Troubling
Images

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Visual Culture and the Politics of Afrikaner Nationalism

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Troubling Images: An Introduction

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In the conclusion of his book *Banal Nationalism*, Michael Billig writes, 'If the future remains uncertain, we know the past history of nationalism. And that should be sufficient to encourage a habit of watchful suspicion' (Billig 1995, 177). This warning has perhaps never been truer or more relevant than in the second decade of the new millennium, which has been characterised by a marked turn towards right-wing populism and nationalism. The list of resurgent nationalisms declaring themselves in exclusionary ethnic, cultural or religious terms is long and growing. Obvious examples include the United States President Donald Trump's social media-led demagoguery vowing to 'Make America Great Again' through isolationism and protectionism, regardless of the cost to international relations, and the patriotic posturing and diplomatic dithering that has characterised the United Kingdom's 'Brexit' negotiations with the European Union. We have witnessed, too, an upsurge of right-wing politics – with its attendant xenophobia, Islamophobia, and echoes of anti-Semitism – in East-Central Europe, and the unapologetic chauvinism and barely disguised expansionist ambitions of Russian President Vladimir Putin; Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Hindu-first' rewriting of nationalist history in India at the expense of multiculturalism; the official relegation of Arabs to the rank of second-class citizens in Israel by the Knesset's declaration of the Jewish nation-state law that effectively declares that only Jews have the right of self-determination in the country. Individually and collectively, these right-wing trends sound a worrying tocsin that when liberal democracy fails to find a sufficiently broad base and democratic governance is seen to fail, authoritarianism – and the attendant erosion of civil rights and liberties of those who do not fit a narrow definition of national 'belonging' – is never far behind.

The consensus among political commentators seems to be that this rising tide of nationalism is a backlash against the complacency and elitism of successive post-Cold War governments. Ordinary citizens were left unprotected from the effects of rampant neoliberal economic policies, which had seemingly not anticipated the social, economic and cultural effects of migration, whether forced or otherwise. These combined forces have also given rise, as William A Galston (2018) argues, to a 'wave of discontent [that] also taps into long-standing fears about globalisation and a dilution of national identity'. In time, he argues, 'the rise of anti-immigrant, anti-internationalist sentiment ... could have grave consequences for liberal democracy itself'. Reminding us of the fragility of democracy and the power of identity politics in the postcolonial context, Mzukisi Qobo (2018) argues that

> nationalism always thrives under the conditions of social marginalisation, and when the voices of the marginalised are drowned out by the liberal-minded middle classes or leftist thinkers who assume they know it all. Nationalism always strikes a chord especially with those who are denied social and economic power, and whose voices are on the fringe, and whose experiences are not well-understood.

While the historical context and circumstances underlying the rise of Afrikaner nationalism belong, of course, to a different era of international politics, it is essentially rooted in the experience of a people who were denied social and economic power, and whose political and cultural agency was marginalised by the imperialist agenda. Indeed, with hindsight we can see that both the imperialist establishment and the international community were slow to understand the depth of Afrikaner humiliation in the aftermath of the South African War (formerly known as the Second Anglo-Boer War).[1] They were, consequently, unprepared for the meteoric rise of Afrikaner nationalism in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Given the legacy of brutally enforced racism and economic inequality that came ultimately to characterise the Afrikaner nationalist apartheid state, and against the backdrop of resurgent nationalist sentiments across the world, it seems opportune to reassess the mechanisms through which it established and sustained itself, if only to remind us of the need to pay attention to the risks that are posed to liberal democracy.

Visual culture constituted one important mechanism for rationalising and normalising apartheid and, with it, the Afrikaner nationalist ideology that bolstered and supported it. It was a domain that was multifaceted and wide-ranging,

extending from imagery accessed in private homes via print culture and television to what might be encountered in the public sphere via monuments, sculptures and art exhibitions. If apartheid South Africa was a context in which images that challenged the status quo tended to be proscribed and suppressed,[2] and their authors threatened, it also celebrated visual discourse associated with Afrikaner nationalist ideals and values. In an era that was yet to see the impact of the internet and social media, and where South Africa's pariah status as well as academic and cultural boycotts limited opportunities for international connections, chances for South Africans to view state propaganda through a critical outsider lens were limited.

Consequently, white South Africans who were born and reached maturity during the apartheid years tend to recognise only with hindsight the full impact of its effect. Repeated exposure to a slanted rhetoric meant that even those who sought to criticise the nationalistic views that bolstered the apartheid state were nevertheless to some extent influenced by its biases. In an article titled 'How Do I Live in This Strange Place?' that was published some 16 years after the demise of apartheid, Samantha Vice (2010) articulated a call for shame and a retreat from public life as the appropriate response by white South Africans to the horrific racial injustices perpetrated in their interests. While controversial, her position nevertheless highlights the fact that, well into the new millennium, people were still coming to terms with the long-term impact of 45 years of apartheid rule. For white South Africans, this involved critically engaging with questions related to their own culpability. The exponential growth in critical whiteness studies in the new millennium is surely also tied to a need to interrogate and understand discourses in South Africa prior to 1994 – including its visual ones. It stands to reason that the current retrieval of a positive blackness from decades of systematically imposed inferiority should be accompanied by a critical reconsideration of whiteness and its strategies of domination and control.

It is notable that images celebrating Afrikaner nationalist imagery remain visible and sometimes even prominent in contemporary South Africa. The public domain continues to include numerous sculptural commemorations of key figures within a white Afrikaner imaginary. The statue of Jan van Riebeeck, who established Cape Town as a way station for the Dutch East India Company in 1652, continues to stand at the bottom of Adderley Street in Cape Town. And the sculpture of Paul Kruger, president of the South African Republic from 1883

to 1900, remains in the central spot of Pretoria's Church Square (see Chapter 3, Fig. 3.5, where it is included in a photograph of the former Transvaal Provincial Administration Building). Additionally, South Africa retains architectural monuments of significant scale such as the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria (commemorating the journeys of Boers into the interior of South Africa) and the Women's Monument in Bloemfontein (commemorating women and children who lost their lives in concentration camps established by the British during the South African War (Fig. 0.1), while the *Taalmonument* [Language Monument] in Paarl celebrates the 50th anniversary of Afrikaans being declared an official language, distinct from Dutch (Fig. 0.2). Monuments such as these may host events or associate themselves with initiatives that cater for groups considerably more diverse than their traditional stakeholders. The Language Monument in Paarl, for example, advertises itself as a site for 'Stargazing Picnics' and 'Full Moon Picnics' that are open to all with a curiosity about astronomy. Even more notably, its council (which is also in charge of the Afrikaans Language Museum in Paarl) hosts a Neville Alexander Prestige Award; named after the black anti-apartheid activist and former Robben Island prisoner, it acknowledges 'the unsung heroes of Afrikaans and multilingualism'.[3] But in terms of their actual architecture, the monuments remain unaltered.

The retention of such monuments as part of a South African commemorative landscape can be understood in light of the National Heritage Resources Act, published in the Government Gazette on 28 April 1999, which sought 'to enable and encourage communities to nurture and conserve their legacy so that it may be bequeathed to future generations' (National Heritage Resources Act 1999). Introduced as part of an agenda to enable reconciliation between formerly opposed cultural groupings and factions, it is underpinned by a belief that diversity in the cultural landscape might be achieved through enabling additions to existent monuments. Consequently, permission needs to be obtained from the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) for any removal or adjustment to public sculptures and monuments. Failure to do so could lead to litigation, as shown by a case from 2008. That year, a Democratic Alliance councillor, Rosier de Ville, working with the Standerton Action Committee and AfriForum,[4] successfully won a case against Lekwa mayor Queen Radebe-Khumalo, who had organised a building initiative that involved the destruction of a memorial from the 150th anniversary of the Great Trek at the Standerton municipal offices. Comprising a

Figure 0.1. National Women's Monument in Bloemfontein, designed by Frans Soff and with sculpture by Anton van Wouw, 1913. The tomb immediately in front of the structure is that of Marthinus Theunis Steyn and Rachel Isabella Steyn. (Emily Hobhouse's ashes are in a niche within the main structure. There are also tombs of John Daniel Kestell and Christiaan Rudolf de Wet on site.) Photograph by Paul Mills.

Figure 0.2. The *Taalmonument* [Language Monument] in Paarl, designed by Jan van Wyk and built in 1975. Photograph by Paul Mills.

slab of concrete with ox-wagon tracks set into it, the 1986 monument had been made to produce a permanent record of the ceremonial trek of wagons across the country that year. The municipality of Lekwa was ordered to pay legal costs for the complainants as well as subsidise the rebuilding of the monument under the guidance of SAHRA (see, for example, Mogakane 2008). But the appropriateness of such an approach has been questioned increasingly since 2015, when, in the wake of the removal of Marion Walgate's sculpture of Cecil John Rhodes from the University of Cape Town, many of South Africa's monuments – including those associated with Afrikaner nationalism – suffered desecration of one variety or another.[5] In such a context and historical juncture, the discussion of Afrikaner nationalism and visual imagery undertaken in this book seems timely.[6]

Theorists in the humanities have done extensive work understanding the impetuses and effects of Afrikaner nationalism and identities, whether in studies authored during the apartheid years (such as Moodie 1975) or thereafter (Giliomee 2003 and Jansen 2009, inter alia). There have also been valuable critical social or cultural histories focused on Afrikaners (see, for example, Grundlingh and Huigen 2008 and Grundlingh 2013). To date, however, there has been considerably less research into Afrikaner nationalism's visual strategies – that is, how art and visual culture helped to secure hegemonic claims to the nation state via the construction of a unified Afrikaner imaginary. Prior critical work on the role of visual culture within Afrikaner nationalism has been limited to individual articles or discussions within collections – including some authored by ourselves, such as Federico Freschi's chapter in volume two of *Visual Century* (Freschi 2011) and Brenda Schmahmann's *Picturing Change: Curating Visual Culture at Post-Apartheid Universities* (Schmahmann 2013). But to date no book has been dedicated exclusively to a critical engagement with a broad range of visual manifestations and responses to Afrikaner nationalism.

Troubling Images addresses this gap. By focusing on manifestations of Afrikaner nationalism in paintings, sculptures, monuments, cartoons, photographs, illustrations and exhibitions, authors of the essays constituting this volume offer a critical account of the relationship between Afrikaner nationalist visual culture and Afrikaner political and cultural domination in South Africa. Examining the implications of metaphors and styles deployed in the examples of visual culture under discussion, they also consider how the design, production, collecting and commissioning of objects, images and architecture were informed by Afrikaner nationalist imperatives and ideals. While some essays focus specifically on

instances of adherence to Afrikaner nationalism, others consider articulations of dissent and criticism. Contributors also engage with the ways in which an Afrikaner nationalist inheritance is understood and negotiated in contemporary South Africa, particularly in relation to the management of its material effects in archives, the commemorative landscape and the built environment.

The book commences with a broad overview of Afrikaner nationalism by Albert Grundlingh that provides a context for the engagements with visual culture that follow. Countering perceptions of the phenomenon as a natural and inevitable outcome of South African history, Grundlingh instead stresses the material and contextual factors that contributed to its development. These include uneven capitalist growth, rapid urbanisation and secondary industrialisation, as well as deeply emotional determinants such as the humiliation and losses suffered at the hands of British imperial forces during, and after, the South African War. He shows how Afrikaner nationalism was the product of sustained, systematic and intense ideological effort; a deliberate ethnic mobilisation that included the promotion of *volkskapitalisme*, the establishment of a multitude of organisations and financial institutions, as well as large-scale cultural programmes which offered Afrikaans-speakers across class divides the opportunity to experience belonging and legitimacy. One of the most important tasks of this deliberate project of self-fashioning was the rewriting of history, in which key events were recast in quasi-religious terms. Foremost among such ideological evocations of past events was the symbolic centenary celebration of the Great Trek in 1938, which saw the triumph of nostalgic populism. This euphoric unity rapidly dissolved in the build-up to World War II and resultant schisms within Afrikaner politics. Grundlingh then briefly considers the consolidation of Afrikaner nationalist power after the unexpected National Party victory of 1948, which saw the rapid rise of apartheid and concomitant growth of Afrikaner capital. Finally, he shows how this prosperity was, ironically, accompanied by the fragmentation and gradual disintegration of a cohesive Afrikaner identity.

ASSENT AND DISSENT THROUGH FINE ART AND ARCHITECTURE

The authors of the three essays in Part One consider the effects and visual legacy of Afrikaner nationalism in the realm of fine art and architecture at three different moments in its history: the period of its ascendance immediately preceding the establishment of the nationalist republic; the mid-century period when it was at its

political and cultural zenith; and the post-apartheid period of its decline, haunted by the discredited imaginaries of its past.

In 'Afrikaner Nationalism and Other Settler Imaginaries at the 1936 Empire Exhibition', Lize van Robbroeck argues that the exhibition, held in Johannesburg, provides a useful historical vantage point in interpreting the emergence of Afrikaner culture and discourse within the broader network of empire. The 1936 exhibition also enables an understanding of the co-emerging settler nationalisms during an era characterised by intensive nation-building in the British Empire, in what Van Robbroeck describes as a 'cauldron of fluid developing nationalisms'. In an analysis of both the art exhibition (featuring work of South African, Canadian and British artists) and the historical pageant that was staged at the exhibition, she reveals an incipient and competitively modern Afrikaner nationalism that, while mirroring the other settler imaginaries on display, effectively infused the ideological agenda of empire with republican messages. In the case of the art exhibition in particular, the South African section of which was curated by the Afrikaner ideologue Martin du Toit, Van Robbroeck argues that the visual language of modernism and established tropes of landscape were used to signify Afrikaner claims to the land, as well as notions of progress and modernity. Nonetheless, she reveals how, claims to distinctiveness notwithstanding, the nascent national imaginaries and common visual strategies and vocabularies reveal nationalism as a 'shared signifying system across ideological and ethnic schisms', thereby exposing 'the tenuousness of dominion claims to national distinctiveness and exceptionalism'.

Federico Freschi takes as his starting point the architectural language of Afrikaner nationalism in the 1930s – the so-called *volksargitektuur* that claimed similar tropes of authenticity and modernity to those described by Van Robbroeck. Freschi's 'From *Volksargitektuur* to *Boere* Brazil: Afrikaner Nationalism and the Architectural Imaginary of Modernity, 1936–1966' focuses on the Brazilian-inspired modern architecture that became the public face of Afrikaner officialdom during the post-World War II period. With reference to key examples of a style he calls '*Boere* Brazil', Freschi argues that the embrace of modernity, together with the shift away from the historicist trope of the *volk*[7] and its implicit codes of the civil religion of nationalism, is more than merely a response to the apartheid government's programme of modernisation and urbanisation, but is linked to the construction of a particular imaginary, that of white Afrikaner

nationhood. He argues that the self-conscious and noteworthy modernity of urban projects and buildings commissioned by the Afrikaner nationalist government fed into a particular construct of international modernity and success, while the self-consciously abstract art that populated these buildings and spaces further reinforced the Afrikaner nation's sophisticated 'European' values. His argument is set against the rising economic and social fortunes of the Afrikaners during the late 1950s and 1960s, and suggests that the change in architectural style has as much to do with the expansion and consolidation of the Afrikaner middle class as it does with a shift in rhetoric from having to mobilise a sense of the right to govern, to a complacency about that right.

If the 1960s represents the high point of Afrikaner nationalist identity, the post-1994 period clearly represents its nadir. Its ideological bases exposed as fundamentally flawed and corrupt, its claims to religious, cultural and racial purity destroyed and the ostensible moral authority it once claimed bankrupted by the incontrovertible facts of the violence and brutality committed in its name, Afrikaner nationalism, as institutionalised by the apartheid regime, has no place in contemporary South Africa. Yet its spectral presence continues to haunt South African society. While liberal-minded Afrikaners seek to claim an identity based on benign notions of shared language and cultural heritage within the broader framework of a constitutionally enshrined multiculturalism, the persistence of vicious, racially motivated attacks and the occasional reappearance of Afrikaner nationalist symbols within certain white communities suggest that Afrikaner nationalism continues to inform identity construction among certain Afrikaners who see themselves as embattled and oppressed.

In his chapter titled 'Afrikaner Identity in Contemporary Visual Art: A Study in Hauntology', Theo Sonnekus uses Jacques Derrida's concept of hauntology – that is, the notion that personal and political ways of being resemble the phenomenon of being haunted – as a framework for reflecting on the relationship between the spectral power of Afrikaner nationalism in relation to post-apartheid Afrikaner identities as they are expressed in contemporary visual art. Sonnekus focuses on selected works by several white South African artists who participated in a series of exhibitions entitled *Ik Ben Een Afrikander* [I am an Afrikaner/African], shown on the Afrikaans festival circuit in 2015–16. While this festival circuit by its nature enables and perpetuates what he describes as 'some degree of ethnic clustering' that bespeaks

a certain nostalgia for the institutionalised unity and sovereignty of the Afrikaner state, the exhibition provided an opportunity to locate and critically examine the position of contemporary Afrikaners in relation to their controversial past. Sonnekus thus focuses on Afrikaner artists who resist discourses of victimisation and marginalisation by mobilising a progressive identity. He argues that the pursuit of this identity is inseparable from the need to 'live *with* ghosts and take heed of their injunctions' and shows how these artists strategically engage personal and collective memories to fit Afrikaner identity to the post-apartheid landscape, while confronting their complicity with the National Party regime. In so doing, they resist the temptation to exorcise the troublesome ghosts of the past, committing instead to their exhumation as an essential part of post-apartheid 'becoming'.

SCULPTURES ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

Part Two similarly explores the idea of engaging with a complex and difficult inheritance – but in this instance through a focus on university contexts and public sculptures located within them. In parallel to Walgate's sculpture of Cecil Rhodes that was formerly at the University of Cape Town and is an example of a British imperialist inheritance, there have also been monuments of a similar scale associated with Afrikaner nationalism at universities where Afrikaans was formerly the exclusive or primary mode of instruction and communication, and which were open only to white students. At the time this Introduction was written, the University of the Free State, for example, displayed a bronze sculpture by Anton van Wouw of Marthinus Theunis Steyn, the sixth president of the Orange Free State and a founding member of the National Party, which was unveiled in 1929. A 1991 bronze commemorative statue of CR Swart, the first state president of South Africa and a former chancellor of that institution, made by Johann Moolman, was also on campus until 2016. And to this day, Stellenbosch University includes on its central Rooiplein [Red Square] a larger-than-life commemorative statue by Coert Steynberg – in this instance in granite – of JH Marais. First unveiled in 1950, it celebrates the institution's benefactor, whose largesse towards the institution in 1918 was bound up with imperatives to establish a fully fledged and independent university where Afrikaans (Dutch) was foregrounded. How might such works be managed in a post-apartheid context, where there are imperatives to revise institutional cultures in such a way as to enable universities to be welcoming to

diverse student bodies? At universities where students and stakeholders have very different allegiances and perspectives, and where the politics of transformation may be viewed in contrasting ways, this is no easy question to address.

In his chapter titled '"It's Not Even Past": Dealing with Monuments and Memorials on Divided Campuses', the former vice chancellor of the University of the Free State, Jonathan D Jansen, explores the politics that surrounded the proposed removal of, or adjustment to, the statue of Steyn. Endeavouring to make sense of the underlying anger, arguments and anxieties of a sector of students, staff and community for whom the statue was conceived as recognition of a white Afrikaner identity in a changing South Africa where they no longer enjoyed special privilege, he seeks also to indicate how this object came to be conceptualised by a segment of black activist students as a symbol of lack of transformation. Drawing on immediate experience, Jansen assesses attempts by the university leadership to find a way of negotiating the sculpture that differed from that which the University of Cape Town followed for their statue of Cecil Rhodes – one that might allow for a creative re-representation of the existing statue, symbolising transformation on campus. In the process, Jansen reveals how the fate of the sculpture was ultimately affected by three contending forces – an institutional commitment to reconciliation, a black student activism that pressed for radical replacement, and a community reaction that demanded retention of the status quo.

Brenda Schmahmann includes an examination of the Afrikaner nationalist agendas that were at play in the 1940s, when steps were first taken to acquire a commemoration of Marais. The focus thereafter is on recent creative interventions to the sculpture under the ambit of the Visual Art Department at the university and on identifying strategies that have enabled a monument such as this to potentially play a role in fostering critical understandings of Afrikaner nationalism and the history of the institution where it is placed. Exploring how the construction of what James Young (1992) termed the 'counter-monument' can be an effective way of articulating different perspectives on Afrikaner nationalist histories via older monuments such as these, the chapter also offers an examination of how dialogical and performative strategies have underpinned creative interventions to them.

While the sculpture of Marais is unlikely to be removed from Stellenbosch any time soon, the future of the sculpture of Steyn at the University of the Free State remains under consideration. In 2017, following the appointment of Francis Petersen as vice chancellor of the University of the Free State, an Integrated

Transformation Plan was devised, with a 'workstream' designated for 'Names, Symbols and Spaces'. A number of students were, however, adamant that the presence of the Steyn sculpture needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency. And so, in March 2018, the university appointed a special task team, headed by its acting director of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice, JC van der Merwe, to deal with this matter.[8]

Students opposed to the presence of the sculpture on campus argued for it to be covered while the review process was conducted.[9] Consequently, the special task team made a submission to the Free State Provincial Heritage Resources Authority for a permit to do this, working in light of a feeling 'that wrapping the statue symbolises the seriousness and urgency of the review process'.[10] But the terms of the permit were rather that the sculpture needed to be kept accessible and made topical via information being made available about it. Kobus du Preez of the architecture department, a member of the special task team, worked in collaboration with another architect on a design for a temporary installation that met this demand while also in some way simultaneously satisfying those students who called for the sculpture to be covered. A key component of the installation was a reflective triangular column (Fig. 0.3) that featured questions about the sculpture in three local languages (English, Afrikaans and Sesotho), yet simultaneously blocked the sculpture if it was viewed from the east by a person heading down the pathway towards the main building (Fig. 0.4). The installation also included a suggestion box, as well as concrete benches where individuals might reflect on the work, its history and its current significance.

The intervention was completed in time for the 2018 *Vryfees*, an annual Bloemfontein arts festival held in July, with the idea that the work would stay up for two months. Anyone associated with the university, as well as residents of Bloemfontein and other interested persons, were invited to make submissions in regard to it – either online, on paper or orally. The plan was that these would be examined and assessed by a heritage consultant appointed by the university who would enable the institution to come up with a decision in regard to the work.[11] Pointing at ways in which creative strategies might be deployed helpfully to enable debate and discussion about the future of a campus sculpture, this installation thus had commonality with an intervention to the Steyn sculpture that Cigdem Aydemir undertook for the *Vryfees* four years earlier, discussed in Chapter 5, as well as interventions to the Marais sculpture at the University of Stellenbosch, discussed in Chapter 6.

Figure 0.3. Intervention to Anton van Wouw's *Marthinus Theunis Steyn,* 1929, at the University of the Free State, August 2018. Photograph by Paul Mills.

Figure 0.4. View from the east of the intervention to Anton van Wouw's *Marthinus Theunis Steyn*, 1929, at the University of the Free State, August 2018. Photograph by Paul Mills.

PHOTOGRAPHY, IDENTITY AND NATIONHOOD

Part Three engages the pivotal role of photography in both the construction and contestation of a unified, heroic Afrikaner imaginary. Benedict Anderson (1983, 93) famously emphasises the importance of print media in the establishment of the imagined community that is a nation, pointing out that it enables ordinary citizens to 'visualize in a general way the existence of thousands and thousands like themselves'. In this regard, it is impossible to overestimate the importance of the medium of photography. Since photographs both serve as evidence of historical events and simultaneously facilitate their commemoration, they were embraced as particularly useful instruments for state propaganda. But photographs of necessity provide partial perspectives, and as such also offer opportunities for contestation and counter-narratives. The two essays comprising this section provide insight into both these ideological deployments of photography. Katharina Jörder explores the Department of State Information's photographs of the inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument in 1949. While images of this event by the American

photographer Margaret Bourke-White brought the new Afrikaner imaginary to life in the eyes of the world via their publication in *Life* magazine, the collection of official state photographs explored here offers a glimpse into the propaganda apparatus of the newly victorious National Party. Initially produced for state archives and for distribution to newspapers, these photographs were eventually collated and published as a book, titled *Die Gelofte* [The Covenant] after the central event in the narrative of the Great Trek. The book was largely for diplomatic distribution abroad, as evidenced by the multiple languages deployed on its cover. Unlike the *Life* magazine photographer, the producers of these images, as mere state functionaries, remain anonymous.

Scenes abound of women and men in historical dress – men with long beards, women in *kappies* (the Afrikaans term for the distinctive bonnets worn by females in those communities). Jörder's discussion of the deliberate and considered construction of gender roles resonates here with Lou-Marié Kruger's exposition of the historical emergence of the *volksmoeder* ideal in Chapter 9. The collection of photographs includes aerial views and crowd scenes which capture the sheer scale of the festival, revealing this carefully curated mass event as celebration of a heroic Afrikaner pilgrimage.

