newspapers like *Abantu Batho* and *The Worker's Herald* in the 1920s and 1930s was counteracted by the setting up of the Chamber of Mines' mouthpiece *Umteteli wa Bantu* in 1921 and the coming into existence of the white-controlled Bantu Press (Pty) Ltd founded in 1932. Radio, too, is an important ideological agent: as were institutions like the Institute of Race Relations set up in 1929 and the Bantu Men's Social Centre set up in 1924, which were set up by white liberals to counteract and control radical black opinion at the time.

Even when organisations are not expressly or immediately focused on ideological issues, political and other organisations often affect the consciousness of people in a noteworthy manner. The ICU, a trade union organisation at its most influential in the 1920s, immediately springs to mind; it acted as a spur for the urban and rural radicalisation of its constituency during its period of most effective operation.

It is easy to see why ideology does not only exist in the realm of ideas but has a *material reality*. All forms of consciousness (like ideology and culture) imply activities as well as ideas. Not only do we become aware of our social existence through consciousness; but it is also through the medium of consciousness that we decide to understand and alter our relationship to the world and so require new ways of looking at the world. Furthermore, ideological and cultural terms do not simply refer to the way in which the ruling classes and/or State try to create a climate which reinforces the status quo and makes people contented with their position in society;

ideological and cultural means may be used to challenge these conditions and unify individuals and groups in their opposition to the prevailing system. The dominant classes use concepts like 'self-determination of peoples', 'anti-communism', 'free enterprise' and so on to spread and reinforce their position and interests. Political groups in oppsotion mobilise around concepts of democracy, non-racialism, majority rule and so on in an attempt to counter state ideologies. One of the interesting things here, of course, is that it can happen that the State and their opponents use the same or similar emotive terms to attempt to win people over to their point of view; and so we can conclude that there is an ideological area where the State and different groups of its opponents may contest for people's allegiance: the struggle for people's minds and consequent political support looms large in this country.

To reiterate, ideology is therefore an important area of class struggle and social contestation. South African black activists and feminists would attest that even *language* is an area of ideological contestation; they would object, for example to the way an evil person is said to have a 'black heart' and humanity is designated 'mankind'. Pure, essential, uncontaminated group ideologies which do not change with historical and social changes do not exist. A dominant class or group tries to control and neutralise the ideologies of other classes to maintain its rule. In doing so, it may take up parts of the ideologies of dominated classes and groups and make them its own. Thus, the dominant ideology at work in any specific capitalist society is never simply a reflection of the ideas of the dominant class; the ideologies of subordinate groups are taken up in such a way as to defuse and neutralise their potential antagonisms to the rule of the dominant group. The State and dominant classes attempt to absorb, distort and control the ideological expression of other classes. If this seems too abstract, consider the following example: for years Shaka was portrayed as a mass murderer and bloodthirsty tyrant by the white media and historians in South Africa. Now he has become acceptable to the ideological manipulators of the media, and will soon be the subject of a 'sympathetic' portrayal on SATV 2/3.

**The Study of Ideology**

Cultural studies, as said before, are a specific area useful in understanding some aspects of the field of ideology. Social scientists use the word 'culture' occasionally to make it mean much the same thing as 'ideology': viz, a set of assumptions commonly held by classes and groups and a 'common sense' appropriation of the world. You will probably find many of the texts you read use them in a similar or overlapping way.

But to my mind there are important differences in the concepts. I cannot go fully into these differences here, as the concepts 'ideology', 'culture'

and 'class consciousness' all to some extent have their own history of independent intellectual formulation and debate. Crucially, however, it seems to me that ideological studies are strongly based in a non-reductionist understanding of social reality; practices in the social network are not just 'reflections' of an economic base but are explained by their place in a network of mutually determining relations (which is termed the mode of production): economic relations and forces are seen as the pre-eminent, but not the only determining, factor of social life and experience. In terms of ideology, proponents of ideological studies tend to be interested in a structural analysis of society and in its relations of power. The nodes of consciousness, their interaction and how they relate to socio-economic realities and contradictions are typical interests of this type of study.

In other words, 'ideology' seems to refer more to an analysis of the conflict of different forms of consciousness in society; it is a concept which looks at relationships of mutual determination and opposition within 'thinking society'. It looks at the credibility of different world views and how groups and classes *use* these views in their struggles for power. The self — the individual human being — is decentred from importance as the producer of consciousness; the most important consequence of structuralism (the discourse from which ideological studies spring) is perhaps its rejection of the notion of the 'subject'. The conscious self is 'dissolved' and its functions are taken up by a variety of interpersonal systems which operate through it. There is, in the more efficacious theorists, no question of denying the existence and activity of individuals, although sometimes the space afforded the active human subject in this type of analysis is little more than gesture. Rather, this type of analysis believes that the distinction between people's consciousness and their world is a variable one, which depends on economic and social forces and the epistemological norms at work in any specific society at any specific time. Individuals choose what to believe and how to act, but these acts are made possible by a series of systems which the individual subject does not control.

While ideological analysts emphasise the constraints of the economic and socio-political forces at work which structure consciousness, one of their greatest flaws is that they tend to underestimate the continuity of human being's consciousness as well as their conscious resistance to the larger ideological forces at work in any given social situation. The thrust of ideological studies has been, not to examine and describe the exact form and meaning of different types of thought in class society, but rather to explain *how* social interaction and struggle has come to give certain ideologies the coherence and meaning people ascribe to them.

Ideological studies stress the need to be rigorous and systematic in

researching and trying to understand elements of human consciousness. However, crudely used, this form of analysis often degenerates into rhetorical and impenetrable jargon: it is easy to be glib when the specific conditions of existence and interaction of consciousness produced by individuals and groups in the instance being studied are reduced to a grinding and battering of seemingly profound conceptual icebergs. To take an example:

> Within the South African social formation the most readily available interpellation, as determined by the hegemonic group, is, and has been, a racial one. While an interpellation in terms of sex is also available, it is overshadowed by the racial interpellation, and an interpellation in terms of class is largely unavailable, except as part of a counter-hegemonic discourse[9].

Such analysis is, finally, unable to come to grips with the element of continuity in social consciousness or the active, day-to-day production of meaning by individuals, groups or classes using the forms of thought given to them by their own history and experience. At worst, ideological studies are anti-historical (a course which can only lead to idealism, as in the work of Hindess and Hirst), and tend to deny *any* effectivity to human agency in historical transformation (as in Foucault's statement 'that man is only a recent invention, a figure not yet two centuries old, a simple fold in our knowledge . . . (who) will disappear as soon as that knowledge has found a new form.'[10])

However, such objections as I have outlined do not invalidate ideological studies; a social scientist need not always give a minute description of the consciousness of an individual, group or class in order to relate its functioning to other foci of consciousness and to social life, or to make cogent observations about the effects of ideological parameters at work in society. Ideology cannot satisfactorily describe the continuity and change of human thought or the behaviour of individuals and groups, with all their whims and impulses; but tentative conclusions can be drawn about the determinants and functioning of the behaviour of larger groups and classes through ideological study. One could not expect ideological analysis to come to a satisfactory explanation of Mrs Leshoai Zippora, for instance, who become literate in the following way: her mother had read the Bible and *Pilgrim's Progress* in Sesotho, told her the stories in Dutch, and she (having English copies of both books to hand) subsequently became literate in English![11]

**Culture**

> Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen

> by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past[12].

In cultural studies the descriptive and empirical emphasis on ways in which people understand their lives and organise themselves to cope with their environment is important. The word 'culture' seeks, rather more than 'ideology', to grasp different world views and forms of organisation based on these *in their own terms*. It is more 'sympathetic', trying first and foremost to describe the different experiences, perceptions and actions of groups of people, and also how these interact and change within a society or societies over time. This is noteworthy: a great deal of ideological studies emphasises an ensemble of social and ideological relations at work; while cultural studies emphasise the elements of historical continuity and change in this ensemble of thought and activity. These are not absolute divisions, of course; but they give something of an idea of the difference in emphasis. Capitalist relations of production and distribution and the modes of consciousness which cohere around them exist only in *specific* historical forms; and it is these actual historical forms and meanings which tend to slip past the grip of students who use ideological constructs in a cavalier and ahistorical fashion.

Again, culture embodies the idea of human agency as an important constituent, refocusing the emphasis away from the delimiting 'play of ideologies' embodied in ideological studies. Culture seems to me most importantly to describe the element of social organisation of a group or class of people acting together to make sense of and act on their natural and social surroundings. It has two noticeable processes implicit in its meaning: the sense of identity a group or class of people may historically gain for each other (attracted to the same conventions, symbols, signs: ie making sense of) and the process of creativity (acting on). Cultural activities, although less immediately tied up with the functioning and reproduction of the society than the ideological institutions talked about earlier, also need a degree of social organisation and backup to exist. These organisations might be self-consciously 'cultural' (eg Housewives' Leagues and Film Societies), or they may be institutions and support systems which grow up around the organisation of life and leisure time activity (dance halls, soccer clubs, shebeens etc). In a class society, different classes and groups often identify themselves in somewhat different ways: cultural differentiation takes place. The penetration of capitalist relations, for instance, caused new divisions in black society: in 19th century South Africa people had already begun to see themselves in different ways, occasioned by the process of urbanisation and proletarianisation and the thrust of Christianity and its educational institutions into rural black society. Differences of identity began to be expressed between semi-proletarianised migrant workers, permanently proletarianised city slickers,

the (still mainly rural) educated black elite and other groups. Words like 'civilised native', 'blanket Kaffir', 'those who have turned their buttocks behind' (referring to people who had permanently gone to the cities), *amakumsha* (the unemployed in the towns) began to be used. This shows very clearly a process of class and cultural differentiation in operation.

Spheres of cultural identification either of racial, class or other origins are, however, not completely opaque to each other: cultural diffusion takes place. As with ideology, there is an area of influence and consideration which can be the property of several classes or groups; a layering of cultures and sub-cultures, a cultural and ideological mingling occurs. Cultural forms which originate at a specific time or place within a particular class and group may spread in influence and be taken up by others. These cultural influences can act 'down' or 'up'. Cultural forms belonging to the middle class or to dominant groups can filter down and be finally identified with the lower classes as well: for instance, in this country church brass bands influenced lower class musicians during the early part of this century, and the tea-meetings propagated by European missionaries as 'civilised' forms of interaction for black women were taken up by these women but also devolved into brandy parties in town shebeens and the *amatimiti* where miners danced, drank beer and played music. (This example shows another important cultural constituent at work, that of transformation of traditional forms: to some extent the miners' tea-parties also replaced and acted as a surrogate for the traditional rural beer drink).

Sometimes however the process works the other way round — lower class cultural forms are promulgated and spread by commercial interests and eventually become an identification point for middle class individuals. This happened to *kwela* in this country in the 1950s (internationally, many other examples come to mind, such as the growth of musical cults around The Beatles and Jamaican reggae in the 1960s and 1970s respectively). However, this diffusion does not just 'happen' — usually there is human agency at work somewhere, connected to political, economic or other interests. In the above examples, one sees the cultural agency of lower class musicians at work; one also sees the political and commercial interests of European missionaries and record companies.

As with ideology, there is no trans-historical class 'essence' to foci of cultural identification used and transformed by different classes in history. One can think here even of the art form of the 19th century most clearly identified with and supported by the European bourgeoisie: opera. In some countries, like Italy, it has huge working-class support. Bearing all this in mind, nevertheless, the observation can still be made that different classes tend to organise themselves around noticeably different cultural activities at any point in time: in South Africa, nothing could be firmer

proof of the class component in culture among black people than a comparison of, say, the *marabi* parties in the Johannesburg slumyards of the 1930s with the soirées and concerts of the BMSC and Inchcape Hall during the same period. The journalist Todd Matshikiza describes a *marabi* party of the time:

> Gashe was bent over his organ in one corner, thumping the rhythm from the pedals with his feet, which were also feeding the organ with air, choking the organ with persistent chords in the left hand, and improvising for an effective melody with his right hand . . . you get a delirious effect of perpetual motion in a musty hole where a man makes friends without restraint[13].

Compare this to the programme at a BMSC concert in 1934:

> 1. Music and Recitations: (a) Gettysburg Oration (Lincoln) Motsieloa Group; (b) I Waited for the Lord (Mendelssohn) The Choir; (c) Brotherhood Song of Liberty (Lowell) Motsieloa Group; (d) The Trumpet Shall Sound (Handel) Phillip Molopi.
> 2. Scene III: The Coming of Freedom. Incidental Music: (a) Spiritual Music (Thompson) Rose Khumbane; (b) God so Loved (Stainer) The Choir; (c) O Taste and See (Goss) The Choir; (d) And the Glory of the Lord (Handel) The Choir; (e) Hallelujah Chorus (Handel) The Choir.
> 3. Closing Music and Recitations: (a) Selections from Tagore: Motsieloa Group; (b) Land of Hope and Glory (Elgar) The Choir; (c) I, too (Hughes) Motsieloa Group; (d) Self-Determination (Hill) Motsieloa Group; (e) To America (Johnson) Motsieloa Group; (f) Thanks Be to God (Mendelssohn) The Choir; Speech: Slavery: Dr Xuma. NATIONAL ANTHEM[14].

The historical element looms large in cultural struggles. Historical experience is important in cultural identity, even if this identity is shaped and changed by the socio-economic forces at work in the society. Objective conditions are not translated into subjective explanations in a vacuum: the way the process occurs, and the types of explanations of reality that emerge, depend on categories of meaning *that already exist*. Amilcar Cabral says that 'culture is simultaneously the fruits of a people's history and a determinant of history'[15]. And so cultural activity and organisation change our lives; culture, as an important constituent of ideology, also has a material reality.

We accumulate and pass on our knowledge, our language, our ways of organising and expressing ourselves to our descendants as a type of 'second nature'. Our descendants use these habits and traditions in ways

which alter them, a process which depends on the changing wider social and economic realities. When we look at cultural history, as said before, it is necessary to look at aspects of cultural continuity and change that emerge as history unfolds. Colonialism made use of the pre-capitalist relations it found among indigenous South Africans, maintaining the forms of separate spheres of existence (rural Venda, rural Transkei, rural Zululand etc) while changing these areas into reserves for cheap labour and subjecting them to new market forces. The cultures of the pre-colonial societies provided a basis which people who became migrant labourers or went permanently to the cities drew on and altered to give vent to new ways of expressing themselves culturally. Many examples of the interweaving and gradual transforming of traditional and urban elements exist, such as the Sotho *lifela* form — a type of self-praise, social commentary and personal address used by miners and based on traditional *lithoko* praise poetry — and performances of new dances using traditional forms, such as *ingoma* performed in towns and *ndhlamu* performed in the rural areas by Durban hostel-dwellers, or the *famo* dances performed in shebeens by prostitutes and shebeen queens in the 20th century. In this way, some of the oral, non-literate forms of cultural expression such as praise poetry, songs and dances remained and were given new and changing content and meaning by the inhabitants of the rural areas who made their way to the cities, or who became migrants shuttling between city and bantustan.

