

https://dspace.org/

The exploded self of a South African poet: the case of Wopko Jensma

Gardiner, Michael

1990-02-06T07:09:33Z
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/7864

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



UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG
HISTORY WORKSHOP

STRUCTURE AND EXPERIENCE IN THE MAKING OF APARTHEID

6 - 10 February 1990

AUTHOR: Michael Gardiner

TITLE: The Exploded Self of a South African Poet:
The Case of Wopko Jensma

AFRICANA LIBRARY

In this paper an account is given of some of the salient features of the work of the South African poet, Wopko Jensma. Though the focus of the discussion is more upon the poetry than upon the poet and his context, the issues which arise from attention to the poetry appear to offer opportunity for reflection upon concerns and tensions which seem to characterise the 1960s as that decade was experienced by an unusual and hence representative sensibility writing in the 1970s.

Octavio Paz has said that it is in the nature of lyricism to be a dialogue between the poet and the world.[1] In the long run, Paz is probably correct, no matter how "poet" and "world" are conceived. When that observation is applied to a poet and a world, then particular resonance is given to the term "dialogue".

The poet is Wopko Jensma. The world is South Africa of the 1960s and 1970s. The world that Jensma has experienced is much more than this, but to put it that way is to provide a field of focus.
During those two decades, Jensma was in his twenties and thirties, the time when he produced the graphic work and the poetry which give him his presence as an artist and a writer in our cultural midst.

Born a few months before the declaration of the Second World War in a small country town in the Karoo, Jensma had this to say about that event in a poem published in 1977:

SPANNER IN THE WHAT? WORKS

i was born 26 july 1939 in ventersdorp
i found myself in a situation

i was born 26 july 1939 in sophiatown
i found myself in a situation

i was born 26 july 1939 in district six
i found myself in a situation

i was born 26 july 1939 in welkom
i found myself in a situation

1405 129

now, when my mind started to tick
i noticed other humans like me
shaped like me: ears eyes
hair legs arms etc ...(i checked)
we all cast in the same shackles:
flesh mind feeling smell sight etc...

date today is 5 april 1975 i live
at 23 mountain drive derdepoort
phone number: 821-646, post box 26285
i still find myself in a situation

i possess a typewriter and paper
i possess tools to profess i am artist
i possess books, clothes to dress
my flesh; my fingerprint of identity
i do not possess this land, a car
much cash or other valuables

I brought three kids into this world
(as far as i know)
i prefer a private to a public life
(i feel allowed to say)
i suffer from schizophrenia
(they tell me)
i'll die, i suppose, of lung cancer
(if i read the ads correctly)

i hope to live to the age of sixty
i hope to leave some evidence
that i inhabited this world
that i sensed my situation
that i created something
out of my situation
out of my life
that i lived
as human
alive
i

i died 26 july 1999 on the costa do sol
i found myself in a situation

i died 26 july 1999 in the grasslands
i found myself in a situation

i died 26 july 1999 in the kgalagadi 2
i found myself in a situation

i died 26 july 1999 in an argument
i found myself in a situation 3

Most poets - like dramatists and tribal dancers, like clowns and mime artists - wear masks. Thus the attribution of simple sincerity to lyrical poets, especially when they are writing about themselves, is to risk missing the adoption of postures and attitudes towards experience which in complexity go beyond irony and evasiveness. Yeats put it this way:

> If I wrote of personal love or sorrow in free verse, or in any rhythm that left it unchanged, amid all its accidence, I would be full of self-contempt because of my egotism and indiscretion, and foresee the boredom of my reader. I must choose a traditional stanza, even what I alter must seem traditional. I commit my emotion to shepherds, herdsmen, camel-drivers, learned men, Milton or Shelley's Platonist, that tower Palmer drew. Talk to me of originality and I will turn on you with rage. I am a crowd, I am a lonely man, I am nothing. [4]

Seen in this light, Jensma's poem, though far from "traditional", is an autobiographical statement which makes the major point that to be a person in South Africa in anything like the full sense of the term, requires multiple births and multiple deaths. And it is the necessity for multiplicity which is one of the most striking characteristics of Jensma's work. It is this feature of the poetry, which explores the manifold implications of the situations in which Jensma inexorably found himself, that is the main focus of this paper.

If one looks at the three collections of Jensma's poetry - which is not easy to do as two of the collections are out of print and the other is banned for distribution - one will find a diversity of languages, forms, identities and histories unequalled in South African literature. This point is not made in any competitive spirit, but is intended to draw attention to the extraordinary variety of situations that Jensma has been able to explore, understand and express with

knife-edge accuracy.

Reading through the collections, with woodcuts and collages interspersed among the poems, one is compelled to jump from language to language and dialect to dialect, often within a single poem. And a further notable feature is that the poems are neither descriptive nor interpretive of what they address. Instead, they are dramatic presentations of the voices which articulate Jensma's sense of reality. By this means, the speaker's history is reflected in the speaker's condition, for the people of the poetry have become what experience and circumstance have made them. The most common condition is one which is generated in diverse forms by relationships which have been established between those who are oppressed and those who oppress them. That in itself says both little and much, but the hideous permutations of such relationships are key experiences of the 1960s for a sensibility such as Jensma's. Thus whether the voices in the poetry emerge from poverty, complacency, confusion or guilt (for example), those voices reflect obsessions, preoccupations and nightmares which the excess of power over the lives of others or the absence of access to some determination of one's own existence seem to generate. Thus the forces which impinge upon the lives of those who speak in the poems are often brutal, crude, inflexible and resonate with an apparent immutability.

The diversity of the poetry is more than one of content, such as the race or class position of the speaker, or the physical context in which the speaker is located. Jensma's poetry draws on European techniques such as surrealism, da-da, modernism and post-modernism to dramatise South African realities. In addition to this major attempt at reconciling African experience with European avant-garde, Jensma's poetry reflects pervasive presences of European, American

and South African musical forms, especially jazz.[5]