These heroic narratives became ubiquitous in the early decades of the new Afrikaner nationalist state. Stamps, public monuments and school curricula all celebrated the grand narrative of the Boer's quest for freedom and self-rule, embellishing the story of heroic resistance and suffering that accompanied this God-ordained journey. Various counter-narratives questioned the historic accuracy of these portrayals, as well as their ideological rationalisation. African nationalists such as Sol T Plaatje provided a glimpse into the suffering, experiences and aspirations of the myriad of disenfranchised indigenous peoples in the unfolding of these battles of settler ascendancy. Anglophile and Anglophone white South Africans provided their own counter-narratives, in which the class distinctions between the settler polities were harnessed to bolster perceived English white superiority.

Michael Godby and Liese van der Watt critically analyse David Goldblatt's photographic series in 'Reframing David Goldblatt, Re-thinking *Some Afrikaners*'. The series was initially produced for the *South African Tatler*, then published in book form in 1975, and subsequently edited and republished as *Some Afrikaners Revisited* in 2007. These photographs, predominantly of poor rural smallholders, have been

lauded by most critics as providing an authentic glimpse into the life-world of 'real Afrikaners'. In their critique, however, Godby and Van der Watt aver that, rather than 'documenting the trivia of everyday life, *Some Afrikaners Photographed* is a construction of Afrikaner identity that reflected Goldblatt's position among South Africa's Anglophile elite'. Using Amita Sen's idea of the miniaturisation of identity, the authors contend that Goldblatt's series sets out not so much to 'correct' the heroic construction of Afrikaner identity by the apartheid state, as to miniaturise and render one-dimensional the complexities and nuances of his subjects' material and cultural experiences. They suggest that Goldblatt's project thus constructed a distancing and patronising counter to the dominant heroic narratives of the apartheid state, and that it panders to a condescending Anglophone stereotype of the backward Afrikaner.

DEPLOYING MASS MEDIA AND POPULAR VISUAL CULTURE

Nationalisms are frequently accompanied by populism. In the case of the Afrikaner, a strongly ethnic nationalism gave rise to a form of exclusionary populism, described by Benjamin de Cleen (2018, 348) as motivated by a down-up antagonism by a powerless people (articulated, in this instance, as '*die Volk*') against a perceived dominant elite. A populist rhetoric of Afrikaner identity emerged mainly in the 1930s but continued to flourish even after the National Party victory in 1948, when it was gradually eroded by the cultural sophistication accompanying economic and political empowerment. In the following three chapters, the authors consider the role of mass media and popular culture in the promotion of both populist and state articulations of Afrikaner nationalism.

In 'Anton van Wouw's *Noitjie van die Onderveld*, Afrikaner Nationalism and the Construction of the *Volksmoeder* Discourse', Lou-Marié Kruger looks at the *volksmoeder* [mother of the nation] as an aspirational ideal for Afrikaner women in the magazine *Die Boerevrou* (1919–1931). She critiques Anton van Wouw's sculpture *Noitjie van die Onderveld*, a picture of which appeared on the cover of the first edition of the magazine, as the embodiment of the ideal of the *volksmoeder*. Arguing that the image provides 'a significant and explicit example of how nationalist art and visual culture were deployed in the gendering of Afrikaner nationalism', Kruger unravels the complexity of women's roles in the formulation and development of this trope. She does so by focusing on the letters pages of the magazine, where women actively engaged, contested and embroidered the

discourse of the *volksmoeder* as embodied in the sculpture, thus demonstrating that Afrikaner women were never mere passive recipients of a patriarchal formulation of ideal womanhood.

Peter Vale, in his chapter titled 'Cartoonists, Intellectuals and the Construction of Afrikaner Nationalism', explores the archive of editorial cartoons as a source of information on the phenomenon of nationalism in South Africa. He shows that political cartoons may be not only disruptive of nationalist ideologies, but also constitutive of them. Focusing on the newspaper *Die Burger* as a central vehicle of Afrikaner nationalist thought, Vale argues that the cartoonists Daniël Cornelis Boonzaaier and Thomas Ochse (TO) Honiball may be described as 'supportive insiders' insofar as their messages promoted the interests of the status quo, as represented by DF Malan, one-time editor of the newspaper and South Africa's first Afrikaner nationalist prime minister. Vale suggests that these cartoons may be read as a kind of a doppelgänger to Afrikaner nationalist discourse, revealing the historical concerns, narratives and mythologies that underpinned it and drove its development, and shows how cartoons, though a vulgar medium, were understood by Afrikaner nationalist ideologues as a useful political tool.

Finally, Gary Baines turns to recent popular culture in 'Visual Narratives of the Border War in 1980s South African Print Culture'. He identifies the dominant discourses accompanying the militarisation of white South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. Providing an overview of the historical forces driving militarisation, he shows how it was accompanied by a virulent militarism propagandised in children's books as well as film and photo stories. Probing these media, he demonstrates that militarist indoctrination started in childhood, not only officially, via state apparatuses such as schools and church, but also through popular culture. He points out that visual narratives of the Border War reveal the gendered nature of this militarist discourse, promoting a vision of virile masculinity and supportive and vigilant femininity. Not only did photo books such as *Grensvegter* [Border Soldier] aid the naturalisation of violence and killing, they also demarcated a clear boundary between 'us', a besieged white nation, and 'them', 'terrorists' who, in the context of the Cold War, were depicted as serving the interests of communism.

Our intention has not been to produce an exhaustive study of Afrikaner nationalist visual culture, a project that would require multiple volumes rather than a single book. Instead, we have sought to engage with diverse examples of the visual imaginaries of Afrikaner nationalism as well as contemporary responses to

this troubling inheritance. Revealing the ways in which a focus on visual culture enables new and enhanced perspectives about not only the past but also the present, *Troubling Images* raises debates that are especially important – and urgent – in a current context of resurgent nationalisms and calls for decolonisation.

NOTES

1   The war was renamed to acknowledge the participation, forced or voluntary, of black southern Africans. According to Nkuna (1999), these participants referred to it as the 'White Man's War'.

2   Even photographs of a banned person such as Nelson Mandela were officially forbidden. While newspapers such as the *Weekly Mail* and *New Nation* on rare occasions published such photographs by exploiting legal loopholes (Trabold 2018, chapters 2 and 5), generally speaking, South Africans did not enjoy free access to information and imagery.

3   Entry on the website of the Taalmuseum. http://www.taalmuseum.co.za/neville-alexander-prestige-award-call-for-nominations/.

4   Established in 2006, AfriForum is a lobby group that promotes and protects the interests of white Afrikaners. Its CEO, Kallie Kriel, was previously a member of the Conservative Party and the youth wing of the right-wing organisation the Freedom Front, which is today a political party, the FF+.

5   For example, on 5 April 2015, the monument to Paul Kruger in Church Square in Pretoria was defaced with lime-green paint.

6   A related question concerns freedom of expression in the creative arts. Visual imagery under apartheid was subject to restrictions under the Publications Act of 1974, which outlawed imagery deemed 'indecent or offensive or harmful to public morals' or 'prejudicial to the safety of the state'. The task group set up to draft new legislation in 1995 felt, however, that there was 'no compelling and substantial Government interest in denying absolute protection to art and science insofar as adults are concerned' (Van Rooyen 1995). Nevertheless, various endeavours to suppress certain examples of visual art have subsequently occurred. A notable example is *The Spear*, a 2012 artwork by Brett Murray depicting then president Jacob Zuma with his genitals exposed. This resulted in the threat of a lawsuit against the Goodman Gallery, where the work was on display, as well as the *City Press* newspaper for publishing a photograph of the work on its website. The controversy that arose from this incident was not simply between, on the one hand, those sympathetic to the claim that the work impaired the dignity of

an individual and was thus in violation of the Bill of Rights, and, on the other, those outraged at the threat of violating the right to freedom of expression: complicating matters was a perception by some that, whether or not a lawsuit was warranted, Murray needed to be called out for perpetuating the racist stereotype of rampant black sexuality. Clearly, contemporary culture wars in South Africa are often underpinned by a tension between an impetus to resist the censoriousness associated with apartheid and a drive to proscribe images deemed to perpetuate racism.

7   In attempting to find an English equivalent of the notoriously difficult-to-translate concept of the *volk*, Charles Villa-Vicencio (1977, 375), following HG Stokr (1941), notes that '*volk* can be translated as *nation* or *people*. The South African *state* can thus be said to be comprised of several *nations* or *peoples*. Many European states are, however, comprised of one nation which has tended to make nation and state synonymous. For this reason, *people(s)* may be a better translation, although it tends to lack the connotation of cohesion that is so dominant to the Afrikaner *volk* or was so decisive in the German *volk* [*sic*] of the period prior to the last world war' [all emphases in the original].

8   These developments and the discussion around the future of the sculpture were not welcomed by all. For a stark sense of the opposition between stakeholders with very different agendas and interests, as described by Jansen in his chapter in this volume, one might compare the response of AfriForum youth (see Venter 2018) and that of the Student Representative Council president, Asive Dlanjwa (see Choane 2018).

9   Sincere thanks to JC van der Merwe, who provided input on the process in an interview conducted at the installation on 21 August 2018. The account provided here is derived from that interview.

10 Entry in the News Archive of the institution from 9 April 2018. https://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive?NewsItemID=10486.

11 Van der Merwe identified three broad trends among respondents to the installation. First, those opposed to the sculpture's presence on campus tended not to care about its eventual location, but focused exclusively on the need for its removal. Second, groups such as AfriForum were mostly adamant that the sculpture should remain where it was. But there was, thirdly, a growing feeling among other Afrikaans-speakers that it should be relocated to the National Women's Monument in Bloemfontein – a site President Steyn had conceptualised, and where he is buried (see Fig 0.1). The final assessment report of 3 October 2018 recommends relocation of the sculpture to the War Museum adjacent to the National Women's Monument (see Roodt Architects 2018, 79).

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The Trajectory and Dynamics of Afrikaner Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: An Overview

ALBERT GRUNDLINGH

This chapter provides a brief overview of key factors that underpinned the emergence of, and shifts within, Afrikaner nationalism. These developments necessarily informed the examples of visual culture explored in subsequent chapters of this volume.

While there can be no question that an ethnic and narrowly defined Afrikaner nationalism profoundly affected the history of twentieth-century South Africa, there has been little agreement among historians as to how this phenomenon should be interpreted. There are divergent interpretations concerning the origins of Afrikaner nationalism, the nature and contents thereof, the way in which it was manufactured, as well as the precise correlation between Afrikaner nationalism and socio-economic developments. Much Afrikaans-language historical writing that deals with this nationalism presents it as an unproblematic concept. Afrikaner nationalism has been naturalised to the extent that it is seen as the inevitable outcome of South African history. The weakness of this approach is that, rather than being interrogated and its complexity unravelled, it is accepted uncritically as a natural given entity. The result is a tautological and essentialist argument with very little explanatory value: Afrikaners are nationalistic because they are Afrikaners.

Liberal, mainly English-speaking historians have been more critical towards Afrikaner nationalism. Ironically, though, their basic point of departure does not differ much from that of their Afrikaner counterparts: they share in analytical terms an unproblematic acceptance of the concept of *volk* [the people], as well as the

notion that nationalism was purely about ideas rather than material considerations. The only substantial difference is that, whereas some English-speaking historians generally denounced nationalism, often in value-laden terms, Afrikaner historians viewed it as a positive phenomenon. The problem here is that, although the outcome may differ, the fundamental point of departure remains the same.

Historiographical advances, however, paid greater attention to the material basis of Afrikaner nationalism that gave rise to intense ideological labour in order to fashion an appropriate cultural and political product. While the precise mix of material, cultural and political factors is a matter of debate, there is, nevertheless, a degree of consensus that these three factors constituted the prime elements of this movement.[1]

In line with such an approach, Afrikaner nationalism is seen in general terms as a broad social and political response to the uneven development of capitalism in South Africa, which meant that certain groups, mainly indigenous but also including a substantial number of white Afrikaners, were left behind. It was within a context of increasing urbanisation and secondary industrialisation during the period between the two world wars, as well as a continuing British imperial influence in South Africa, that Afrikaner nationalism made headway. Important ideological building blocks in this process were the following: the promotion of a common language, the emphasis on what was perceived to be a common past, and the unifying effect of a common religion.

FACTORS FACILITATING GROWTH

Prominent in the construction of and the direction in which Afrikaner nationalism was pushed was the Afrikaner middle class, comprising, inter alia, ministers of religion, teachers, academics, journalists, farmers and certain elements in the civil service. Many leading white middle-class Afrikaner men in the 1930s and 1940s belonged to a secret organisation called the Afrikaner Broederbond, which ceaselessly endeavoured to promote the exclusive interests of 'true' Afrikaners on behalf of the *volk*. The Broederbond was established in 1918, and in 1929 it became a secret organisation.

Uniting rural and urban people, rich and poor, political idealists and pragmatists under the banner of Afrikaner nationalism called for a sustained ideological effort on several levels over a number of years. The depression of the early 1930s forced a considerable number of Afrikaners off the land and into

the cities. Many lacked the necessary skills to assert themselves in the new and competitive urban milieu, and were relegated to relatively low-paid positions. For example, almost 40 per cent of urbanised male Afrikaners found themselves in the following occupations in 1939: manual labourer, mine worker, railway worker, and bricklayer (O'Meara 1983, 82). According to the 1932 report of the Carnegie Commission investigation into white poverty, 200 000 to 300 000 Afrikaners could be classified as very poor. The cold statistics, however, did not reflect the profoundly human story of suffering and humiliation. A contemporary church commission sketched the lot of the new urban Afrikaner in the following empathic terms:

> He was looked down upon, he had to come with his hat in hand, he had to be satisfied with the crumbs which fell from the tables of the rich. To make any sort of progress, however little, he had to beg the English oppressor and had to obey his every command. Any job that was offered him, however humiliating, dangerous and lowly paid it might have been, he had to accept with gratitude. He and his family had to be satisfied with the worst living conditions in the dirty ghettoes. The door to well-paid occupations was firmly closed. His erstwhile independence was reduced to humiliating servitude and bondage. (Albertyn 1932, 216–217)

While poverty was particularly acute in urban areas in the depression years, white poverty was not restricted to those locales. It was also especially severe in the northern Cape with its nomadic *trekboers*, in the Bushveld area of the Transvaal, in the Karoo and Little Karoo with their struggling peasant farmers and *bywoners* [sharecroppers], and in the southern Cape where formerly independent woodcutters were fighting a rear-guard action against rapacious wood merchants. Impoverished Afrikaners had to be rescued for the sake of the *volk*. In the Broederbond as well as other circles, a strategy combining ethnic mobilisation with the promotion of *volkskapitalisme* [capitalism in the interest of the *volk*] was seen as a possible solution to the problem. Through group identification and cooperation, it was hoped that the position of Afrikaans-speakers might be improved. Their predicament was exacerbated by competition with even poorer Africans who undercut the cost of white labour, particularly in the cities.

Identification with the group had to be complete, and had to be carried out on all levels of society. A complex network of Afrikaner organisations was established

in the 1930s, with existing organisations being strengthened. Across the board, from financial institutions such as insurance companies, later known as Sanlam and Santam, and a bank, Volkskas, through to youth movements such as the *Voortrekkers* (named after the pioneer Voortrekkers of the nineteenth century), organisations which bore an Afrikaner imprint came into existence. Many of these had English-speaking counterparts; the *Voortrekkers*, for example, was specifically established to compete with the English-speaking organisation the Boy Scouts. The umbrella body was a cultural federation, the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereninge* (FAK). Especially important in the organisational network, it ensured that all Afrikaner cultural forms took a decidedly nationalistic turn. In retrospect, the material and cultural foundations of Afrikaner nationalism were being laid systematically.

The role of visual culture in this early, programmatic construction of a national imaginary is important, as discussed by Lize van Robbroeck in the next chapter, which focuses on the Empire Exhibition of 1936, and later by Peter Vale in his chapter on political cartoons in *Die Burger*. It also forms a backdrop to the commissioning, in 1929, of a sculpture of Marthinus Theunis Steyn, sixth president of the Orange Free State Republic, for what was then Grey College in the Orange Free State, as discussed by Jonathan Jansen in his chapter below.

In a strongly patriarchal Afrikaner society, it was often men who took the lead in nationalistic and cultural projects. The role of women can, however, be easily underestimated. The notion of the self-sacrificing *volksmoeder* [mother of the nation] was an integral element in the national ethos, as demonstrated in Katharina Jörder's chapter, which examines photographs taken at the inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument, and also in Lou-Marié Kruger's chapter, where she engages with the reproduction of Anton van Wouw's *Noitjie van die Onderveld* in the women's magazine *Die Boerevrou*. It was the *volksmoeder* who had to transmit the appropriate aspirations and ideals to the youth, and provide a home environment in which Afrikaner ideals could be cherished. But her influence was not restricted to the household; she was also expected to play an active supportive role in the promotion of wider nationalistic politics. Although not all Afrikaner women followed the script that had been written for them, the notion of the *volksmoeder* was nevertheless seen as a worthy role model for young Afrikaner girls to emulate. As a result, the continued incorporation of women into a male-dominated nationalism was assured. The *volksmoeder* ideal meant that women could gain social

recognition only as participants in the lives of their husbands and children; plotting their own course outside the prescribed framework was distinctly frowned upon, although, as Kruger shows, women did have a certain agency in the formulation of the *volksmoeder* discourse. The powerful hold of the *volksmoeder* ideal is evident from the fact that it had resonance even among working-class women who had joined socialist-inclined trade unions under non-Afrikaner leadership, such as the Garment Workers' Union under Solly Sachs. The symbols of the *volksmoeder* seem to have offered working-class women opportunities to experience a sense of belonging and legitimacy within a society in which they were otherwise marginalised (Brink 1991, 156–171).

An important arena for Afrikaner cultural entrepreneurs was that of trade unionism. Afrikaner workers had to be organised within a nationalist context and weaned from existing trade unions dominated by English-speakers. Broederbond Afrikaner unions such as the *Spoorbond* and the *Afrikaner Bond van Mynwerkers* were established in the 1920s and 1930s to look after the specific interests of Afrikaans-speakers on the railways and gold mines respectively. The *Spoorbond* was relatively successful, but the *Afrikaner Bond van Mynwerkers* met with considerable opposition from the already established Mine Workers' Union. The latter had come to an agreement with mine owners that the Afrikaner union would not be recognised, and that only members of the predominantly English-speaking union would be employed. Thus, Afrikaans-speakers were compelled to work as 'reformers' within the framework of the often corrupt Mine Workers' Union. This gave rise to considerable tension, to the extent that the secretary of the Mine Workers' Union, Charlie Harris, was shot dead by an outraged Afrikaner in 1939. Establishing an organised Afrikaner influence on the mines proved more difficult than originally anticipated.

A marked feature of the way in which Afrikaner nationalism was constructed was the emphasis on history. Past occurrences that were presented as key symbolic events were the Slagtersnek Rebellion of 1815, the Great Trek, the Day of the Covenant, the South African War, the concentration camps during that war, and the Rebellion of 1914.[2] These events were cast in near-religious terms, with Afrikaners as God's chosen people, destined to bring civilisation and Christianity to the southern tip of Africa.

Of particular significance in moulding an Afrikaner identity during the 1930s were the centenary celebrations of the Great Trek in 1938. The Great Trek,

which assumed pride of place in Afrikaner history, was commemorated by nine ox-wagons, slowly making their way from Cape Town to the north. It turned out to be an unprecedented piece of cultural and political theatre, with excited crowds dressed in period Voortrekker garb welcoming the procession as it approached towns and cities. Streets were named after Voortrekker heroes; men and women were moved to tears by the spectacle; young people were married alongside the vehicles; couples christened their babies in the shade of the wagons (many infants were given names derived from the Great Trek, such as Eeufesia [Centenaria] and Kakebeenwania [Oxwagonia]). Although this 'second Trek' had been carefully orchestrated by Afrikaner cultural entrepreneurs, even they were taken aback by the tumultuous response (Grundlingh and Sapire 1989, 1–19).

This symbolic trek paralleled the economic trek of Afrikanerdom from a debilitating depression that had relegated even larger numbers of the *volk* to the ranks of poor whites. For many former *platteland* [rural] Afrikaners who now found themselves in an urban environment, the centenary Trek, symbolically rooted in an idyllic, heroic pastoral past, gave powerful expression to longings for a better, more prosperous future and to a nostalgia for a now fast-eroding rural social order. At the heart of the 1938 celebrations lay the perception that Afrikaners were strangers in their own land, victims of British-based capitalism and an alien political culture, and that a solution lay in unified economic, political and cultural action. And indeed, as fractured as Afrikanerdom may have been in class terms, the 1938 celebrations served as a powerful binding agent and represented a truly unique moment of cross-class ethnic mobilisation. In the celebrations and in the evocation of the heroic struggles of their forebears, Afrikaners saw themselves mirrored in history, drawing inspiration for survival and for the future.

In evaluating the place of the Voortrekker centenary celebrations in the development of Afrikaner nationalism, it is perhaps best viewed as an important populist phase. It had all the rhetoric of populist movements: 'struggle', 'survival' and 'salvation'. It also displayed several features of populism: a moralistic rather than programmatic content; a romantic, consciously anti-intellectual, and deliberately declassed leadership; an overt alienation from the centres of political and economic power; the launching of cooperative economic ventures, involving the small man, such as the *Reddingsdaadbond*;[3] and a strong nostalgic element in drawing upon an idealised past that might shape the present and the future. As Katharina Jörder discusses in her chapter, a similar populist celebration manifested

just over a decade later, in 1949, at the inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument, where the centenary celebrations culminated.

These developments were augmented by the steady growth of Afrikaans as a language. Apart from the expansion of Afrikaans schools and higher education, there were concerted attempts, especially through print media, to reach out to and educate the masses. These included popular magazines directed at the intimate home environment, which contributed significantly to the settling of a sedimentary sense of 'being an Afrikaner' in many households. The memorable phrase 'building a nation from words' captured much of this initiative (Hofmeyr 1987).

The degree of Afrikaner unity in evidence during the celebrations was, however, of brief duration. It is probably true to say that in the long term the foundations for Afrikaner unity were laid during the centenary celebrations. But in the general euphoria of 1938, it was insufficiently recognised that no unanimity or clarity existed as to the actual shape of the building to be erected on these foundations.

Some of the issues revolved around South Africa's constitutional position as part of the British Crown, and the extent to which republican ideals should be foregrounded and pursued. The question of participation in the network of empire generated serious schisms in Afrikaner political organisations. Motivated by anti-imperialist, republican sentiments, the *Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party* [Purified National Party], under the leadership of DF Malan, broke away from JBM Hertzog's National Party. Hertzog's National Party in turn merged with Jan Christiaan Smuts's South African Party to form a 'Fusion' government under the newly minted United Party (1933–1948).

Subsequently, divisions among Afrikaners about the future direction of Afrikanerdom would be reflected in a number of organisations, with some claiming to represent the 'soul of the nation'.

ORGANISATIONAL EXPRESSIONS

One such organisation to emerge from the centenary celebrations was the *Ossewabrandwag* [Ox-wagon Sentinel]. The *Ossewabrandwag* promoted itself as a cultural organisation, intent on keeping the 'spirit of '38' alive. It claimed to stand aloof from the sordid squabbles of party politics. Petty political differences were prone to divide Afrikanerdom, and the organisation had therefore to guard against divisions generated by the dynamics of party politics.

The movement, with its emphasis on a cultural heritage which all Afrikaners supposedly had in common, grew apace. Membership claims of between 300 000 and 400 000 in 1941 were probably only slightly exaggerated. The strength of its appeal lay in its ability to promote *kultuurpolitiek* [cultural politics] that allowed for full individual expression and participation. The advantage of this strategy is well explained by Roberts and Trollip (1947, 74):

> The O[ssewa] B[randwag] succeeded because it seemed to offer every man – and at first also to every woman – the chance of an individual and ponderable contribution to the great task of unifying the Afrikaner nation. At *'braaivleisaande'* [barbecue evenings] and *'jukskei'* [an Afrikaner sport] meetings, at the local *'kultuurvereniging'* [cultural organisation] and even on occasion at church, Afrikaners could meet in that Trekker dress which was to be the uniform of the movement, and feel a sense of community of culture, of common heritage, of organised progress towards a great goal – a feeling which they did not always (or even, perhaps, often) experience within the framework of their political parties.

The leader of the *Ossewabrandwag* was Dr Hans van Rensburg, a former administrator of the Free State. As the movement grew, and as it seemed possible in the early stages of World War II that Germany might well be victorious, the *Ossewabrandwag* became more outspoken and styled itself along more explicitly militaristic lines. This was particularly evident in the formation of an elite corps, the *Stormjaers* [Stormtroopers]. It constituted a semi-military wing of the *Ossewabrandwag* and committed acts of wartime sabotage. The corps was also involved in incidents of street thuggery and assaults on soldiers who had volunteered to fight abroad.