Moreover, culture always has an organisational component and is an organisational process. Any apparent 'spontaneity' of cultural flowering usually hides levels of work, leadership and intellectual activity of which we are not aware. In the slumyards, cities and mine compounds the use of cultural forms of organisation aided ajustments to the new life of the city and served as a means of identity in the midst of upheaval and changing social conditions. By the end of last century 'homeboy' clubs had emerged on the mines. These clubs were a means of identification and solidarity, linking members to their original homes. They served as networks for urban faction fighting and stimulated new expressive cultural patterns relevant to life on the mines, such as the dance teams which used and changed rural forms in dance competitions organised by mine management. As another example, among male domestic servants in the towns one finds the famous *amalaita* gangs emerging in the early part of this century. These were groups of (normally young) domestic servants who would go into open spaces on Sunday to box. They also served as a type of quasi-military organisation for men from the country who were doing one of the most denigrating jobs possible. There is little cause to wonder that the newly-named 'Saucepan' or 'Sixpence' working in white kitchens during the week became the tough and brutal *amalaita* fighter during the weekend.

Culture therefore displays the history of men and women manipulating their world and organising themselves to deal effectively with it. In terms of the process of creativity, it is the way in which specific groups/classes of people *produce* meanings and humanise and make sense of their surroundings, shaping these as nearly as possible to suit their own purposes. In other words, culture is the expressive form groups make out of their material reality: it describes the accumulative way they build on the consciousness produced in them by economic and political realities and ideological struggle. In terms of gaining of identity, culture gives people a sense of history and a sense of uniqueness: groups can and do develop distinctive patterns of livelihood and choose different ways of expressing themselves. In the words of Hall and Jefferson, 'Culture is the distinctive shape in which the material social organisations of life express themselves'[16]. These identities can overlap and be constituted by disparate elements, depending on what the person involved is relating to or comparing him/herself with (this process resembles in some ways the process of interpellation described in ideological studies). For instance, the same person may at different times say: 'I am a human being', 'I am an African', 'I am black', 'I am a South African', 'I am Zulu', 'I am a Zionist', 'I am a Sowetan', 'I am working-class' etc. In each of these statements is implicit a sense of identity for a group differentiated by historical, class, ethnic/racial, geographical, organisational or other factors.

**The Study of Culture**

It must be stressed that in capitalist society the dominant classes, the State and technological progress constantly act on the cultures of dominated classes and groups; and in more advanced capitalist societies, the pressures on dominated classes to suit their way of life to ideological and commercial purposes imposed from above is even greater. Cultural means are, however, also used as a way of resisting the influence of dominant groups — we can see this very clearly in, for instance, the use the Black Consciousness Movement of the 1970s made of black culture and the idea of the 'African personality'.

This has, unfortunately, led to a recent tendency among some South African intellectuals to see 'ideology' as the consciousness belonging to the dominant classes, and 'culture' as the consciousness belonging to the subordinate classes (or 'the community') and used by them to resist ideological domination. This is, obviously, a misapprehension: dominant and dominated groups both participate in the ideological network of meanings immanent in social life and use cultural forms to maintain and change their identities. In my opinion ideology is the overarching term; while culture is an important facet of ideological studies. Cultural means are sometimes used directly in ideological contestation: an example is the

way Christianity was introduced to South Africa, as a doctrine linked into colonial conquest. Here, European notions of 'civilised' behaviour, art, morals and social interaction were marshalled to destroy and denigrate African cultural and social norms which were labelled 'pagan'. One can also think of the missionary Ray Phillips, who remarked at a later date, 'It has become a commonplace slogan in Western Culture that whoever captures the leisure time of the people gets the people. A people's character is moulded by the kind of investment made of their free time.' He once, for example, managed to defuse a riot in a mine compound in the 1920s by showing a Charlie Chaplin film![17].

Five years ago ideological studies were all the rage at South African universities; now cultural studies have usurped that position. This fluctation is partly a reaction to the Althusser-Thompson debate in Europe. Unfortunately, few attempts have been made in South Africa to systematically identify and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of either argument in this debate and to use the received concepts selectively and cogently. Although they claim a greater historical accuracy, the 'culturalist' group propagating the work of Thompson and Williams often use concepts borrowed from overseas debates as unconvincingly as the Althusserian group they condemn; a concept such as 'hegemony' needs, I suggest, some reformulation before easy application to a South African situation where the racially exclusive policies of the government in power often militate *against* them achieving the ideological incorporation of subordinate groups. Furthermore, the 'culturalist' group often uses predominantly descriptive terms (such as 'residual' culture, a term derived from Raymond Williams) in a way which attempts to elevate them to the status of methodological insights[18].

Another weakness inherent in the 'culturalist' position is, to my mind, its present linkages with a romantic attachment to the working-class on the part of petty- bourgeois intellectuals and an uncritical identification with populist political and intellectual practices. At worst,

> . . . methods of work are uncritically empiricist and completely innocent of theoretical intent — a mode that both Thompson and Althusser would unite to condemn. The central concerns of Thompson's own historical work are metamorphosed into a narrowly empirical history with a minimal leftish gloss, often taking the form of a sentimental identity with the downtrodden poor[19].

**The Formation of Working-Class Culture**

What, then, is working-class culture? It seems easy to answer: it's the cultural forms created, adapted and used by the working-class. But classes

consist of human beings, and they are not exactly defined or unchanging through time. People in the working-class, like in any other class, have other ways of identification also than just class identity; this fact militates against any pure, cohesive working-class consciousness. In South Africa racial and ethnic identities are for instance very strong. In addition working-class people change their ideas, get interested in various things, dance different dances; some members of the working-class manage to use their skill and talents to move into better jobs and so become petty-bourgeois, etc. Classes have very blurred and shifting edges, and the working-class moreover is not a single, undifferentiated bloc of people doing identical jobs. The working-class consists of different categories of rural and urban wage earners, who are defined as workers with regard to their position in the capitalist process (non-ownership of the means of production, subordination to and dependence on wage labour, selling of their labour power to make profits for others).

When we talk about 'working-class culture' or 'working-class consciousness' we are using broad categories. If we are to define them in a dynamic way, we must move away from giving the impression of inward-looking and self-sufficient enclaves within capitalist society generating their own isolated values, institutions and practices. Otherwise we divest culture and consciousness of their basis in class struggle and deny their interaction with more dominant ideologies and culture. South Africa is, despite Government propaganda, a single body politic, with ideological struggles for domination and cultural interaction the rule rather than the exception. This country exhibits particular forms of political and social struggle which affect everyone. And so working-class culture and experience can only be fully understood if one is aware of attempts at ideological domination on the part of the State, business and commercial interests, as well as resistance to this domination by subordinate groups. The myth of a pure, static working-class culture is no use to us in this situation.

A further problem in analysis of the black working-class occurs because a 'geography of class' has not emerged among blacks to the extent it has among whites (you would not find a rich white businessman living in Troyeville; you would not find a member of the white working-class living in Houghton). Though capitalism has acted as a social leveller in South Africa — the subordination of both black and white workers to wage labour, the mixing of races to a limited extent in the cities and even the workplace — segregation and later apartheid has served to force and emphasise differences in living place, outlook and culture between races. The racial dynamic to capitalist development in South Africa has led to blacks of different classes being lumped together in segregated townships. These contain a mixture of classes — workers, the petty-bourgeoisie, the

unemployed — all of whom influence the cultural identity that emerges. Here, again, to isolate a 'pure' working-class culture is often problematic (although there are areas where one can take a good guess as to the class background of the inhabitant — Dube in Soweto, for example, is hardly a working-class suburb!) Thus, it is probably more adequate to point to a cohesive tendency of groups around different cultural identities in the townships, rather than attempting separate and absolute class cultures.

This is just in warning. Certainly, workers tend towards certain types of political and cultural expression and activity. For instance, the black working-class is at the moment a backbone of strike action, boycotts and trade union organisation in this country. There are certain forms of culture, too, that the working-class on the Witwatersrand has built up and gravitates towards: a black worker may choose to go to a soccer or a boxing match, but he is unlikely to go and watch cricket; he may enjoy the Mahotella Queens, but he is unlikely to listen to Beethoven; he may drink in a shebeen, but he is unlikely to go to Sun City with some of his petty-bourgeois brethren.

However, the amount of differentiation along racial lines we experience today blurs the fact that, from the onset of capitalist penetration, the amount of pan-ethnic and pan-racial interaction and influence in South Africa has been much greater than government ideologues would admit. In the crucible of the new urban centres of Kimberley, Johannesburg and the like, a great deal of social interaction across ethnic and even racial lines took place. A new cosmopolitanism prevailed already, as an example, among the black educated elite by the latter decades of last century; and this mingling happened on an even greater scale to lower class people. An African preacher wrote of the workers on the mines of Kimberley in 1872:

> When they are at work you can hardly distinguish the whites from the Coloureds, for they all resemble the diamondiferous soil they are working. There are Bushmen, Koranas, Hottentots, Griquas, Magwato, Mazulu, Maswazi, Matonga, Matabele, Mabaca, Mapondo and more[30].

Afrikaans and black workers, forced off the land particularly after the Anglo-Boer War, mingled with European immigrants in the cities: in the brothels, the gambling halls, the shebeens and the slums. This land dispossession was a violent and brutal process, one must be aware; nevertheless it was among these people, poorly paid, often militant, that the beginnings of working-class culture in South Africa emerged.

In Johannesburg, despite attempts at the beginning of this century to disperse the working-class (attempts to move Afrikaans workers and the unemployed to Newtown and the setting up of the first black location in Klipspruit in 1904), part of the city remained racially integrated. In

Burgersdorp, Vrededorp, part of Brickfields and elsewhere different races lived in close proximity and often in the same slumyards. Jacobus Lub, a Dutch journalist, described in a story a visit he made to a slumyard at the bottom of Albert Street in 1906 (where the pass office for men now is!). Here he found what he called 'Arabs', 'Jews', 'Hottentots' and 'people from Java' living together[4].

In the emergence of new ways of social organisation and interaction which accompanied the formation of working-class culture, however, black workers in particular had an insecure existence, subject to pass raids, tax raids and liquor raids. The violence of black working-class life, in other words, was and is connected to the repressive, enfored system of racial inequality which dominated South African politics. Lower class black people generally lived in an extremely deprived environment, with the minimum of social services and benefits, where even the most law-abiding were subject to arbitrary arrest and imprisonment. They lacked the leisure opportunities or surplus income to partake in commercial culture and very much had to create their own forms of recreation and social organisation. At the same time organised crime was an aspect of life; from the illicit diamond dealing in Kimberley last century, through the rise of organised prostitution in the 1890s, to the illicit liquor trade in many slums and townships, the opportunities and necessity for crime among unemployed, marginalised and desperate people were many. Petty crime was prevalent among juveniles, especially in times of chronic unemployement; organised crime existed among groups like the *amalaita* and the dreaded Ninevite *izigebengu* early in the century and has flourished ever since, perhaps reaching its apotheosis in the feared township gangs of the 1950s like the Americans, the Vultures and the *amaRussia*.

The working-class created their own recreation and entertainment. As with the earlier example of the 'homeboy' clubs, they created points of organisational focus which had a bearing on the culture which evolved. These organisations also often helped people adapt and cope with the new environment they found themselves in. There were and are, for instance, the Zionist churches, which remoulded Christianity into a more acceptable form for their members and acted as self-help societies and important givers of psychological support. Self-improvement and rotating credit and entertainment clubs, like burial societies, *stokvels* and *mohodisana* were constituted and still serve important ends.

One of the most prevalent of these points of organisational and recreational focus among workers, then and now, is the shebeen. It was probably first brought to the Transvaal by 'coloured' musicians from the Cape, where the illegal drinking house was an old and much-loved custom. The shebeen also, of course, had (along with the miners' *amatimiti*) echoes of the traditional communal beer-drink among blacks

newly arrived in the towns. They then took the shebeen back into remote rural areas with them as well. Beer-brewing and the illicit liquor trade (European liquor was prohibited to blacks until 1962) created the first really viable home industry among people newly arrived in the towns who could not find work. Women played an important role here. Due to the low wages of workers and the large number of occasionally employed or unemployed in urban areas, life was very difficult for many. Most women's only substantial contribution to family income was the brewing and selling of beer, as women were very much marginalised workers excluded from most forms of wage labour, particularly in the first decades of this century. Many working-class families and single women depended on beer brewing to see them through.

The shebeen was also a natural home for an important agent of culture: the itinerant musician. By the turn of the century these musicians were evolving a type of music incorporating coloured-Afrikaans, European, Afro-American and African music. Migrants played indigenous music on the streets and in the shebeens. (This process was similar to the way black musicians spread blues through the juke houses of Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi in the USA in the 1920s and 1930s, eventually carrying this new musical form north to Chicago.) Finally, in the slumyards of Doornfontein, Prospect Township, Ferreirastown, Fordsburg and George Goch, a new musical form called *marabi* spring up in the 1920s. On weekends slumyard women took it in turns to brew beer, and *marabi* parties would be held with music played on piano, trumpet and other instruments.

Disapproved of by whites and middle class blacks of the time[2], *marabi* has since been extolled as the first authentic example of black working-class cultural expression. While this is an exaggeration, *marabi* nevertheless remains noteworthy. It was a discernible form of culture which flourished in a specific environment and faded with the destruction of that environment in the late 1930s.

The effect of environment on the forms of culture which emerge again raises its head here, as does the common theme of the shaping power of the South African state and its laws on black working-class life and, consequently, culture. The death of *marabi* was assured by the clearance of the slumyards in which it flourished and the removal of slumyard residents to new townships like Orlando, Meadowlands as well as older locations like Pimville and Western Native Township. Older segregated townships had previously been avoided by blacks as much as possible, and it is not difficult to understand why: the possibilities for political and social control by whites was much greater in these places. A resident location suprintendent aided by municipal police carried out a continuous programme of pass raids and liquor raids; most locations had a fence right around them and only a few controlled places of entrance and exit.

Moreover, these locations tended to be at a distance from town, and transport costs were a constant problem for poorly-paid workers (along with rent, housing and pass laws, transport issues have been a constant source of unrest among the black working-class). Neither were services such as water and sewerage much better in the locations than the slumyards, and in some cases they were worse.

Steps to increase worker segregation in Johannesburg were partly the result of an expanded proletarianisation of black people, especially after the 1913 Land Act, and an ever-increasing urban black population. The 1913 Land Act had, furthermore, extended the process of proletarianisation to whole families rather than just men. Add to this the increased industrial activity in Johannesburg around the time of the First World War, and it is easy to see why a housing crisis resulted which neither the municipal authorities nor the government seemed able to cope with. The few 'official' segregated townships around Johannesburg (in 1918 there were only two) could absorb only a small proportion of this influx. Middle-class people reacted unfavourably to the 'depravity' of life in the non-segregated slumyards throughout the 1920s and 1930s. In 1920 the Rev F Bridgman observed, 'For weal and woe Johannesburg has become unwittingly the greatest educational agency among the Native people', and in the same decade the black newspaper *Umteteli wa Bantu* complained that 'the social abasement of slum life is responsible for much of the bitterness and unrest of town natives' and expressed the fear that the slums would become a seedbed for 'Black Reds' and 'Bolshevism'[23].

Thus, the move towards segregation on the part of the government and dominant classes was also a result of growing worker militancy in the 1910s and 1920s, and was due to a realisation that buying off of white workers and stricter control of the movement and organisation of black workers and the unemployed was imperative if the status quo was to be maintained. The Stallard Commission of 1922 established the principle that urban areas were white areas in which the presence of blacks was to be controlled and limited as far as possible to labour requirements. Blacks were to be restricted even more strictly as to numbers, mobility and ability to sell their labour freely. They were to be housed in segregated townships and locations as far as possible. The Commission was followed a year later by the Urban Areas Act, which specified that all urban Africans should be compelled, with only a few exceptions, to live in a location or native hostel. However, segregation only really began to be effective a decade later when many of the loopholes in the Act were closed.