From an historical point of view, Jensma's poetry, in its movement across divisions of race, class, language and culture, is a significant counter-attack upon the barriers and distinctions built into South African society with savage persistence by political, economic and cultural interests during the 1960s. At a time when repression by systems of grand apartheid were least coherently opposed within the country since the resistance of the 1950s, Jensma began writing in ways that caused uncertainty about his identity,[6] and which transcended those categories peculiar to South African practice. Such an achievement does more than make Jensma a figure of interest and elicits comments of praise proclaiming Jensma "the first South African".[7] But perhaps the most distinctive achievement of the poetry is that it goes beyond identification, in its focus of sympathy, with the oppressed. The speakers in the poems are both the oppressors and the oppressed and both sectors (to live for a few moments more with such binary nonsense) are victims who share an essentially common plight. Were Jensma's analysis to stop there he would have gone only as far as a broad humanitarianism, no matter how finely his poems caught such obvious concern. What he traces instead is the damage done to those who participate willingly or helplessly in a brutal manifestation of racial capital. Nowhere does he hint at structures which might provide the succour that people so desperately need and in particular he posits no hidden utopia (especially the oldest of all, the bucolic one) by means of which the damage is judged. Jensma is only too familiar with what rural life, especially upon white-owned farms and in country towns has become. Furthermore, the pastoral dream no longer exists and will never exist for those who rustle in the detritus of the city or whose lives disintegrate in rural slums. Perhaps most important of all, neither sensitivity to other or to self, nor the sharp wince of being alive are dependent

upon a sense of hope or the promise of a future. The pressing presence of need and circumstance give the immediate a pungency and a poignancy in which the stink of life is asserted.

The temptation to applaud such achievement must be checked by the price paid for it. In the process of registering with uncanny accuracy a multitude of South African experiences, Wopko Jensma has lost the ability to write poetry. By extending himself across the barriers of South African society, he has forfeited his coherence as writer and has, in effect, exploded his poetic centre.

(ii)

Critical commentators on Jensma's poetry read his work differently. Peter Horn[8] argues that Jensma writes as one of the oppressed because he knows oppression in psychological and class terms. Michael Chapman[9] reads Jensma as a fundamentally radical poet whose stance is subversive of all existing political systems, whereas Jacques Alvarez-Pereyre[10] regards Jensma as a prophet who speaks in the tradition of the liberal conscience in South Africa. My own views[11] are less decisive than these as I am still in the process of coming to terms with Jensma's writing with the consequence that repeated readings of the poems are still necessary to my sense of the scope and nature of his work.

For the purposes of this paper, I have selected some ten poems, drawn from Jensma's three collections, which are intended to enable the reader to gain an impression of Jensma's concerns, with special reference to that broad enterprise, embraced by the widening term 'history', which seeks to reflect upon the South African experience.

The degree to which racial consciousness is forced upon hapless

South Africans is evident everywhere in Jensma's poetry. None of the official claims about the benefits of racial identity, under the apartheid system, appear to have existential validity and instead the damage inflicted by such a system is suggested to be profound. In the poem, 'I COME', the unconscious interplay of racial tensions between white and black emerges with a starkness that is both necessary and obvious:

I COME
1
i am white and brutal
i come to you after death
and leave you completely deserted

a little tenderness
a little care
only hardens my heart

a gentle bayonet
a breeze of bullets
is the voice of my existence

i did not hear you
i wont listen
i did not hear a thing

i am white and brutal
i come to you after death
and leave you completely deserted

2
you lie hidden
in the corridors of my fear
smelling of blood

i've plucked out your eyes
i've smashed in your teeth
i've peeled off your skin

but they don't believe
- everything is just lies
but they don't believe

that i call you brother

you lie hidden
in the corridors of my fear
smelling of blood [12]

Both voices in this poem are read as 'white'. The first appears to be a presence in the subconscious of a black person, whereas the second is suggested to be a response to a black presence in a white person's dream. The horror of this relationship is underscored by the quietness of the voices, perhaps the same voice. As it whispers down the labyrinths of psychical history, it gains an unnerving inexorability as the hideous bond tightens. In the original edition, the two sections of the poem are printed back to back.

At this level of exploration, Jensma brings to the surface one perspective upon age-old interdependencies within relations of power.[13] The silence of the black voice is both confirmatory and revealing. While the white voice prowls, infests and asserts, the black figure has to endure invasion, exhortation and, most acutely of all, to being used as a justification for the white nightmare. The white unconscious appears to now need the monster it has made of itself and the other to provide itself with identity, validity and reason for existence.

Reduced to abstraction, the poem is confirmatory of what is rather obvious. Yet the palpability of this poem presupposes an attentiveness to voices in society that goes beyond analysis of their relations.

Both figures suffer and that suffering, though different, is recognised. The erotic suggestions in the poem confirm the centrality of the acknowledgements made by the voice and imply (in a perverted form) a shared predicament. And a historical dilemma is here painfully evident: to what extent are individuals, as inheritors and bearers of history, responsible for the degree to which their present is so dauntingly determined? Reduction to "i am white and brutal" and to "you lie hidden/ in the corridors of my fear/ smelling of blood" does not happen within a single lifetime.

The tenderness implicit in such a recognition points to an awareness of the damage done to people trapped in such a relationship. However, the effects upon the lives of those afflicted by a system of social management involving relocation show much shorter-term damage, as evident in this minimalist poem which dramatises the situation of people who have been 'resettled':

LIMEHILL AFTERMATH [14]

cos's bloat belly
'f only mealie meal

cos's dark stare
'n a corners

cos 'e only fears
'n pines away

cos 'e can't shout
we toss side to side

cos 'e lift 's fists
we wan' 'e'v'n here 'n now [15]

To achieve the full effect, this poem needs to be read aloud as if one's mouth is lined with dust and as if one's jaws have been tightened by hunger. Like their language, these figures blur into clots, fragments and semi-random clusters, mouthing painfully and contortedly their anguish which ultimately collapses into a demand for a hopeless ideal. With the intermediate gone, this group of people has been translated from a community into a decayed collective of spasmodic gestures.

The absence of the intermediate - by means of which the past can be assimilated and a future generated - places the entire focus upon the present: "we wan' 'e'v'n here 'n now". And though this point should be developed at length, for its implications are manifold and profound, it must be sufficient to say here that the experience of the people forcibly moved to Limehill has an emblematic power in its exposure of ideological practice. When imposed from without or from above, this kind of system creates a continuous and an apparently inescapable present which in turn, it would seem, puts disintegrating pressure upon the capacity of people to live beyond myopic subsistence.

Of course communities even in such a state of waste generate modes of existence, adapting and developing structures which provide a degree of viability. That is not at issue here. What is necessary to note (and this goes beyond this poem) is the degree to which dependency upon the reality of others, especially those who impose the vision of the South African state of the 1960s, becomes a psychological and political absolute, from which there is no discernible escape.

JA BAAS

1

'n renoster is 'n nors vent. meneer hier -
rye skedels, gekatalogiseer, op rakke (spykers in my keel)
laat ons jou geheue, in alle redelikheid
oophark
nou, luister mooi hoe ek die bordjie sop opslurp
    luister na die sirene
    probeer nou deur jou gewete loop
    probeer voel hoe die visse jou vleis vreet
van renosters gepraat: is jy 'n suid-AFRIKANER?