The *Ossewabrandwag* had clearly become more than a mere cultural organisation. It had entered the political fray. Van Rensburg described himself as the leader of what he perceived as disciplined Afrikanerdom, and openly advocated an authoritarian one-party state. This was to set him on a collision course not only with the Smuts government – approximately 2 000 *Ossewabrandwag* men were placed in internment camps for anti-war activities – but also with Hertzog's National Party.

Initially, there was a cordial relationship between the *Ossewabrandwag* and the National Party – the political voice of Afrikanerdom. However, the party

watched with growing unease as the *Ossewabrandwag* encroached on what the Nationalists regarded as their territory. Increasingly, the *Ossewabrandwag* came to represent a threat to the Nationalist leadership. Attempts to delineate a political field for the party, as well as a separate cultural sphere for the *Ossewabrandwag*, proved to be futile. Each group manipulated such undertakings to suit their own purposes.

Between the entrenched leaders of the party and the newer, ambitious architects of the *Ossewabrandwag*, there existed an intense rivalry. The battle for the soul of Afrikanerdom was on. In opposing the *Ossewabrandwag*, DF Malan projected the party as offering more in the sphere of *realpolitiek* than the *Ossewabrandwag* was able to deliver. Following the party down the parliamentary route, Malan argued, was the only realistic proposition for ensuring that Afrikaners remained in the race for power. Those Afrikaners who put their faith in the more fanciful ideas of the *Ossewabrandwag* were not only abandoning establishment politics, but were also instrumental in dividing Afrikanerdom itself. The *Ossewabrandwag*, Malan warned, was leading Afrikanerdom down a cul-de-sac. It was the party that rightfully occupied the central place in Afrikaner political life, and who was best positioned to lead Afrikaners to the promised land.

To offset the popular appeal of the *Ossewabrandwag*, Malan and his lieutenants decided, furthermore, to reorganise the National Party, making it more accessible to grassroots members. The requisite size of the party units was decreased, making it possible for even the smallest grouping of Afrikaners to form their own political cell. The aim was to educate the ordinary member in the tenets of the faith; moreover, 'he was to be made to feel that he counted for something in the deliberation of his chiefs …' (Roberts and Trollip 1947, 81).

Apart from such restructuring, Malan was aided by events in Europe. As the prospects of a German victory receded, enthusiasm for the *Ossewabrandwag* began to wane in South Africa. In a changed set of circumstances, *Ossewabrandwag* leaders found it difficult to recast their rhetoric and to extol the supposed virtues of authoritarian dictatorship. Among even its most ardent followers, the message of the *Ossewabrandwag* began to ring hollow. With Germany out of the picture as the possible outside liberator of Afrikanerdom, the parliamentary route proposed by Malan began to make more sense. In 1943, the party could confidently claim that it was the dominant political representative of what it regarded as true Afrikaners.

The *Ossewabrandwag* was not the only extra-parliamentary organisation to emerge during these turbulent times. Far smaller than the *Ossewabrandwag*, but at times more vociferous, was the New Order that was established in September 1940 by Oswald Pirow. Pirow, minister of defence in the Fusion government, had opposed South Africa's entry into the war. He publicly identified with national-socialist doctrines and propagated these through the New Order study group. Initially, Pirow functioned within the ranks of the party, but as his calls for an end to the parliamentary system became more strident, he was effectively marginalised by Malan. After all, Pirow's impatience with elections and his clamouring for a republican dictatorship effectively undermined the very purpose of the party, that is, to equip and prepare itself for electoral contests. Although Pirow continued to react through his publications, he failed to establish a firm political foothold.

Of similar ilk was the Greyshirt Movement of the 1930s; virulently anti-Semitic, it openly modelled itself on Nazi organisations. This took place at a time when an increasing number of Jews were fleeing Central Europe, with some heading to South Africa to escape persecution in the Third Reich. Some Afrikaners, many of them destitute after the depression of the early 1930s, saw Jewish immigrants as yet another group asserting themselves in South Africa and possibly undermining Afrikaners. Under such circumstances, the stereotype of Jews as alien exploiters resounded readily among impoverished Afrikaners. As Peter Vale points out in his chapter, the cartoonist Boonzaaier's caricature of a predatory Jewish capitalist, Hoggenheimer, reflects the prevailing anti-semitism of the Afrikaans press. Louis Weichardt, who had fought on the side of Germany in World War I, was the leader of the Greyshirt Movement, and he skilfully played upon anti-Jewish sentiments. The Greyshirt Movement had a rather ambiguous relationship with Malan's parliamentary National Party. Though not himself overtly anti-Jewish, Malan could not afford to ignore grassroots pressure, and so at times flirted dangerously with the unashamedly racist ideas proposed by Weichardt. In 1942, however, relations deteriorated when the party leader perceived Weichardt to be casting himself in the role of *volksleier* [leader of the *volk*]. Already embroiled in an internecine struggle with the *Ossewabrandwag*, Malan did not relish yet another contender for the leadership of greater Afrikanerdom.

Given the sympathies of some Afrikaners towards Nazi Germany during the war years, certain authors, critical of later Afrikaner race policies, were quick to equate the post-1948 apartheid state with the Nazi state of the 1930 and 1940s.

Given the universal opprobrium heaped upon the Nazis, and the general scorn evoked by apartheid, the analogy was tempting as it could, moreover, be readily understood and appreciated abroad. Such a one-to-one equation, however, obscures more than what it reveals. Although some right-wing Afrikaners did identify with Nazi Germany, in terms of realpolitik, Nazi influence in South Africa was rather limited. The affinity between Afrikaner nationalism and German national-socialism appeared to be mainly one of mutual ideological sympathy rather than any deep-seated structural similarity. Afrikaner nationalists differed from their German counterparts in terms of their belief in the doctrine of Christian nationalism as opposed to the crude pseudo-scientific social Darwinism of the Nazis. Afrikaners felt no need to exterminate other groups, and although Afrikaners respected strong leaders, there was no cult of the *Führer*. Afrikaner nationalism owed its characteristics and thrust more to the evolution of a specific historical ideology with its own constituent elements, and the localised material conditions of the times, than to the adoption of an ideology that originated outside of the country.

Divisions in the political domain in the 1940s had an impact on visual culture in ways that were at times implicit rather than explicit. Brenda Schmahmann, for example, speculates in her chapter that, whereas the commissioning of a sculpture of Jan Marais for Stellenbosch University may have been envisaged as a means of inspiring commonality of purpose among white Afrikaners, the diverse allegiances of Stellenbosch academics, with accompanying heated debates, 'had much to do with its commissioning and making being so protracted'.

AFRIKANER NATIONALISM AND THE RATIONALE OF APARTHEID

The rather unexpected National Party victory in 1948, coming on the back of altered post-World War II social and economic circumstances and the complacency of the opposition United Party after its comfortable 1943 election victory, ushered in a new era. The following years would see the ratcheting up of earlier segregatory measures, especially in the form of increasingly harsh apartheid laws. For many Afrikaners, the coming to power of the National Party ushered in the time-honoured and long-cherished ideal of being able to reshape South Africa in its own image. Flushed with victory at the polls, the party considered it imperative to maintain the upper hand over other contesting groups in the country.

Because the ensuing apartheid policy has been mainly associated with Afrikaners for over 40 years, there has been a tendency in the literature to relate all forms of earlier discrimination to some kind of primordial Afrikaner instinct. However, such analyses lose sight of the fact that the early systematic exposition of segregation in the twentieth century emanated not from Afrikaans-speakers but from mainly English-speaking administrations. Up until the late 1930s, Afrikaner ideologues were too involved in the so-called Boer and Brit battle to pay serious attention to what was called the 'native question'. By that time the ideology of segregation was already deeply rooted. It assumed a spurious naturality as a 'sensible' policy, despite being increasingly challenged in the 1940s. Segregation was more flexible than its successor, apartheid, but in certain respects it foreshadowed the implementation of a more complete and harsher system of discrimination.

Nevertheless, one of the ideological wellsprings of the earlier era – that of 'separateness' – was adopted and related to Afrikaner notions of nationalism that set the *volk* apart from other groupings. 'Separateness' was elevated to a supreme level; it was regarded as a key imperative emanating from nationalist precepts. Within Afrikaner nationalist political culture, 'separateness' was imbued with desirable as well as laudable qualities. Fears were expressed that Afrikaner culture would wilt in a melting-pot environment, and that any form of integration should be resisted. There was also a religious element to this thinking. Through Christian nationalist ideology, based on a narrow reading of the Bible, efforts were made to justify racial separatism in terms of the 'calling' and 'mission' of Afrikanerdom. In this way, one of the planks of Afrikaner nationalism came to feature in its racial policy.

In order to stave off criticism that apartheid only benefited Afrikaners or white people more generally, 'separate' freedoms had to be allowed for other groups. In this respect, apartheid offered the Afrikaner elite a method which, it thought, would help overcome the basic problem of maintaining the domination of a white minority over a vast black majority. With the steady erosion of white power in the rest of Africa after World War II, new solutions had to be devised for South Africa. The answer was to be found in the so-called homelands policy, which parcelled the country up and assigned to each 'tribal' grouping its own 'homeland', despite the fact that black people had become increasingly urbanised and had no need or desire for a rural 'homeland'. Underlying this attempt to maintain power over most of South Africa was a form of paternalism. Afrikaners decided and

decreed what was acceptable and fair for black people. Thinking of themselves as an insular offshoot of western Europe, and priding themselves on being a separate and superior 'white tribe', they took it upon themselves to dictate to others. And if others did not see it in that light, they had to be persuaded, cajoled, even forced into believing that, ultimately, it was in their interest to do so. There were, of course, a number of other factors, such as the need for cheap black labour, which helped to shape apartheid thinking, but the elements transferred from nationalistic thinking cannot be ignored.

NEW SUBJECTIVITIES AND THE GRADUAL DISINTEGRATION OF AFRIKANER NATIONALISM

Once the National Party had assumed power, gradual changes relating to the self-representation of the nationalist movement occurred. It began to shed some of its more populist characteristics – at times crudely expressed – to assume the guise and demeanour of a respectable governing party. The movement also became more bureaucratised as a greater number of Afrikaners found themselves in the civil service with a steady income, which further helped to blunt possible populist expressions of discontent.

This was paralleled by exceptional economic growth during the 1960s, outpacing nearly all Western countries by registering an average growth rate of 6 per cent over the decade. Although Afrikaners still lagged behind white English-speakers in terms of total income (45 per cent against 55 per cent), overall they had made significant strides. In general, there was a trend among Afrikaners away from unskilled or semi-skilled relatively poorly paid labour to skilled and better remunerated positions with stable career prospects. This process was accelerated by the National Party's purposeful policy, implemented from 1948, of promoting Afrikaner education in a variety of ways, including establishing technical schools and, at tertiary level, medical and engineering faculties.

With this changed milieu of upward mobility came greater status differentiation and lifestyle changes. Co-existing with nationalist impulses was a new call to join a fast-growing consumer culture. Materialistic values and impulses were given free rein. Conspicuous consumption was reflected in emerging trends: 'Persian carpets, caviar, private swimming pools, caravans, "doing Europe" – cars, holiday plans, and fashions' assumed a new importance (*Die Huisgenoot* 1968, 32).

In the longer term, the economic changes of the 1960s had a catalytic effect on Afrikaner politics. Structurally, as a consumer mentality gradually became entrenched, it brought into play a new set of subjectivities. Consumer practices assumed a more prominent role in the formation of identity, while individualised materialism rendered group boundaries more brittle, placing greater emphasis on re-inventing the self in a new environment. This did not imply a complete disintegration of Afrikaner identity, nor, indeed, an immunity from wider political developments, but a new re-imagining of this identity in the light of changed material and political circumstances.

With the attainment of a republic in 1961 – the fulfilment of a long-cherished ideal – one of the main Afrikaner goals was achieved. Nationalistic fervour slowly started to dissipate; there were no longer large-scale ideological projects reminiscent of an earlier era to pursue. Of course, there was always apartheid policy as an ongoing ideological aim to mould and adapt, but even here, as anti-apartheid forces gathered momentum, enthusiasm started to wane during the 1980s. One commentator pointedly remarks on the outcomes as choices were narrowed down: 'It has yet to be proven anywhere that a BMW-owning bureaucratic bourgeoisie with swimming pools and servants readily sacrifices the good life for psychologically gratifying ethnic identities' (Adam 1990, 236). Nationalistic reflex reactions may well have continued in one form or the other, but the core elements of nationalism had already started to erode under the twin impact of external pressure and internal adjustments.

The drive to portray Afrikaners as cultured and sophisticated, which Van Robbroeck describes in her chapter, had already begun in the 1930s; it gained momentum in the following three decades, particularly in the field of architecture, as Federico Freschi demonstrates in his own chapter. As the economy prospered, Afrikaners increasingly wished to portray themselves as a modern people. In terms of public architecture, this self-representation was reflected, inter alia, in grandiose and imposing buildings such as the University of South Africa, which, planned in the late 1960s, dominated the entrance to Pretoria from the south. In the administrative capital itself, the glitzy black glass of the Reserve Bank complemented the commanding State Theatre building. In terms of appearance, these buildings stand in contradistinction to the Voortrekker Monument, inaugurated in 1949 on a hill just outside the city (see Katharina Jörder's chapter for a discussion of photographs of this event); its overwhelming

architectural style symbolises the values and aspirations of an earlier generation of nationalists. Yet it is necessary to utter a caveat. Nationalism is known for its Janus-like qualities, looking forwards as well backwards, incorporating national aspirations in different guises, and in line with more modernist impulses. While developments in the 1960s initiated a process of fragmentation, the past was not wholly discarded. As suggested earlier, however, it took a while for nationalism to run its full course, and it only lost its traction as an ideological force towards the end of the twentieth century.

This process came to a head with President FW de Klerk's unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1990. A number of factors, each with its own tangled history which can only be touched on here, fed into this: the periodic and debilitating internal unrest in the country; the replacement of the hawkish President PW Botha with the more pragmatic FW de Klerk; economic sanctions and a worsening economic situation; international isolation; and the fall of the Berlin Wall which changed the nature of the Cold War and which De Klerk saw as an opportunity to deprive the ANC of its Eastern Bloc support. The Cold War, as demonstrated by Gary Baines in his chapter, had resulted in comprehensive militarisation and concomitant cultural militarism.

As the world around it changed, political nationalism lost its ideological coherence and was no longer able to serve a functional purpose. A confident Afrikaner middle class that had control of the party and key positions in the state could afford to abandon nationalism as they were certain that, with broad constitutional guarantees, they would be able to survive in a 'new' South Africa. It was the poorer Afrikaners who still hankered for the nationalism of yesteryear, but they were simply not powerful enough to stop their wealthier and more influential brethren from surrendering the instruments of state necessary to underpin white privilege. In their chapter, Michael Godby and Liese van der Watt explore the tensions implicit in photographer David Goldblatt's visual construction of poorer Afrikaners and the extent to which this reinforces Anglophile stereotypes of 'backwardness' that ran counter to the emergence of the Afrikaner cultural elite at the height of apartheid. While prosperous Afrikaners could afford to be satisfied with constitutional guarantees, those who were financially unstable needed more tangible guarantees than abstract constitutional assurances (Adam, Slabbert and Moodley 1997, 57). To be sure, after the transition to democracy, a new form of cultural nationalism started to emerge which found specific expression in Afrikaans

arts festivals and civic movements to protect and promote Afrikaans as a language. These developments were, however, qualitatively quite different from, and more muted and circumscribed than, earlier, more strident forms of nationalism that straddled a number of terrains.

Ongoing contestation about an Afrikaner nationalist inheritance impacts on the visual domain in various ways. The debates concerning campus sculptures, discussed by Jansen in his chapter, indicate that it is not only an older generation, but also some young people born after the demise of apartheid, who continue to have attachment to Afrikaner nationalist symbols. Still, there are many Afrikaans-speakers in contemporary South Africa who conceive of their histories and identities in terms sharply critical of those extolled by the apartheid state. The artworks that Theo Sonnekus discusses in his chapter point to the ways in which many young white Afrikaans-speaking artists seek to negotiate and confront an uneasy inheritance, as indeed do several art projects at Stellenbosch University, which Schmahmann examines in her chapter.

The essays in this volume thus underscore the continued relevance of William Faulkner's 1951 aphorism that finds an echo in Jansen's own chapter title: 'The past is never dead. It's not even past.'

NOTES

1   For perspectives on Afrikaner nationalism that discuss the different historiographical positions outlined above, see Bundy (1987, 8–66) and Marks and Trapido (1987, 16–19). For more detailed analyses, see Van Jaarsveld (1964), Moodie (1975), Adam and Giliomee (1979), O'Meara (1983 & 1996) and Giliomee (2003).

2   The Slagtersnek Rebellion of about 40 Boers was aimed at established British government authority on the rough eastern frontier of the country. The Great Trek was the large Boer migration from the Cape to the interior of the country in the 1830s, and the Day of the Covenant relates to the Boer victory over the Zulu army in 1838, when the Voortrekkers promised that if God assisted them they would honour that promise on a specific day each year. The South African War of 1899–1902 saw the British destroying more than 30 000 farms and homesteads, and then housing the refugees in concentration camps where about 27 000 women and children died. The Boer Rebellion of 11 000 men in 1914–1915 was sparked by opposition to the decision that South Africa would participate in World War I on the side of Britain.

3   In support of fledgling Afrikaner businesses, the *Reddingsdaadbond* collected funds for entrepreneurs.

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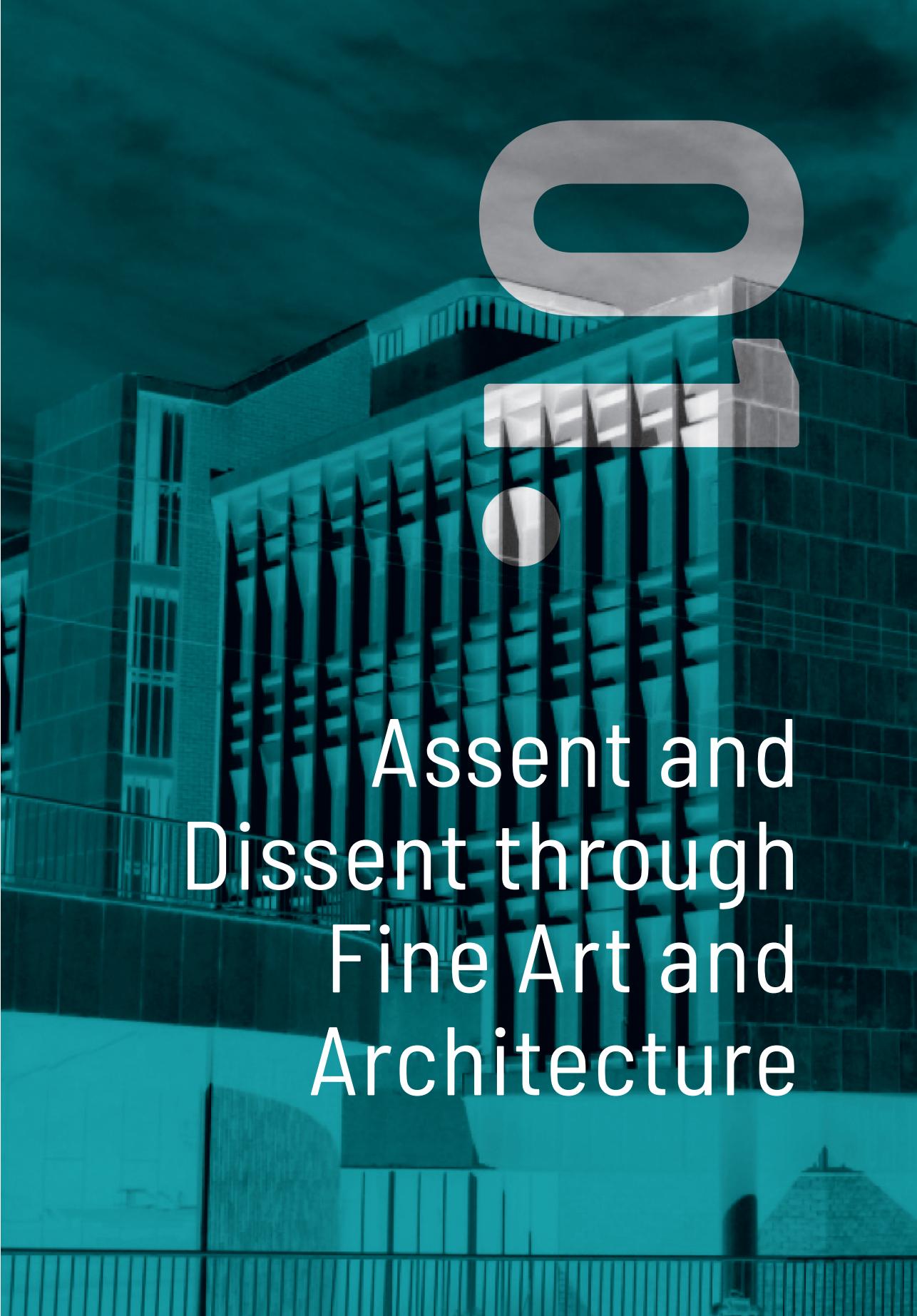
Assent and Dissent through Fine Art and Architecture

Afrikaner Nationalism and Other Settler Imaginaries at the 1936 Empire Exhibition

LIZE VAN ROBBROECK

The 1930s was a time of intensive settler nation-building in the British Dominions. The Balfour Declaration of 1926 and the Statute of Westminster in 1931 proclaimed the independence of the Dominions and their parity with Britain, heralding the first steps in institutionalising the British Commonwealth of Nations. The interwar years were, as Christine Boyanoski (2002, 12) suggests, a 'crucial moment in the history of cultural relations between Great Britain and the former white colonies of settlement; for while the latter gained political independence through the process of decolonisation during these years, cultural independence was less easily attained'. New nationhood demanded signs of a national character that could be displayed in both high and popular cultural spaces, not only to invent a national settler imaginary, but also to boost tourism and commerce between domains. The challenge was to generate an iconography that would produce distinct white national identities that accorded with the goals of empire, while simultaneously pacifying and/or suppressing potentially resurgent anti-imperial nationalisms.

In South Africa, the early twentieth-century construction of a national identity presented unique challenges. Barely three decades before, the South African (Anglo-Boer) War had left the empire significantly weakened, while the defeated Boers resented the loss of their hard-won independence. Under these circumstances, the attempt to manufacture unity among South Africa's divided settler polity rendered the conciliatory Fusion politics of the 1930s tenuous, no matter how robustly it was promoted through events such as the Empire Exhibition.[1]

Afrikaner affiliations were split between, on the one hand, politicians (such as Jan Smuts) who advocated unification under the British Commonwealth and, on the other, ideologues as well as numerous political and cultural organisations passionately promoting republican ideals.[2] By and large, the white English-speaking population was resented for what many Afrikaners regarded as blind allegiance to the Crown, while the English-speaking capitalist elite provoked strong class antagonisms (Bozzoli 1976). In the shadows of this blinding whiteness, increasingly marginalised African nationalist groupings tried to forge a unified African imaginary to counter the relentless erosion of native rights and the exclusionary politics of Union.[3]

The nascent white national imaginaries mobilised visual culture to claim distinctiveness, yet ironically tended to share visual strategies and vocabularies, revealing nationalism as a shared signifying system across ideological and ethnic schisms.[4] Emerging settler imaginaries brought distinctiveness into being through the incorporation of indigenous flora, fauna, climate and topography as signifiers of uniqueness.[5] In this cauldron of fluid developing nationalisms, nationalist identifications were seldom absolute, which not only made identification with multiple nationalisms and ideologies possible, but also produced characteristically ambivalent visual cultures.

To demonstrate this, I look at the 1936 Empire Exhibition in Johannesburg, which was organised to celebrate the city's jubilee. This exhibition not only served as a stage upon which emerging white South African nationalisms could play themselves out, but more significantly, its imperial scope allows comparison with other white nationalisms in the Dominions. It is useful not only to explore the horizontal networks of cultural and economic exchange among newly independent settler nations, but also to expose the tenuousness of dominion claims to national distinctiveness and exceptionalism.

In the early twentieth century, large art exhibitions, expressly concerned with nationalist display, were organised in the Dominions and in Britain to promote both cooperation and economic and cultural competition.[6] Modernist art was infusing the globe and radically reframing cultural discourses, weaving a complex web of (sometimes antagonistic) ideologies in a language shrewdly celebrating both primitive vitality and modern technological sophistication. As national showcases, these exhibitions tended to walk a narrow line between traditionalism as a signifier

of stability and origins (an especially difficult feat for recently nationalised colonies), and modernism signifying progress and accomplishment.