In this instance, and in many other instances, segregation laws, the various Urban and Group Areas Acts, pass laws and so on have given a distinctive face to different sections of the working-class; they shape the limits of the type of culture that can emerge. The strength and vitality of

cultural continuity can however be seen in the amount of different social and cultural means of organisation which were transferred to the new social environment of the townships. Shebeens continued to flourish; Zionist churches and the ministrations of traditional healers and diviners were widespread; 'action films' and music remained popular and *stokvels* and burial and credit societies played an important role in sustaining impoverished and struggling families and individuals. Cultural change to cope with the changing face of political and social life is also noteworthy; for example, from about the mid-1930s music and variety shows and dances in (often bleak and meagre) township community halls absorbed some of the functions of slumyard parties; new dances like the *tsaba-tsaba* and *phata-phata* and new forms of music like *mbaqanga* and *kwela* emerged in the 1940s and 1950s.

The segregation of black people proved more difficult than many whites imagined. A period of rapid economic growth followed the Depression of the early 1930s, particularly in the manufacturing industry. This created fresh demands for labour. More people were also forced into the cities due to the impoverishment of the rural areas, made worse by inflation and the escalating price of maize in the late 1930s and early 1940s. And so the urban working-class in towns like Johannesburg continued to grow. This growth was matched by a rise in worker militancy, epitomised in the 1946 black mine workers' strike and the growth of militant trade unions like the AMWU and CNETU. Organised squatter camps grew up around Moroka, Alexandra, Pimville and other townships during the 1940s, containing returned ex-servicemen and marginalised and homeless people. The squatter leadership organised controlling committees in the camps and even issued trading licences and organised their own police force. Bus boycotts and rent boycotts were a further sign of working-class resistance to white rule, as was the rise of organisations like *Sofasonke* (We shall all die) in the squatter camps and *Asinamali* (We have no money) to protest rent increases in Jabavu. Some people, moreover, avoided the locations by simply moving to the remaining freehold areas in Johannesburg where they were not subject to strict control and supervision — Sophiatown, Newclare, Martindale and Alexandra. The housing shortage in these areas turned into a housing crisis. Sophiatown, as an exmple, was already filled to bursting in 1937, having some seventeen thousand inhabitants. These areas, however, remained to many symbolic of the vibrancy of South African black working-class life, subject to increasing regimentation elsewhere. A white priest remarked of Sophiatown:

> Sophiatown is not a location. That is my first reason for loving it. It is so utterly free from monotony, in its siting, in its buildings and in its people. By a historical accident it started life as a suburb, changed its colour at an early moment in its career

> and then decided to go all out for variety. A £3,000 building jostles a row of single rooms; an 'American' barber's shop stands next door to an African herbalist's store, with its dried roots and dust-laden animal hides hanging in the window. You can go into a store to buy a packet of cigarettes and be served by a Chinaman, an Indian or a Pakistani . . . There are churches of every denomination and of almost every imaginable sect[24].

Different parts of the dominant classes and political groups in South Africa were divided on how to solve the urban black 'problem'. One of the possible solutions considered was to allow the growth of a stabilized urban workforce in some areas of the economy (like secondary industry); the other was to control the movement of labour even more completely with vigorous and expanded application of pass laws, influx control and complete racial segregation of communities. The victory of the Nationalist Party and their apartheid policy in the 1948 white elections confirmed an opting for the second solution. Despite a great deal of political and community resistance, the next two decades witnessed the implementation of apartheid and the crushing of any viable opposition to Government dominance. The remaining freehold areas (except Alexandra) were demolished; Sophiatown became a white suburb and was renamed, not accidentally, Triomf. The inhabitants of the freehold areas were shipped out to Soweto and other townships. An offensive was launched by the State against the ideological and educational institutions run by the liberals and the missions which had acted as a formative agent on several generations of the black middle-class and which were, by and large, inimical to apartheid; schools like St Peters and Adams College were closed down and other educational institutions, like the University of Fort Hare, were turned into ethnic colleges.

The established forms of liberal education, elitist but of relatively high quality, were replaced by the rigid, mass system of Bantu Education, which sought to 'retribalise' urban blacks and not educate black people above their station as 'categories of labour'. An emphasis was placed on ethnic and racial identity in the ideological apparatuses which fell into Government hands, of which the most important were education and the media. Radio Bantu, as it operated after 1960, served to negate as much as possible black social and cultural identification with the urban areas and thus helped retard urban black cultural development.

Culturally, the main effect of apartheid was a 'levelling effect' on blacks (ie the class determinants of consciousness among blacks came to seem unimportant in the face of a policy which strove to treat all blacks alike) and a strengthening of racial identity among both black and white. Nevertheless, if one probes deeper into black consciousness, what becomes apparent is a diversification of cultural choice *among* black

people after the Second World War. Furthermore, black working-class culture becomes increasingly subject to commercial and ideological pressures aimed expressly at influencing the cultural tastes of workers. A popular culture associated with the spread of literacy past a small elite is noticeable: by the 1950s reading habits had spread past well-educated blacks to a much larger audience. Furthermore, as the use of English spread among blacks, it served to act as a unifier across ethnic lines and aided the spread of black 'popular' culture. This can be seen in newspaper circulation figures over the years — in 1934 the elite newspaper *Bantu World* had a circulation of 6,000; by 1960 the mass newspaper *World* had a circulation of 150,000. Pulp novels and magazines became popular: the magazine *Drum*, founded in 1951, demonstratd the demand for less elitist reading material in its stories dealing with the perceived realities of township life — sport, jazz, crime reports, picture features and cover girls vied with political articles and exposés of social conditions. The circulation figures of *Drum* rose to 65,000 an edition at one point. One of the white editors remarked in the following vein about the cultural ambience in which *Drum* flourished:

> The workers of the world were united, at least, in their addiction to cheese-cake and crime. The African's favourite reading was the overseas Daily Mirror. The most popular author in African libraries was Peter Cheyney[25].

While it can be argued, fairly persuasively in my opinion, that the exclusivist nature of white political rule means that many blacks have not been over-anxious to believe the State's version of reality and attempts at ideological incorporation, commercial aspects shaping black culture have had rather more success. Indeed, commercial interests acting on cultural forms among black people have been apparent from the 1930s onwards in a very real sense. Black music was one of the first to feel the effects of co-option; in the years before and after World War II African music, previously produced mainly by and for members of the community, began to attract the attention of white entrepeneurs and the white-dominated record industry. Actor and elocutionist Griffiths Motsieloa became the first black talent scout for Gallo Records in the 1930s. In 1936 several black performing groups were exposed to white audiences and talent scouts at the Empire Exhibition, and some of the big bands which were replacing *marabi* musicians, like the Merry Blackbirds, began to play imported music for white aduiences at clubs and hotels — until they were squeezed out by exploitation as well as pressure from the all-white Johannesburg Musicians' Union in the late 1950s. Later, the close identification with the control of *mbaqanga* artists by their employers can be seen in names like *Abafana Baseqhudeni* (The Boys of the Rooster) identifying that particular *mbaqanga* group with the emblem of Gallo-Afrika Records. Furthermore,

*mbaqanga* performers, whose records sold mainly to a lower class audience of migrant and industrial workers and domestic servants, began to appear on stage in what can only be termed a white impressario's version of 'traditional African culture': animal skins, acrobatic performances and pastiches of contemporary male Zulu dance styles. Indeed, the well-known singer Mahlathini at one time appeared on stage in the robes of a Zionist clergyman.

The variety shows popular with blacks of all classes in the townships with their variety of drama, comedy and music were also increasingly subject to white control in the 1950s, with the impressarios like Herbert and Brooks replacing their black counterparts like Motsieloa and James Tuti. The result was, at best, multi-racial shows like *King Kong* and at worst extravanganzas like *Drums of Africa*, staged in 1961, which Herbert remarked had the purpose of showing off 'the sexulating rawness and glamour of some of the most beautiful non-European women[46]'.As well as ideological manipulation of cultural images to accommodate white preconceptions, exploitation of artists was the order of the day: Aaron Lerole, a *kwela* musician, received R30 for his 1954 hit 'Tom Hark', which netted Columbia Records R¼ million, just as one example.

The commercialisation of points of cultural focus for working-class people, of course, continues; culture is a big money-spinner these days for both black and white entrepeneurs. The NPSL soccer nexus is one example; another is various magazine publishers and film companies like Bayeti and Igoli films, who specialise in ethnically-orientated moral parables. Several points must be considered here. Even when the cultural forms under scrutiny are not subject to direct ideological or commercial manipulation, the spread of popular and commercial cultural tastes has affected all people in South Africa. The first *kwela* musicians (lower class teenagers and children in Alexandra in the 1940s and 1950s who imitated *mbaqanga* on penny-whistles and paraffin tin guitars on street corners) from the start showed the influence of commercial culture on the musical form they were evolving. They charged passers-by 'tickey a record' and ended tunes with a fade out!

Moreover, the 'culture industry', despite its manipulation of the culture in which it interests itself, has made (albeit transformed) cultural forms more accessible to a broader audience. At the same time this process accelerated the change in the relationship between performers and their audience — in many cases the culture produced today by and for working-class blacks (such as, for example, the plays of Sam Mhangwane and *mbaqanga* and choir groups like Ladysmith Black Mambazo) is more self-consciously artistic and less organically connected to its audiences than before[47].

## Conclusion

This article has attempted to sketch out some issues pertaining to the types of mainly black, mainly lower class culture which evolved and developed in the Witwatersrand area. What is loosely termed 'working-class culture' in South Africa has been a result of and reaction to the penetration of capitalism, the growth of towns and the subordination of black South Africans to wage labour and the capitalist system. Types of cultural activity were and are created against a background of repressive laws and the often harsh, oppressive reality of slumyard, location and hostel.

The shaping of cultural forms by economic, political and social determinants must therefore loom large in any cogent analysis of culture. The process of acculturation can perhaps best be seen as a *creative response* of working-class (and other) people to the determining social and ideological conditions of their life, a process of creating meaning for themselves in a changing world. For people are both created by and create history; and cultural activity is no more a process of strict economic determination than it is a process of complete free will.

The changes wrought by the apartheid state on the social milieu of the black working-class which are mentioned briefly towards the end of this resumé also suggests that a study of contemporary activity would come up with new forms of cultural expression and new problems. Even the same cultural forms and symbols can come to stand in a different relationship to the way people live over time: the 1970s and 1980s in particular have been period of great political upheaval, attempts at State restructuring by dominant groups and increased resistance on the part of subordinate groups. Ideological and cultural issues are an important area of mobilisation and struggle in this climate. Furthermore activists are delving into South Africa's cultural history to claim symbols for use in the present; for instance, during the 1970s in re-examining African pre-colonial culture and history in a new light. In addition, Black Consciousness has, despite its failings, had a salutary effect in orientating privileged blacks back towards their community in political and cultural matters and in promoting cultural self-awareness. It has lent considerable impetus to an upsurge of cultural activity in the guise of poetry readings, drama, published fiction and so on.

The political situation is in a state of flux at present. At the same time as the South African State is proposing concessions and privileges for some parts of the black petty-bourgeoisie and urban blacks, other groups (such as those not fortunate enough to qualify for Section 10 rights) are being marginalised. The State is increasingly asserting ideologically that what it is defending with its principles of 'total strategy' are 'the interests of the free world' and 'economic growth' rather than racial privilege, and a new breed of black managers and businessmen and women (typified as the 'New

Men' by the 1980 National Manpower Commission) is being fostered in the private sector.

In this situation it follows that a large amount of re-thinking and research of cultural and ideological history, and its implications for the present, need to be done by those interested in understanding and fostering cultural activity. It is hoped that this article will help question the cultural stereotypes and images of static racial essences that abound in the corridors of power and on the coffee tables of South Africa today. Moreover, I hope that some of the questions raised will help further define what is meant by 'culture' and cause further debate of the theoretical and empirical dimensions.

Analysts can become rather cavalier as to what they categorise as 'working-class culture'; cultural research sometimes vacillates between, on the one hand, a reference to everything the working-class does under this category, and, on the other, a selection of certain privileged institutions and activities to fit into already existing preconceptions of what 'culture' means. This uncertainty is partly due to the fact that lower class cultural forms in South Africa are often more undirected and inchoate than overtly cultural expressions such as drama and art. The reason why this culture is more difficult for the State to control is the same as the reason analysts find it difficult to pin down: it does not always reach a clear and articulate form.

The fact that South Africa is at present going through a period of popular opposition to the State has also led some radical middle-class intellectuals to romanticise working-class life. This is particularly so among students, who have a tendency to see themselves as *declassé* and unproblematically connected to the working-class because of their political attitudes. Sometimes an implicit assumption is made by such groups that working-class culture expresses an inherent anti-capitalism. Whether accurate or not, this ignores the problem as to whether such anti-capitalist values will necessarily contribute to the development of socialism — or whether they can be used for other ends in the way the FAK and Broederbond manipulated the white workers' dislike of imperialism and capitalism in the 1930s and 1940s to win them over to an extreme nationalism. Politically, the potency of working-class cultural activities can only be assessed in terms of the ideological interests of the classes which strive to make use of them for various political ends.

It is my contention nevertheless that many people who have looked at South African history and politics over the last decade (especially whites) have placed rather too little emphasis on the importance of culture and experience, either in academic analyses or in the prioritising of political issues. Such economic reductionism is absurd, as it denies an area of human consciousness and identification and subsumes it to mere

reflection of an 'economic base'; change the economic conditions, the argument goes, and you automatically change people's consciousness. I would suggest that this is overstated. In academic areas, these are the type of analysts who:

> . . . tell us a great deal about the world the slave masters made but far too little about the dialectical relation between that world and the one the slaves made. Without the kind of research I am urging coupled with an undoubted need to conceptualise, South Africa will remain a kind of science fiction universe peopled by forces as lifeless as those in Star Wars[28].

NOTES

1 What follows was originally delivered as a talk for students at the University of the Witwatersrand, and was intended as an introduction to the subject. It therefore attempts to explain its concepts as simply as possible. Any consequent distortion of these concepts is, of course, my fault.

2 Karl Marx 'Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*' in *Marx/Engels: Selected Works in one volume*, Moscow and London: Progress Publishers and Lawrence and Wishart Ltd, 1968, p 181.