2

16 desember en 'n skottel bloed op tafel
die karkas van afrika hang in-tempel
hallelujas onder koepelblou
'n skermutseling iewers
ek trommel my vingers op my propvol maag

3

ek is vredevors hier
ek wik en beskik
ek besluit wie vrek

julle koppe rol rose van ranke

julle eet klippe vir brood

ek is vredevors hier
ek ken harde kontant
lek my gat

16

This is a guided tour of an Exhibit A oppressor. With language as delicate as a meat-cleaver, Exhibit A displays his knowledge, his trophies, his obsessions and his power. Notice the silence (except, possibly, for "spykers in my keel") and the passivity of the listener. Lumbering as he does through his own exhibits, the "baas" draws in the listener with the eager deftness of an interrogator ("laat ons jou geheue, in alle redelikheid/oophark"), guiding his prisoner ("luister

...luister...probeer...probeer") along the path of disintegration. Mixed with this is the tone of the passionate analyst who, upon opening up a specimen, demands conformity to type: "van renosters gepraat: is jy 'n suid-AFRIKANER?".

The world of this Exhibit is a closed one, as section 2 of the poem suggests. Ritual, icon, thanksgiving, justificatory violence (trivial to this consciousness) and a full stomach complete this complacent pantheon. As overlord ("vredevors") this figure has power of life and death. It is of particular interest to observe how he refers to himself as "ons" in section 1 when he begins the process of dissection, and then to the listener as "julle" when he dismisses the mass of the powerless, enclosed as they are by the structure of section 3, which is dominated by the absolute pronoun "ek".

What else can be said in this context to the tirade but "Ja Baas"? When the grotesque looms so large to a person this speaker is prepared to address as "meneer", even though it is most probably ironic, how implacable must he be felt to be by those even lower on such a system's scale?

The contempt which this self-exposure reveals is not limited to the speaker. It smears off onto the listener and reaches beyond the brutality which drenches every thought and act. This is not the only view of Afrikaners which Jensma adopts in his poetry, but this is clearly the kind of universe from which Jensma recoiled into an alternative reality based upon identification with the multiplicity of those who have had to endure such savage tyranny.

That recoil has been finely observed by Mafika Gwala:

> Wopko Jensma. For a long time I thought he was a black. ... So when I met Wopko one evening, edged against his self-withdrawal, I could only think of one thing: his white world was killing him, as if out to destroy him. Perhaps he had refused for too long to be the white he was expected to be. Another hurting thought flushed my mind. It was the gnawing feeling that with such cruel reality as we have in this country - and with worse to come - it was futile to engage in existentialist resistance against a culture of oppression.[17]

Gwala could only have known Jensma through his poetry prior to this meeting , and the phrasing of "For a long time I thought he was a black" has the suggestion of an automatic assumption about it, implying that the poetry spoke effortlessly to Gwala in black terms. The interesting tension in Gwala's description is therefore that between the achieved quality of the poetry and the destructive effects upon Jensma of the position he had adopted towards 'white' society. Thus Gwala's "gnawing feeling" reaches with painful starkness in to the predicament of South African whites who sought then to dissociate themselves from the "culture of oppression". A further dimension to this predicament is illustrated by a poem which I consider less successful than others by Jensma, but which, as a failure, might itself be a statement about the particular limbo in which Jensma found himself through his attempts to ignore colour and class in his personal life:

> ONCE AND NOW
>
> i dont care what you do
> i dont care no more
> - sonny boy williamson
>
> a' know deir guilt-grimace:
> "shuv ova suzi matwetwe
> da sinod meetin's far still"

an a'm dreamin you, cathy-we
da smile on ya face da sun
batusi, batusi direlang (seTswana names for women)

a'm sittin hea, bessie
gettin soaked in yo blues
a've been livin it, bessie
an now it's juss moonshine
any damn booze fo' me

yea, sugar pie desanto
yo beat's a yellin i'ma head
lika bandsaw howlin'n screamin
an all yu'a juss sayin's: free

knockin yo do' a day:
unkhona u Thandiwe? (is Thandiwe here?)
an really dis reply:
"yea boss, she's hea"
a' keep forgettin ma skin
it's ma curse
cause a' lost a white swing

yea, a'll neva hav't no mo'
yo placid white kaffir
cares no mo'
yu wont touch him no mo'

love ya, love ya, ma black babe
yea, a' live ma dream, a'm alive

a' know deir guilt-grimace:
"shuv ova suzi matwetwe
da sinod meetin's far still" 18

The obvious irony here is that "yo placid white kaffir" cannot visit Thandiwe as a man calling upon a woman. American and Portuguese musicians, black at that, make meaning for a detribalised Afrikaner living temporarily in Botswana, but that fusion disintegrates when he steps across to Thandiwe's house, even though he speaks in se-

Tswana. Solitary stupor of booze and music makes for self-pity to the extent that the words "free" (stanza 4) and "a'm alive" (stanza 7) are hardly convincing. There is a masturbatory quality to this poem, something not necessarily a problem in itself, but here it is essentially dead-end.

The mawkishness of such vitiating unease is entirely absent in this remarkable little poem which deals ambiguously with the pain of dislocation:

OUR VILLAGE

since two gents with white suits rolled up
our village is not the same anymore

they pumped our chief full of bullets
they bumped off all our elders
they started raping our womenfolk
they keep talking of a new life for us
they say this thing is also elsewhere
they have our whole country tied up
they have come a long way to help us
they want us to have faith in them

our village is not the same anymore
since two gents with white suits rolled up 19

Once one perceives the implications of the circular structure created by the first and last couplets, it becomes impossible to read this poem only as the lament of a villager appalled at the violation of a deeply-held and familiar world. As has been remarked earlier, Jensma does not posit some rural paradise as an escape from the situations he understands with so much pain. If one looks at the circularity of this poem (with implications for architecture, time, ritual and so on), the village can be seen both as haven and

as trap. These "gents in white suits" can be all of many things: traders, missionaries, commissioners, agents of colonial powers and more. But their impact is as forces of irresistable change. For example, even the lamenting speaker has begun to use uncharacteristic language such as, "gents", "pumped" and "bumped off".

Here we have in a remarkably small space a drama of those fluxes and convulsions which characterise human history. Perhaps the Vietnamese experience (which emerges in the first novel by J M Coetzee[20] and the novella by Neil Williams[21]) has been influential in this instance, and/or African experience of colonialism.