One such show was the Contemporary Canadian Painting: Southern Dominions Exhibition, which toured South Africa, Australia and New Zealand from 1936 to 1939; a significant exhibition, it accelerated the process of white national self-fashioning in these countries, as Christine Boyanoski suggests.[7] The Canadian art show was launched at the Empire Exhibition in Johannesburg, where it was accompanied by South African and British shows.

THE EMPIRE EXHIBITION AND THE CONTEXT OF THE 1930S

The Empire Exhibition, in which the art exhibitions mentioned earlier played a vital ideological role, was an enormously ambitious event. A miniature city was erected in Milner Park on the outskirts of Johannesburg to mark the jubilee of the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand as well as the founding of Johannesburg. The exhibition was attended by 1.5 million people, and involved all the Dominions and British colonies such as Southern and Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Kenya. In the tradition of world fairs, the exhibition presented an evolutionist narrative of civilisation and technological achievement against a spectacle of primordial and primitive otherness as represented by, inter alia, the South African explorer Donald Bain's (hugely popular) exhibition of 'Bushmen'.[8]

The Empire Exhibition provided a panoply of 'various marvels, including exhibits of minerals, diamonds, and postage stamps; a rock garden; a replica of Victoria Falls; an animal zoo; and a model of the Rand. Other attractions included a Jubilee parade, an ice rink, a cinema, musical performances, and a pageant presenting South African history' (Coe 2001, 3). This pageant, which will be discussed later, was written and produced by Gustav Preller, an Afrikaner historian and cultural entrepreneur who later assisted in choreographing the centenary celebrations of the Great Trek in 1938; he was also a consultant in the early planning stages of the Voortrekker Monument, a model of which was on display at the Empire Exhibition. The participation of such outspoken anti-imperialists in the exhibition, even being drawn into its planning and execution, demonstrates the kind of ambiguous identification I mentioned earlier.

The 1930s were significant as regards the invention of synchronous and competitive nationalisms in the Dominions, seeing an increase also in the pace of both Afrikaner and African nationalist mobilisation. The destructive effect of the South African War on Afrikaner rural life and economic well-being was

exacerbated by a devastating drought and the Great Depression, which gave impetus to urbanisation and migrant labour among Afrikaners as well as indigenous populations. The latter had been left with a mere 7.5 per cent of arable land in terms of the Natives Land Act of 1913, and were forced to compete with displaced Afrikaners for jobs in the cities in an atmosphere of increasingly acrimonious racial tension (Beinart and Delius 2013). In the growing race consciousness of this period, Afrikaner political claims were recognised as legitimate and pressing, while the liberal notion of racial equality was in decline. Blithely unconcerned about rising African nationalism, organisers of the Empire Exhibition were, however, sensitive to the reality that Afrikaner nationalist leaders were firmly seated in positions of power in the Union government, and that Afrikaner republicans were pushing for sovereign independence from Britain. It was therefore of strategic importance to quell potential Afrikaner resistance to this imperial event, and to co-opt Afrikaner interests.

In this competitive context, Deborah Hughes (2008) points out, pro-Afrikaner histories that appealed to a race-conscious settler audience were gaining the upper hand. Also, although the exhibition was mooted by English-speaking Johannesburg elites to massage South Africa's relationship with Britain, the organisers went out of their way to accommodate Afrikaner interests by toning down the imperialist rhetoric (2008, 142–152). Realising that anti-imperialist sentiments could derail the exhibition, a strategic effort was made to include Afrikaner nationalists in the organisation of key events. Significantly, three ardent nationalist culturalists from Pretoria – artist Jacob Hendrik Pierneef, historian Gustav Preller and academic Martin du Toit (who launched and chaired the Department of Afrikaans Art and Culture at the University of Pretoria) – were involved in the Empire Exhibition's cultural events. These three figures feature prominently in the discussion below.

The Empire Exhibition conveyed a message of unity, not only between the two settler polities in South Africa, but also among the white subjects of empire, belying any competitive or, indeed, hostile undercurrents. All the opening addresses emphasised the stimulation of trade and tourism, and solidarity and peace in the British Empire, since 'cooperation was a mark of civilisation in a world threatened by war' (Coe 2001, 7). While this discourse was particularly common in the English press, it was found also in Afrikaans coverage. An editorial in *Die Volkstem*, for example, interpreted the exhibition as proof of the economic

recovery of the Union, and of the existence of an '*Uniemensheid*' [literally, Union-humanity] that had faith in the future, adding that the exhibition might be regarded as 'proof of the vitality to be expected of a young, vigorous nation'.[9]

There were also, however, several hostile – or ambivalent, at best – examples of press coverage. In a *Volkstem* article titled 'Afrikaans en die Rykstentoonstelling: 'n Beroep' [Afrikaans and the Empire Exhibition: an Appeal], the secretary of the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge* (FAK) pleads with *Afrikaanssprekendes* [Afrikaans-speakers] only to speak Afrikaans at the exhibition ('Afrikaans,' 1936, 6). He calls for '*kragtige selfhandhawing*' [robust self-assertiveness] in order to resist the '*papbroekige toegewingsgees*' [cowardly spirit of compliance] that dominates Union discourse, given that the Afrikaner's consistent lot on the Witwatersrand is one of inferiority. Afrikaners are urged to remember '*die afsonderlike roeping van die Boerevolk*' [the unique destiny of the Boer nation] and to think about Afrikaners struggling to make a living in the '*Rykstad*' [city of Empire, that is, Johannesburg]: 'You don't expect, in your own country, to go to an exhibition organised by the English for the benefit of the English, but rather to one that also serves and promotes your interests as a Boer.'[10] In conclusion, there is a polite, if cool, reminder that more than 60 per cent of the exhibition applicants are '*Afrikaners, lede van u volk*' [Afrikaners, members of your nation].

Mostly, however, a stance of a white transnational solidarity was maintained by Afrikaner participants, who nonetheless found subtle ways of asserting their nationalist interests. In this regard, visual culture played a pivotal role.[11]

ART EXHIBITION

If most of the displays at the Empire Exhibition were meant to strengthen the economic infrastructure of the newly independent settler Dominions, the art exhibition and various other cultural events, such as the pageant, provided the superstructure which supplied the ideological message needed to rationalise and reproduce the new nations' economic needs. Organisation of the South African component of the art exhibition was entrusted to Martin du Toit, a prominent Afrikaner ideologue. In an article on the enormous cultural influence of Du Toit in the period in question, Jeanne van Eeden (2008, 164) points out that the 1930s saw the establishment of the Transvaal as a leading force in cultural matters of state.

Du Toit's introduction to the catalogue of the South African section of the combined Canadian, British and South African art exhibition employs the familiar nationalist rhetoric of Union. In a manner that is characteristic of all settler dominion discourse, it focuses on the freshness and energy of the new nation. Commenting on the early twentieth-century revival of the arts, Du Toit (1936) lists the diversity of styles and preferences that characterise South African art, including 'the hypermodern schools of Paris and Berlin'. His emphasis on modernism, and 'even Surrealism', is noteworthy, since, as Van Eeden (2008) indicates, Du Toit was the single most important interlocutor for modernist art in South Africa in the first half of the twentieth century.[12] Significantly, Du Toit singles out the Afrikaner (though the term was commonly used at the time to denote 'South African'): 'A peculiar phenomenon is the fact that the Afrikaans-speaking Afrikaner has only recently turned to sculpture and painting. His time of trekking and unrest has probably passed. And how his young literature and his young art flourish!' Youthful vitality and modernism are, of course, complementary, and hence serve as nationalist self-promotion.

Du Toit's main selection criteria were modernity and sophistication. Though he included several of the more conservative and canonical of the 'old guard', among them Hugo Naudé, Gregoire Boonzaaier, and Anton van Wouw, Du Toit's godfather, to the chagrin of members of the public and a number of critics, perennial favourites such as Frans Oerder, WH Coetzer, Erich Mayer, JEA Volschenk, Gwelo Goodman, Tinus de Jongh, Coert Steynberg and Fanie Eloff gave way to young upcoming modernists.[13] Accusations that the selection committee, under Du Toit, prioritised competition with Canada at the expense of local artistic diversity are not unfounded, given the number of places awarded to an up-and-coming generation of artists with overt modernist proclivities, including JH Pierneef, Irma Stern, Maggie Laubser, Alexis Preller, Walter Battiss, Bertha and Rosamund Everard, Lippy Lipschitz and Elsa Dziomba.

It seems, thus, that it was a matter of national pride for Du Toit to promote a progressive version of South African art that could compete with the overt modernism of Canada's emerging canon. To understand this, it is necessary to examine the Canadian exhibit which was held up to the white Dominions as an example of effective and progressive new national art. The Group of Seven, also known as the Algonquin School, modernised the conservative Anglophile tradition of Canadian landscape painting by deploying the formal devices of

continental post-Impressionism, such as a flattening of perspective and the use of bold, clear colours to render scenes of the Canadian wilderness. Their overt nationalistic goals are discernible in their writing, as in the statement by artist Lawren Harris (in Mackey 2000, 126), who insists that 'a nation identifies itself with its land' and 'no virile people could remain subservient to, and dependent upon the creations in art of other peoples'. Such claims to cultural autonomy and novelty not only served to counter the repeated refrain that settler art constituted belated imitations of metropolitan trends, but gave voice to a sense of impending emergence of the nation: 'there was also the strange brooding sense of another nature fostering a new race and a new age' (Harris in Mackey 2000, 126).

Precisely because of its nationalistic goals, Canadian modernism resonated with the cultural needs of the Dominions between the world wars.[14] As was the case in the other white Dominions, South African writers, artists and critics expressed the overt need to invent a unique national aesthetic that would signal a break with the colonial past.[15] Ironically, the same two ingredients were presented by all the Dominions to guarantee national singularity: a unique topographical and climatic character, and proximate Others in the form of indigenous peoples and other 'exotic' colonial cultures. Both of these settler-national preoccupations feature strongly in the South African exhibition. Depictions of both landscape and dark-skinned Others were increasingly couched in a modernist aesthetic, which served as shorthand for the new nation's sophisticated modernity and cultural competitiveness.

LANDSCAPE[16]

In the case of the 1936 Empire Exhibition, the modernist nationalism it showcased was subtly infused with sectarian Afrikaner interests. A case in point is the genre of landscape. The prominent role of landscape is a given in all settler colonial art, for reasons that have been extensively examined.[17] However, Afrikaner artists and cultural brokers laid claim to a deeper and more primal connection to the land than their English countrymen, based not only on Afrikaner colonial precedence, but also on nostalgia for the Afrikaner's agrarian past, which was lamented as irredeemably lost due to the devastations of the South African War and the growth of an alien, urban industrial economy. It is notable that Martin du Toit had earlier commented on the impact of the loss

of land and autonomy on the Afrikaner artist, whose work was, consequently, characterised by a sober, melancholy, even tragic air (Van Eeden 2008, 185).

This further implies a 'settler pioneer' perspective, which regards the urban sphere with suspicion and disdain.[18] One of the exhibitors, British-born South African painter Edward Roworth, lauded a life of the soil, in contrast with 'the neurotic existence of the myriads in the overgrown cities of the old world!' (in Boyanoski 2002, 74). In the case of the Afrikaner, this typical settler distrust of the 'denatured, decadent' milieu of the city was closely imbricated with a xenophobic dislike of the relatively new city of Johannesburg, with its nouveau-riche multiculturalism and crass materialism. This view emerges strongly in the Afrikaans press coverage of the Empire Exhibition.[19] If landscape thus reflected the vigour and pioneering spirit of Afrikaners, and declared their close ties (and hence prior claim) to the land, landscape in a modernist style served to counter views of the Afrikaner as atavistic and backward.[20]

In the case of perhaps the most the iconic white South African artist, Pierneef (who had six works on display, and served on the selection panel),[21] the stylised language of modernism offered a means of declaring a romantic affinity with the characteristically African feel of the Highveld and Lowveld, the northernmost regions of the Union. The Transvaal was one of two Boer Republics that were captured by the British in the South African War, and hence a terrain loaded with historical and symbolic significance for Afrikaners. Significantly, no fewer than 12 of the total of 32 massive paintings Pierneef produced for the new Johannesburg Park Station on commission from the South African Railways are scenes of the Transvaal (Coetzee 1992, 31).

This affinity with the Transvaal may be read as a declaration of both Afrikaner belonging and authentic Africanness – '*Ik ben een Afrikander*' [I am an Afrikaner/ African] couched in visual language. The conflation of Dutch-descent whiteness with an authentic Africanness is borne out by repeated barbs in Pierneef's public addresses. One such was an accusation levelled at British architect Herbert Baker for filling South Africa House in London with work by Jewish artists 'who had never experienced the smell of a dung fire', and hence, presumably, had no inkling of what it meant to be an African (Pretorius 1990, 84). This anti-Semitic statement is, indeed, nothing less than a thinly veiled attack on the perceived inauthenticity of Fusion politics and art, with South Africa House being a textbook example, in the opinion of Federico Freschi (2006).

'Authenticity' features prominently in settler cultural discourse, possibly to counter the 'myth of belatedness' (Ashcroft and Salter 2000, 296), which saw settler art as derivative, a latecomer to European trends. In this regard, Pierneef's claim to authentic national belonging is typical. This is clear from a letter he wrote to DF Malan in 1932 apropos foreign influences on South African art: '... it would be disaster if we allowed ourselves to be dictated by ... outsiders as to what African art is. And since Art is the spontaneous and highest expression of our people, who are of Dutch origin, it is essential that we as Afrikaners should take care that no foreign influences creep into our Art' (in Pretorius 1990, 78). The fact that Pierneef himself was first-generation South African of Dutch descent suggests that an element of anxiety and insecurity possibly underpins these qualms, and that a tenuous hold on belonging is overcompensated by exaggerated claims of authenticity.[22]

As was the case with the Group of Seven, Pierneef produced landscapes that relied on a Romantic tradition that was invigorated, possibly via the influence of these Canadian artists, by the deployment of a modernist visual vocabulary.[23] Since none of his landscapes at the Empire Exhibition are available for reproduction, I look at Pierneef's earlier station paintings which similarly show how the supposedly nationalist art of Union was subtly infused with hidden Afrikaner nationalist signs. Commissioned to demonstrate the promise of the new Union, they advertise the natural splendour of South Africa to tourists. Since they depict no figures, these scenes serve as excellent examples of settler 'empty land' painting. The paintings include numerous depictions of African wilderness, as well as many agrarian scenes imbued with signs of settler occupation and industry, but they are entirely stripped of indigenous presence. Orderly agrarian townscapes – such as the view of Louis Trichardt (Fig. 2.1) – celebrate settler industriousness and productivity.

Cultivated fields lead the eye to the peaceful rural settlement, where it comes to rest on the perspective fulcrum of the composition, the Protestant church – a reminder, no doubt, of the Old Testament commandment to till and tend the soil, and testimony to the piousness of the *volk*. Given Pierneef's overt nationalist sentiments, it is surely no coincidence that this is a historic Afrikaner settlement named after a prominent Voortrekker leader.

It is indeed striking how, though more consciously designed and architectonic, Pierneef's planar designs and crystalline colours evoke the style of the Group of

Figure 2.1. Jacob Hendrik Pierneef, *View of Louis Trichardt*, 1932. Oil on canvas, 140 x 148.75 cm, Transnet collection. Reproduction courtesy of Transnet.

Seven. This could, as previously observed, be the result of direct transmission, but Canadian and South African art historians (Coetzee 1986; Mandel 1978) have pointed out that both Pierneef and the Group of Seven drew on a 'Northern Romantic tradition' that attempted to capture the immanence of God in nature. This is suggestive of an epistemological and aesthetic convention, shared among Protestant settler artists, which goes deeper than mere influence. A comparison of Pierneef's *Louis Trichardt* with a view of Quebec by the famous Canadian artist Arthur Lismer amply demonstrates this affinity (Fig. 2.2).

Figure 2.2. Arthur Lismer, *Quebec Village*, 1926. Oil on canvas, Agnes Etherington Art Center, Kingston.

It is likely that Pierneef's modernist reinvention of the Protestant Romantic idiom is infused with a German Idealist understanding of nations and cultures. As Dunbar Moodie (1975, 146–174) points out, Afrikaner *kultuurpolitiek* [cultural politics] in the interwar years was influenced by German Romantic ideas brought from Europe by Afrikaans intellectuals and artists. These views promoted essentialist understandings of nations and national cultures in contrast to the liberal nationalisms favoured by empire, which, for strategic reasons, promoted cooperative multiculturalism. Though deeply contentious in Afrikaner circles, German Idealism manifested strongly in Afrikaner nationalist art and discourse. Certainly, Pierneef's statements to the press suggest deep sympathy with Romantic constructs of nations as inextricably bound to ancestral lands and cultures, and united by a spiritual bond: 'Afrikaners derive their historical being and identity

from this relationship [with the land]; they're products of the land, or *natuurmense'* (Pierneef in Ferreira 1990, 23).

This Romantic view of art, nation and the land as inextricably interwoven would reach fever pitch a few years later in the rhetoric of the centenary celebrations of the Great Trek. However, it fundamentally differs from the more instrumentalist view of land in the exploitation phase of colonial occupation, as exemplified by British colonial artist Thomas Baines's *Gold and Ivory* (1874). As the title reveals, Baines's image of elephants charging over gold-bearing earth is an open admission that the imperial project is primarily economic and exploitative. An open declaration of economic intent such as this is avoided by twentieth-century settler artists, who portray the land in far more nostalgic and nationalistic terms.[24] It is interesting and, indeed, significant that the pre-settlement stage of colonial exploration (as exemplified by Baines) and the later stage of colonial settlement (exemplified by Pierneef) corresponded with a cultural shift in landscape painting from nature as mere potential to nature as treasured possession.

THE OTHER SIDE OF WHITE SETTLER ART

Anitra Nettleton (2011, 141) names two types of primitivism in South African art: a romantic trope of 'primitive simplicity and purity' in the form of representations of dark-skinned people in their 'natural' environments, and a formal primitivism that imitated shapes and motifs from 'primitive art'. In *Possessions* (1999), Australian author Nicolas Thomas explains how the latter enables settlers to claim national belonging via the appropriation of indigenous cultural signs, with the New Zealand dance, the Haka, being an obvious example. This cultural strategy emerged across the Dominions in the 1950s (well after the Empire Exhibition), in response to European modernist primitivism which reached its apogee in the interwar period. In South Africa, the artists Walter Battiss, Cecil Skotnes and Alexis Preller are the most prominent examples of this phenomenon. While Preller and Battiss featured in the Empire Exhibition, both were very young, and had not yet started using indigenous stylistic elements and motifs in their art. Rather, it is in the representation of indigenous and exogenous Others (the trope of the noble savage) that the South African section of the exhibition reveals the importance of alterity to settler self-fashioning.

Romanticised studies of 'natives' and images of exogenous Others (for example, Cape Malay people) abounded in the South African art on show, perhaps in

response to an implicitly felt demand to showcase elements that render the nation culturally distinct.[25] *Native Study (Mapogges)* (Fig. 2.3) is the sole painting by Alexis Preller in the Empire Exhibition.

In this rather curious act of semantic inversion, settler identity is presented as indigenous by proxy. One might argue that this appropriation is most palpable in visual culture, since national imaginaries are extremely dependent on optic practices. This visual prominence of romanticised (though distinctly modernist) images of 'primitive Others' in the South African art section of the exhibition (as represented by artists such as Irma Stern, Moses Kottler, Elza Dziomba and Lippy Lipschitz) is ironically meant to signal settler identity, insofar as the paintings themselves accompany claims to a unique settler art imbued with a native 'spirit'. In a classic instance of semiotic slippage, representations of 'natives' in a state of

NATIVE STUDY (MAPOGGES) ALEXIS PRELLER

Figure 2.3. Alexis Preller, *Native Study (Mapogges)*, 1936. Oil on canvas, 61 x 71 cm, as seen in the catalogue of the Empire Exhibition. Reproduced courtesy of the Norval Foundation.

'primitive' oneness with nature are mobilised to signify not only settler belonging, freshness and originality, but also the settler artists' modernist sophistication and a contemporaneity that is equipped to compete with their peers.

Although, as mentioned earlier, the second phase of formal primitivism had not yet been initiated at the time of the Empire Exhibition, Pierneef anticipated this appropriation in ways that may not be evident in his paintings, but emerged in design motifs he produced for the applied arts (Pretorius 1990, 53) – after all, African art was, at the time, generally understood to be 'craft'. According to Pretorius (1990, 59), Pierneef regularly delivered lectures on the decorative possibilities for the applied arts of 'Bushman' and other native motifs. In true primitivist mode, Pierneef expressed a deep spiritual affinity with 'Bushman' art and folklore in particular, an affinity that is evident from the large motif of an eland he etched onto the front door of his Pretoria home. The problematics of the supposed affinity between the 'tribal' and the modern in modernist primitivism has been extensively covered by art historians (see, inter alia, Barkan and Bush [1995], Hiller [1991], Rhodes [1994]). It bears repeating that this 'affinity' articulates the co-emergence (and co-dependence) of colonialism and modernism. The denied dependency of the colonial project on the colonial Other, as both counterfoil and source of financial and cultural capital, is echoed in the appropriative gestures of the primitivist artists.

In his opening address at a Pierneef exhibition, the Reverend Roger Castle (in Pretorius 1990, 64) affirms the complex interweaving of nationalism, primitivism and land in Pierneef's work: 'We, who are interested in the founding of a South African School, maintain that the only way to lay hold of the spirit of this vast sub-continent is to first soak oneself in the soil, to feel oneself filled with and overwhelmed by the great soul of the land, and secondly, to return to the primitives of this land for inspiration. Pierneef has done both these things.'

THE PAGEANT

Probably because, by their very nature, historical pageants assume a narrative form, social evolutionist tales emerged very strongly in the opening pageant of the exhibition. Designed and choreographed by the Afrikaner nationalist historian Gustav Preller, the pageant was commissioned to trace the history of South Africa, culminating in Union independence within the peaceful and prosperous network of empire, as exemplified by the Empire Exhibition itself. Responding to criticism

that he had yielded to Fusion propaganda and pressure from fellow Afrikaners, Preller writes in *Die Volkstem* about the design and execution of this pageant (1936, 14–15); somewhat defensively, he discusses the limitations of historical pageants, which of necessity 'tell the truth and nothing less than the truth, but not the whole truth!'[26] Accordingly, selection and omissions are inevitable in any such brief, ephemeral event.

In keeping with its social Darwinist perspective, the pageant begins with a procession of 'Bushmen' (specially brought in from the Kalahari), representing South Africa's first inhabitants. In nationalistic terms, first settlement confers rights, but in relation to the 'Bushmen', the idea was anathema to Preller. And so, in his *Volkstem* article titled '*Die Tyd van die Boesman*' [The Time of the Bushman], Preller makes the remarkable claim that 'there was a time when a (probably white) civilisation had already vanished from the scene, centuries ago, in one of the iron ages, when the Bushman had taken possession of the entire continent' (Preller 1936, 15).[27] He then refers to Jan Smuts, claiming that Smuts seemed also to believe in a past white civilisation 'which had sunk into the quicksand of African blood' (1936, 14).[28] In this way, the claim to Caucasian vanguardism is asserted, while the pageant tale of the progression from primitive to modern remains intact.[29]

This historical trajectory continues, with 'Hottentots', Bartolomeu Diaz, 'Johan' van Riebeeck and the French Huguenots all making an appearance, showing how, 'through the ages, a new nation arose in South Africa, formed of all the most noble elements of the Old World' (Preller 1936, 15).[30] The pageant shows the change of government at the Cape and the '*finale Engelse inbesitneming*' [final English occupation] – the latter represented by Lady Anne Barnard's hosting of a ball. Accompanying the visual aspect was a narrator telling of the various '*kafferoorloë*' [kaffir wars, as the Frontier Wars of 1779–1879 were known at the time], the Slagtersnek Rebellion and other significant battles and events (Preller 1936, 15). The arrival of the 1820 Settlers is couched in sympathetic terms, in keeping with the Afrikaner nationalist perception of the Settlers as victims, as the Boers themselves were, of an unsympathetic British colonial administration.[31] In keeping with the occasion, white settler unity is promoted, but with a caveat: 'nothing in their past was reckoned to keep Boer and Brit apart from each other – other than an erroneous native policy' (Preller 1936, 14–15).[32] Moodie's nuanced discussion of republican approaches to settler union confirms that most Afrikaner nationalists saw a period of reconciliation and white settler-bonding as a positive

and inevitable precursor to the establishment of an eventual Afrikaner republic (Moodie 1975, 116–145). It was on the issue of 'native policy', however, that the more liberal English approach presented obstacles to such unity of purpose.