3 The theoretical part of this paper is based on my own conclusions reached after reading the following: L Althusser *For Marx* (London, 1969) and 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' in *Lenin and Philosophy* (London, 1971); P Anderson *Arguments Within English Marxism* (London, 1980) pp 5-156; M Barrett/P Corrigan et al 'Representation and Cultural Production' in Barrett et al *Ideology and Cultural Production* (London, 1979); J Clarke, S Hall et al 'Subcultures, Cultures and Class' in Hall and Jefferson (eds) *Resistance Through Rituals* (London, 1977); A Cabral 'The Role of Culture in the Liberation Struggle' (Mimeo, Paris, 1972); G Cohen *Karl Marx's Theory of History* (Oxford, 1978) pp 231-48, 278-92 and its critique by Levine and Wright in *New Left Review* 123, 1980; R Coward 'Class, "Culture" and the Social Formation' *Screen* 18.1 1977 and its critique by Chambers et al in *ibid.* 18, 4 1977-8; A Glucksmann 'A Ventriloquist Structuralism' in *Western Marxism: A Critical Reader* (London, 1977); A Gramsci 'Marxism and Modern Culture' in *The Modern Prince* (New York, 1957); S Hall 'Rethinking the "Base-and-Superstructure" Metaphor' in Bloomfield (ed) *Class, Hegemony and Party* (London, 1977), 'Notes on Deconstructing "The Popular" ' and 'In Defence of Theory' in Samuel (ed) *People's History and Socialist Theory (London, 1981)* and 'The Problem of Ideology — Marxism without guarantees' in Matthews (ed) *Marx 100 Years On* (London, 1983); R Hebidge *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London, 1979); P Hirst 'Althusser and the Theory of Ideology' in *Economy and Society* 5, 4 1976; F Jameson *The Political Unconscious* (London, 1981) pp 23-58; R Johnson 'Histories of Cultures/Theories of Ideology' in Barrett *op. cit.*, 'Three Problematics: Elements of a Theory of Working-Class Culture' in J Clarke et al *Working-Class Culture* (London, 1979) and 'Against Absolutism' in Dsmurl *op cit;* E Laclau *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (London, 1977) pp 143-98; T Lovell 'The Social Relations of Cultural Production' in S Clarke et al *One-Dimensional Marxism* (London, 1980); K McDonnell and K Robins 'Marxist Cultural theory: the Althusserian Smokescreen' in *ibid.;* G McLennan 'Richard Johnson and His Critics' *History Workshop Journal* 8, 1979; C Mouffe 'Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci' in Mouffe (ed) *Gramsci and Marxist Theory* (London, 1979); N Mouzelis 'Ideology and Class Politics' *NLR* 112, 1978;

K Nield and J Seed 'Theoretical Poverty or The Poverty of Theory' *E and S* 8.4 1979; N Poulantzas *Political Power and Social Classes* (London, 1973) pp 195-224; J Saul 'The Dialectics of Class and Tribe' in his *The State and Revolution in Eastern Africa* (New York, 1979); D Sayer 'Method and Dogma in Historical Materialism' *Sociological Review* 23.4 1975; G Therborn *The Ideology of Power and The Power of Ideology* (London, 1980) pp 15-49; E Thompson *The Poverty of Theory* (London, 1978).

4 Some of the phrasing here is derived from Dan O'Meara's very useful introduction to *Volkskapitalisme* (Johannesburg, 1983).

5 I am of course not implying that these three disparate ideological viewpoints have equal relative explanatory weight; the relationship of ideology to material reality and scientific enquiry is a methodological and epistemological question which I will not go into here.

6 P Bonner 'The Transvaal Native Congress 1917-20' in Marks and Rathbone (eds) *Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa* (London, 1982) p 293.

7 T Couzens 'Widening Horizons of African Literature 1870-1900' (Mimeo, York, 1981) p 4.

8 See Linda Chisholm's 'Redefining Skills: Black Education in South Africa in the 1980s' *Comparative Education*, forthcoming.

9 J Shapiro 'Political and Economic Organisation of Women in South Africa' *Africa Perspective* 15, 1980 p 1.

10 Quoted in J Culler *Structuralist Poetics* (London, 1975) p 28.

11 Couzens (1981) p 30. I believe this remains true despite Therborn's attempts to 'focus' ideology 'down' in *op cit*. Some of the objections however raised to the methodology of ideological analysis (I have various British and South African empiricists in mind) show little but woeful ignorance of how theory attempts to conceptualise and abstract knowledge from the world around us. One does not, for instance, expect a nuclear physicist to describe the variant behaviour of every electron in order to posit laws which electrons in aggregate obey. So how can one expect ideological theory to account for the behaviour of each and every individual? This does not invalidate ideological theory: what would invalidate it or *any* theory would be if its concepts and laws were not derived from or verifiable in actual social/physical life and history, and if they could not effectively be applied to the study and understanding of that life and its dynamics.

12 Karl Marx *op cit* p 96.

13 Quoted in E Koch ' Without visible Means of Subsistence: Slumyard Culture in Johannesburg 1918-40' in Bozzoli (ed) *Town and Countryside in the Transvaal* (Johannesburg, 1983) p 160.

14 T Couzens 'The Social Ethos of Black Writing in South Africa 1920-50' in Heywood (ed) *Aspects of South African Literature* (London, 1976) p 77.

15 A Cabral *Unity and Struggle* (London, 1980) p 141.

16 Hall and Jefferson *op cit* p 10.

17 Koch op cit p 167; Couzens (1976) pp 73-4. See also Couzens 'Moralising Leisure Time: The Transatlantic Connection and Black Johannesburg 1918-36' in Marks and Rathbone *op cit* pp 319-22.

18 As an example, see Bozzoli *op cit* pp 18, 23.

19 Nield and Seed *op cit* p 400.

20 Cf *Outlook on a Century*. This was not only a function of the workplace: 'The coloured population, Malays, Indians, Chinese and Natives of every tribe and shade of colour, lived . . . but a short distance from the European quarters; in fact, in some parts, whites and coloured people were mixed up indiscriminately.' *IDB or the Adventures of Solomon Davis* (London, 1887) pp 215-6.

21 I am indebted to Isabel Hofmeyr who made this story available to me.

22 Musicus, the black music critic of *Umteteli wa Bantu*, remarked in 1933: 'The problem of African music must eventually be solved by Africans. The "Marabi" dances and concerts, and the terrible "jazz" music banged and wailed out of

the doors of foul-smelling so-called halls are far from representing real African taste. They create wrong impressions. The Transvaal Bantu is to be complimented in the circumstances on the annual Eisteddford, which, to a great extent, will help to abolish the "Marabi" menace.' Couzens (1976) p 79.

23 D Coplan 'The Emergence of African Working-Class Culture: Some Research Perspectives' *Africa Perspective* 16, 1980 p 12.

24 T Huddleston *Naught For Your Comfort* (Glasgow, 1977) p 96.

25 A Sampson *Drum: A Venture into the New Africa* (London, 1956) p 20.

26 D Coplan 'The African Performer and the Johannesburg Entertainment Industry' in Bozzoli (ed) *Labour, Townships and Protest* (Johannesburg, 1979) p 201.

27 In addition to the works cited above, in my descriptions of working-class history and culture in South Africa I have made unacknowledged use of articles and pieces by Peter Abrahams, Johnny Clegg, Modikwe Dikobe, Deborah Gaitskell, Tom Lodge, Es'kia Mphahlele, Nat Nakasa, Andre Proctor, Alf Stadler, Can Themba, Charles van Onselen and Brian Willan.

28 R Rathbone 'The People and Soweto' in *Journal of Southern African Studies* 6, 1, 1979 pp 131-2.

# Metagogics: A New Discipline Part Two

## Its Objectives, Principles, Criteria and Significance, and the Difference between Metagogics and History of Education

J H Coetzee

### 1 Objectives

Like any other independent discipline Metagogics aims at achieving specific objectives. After all, without realising objectives there is no justification for the existence of any discipline. Metagogics is always concerned with the agogic reality which implies that generally speaking. Metagogics should always emphasise the following: to bring meaningful agogic life styles to the fore and to verify them; to establish relevent relationships and to seek for new ways of existence and future guidelines in order to realise the agogic practice more meaningfully. It is, however, imperative that the specific objectives be discussed in detail.

Firstly Metagogics endeavours to solve present agogic problems, ie to change or to improve the entropic-agogic situation in favour of a more meaningful existence in future. Without stressing this objective Metagogics will have no vitality.

To be able to change the entropic to an ectropic situation, it is necessary that it be done according to criteria, principles and norms (invariants). In this regard it is the objective of Metagogics to detect the invariants (also called laws) by means of independent research. '... scientists are interested in the power of laws and theories which are general and predictive ...'[1]. Notwithstanding this objective Metagogics also uses and integrates criteria of other relevant scientific and applicable disciplines whenever this is possible. For Metagogics the following question should always receive the highest priority: what does it want to achieve by determining and applying invariants? There can be only one answer: to solve present agogic problems and to verify future agogic perspectives. When Metagogics uses

these invariants as criteria, they act as links between historical epochs and the present and between Metagogics and other disciplines with a view to forming a clearer perspective of the whole.

Metagogics represents applied, action or operational research because it always endeavours to improve the present and future agogic reality. This objective is achieved by fulfilling the demands as prescribed by scientific research, ie by complying with the characteristics of rational and founded knowledge by means of proven scientific methods and by being as objective as possible.

Metagogics intends to fill the gaps caused by the weak implementation of the methodology of Historical Education especially with regard to the problem approach and work procedures.

Metagogical research never studies a problem in isolation; on the contrary, it acknowledges and accepts the co-involvement of other disciplines and systems.

Metagogics is anti-entropic and is for this reason trying to counteract stagnation by means of change and innovation (being a planned or willed action).

To achieve these objectives Metagogics should always adhere to the following characteristics or principles.

## 2 Agogic Principles (Characteristics) of Metagogics

*Co-existentiality* is a principle of prime importance for Metagogics. Agogics, being present-day involvement in view of future significance, originates from man's (adult) genuine concern and love for the man in need of guidance, security and safety, whether it be a child, a fellow adult or an elderly person.

*Agogic responsibility* in Metagogical sense characterises man's capability of discovering and improving his potential by means of assignments. Agogic responsibility therefore presupposes acceptance and handling of problematic situations in order to solve or improve them by means of intervention and corrective measures.

The principle of *situation-directedness* is greatly emphasised in Metagogics. Man is a present existial but also a future being who always finds himself in a specific situation at a specific time. Man is always in contact and in communication with his *Umwelt*. The situation-directedness is part of every human being who relies on his fellow-man and environment in order to become more complete in humanness. This characteristic leads to the principle of *encounter*, ie an existential encounter between people being the initiator or guide (educator) and the participant (normally the immature person). Due to the fact that the encounter takes place in the present it is always genuine and reaches deep

into the heart of the person in need. This intimate encounter influences the person in need's expression of will and his consciousness of values. A study of an historic encounter between people is always impersonal because the 'I' always remains an outsider and no intimacy can prevail. The agogic encounter is and will remain a present affair which changes constantly.

Metagogics is also characterised by the principle of *becoming or making oneself redundant*. This characteristic is very much future orientated because the educator guides in such a way that his involvement and intervention in the agogic situation will in future become redundant. Agogic intervention is aimed at making the person in need independent or preparing him for independence. This implies that the educator should 'let him loose' or 'set him free' enabling him to become independent and to transform his insecurity, doubt and lack of freedom into security, freedom, creativity and initiative.

The principle of *agogic interaction* in Metagogics being an interaction of goodwill, of mutual trust and willingness to help and the acceptance thereof suggests a dual intercourse and reciprocal influence. Never can an agogic interaction be created without mutual love and respect. Love and concern for the person in need stem from the well-intentioned agogic intervention as being encounter, interaction and redundant-making so as to create a responsible future perspective. This in turn suggests interaction from a system's, or multidisciplinary, point of view. Agogic interaction is even reflected in the origination of Metagogics from the (Greek) word *metaballein*, ie to change through the intervention of somebody.

A real agogic situation can flourish only within a *positive authoritative structure*. The person in need yearns for authority and sympathetic guidance. Without authority, guidance becomes hazardous because obedience is rendered impossible and the appeal for responsibility becomes meaningless. Authority in Metagogics even reflects its own authority, viz that it can speak with and rely on authority regarding scientific research.

A true agogic interaction is *free from deceit and gimmicks* and only by means of purposeful and planned interference in the (entropic) agogic situation, and according to fixed values and norms can interaction in Metagogical perspective be positively researched.

Metagogics acknowledges *cultural changes* in time perspective. In other words, Metagogics acknowledges the cultural manifestations of the past, its existence in the present traditions and habits as well as its inter-relatedness with other disciplines. For Metagogics culture is never static (atropic) but always becoming (changing). This, however, does not imply that culture is constantly changing. Metagogics always endeavours to change or improve those cultural aspects which have become obsolete

and to emphasise or reaffirm the postive aspects.

After having considered the objectives and principles of Metagogics, let us now turn to the criteria used in Metagogical research.

## 3 Criteria for Research in Metagogics

Metagogics acknowledges the existential freedom of the researcher to undertake any type of agogic research without ignoring the authority and principles which characterise a specific discipline.

Metagogical research must always give clear proof that several techniques and aids (models etc) have been used effectively and efficiently.

Proof must always be given that invariants have been detected, compared and used in the verification of the results.

Only by implementing these invariants will the researcher be able to compare properly with a view to providing future guidelines for changing the entropic situation to an ectropic one.

The point of departure of all research in a Metagogical perspective is rooted in investigation of the present problem.

Research in Metagogics should always be impartial ie as objective and professional as possible. Thus there should always be evidence of questions being put to reality, of inquisitiveness, scepticism, doubt, certainty, comparison, etc. Never should a Metagogician hide behind excuses like: it is just my interpretation; sources weren't available or relevant enough, etc, etc. In Metagogical research the present situation will always act as judge because all results are being implemented in practice.

The historic events and data should help in verifying the present and future needs and should never dominate the investigation.

Metagogical research should always assist the researcher in solving his own problems, ie it should have practical value for the individual as well as for science as such: '. . . it may be that the very act of teachers' addressing their own classroom problems from a research perspective will be the most fertile soil for educational research to grow in'[2].

It is only to be expected that the reader would now inquire about the significance of Metagogics.

## 4 Significance of Metagogics

By implementing a multidisciplinary view or procedure Metagogics serves as an introduction and preparation to acquire more knowledge about the interrelatedness of agogic part-disciplines and other independent disciplines. Furthermore Metagogics helps to bring about perspectives

about the essences of life in its diversity and integratedness: viz interrelated micro and macro systems. The interrelatedness of disciplines cannot be better researched by any other agogic discipline because the aspect of multidimensionality is never a crucial factor in that research. In this respect Metagogics is able to use and present an inexhaustible source of material for real comparison in a narrow or causal sense around the entropic situation.

Not only does the problem approach explicitly suggest a tentative answer (hypothesis), data verification, prognosis and future guidelines with regard to the present specific problem, but brings other acute and peripheral problems to the fore which also need attention and correction. Having this significance, Metagogics (through the problem-approach) can also be regarded as a 'discovering' science. By taking the present as point of departure for all research, Metagogics at the same time delimits past and future perspectives, resulting in more systematic, purposeful and valuable research.

Metagogics works creatively and epistemologically, ie it follows a specific methodological order. In the creative sense (as corrective measure, it starts off with aims and works through to content, form (method) and functional outcome and vice versa for the epistemological order which is the point of departure for that research. This work procedure has significant potential in reserve because when research is undertaken (starting with the entropic situation), and the past, present and future are taken into consideration, both work procedures are indispensable and become interrelated.

Metagogics helps to bring new or previously undiscovered invariants to light, it emphasises the existing invariants or re-affirms invariants which have become 'irrelevant'. By achieving this, much more certainty prevails with regard to the tested hypothesis, prognosis, future guidelines and future planning.

Metagogics acquaints the researcher with a variety of research methods, even with methods used by other disciplines, and it is of invaluable assistance to the teacher because Metagogics (action research) helps him to solve his own problems. It also assists both educator and educationist in being more aware of acute entropic situations: ie in exploiting the entropic situation to their own advantage as well as that of education. 'In general however, the professional researcher seems to me more vulnerable because of his distance from practice and his lack of responsibility for practice than is the teacher, by virtue of his involvement in practice'[3].

Metagogics does not only have advantage for educator and agogician in helping them to discover and overcome their shortcomings: 'A teacher lays the foundation of his capacity for research by developing self-motivating strategies . . . Through self-monitoring the teacher becomes a

conscious artist. Through conscious art he is able to use himself as instrument of his research'[4].

After having described a few significant aspects of this new discipline I shall now briefly compare Metagogics with History of Education to enable the reader to judge for himself whether Metagogics is in fact an improvement on History of Education.