A major difference between this poem and 'Limehill Aftermath' (discussed earlier, p9) is that despite many similarities between the two situations, such as the absence of a mediating process from one state of existence to another, the speaker in'Our Village' is to be trusted less than those forced into Limehill. Whereas the disintegrated state of those who have been 'resettled' engages sympathy and concern of a direct kind, the querulous note in the voice of the stunned recounter of 'Our Village' generates an equivocal response, as the haven-trap ambiguity of the situation suggests. Furthermore, the people of Limehill demand an impossible future in the present, whereas the single voice of 'Our Village' seeks a return to the past. Although this again puts unremitting pressure on the present, the tension in the poem is one between the inevitability of change and the legitimate fondness for the familiar. And it is that kind of tension in the poetry which generates complex imaginative responses to it.

When self-pity (for this is what characterises the tone of the central section of 'Our Village') is dramatised as a critical element

in the situation, it is very different from the self-indulgence which weakens 'Once and Now'. And Jensma's handling of facets of the experience of dislocation in all three poems prevents the banal self-satisfactions implicit in notions like 'natives good, settlers bad' and instead prompts questions - based upon emotional disquiet - about social relationships and change in their effects upon the lives of people.

Ambiguity in relation to political experience is sharply presented[22] in the following poem:

FEAR FREEDOM

after freedom struck my country
after the thousands dead
i am the only one left
the only one to know
the only one guilty
the only one to resist death
before my people's bones
before flowers of freedom country

before my people knew no nothing
before flowers were flesh
i am the only one
the only one with no gun
the only one no one suspected
the only one
after my eyes were burnt out
after remains of whitewashed bones [23]

Jensma is obviously writing about that deeply anticipated need and inevitability which has occupied the minds of South Africans for so long now. The 1960s was the decade when black African countries achieved "freedom" from political colonialism and, until recently in South Africa, liberation from minority domination has characterised what the notion 'freedom' has meant for us since the independence of

Ghana. Written out of the experience of repression in the 1960s and published in the early 1970s, this poem translates the desirable and the longed-for into a nightmare of one who anticipates the horrors of not so much a violent as an unrecognisable world. One reason why I say this is that the violence in the condition of the speaker seems greater than that generated by (what is imagined to be) a highly destructive confrontation between forces at the extremes of the great South African divide, with the outright defeat of one and the consequent deaths of so many people.

The speaker in this poem is clearly no activist, but is one who suffers acutely in the mind. In anticipating the cataclysm, the speaker speculates about the situation of one such as himself (to choose a gender) who has been a passive participant in the carnage and who now attempts to grasp at a world that has been devastated. Incapable of imagining a process of change, the speaker instead has to attempt to live in a world which is a projection of horrors which are already familiar. There is thus no irony in the term "freedom": it is an event, a thing which has "struck". The irony exists in the whole situation because the effects of freedom, as anticipated, are merely greater in degree, more obvious and thus more stark than the circumstances from which the majority seeks to free itself. Here we have an instance in Jensma's poetry of an attempt to anticipate a future. In so doing, the tension between the past and the present, as in 'Our Village', becomes a wild lurch from one extreme position to another, as in the swings from "after" to "before" and to "after" in the poem's structure. The lines in the poem are linked to each other by association, not logic or sequence, and every line is a tentative and incomplete probe into what is for the speaker a hostile and searing reality. Since the moral is a condition of Jensma's poetry rather than its purpose, the gentleness with which

this speaker's situation is understood and reflected is noteworthy. By establishing a link between the present and the future, the poem accords to the speaker the worst of all worlds in which guilt, doubt, irrational and rational fears, suspicion and, most corrosive of all, acute self-consciousness have inexhaustible space in which to ebb and flow. Against what looks like inevitable catatonia, the self attempts mutilated gestures in the direction of coherence.

That struggle not to be overcome by forces has enormous significance because it is when the odds are felt to be overwhelming that the small gestures can become acts of defiance, acts which keep essential integrities intact. The admixture of terror and courage is well-dramatised by this poem:

CRY ME A RIVER

who's that rowing a black boat
through this black night?
who's that not sparing his arms
and rowing without end?

who's that rowing a boat
on the river without an end?
who's that not giving up hope
on a journey without end?

who's that rowing a black boat
black in the black night?
who's that hearing the slavebell
and beating the thud of his gut? 24

The poem contains six questions, three about rowing a boat, and three about "not sparing his arms", "not giving up hope", and "hearing the slavebell". As I have suggested elsewhere[25] this poem generates a sensation of terror in one's gut rather than understanding in the mi

and it is thus not easy to articulate responses to it in words. But the repetitions and the persistent questions tend, I feel, to focus attention more upon the speaker than upon the rower.[26] What is striking in that case is the preparedness of the speaker to ask questions despite the risks of doing so. The initial risk is in opening the self in admiration at the heroism of the determined and desperate rower to the extent of inevitable engagement (even if only emotionally) in that situation. The speaker is therefore no mere observer but is drawn in, question by question until the coalescence of rhythms in the final stanza implies a powerfully sympathetic pulsation of effort, terror and courage.

Such a juxtaposition of the speaker and the object of admiration makes for an interesting comment on heroism in dark days of repression. The poem suggests that it is as much a condition of refusal (who's that not giving up hope") as it is a product of that which is being denied ("who's that hearing the slavebell/and beating the thud of his gut?"). Other elements of heroism are also present, such as a determined selflessness, but this poem gives a particular flavour to the courage in both observer and actor.

A further striking aspect of this poem, the discussion of which concludes this section of the paper, is that as it establishes the bond between speaker and rower, so it suggests that the need to ask the question "who's that" is a condition of the essential distance or gap between the two. It is this dimension to the poem which makes me see it as being more about the recognition and acknowledgement of terror and its accompanying bravery than about their nature or condition. Therefore this poem - for all its abstraction when decontextualised - does not slide into the universal or ideal by meditating upon the human condition. The responses (questions)

within the speaker are produced by circumstances, in this case those which induce a near-incapacity to envisage a future, those which suggest that the large act of defiance or resistance is impossible, and those which make oppression synonymous with being a victim in every possible sense of that term.