The pageant draws to a conclusion with the Great Trek, featuring key symbolic events such as Blood River and the Vow of the Covenant. It is significant that 5 of the 19 pageant scenes are of the Trek; recalling Pierneef's station panel scenes, these similarly insert the Afrikaner quest for independence into the ideological programme of the Empire Exhibition. Yet this quest is, as suggested above, necessarily accompanied by disregard, indeed contempt, for 'native' interests. Tellingly, Preller (1936, 15) callously laments not being permitted to show full battle scenes with natives on the attack. In a chilling explanation, he states that, in a scene from the 1916 film *Voortrekker* (for which he had written the screenplay), 'three natives died, and – so enormous is current concern for the native! – no more war scenes are thus allowed!'[33]

CONCLUSION

The 1936 Empire Exhibition offers a window into the complexity of Afrikaner nationalism, not only within the Union, but also within the broader network of empire. The core involvement of ardent republicans and anti-imperialists in the cultural programmes of the exhibition is revealing: it shows the extent of Union reliance upon Afrikaner cooperation, and unmasks the manner in which Afrikaner nationalists managed to implant republican messages in the agenda of empire. In the art exhibition, modernism and landscape were deployed to signal Afrikaner ancestral claims as well as a progressive modernity able to compete with empire. If landscape served as an 'innocent' genre through which the claim to land could be articulated, modernism similarly offered an ostensibly value-free visual vocabulary that served to divest settler interests of overt nationalist entitlements. For instance, Martin du Toit countered media attacks aimed at Irma Stern because of her focus on dark-skinned subjects by insisting that subject matter is irrelevant, as modernist art focuses on form rather than content (in van Eeden 2008, 172).

What also emerges is the degree to which Afrikaner visual culture employed strategies shared by all the Dominions, thereby rendering suspect its nationalist claims to a profound, spiritual uniqueness. Finally, the reliance on a debased

and/or romanticised, idealised native Other is seen to be key to the settler project of national self-construction.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

1   'Fusion' refers to General Hertzog's abandonment of republicanism and the fusion of his National Party with General Smuts's South African Party; this was in response to the world economic depression in 1933–1934, with the concomitant rise of a more militant Afrikaner nationalism under the leadership of DF Malan (Marks and Trapido 1987, 18).

2   Afrikaner nationalist organisations active in the 1930s included the *Broederbond*, the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge* (FAK) and the *Voortrekkers*, as well as a number of Afrikaans trade unions. According to Christine Boyanoski (2002, 126), the FAK (founded in 1929) was formed to oppose perceived threats to Afrikaner cultural identity posed by, inter alia, capitalism, imperialism and egalitarian liberalism.

3   For indigenous Africans, 1936 was an ominous year as fragile rights held under colonial rule were, under Union, systematically eroded. Hertzog passed the three notorious 'Native Bills': the Native Representation Bill (1936), the Nature Trust and Land Bill (1936) and the Urban Areas Amendment Bill (1937). In response, the All African Convention was assembled in June 1936 and again in 1937. For an analysis of African responses to the Empire Exhibition, see Deborah Hughes (2008).

4   African nationalisms were exceptions to this rule, and employed significantly different visual ciphers. For a brief analysis of early twentieth-century African nationalist strategies in the visual arts, see Van Robbroeck (2011, 15–36).

5   See Freschi (2006) for a discussion of motifs in South Africa House in London. Designed by Herbert Baker in 1933, springbok and protea motifs, together with various landscape paintings, were used to signify a quintessential South Africanness, for nationalistic purposes.

6   This included the Empire Exhibition at Wembley in London (1924–1925) and the Scottish Empire Exhibition of 1938 in Glasgow. However, the All Jamaica and Empire Exhibition of 1934 in Kingston never gained imperial sanction: as Hughes points out, it

was not recognised as an 'empire exhibition', largely in order to preserve the imaginary of the empire as white (Hughes 2008, 2).

7   The positive reception of Canadian art at the British Empire Exhibition in London gave rise to this exhibition. According to Boyanoski (2002, 25–26), the cultural example offered by the Southern Dominions Exhibition was meant to counter the crass materialism of the Dominions (Australia and South Africa in particular), and the perceived freshness of dominion art presented hope for the regeneration and redemption of the British character in the wake of World War I, when the rise and fall of empires was much debated.

8   Hughes (quoted in Lindfors) states: 'This "exhibitionary complex" … presented a vision of the world in which European accomplishments were seen as the pinnacle of human experience, with the rest of the world situated on a "sliding scale" of evolutionary, social and cultural development.' That Bain eulogised the 'Bushmen' as 'the last living remnants of a fast dying race' reinforces this (Lindfors 1999, 270).

9   My translation of *mag beskou word as bewys van die vitaliteit wat by 'n lewenskragtige jong volk verwag mag word* ('Rykstentoonstelling' 1936, 4).

10 My translation of *U verwag nie om na 'n tentoonstelling te kom wat deur Engelse ten behoewe van Engelse in u eie land georganiseer is nie, maar na een wat ook u belange as Boer moet behartig en bevorder*.

11 The cooperation proposed by such an event was, however, premised on the radical marginalisation of indigenous and other subject peoples of colour. Despite the 'liberal ideal of subject equality in the evolving Commonwealth, matters relating to race and the construction of white supremacy in Dominion were central to the organization of the exhibition', which essentially served as 'a spectacle of white supremacy negotiating the racial contingencies of empire' (Hughes 2008, 141).

12 Du Toit was a supporter of both Afrikaner nationalism and cultural modernism. He was president of the *Afrikaanse Kunsvereniging*, which he himself founded in 1931, and whose aim of was the '*Bevordering van Afrikaans in al sy vertakkinge*' [promotion of Afrikaans in all its manifestations] (Van Eeden 2008, 167). In 1929 he established a journal, *De Nuwe Brandwag*, and organised an art exhibition that tied in with the founding of the FAK. He also founded the *Volksteater* [State Theatre] in Pretoria, as well as the *Afrikaanse Kultuurraad* [Afrikaans Council for Culture], and was a regular contributor to *Die Vaderland* and *Die Volkstem*. It is likely that his Afrikaner nationalism was inculcated in him by his parents, who were founders of the *Genootschap van Rechte Afrikaners* [Society of True Afrikaners] (Van Eeden 2008).

13 In response to misgivings expressed by artist Leo François (a member of the selection committee) regarding the modernist slant of the exhibition, a special, separate exhibition

was arranged for the art of Pieter Wenning (1873–1921), a pioneer Afrikaner artist regarded as too iconic to ignore (Boyanoski 2002, 147). An example of a public outrage is a letter to the editor of *Die Volkstem* from Johanna CL Bosman (1936) complaining that the selection panel was biased towards the '*buitelandse modern styl*' [foreign modern style], and that so many works were rejected that the final selection was far fewer than the 500 originally allocated to '*Afrikaanse kuns*' [South African art]. Bosman warned against becoming '*na-apers of nabootsers*' [copy-cats or mimics]. One article singles out the destructive effects of '*Engelse kuns*' [English art] (*Die Volkstem*, c 1936).

14   This was true of New Zealand in particular. The New Zealand painter Roland Hipkins, for instance, wrote: 'This exhibition is of more than passing interest to this Dominion'; 'It will prove a stimulus to our artists, many of whom are also striving to interpret the spirit of their own country' (Hipkins 1938, 198).

15   See, for instance, a series of articles written by the German-born Jewish Afrikaner-sympathiser and artist Erich Mayer, in *Die Volksblad*, 1930.

16   Note that this discussion of landscape is partially based on an earlier publication (Van Robbroeck and Skinner 2018).

17   See Nicholas Thomas (1999), P Gentile and J Nickolas (2013), Foster (2008), NJ Coetzee (1992) and Francis Pound (2010), to name but a few.

18   In his comparative study of Australian and American settler strategies around land, Tom Lynch (2015, 699) claims that the creation of a regional frontier mythology was crucial to the formation of a national identity. People allied with rural frontier culture are perceived to be authentic representatives of national identity, so that 'real Australians' live in the Outback, and 'real Americans' live in rural areas, especially in the West.

19   In a special edition of *Die Volkstem* devoted to the Empire Exhibition, for instance, an article appeared on 'Die Rosestad' [Rose City; that is, Pretoria]; the city was seen as a 'Mecca' for Afrikaners, calm and peaceful, in contrast to the '*senuweeagtigheid*' [nervousness] and '*koorsagtige bedrywigheid*' [feverish busyness] of Johannesburg ('Rosestad' 1936, 3).

20   An article in *Die Vaderland* contrasts the 'limpness' of English-speaking Johannesburg artists' derivative Anglophile art with the virility, modernity and spontaneity of Afrikaner artists' work. The author blames the 'egotistical hunt for gold which created an environment in which English influence could easily overpower Afrikaans art' (in Boyanoski 2002, 142).

21   The selection committee of the South African part of the exhibition was, as Boyanoski speculates, suggested to Martin du Toit by Edward Roworth, and consisted of the following eight jury members: 'Professor John Wheatley, J.H. Pierneef, Moses Kottler,

Roworth himself, A.S. Furner or Gerhard Moerdyk, Irma Stern or Maggie Laubser, Leo François and Mr. G.E. Pearse, Chairman of the Board of the Johannesburg Art Gallery' (Boyanoski 2002, 145).

22 In similar vein, the landscape painter Erich Mayer wrote a series of articles in *Die Volksblad* about how to advance a national art, in which, significantly, he drew on examples from Canada and Australia. He called for a rejection of foreign influence, and pleaded for the establishment of art schools that would draw on the experiences of a deep-rooted peasantry; in this way a national art would develop that revealed the '*volkspersoonlikheid*' [national character] of South Africa. Mayer contrasted the decadence and frivolity of Europe with the staunch values and authentic lifestyle of the rural settler. Implied in this was a rebuke of urban English latecomers, and the fact that Mayer was himself not of South African birth, but a German Jew, is not so much a contradiction as a case in point that the most virulent settler nationalists tended to be recent arrivals.

23 It is probable that Pierneef attended the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley (1924–1925) as he was in London at the time, and is likely to have been impressed by the critically acclaimed landscape art of the Group of Seven. Because of the interwar network of cultural exchange in the Dominions, Canadians often filled posts in the other Dominions. For instance, Arthur Lismer (see Fig. 2.2), a Group of Seven painter and organiser of the Contemporary Canadian Painting exhibition in Johannesburg, was offered positions such as director of the Johannesburg Art Gallery, and chair of the Michaelis School of Fine Arts in Cape Town with an accompanying part-time post of director of the South African National Gallery (SANG), each of which he declined (Proud 2015: 33). Lismer spent a year in South Africa during the Empire Exhibition, and gave numerous public lectures.

24 Such affiliations gloss over the fact that artists often benefited directly from the land they depicted. Bertha Everard's painting for the Empire Exhibition showed one of her favoured scenes, the farm Lekkerdraai bought by her husband for mining purposes, which provided Bertha and her sister with endless opportunities for plein-air painting (Harmsen 1980, 38).

25 Though images of 'natives' were plentiful, there was a complete absence of indigenous artists. Tellingly, Martin du Toit organised a separate 'native' exhibition, and though no illustrations or lists appear in the exhibition catalogue, he makes brief mention of it: 'No SA art exhibition would however be complete without a section of native art. Here is greater tradition and less contact with modern Europe, though interesting interactions are clearly discernible' (Du Toit 1936, n.p.).

26 My translation of *dat dit die waarheid is en niks as die waarheid nie, maar nie die hele waarheid nie!*

27 My translation of *Daar was 'n tyd gewees nadat 'n waarskynlike blanke beskawing reeds van die toneel verdwyn was, eeue gelede, binne een van die ystertydperke, toe die Boesman die hele continent alleenbesit het.*

28 My translation of *Wat weggesink het onder die welsand van die naturellebloed.*

29 This denial of African firstness emerges particularly in relation to cultural artefacts and accomplishments, such as the Great Zimbabwe complex, with Cecil John Rhodes at the forefront of white archaeological claims of its non-African origins.

30 My translation of *hoe op die wyse, in die loop van die eeue 'n nuwe nasie die aansyn ontvang het in SA ... gevorm uit al die edelste elemente wat die ou Wereld besit het.*

31 This portrayal of the 1820 Settlers is referenced in a bas relief panel from the Hall of Heroes in the Voortrekker Monument, where the Settlers hand a Bible to the Boers as a gesture of support. This scene also occurred in Preller's pageant.

32 My translation of *daar was niks in hulle verledene wat bereken was om Boer en Brit uitmekaar te hou nie – buiten 'n verkeerde naturellebeleid.*

33 My translation of *drie naturelle [het] verongeluk, en – só enorm is teenswoordig ons besorgdheid vir die inboorling! – nou mag daar geen oorlogstonele meer vertoon word nie!*

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From *Volksargitektuur* to *Boere* Brazil: Afrikaner Nationalism and the Architectural Imaginary of Modernity, 1936–1966

FEDERICO FRESCHI

By the time the National Party came into power in South Africa in 1948, an architectural language associated with Afrikaner nationalism had already been clearly articulated. Informed, on the one hand, by the modernistic, stripped classicism of the 1930s and, on the other, by Cape Dutch and vernacular African traditions, the style that emerged aimed to construct a *volksargitektuur* [people's architecture] for the maturing Afrikaner nation. As a concrete manifestation of political aspirations at a time when Afrikaner nationalism was asserting its political and cultural dominance, *volksargitektuur* could make a claim for the authenticity of modern Afrikaners' uniquely 'African' origins and their consequent right to sovereign nationhood.

The quintessential example of *volksargitektuur* is Gerhard Moerdijk's[1] Voortrekker Monument, which, although conceived during the ideological hothouse of growing Afrikaner nationalist sentiment in the 1930s, was only inaugurated in 1949. Following so close on the heels of the National Party victory, it gave literal expression to the abstractions of politics and nation building, not least in the extent to which its decorative frieze unflinchingly spelled out the racial dynamics of Afrikaner nationalism, with black people being 'uniformly represented as barbaric savages standing in the way of brave and heroic Boers claiming to bring civilization to the interior in the nineteenth century' (Grundlingh 2001, 96).[2] The Voortrekker Monument thus not only became the most prominent and celebrated emblem of Afrikaner nationhood,

it also appeared to set the tone for future architectural projects of the newly installed Afrikaner nationalist state.

This language had shifted considerably by the time of Verwoerd's assassination in 1966. The symbolic ramifications of this act would soon undermine the nationalistic hubris that had characterised the ascent to power of the infamous 'Architect of Apartheid' (Posel 2009; O'Meara 1996); the ramifications presaged, too, the loss of consensus of the nationalist regime evident by the time of the Soweto Uprising of 1976 (Coetzee 1990, 47). On the back of an ever-strengthening economy and burgeoning industrialisation, state-sponsored building projects had proliferated in urban centres throughout the 1960s. Now, however, they were invariably designed in a style that embraced with messianic fervour the concrete-and-glass modernity of post-war New Brutalism (Freschi 2011a, 13). Though largely stripped of applied ornament (if not of sculptural architectonic elements), these state-commissioned buildings generally had decorative programmes that parlayed the blood-and-soil imagery of the 1930s into increasingly abstract forms that promoted new imaginaries of progress and achievement. From monolithic government administration buildings and civic centres to performing arts complexes, airports and Dutch Reformed churches, the overwhelming – if politically flawed – architectural message of the 1960s was of a government and nation that had 'arrived', whose claims to progress and modernity were unassailable, and that could consequently take their rightful place in the international community.

I suggest in this chapter that this self-conscious embrace of modernity during the period immediately before, and in the two decades following, the National Party victory of 1948 is more than merely a response to the government's programme of modernisation and urbanisation: rather, it is linked implicitly to the construction of a particular imaginary of white Afrikaner nationhood. This has as much to do with the expansion and consolidation of the Afrikaner middle class as it does with a shift in rhetoric from the politics of mobilisation of the right to govern that characterised the 1930s, to an acceptance of, and growing complacency about, that right. Drawing on what Lawrence Vale (1999, 396) calls 'noteworthy modernity' as a way of expressing national identity in architectural terms, I argue that the urban projects and buildings commissioned by the state fed an imaginary of modernity and success. At the same time, the self-consciously modern decorative programmes that enlivened these buildings

and spaces reinforced the sophisticated, worldly values of the 'new', middle-class Afrikaner that emerged during this period: 'well-off, well-travelled, well-read, an explorer of the world' (Coetzee 1990, 37). This has profound implications for understanding not only what constituted Afrikaner high culture, but also the ways in which it was officially mediated during the height of apartheid.

VOLKSARGITEKTUUR: A NATIONAL ARCHITECTURE FOR THE 1930S AND 1940S

With the maturation of Afrikaner nationalism as a social and political force in the 1930s, the social imaginary of the Afrikaner *volk* was increasingly associated with what Dunbar Moodie (1975) identifies as the 'civil religion' of the Afrikaner. Its articles of faith were a strict Calvinism, single-medium mother-tongue education, racial segregation, the social and economic upliftment of poor Afrikaners, and ultimately the establishment of a republic. The basis of this 'civil religion', therefore, was essentially a theologised nationalism, founded on the belief that the Afrikaners were a 'chosen people'. In 1944, JC van Rooy, who was chairman of the Broederbond from 1932 to 1938, put it thus: 'God created the Afrikaner People with a unique language, a unique philosophy of life, and their own history and tradition in order that they might fulfill a particular calling and destiny here in the southern corner of Africa ... We must believe that God has called us to be servants of his righteousness in this place' (in Moodie 1975, 110). Half a century later, in 1966, the arch-apologist for, and theorist of, Afrikaner nationalism, PJ Meyer,[3] described the *'onsigbare nasionale vlam'* [invisible national flame] that had inspired this nationalism – and, ultimately, republicanism – in the following terms: 'This Afrikaner nationalism is deeply rooted in the Reformation and more particularly Calvinism; is performed and formed in the light of the Bible [and] ... is accepted as a godly calling to the honour of His name and to the glory of all the people and peoples of Africa' (in Venter 2011, 541).[4] Implicit in this soteriological view of Afrikaner nationalism is the notion, as Venter (2011, 541) notes, of the superiority of the white race. This belief directly informed the implementation of apartheid policies after the 1948 election, starting with the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949, and the Immorality Amendment Act, Population Registration Act and Group Areas Act the following year. By the 1960s, this would be engineered into the so-called *swart gevaar probleem* [problem of the black threat], a threat both from

within and outside of the republic's borders, and the increasing militarisation of the state.[5]

With hindsight, it is clear that the theologised nationalism of the Afrikaner state was in fact a case of a 'constructed ... world view that synthesize[d] a particular interpretation of the Bible and a particular theology of creation with the passions of national ambition' (Charles Villa-Vicencio 1977, 381). In effect, as Saul Dubow (1992, 217) argues, it was ultimately 'a self-referential discourse, a coded vocabulary of imperatives and shibboleths which could be, and were, constantly reinterpreted in the light of political realities'. Nonetheless, it was a powerful ideological instrument that reached far beyond the pulpit to inform every aspect of the Afrikaner nationalist cultural imaginary. As Afrikaner nationalism gained momentum during the 1930s and 1940s, the notion of a 'civil religion' found expression in the arts (Freschi 2011a, 9). This occurred primarily in two ways: first, in the valorisation of the beauty and majesty of the empty landscape, the biblical 'promised land' of God's 'chosen people'; and second, in the mythologising of the Great Trek and the Voortrekkers, whose ostensible acts of heroism and sacrifice in penetrating and settling the hostile interior were akin to those of the Israelites being delivered from bondage.

These two tropes – the empty land, and those who were 'chosen' to claim it – are inherently related, and, from the 1930s onwards, fundamentally informed the popular identification with the Voortrekkers in order to reinforce at every level notions of the legitimacy of the Afrikaner *volk*. The inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument in 1949 was therefore the realisation of a long-cherished desire to have a permanent and highly visible shrine to the Voortrekkers. The foundation stone was laid on 16 December 1938 after a symbolic re-enactment of the Great Trek, which began at the foot of the statue of Jan van Riebeeck in Cape Town. The day itself was significant, as the 'Day of the Covenant' commemorated the ostensibly divinely ordained victory of the Boers over the Zulus at the Battle of Blood River. Indeed, during the 1930s there was, as David Morton (2015, 339) argues, 'something of a mania' for the erection of monuments to the Voortrekkers. These memorials, in the form of obelisks, grave markers or concrete replicas of wagons, were erected along the routes taken by the Voortrekkers, even extending beyond the borders to Mozambique.[6]

In addition to rendering visible the mythology of the Voortrekkers' heroism and sacrifice, the Voortrekker Monument is, as noted above, also the crowning

achievement of *volksargitektuur*, whose most vociferous champion was the Pretoria-based architect Gerhard Moerdijk. The first fully articulated exemplar of Moerdijk's ideas, and in many ways the prototype of the Voortrekker Monument, is his Merensky Library (Fig. 3.1) on the University of Pretoria campus (1937).

The university had become an Afrikaans-language institution in 1930 – an important milestone on the path to Afrikaner political and cultural sovereignty – and, at the time of the library's commission, Moerdijk sat on the university council (Fisher 1999, 222). The project thus afforded him a prestigious platform from which to promote his principles of *volksargitektuur*, namely an 'authentic' Afrikaner identity rooted in Africa. In effect, this meant the complete rejection of the classicism associated with Herbert Baker and the British imperialist tradition, which dominated South African official architecture at the time, in favour of a style that was at once up to date in its modernistic, stripped classicism, and 'authentic' in formulating a decorative language that was uniquely Afrikaner. Moerdijk's first foray into this style, the Reserve Bank building in Bloemfontein (1936), established his trademark principles. It had a modest but unmistakable monumentality, the symmetrical massing of the ashlar façade rising from a rusticated granite base, and

Figure 3.1. Gerhard Moerdijk, Merensky Library, 1937, University of Pretoria campus. Photograph by Federico Freschi.

classical ornament was rejected in favour of motifs that would resonate with the African/Afrikaner context. In the case of the Reserve Bank, these included merino sheep on the architrave – emblematic as much of agricultural wealth as of a bond with the land – and the use of South African marble and wood for the fittings.

Like the Reserve Bank building, the Merensky Library is relatively modest in scale, its two storeys of granite-faced ashlar rising in perfect symmetry from a rusticated base, and terminating in a low dome not easily visible from the exterior. A centrally placed staircase leads to carved wooden entrance doors at first-floor level, set back to allow the two wings of the building to curve outwards in a manner reminiscent of the streamlined style of the 1930s, and simultaneously symbolic of an 'open book, knowledge revealed' (Fisher 1999, 222). At the top of the façade is a zig-zag stone course, with similar zig-zags repeated in the treatment of the window panes and spandrel panels. In the interior, the dome is supported on squared columns with inverted capitals featuring corn cobs and maize leaves, with merino rams' horns forming the volutes. As with the Reserve Bank, these agricultural references reinforce the 'Promised Land' mythology at the core of the Afrikaner nationalist imaginary, while at the same time expressing a sense of place. The arches beneath the dome contain pierced screens, whose geometric latticework forms an orientalist pattern of five-pointed stars.[7] For the esteemed librarian PC Coetzee, writing in *Die Volkstem* of 11 October 1937, the building would be 'one of the most beautiful library buildings in the Union' (in Vermeulen 1999, 116).[8] For Doreen Greig, however, writing in 1971, these stylistic refinements served merely to epitomise a 'popular pre-war idea', namely:

> '[M]odern architecture' meant that buildings were to be constructed in the same way as before but could be brought up to date by discarding classical and gothic decorations. Then one changed the shapes of windows and glazing patterns, rounded off some corners, gave the building a frieze of meaningless Stockholm decorations and called it modern architecture. (Greig 1971, 202)

A more sympathetic reading, however, reveals a wealth of symbolic associations that set this building apart from the kind of fashionable modernism, now called Art Deco, which Greig disparaged. Not least is the audacious extension of the notion of an authentic Afrikaner/African language of style to include direct references to African vernacular traditions, in this case to Great Zimbabwe. This use of the

African vernacular is unique in the South African architectural vocabulary of the time. Though Herbert Baker had included references to Great Zimbabwe in the decorative programme of Rhodes House, Oxford, 1928 (Freschi, 2016), Moerdijk was the first to use these in South Africa. Unlike Baker, who denied any southern African provenance for Great Zimbabwe, Moerdijk believed that it had been built by indigenous Africans. In an interview in *Ons Vaderland* on 9 June 1930, he argued: '[W]e are richer in possessing something which, in my opinion, we can be certain is the start of a culture, the first efforts to aspire to something other than grass huts and caves, rather than in believing that at best [the ruins] must be a decadent example of a culture that has been brought over from India, Asia or the Mediterranean' ('Afrikaans Kerkbouer' 1930).[9] For Moerdijk, this African vernacular was significant in constructing notions of legitimacy and authenticity (Freschi, 2016). There are several Zimbabwean references. One is the zig-zag coursing on the façade, which is a direct quotation from the outer walls of Great Zimbabwe. Another is the symmetrically repeated low reliefs on the entrance architrave – the Zimbabwe bird and crocodile, as well as a troop of baboons – which appear on the lintel above the entrance; this motif was taken from a carved soapstone dish found in the Zimbabwe ruins (Freschi 2011b, 171). The ubiquitous zig-zags, although a common decorative motif in the Art Deco style, are, in this context, given a more specific reference to Africa. Roger Fisher (1999, 222) suggests that the zig-zag serves a dual purpose: at once 'an archetypal symbol of water and fertility found in indigenous African culture', with the additional symbolic association of 'the Voortrekkers as a chosen people', divinely succoured in the wilderness. Some of these Great Zimbabwean references would be repeated on the Voortrekker Monument, where they serve much the same purpose, namely the claiming of African points of reference to vindicate the Afrikaner nationalists' authentically 'African' origins.[10] This conflation of autochthony and modernity was 'an important component of the imaginary of Afrikaner nationalism as both African, and part of a forward-looking community of nations' (Freschi 2016, 115).