## 5 Differences between Metagogics and History of Education

Metagogics emphasises all the time perspectives but pays special attention to the present and future while History of Education exclusively stresses the past. This leads to a second difference.

Metagogical investigation starts with a present problem or entropic situation in order to solve or correct it and to supply future guidelines. History of Education is very seldom problem-orientated in spite of the fact that Venter[5] describes the problem approach as a ground structure: History of Education still remains theme-orientated.

The prime objective of Metagogics is change and/or innovation in order to improve or to rectify. History of Education only emphasises change in the past and to substantiate this statement I quote De Vries[6]: 'In its educational research History of Education must take cognisance of change, although change must never be over emphasised or made absolute' (translated). Metagogics also supplies strategies for change and/or innovation and differs fundamentally from History of Education in this respect.

Metagogics is always searching for invariants while History of Education doubts the existence and necessity thereof because to the latter in general, each and every (educational) situation is unique and non-recurring. According to History of Education the determination of invariants helps to give man a puppet-like character. 'The freedom of man mocks every effort to schematise human existence in the past: even more in trying to schematise man for the future' (translated)[7]. The denial of invariants of History of Education also emphasises its differences with an neglect of using other disciplines (as used by Metagogics) in its interdisciplinary approach. To explain this more lucidly it can be mentioned that the natural sciences study the non-personal and stress a cyclic view. History of Education on the other hand believes in the linear approach and studies the past educational existence of human beings. Metagogics, however, integrates both these approaches and uses knowledge derived from both.

In conjunction with this previous point, Metagogics also uses the relevant essences and criteria of other scientific disciplines while History of Education might perhaps only use the criteria from other part-disciplines in education and in doing so minimises comparison and the probability of providing verified future guidelines.

Metagogics works multidimensionally with regard to methods and approach. History of Education (as indicated already) has fallen into a 'method-monism' which implies that the past-situation is seldom (if ever) researched in its full dimensions resulting in an incomplete perspective of the past situation. Metagogics studies the educational reality in a system context: History of Education isolates the past.

Because Metagogics takes the existing (present) entropical situation as point of departure, all research is operational in character. History of Education, on the other hand, studies the past situation which is always alien to the researcher. This makes it impossible for the researcher to re-establish the real past event since he cannot transpose himself into the past. Metagogics is therefore also better equipped to produce future guidelines. 'But when we apply science, we premise high predictability and when we apply history we premise low predictability'[8]. Observation plays an important role in Metagogics, but is absent in History of Education because the entropic situation does not exist anymore. It is therefore obvious why History of Education can never use the phenomenological method.

Metagogics works creatively and is future orientated and always asks the following questions: why, what and how, whereas History of Education generally asks who, where and when, and according to Potgieter[9] the latter three questions are on a lower niveau because they usually deal with 'basic research', ie the provision of historical information without the intention of implementing it to the benefit of the present agogic reality.

> In its pure form, basic research is conducted solely for the purpose of theory, development and refinement. It is not concerned with practical applicability . . . Applied research (Metagogics) is conducted for the purpose of applying, or testing, theory and evaluating its usefulness in solving educational problems[10].

Seeing that Metagogics emphasises rectification of the problematic situation, it has utility value. History of Education is very seldom problem orientated and if past corrective measure are detected, they are in most cases irrelevant for the present. History of Education only supplies the researcher with examples of how other (historic) figures under different circumstances solved their problems. In emphasising the present and future, the Metagogician is forced to be in step with the latest technological developments and their implications for education. In History of Education the effects of these (historical) changes and innovations should be known, but might not be relevant or important anymore.

## 6 Conclusion

The author truly hopes that by looking at a new educational discipline through a keyhole, interest has been aroused and stimulated and that other colleagues will follow suit in questioning the relevance of their present application of History of Education. However, the intention is by no means to discredit History of Education but rather to emphasise the shortcomings of History of Education in its present state in our present world situation and to propose a substitute (Metagogics) which, to the author's mind has more scope, advantages and potential to cope with all the educational demands in a technical and functional world rapidly approaching the year 2000. Metagogics also does not only include the methodology of History of Education but also elaborates on it and presents much more in the field of research. Metagogics is a modern approach to education in time perspective, it has vitality for the present and takes the sting out of the unknown future.

NOTES

1 L Stenhouse 'What counts as research?' in *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol XXIX, No 2, June 1981, p 105.
2 P Broadfoot and J Nisbet 'The impact of research of educational studies' in *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol XXIX, No 2, June 1981, p 121.
3 Stenhouse *op cit* p 110.
4 *ibid.*
5 I S J Venter *Historiese Opvoedkunde*, Durban: Butterworths, 1976, pp 167-173.
6 C de Vries *et al Die Pedagogiese Perspektiewe*, Durban: Butterworths, 1982, p 51.
7 P S Dreyer *Inleiding tot die Filosofie van die Geskiedenis*, Pretoria: HAUM, 1974, p 181.
8 Stenhouse *op cit* p 106.
9 F J Potgieter *Historiese Wordingskunde*, Pretoria: HAUM, 1980, pp 36-41.
10 L R Gay *Educational Research*, New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1981, p 8.

# Which History of which Education? A Critique of Metagogics

Linda Chisholm and Peter Randall

In his article, 'Metagogics; A new Discipline', published in *Perspectives in Education* vol 7 no 1, Professor Coetzee attacks History of Education on a number of grounds. The most important of these appear to be that history of education 'burdens the students with a mass of irrelevant facts'[1] and that it has no utility for either the present or future. Professor Coetzee asserts that 'leading agogicians in South Africa and overseas'[2] and the 'present pragmatic world tendency'[3] have moved away from a study of the past.

In the place of History of Education, Professor Coetzee wishes to establish 'Metagogics', a discipline which would, by contrast to History of Education, be relevant and have immediate use in the practical world. Professor Coetzee's citation of leading agogicians — presumably he means educationists — is rather narrow and largely confined to a few universities in South Africa[4]. His characterisation of History of Education also seems to be something of a caricature and provides little insight into the actual content of the courses provided. However, he does appear to be criticising an approach to the past which assumes little relation between the past and present, does not seem to provide students with any sense of meaning or understanding of process and change in history and is particularly narrow in its source-usage.

Although one cannot assume too much, given Professor Coetzee's restricted range of 'authorities' and since he provides no concrete examples, it is clear that the spirit informing the kind of History of Education which he criticises is that which considers a study of the past 'for its own sake' and on its own terms as a valid exercise. Such a conception of the task of the historian, as painstakingly uncovering all the facts, which are by definition neutral, for a purpose that is not immediately discernible, has been subject to attack, it is true, since at least the early years of this century[5]. It is an extremely old-fashioned approach, and one which we, for example, have rejected in our own teaching.

Professor Coetzee also defines the particular purpose of Metagogics as wanting to 'plan ahead and anticipate the necessary steps for preventing the entropic situation in future (long term)'[6]. Metagogics would establish

'corrective measures' to prevent the 'entropic situation' and would employ a methodology embodying a 'problem approach, multi-disciplinary view, system theory and the detection of variants'[7]. This article cannot take issue with all the questions raised by Professor Coetzee, but will focus on two areas which seem to be of primary importance. The first is Professor Coetzee's notion of the relationship between past, present and future and the second involves the implications of his new discipline, Metagogics.

**Past, Present and Future:**

Professor Coetzee appears to posit somewhat artificial breaks between the past, present and future. His position seems to be predicated either on the notion there is no alternative to the 'traditional approach' criticised by him, or on ignorance about major shifts in western historiography which have affected education within the last century. He also assumes, a little breathtakingly, that the present can be understood, and the future planned for, without reference to the historical processes that shape it.

Many historians, dissatisfied with the 'traditional approach', have undertaken historical research, whether it be in education or not, armed with the maxim popularised by E H Carr in his classic and seminal work *What is History?* (1960) that 'the function of the historian is neither to love the past nor to emanicpate himself from the past, but to master and understand it as the key to the understanding of the present'. Carr seems to have been criticising the notion of history 'for its own sake' expressed so clearly by Professor Elton:

> The task of history is concerned with the (present) only insofar as it throws light on the part of the past that he is studying . . . Let it be remembered that the pursuit of history in its own right is not only morally just but agreeable. A good many people simply want to know about the past, for emotional or intellectual satisfaction and the professional historian fulfils a useful 'social' function when he helps them to know better. He is also, of course, satisfying his own desire for knowledge . . . Yet these . . . uses are not its main contribution to the purpose of man. The study of history is an intellectual pursuit, an activity of the reasoning mind, and, as one should expect, its main service lies in its essence . . . It real value as a social activity lies in the training it provides, the standards it sets, in this singularly human concern[9].

Carr was also criticising the view that people can be abstracted from their social context. An important part of his argument is that all questions and accounts of the past are asked and made from the standpoint of the present. It is always the questions of the present that illuminate the past,

that give it meaning. In addition, the historian him/herself sees the past in terms of his/her particular values, opinions and prejudices. These are always structured, although not absolutely determined, by his/her present place in society and his/her views about it. Thus every generation writes history anew[10], since each generation asks different questions of the past — questions which are raised by present conflicts and issues — and conflicting interpretations might thus co-exist at any given time. A particularly apt illustration of this might be the current re-thinking of Afrikaner history, which has presented a very different picture from the standard view which maintains the existence of a monolithic Afrikaner unity over all time. Fracturing and disunity within the ranks of Afrikanerdom at present have given rise to interpretations of that past which sees it as having been fraught with conflicts and disunity since at least the eighteenth century, and which effectively challenge common assumptions about Afrikaner racial attitudes, in history[11]. This reworking of the past is not insignificant in terms of its impact on present political re-alignments and hence the future. Similarly, the student uprisings of 1976, the school boycotts of 1980 and continued black resistance to the education to which they are subject, have prompted questions about the forces in the past that have revealed in the words of van Schoor,

> We who have thus far been the victims of South African history will play the major role in the shaping of a new history. In order to make that history we must understand history. A people desiring to emancipate itself must understand the process of its enslavement.[12]

Clearly an understanding of the role of education in this process is not insignificant. Questions about the past from this vantage-point, have in turn given rise to a substantial educational historiography which differs from the 'traditional approach' in both its content and in the way it attempts to understand the present through analysis and understanding of the past.

We do not here imply that history of education should be *reduced* to present concerns, merely that it informs our understanding of them, and hence the ways in which we choose to act on this knowledge. We also do not imply that all histories are equally good therefore equally valid. Indeed, we would argue that the 'traditional approach' has been superceded by better accounts; here the criteria are based on standards of scholarship, the rigour of the concepts employed and the explanatory value of specific accounts. We would also agree with the British educational historian Brian Simon that,

> It is the most difficult thing in the world to view objectively a system in which one is immediately involved. Historical study

> can be a powerful means to this end. It enables the student to understand that educational 'principles' contain historical components, some of which may no longer be relevant — or, in the light of advancing knowledge, viable — and which are, therefore, open to reconsideration. The same applies to institutions which have often been changed in the past and will certainly be changed in the future. There is, perhaps no more liberating influence than the knowledge that things have not always been as they are and need not remain so.[11]

In view of the above arguments, we would thus agree with Professor Coetzee that certain approaches to the study of History of Education, namely those which present it as a mass of 'irrelevant facts' with no relation to the present, are defective, not least because they obscure the relationship that does exist between the past, present and future. We would contest his argument, however, that there is *no* relationship between the past, present and future. To deny this relationship is to engage in a re-definition of the past-present nexus; this is itself an act to be placed in its historical context if it is to be understood, an act that has determinate effects. In denying a past-present relationship, and suggesting the neutrality of his own intervention, as if it stands outside of history, simply by virtue of its dealing with the present and future, Professor Coetzee is privy to some of the very defects in the school which he is criticising.

For Professor Coetzee, the only way out of the 'traditional approach' is to abandon it altogether. This, according to him, is supported by 'leading agogicians in South Africa and overseas' and the 'present pragmatic world tendency'. It is a pity that Professor Coetzee is not more specific about whom this tendency represents, or where it is located. For it is at least as demonstrably true to say that the 'traditional approach', having been questioned and abandoned by many and probably most working Historians of Education in the English-speaking world, has given way to a variety of approaches which attempt to make the discipline both meaningful and significant — often with the help of insights from other disciplines such as sociology. It is now almost common-sense to say that,

> History has always been a borrower from other disciplines . . . but history has always been a lender, and all the social sciences would be immeasurably poorer without knowledge of the historical record. The social sciences are not a self-contained system, one of those boundaries lies in some fringe area of the historical sciences. Rather the study of man is a continuum, and social-scientific history is a bridge between the social sciences and the humanities.[11]

We here also endorse the view of Asa Briggs that

> . . . the study of history of education is best considered as part of the wider study of the history of society, social history broadly interpreted with the politics, the economics and, it is necessary to add, the religion put in.[15]

Thus, at least in England and in the United States of America (not to mention Australia and Africa), Historians of Education have begun to focus on educational history as an aspect of social history; they have focused on areas like the family, the media and other social institutions which help to socialise children; they have explored local Histories of Education; they have sought to broaden the notion of education by looking at the history of childhood, patterns of literacy and illiteracy and their determinants — which are often political and economic — and the educational experiences of those groups 'hidden' from orthodox educational history, namely workers, women and blacks. They have also begun to broaden their range of sources to include the memories of living people — the oral history movement in education is but one example here.

These currents of research and explanation have already made their impact on South African educational studies. Admittedly Histories of Education in South Africa — both in Afrikaans and English — have been dominated by the 'traditional approach'; that there are exceptions in both cases, however, has to be noted. Amongst Afrikaner historians, the work of van Zyl, as part of RAU's Geskiedenis Navorsingsprojek on Afrikaner history on the Rand, clearly relates the educational experiences of Afrikaans-speaking youths on the Rand to their social context[16]. It is also clearly related to the present in that it forms part of the on-going project of Afrikanerdom in its self-definition. Amongst English-speaking historians of education, the most significant work reflecting broader trends is represented in Peter Kallaway's forthcoming collection of essays by a range of scholars on the relationship between *apartheid* and education[17]. While its focus is on black rather than white education, it is, in the same way as van Zyl's, a work on the past, with implications for the future.

And this returns us to Professor Coetzee's rather crude attempt to posit a final break between past and present — as though it can be achieved by the stroke of a pen, or the creation of a new discipline called 'Metagogics'. Whether he likes it or not, History of Education will continue to be written by different groups attempting to understand the present, making history meaningful, giving shape to present social conceptions, and — while not doing so directly — guiding actions with a bearing on the future.

**Metagogics: a new discipline?**

According to Professor Coetzee, metagogics is designed, inter alia, 'to

solve present agogic problems', 'to change the entropic to an ectropic situation' and 'to improve the present and future agogic reality'[18]. There is a frequent stress on change and innovation, these being seen as 'planned or willed action'[19]. Another major element is the utility of Metagogics: 'seeing that Metagogics emphasises rectification of the problematic situation, it has utility value', as opposed to History of Education — which has none, according to Professor Coetzee. We do not intend here to engage in the debate about the predictability value of History and History of Education or to outline its nature as a social science, although we have already alluded to these issues. We shall attempt merely to situate, albeit briefly, Professor Coetzee's article in its context, to show its own continuities with the past and interaction with the present, and to suggest that its possible implications might be.