(iii)

Against the disintegrative effects of oppression, Jensma, as poet, has one major counterforce, and that is form. Without form, in the sense that it applies to the making of meaning in art, all art is impossible. In the case of Jensma, the meaningful line, poetic and graphic, stands between him and utter helplessness. As the poems discussed thus far have indicated, variety of form is closely allied to the necessity to speak with a wide range of voices. In a context which has the effect of seeming to turn essentially upon racial identity and restriction - the increase of prohibitions and controls by the state which characterised the 1960s is germane here - the assertion of a counter kind of coherence, in this instance poetic form, is necessary to keep at bay the essential chaos which rigid, mechanical, dichotomous and two-dimensional impositions of reality produce. [27]

The struggle of form against chaos, in the terms alluded to above, is evident in this six-part poem:

LOPSIDED CYCLE

1

we're all underground now, bud
conspiracy against the state, you say?
one by one
explosions
go off nea
whe e sits
one by one
e hammer'm
bulgin pop
'n declare
misjin co'
plete, race
relation's
betta than
eva. o numb
son, what up
now? t'many
explosions
now, 'n den
't blew ma
arshole to
smithereen
i juss crack some joke, you say
lets go paint heavensgate: whites only

2

today we will be singing a sad song, son:
a song of our hunger
we will defy you, yessa boss
we will crucify the nearest christ
we will all be living aloud
you know why son, eh?
we carry the carcass of hunger gravewards

3

for billy the kid zambi

you breeze from far, spokes
still
your kwela
rocks in me
your wail's
a eh pá
our joke
the ol PIDE
hidin in ma
cona till a
end a fight
then
brandishing
the cosh, eh
pá, whea's a
hooligans now
ep
drink up ol
son an feel
the jazz breeze blowin fez

en pá: I say (colloquial Portuguese)
PIDE: police in Mozambique

4

our cutlassregime hollers praise for the whip
dumbfounded
prisoners a
scratchin a
prison walls
until blood
drips outa'
their nails
a log chain
a ma leg, oh
neverending
pit a agony
set me free
Lod, i hea't
yours iGoli
leaves the gap for poor souls to die forever

iGoli: Golden City (Joburg)

5

minha mão está suja 28
-carlos drummond de andrade

i got a gash in my head
blood spurts from it
i must cut my head off
i must hide myself
no one must see me do it
cause the blood is my guilt
i can't stop the blood
a force behind the blood
tears all bandages off
i tried it many times
in the dark of my room
i am very weak now
due to loss of blood
i only have my agony now
i must cut my head off
and replace it with
a shining conscience

6

we drum our fingers on our potbelly
and feel at ease with the world
we brood around
innumerable slotmachines
the prize will be
a body plus its labour
what a comfort!
a petty pass law gets us slaves:
right to use a gun 29

The most obvious lopsidedness evident here is the way in which part 6 distorts the cyclical flow of the poem and, in its extrusive smallness, decentres the circular movement as an eccentric gear does. The bloated complacency of the speaker in 6 both contrasts with and is the source of the agitated condition of those in the other five parts. Significantly enough, part 2 is the most lucid of the other parts of the poem as it is aware of time, of action and offers explanation. As such, it is the opposing centre of force to the lopsided influence of of part 6. The cycle turns therefore around two pivots, excess and poverty, in tension producing an eccentric motion (to extend the metaphor) within the cycle of South African life.

Much can be said about the typographical forms of this poem's parts but it is perhaps more pertinent to point out here how the differences and the relations evident to the eye establish the community of linked but diverse concerns. The part which speaks most directly and most desperately in the struggle against and with disintegration is part 5 in which the repeated line, "i must cut my head off", with its ambiguous imperative, reflects acutely the predicament of the poet/speaker/thinker. When awareness and the need to articulate it has become a wound ("gash"), then the damage is heavy indeed. To the drumming of part six we listen to the explosions at the beginning, to the singing, the music, the breathing (read the "a" in part 4 stertorously) and to the sounds in part 5 ("gash", "spurts" and so on, including the sinister sibilants in the last two lines) as a chorus of efforts to express what Wordsworth in more placid surrounds called "The still, sad music of humanity"[30] and what Cronin, more contemporaneously and a good deal more optimistically refers to as "the voices of the land".[31]

Appropriate form is what Jensma seeks in his poetry, form sensitive to his awareness of the manifold suffering and his experience of the sources of pain.

By exploding himself existentially into the multitude of personae and voices which utter in his poems, Jensma appears to have transcended the restrictions of racial, class and linguistic inheritance. He has defied the single and the either-or by becoming the many. As the earlier quotation from Yeats indicates (p 3), protean elusiveness in poets is nothing new.[32] But in the instance of Jensma, the matter goes alarmingly further, to the point of creative collapse.

Such collapse is not simply attributable to the effects of severance from one's community, society or group. That can be bad enough, as those whites who took firm stands on religious, political and moral grounds have experienced. Isolation from family and community is severe, but society tends not to remain passive in its stance towards those who make that break. The mere withering in the wilderness of the outcast is often insufficient to it, and society is therefore capable of seeking out that person and of destroying him and her.[33] Assassination can take very many forms. It is this which underlies the earlier comment by Mafika Gwala: "His white world was killing him, as if out to destroy him".

The question must be asked: If one such as Jensma made the break in South Africa of the sixties, where could he seek shelter, succour and support? What social formations had the resources to sustain such a person? Institutions - such as those where many of us shelter - were clearly out of the question as Jensma is not a writer/academic such as N P van Wyk Louw, D J Opperman and J M Coetzee. I am in no position to catch with a well-researched phrase the cultural climate

of the sixties, but it is probable that the constrictive squeeze upon creativity and diversity of every kind except the official and commercial was at its most intense ever in South Africa at that time - suitably called "the decade of repression"[34] - particularly for a white artist and especially for all artists.

If one rolls off the names of some of the people active in music, literature, the plastic arts, drama and other cultural activities in Johannesburg and Pretoria in the sixties and early seventies, it looks from today's perspective as if there were a rich weave of creative fabric.[35] But outside of the ghettoes there was little possible sense of community. The absence of political and cultural structures to shape and sustain it, the stringent prohibitions of it as well as the general unthinkability of it made easy mixing of class and race within anything like a supportive community an extreme rarity. Instead of being absorbed into the texture of social formation and development as is much more possible today, figures like Jensma were egregiously isolated. And that widely felt sense of isolation led many academics, writers and other creative people to leave South Africa and live abroad.

It is possible to argue, following experience and a tradition which is romantic, that certain artists always stand outside of the conventional structures of society. That this can be so is not in dispute. The point is, however, that only real exceptions are wholly self-sufficient in this respect and furthermore, a politically engaged writer such as Jensma is acutely sensitive to the quality of the society in which he moves and lives. There are, of course, no contemporary societies without those so alienated by and from them that they both withdraw from them or are rejected by them.