Lawrence Vale (1999, 396) contends that the conflation of ethnicity and modernity in nationalistic architecture serves a threefold function: first, it enables the sponsoring regime to reassert a sub-national identity by equating its ethnic heritage with 'the national'; second, it extends this identity into the international realm by means of a 'noteworthy modernity'; and third, it develops the personal

identity of the client or designer. Certainly, all three of these elements were present in Moerdijk's *volksargitektuur*. Not only did he conflate the Afrikaner sub-national identity with a broader 'African' identity by means of the use of regional materials and iconographic references, he also did so in terms of a self-consciously 'modernist' style. These combined forces in turn establish him as the quintessential *volksargitek*, whose engagement on any subsequent projects would carry the imprimatur of highest moral credibility.

The 'modernistic' styling of his buildings notwithstanding, Moerdijk's emphasis on heavy-handed symbolism was fundamentally backward-looking, its nationalist rhetoric relying heavily on subjective notions of antiquity. Within a decade, with the Afrikaner nationalist government now firmly in power, the emphasis would shift to a celebration of objective modernity, progress and achievement.

BOERE BRAZIL: REGIONALISM AND NATIONALISM IN THE 1950S

The South African economy grew rapidly in the post-World War II period, with an average rate of growth of 4 per cent between 1945 and 1960, increasing to 7 per cent between 1960 and 1970 (Magubane 2004, 43). Despite the decline in gold mining and agriculture, the mainstays of the South African economy before World War II, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) more than doubled in one decade on the strength of capital-intensive industrial production. Furthermore, as Deborah Posel (2009, 335) notes, 'by 1966, the apartheid regime was approaching the zenith of its power, having quashed organised black resistance, and having achieved unprecedented electoral support across the white population at large'.

Given the rapid growth of the economy and the concomitant expansion of the state's bureaucratic apparatus, there was a proliferation during the 1950s and 1960s of state-sponsored public buildings. Many of these buildings – all of which reject Moerdijkean *volksargitektuur* in favour of internationalist modernity – are in Pretoria, which was the epicentre of the National Party-dominated civil service.[11] Two aspects of the historical record are pertinent here: first, the establishment of a School of Architecture at the University of Pretoria in 1943, whose first graduates had qualified by 1947 (Gerneke 1998, 215); and second, the staging of the Brazil Builds exhibition in New York, also in 1943. For the emerging generation of Afrikaner architects, Brazil Builds provided a compelling reference point for 'an expression of newly independent statehood' (Fisher 1999, 229) in the mode of Brasília and Chandigarh. Gus Gerneke (1998,

212) refers to the excitement of 'an unexplored visual world [that] was ushered in by the intriguing imagery of Brazil Builds' among architects and students, who increasingly had access to architectural publications from abroad. Gerneke goes on to argue that the interest awoken by these publications was reinforced by professional contact with Brazilian architects through reciprocal visits and a bilateral link between their institute and the South African Institute of Architects. Indeed, the Brazilian influence on South African architecture of the early 1950s was so immediate and pervasive that Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, after touring the country in 1953, would famously refer to the 'existence of a little Brazil in the Commonwealth' (in Gerneke 1998, 218).[12]

The first of the Brazil-inspired buildings to be commissioned by the state – Pretoria's 1950 Meat Board Building[13] – is a case in point (Fig. 3.2).

Figure 3.2. Hellmut Stauch, the Meat Board Building (now NIPILAR House), Pretoria, 1950. Photograph by Federico Freschi.

Commissioned by the public works department and designed by the German-born architect Hellmut Stauch,[14] this building is a faithful interpretation, if on a greatly diminished scale, of Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer's Ministry of Education and Health building in Rio de Janeiro, which was completed in 1943. Stauch had met Niemeyer on a visit to the city in 1948 (Gerneke 1998, 204), and was clearly influenced by the Brazilian modernists' regionalist interpretation of Le Corbusier's theories of the 1920s and 1930s. He brought these influences to bear on the Meat Board Building, raising it on slender columns known as pilotis, providing open spaces to allow for flexible interior partitioning, and finishing the building with adjustable *brise-soleils* [sun screens] over the windows. A contemporary critic lauded the building, saying that it 'clearly points to what can be done to free official architecture from the heavy hand of convention and outmoded tradition' (in Gerneke 1998, 217). Doreen Greig (1971, 204) noted that 'this splendid building won an Award of Merit from the Institute of South African Architects and did much to popularise South American ideals'. In effect, the Meat Board Building issued a clarion call to the public works department, and to young architects and nationalist ideologues alike. It called upon them to imagine a new kind of *volksargitektuur* for the capital – one whose confident embrace of a progressive future would allow the ever-strengthening Afrikaner nation to assert itself on an international stage.

The Pretoria School of Architecture was quick to heed this call in the design of buildings on the university's campus. Throughout the 1950s, the dominant idiom on the campus was Brazilian, with a proliferation of elaborately sculptural buildings, raised on slender concrete pilotis and sporting free-standing helical staircases, with *brise-soleils* and glazed tiles and mosaics replacing applied figurative ornament. Designed exclusively by Afrikaner architects, 'all concerned in one way or another with Afrikaner culture and identity' (Fisher 1999, 224), the campus became an important laboratory for architectural ideas that would soon become synonymous with the capital: the so-called Pretoria Regionalism that spread rapidly from the campus to the burgeoning city, its suburbs, and beyond.[15] As the style of choice for the public works department, it became, de facto, a new *volksargitektuur*, finding expression in most major state-sponsored projects of the time.

Not least among these are numerous Brazil-inspired buildings on the campus of the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (now the North-West University) in Potchefstroom, the first capital of the South African Republic and

the heartland of the Afrikaner civil religion. Various architects associated with the Pretoria School were commissioned to produce a comprehensive plan for the campus, and the buildings they produced have much in common with those on the University of Pretoria campus. Of particular interest is Johan de Ridder's Conservatoire of Music (1960),[16] a sculptural tour de force in the Brazilian idiom (Fig. 3.3).

The cruciform plan features a long, horizontal block, raised on squared, mosaic-clad pilotis. Housing a library, lecture theatres and classrooms, the building is flanked by a wing with practice-rooms and classrooms on the one side and an auditorium on the other. The steeply pitched roof of the lozenge-shaped auditorium rises dramatically from the ground, its expressive form amplified by being repeated at one-third of its scale in the instrument storage room projecting from it. The expanse of the raw concrete roof is relieved by face bricks and terracotta air bricks on the façade.

Figure 3.3. Johan de Ridder, Conservatoire of Music, Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (now North-West University) campus, Potchefstroom, 1960. Courtesy of the North-West University Archive.

De Ridder also designed a number of Dutch Reformed churches, often using similar adventurous, prism-like roof shapes arising from the ground (Radford 1997, 335). It is not too much of a stretch of the imagination to suggest that, in the context of the Potchefstroom Conservatoire, the reference to the developing tropes of Dutch Reformed Church architecture is not accidental. Given its position on a campus dedicated to the principles of Christian National Education, the auditorium had an important symbolic function. As the epicentre of high culture on campus, it was where the support of Western classical music proclaimed the Afrikaners' sophistication and worldliness.[17]

The Brazilian influence was equally evident in Johannesburg. Although the incipient ideological undertones emerging in Pretoria were not always apparent, it is interesting to note formal influences at work in one of the most important civic commissions of the period, the 1962 Johannesburg Civic Theatre (Fig. 3.4).

Designed by the Wits-trained architect Manfred Hermer,[18] the building references Oscar Niemeyer's Palácio da Alvorada (Palace of the Dawn), the official residence of the president of Brazil, and one of the first major buildings to be completed in the newly built capital city of Brasília in 1958. Niemeyer's Alvorada Palace was conceived as a glass box, appearing to be suspended in a frame of slender, tapered columns connected by horizontal members, giving an impression of elegant lightness that is reinforced by the play of light and reflections in a shallow pool before it. Hermer adopted a comparable approach in the Civic Theatre, setting the rectangular block of the building with its curtain glass walls behind a series of tapered columns whose horizontal members give them the appearance of a starburst. A sense of lightness is achieved by the fact that the slender columns do not rest directly on the base of the building, but are connected to it by circular rods, so that they appear to float. The effect is not unlike that of the Alvorada Palace, although placing the columns closer together, and dropping the horizontal members to the lower third of the overall height of the building, achieves a greater sense of verticality. The effect is one of restrained, sculptural monumentality, befitting the ceremonial function of the building as Johannesburg's new 'temple for the performing arts', as Pieter Roos, a member of the city council and chairman of the Johannesburg Civic Theatre Association, put it in 1965 (in Spector 2007, 8). Accordingly, it was positioned high up on the Braamfontein ridge, 'like a modern Parthenon' (Grobbelaar 1962, 77).

CIVIC THEATRE, JOHANNESBURG

Figure 3.4. Manfred Hermer, Johannesburg Civic Theatre, Johannesburg, 1962. Courtesy of GLH Architects.

Integrated into the base of the building on its western façade is a series of abstract geometric forms in sand-moulded concrete by the sculptor Mickey Korzennik. By its nature, the technique of sand-casting cement produces a characteristically rough, textured finish. When combined with abstract patterns and forms, this evokes early twentieth-century modern artists' interest in so-called primitive artistic forms from outside of the West in their pursuit of a new visual language to describe the disruptions of the modern age. The interest in primitivism, inspired by indigenous African visual forms, was also to become, as John Peffer (2009, 21) notes, something of 'a recurring theme among modernist artists in South Africa' in their pursuit of an authentically (South) African form of modernism. In the context of Hermer's Brazilian-inspired building, this self-conscious primitivism unwittingly becomes a marker of the nationalist government's identity, at once

forward-looking, sophisticated and urban, and yet rooted atavistically to a particular cultural and social context.

REGIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM: THE TRANSVAAL PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING (1962)

The building that irrevocably put the stamp of official sanction on Brazilian-inspired modernism was the Transvaal Provincial Administration (TPA) Building (1962) in Pretoria, which, comprising an entire city block, was the largest official public commission of the decade. Completed the year after the establishment of the Republic, the TPA set a new standard in civic architecture, one that would be widely emulated in South Africa's rapidly expanding cities and towns. Like the Meat Board Building, the TPA Building reiterates the lessons of Rio de Janeiro, but here exercised on a monumental scale, balanced in its details by a restraint and rationality worthy of Mies van der Rohe.[19] The TPA was designed by a team led by AL Meiring,[20] who was professor and chair of architecture at the University of Pretoria at the time. The building dominated the city centre, the implacable rhythm of its façade forming a dramatic backdrop for the city's historical buildings – not least the Raadsaal, the seat of the old Boer Republic's government (Fig. 3.5).

With hindsight, this juxtaposition of the old and the new administrative centres of the 'old' and 'new' Boer Republics reads as a grand triumphal gesture in the mode of what Homi Bhabha (1990, 294) refers to as 'a double time of the nation', where the nation legitimises itself by simultaneously positing ancient origins and progressive futurity. Having inserted its bureaucratic monolith into this historically significant site, the nationalist government in effect claimed legitimacy in the present, doing so through the imagined inevitability of history.

Meiring was well aware of the significance of this commission. In an interview for *South African Panorama* magazine in February 1964, he noted that the TPA 'would be no ordinary building, but would ... by reason of its function, immediately be raised to the status of one of the most important buildings in the country' (in Judin 2016, 148). The building distinguished itself as much by the ambitiousness of its scale as by the rationality of its planning, meticulous attention to detail, and use of new technologies such as air conditioning and fluorescent lighting. Though the site itself 'is one which would deflate any attempts at monumentality' according to Greig, 'somehow, between its north- and south-facing curtain walls of glass and aluminium and the plain terrazzo walls on the east and western sides of the

Figure 3.5. Meiring and Naudé, Transvaal Provincial Administration Building, Pretoria, 1962, viewed from Church Square. Photograph by Federico Freschi.

six slab-like units of which the complex is composed, dignity has been achieved' (1971, 207).

The building's symbolic importance is further consolidated by the inclusion of an extensive decorative programme featuring the work of celebrated South African contemporary artists. William Nicol, who chaired the decoration committee, expressed the rationale for this decorative programme in the brochure commemorating the inauguration of the building: 'From the start, the Administration felt that the new Provincial Building should fulfil not only a utilitarian function, but should also satisfy the cultural needs of the nation' (Transvaal Provincial Administration 1963, 3).[21] To this end, it was important that the decoration should 'cater for every taste'. Accordingly, 'There are a couple of very realistic works that can be understood without troubling the imagination. On the other hand, there are symbolic representations that will require deeper thought in order to be appreciated' (Transvaal Provincial Administration 1963, 3).[22]

The 'realistic works' included WH Coetzer's *Ons vir Jou, Suid-Afrika* [We for Thee, South Africa], a 3 x 12.8 metre mural in the committee chamber on the fifth floor. The painting depicts the moment, described in the diary of trekker Louis Trichardt, when his trek began its descent from the Drakensberg onto the plains stretching as far as Mozambique. The commemorative brochure describes the mural as expressing 'all the characteristics that distinguished the Great Trek from other mass migrations' – in particular, that this was 'an honest search for a home by a new nation' rather than a 'raid by fortune seekers who wanted to enrich themselves' (Transvaal Provincial Administration 1963, 12).[23] In the context of the committee chamber, Coetzer's sanctimonious set piece served as a clear reminder of the important work being done there by modern bureaucrats in the service of the descendants of God's chosen people.

Elsewhere in the building, works in a modern idiom engage themes that resonate with notions of progress on the one hand, and a sense of place on the other. These include Alexis Preller's 12-metre wide painted mural *Die Ontdekking* [The Discovery] (Fig. 3.6) for the boardroom on the eighth floor.

The mural engages the theme of the 'discovery' by European explorers of the sea route around Africa to the East, or the answer to 'the most difficult question relating to Africa that Europe ever had to confront' (Transvaal Provincial Administration 1963, 10).[24] In the context of the boardroom, the mural was envisioned as inspiring those present with the idea that 'just as the great question of the sea route was solved in the fifteenth century, so an answer could be found to all their questions in the twentieth century and after' (Transvaal Provincial Administration 1963, 10).[25] Preller's mural was undoubtedly his magnum opus, and a fine distillation of his mature style and the themes that had preoccupied him to that point (see Berman

Figure 3.6. Alexis Preller, *Die Ontdekking* [The Discovery], 1962. Oil on canvas, Transvaal Provincial Administration Building, Pretoria. Courtesy of the Norval Foundation.

2010). In effect, it evokes the triumph of European civilisation, embodied by the newly established Republic, in a style that is at once 'modern' and forward-looking and yet figurative and accessible.

Similar impulses underlie other works in the building. Some engage subjects relating to the regional landscape: for example, Jeanne Kotzé's mosaic *Son en Saffier*[26] [Sun and Sapphire], Cecily Sash's mosaic *Seekoeivlei* and Walter Battiss's painted mural *Transvaalse Voëlpark* [Transvaal Bird Sanctuary]. Other works are allegories of time, place and identity, among them Bettie Cilliers-Barnard's tapestry *Die Vrou* [The Woman]; Coert Steynberg's sculptures *Glanstoring* [Shining Tower] and *Ons Hoop* [Our Hope] in bronze, enamel and glass, representing mining and education respectively; as well as mosaics by Ernst de Jong entitled *Dag* [Day] and *Nag* [Night]. Figurative sculptures include *Getemde Vryheid* [Liberty Subdued] by Hennie Potgieter, depicting a bull being wrestled to the ground by a scantily clad, well-muscled youth, and Moses Kottler's group of three interlocking figures with raised hands entitled *Strewe* [Striving], ostensibly symbolising 'the people of South Africa who strive to understand and to reach their own destination … the outstretched hands, surrounded by an administrative building, beseech the authorities for help in building a worthwhile nation' (Transvaal Provincial Administration 1963, 26).[27] The balance between abstraction and figuration in all these works serves, indeed, to highlight both their didactic and quasi-spiritual function in promoting the image of a stable and beneficent government.

The only fully abstract work is a mosaic grid of intersecting geometric forms entitled *Bantoe-Afrika* [Bantu Africa] by Armando Baldinelli (Fig. 3.7), which was positioned at the 'non-white' entrance to the building. From the vantage point of the present, there is something of an irony in the figurative African references of Preller's mural being intended for a white audience, while Baldinelli's abstract mosaic was intended for a black audience. In the context of the time, however, this was in keeping both with the need to enforce notions of exotic otherness, and with paternalistic attitudes towards black people and their cultures. Deeply embedded cultural meanings of indigenous art forms were, at worst, entirely disregarded and, at best, reduced to mere expressions of pattern and colour. As the inaugural brochure put it, '[Baldinelli] has had personal encounters with Bantu Africa, which have put him in a position to reveal the indigenous and primitive elements in their culture through his art', and although these encounters 'inspired him, he nonetheless stayed true to himself' (Transvaal Provincial Administration 1963,
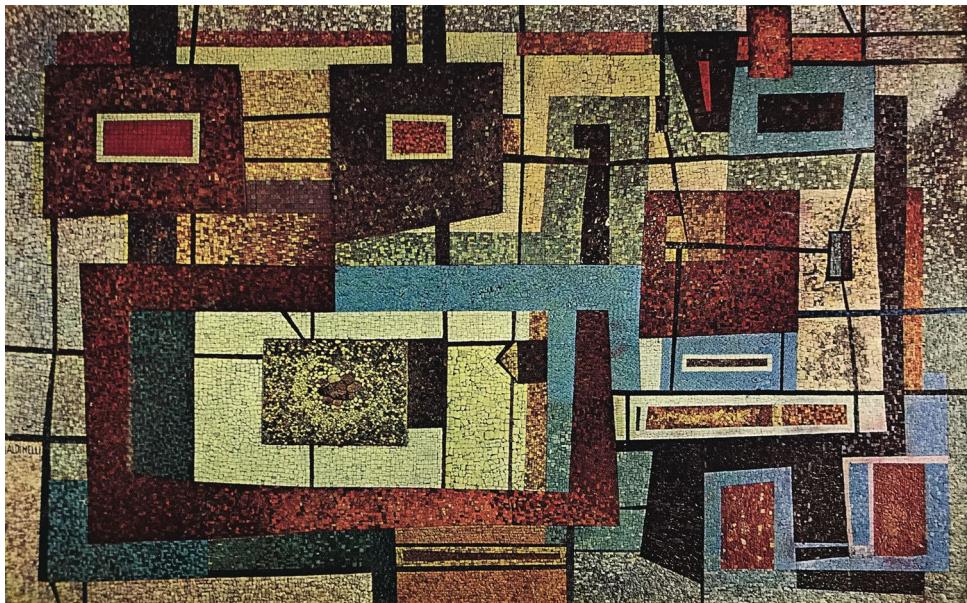
Figure 3.7. Armando Baldinelli, *Bantoe-Afrika* [Bantu Africa], 1962. Mosaic, Transvaal Provincial Administration Building, Pretoria.

19).[28] According to the brochure, Baldinelli's contemporary mosaic technique of enamelled glass combined with natural stone and marble, filtered through his sophisticated, European sensibility, resulted in a work in which 'the spirit and the emotional life of the Bantu effervesces' (Transvaal Provincial Administration 1963, 19).[29] While the mural is notable for its formal elegance and restraint, in the context of this building its mute abstraction speaks volumes about the absence and invisiblity of authentic African voices, and the exclusion of black South Africans from public life.

Collectively, the decorative programme of the TPA Building is characterised by the extent to which it conforms to the prevailing moralistic values set for public art by the Afrikaner cultural establishment. It is 'modernistic but not avant-garde, "African" (or indeed "Afrikaner") in its reference points, and with sufficient figurative content to reinforce the notion that art has a higher moral purpose' (Freschi 2011a, 19). Like many subsequent examples, it participated calmly in the narrative of regionalist authenticity that ostensibly informed the architectural

programme as a whole, without in any way destabilising its claims to rationalism and internationalist modernity.

CONCLUSION: FROM *BOERE* BRAZIL TO *BOERE* BRUTALISM

By the end of the 1960s, the period that saw the beginning of the end of Afrikaner nationalist hegemony, *volksargitektuur* was irrevocably internationalist in style. Where references, however indirect, to the established tropes of the civil religion persisted in state-commissioned buildings, these were largely indoors, consigned to murals and interior decorative details. In terms of the structures themselves, the wholesale embrace of the principles of the International Style, and later Brutalism, meant a complete rejection of symbolically loaded, decorated façades in favour of a formalist approach. Greig (1971, 202) contends that this approach was remarkable for 'its frank display of exposed structure of great, curved reinforced concrete beams' and its imaginative use of 'expressive plastic forms and contrasting geometrics that can be produced in reinforced concrete'. In short, in giving physical expression to the apparatuses of state bureaucracy, architects of this generation 'felt no obvious need for the display of gratuitous populist expression or overt symbolism in the architecture itself' (Judin 2016, 159). The intention and effect was clear: this was a rhetoric of internationalism in the service of constructing an image of a modern nation state.

As Walter Peters (2003) has shown, much of the monumental, state-commissioned architecture of the late 1960s and early 1970s was influenced by the work of Louis Kahn. A significant example in Johannesburg is Willie (Wilhelm) Meyer's design for the Rand Afrikaans University, described by Clive Chipkin (1999, 262) as 'the most spectacular of the grand apartheid projects' and which, like the nearby SABC complex, was to shift the emphasis from Pretoria to Johannesburg to consolidate 'the Afrikaner's foothold in the big city'. The Kahn influence effectively eclipsed the Brazilian-inspired regionalism of the preceding period, the grace and refinement of the latter yielding to a self-conscious monumentality that unequivocally betokened the arrogant triumphalism of the apartheid state.

Writing on 5 October 1963, on the eve of the inauguration of the TPA Building, FH Odendaal, who was at the time administrator of the Transvaal, observed: 'Naturally we realise that the most beautiful building has not any meaning without its people' (in Transvaal Provincial Administration 1963, 2).[30] He could not know

it at the time, but this was a deeply prophetic statement. Today the TPA Building, once the pride of the new nationalist government and the quintessential expression of the long reach of its sinister bureaucracy, stands empty. Increasingly derelict, it is a candidate for demolition-by-neglect; its elaborate artworks – including the Preller murals, which, given this artist's meteoric rise on local auction markets, are of considerable value – are today inaccessible and ignored.[31] 'Its people' are clearly gone, and the building no longer has any of the meanings it may once have held. Yet, ironically, its status as a proto-ruin is perhaps the most compelling signifier of all. Like Ozymandias, the fallen statue in Shelley's eponymous poem,[32] the building is a reminder that representations of nationalism are contingent and variable, and that the longevity of any such monumental, nationalistic structure will always be in inverse proportion to the ostensible power of its underpinning ideology.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

1   Gerhard Leendert Moerdijk (1890–1958), the son of Dutch immigrant parents, was interned with his family during the South African War. This would have a lasting effect, influencing his Afrikaner nationalist sympathies ('Moerdyk' n.d.). He studied at the Architectural Association in London, and became a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1920. Moerdijk used the Dutch spelling of his name, but it was often presented in the press and elsewhere in the Afrikaans variation ('y' instead of 'ij'). This persists in the cataloguing of the Moerdijk archive at the University of Pretoria.

2   According to Moerdijk, interviewed shortly after the monument's completion, there was no political motive in the Voortrekker Monument, since it was 'a symbol of the sacrifice of the Voortrekkers who had established white civilisation in South Africa'. Consequently, '[t]here were no revolting scenes depicted on the friezes. The Native had not been presented as an unworthy being, but if the dramatic history of the Voortrekkers

was to be shown graphically, the treachery and murders which dogged the Trek had to be shown ... The Natives on the friezes were modelled from fine specimens of Zulus. No injustice had been done to anyone' ('Moerdyk denies' n.d.).