We need to decode some of Professor Coetzee's language to understand what he is actually saying. In essence, it seems to us that he is concerned to supply a 'science' that will assist in crisis-management and in preventing future conflict in education through certain (unspecified) 'corrective measures'. One's understanding of the aim of Metagogics is enhanced by considering the historical context within which the inventor of this 'science' is himself operating. The South African education system has been in a state of 'crisis' since at least 1976. It is, moreover, a crisis that is multi-dimensional. It goes beyond the 'critical' shortage of teachers and funds and the evident anxiety amongst a large part of the Afrikaans teaching corps about the implications of educational 'reform', as well as the dissatisfaction felt by many English-speaking whites about the nature and degree of reform. It involves, crucially, continued resistance in black schools and colleges of education and universities to an imposed form of education. This education 'crisis' is clearly part of a larger scenario in which the legitimacy of the status quo is being questioned in no uncertain terms. The government has responded with, amongst other things, the de Lange Commission of Inquiry into education, appointed in 1980. Restructuring and reform in education has certainly taken place, most notably in the field of non-formal education. Further reform, however, has been hampered not least by the growing divisions within Afrikanerdom, as illustrated for example by the reactions to the de Lange Commission's recommendations for a single ministry. From Professor Coetzee's viewpoint, the situation is 'entropic' indeed. Clearly, 'planned and willed action' is required to counter the forces of disequilibrium. But agreement is required on the nature of the action — to both the left and right.

An examination of Professor Coetzee's article makes it clear that his proposed changes do not represent a complete discontinuity with the past. His science of 'futurology' (a term which inevitably raises undoubtedly ludicrous comparisons with astrology) seems to us to draw heavily on an

all-too-familiar educational framework. For example, there is a thinly-veiled suggestion — 'man's genuine concern and love for the man in need of guidance' — that the Metagogician actually has a mission to make the person in need independent and prepare him/her for independence. This is patently independence of a particular kind. The echoes of Christian-National Education are quite clear:

> We believe that the calling and task of white South Africa with regard to the native is to christianise him and help him on culturally and that this calling and task has already found its focusing in the principles of trusteeship, no equality and segregation . . . We believe that native education and teaching must lead to the development of an independent, self-supporting and self-maintaining native community on a Christian-National basis[20].

The historial continuities, the suggestions of Professor Coetzee's own sources of inspiration and action, become clearer when he tells us that 'a real agogic situation can only flourish within a *positive authoritative structure*'[21]. According to Professor Coetzee, 'the person in need yearns for authority and sympathetic guidance'. Compare this with Christian-National Education doctrine that

> . . . the authority must also see to it that the education which is given to adults is not damaging or dangerous to the state[22] . . . We believe that the teaching and education of the native must be grounded in the life and world-view of the whites, most especially that of the Afrikaner nation as the senior trustee[23].

The sentiments expressed in these various extracts are not far removed from the apparatus and language of separate development and ethnic differentiation in education. They do not differ fundamentally from the aim of Bantu Education, namely 'to prepare African youngsters psycho-ideologically for where the Bantustans placed them physically and politically'[24]. Needless to say, neither separate development nor unequal racialy-divided education is universally accepted.

By the end of the article Professor Coetzee is making very grand claims indeed, namely that Metagogics has 'more scope, advantages and potential to cope with all the educational demands in a technical and functional world'[25]. The technicist view of the world which underlies this sort of statement is deeply disturbing[26]. It suggests an extraordinarily narrow conception of the real needs of South Africa, and the blithe jettisoning of History of Education in favour of a utilitarian discipline does nothing to increase our sympathy for it. Although we have stressed the continuities between the past and present in Professor Coetzee's own work, we

recognise that it does represent a departure which is not insignificant. That is, it is perhaps not too far-fetched to suggest that Professor Coetzee's very language of technicism, combined with Christian-National Education overtones, produces a synthesis reflecting something of the reality of new historical forces in South Africa.

Professor Coetzee asks us to guage for ourselves whether Metagogics is 'in fact an improvement on History of Education.' His characterisation of the latter is so absurdly outdated (according to him, it *'exclusively* stresses the past', 'is very seldom problem-oriented', suffers from 'a neglect of using other disciplines', 'believes in the linear approach', 'has fallen into a method-monism', etc, etc all of which we hope we have effectively refuted in the earlier part of the paper) that any comparison is impossible. We are dealing with two very different animals. Our concern is that if Metagogics were to be instituted in place of History of Education (as it is now commonly understood, and not as Professor Coetzee caricatures it), the study of education in this country would be enormously impoverished. What is really needed is a broadening and enriching of the understanding of History of Education amongst those who still view it as a 'mass of irrelevant facts'. And that brings us back to the title of this article: unless we know specifically *which* history of *which* education system we are talking about, the danger indeed is one of irrelevance.

NOTES

1 J H Coetzee 'Metagogics: A New Discipline', in *Perspectives in Education* Vol 7 No 1, July 1983 p 8.
2 *Ibid* p 9.
3 *Ibid* p 10.
4 These include D B van Dalen, J J Pienaar, A J Basson, F Potgieter, and I S J Venter; R G Woods, I Morrish and A Toffler (an historian of education?) are also cited.
5 See, for example, R H Tawney's, 1914 essay reprinted in R Hinden (ed) *The Radical Tradition,* 1964; also see Brian Simon, 'The History of Education' in R Tibble (ed) *The Study of Education* (London: RKP, 1966) for more recent discussion on this question.
6 *Op cit* p 15.
7 *Ibid* p 17.
8 E H Carr *What is History* (Harmondsworth: Penguin), p 26.
9 G R Elton *The Practice of History* (London: Fontana, 1967), p 68.
10 See Brian Simon 'The History of Education in the 1980'. *Educational Studies,* vol xxx, no 1 Feb 1982, p 1, for a restatement of what has become a platitude.
11 Andre du Toit and Hermann Giliomee *Afrikaner Political Thought: Analysis and Documents, vol 1, 1980-1850* Cape Town David Philip, 1983; Dan O'Meara *volkskapitalisme* Ravan Press, 1983.
12 W P van Schoor 'The Origin and Development of Segregation in South Africa', A Abrahamse Memorial Lecture, 5.10.1950, Teachers' League of South Africa, Cape Town, p 35 (mimeo).
13 Brian Simon 'The History of Education' in R Tibble (ed) *The Study of Education,* op cit, p 92.

14 D S Landes et al, *History as Social Science* (1971) p 142-3.
15 Asa Briggs 'The Study of the History of Education' in *History of Education*, vol 1, no 1, January 1972, pp 5-22.
16 See E L P Stals *Afrikaner in die Goudstad*, Deel 1, 1886-1923 and P van Zyl, *Die Onderwys van die Afrikaanse Kind aan die Witwatersrand, 1886-1921: 'n Voorlopige evaluering*, Publikasiereeks: Die Geskiedenis van die Afrikaner aan die Rand, B4, Johannesburg, 1975.
17 Peter Kallaway (ed) *Education and Apartheid* (Ravan Press, forthcoming).
18 Coetzee in this issue of *Perspectives in Education*.
19 Coetzee *op cit*.
20 Christian-National Education manifesto, article 15.
21 Coetzee *op cit*.
22 CNE Manifesto article 13.
23 *Op cit*, article 15.
24 Frank Molteno 'The Schooling of Black South Africans: an Overview' in Peter Kallaway *Education and Apartheid* (Ravan Press, forthcoming 1984).
25 Coetzee *op cit*.
26 See for example Peter Buckland 'Technicism and de Lange' in *Perspectives in Education*, HSRC, Special Issue, 1982.

# Metagogics: Its Meaning?

Hannah Gluckman

In this article I will be concerned not so much with what Coetzee[1] is saying in his two articles on Metagogics, but with the problems of understanding what he is saying.

When I studied Pedagogics and read various writers on the subject, I always suspected that what I was struggling to understand was in fact often unintelligible. However, I held this suspicion in check for three reasons: Firstly, I had to consider that possibly my own understanding was deficient, and in the case of translated works, I preferred to believe that the translator himself was at fault. Thirdly, I naively believed that a professor or doctor of Education, or both, must know what he's talking about.

But if an Afrikaans-speaking literary columnist[2], who probably has not even studied Pedagogics has the courage to believe in his own intelligence and criticise the writing of Pedagogicians, then I too must now speak out. For not only are Coetzee's two articles a good illustration of what Bertyn is referring to, but he is guilty of even more reprehensible errors.

Bertyn[3] refers to 'pompous definitions', writers who 'refrain from using ordinary words', who 'embroider for pages an idea which could be expressed in a few sentences', who ' fabricate words'. Coetzee does all this and more. I will give two examples only.

Coetzee[4] writes: 'Corrective measures then are the . . . result . . . of research' — a fairly understandable statement. He then adds, 'viz the functionalisation of the inferences'. If this is supposed to throw further light on his original statement, it does not succeed. I presume he means to say that the results of the research are then put into practice.

Another example: '. . . Metagogics endeavours to solve present agogic problems, ie to change or to improve the entropic-agogic situation in favour of a more meaningful existence in future'[5]. Hands up those who now fully understand the first part of the statement on the basis of the explanation which follows it? Surely one of the first principles of good writing is to bear one's audience in mind, and Coetzee must have known that he was writing for English-speakers whose knowledge of the jargon of

Pedagogics is (thankfully) limited. Yet, nowhere does he give us an explanation of what an 'entropic' situation is, or for that matter an 'ectropic' situation (his next point on the same page.) A dictionary does not help:

> Entropic — referring to a measure of the unavailability of a system's thermal energy for conversion into mechanical work[6].
> Ectropic: Referring to an eversion of the margin of the eyelid, so that the red inner surface is exposed[7].

But even if we were to guess from the context, if not the dictionary, that an entropic situation is somehow an educationally unsatisfactory one, we are still left in the dark. What is 'a more meaningful existence'? At whom is this 'meaningful existence' directed? Who decides? I wonder if Coetzee meant that Metagogics would help to change a situation where a child is not learning (if that is his definition of entropic) to one where he will learn? Professor Coetzee, would you please reply? In simple English?

Let me go further than Bertyn does. I aver that not only does Coetzee use words and phrases which hinder meaning eg 'preontological' (to be discussed later); 'agogic'; 'metabletica';[8] Umwelt'[9]; 'existial'[10]; 'invariants' (to be discussed later); 'Metagogics works multidimensionally'[11]; and 'methodmonism'[12] but at times he makes no sense at all. For example: Coetzee states that the concern of Metagogics is, 'to establish relevant relationships and to seek new ways of existence and future guidelines in order to realise the agogic practice more meaningfully,[13]. Should someone who wishes actually to practice Metagogics read this sentence, would he now know what to do? Where are the answers to the specific questions that come to mind — relevant relationships between whom? What makes them relevant? What new ways of existence? What future guidelines? What makes agogic practice more meaningful? Who decides all this? How do you judge if they are right?, Alas, Coetzee does not help such a neophyte[14].

Another statement that might worry our neophyte is; 'Metagogics represent applied action on operational research because it always endeavours to improve the present and future agogic reality. This objective is achieved by fulfilling the demands as prescribed by scientific research ie by complying with the characteristics of rational and founded knowledge by means of proven scientific methods . . .'[15] Again, the specific questions which cry out for answers are: what is the difference between applied action and operational research? If 'represent' means 'to stand for: to be a substitute for: to correspond or be equivalent to'[16], how can Metagogics 'represent' research? Or does Professor Coetzee mean that Metagogics *involves* research? What are the characteristics of rational and founded knowledge? Which proven scientific methods?

Coetzee's two articles contain many such vague, generalised statements

which on closer examination tell us very little. They also contain obvious statements such as 'man is . . . also a future being who always finds himself in a specific situation at a specific time'[17]. The section headed *Agogic Principles (characteristics) of Metagogics*[18] abounds with such meaningless sentences, and the tone is set right from the opening paragraph with 'Agogics, being present-day involvement in view of future significance . . .'

However, not only is Coetzee's use of language difficult for us to accept, but so too is his attitude to language. His obviously a follower of Humpty Dumpty who spoke to Alice when she went through the looking-glass. She said, 'The question is whether you can make words mean something different': he replied, 'The question is, which is to be Master That's All'. Coetzee obviously intends to be Master. For example, he writes that 'of even greater concern are the personal factors which encumber change . . . These factors are self-competence, self-esteem, dogmatism, authority, fear and menace'[19]. While I agree that the last four characteristics could hinder change, I wonder what peculiar meaning Coetzee has given to the characteristics of 'self-competence'(sic) and 'self-esteem'? Surely most people would regard these as necessary personal factors for change?

More serious, however, is Coetzee's inability to see that by using words without regard for the definitions that he himself ascribes to them, while he may be showing that he is master, he is nonetheless contradicting himself and confusing hell out of the reader. For example, he defines, change, as 'to make something different but not necessarily new. Change has no purposeful or planned characteristics because it happens spontaneously . . .' On the other hand, innovation, is '. . . not evolutionary, but is a purposeful, willed or planned action . ..'[20]. By his definitions, Coetzee has shown that he regards these two concepts as differing somewhat in meaning, yet throughout his two articles he couples the two words together as if they have identical meanings. For example, in the paragraph following the definitions he writes, 'Because Metagogics wants to change or innovate with regard to the entropic situation, it is now clear why Metagogics possesses the characteristics of both change and innovation'. Apart from the fact that wanting something does not logically lead to possession of it, one now wonders why he bothered to make the distinction between these terms. The confusion grows in the following paragraphs as well, when Coetzee specifies the characteristics that 'change and innovation should always satisfy'. How can 'change' for example, 'take the cost factor into account' or 'be compatible with existing laws' if 'change' is spontaneous?

Even the opening sentence of the section on *Change and Innovation* is confusing. Here he asserts that 'Change is not only ontological, it is pre-ontological . . .' But how can it be? If ontology is concerned with the nature and essence of things, how can a concept or thing such as 'change' have

existed before things had a nature or essence? Yet another area in which Coetzee uses words as if he intends to be Master of them, is in his use of the term 'invariant'[21]. The following points (I think) are made in connvection with this term:

1 Invariants are fixed principles, 'laws or even values or norms'[21].
2 'Principles, norms and values taken from society, religion etc act as invariants in the agogic situation'[21].
3 'To correct the entropic situation . . . invariants are indispensible because they become the criteria by which verification can be done'[21].
4 'Each period shows unique and specific characteristics (invariants) . . .'[21].
5 'Metagogics helps to bring new or previously undiscovered invariants to light, it emphasises the existing invariants or re-affirms invariants which have bcome "irrelevant" '[22].

If our neophyte Metagogician were to read this, what guidance would it give him in putting Metagogics into practice? Having noted in the dictionary that 'invariant' means 'that which does not change', he would expect to look for just that quality in the invariants he uses as criteria for verification. (Even though as yet, Coetzee has not made clear what is to be verified.) He's confirmed in his view by point (1) which says that invariants are fixed principles (the exact quote is '. . . fixed principles which can be called invariants'). However, the beginnings of doubt must surface when he sees still in point (1) that fixed principles are also equated with laws, or even values and norms because surely these can and do change from country to country and even within one country. How reliable then are these invariants as criteria for verification (as instructed in point (3)) if they can and do keep changing? Moreover, how will he know which ones to choose as criteria for verification? Point (4) does not help him because suddenly the definition of 'invariant' has changed from being a 'fixed principle' to being a 'unique and specific characteristic'. When finally he reaches point (5) (in the next article) his confusion must become terrible to watch because now, although hints were given previously, instead of *using* given invariants as criteria for verification, he as a Metagogician has to *discover* them — new ones, previously undiscovered ones, existing ones, and even 'irrelevant' ones.