Jensma would seem to be one such outcast, and without the evidence of his poetry and graphic works, which reflect again and again attempts made to connect with society in addition to caring so deeply about its members, he might be indistinguishable from so many who can no longer be 'productive' members of society. But he has left a remarkable testimony to those social and political manifestations in South African life which actively damage its people. The following poem is perhaps the finest example he has produced of the impact of those destructive forces:

JOBURG SPIRITUAL

1

we all sat roun a faia
a cops
squadcar holler a stop
a lump
a fool we dont run but
sit an
grin. hell. lod.i saw'm
thump da nightwatch down
his head a ball o' blood
i a white: we dont want
to see
you here again. an what
dat ma
bitch scuttled roun da
cona. i
my pals all gone, o Lod

2

i saw her sit on a sidewalk
i saw her spit blood in a gutter
i saw her stump for a foot
i saw her clutch a stick
i saw her eyes grin toothless
i saw thorns in her burnt flesh

i see her cut her own throat
i see her corpse lie in Dark City
i see her save a multitude

3

on my way to St Peter's Gate
i see a sign looming up -
WELCOME TO SOWETO:
air-conditioned rooms with baths
we can recommend the soap -

4

he sits in glory
a red robe
a golden throne
a thorn crown
the halo
the cross
the works

on his farm
khaki shorts
chev truck
barbed wire
smoke ring
fencing pole
the works

5

today is tuesday
yesterday was monday
tomorrow will be wednesday
after that another day

time after time the sea
collapses to certain death
on its burning beaches

time after time our prime
minister proclaims lasting peace
and nails sharpeville on
another burning cross

today is dingaan's day
yesterday was republic day
tomorrow will be an ordinary day
after that a similar day 36

Though much can be said about this poem,[37] the point that needs to be made at this stage in the discussion is that Jensma's control of his material clearly indicates that he is not possessed by the voices which speak through his poetry and, in addition, his familiarity with the worlds of outcasts, rejects and solitary figures of pain cannot, in the face of such intelligent attention to those situations, be romanticised. To do so would be to translate Theseus' statement that

The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact 38

into a Möbius Strip of self-gratification. The figures in 'Joburg Spiritual' are located at points where the systems which have produce them can no longer lie.

A further point needs to be added here. The admission of the reality of other beings into the self as Jensma has done is neither an uncommon nor a special quality. To think that it is, is to reduce the notion of identity to quantifiable units. It is precisely this reductiveness which the poetry challenges and through that challenge reveals the horror - in Mr Kurtz's use of that word[39] - of that which prevents exploration of the range of self.

Wopko Jensma deliberately reached beyond the limits that people from the South African variant of his race and class felt to be absolute except for very limited, minor forays beyond those bounds. In doing so, he sought one of the most intimate associations with the other that is possible. His poetry speaks through voices

from within worlds ordinarily unreachable from without. And the radical nature of this poetic act is underscored when it is understood that he did not do so on behalf of the other but as the other.

John Donne's famous paradox of the "dialogue of one" between two lovers is given a local dimension in this account of Jensma's 'method':

> His method - if it is a method - is simple, for it follows closely the lines of reality itself. Cain has killed Abel. Cain keeps his brother's still bleeding body. Cain talks to it, talks aloud to himself, and his waking dreams are heavy with this blood which he cannot wash away: a forerunner of Lady Macbeth, but worse than her, since it is his own brother Cain has killed. In fact, in order to show a South Africa sickened by apartheid, Jensma has chosen to speak in the first person, as both the hero-victim and the hero-murderer. But it is always the same 'I': it is the same person who suffers, the man who has been stricken by what he has himself conceived or done in a moment of aberration or madness. An inner universe takes shape, like the cross-section of a sick mind: it reveals the terrible schizophrenia of living all the time by two codes of conduct, one for one's family and (white) neighbour, the other for the sub-human black man cast in the role of servant. Thus the hero-victim dies a thousand times over, bleeding from a thousand wounds, while the hero-murderer constantly proclaims a brotherhood which is contradicted by the multitude of crimes committed against the flesh and the spirit of these 'unlike likes'. 40

As the previous discussion has indicated, I regard Jensma's relations with the personae in his poetry as more complex than as described above, but the account of the 'method' makes an interesting connection between the "lines of reality" and what is called "the terrible schizophrenia of living all the time by two codes of conduct". There is an implication here that to acknowledge and admit the other under apartheid is to become schizophrenic. Further, and more generally speaking, it is implied that apartheid generates

a state of schizophrenia, especially in those who have their original locations in the dominant minority and class. Seen from this perspective, Jensma's poetry is an analysis of that state in South African society of the 1960s and 1970s. Thus the autobiographical detail from 'Spanner in the What? Works' (quoted at the beginning of this paper),

> i suffer from schizophrenia
> (they tell me)

has an important ambiguity to it: both he and his society share the same affliction.

This is not an attempt to make simplistic connections between the experience of South Africa and schizophrenia. That is not intended by this paper. A recent scientific (and therefore crude) study has been made of the physical and psychological problems of South Africans[41] but these figures, though very disturbing, do not address the scale or scope of "the situation". If we accept Berthoud's aphorism,

> If the activist makes history, and the intellectual defines it, the poet experiences it - that is, makes it real to himself. 42

then it is to poets (in the broadest sense of the term) that we need to look for accounts of experience which are not to be found anywhere else, and which are explored with a complexity peculiar to the nature of poetry itself.

That Jensma was aware of this and of the creative tradition to which he belongs is evident from this poem:

KLOP EN VIR JULLE SAL TOEGEMAAK WORD

beethoven was 'n skisofoon
só maak die sielwetendes my verstaan
gauguin was 'n skisofoon
só laat die tugkomitee my dit voel
baudelaire was 'n skisofoon
èn, boonop is hy aan syphilis dood
francois villon was
paul van ostaijen was
marcel duchamp was
hendrik marsman was
tristan tzara was
òns benodig 'n gemeenskap
wat werk nes 'n byekorf
òf miernes (ibid: salomo 1:1)
waar elkeen sy of haar plig
in hierdie saak ken of beken:
besoek jou kerk gereeld
moenie jou werk verander nie
koop jou televisiestel
luister nuus, lees koerant
koop 'n bougenootskaphuis
dring aan op kux seep
betaal 'n begrafnispolis af

eugène marais was 'n skisofoon
èn, boonop verslaaf aan morfien ook
dumile is 'n skisofoon
wolf kibel was 'n skisofoon
can themba was
vincent swart was
nat nakasa was
cyprian sjilako was
kippie moeketsi is
raditladi was 'n skisofoon
èn, op moussorgski se kaal berg dood
harold rubin is 'n skisofoon
david botes is 'n skisofoon
is ek nou om te wees? en om te glo?