3   Meyer was the chairman of the SABC from 1958 to 1976, and chairman of the Broederbond from 1960 to 1972.

4   My translation of *Hierdie Afrikaner nasionalisme is diep gewortel in die Hervorming en meer bepaald die Calvinisme; is vertolk en gevorm in die lig van die Bybel [en] ... is aanvaar as 'n goddelike roeping tot eer van Sy naam en tot heil van al die mense en volke van Afrika.*

5   The increased militarisation of the apartheid state during the 1960s and 1970s was the direct consequence of its need to crush internal resistance to its policies, and to prevent support for resistance from neighbouring countries through a policy of destabilisation. In addition to raids targeting ANC bases in neighbouring countries, the apartheid government supported guerrilla groups in Angola, Mozambique and Namibia in an attempt to destabilise the socialist governments in those countries.

6   See Morton (2015) for a fascinating account of a memorial, still extant, to Louis Trichardt erected in downtown Maputo in 1968.

7   Roger Fisher (1999) suggests that the 'Star of David' pattern is in recognition of the Jewish community of Pretoria, who donated funds to the subscription drive for the library. The 'Star of David' reference is reiterated by Johan Jooste (2000, 74). However, the latticework in these screens is in fact a direct quotation from similar screens used by Baker in the Council Chamber of the House of Parliament in New Delhi (1927). In the context of the New Delhi project, this latticework betokened Mughal architecture and, much like the Cape Dutch references in the Union Buildings, served to 'naturalise' the overriding imperial classicism of the project as a whole. Baker and Lutyen's work in New Delhi was extensively described in a special issue of the *Architectural Review* of January 1931, with photographs of the various architectural details, including the screens (Byron 1931, 19). Moerdijk may well have encountered these images and transcribed them in the library, whether in recognition of the Jewish community's contribution or otherwise. However, given that this contribution amounted to a mere 2.5 per cent of the overall cost of the project ('Merensky-Boekery' n.d.), it seems unlikely that it would have warranted such a large proportion of the decorative programme. The introduction of this orientalist note in the Merensky Library remains obscure, and deserves more scrutiny than I can provide here.

8   My translation of *een van die mooiste biblioteekgeboue in die Unie.*

9   My translation of *[O]ns is ryker in die besit van iets waarvan ons m.i. kan weet dat dit die begin is van 'n kultuur, die eerste pogings om te geraak to iets anders as stooihuise [sic] en hole, as in die gedagte aan die besit van dinge wat op sy beste maar 'n dekadente voobeeld moet wees van 'n kultuur wat hierheen oorgebreng werd uit Indië, Asië of die Middellandse-see.*

10 One English newspaper, commenting on the proposed plans for the monument, noted: 'the monument will be a massive stone structure, showing some trace of the Zimbabwe style ... and the Chevron [*sic*] motif will be introduced, as well as other indigenous art motifs' ('Memorial' n.d.).

11 For a detailed discussion of Afrikaner nationalist architecture in Pretoria from the late 1950s to the mid-1960s, see Hilton Judin (2016).

12 Pevsner made this remark in reference to Johannesburg architecture, but, as Roger Fisher (1999, 229) notes, it was arguably truer of Pretoria, where Brazilian modernism was widely emulated, partly in response to the city's subtropical climate.

13 The building currently houses the National Institute for Public Interest Law and Research, and is known by the acronym as NIPILAR House.

14 Hellmut Wilhelm Ernst Stauch (1910–1970) came to South Africa in 1935 after studying at the Ittenschule and the Technische Hochschule in Berlin. He joined the staff of the Pretoria School of Architecture when it was established in 1943.

15 Commenting on the spread of the Brazilian influence by young graduates of the Pretoria School in the 1950s, Gerneke (1998, 216) notes, with reference to Brazilian-inspired projects in Mokopane (formerly Potgietersrus) in Limpopo province, how, 'for the first time since the thirties, when Art Deco buildings went up in such unlikely places as Worcester and Wolmaransstad, a little *dorp* or two in the deep Transvaal bushveld were in the architectural vanguard'.

16 Johan de Ridder (1927–2013) studied at the University of Pretoria under AL Meiring from 1944 to 1950.

17 The Conservatoire was officially opened by the rector of the university, FJ (Frans) du Toit, on 8 April 1960. A series of inaugural concerts began in the following month. Underscoring the links between Afrikaner high culture and Western classical music, these included a performance of his own work by the Afrikaner composer Arnold van Wyk, as well as a performance by the SABC Concert Orchestra featuring Afrikaner soloists (Scheppel 2010). This embrace of elite Western culture would ultimately be further consolidated in the state-of-the-art, whites-only provincial performing arts complexes built by the nationalist government in the 1970s in each of the four provinces.

18 Manfred Hermer (1915–2011) completed his studies in architecture at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1937. Hermer is the only non-Afrikaner architect discussed in this chapter, and serves as a reminder that not all the architects producing state-sanctioned projects during this period were necessarily Afrikaners or nationalists. As Clive Chipkin (1999, 254) puts it, 'commercial architects and real-estate developers do not generally see themselves as the "ideologists of society", but simply as men and

women making a living by implementing practical proposals'. Nonetheless, the fact that innovative architects were being commissioned by the state points to a shift in cultural values on the part of the Afrikaner elite.

19   As Judin (2016, 138) points out, there are indeed striking similarities between Mies van der Rohe's conceptual drawings for glass skyscrapers in the 1920s and the slab-like structure of the Transvaal Provincial Administration Building.

20   Adriaan Louw Meiring (1904–1979) studied architecture at the University of Liverpool School of Architecture. He was appointed as chair of the new School of Architecture at the University of Pretoria in 1943. Meiring was in charge of a team of architects who worked on the Transvaal Provincial Administration Building, managing the offices of Meiring & Naudé and Moerdijk & Watson. The original drawings for the proposed scheme were in fact drawn up by Moerdijk & Watson (Judin 2016, 148).

21   My translation of *Van die begin af het die Administrasie gevoel dat die nuwe Provinsiale Gebou nie slegs 'n utiliteitsfunksie moet vervul nie, maar ook aan die kulturele behoeftes van die volk bevrediging moet gee.*

22   My translation of *Daar is 'n paar heel realistiese werke wat sonder bylas van die verbeelding verstaan kan word. Aan die ander kant is daar simboliese voorstellings wat dieper nadink sal eis om ten volle gewaardeer te word.*

23   My translation of *Hier was geen strooptog deur fortuinsoekers wat hulleself wou verryk nie, maar 'n eerlike soektog na 'n woonplek deur 'n nuwe nasie.*

24   My translation of *die moeilikste vraagstuk in verband met Afrika waarvoor Europa ooit te staan gekom het.*

25   My translation of *net soos die groot vraagstuk van die seeweg in die vyftiende eeu opgelos is, so sou daar 'n antwoord gevind kan word op al hulle vraagstukke in die twintigste eeu en daarna.*

26   The phrase '*son en saffier*' occurs as a refrain in '*Die Beste*' [The Best] by C Louis Leipoldt (1880–1947), a poem extolling the beauty of nature and the vanity of earthly possessions.

27   My translation of *Die volk van Suid-Afrika wat streef om sy eie bestemming te verstaan en te bereik ... die uitgestrekte hand, omring deur 'n administratiewe gebou, by die gesagvoerders smeek om hulp vir die bou van 'n waardige nasie.*

28   My translation of *Hy het Bantoe-Afrika persoonlik ontmoet en dit het hom in staat gestel om deur sy kuns die inheemse en primitiewe bestanddele in hulle kultuur te openbaar. Hoewel hy besieling ontvang het van hierdie oerlewe, het hy tog aan homself getrou gebly.*

29   My translation of *Die gees en die gevoelslewe van die Bantoe bruis daarin.*

30   My translation of *Ons besef natuurlik ook dat die mooiste gebou sonder sy mense geen betekenis het nie.*

31 Potgieter's *Getemde Vryheid* and Coetzer's *Ons vir Jou, Suid-Afrika* were moved to the Voortrekker Monument in 2008. Most of the building's other artworks remain in situ, their fate uncertain.

32 Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Ozymandias' (Allison et al. 1983, 619).

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Afrikaner Identity in Contemporary Visual Art: A Study in Hauntology

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Considering the persistence of the many structural inequalities and racial taxonomies forged during colonisation and institutionalised under apartheid, South Africa altogether figures as a haunted nation. Jacques Derrida's concept of hauntology, which suggests that our personal and political ways of being resemble the phenomenon of being haunted (2006, 10), offers a compelling framework for reflecting on the relationship between spectral powers, post-apartheid Afrikaner identities, and contemporary visual art in particular.[1] Derrida's *Specters of Marx* (2006) is frequently cited as the major catalyst for the continuing interest in haunting as a theoretical approach in cultural studies and other disciplines. Indeed, fragments of lost time are constantly reanimated by historiography and memory, and implicate us in various moral and social dilemmas in the present. Thus, at the core of Derrida's thesis resides an ethics: instead of begrudging our status as heirs to the past, we are compelled to welcome and negotiate with spectres in order to realise social justice.

The ghost or spectre is therefore liberally employed in contemporary critical theory as a conceptual metaphor befitting, for example, revisionist readings of history, perspectives on the itinerant status of the disenfranchised (such as political refugees), and the politics of trauma, remembrance and commemoration.[2] Spectral readings of the South African landscape are, for example, adept at addressing the erasure (and lingering traces) of communities physically and psychologically displaced by apartheid (Buys and Farber 2011; Jonker and Till 2009; Shear 2006). I apply such spectral reading vis-à-vis existing research on Afrikaner ethnicity to

selected works by a number of contemporary South African artists who participated in three consecutive exhibitions, *Ik Ben Een Afrikander* [I am an Afrikaner/African] *I*, *II* and *III* (2011–2012), which culminated in a travelling exhibition, *Ik Ben Een Afrikander: The Unequal Conversation* (2015–2016).

The exhibitions, curated by Teresa Lizamore and shown at various locations across South Africa, included numerous works of painting, photography, sculpture, site-specific installation and video, created by nearly 30 individual South African artists. The curatorial intent of the exhibitions is an attempt to locate and critically examine the position of contemporary Afrikaners (that is, white Afrikaans-speakers) in relation to their controversial past, which to some degree complicates (and almost invalidates) their legitimacy in the present (Lizamore 2012). The participating artists were therefore invited to respond to this predicament, and they deployed a number of discursive strategies to implode the category of Afrikaner-ness and define it anew.[3] They also critically engaged Afrikaner history and the material and visual culture of Afrikaner nationalism to visualise and negotiate particular artefacts and environments traditionally associated with Afrikaner ethnicity. These include, for example, nationalist monuments as well as real and fictional Afrikaner personages. To date, no other group exhibitions of contemporary visual art that explicitly investigates Afrikaner identities in the post-apartheid context have equalled the scope or critical significance of the *Ik Ben Een Afrikander* (*IBEA*) project. The few black artists who participated in the exhibitions have been omitted from this discussion, not as an act of erasure, but because they occupy an entirely different position in relation to Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid, and are haunted by alterity and oppression rather than complicity.

I focus on the social and psychological anxieties associated with contemporary Afrikaners and explore the *IBEA* exhibitions as platforms for the visualisation, negotiation and potential transformation of such perceptions of precarity, estrangement and collusion. My analyses of relevant works from the exhibitions position the Afrikaner, firstly, as a ghost – under threat of erasure and in constant pursuit of a symbolic home, but also emancipated from outmoded ways of being. Secondly, the Afrikaner is anticipated as a haunted subject. Mourning and related elements of nostalgia and shame inform the latter and give expression to the tension that exists between memories, their affective power, and the historical context from which they are recalled.

AFRIKANER IDENTITY IN CRISIS – AND RE-IMAGINED

A significant number of studies suggest that Afrikaner identity is in a state of disarray, and that some Afrikaners perceive their position in post-apartheid South Africa as tentative at best (Blaser 2004 & 2012; Korf and Malan 2002; Steyn 2004; Vestergaard 2001). The relatively stable position of Afrikaner capital (accumulated during white rule) means that some of the most pressing contemporary anxieties surrounding Afrikaner identity are symbolic rather than material (Korf and Malan 2002, 164). These anxieties centre mainly on perceptions of irrelevance and persecution, and include claims that Afrikaners are excluded from the national conversation and wield very little political power in a state previously subject to their absolute control. Furthermore, they are confronted by threats regarding the demotion and possible extinction of their language, culture and history, and have to contend with the immense moral debt created by their ancestors.

In order to assuage their pariah status, many Afrikaners have defected from the ethnic fold (Grundlingh 2001, 102), thereby shirking responsibility for the historical injustices that continue to secure their privilege in the present. Others long for, and seek to maintain, the sense of unity and sovereignty previously rationalised by the state, Afrikaner nationalist ideology and (steadily diminishing) structural entities such as the Dutch Reformed Church (Giliomee 2009, 660). At one level, this desire for community is evidenced by the continuing commercial and symbolic muscle of the Afrikaans festival circuit, which (under the aegis of multiculturalism) allows for some degree of ethnic clustering, particularly around the Afrikaans language (Giliomee 2014, 578). Afrikaans-origin universities not only host a number of these festivals,[4] but correspondingly figure as some of the few remaining bastions of Afrikaans and Afrikaner elitism; the latter are constantly embattled by the forces of language reform (which question the legitimacy of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction) and decolonisation (Jansen 2017, 70–71). Yet, the strategies employed by contemporary Afrikaners to rehabilitate their self-esteem are not necessarily intransigent. A number of Afrikaners invest a considerable amount of creative energy in resisting discourses of victimisation and marginalisation in their efforts to forge new, progressive identities.

While the first *IBEA* exhibition opened exclusively at Artspace in Johannesburg in 2011, the later exhibitions mainly materialised at Afrikaans festivals or on the

campuses (and associated sites) of Afrikaans-origin universities. *IBEA II* and *III* (2012) were exhibited, respectively, at *Woordfees* [Festival of Words] in Stellenbosch and at the *Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees* [Little Karoo National Arts Festival] in Oudtshoorn. The final exhibition (2015–2016) travelled to the North-West University Gallery in Potchefstroom, Freedom Park in Pretoria, the Oliewenhuis Art Museum in Bloemfontein (which is also home to the University of the Free State), and to the Lizamore & Associates Contemporary Art Gallery (formerly Artspace) in Johannesburg. The exhibitions were thus chosen for their potential to critically re-examine Afrikaner identity in milieus that attract a significant number of Afrikaners, and in approximate spaces as well as events where Afrikaner ethnicity is already subject to much debate.

A number of these sites are also marked by the remnants of both Afrikaner nationalist ideology and colonialism, which intensify the haunted state of the works discussed in the following sections. From the 1960s onwards, and before its inauguration as an art museum in 1989 (nearly a decade before South Africa's democratisation), Oliewenhuis was the official residence of ministers of state during formal visits to Bloemfontein (Botes 2003, 13). Particular features of the visual and material culture of the universities in question, such as statuary, memorial sites and architectural programmes, have eluded decolonisation and still bear the names and likenesses of apartheid-era personages and Afrikaner heroes. Indeed, their irreconcilability with the post-apartheid context compounds the considerable difficulty these universities experience in disentangling from perceptions (and disturbing instances) of institutional and everyday racism (Jansen 2017, 54–55).

The immersion of the works in such symbolically loaded locations ultimately facilitates a conversation between a past that weighs heavily on the Afrikaner's psyche and an anxious present in which Afrikaner ethnicity is at once problematic and replete with potential for critical reflection. Given that the majority of the artists involved (as well as the curator) identify as Afrikaners, I regard the works discussed in the following sections as highly critical and self-reflexive. Yet, this approach is not tone-deaf to the problematics of white or settler self-reflexivity in contemporary postcolonial debates. While such critiques do not entirely discredit the role of white individuals in anti-racism struggles and decolonisation, they generally express a concern that such forms of involvement (at personal and scholarly levels) possibly replicate the colonial power dynamics

they seek to dismantle (De Leeuw, Greenwood and Lindsay 2013; Emirbayer and Desmond 2012; Matthews 2012). In other words, the critiques suggest that such forms of introspection ultimately reinstate the white subject 'as the subject capable of self-reflexivity and the colonized/racialized subject as the occasion for self-reflexivity' (Smith 2013, 264).

Although there is no consensus on a definitive way to solve this quandary, one possible solution is for liberal whites to resist integrating themselves into Black Consciousness movements, thereby making space for, and returning power to, black subjects. In turn, white people 'should work on making other white people more aware of white privilege and more willing to recognise the injustice of it' (Matthews 2012, 177). While the Afrikaans festival circuit is still subject to major scrutiny – and legitimately so – for creating exclusionary environments that cater mostly to white, Afrikaans-speaking audiences (Haupt 2006), the exhibitions in question are radical precisely because they mainly emerged in this context. Instead of anticipating an imaginary black audience compelled to listen to confessions of white privilege and disgrace, the *IBEA* exhibitions conjured the ghosts of Afrikaner ethnic identity in order to place the responsibility for their transformation firmly on the shoulders of Afrikaners themselves.

SWERWERS / WANDERERS

According to folklore, the first person to identify as an Afrikaner was a young man of Dutch and German descent, Hendrik Biebouw. In 1707, upon refusing to return to the Netherlands after his employment with the Dutch East India Company had ended, he drunkenly declared, '*Ik ben een Afrikander!*' – an expression simultaneously suggesting 'I am an Afrikaner' and 'I am an African' (McDougall 2014, 21).[5] Despite its anecdotal status, Biebouw's claim provides a vantage point from which to start debating the problematics of conflating Afrikaner identity and African-ness, to which the artists who participated in the exhibitions were also invited to respond (Lizamore 2012; Nuttall and Le Roux 2015). Historically, one of the major endeavours of nascent Afrikaner nationalism was to disavow the European heritage of Afrikaners in an attempt to create a sense of an indigenised white ethnicity that sought equity with, but distinctness from, British settlers (Giliomee 2009, 359). The later electoral victory of the National Party in 1948 not only thwarted the perceived Anglocentric aspirations of the United Party (Giliomee 2009, 490), but also firmly established Afrikaner hegemony. The National Party

subsequently deployed a number of social, legislative and economic apparatuses in the post-1948 period that secured the privilege and power of the Afrikaners. Certainly, the most contentious of these strategies was the implementation of apartheid.

In contemporary South Africa, however, the sea change of democratisation has effectively collapsed the synonymy of national and Afrikaner identity, and while English-speaking 'whiteness' is still subject to 'an international ideological center which gives [it] stable continuity ... Afrikaners are contending with a profound existential crisis, grappling with the question "Who are we?" ' (Steyn 2004, 153). Furthermore, the euphoric period of ostensible race-blindness and sentimental multiculturalism directly following democratisation proved unsustainable and soon turned to powerful Afrocentric discourses. These reinstated the binaries of colonised and coloniser, thereby conceiving a decidedly *un-African* whiteness (Blaser 2004, 179; Jansen 2017, 168). To some extent, such discourses have rendered the possibility of white African-ness nearly untenable or at least controversial.[6]

The state of homelessness experienced by some Afrikaners also results from the displacement of selected markers intended to fulfil a totemic role in cementing Afrikaner identity to the South African landscape via collective memory (Vestergaard 2001, 23). Memories, in fact, wholly depend on particular (often institutionalised) narratives, as well as aspects of material and visual culture that figure as their repositories (Nora 2012, 61).[7] Being immersed in a largely state-sanctioned, post-apartheid public sphere means that Afrikaners have to contend with the decentralisation of selected Afrikaner histories; the national flag and anthem, as well as the names of a number of public holidays, streets and buildings once synonymous with prominent historical events and personages from Afrikaner history, have in the process been supplanted. This begs the question whether one disappears along with one's disappearing symbols – becoming a wanderer, a ghost.

Unnerving images of desolate, nocturnal spaces and places constitute a significant part of Henk Serfontein's oeuvre, and feature prominently in a number of the *IBEA* exhibitions (Fig. 4.1). Their significance for visualising the precarious state of contemporary Afrikaner identity can be gleaned, in particular, from a series of works depicting the parking garages of the Christiaan Barnard Memorial Hospital in Cape Town, which honours the South African cardiac surgeon responsible for

Figure 4.1. Henk Serfontein, *Urban Tension I,* 2012. Oil on canvas, 42 x 59 cm. Reproduced with kind permission of the artist and Lizamore & Associates.

the first successful heart transplant in 1967. Barnard's momentous achievement, and his status as an Afrikaner, aptly corresponded with the aspirations towards modernity that characterised Afrikaner nationalism – and also the ambitions of a rapidly growing Afrikaner middle-class – in the mid- to late-twentieth century (Grundlingh 2008, 143–144).

The Afrikaners ultimately experienced an unprecedented leap in self-esteem during this time, based on a variety of triumphs in modern art, industry and science, which gave access to considerable cultural and economic capital, as well as recognition from the international community (Freschi 2011, 24). Presently, however, Afrikaners face the reappropriation of a number of affect-laden, previously stable signifiers of prestige, which have shifted significantly in meaning and are being steadily wrested away from Afrikaner ethnocentrism: Barnard's legacy now more likely figures as emblematic of African excellence in general, rather than some talisman of Afrikaner prowess.

Serfontein contends that, while his works elicit feelings of isolation and disconnection, they also suggest transition and 'even a state of emergence' (in Lizamore 2012). Transit zones, such as parking garages, airports and train stations, figure as spaces of suspension, impermanence or liminality; they mediate between one's arrival and departure but are not, strictly speaking, destinations in their own right (Sey 2011, 66). For Serfontein, such liminal spaces become salient metaphors for the precarious state of contemporary Afrikaner identity, but not necessarily in terms of victimhood. The demotion of Afrikaans, for example, has been met by some (particularly right-wing) Afrikaners with defensive, inward-looking politics rooted in existential dread, with Afrikaner ethnicity 'hovering constantly between a sense of social life and social death' (Van der Waal 2011, 69). By contrast, Serfontein's liminality is not defined by closing ranks to guard against exposure or contamination, but rather by porosity or malleability; accordingly, there is 'the possibility of sharing, being-with, refusing the safety of clear positons and certain outcomes' (Motha 2010, 300). The post-apartheid state therefore places Afrikaners at the threshold of stepping into new, progressive ways of being that could foster social connectedness.

In *Taal* [Language] *I* (2012) (Fig. 4.2), Mea Ox has rendered the *Afrikaanse Taalmonument* [Afrikaans Language Monument][8] (see Fig. 0.2) ephemeral via needlepoint-relief on paper, thereby visualising the frailty of extant monuments previously central to manifesting Afrikaner nationalist ideology. Despite their imposing physical presence, monuments are by no means autonomous; their potential for reification depends on the ability of the group for whom they hold significance to secure their status via the deployment of political power (Baines 2007, 169). Regarding the *Taalmonument*, the forces responsible for imbuing it with symbolic weight have ultimately run their course: any claim to an elite national language is unthinkable in democratic South Africa, while the promise of the Afrikaners' bold ascendancy (signified by the monument's hyperbolic design) has collapsed together with the previous regime.

While a number of Afrikaner nationalist monuments remain, they no longer figure exclusively as sites of mythic proportions: the Voortrekker Monument, for example, has figured as a backdrop for pornographic kitsch and even a celebration of LGBTQI pride.[9] Ox also exhibited a work derived from the architectural lines of the monument, rendered in the same fashion as *Taal I*. By employing needlework, a practice traditionally associated with feminine industry, the artist
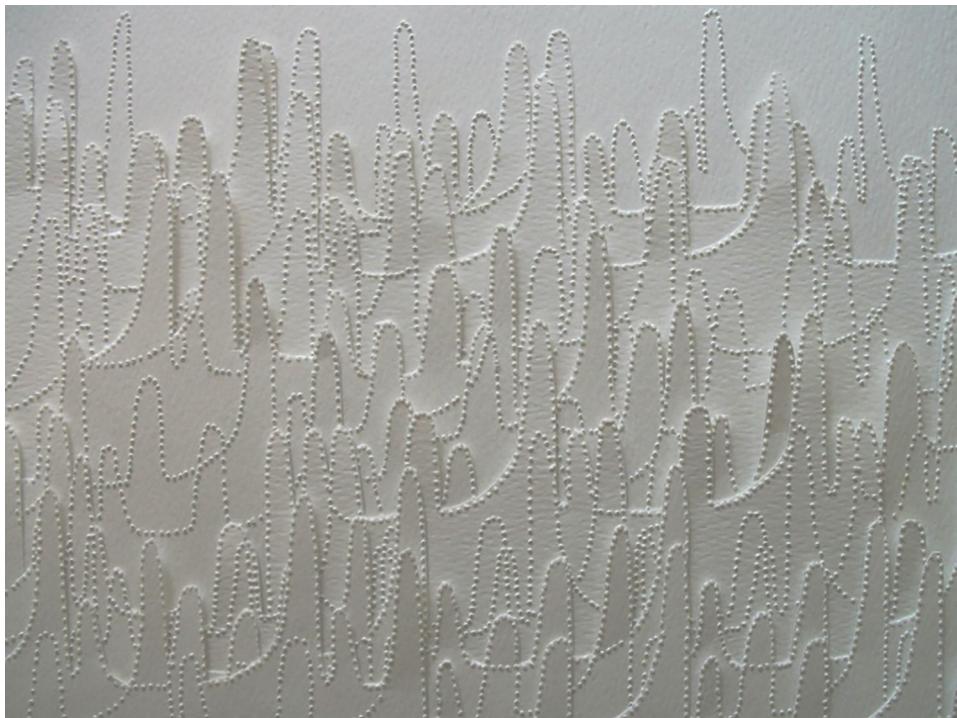
Figure 4.2. Mea Ox, *Taal* [Language] *I* (detail), 2012. Needlepoint-relief on Fabriano, 18.3 x 59.2 cm. Reproduced with kind permission of the artist and Lizamore & Associates.

therefore intervenes in the 'generally accepted (though questionable) associations of masculinity with harder materials and angular forms' (Van der Watt 1998, 94). Traditionally, the latter signify, particularly in the case of nationalist monuments, the centrality of male prowess in the politics of nation building. The work could, furthermore, be read as a response to the tapestries created for the monument in the mid-twentieth century by a number of women in the service of Afrikaner nationalism; theirs was a collaborative effort 'representing all Afrikaner women and offering a way to grant them limited access in the public [male-dominated] realm of Afrikaner politics' (Van der Watt 1998, 94). Ox's practice, by contrast, recuperates female agency, because it represents, not the conditional or dutiful inclusion of women's labour or ingenuity at the peripheries of the monument's design or decorative programme,[10] but rather a complete overhaul of its masculine immensity.