If in a panic at this responsibility, he goes back to the first article for further guidance via closer reading and turns to section (8) from which he had first summarised points (1-4), he will note with a sinking heart that they aren't 'invariants' at all — the heading calls them 'Invariables'. However, all

is not lost, because he remembers that in section (5), under the heading of Future Perspective, he had read that while he should look carefully at his own 'thoughts, life and world views, judgements, values and norms . . .', as a serious educationist, 'he should *never be unfaithful to himself when it comes to his educational intervention and scientific research*'[23] (own emphasis).

In which case he doen't have to worry about invariants or invariables, nor does he have to worry about taking change or innovation into account. All he has to do to verify whatever he is verifying, is to follow his own biases.

In our neophyte right? Does what is is claimed to be 'thorough research' based on 'a solid foundation which in all respects can be scientifically justified'[24] boil down to no more than the values, views and biases of the so-called researcher dressed up in fancy language? Professor Coetzee, in simple language, prove me wrong![25].

NOTES

1 J H Coetzee 'Metagogics: a new discipline' in *Perspective in Education* Vol 7 No 1 July 1983. and 'Metagogics: its objectives, principles, criteria and significance, and the difference between Metagogics and History of Education' in this issue of *Perspectives in Education*.
2 L I Bertyn 'Little pedagogic Monsters' reprinted in *Perspective in Education* Vol 7 No 1, July 1983.
3 L I Bertyn *op cit*, p 1.
4 J H Coetzee, *op cit*, PIE July, p 18.
5 J H Coetzee, *op cit*, this issue p 94.
6 *Concise Oxford Dictionary*.
7 *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*. (Not even listed in 6).
8 J H Coetzee, *op cit*, PIE July, p 12.
9 J H Coetzee, *op cit*, this issue p 95.
10 J H Coetzee, *op cit*, this issue p 95.
11 J H Coetzee, *op cit*, this issue p 100.
12 J H Coetzee, *op cit*, this issue p 100.
13 J H Coetzee, *op cit*, this issue p 94.
14 *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines, neophyte, as 'a new convert . . . beginner or novice'.
15 J H Coetzee, *op cit*, this issue p 95.
16 *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*.
17 J H Coetzee, *op cit*, this issue p 95.
18 J H Coetzee, *op cit*, this issue p 95.
19 J H Coetzee, *op cit*, PIE July, p 14.
20 J H Coetzee, *op cit*, PIE July, p 13, Section 4. Change and Innovation.
21 J H Coetzee, *op cit*, PIE July, p 17, Section 8, Invariables (laws).
22 J H Coetzee, *op cit*, this issue p 98.
23 J H Coetzee, *op cit*, PIE July, p 15.
24 J H Coetzee, *op cit*, PIE July, p 18.
25 Before doing so, perhaps Prof Coetzee will read the unpublished MEd dissertation 'A critical study of the Philosophy of Education which undergirds the teaching of educational studies in Afrikaans teacher-training Institutions in the Transvaal' by H Gluckman 1976. This substantiates in great detail the assertion made.

# DISCUSSION

## The Interests and Organisation of 'English Speaking' Teachers

Tony Morphet

The core of this paper was prepared for and delivered to the 1983 annual conference of the Natal Teachers' Society.

The argument proceeds through several stages before it focusses on the English speaking teacher. It begins with an unlocated reflection on the nature of teachers' interests and it proceeds to an attempt to locate those interests in their different contexts and then, on that basis, to enquire into the situation of the English speaking teacher.

The question which best launches the enquiry is happily simple and direct. 'What constitutes the interests of the teacher?'

The possible answers to this question must accommodate the meanings of two widely differing sites of teacher activity — the public organisation of the profession which articulate those interests and the schools in which the interests arise and are given active form.

We may start in the public arena by looking at teacher organisations, though the task is immediately daunting. South African teachers have their interests represented by twenty two different organisations — each appropriately designated through an acronym. In some sectors these organisations are openly competitive, even vitriolic, in their antagonism, while in others a kind of sensitive and suspicious fraternity prevails. Fracture and fragmentation are clearly ruling conditions, and sporadic attempts at 'unity' (SAFTA, NEUSA, UTASA) have not succeeded in reversing the process. An adequate account of teacher interests will have to provide explanations for the extraordinary degree of fragmentation as well as ways of understanding the specific lines of fracture and dissent between the various groups. As an interim procedure we can note simply that teacher interests do not exist, at least in public forms, within homogeneous and consensually determined goals or purposes.

As a further step towards exploring the mixed and heterogenous nature of teacher interests we can, usefully, turn towards the other site of activity,

the school, and enquire into the process through which teachers as individuals and as members of a staff become consciously aware of and articulate about their interests and commitments in the enterprise of teaching and learning. A teacher, newly qualified and fresh, enters a school full of hope, enthusiasm and commitment and he looks in very practical and realistic ways for the *conditions which will make his work possible*. Not all teachers make this kind of entry but it is common enough to form a basis for consideration. Generally, and fairly quickly, disappointment sets in. The needed conditions are not easily secured, particularly for the young visionary who emerges from training filled with a sense of his own talents and seeking to shift the values of the world.

His first problems lie within the extraordinary, small, closed, rule-dominated hierarchical, conflict-ridden, world that is his school. He must make his working terms with his colleagues and with his pupils, and the means towards that agreement, which is something he desperately needs as a basic condition for his real work, lie in the unattractive processes of compliance. Compliance is the cost, the investment, which the teacher must make. He must comply in dress, manners, styles of behaviour, standards of work and recognition of authority. He must know, and share the 'tone' of his school, its traditions and history, its value of itself and its interpretations of its purposes. In return for his investment in compliance the teacher gains solidarity and the respect from his colleagues. With that behind him, he can outface the pupils and begin his work. And out of the compliance and solidarity the young teacher begins to gain the first rewards of movement up the scale — beginning the slow steady advance up the long ladder of esteem towards promotion. This is the origin of *the bureaucratic interest*. All teachers have this interest but so do all bureaucrats and as we shall see, this bureaucratic interest extends beyond the school.

Before going beyond the school we need to look at a second kind of basic interest which the teacher becomes aware of in his endeavour to establish the conditions under which he can do his work. When the classroom door closes he is an actor on another stage and although it may not always seem so, it is a very large stage on which he plays out a highly dramatic role in a portentous script. Stripped to essential functions he is his society talking to its future. How this conversation proceeds will depend very much on who our teacher is. As we shall see, it will differ a lot depending on whether he is black, or brown or white, or whether he speaks in Afrikaans or English and what he speaks about. But for the moment we need to notice how, within the creative life of the classroom, the teacher builds a range of interests in his encounters with his pupils. They are his creative material; he works with them in developing their best potentials; together they are directed towards the future; towards jobs and

family and culture and society. The pupils are his responsibility and his creative opportunity and the teacher comes to have an intense interest in who they are, where they come from and where they are going. It is this basic interest which sustains a range of secondary interests — in curriculum innovation and development, in resources and teaching ability, in a learning climate. Thus together with the bureaucratic interest the teacher establishes this *creative interest*, and the two intersect and intermingle. No classroom has a uniformly creative culture. Problems of authority and discipline require bureaucratic measures for their solution. Counter cultures amongst the pupils may sabotage the most generous and gifted attempts at creative 'conversations' between teacher and class. Further, the reputation for gifted work in the classroom makes a powerful contribution to the bureaucratic ascent of the young teacher. But we can, even while still within the confined space of the school see the teacher (still a colourless, classless, raceless, languageless figure) developing two differently constituted kinds of interests, one in security and the other in creative engagement. There is always, doubtless, a third form of interest, a secret hovering awareness of the numbing problems facing any teacher and a corresponding search for ways out of the profession. This third interest we can ignore in this discussion since it leads beyond the framework under consideration.

We have so far taken the school as a closed social world. In many ways it is, but never totally so — a range of pressures from outside the immediate walls are filtered or mediated inwards and have their impact upon the teacher, and equally, if he is to secure and advance his cause the teacher must be ready to act beyond the limits of the school walls. Teachers grow older, have families, need money, need status, need promotion, and these are controlled from outside, by the state department. The early experience of compliance which the young teacher learns in relation to his colleagues is repeated and amplified in his attempts to win advances up the scales of status and money. He enters an often tense relationship with the State in which personally he must comply with its requirements and wishes, flatter its whims and fancies, and please it in every way he knows how. But to go further and to advance collectively; to move not just up the old scales, but to secure new dispensations he must organise with his fellows. On the base of this bureaucratic interest the teacher organisation is born. If it were possible for all teachers to establish identical personal and collective relationships with the State we might have only one teacher organisation, but clearly this cannot happen since the State is not a neutral beneficient, abstract, referee, sitting high and lordly above the struggles of everyone to establish decent conditions for work. Instead the State is an active and partisan agent at the centre of the struggles. It is an instrument in the hands of some of the participants and it is used against competitors. So

different groups relate to it in different ways and see their collective bureaucratic interest in different and conflicting perspectives. Fracture and fragmentation begin within these conflicting patterns of relationship with the State.

In the same way that the teacher's bureaucratic interests originate within the school and then find their way into public forms in separate and differential negotiations with the state so does the other, creative interest, emerge beyond the school and take on public life. However, in the latter case the forms of action vary over a very wide range of activity, shaped as they are by the precise social locations and functions of particular schools. The pupils in the particular classroom bring with them very specific established messages, meanings and structures. They come from a particualr community, a precisely located social class, a geographical area, even a particular zone. They have been assigned to a racial group, they speak a common language. They articulate a common historical inheritance and they look towards a common social horizon. These coherences exist *within* a school (indeed the school helps to build them) but *between* schools the differences can be as wide as the society itself. Through the creative conversation in the classroom the teachers' vision and purpose interact with the community from which the school draws its life. However, between teacher and teacher the vision and purpose may differ so widely that no common purpose between them, as teachers, may be discernible. There are few common interests between South African teachers because South African society is fractured into competitive groups. Behind the fragmentation of the teacher organisation stands the segmented politico-legal structure of South African society. Not only are there 13 different educational bureaucracies managing the relationships between the State and teacher organisations but the legal structures of population registration, group area demarcations, and educational enrolment ensure that schools locate within exclusive and competitive social segments.

To recognise these simple facts in abstract terms is important, but to gain a more active sense of the qualitative differences in the perception which various teacher groups have of their interests and the actions they take requires more than merely the abstract recognition. We require some theoretical grasp of the dynamics of the existing conflicts in order to be able to give some definition finally to the interests of English speaking teachers.

The origins of present social fragmentation lie obviously enough in the era of colonial conquest and imperialist incorporation but the peculiarly modern dynamics built upon nationalist responses derive more directly from the penetration of the region by large scale international capital in the period after the discovery of gold in 1886. Development under

capitalism is always and everywhere a process of drastic transformation in the relations between segments of the society. New lines of division spread through the society, superimposing themselves on the customary patterns of social life and the most definitive of the new fractures lies along the line of 'development'. To the one side of the line lies possession, property, development investment, wealth, progress and power: to the other lies dispossession, landlessness, underdevelopment, poverty and impotence. It may be feasible to call these new lines of separation class divisions but the phrase hardly assists in understanding the dynamics of the process. What is patent to all actors in the drama is the burgeoning wealth and capacity of the 'owners' and beneficiaries, and the simultaneous destruction of pre-existing independence and the decline of the subsistence peasantry into the condition of wage labourers. Across the line of division the 'have nots' stare with feelings of mingled rage, energy, and hatred at the 'haves'.

The processes and the experiences are neither new, nor particular to South Africa, but what is unique in the local circumstance is the manner in which politico-legal means have been used to force, and maintain, the coincidence of racial and class divisions. Even these coincidences have not always remained consistent. For example in the period 1900-1930 the cleavage, on class lines, ran *between* the two white groups following a cultural and language 'break'. Black and Afrikaner migrants pouring off the land into Johannesburg shared a common class experience of deprivation at the hands of the Randlords and the English speaking skilled workers.

After 1930 the movement to mobilise Afrikaners took place precisely against the dominance and monopoly of Englishspeaking South Africa. The origins of the movement lie within the frustrations experienced by the rising petit bourgeois class of Afrikaners and it was they, from their positions as dominess, teachers, magistrates, clerks or small traders who generated the 'cultural' and 'racial' elements around which they built the nationalist constituency. The task of the movement was to close the gap between themselves and 'the English' and to widen it between Afrikaners and blacks. Jan Esterhuyse reflects very clearly the teachers' role in the process:

> The Afrikaner teacher differed in important respects from his English counterpart. Whilst the average English teacher may join the profession because he felt attracted to it, the former felt commitment, because it was an important way of tendering *volksdiens*. The strong surge of national consciousness created the need to provide leaders in many new fields a need for uplifting the vast Afrikaner *armblankedom* and an urge to catch up with the Englishspeaking community.

> Consequently teaching attracted some outstanding men and women who approached the profession with a missionary zeal, and who truly regarded the financial rewards as of secondary importance. In fact, careers in teaching and theology both possessed a dual quality of being in the services of God as well as the service of the nation. This special relationship between *godsdiens* and volksdiens is still an important feature of the Afrikaner school. And to this day many prominent Afrikaner educationists fundamentally believe that the true teacher *(die ware onderwyser)* does not regard his career as a mere *beroep* (vocation) but as a *roeping* (calling).
>
> This idealistic, self-denying view of teaching had some important long-term implications for the teaching profession as a whole: over the years any dissatisfaction with the mediocre salary structure was carefully suppressed as it was improper for a teacher to agitate for his own financial gain. Furthermore, it was naively accepted that a sympathetic government would look after the interests of a key section of its voters. (It was only in the previous decade that disillusionment set in and that Afrikaner teacher bodies started to agitate for better conditions of service.) This historical attitude partly explains the weak bargaining position of the present teacher generation.
>
> Being in the service of the *volk* and God, made the Afrikaner teacher generally a selfless devoted person, serving on numerous committees, involved in community projects as well as doing his duty as deacon or elder and Sunday School teacher in the Church[1].

Esterhuyse's comments are interesting in two respects. Firstly they show quite clearly the role of the teacher in the nationalist movement but secondly they throw important light on the way that role provides a pattern for shaping the interests of the teacher. Under the pressure of underdevelopment (armblankedom) the teacher's creative interest is expanded. He suppresses the immediate bureaucratic interest and takes up an 'idealistic self-denying' vocation in return for which he gains not only a sustaining sense of mission, but also positions of leadership and influence in the community. Once the task of crossing the line of cleavage is complete (as it was by 1970) the bureaucratic interest reasserts itself, hence Esterhuyse's remarks about 'disillusionment' and 'agitation for better conditions of service'. There are several other important questions which arise concerning the Afrikaner teacher interests as they enter the period of 'disillusionment' but many of these can be posed in the

discussion of the Englishspeaking teacher. For the present we may note that the detemining patterns of teacher interests come not merely from race or language or even class position, though these may be crucial at particular points, but that the location of groups within the historical process powerfully shapes both the functions and interest of teachers.

A quick glance at the contemporary crisis points in South African society shows that the line of cleavage now confront rising groups of Coloureds, Indians and blacks. Soweto 1976 and the Cape in 1980 speak eloquently of the teachers' roles and interest within those groups. There are many similarities with the Afrikaner teacher of the 30s and 40s.

However, even outside the framework of immediate crisis we can explore the ways in which the 'Coloured' teacher in particular finds that his career is less of a bureaucratic progression and more of a vocation, or devotion to an ideal. Mr Franklin Sonn, President of the CTPA and UTASA provides a definition strikingly similar to the description offered by Esterhuyse:

> Teaching is both a profession and community service which gives the teacher the opportunity to offer leadership and direction to the youth and community as a whole[2].