nie alle diere is olifante nie
nie alle diere is donkies nie
nie alle diere is hyenas nie
nie alle diere is seekoeie nie
nie alle diere is renosters nie
nie alle diere is zebras nie
nie alle diere is bokke nie
nie alle diere is ape nie
nie alle diere is skape nie
party is ystervarke, krimpvarke 43

To conclude with a focus upon Wopko Jensma, it is necessary to reflect briefly upon two accounts of the schizophrenic condition. Jameson, paraphrasing Lacan, says the following:

> For Lacan, the experience of temporality, human time, past, present, memory, the persistence of personal identity over months and years - this existential or experiential feeling of time itself - is also an effect of language. It is because language has a past and a future, because the sentence moves in time, that we can have what seems to us a concrete or lived experience of time. But since the schizophrenic does not know language articulation in that way, he or she does not have our experience of temporal continuity either, but is condemned to live in a perpetual present with which the various moments of his or her past have little connection and for which there is no conceivable future on the horizon. In other words, schizophrenic experience is an experience of isolated, disconnected, discontinuous material signifiers which fail to link up into a coherent sequence. The schizophrenic thus does not know personal identity in our sense, since our feeling of identity depends on our sense of the persistence of the "I" and the "me" over time.[44]

There are some useful remarks here, which confirm Jensma's analysis of the predicament of those condemned by poverty, removal, servitude and the many as yet unformulated malignities which South Africa's history has inflicted upon so many people. But the focus is now more personally upon Jensma himself:

> If hysteria was the pathology of the exacerbated staging of the subject, a pathology of expression, of the body's theatrical and operatic conversion; and if paranoia was the pathology of organization, of the structuration of a rigid and jealous world; then with communication and information, with the immanent promiscuity of all these networks, with their continual connections, we are now in a new form of schizophrenia. No more hysteria, no more projective paranoia, properly speaking, but this state of terror proper to the schizophrenic: too great a proximity of everything, the unclean promiscuity of everything which touches, invests and penetrates without resistance, with no halo of private protection, not even his own body, to protect him anymore.
>
> The schizo is bereft of every scene, open to everything in spite of himself, living in the greatest confusion. He is himself obscene, the obscene prey of the world's obscenity. What characterizes him is less the loss of the real, the light years of estrangement from the real, the pathos of distance and radical separation, as is commonly said: but, very much to the contrary, the absolute proximity, the total instantaneity of things, the feeling of no defense, no retreat. It is the end of interiority and intimacy, the overexposure and transparence of the world which traverses him without obstacle. He can no longer produce the limits of his own being, can no longer play nor stage himself, can no longer produce himself as mirror. He is now only a pure screen, a switching center for all the networks of influence. 45

I am persuaded that there is much more than an individual, idiosyncratic instance in the case of Wopko Jensma. Inasmuch as apartheid, which has roots easily perceived in the sixteenth century, is one of this century's particularly malign manifestations, so too is the incidence of schizophrenia a phenomenon of our time, not only in this country. Aside from the sheer pain which being "only a pure screen, a switching center for all the networks of influence" must be for the person so afflicted, the effects upon a poet are obviously devastating. Jensma's struggle with form

now has a poignancy which is acute. And the bitter irony must be that in transcending with such tender understanding the barriers of race, class, culture and condition, Wopko Jensma now suffers the indignity of being no longer able to regulate or control the obscene flow of experience and sensation through himself. In seeking a fuller, more complete identity than the operation of apartheid decreed, Wopko Jensma has lost his creative identity. He can no longer paint or write. The analysis that his poetry makes of the agonies of southern Africa is now directly applicable to himself.

Wopko Jensma currently lives in the Salvation Army Men's Home in Johannesburg. He is a patient of the state, an incurable schizophrenic.

POSTSCRIPT BY A POET

> History has the cruel reality of a nightmare, and the grandeur of man consists in his making beautiful and lasting works out of the real substance of that nightmare. Or, to put it another way, it consists in transforming that nightmare into vision; in freeing ourselves from the shapeless horror of reality - if only for an instant - by means of creation. [46]

NOTES

1. Octavio Paz. 1985. Labyrinths of Solitude Harmondsworth. Penguin. p 90
2. This is the indigenous name for the Kalahari
3. i must show you my clippings (1977) Johannesburg. Ravan. pp 6-7
   The two other collections of poetry, woodcuts and collages by Jensma are:
   Sing for Our Execution (1973) Johannesburg. Ophir/Ravan
   Where White is the Colour/ Where Black is the Number (1974) Johannesburg. Ravan
4. Quoted in Michael Hamburger. 1969. The Truth of Poetry Harmondsworth. Penguin. p 82. The quotation is from W B Yeats. 1961. Essays and Introductions London and New York. p 552
5. See Michael Gardiner. Funking the Jive: the poetry of Wopko Jensma. The English Academy Review 3 1985, especially pp 109-113
6. See Mary Morrison Webster in Sunday Times (1974): 'The reader's initial and, indeed, lasting impression is that Jensma is an African - possibly of Sophiatown.' Endnote in Jacques Alvarez-Pereyre. 1984. The Poetry of Commitment in South Africa London. Heinemann. p 114
7. Peter Wilhelm in To the Point (1973): 'This is the clue to Jensma. He stays together, in shape, alchemically combining enormously diverse cultures and experiences. He is a terrifying, new sort of human. He is the first South African.' Quoted on the back cover of Where White is the Colour/Where Black is the Number
   See too Jacques Alvarez-Pereyre op. cit. : Jensma is certainly the one poet living in South Africa today who comes closest to being what one could, for the first time, call the voice of the South African nation - if such a nation really existed.' p 111
8. Peter Horn . The Psychological Pauperization of Man in Our Society in Lionel Abrahams and Walter Saunders (eds) 1977. Quarry '77 Johannesburg. Donker
9. Michael Chapman. 1984. South African English Poetry: a modern perspective Johannesburg. Donker
10. Jacques Alvarez-Pereyre. op. cit.
11. Michael Gardiner. Funking the Jive: the poetry of Woko Jensma op. cit.
    Self and Circumstance: a note on Wopko Jensma's poetry. Theoria. 69 May 1987
12. Sing for Our Execution pp 63-4
13. See Peter Horn op. cit.: 'Jensma exposes the reality of race as a construct of psychotic consciousness which stares with catatonic rigidness at skin colour, unable to grasp and unwilling to confront the real and underlying causes of the South African misery, a struggle of a people for their rights. In this world of a bad dream "everything is just lies", and such is the double-bind which ensnares all that nobody will be-

lieve "that i call you brother". p 118

14. Limehill: a 'closer settlement' in N Natal to which people from farms and missions were moved in 1968. The death-rate, especially of the old and the young, was appallingly high and the place was given the nickname, "mshayazafe" (beat him until he dies) by those who had to live there.
Cosmas Desmond O F M ?1970. The Discarded People Braamfontein. The Christian Institute of South Africa. pp 23-26
15. Ophir 18 1973. p 18
16. Sing for Our Execution p 9
17. Mafika Gwala. Tracing the Steps. Matatu 3/4. no 2 1988. pp 80-81
18. Sing for Our Execution p 43
19. Ibid. p 69
20. Dusklands (1974) Johannesburg. Ravan
21. Just a Little Stretch of Road (1979) Johannesburg. Ravan
22. Horn. op. cit. p 119
23. Where White is the Colour/Where Black is the Number p 8
24. Ibid. p 19
25. Gardiner op. cit. 1985. pp 120-1
26. Alvarez-Pereyre suggests that 'Cry Me a River' was 'inspired by the fate of Bram Fischer'. This poem is printed next to one entitled, 'Bram Fisher Gasink'. I am not aware of the source of Alvarez-Pereyre's information.
Alvarez-Pereyre op. cit. p 110
27. See D H Lawrence 1921. Women in Love:

> It was the first great step in undoing, the first great phase of chaos, the substitution of the mechanical principle for the organic, the destruction of the organic purpose, the organic unity, and the subordination of the organic unit to the great mechanical purpose. It was pure organic disintegration and pure mechanical organization. This is the first and finest state of chaos. ('The Industrial Magnate')

28. 'My hand is dirty'
29. Sing for Our Execution pp 10-15
30. 'Tintern Abbey' line 91
31. 'To learn how to speak' line 2
32. See John Keats: letter to Richard Woodhouse, 27 October 1818:

> As to the poetical Character itself, (I mean that sort of which, if I am any thing, I am a Member; that sort distinguished from the wordsworthian or egotistical sublime; which is a thing per se and stands alone) it is not itself - it has no self - it is every thing and nothing - It has no character - it enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated - It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an

Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosop(h)er, delights the camelion Poet.

in Robert Gittings (ed) 1982. Letters of John Keats Oxford. O U P p 157
(If Wally Serote is South Africa's Wordsworth, then Wopko Jensma is this region's Keats.)

33. See D H Lawrence. Study of Thomas Hardy (1914) in R P Draper (ed) 1975. Hardy: the Tragic Novels London. Macmillan. Lawrence's actual words are:

> ... remain quite within the convention, and you are good, safe and happy in the long run, though you never have the vivid pang of sympathy on your side: or, on the other hand, be passionate, wilful, you will find the security of convention a walled prison, you will escape, and you will die, either of your own lack of strength to bear the isolation and the exposure, or by direct revenge from the community, or both. p 65

See too J P Satre in What is Literature? (1948) :

> If society looks at itself and especially if it sees itself being looked at, there is, as a consequence of this alone, a questioning of the established values and the state: the writer shows society its image and calls upon it to acknowledge it or to change. And it changes in any case: it loses the equilibrium formerly given it by ignorance, it vacillates between shame and cynicism, it engages in bad faith; thus the writer gives society an unhappy conscience, and as a result he is in perpetual conflict with the conservative forces which maintain the equilibrium he tends to break.

34. Ampie Coetzee, speaking at The Weekly Mail Book Week, Johannesburg, 13.11.1989

In that decade the major sectors of the Congress Alliance were banned; trials imprisoned the leadership of the ANC, the SACP and the African Resistance Movement as well as the PAC. Hundreds of people were jailed for 'promoting the aims' of banned organizations. The Liberal Party disbanded in 1968 in the face of the 'Improper Interference in Political Activities Act', which prohibited multiracial political movements. South Africans were prevented from reading the works of 46 writers who had left the country. Censorship, house-arrest, banning, banishment and prohibitions through 'naming' were rife.

35. These would include, as a sample only, such figures as:
Lionel Abrahams, writing as well as editing The Purple Renoster
Bill Ainslie, painting, and developing one of the first nonracial art schools
Dumile Feni, exhibiting his drawings for the first time
Nadine Gordimer, publishing novels and stories such as Occasion for Loving, Not for Publication, The Late Bourgeois World
Esrom Legae, sculpting and drawing at Dorkay House
Mahlatini and the Mahotella Queens

Kippie Moeketsi, generating South African jazz
Walter Saunders, editing Ophir
Mongane Serote, publishing his first poems
Barney Simon, writing, producing, editing The Classic after Nat Nakasa had gone into exile
Wolf Weinek, exhibiting Jensma's woodcuts and prints.

36. Sing for Our Execution pp 38-42.

37. See Michael Chapman op. cit. pp 29-33
Michael Gardiner op. cit. 1985. pp 115-120

38. William Shakespeare A Midsummer Night's Dream Act V, scene i ll 7-8

39. Joseph Conrad. Heart of Darkness

40. Alvarez-Pereyre op. cit. pp 106-7

41. Louise Olivier 1989. The Physical and Psychological Problems of the Peoples of South Africa Pretoria. HSRC (P 101)
A report published in Beeld (8.11.1989, p 15) quoted the following figures from the Olivier study:

Out of a city population of 14,1 million people in South Africa
4,5 million suffer from tension/stress
3,4 million have aggressive tendencies
3 million have diagnosable symptoms of depression
1,25 million have considered suicide
335,400 have thought about murdering their families.

Whereas the World Health Organization sets the incidence of depression in the world's population at 5%, in South Africa 30,6% urban black people and 15% of the remaining people suffer from depression.

42. Jacques Berthoud. Poetry and Exile: the case of Arthur Nortje. English in Africa 11 no 1 (May 1984) p 9

43. i must show you my clippings pp 24-5

44. Fredric Jameson. Postmodernism and Consumer Society in Hal Foster (ed) 1985. Postmodern Culture London. Pluto Press. p 119

45. Jean Baudrillard. The Ecstasy of Communication. in Foster op. cit. pp 132-3

46. Octavio Paz op. cit. p 95.

My thanks to Linda Chisholm for comments on an earlier draft of this paper and to Lettie Gardiner for many very helpful insights.