Mr Sonn, the architect of the *UTASA Charter for Teacher Unity*, is plain in his intention to mobilise support for the removal of apartheid, which is for him and his constituency exactly the rampart that holds them out on the wrong side of the 'development line':

> The Charter for teacher unity declares itself in favour of the establishment of a non-racial society based on respect for human dignity and repugnance for measures intrinsic in the policy of apartheid, which serve to offend the basic humanity of our children, our members and our parent community[3].

Mr Sonn is attempting to lead from a racially centrist, moderate position recruiting support from white and African teachers though recognising that 'racist' extremists on either the black or the white wings will reject his approaches. He thus rejects race as the explicit interest base but nevertheless finds himself trying to secure a class-based interest and the class to whom his appeal is most powerful is the aspiring petit bourgeoisie who experience their position as one of 'irrationality' and 'frustration'. His language polarises two conflicting states — the positive state of 'opportunities' and 'offers' and the negative state of 'frustrations, barriers and insults'. These are precisely the co-ordinates of the petit bourgeois perspective.

By contrast to the rising Coloured group, the African group experience

not the frustrations and barriers of an 'irrational' policy but the direct and immediate penalties and costs of underdevelopment. Professor Thembela in the context of a discussion of education reform made the following points:

> It will help little to upgrade teachers, provide adequate supportive services or provide equitable financing within the school system only, if some people still come from overcrowded filthy crime-ridden slums with no prospect of getting out of this situation.
>
> If even those who go through the school system in spite of these conditions do not have the political climate within which to actualise their potential then anything faculties of Education might do would be futile[4].

Some of the costs of capitalist development are visible in Thembela's words and his perspective, dominated as it is by those facts, admits little prospect of community service, creative or even bureaucratic interest. Teaching under such circumstances may be little more than a job providing the means of livelihood, though it would be wrong to assume that all African teachers find themselves locked within such narrow and grim confines. We need to remember Soweto in 1976.

The limited data generated through the preceding explorations of teacher interests is intended to provide some of the loci which will enable us to fix more accurately the locations of the Englishspeaking teacher interests. We have raised a number of criteria and determinants, which act on teacher interests: language, race, class, historical trajectories, the State. Each of these has an analytical role to play in the discussion but time and space forbid the full deployment of each question separately. In what follows they act in concert each coming into prominence only when it becomes dominant.

Historically, acting from the base of colonial conquest, victory in war, and in the interest of the Imperial power, the Englishspeaking community has always been the prime beneficiary of the South African system. The community has always had its own internal divisions, originally 'settler' and 'official', later transformed into class divisions, and it has employed various cultural fictions such as 'the British heritage' or '1820-dom' to mask those divisions and to preserve some semblance of 'unity'. The case of the teacher will, I think demonstrate both the reality of the divisions and the cultural fiction of unity. However, when seen against the overtly competing sectors of the society, Afrikaner, Coloured, Indian and African, it does nonetheless seem real and adequate to speak of an English-speaking community as the prime beneficiary. The volume and quality of benefits, initially extracted through colonial rule and distributed through

networks of patronage which favoured the common English culture was dramatically increased after industrialisation began.

The mobilisation of Afrikaner power however led to important shifts in the base of English power, particularly after 1948 when the Afrikaner capture of the State dislodged and changed the control of the bureaucratic structures, but the English community as a whole has successfully buffered itself against any direct experience of exclusion, loss or insecurity. English education has played no small role in the process of buffering and protection but it has been education established on an already powerful community base and developed within the context of established resources and designed for high-level achievement within the society. The external reference point beyond English South African education has never been *within* the society at all — it has always been the British system itself, and the pinnacles of that system to boot, Oxford, Cambridge and Edinburgh — with the recent additions of Harvard, Yale and (possibly) Princeton and Columbia.

Yet the very success of the 'Englishspeaking' community in securing its dominance within the economy and national culture poses difficult problems for the teacher. Such success rules out the kind of 'national' experience which characterised the Afrikaner movement between 1920 and 1970, new forms of which can be seen among the Coloured and African communities at the present moment. The 'nationalist' mobilisations which give the teacher such an intense sense of mission and influence (see Esterhuyse) require as their foundation an acute sense of disadvantage and exclusion. Professor Michael Ashley has attempted, through an invocation of Alan Paton's aphorism 'I am the servant of nationalism not yet born', to stimulate a sense of national mission among teachers, but it must fail, along with attempts to construct a 'philosophy' for English teachers, and for the same reasons. There is nothing to philosophise from or for, there is nothing to mobilise against or towards. English teachers, and their community, are enjoying the fruits of the philosophy of John Locke and the practical teaching of the Royal Society of the 18th Century England and those are still, regrettably, powerful enough to guarantee their security. Philosophically, and in terms of his commitment to a mission, the English-speaking teacher is stranded because the material life of the community whom he elects to represent is confronted by only one problem — how to increase its consumption and maintain its security. Philosophically these are null questions.

But it would not be adequate to leave the problem at this general level. Looking more precisely at the national scene it is clear after a moment's reflection that the phrase 'Englishspeaking' teacher, (now ESSA's, and ESTAS) is universally used to refer to the teachers of the State system — the members of the TTA, SATA, and NTS. To take this view for granted however

is unwittingly to suppress the fact that there is another group of English-speaking teachers, substantial in numbers, but infinitely more so in power and influence. These are the participants in the private system. Who are these teachers? What are their interests? Why are they split away from their cultural compatriots? What roles do they have? and which 'community' do they speak to and represent?

Once we recognise the existence of a separate education system (the private schools are organisationally linked both in the national context and to an international network) of Englishspeaking education we find we are looking at a class division within the cultural fiction of Englishspeaking South Africa. The private system has as its 'community' the 'big' bourgeoisie. The teachers within the system speak, in their creative interests, to the future owners, managers entrepreneurs and professionals of the South African system. The agendas of the private system focus on the recruitment, linkages, ideologies, culture and skills of the ruling group.

Of the current concerns of schools in the private system we may allow Mr Michael Corke, principal of the multi-racial St Barnabas College to speak, remembering though that his emphases take their place together with the traditional concerns of the private schools — namely a 'better' education for those who can and wish to pay for it:

> Schools aspiring to true independence should therefore be preparing to move out of the domain of providing a socially acceptable and technically sound education for the children of white middle class parents to a position where, on an organised basis, they are able to practise a concern for the needs of disadvantaged rural and urban people, attack the problem of dichotomy between humane and technocratic values, and act as a goad to the public sector and the emerging quasi-private schools in the matter of developing non-racial institutions whose practices are appropriate to the needs of a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society.
>
> Such an association of independent schools would ensure that its members were properly accredited in terms of non-discrimination on racial grounds, that member schools adhered to a code of professional ethics, that affirmative action was practised in respect of pupils from disadvantaged communities, that 'average' pupils were stimulated to high academic achievement, that the life-style of its schools were such that the less affluent child would not feel out of place, and that pupils would be brought to a realisation that wealth is not a barometer of personal, intellectual, spiritual or social worth[5].

The tone and the recommendations of the Principal of St Barnabas are impressive and at the same time unmistakeable. He is earnest, confident, aggressive and purposeful. His recommendations fuse with clarity and assurance the goals of the mission and the elite private school. Good conscience and the big bank balance stand behind his courageous confrontation of the future. Mr Corke, speaks (educationally) for the corporations of the international bourgeoisie to whom 'black advancement' (on proper terms) is the immediate need for system stability. Indeed the same class provides the foundation, in fees and donations, of Mr Corke's, and every other, private schooling enterprise.

For the teachers of the State system, whether they are members of the associations or not, Mr Corke and his colleagues who have elected to work within the private system constitute a severe problem. The social power of the Englishspeaking community is in the hands of the private teacher and is lost to the worker in the public system. Nothing exemplifies this more clearly than the de-racialising process which is taking place in private education. The private system is able by tacit dispensation to work beyond the provisions of the law while the public system is apparently trapped within the most humiliating and pettifogging of bureaucratic regulations.

To pursue to the issue of class division. If the teachers of the private system speak for the big bourgeoisie then the members of the public system speak for their petit bourgeois compatriots — the middle managers, production bosses, foremen and supervisors, bureaucrats, clerks and shopkeepers — all of those who will never share in the full power and profits of the system but who feel they cannot risk their allegiance to their 'cultural' leaders. They are the service and production personnel who must, of necessity, keep their place — the chance of preferment may, after all, come and the risks of falling are great. Risks are frightening; security over small domains is the watchword of such a class.

In speaking of the creative and the bureaucratic interests of 'English-speaking' teachers we need to be aware that we are in fact talking about a particular grouping defined by a class position. Of the Afrikaans-speaking teachers of the 1970s Esterhuyse referred to their 'disillusionment' and it is more than accurate to say that the Englishspeaking teacher of the public system experiences a consistent and continuous 'disillusionment'. His bureaucratic advance is painstakingly slow, and his creative interest is distorted and blocked. For him there is neither the sense of mission nor vocation, nor the speedy access to profits and power. The conversation of the classroom typically pits the reductive 'experience' of the teacher against what he sees as the naive expectations of his pupils. The 'mission' becomes distorted into a determination to confront pupils with the narrow spaces and tight limits of petit bourgeois life, and it is in precisely these circumstances that the celebrated 'sarcasm' of teachers is created. The

creative interest turns out of its proper course into a bitter reductive commentary scorning the hope and aspirations of the pupils. The typical content of such conversations lies in the importance of 'security' and the folly of ambitions. The teacher's task is the denial and the 'cooling out' of his pupils.

The consequences for the teacher associations of this set of teaching conditions are decisive. With a constituency of teachers whose community (or class) location commits them to an ideological role of limiting the range of expectations of their pupils little can be expected of the associations in the way of progressive political commitment. Whatever the association, as an independent thinking body, may wish, it is inevitably tied to the central issues of guarding the systems of promotion and salary increases. If 'security' forms the key concept within the conversations of the classroom so much the more does it provide the baseline for action in the teacher association. The association looks not towards goals that can and must be achieved, but to dangers and threats that must averted.

The reliability of these assertions can, I think be tested in two ways. The first is through the question of teacher recruitment; the second through the public profiles of the 'English' teacher associations. That the recruitment of English-speaking teachers is a severe 'problem' is nowhere in doubt. What kind of a problem it is, is widely disputed, but in my view, there can be no avoidance of the broad conclusion that the position itself holds no attraction for aspirants — and for this to hold there must be both deterrents and counter-inducements. Esterhuyse is again helpful here — bureaucratic interests can be all but entirely displaced by the sense of vocation but when vocation becomes a structurally determined process of denial, then unless the 'security' terms of salaries and benefits are large and persuasive, recruitment to the positions will unquestionably become difficult. It is worth noting one instance of how the problem has been confronted in the Transvaal. At a large public meeting the reforming head of the Broederbond, Professor Pieter de Lange, and Mr Denis Etheredge the Chairman of the Gold and Uranium Division of Anglo American, saw fit to define the calling and duties of the 'Englishspeaking' population in respect of teaching. They were the spokesmen of the 'big' bourgeoisie exhorting their lower class compatriots to their duties. Duties to whom one may well ask?

The stance of the teacher associations is the second indicator of the entrapped position of public-system Englishspeaking teachers. We can effectively disregard NEUSA, since despite its impressive position at its inception, it is now abundantly clear that it respresents a small fraction of teachers affiliated to big bourgeois interests through private schools, colleges and universities. We are concerned with SATA, the TTA and the NTS and for them their position might be kindly described as dynamically

conservative or, less kindly, as paralysis. They are agonisingly caught between the powerful persuasions of Mr Sonn's advancing petit bourgeois group on the one hand, the accusing harassment of the 'disillusioned' Afrikaner petit bourgeois teachers (SAOU, NO, TO) on the other and the sweet blandishments of cultural 'affiliations' to the English establishment above them. It is no wonder that they look about in search of the consolations of philosophy.

An argument as bleak as this owes more than merely analysis though the logic of the case allows few easy recommendations. At the centre of the discussion is the argument that class divisions are slowly asserting their dominance over racial and linguistic lines of difference. In those circumstances the creative role of the petit bourgeois teacher lies in the direct challenge to all of the mystificatory categories of distinction presently used to divide teacher from teacher and community from community. Non-racialism has long been a morally positive category in South African educational thinking — the problem is how to give that negative concept its positive content and meaning. In general this has been taken to be an expansive morally positive condition in which people will appear as 'people' freed from restrictive social categorisations, but such millenial hopes are plainly insubstantial and illusory. As racial categorisation recedes so will other forms of social distinction, particularly class, assume dominance and interests will be organised within those terms. The implicit plea of this paper is that Englishspeaking teachers should recognise at an early stage that their racial and linguistic categorisation constitutes the means through which they are effectively trapped and prevented from exercising their real interests as teachers. Both their bureaucratic and their creative interests lie in the restructuring of South African society into forms which allow a very much wider degree of decision-making and benefit sharing. The big bourgeoisie of South Africa must be among the narrowest, most selfish and ruthless ruling group in existence and their position is secured through a violent, coercive and authoritarian state. Teachers have a role to play in transorming these circumstances and to fulfil that role they need first to act on their real as opposed to their assigned interests. The first step is the abandonment of the 'English' fiction.

NOTES

1 J S Esterhuyse 'The Afrikaans Experience' in M J Ashley and S E Philcox (eds) *My Kind of School*, Cape Town, 1983.
2 F A Sonn 'The School as Community Organisation' in *My Kind of School*.
3 UTASA Charter for Teacher Unity.
4 A Thembela 'A reply to James Moulder' in R Muir (ed) *Proceedings of the Kenton Education Conference 1982*, Pietermaritzburg, 1983.
5 M Corke, 'Independent Schools and the Public Interest' in *My Kind of School*.

# Notice

In the previous issue of *Perspectives in Education* we said that from Volume 7 Number 2 (this issue) this journal would be refereed.

Unfortunately, due to administrative difficulties, this is not in fact that case. But arrangements are now well in hand and from the next issue, Volume 7 Number 3 (November 1983), *Perspectives in Education* will indeed be refereed. Our policy will be that all items which appear in the Articles and Interchange sections will have been approved by Consulting Editors who will have read them without knowing the identity of the authors. The names of our Consulting Editors will be listed inside the front cover and the Editorial Committee will decide to which Consulting Editors the various contributions will be sent.

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Volume 7 Number 2 October 1983

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# Information for Contributors

The Editors will welcome contributions in the form of comments on local events or questions, original articles, discussion of articles published in previous issues, reviews, items for the 'Notices' section, and so on.

Contributions should be sent to:

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Contributions should not ordinarily exceed 3 000 words in length, and should be typewritten on one side of A4 paper, double spaced, with ample margins. Three complete copies should be submitted. Proofs will not be sent to authors for correction unless this is explicitly requested.

There is to be no separate 'Bibliography'. References should be kept to a minimum. All notes (which includes 'footnotes' and references) are to be numbered consecutively in the text (in Arabic numerals, in parenthesis, on the line of the text), and should be listed at the end of the article, as 'Notes'. Titles of papers or chapters citied are to be enclosed in quotation marks; titles of books are to be underlined. Examples:

NOTES:

1. Carole Pateman *Participation and Democratic Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.
2. PF Strawson 'Freedom and Resentment' in *Freedom and Resentment and Other Essays*, London: Methuen, 1974, pp 15-23.
3. L Althusser 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' in B J Cosin (ed) *Education, Structure and Society*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977, see p 81.

Substantial quotations (more than about 3 lines) should be indented, shorter quotations should be enclosed in single quotation marks. Omissions from a quotation should be indicated by three dots.