Rather than hard-edged and opaque, Ox's images are therefore deliberately indeterminate and nearly transparent, thereby signifying the pliability of Afrikaner ethnic identity in post-apartheid South Africa. In a sense, contemporary Afrikaners are liberated from monolithic notions of ethnicity propagated by the moralistic, conformist ideals of a depleted national ideology that sought uniformity, maintained strict hierarchies and rejected difference. This resonates, too, with Serfontein's representations of liminality and transcendence, since the rigid social boundaries that largely defined the history and development of the Afrikaners, particularly along racial lines, are now subject to the 'deflation of the notion that an inherent barrier exists between the experiencing self and the close but distant other' (Sey 2011, 67).

The ghostly status attributed to Afrikaner identity by Ox and Serfontein therefore also involves a peculiar kind of agency. Neither living nor quite dead, ghosts occupy an unruly space that escapes clear definition and rejects concepts of purity or the 'un-mixed' (Peeren 2014, 10), thus allowing for endless play across past and present in what is a constant state of becoming. Despite the sense of calamity experienced by some Afrikaners in contemporary South Africa, democratisation also presents a distinctly postmodern moment for many who now choose to combine or supplement their ethnic identity with a variety of other subject positions (Giliomee 2009, 664), thereby creating hybridised, radical expressions of Afrikaner-ness. Jaco Sieberhagen's 2012 sculpture *Studie in Grys en Swart, 'n Moeder van die Nasie* [Study in Grey and Black, a Mother of the Nation] (Fig. 4.3), for example, turns to the canon of Western art history and traditional Afrikanerdom to imagine a genealogy of Afrikaner ethnic identity that attends to its Creole status, thereby negating the claims to racial purity previously central to the development of Afrikaner nationalism.

At one level, the title and formal qualities of Sieberhagen's sculpture represent a continuation of the seemingly endless reproductions and parodies of one of the most iconic American paintings produced in the nineteenth century, James McNeill Whistler's *Arrangement in Black and White: The Artist's Mother* (1871), generally referred to as *Whistler's Mother*. Whistler could not have anticipated the painting's afterlife in popular culture via postmodern kitsch; he also never intended the work to be more than a formal experiment – in fact, the subtitle alluding to the sitter's identity was added at some stage in the painting's career almost as an afterthought (Trapp 1964, 207). During the Great Depression, with the American public's
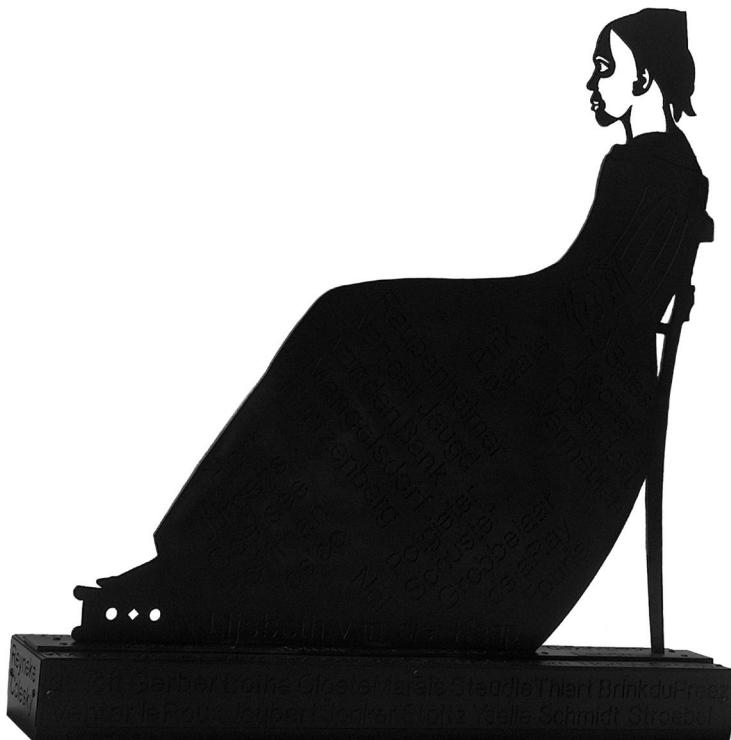
Figure 4.3. Jaco Sieberhagen, *Studie in Grys en Swart, 'n Moeder van die Nasie* [Study in Grey and Black, a Mother of the Nation], 2012. Laser-cut steel and paint, 166 x 160 x 29 cm. Reproduced with kind permission of the artist and Lizamore & Associates.

dwindling morale in the 1930s, for example, *Whistler's Mother* was usurped by nationalist ideologues and reanimated as a symbol of the perseverance of American patriotism and the stoical women who had dutifully nurtured the national spirit (Tan 2016). Solidifying the significance of the painting in the American imaginary is in no small part due also to its large-scale reproduction on commemorative postage stamps for Mother's Day in 1934 (Tan 2016).

Sieberhagen invites the viewer to create a number of conceptual links between *Whistler's Mother* and the figure of the *volksmoeder*, which also came to prominence in the early twentieth century and, like its American counterpart, occupies a central place in the Afrikaner imaginary. The need to strengthen ethnic identity was particularly significant during this period, since the South African War had left Afrikaners defeated, impoverished, humiliated and demoralised, thereby

destabilising Afrikaner unity and nationalist fervour (Giliomee 2009, 329). The *volksmoeder* thus initially emerged in Afrikaner nationalist ideology as an ideal of Afrikaner femininity that mainly operated as a call of duty that would secure white dominance for posterity. Afrikaner women were encouraged to assume custodianship of the moral and spiritual well-being of the Afrikaners, becoming not only martyrs, but also the biological and symbolic repositories of the *volk* (McClintock 1997, 104). The *volksmoeder* also became manifest in material and visual culture, most notably via the iconic statuette of a demure Voortrekker woman (1907) created by nationalist sculptor Anton van Wouw, and the first successful Afrikaans women's magazine, *Die Boerevrou* [The Boer Woman], which employed a similar iconography for its visual identity from 1919 to 1932 (Brink 2008, 7).

Yet, the sculpture ultimately follows a tradition of contemporary avant-garde art practice and critical theory that tends to question the perceived truth, objectivity and universality of historical knowledge. Such critiques centre on the notion that institutionalised histories (exemplified by narratives relating to the mother figures discussed earlier) are never constructed or recorded for their own sake, but because they serve the polity. The critical project of democratising history has therefore mobilised an unprecedented interest in personal readings of the past and attendant genealogical 'discoveries' (Baines 2007, 174). Sieberhagen's sculpture is one such discovery made manifest: the names of more than a hundred Afrikaner families (including the artist's own) descended from Lijsbeth of the Cape – a freed slave who married into a family of European settlers during colonisation (McDougall 2014, 24) – are etched into the sculpture, which also casts Lijsbeth in the role of *Whistler's Mother*. In a sense, the work conjures the ghost of Lijsbeth from the lacunae of history to supplant certain established tropes of motherhood, thereby undermining and ultimately rewriting the narrative fantasies of Afrikaner purity.

The work therefore recalls the viewer to the fallacy of race, since Afrikaners are not – and never were – truly 'white', at least not in the sense of the unambiguous and hierarchical systems of racial classification that originated in the colonial era and solidified under apartheid. The work also reveals, and neutralises, the paranoia about miscegenation and subsequent weakening of Afrikaner 'stock'. Historically, this was curbed by the separatist policies of Afrikaner elitism, which propagated the ideal of an uncontaminated ethnic lineage via, for example, the symbolically loaded image of the *volksmoeder*. Even some reference to the Creole status of Afrikaans

(arguably the most salient marker of Afrikaner ethnic identity) can be inferred: the language developed from a dialect of Dutch initially spoken by slaves and servants in the early years following colonisation, and was only later standardised by nationalist ideologues as 'supposedly the language of white people' (Van der Waal 2008, 62). Sieberhagen's personal investment in this narrative thus allows him to disentangle from limiting notions of whiteness to possibly reconcile with African-ness and the post-apartheid state, in what might be described as a process of simultaneous 'un-homing and re-homing' (Motha 2010, 290). Yet, specifically because of his acuity regarding the historically privileged position of whiteness, this transition is achieved without necessarily claiming a self-defensive minority politics or subaltern status for the Afrikaner that is akin to blackness.

SPOOKBEELDE / APPARITIONS

For white South Africans, living with ghosts and claiming authentic post-apartheid citizenship means not only accepting responsibility for past injustices, but also disavowing those parts of their identities and lived experience which evoke the previous regime. Acclimatising to the new dispensation is, however, particularly complex for Afrikaners, whose ethnic identities and history are interwoven with apartheid, thereby corrupting even their most intimate, and ostensibly innocent, memories (Truscott 2011, 93). As a result, some Afrikaners experience a profound sense of shame in post-apartheid South Africa. At this point, it is useful to distinguish between the psychological experiences of shame and guilt. Guilt implies reprimanding oneself for one's direct involvement in (or actions associated with) a specific offence, while shame has very little to do with what one has *done*, but rather concerns who one *is* (Vice 2010, 328) or how one might be *perceived*. Guilt therefore operates independently, or as a 'highly individualist emotion, reaffirming the centrality of the isolated person' and his or her potential for offering reparations at a personal level (Scheff 2000, 92). Shame is a comparatively complex, social emotion. As such, it erodes the ego and emerges, and is sustained, relationally: it is the product of having to 'continuously monitor oneself from the point of view of others' (Scheff 2000, 88). In other words, negative subject positions such as the historical figures of 'the bystander' or 'the accomplice' (Van der Watt 2005, 27), which some Afrikaners feel projected onto them in the post-apartheid era, have seemingly become internalised and are constantly performed through shame. This may explain why, more than two decades after democratisation, troubled

white South Africans (including contemporary visual artists) still return to, and negotiate, the past.

Furthermore, in this context, shame figures as a question of inheritance or legacy. For Afrikaners, feelings of shame are barely distinguishable from the notion of an intergenerational betrayal that is twofold: firstly, there is the unwanted moral debt carried over into the present and, secondly, the failure of whiteness 'to live up to its own ... humanitarian ideals' (Straker 2004, 409). Many contemporary Afrikaners therefore encounter feelings of disgrace or unease that are at odds with the idealised narratives of Afrikaner pride with which they were raised. My immediate focus is on individual works by two South African artists who had already reached adulthood at the time of South Africa's democratisation, but whose formative years played out against the backdrop of apartheid. The works collected here therefore recall or manifest either a personal or collective memory from that earlier time. Yet, instead of lingering on the past in an uncritical, utopian fashion – hoping for its reconstruction in what may be referred to as restorative nostalgia – these artists are engaged in reflective nostalgia. The latter acknowledges the imperfections and contradictions of the past and of memory, though without denying some affective 'connection to the loss of [such] collective frameworks' (Boym 2001, 55).

Much of the nuance of the word *spookbeeld* is unfortunately lost in its English translation, 'apparition'. *Spookbeeld*, suggesting as it does the image or reflection of a ghost, or a ghost-like image, hints at superimposition, or the nearly imperceptible presence of something not necessarily intended to be observed as part of the main; it is, in other words, a palimpsestic trace. Derrida, for example, suggests that, although multiple spectres cross over into the world of the living, their simultaneous appearance always risks exclusion or selective acknowledgement of some at the expense of others, which is an ethical pitfall (2006, 109). In a sense, the artists collected here demonstrate an awareness of being doubly haunted: if memories themselves are spectral, then their immersion in the ominous matter of South Africa's past suggests a second, more disturbing level of haunting that cannot be denied.

Hentie van der Merwe's 2015 photograph, *Liewe Heksie* [Dear Little Witch] (Fig. 4.4), features the eponymous character in a much-loved Afrikaans children's television programme that occupies a central place in the Afrikaner imaginary.

Typical of his generation, the artist watched the programme (which debuted in 1978 and returned for a second series in 1981) as an integral part of an Afrikaner upbringing.

Figure 4.4. Hentie van der Merwe, *Liewe Heksie* [Dear Little Witch], 2015. Inkjet print on archival paper, 70 x 50 cm. Edition of 10. Reproduced with kind permission of the artist and Lizamore & Associates.

Van der Merwe states that *Liewe Heksie* played a formative role, helping to make sense of his place in relation to the 'world, which at that time was apartheid South Africa' and Namibia, where he was born (in Nuttall and Le Roux 2015). Such processes of affinity are characteristic of the manner in which the aesthetics of *Liewe Heksie* – and other

Afrikaans children's programmes that relied on puppetry and meticulously crafted sets – deployed familiar tropes of Afrikaner culture and apartheid ideology, thereby creating a seamlessness between its fantasy world, *Blommeland* [Land of Flowers], and social reality (Van der Walt and Sevenhuysen 2005, 89).

The picturesque landscapes of *Liewe Heksie* feature familiar household items, as well as architectural and practical structures such as thatched cottages and *windpompe* [windmills]; though not necessarily native to Afrikaner culture, these have nonetheless obtained iconic status as exemplars of a romantic, pastoral Afrikaner-ness (Grobler 2008, 94–95). *Liewe Heksie* also relies on particular conventions of fairytales, such as the binary opposition of good and evil, to define its protagonists as morally just and therefore superior to their nemeses, who, given their inherent wickedness, dwell in a dark, derelict realm (Van der Walt and Sevenhuysen 2004, 64). In addition, *Blommeland* is presided over by a benevolent king, who to some degree embodies the paternalistic, sovereign ideals of Afrikaner nationalism; in much the same way, the stark distinctions between its heroes and villains sublimate racial segregation (Van der Walt and Sevenhuysen 2004, 66).

The magical utopia represented in *Liewe Heksie* therefore emerges as a phantasmatic double, or exaggerated version, of the promise of endless possibility that apartheid South Africa held for the Afrikaners. In this regard, *Liewe Heksie* exemplifies the manner in which the aesthetics and narrative structures of an array of cultural forms aimed at Afrikaner youth in the mid- to late-twentieth century, in particular popular fiction, enabled 'identification with an Afrikaner nationalist world that is suffused with aspiration and desire' (Du Plessis 2010, 4). Such forms of social conditioning are part of a larger context in which the press and the public broadcaster played pivotal roles in naturalising apartheid logic, manifest in ethnically-specific, exclusive media, which, for the most part, catered to a largely white audience base (Ballot 2005, 242).

The implication is that, although black South Africans had the capacity and desire to imagine cherished realms and lives beyond their immediate experience of apartheid, their dreams were neither visualised nor bolstered, but rather denied or dashed by an omnipresent Afrikaner nationalism. The presence of *Liewe Heksie*'s spectre in Van der Merwe's actual present thus evokes the shadow that apartheid casts over the idyllic worlds of his youth, which belied the abject poverty and systematic oppression of his black countrymen. The resulting image is therefore steeped in pathos, amplified by the aesthetic decision to render the image in black

and white, which is at odds with the highly saturated, childish hues of its original context. The tension that exists between a treasured fragment of the past and a harsh post-apartheid awakening – which indelibly taints the former – finally defines the dual mourning, the grieving for oneself *and* others, captured by Van der Merwe's photograph.

Marieke Kruger's 2012 self-portrait, *Verklarings* [Confessions] *III* (Fig. 4.5), forms part of a series of four mixed-media works, which also feature photographic portraits of her husband and parents. Each portrait corresponds to an imprint of the featured individual's right hand, as if laid upon the Bible in an act of oath-taking, and a personal memory recalled from that individual's youth. These anecdotes overlap with a number of admonitory Afrikaans proverbs and passages from the Bible, while both sets of text resemble the naive handwriting of a child. Furthermore, each panel features a drawing of its subject created by the artist's children. The confession that appears alongside Kruger's own portrait reads: 'I was 5 years old, but we were not allowed to play together. They were our neighbours and I used to talk to her, each of us on our own side of the fence. I asked questions ... I could not understand it.'[11] In retrospect, and having acquired knowledge of the reality of the separatist policies of apartheid, Kruger is now able to perceive the spectre that dwells just beyond the realm of memory. A question, scrawled in red, hovers just above this recollection and demands: 'Are there still treasures of disgrace in the house?'[12]

The artist appears to feel herself surveyed or called to judgement by a ghost seeking retribution for the material and symbolic privileges accumulated over generations, and bestowed upon her by default, as a consequence of her whiteness. In this regard, Kruger reveals that each panel 'was designed as a ticket, something we need for entry into a place or state of being' (Lizamore 2012); this seems to refer to integration into post-apartheid South Africa. Yet, considered as a whole, Kruger's

Figure 4.5. Marieke Kruger, *Verklarings* [Confessions] *III*, 2012. Digital print on Somerset velvet 100% cotton paper, 32 x 148 cm. Reproduced with kind permission of the artist and Lizamore & Associates.

Verklarings do not suggest that declarations of complicity, or associated positions of humility, are necessarily sufficient to bring about absolution – if, indeed, that might be admissible. By qualifying each confession with some reprimand or another, Kruger destabilises the spectacle of atonement. Consider, for example, that one of the panels is inscribed *Dit is mostert* [*sic*] *na die maal* [literally 'mustard after the meal', or 'too little, too late']; the implication is that repentance is inadequate and long overdue.

In post-apartheid South Africa and other previously colonised states, the act of confession momentarily places the hearer – the racial other – in a position of power, either to grant or withhold forgiveness; depending on the outcome, this could release the one confessing from white guilt or shame (Smith 2013, 263–264). Yet, confession is no more than an echo chamber: merely verbalising admissions of white privilege does very little to eradicate, and could not possibly reverse, existing and ever-deepening structural divisions between black and white. By amalgamating multiple generations of Afrikaners in a single work, Kruger demonstrates the inheritance of privilege, which, by contrast, brings the continuing hardship of most of South Africa's black population into stark relief. The works ultimately visualise the imbrication of Afrikaner ethnic identity in apartheid and white privilege. At the same time, they acknowledge that Afrikaners' integration into post-apartheid South Africa is neither complete and nor is it easily acquired, least of all through hollow gestures of confession.

CONCLUSION

The works discussed in this chapter are exemplars of what it might mean to learn to live as an Afrikaner in post-apartheid South Africa – 'in the upkeep, the conversation, the company, or the companionship ... of ghosts' (Derrida 2006, xvii–xviii). They display a commitment to self-analysis akin to the post-apartheid literary works of Antjie Krog, who, perhaps more than any other writer of Afrikaner descent, seeks to 'de-centre herself and a colonizer's way of seeing, knowing and being' (Motha 2010, 286). In fact, it is learning to see, and subsequently *showing* what is, ostensibly, *not there*, which guides the practices of the artists subject to the hauntology I have proposed in these pages. If two types of conjuration exist, as Derrida suggests (2006, 50), these Afrikaners resist the temptation to exorcise, to conjure *away*, and instead undertake the psychologically taxing but essential task of exhuming the ghosts of the past. Wilful ignorance, blindness, denial and

self-defensive politics merely defer the post-apartheid 'becoming' of the Afrikaner, which, if we yield to spectres, could be accelerated.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

1   While encounters with the past, as well as their implications for 'interrogating notions of self and other', figure as fairly stable tropes in the discourses of post-apartheid visual art (Klopper 2013, 129), they are by no means universal. In other words, the task of exhuming ghosts figures as one strategy among others. Moreover, art produced in the post-apartheid era need not necessarily emerge from trauma or be restorative, but can also be productive in terms of experimentation, innovation, imagination and play.

2   In this regard, see the essays collected in the two volumes by María Del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren (2010 & 2013).

3   Such strategies of identity-work are, however, not unique to visual art practices or the singular context of the post-apartheid era. Historically, the emergence of alternative or dissident Afrikaner identities is also associated with significant anti-apartheid movements in Afrikaans literature and music. The literary avant-garde known as the *Sestigers* [the Sixties Generation], named for the period during which they were active, and the highly politicised rock-and-roll of *Voëlvry* [Free as a Bird] in the 1980s are prominent examples in this regard.

4   Stellenbosch University, North-West University and the University of the Free State accommodate, sponsor and promote *Woordfees*, *Aardklop* [Pulse of the Earth] and *Vrystaat Kunstefees* [Free State Arts Festival], respectively.

5   The meanings associated with the term 'Afrikaner' (and inflections such as 'Afrikander') have shifted significantly over time. Hermann Giliomee (2001 & 2009) discusses a number of illustrative examples in this regard. During the early years of colonisation, the term 'Afrikaners' referred to slaves and their descendants, as well as Dutch settlers (2001, 7–8). However, it took close to a century after Biebouw's declaration for settler communities generally to start identifying as Afrikaners (2001, 10). Arguably, therefore,

the early use of 'Afrikaner' largely defined a linguistic community, since Afrikaans (a dialect developed from Dutch) was widely spoken by slaves and settlers alike (2009, 53). On the other hand, as Giliomee contends (2001, 10), in the nineteenth century there are instances of the use of the word 'Afrikanen' to refer to Dutch and British settlers, thereby attempting to unify the two main white populations of the Cape Colony. At this time, black South Africans were firmly excluded from the category of 'Afrikaner' or 'Afrikanen', regardless of whether they spoke Afrikaans or contributed to its development. In a sense, 'Afrikaner/Afrikanen' had come to signify citizenship – a status that colonised peoples were denied. The British, however, had no intention of adopting any such collective designation, thereby deepening the existing divisions between the two settler communities, which culminated in the Great Trek and, later, the South African War (2001, 11). The use of 'Afrikaners' to designate a distinct ethnic group with nationalist aspirations and a shared mythology gained momentum (although not necessarily universality) in the period after this war, which had left the Afrikaners defeated and in dire need of emotional, social and economic recuperation (2009, 329).

6 While English-speaking whites were also beneficiaries of the apartheid regime, they 'can adopt a more equivocal position in relation to the policy that they supported in increasing numbers', since their identities are not as enmeshed with Afrikaner nationalist ideology (Steyn 2004, 150). Therefore, the anxieties created by the post-apartheid milieu are, arguably, more pressing for Afrikaners.

7 The significance of collective memory, and deliberate forgetting, is also the subject of a volume of essays that focus on the continuing affective potential of selected icons from Afrikaner history (see Grundlingh and Huigen 2008).

8 The *Taalmonument* (unveiled in 1975) manifests the centrality of the Afrikaans language to Afrikaner ethnic identity (Van Zyl and Rossouw 2016, 299), but is also testament to the triumphant outcome of the 'so-called language struggle that led to Afrikaans being declared an official language next to English in 1925' (Botma 2008, 52).

9 The Voortrekker Monument, inaugurated in Pretoria in 1949, pays homage to the Voortrekkers, Afrikaners who revolted against British governance of the Cape Colony and subsequently colonised the interior of South Africa in the mid-nineteenth century; referred to as the Great Trek, reiterated by Afrikaner nationalist ideology, this event was the underpinning myth that South Africa was their promised land (Grundlingh 2001, 96). In 1995, the now defunct Afrikaans pornographic magazine, *Loslyf* [Slut], featured the monument in an irreverent erotic pictorial, thus assailing its hetero-patriarchal, Christian nationalist heritage (Coombes 2003, 44–45). The Pink Jacaranda Festival, an LGBTQI event, was celebrated on the monument grounds in 2009, provoking outrage from some conservative Afrikaner groups (Mamba Online 2009).

10 While numerous representations of Afrikaner women (in the guise of the enduring *volksmoeder*) feature prominently in aspects of the monument's design, such as the marble friezes, their actual contributions were considered unbecoming of so significant a structure. The placement of the tapestries was especially contentious in this regard: 'the Board of Control of the Voortrekker Monument asserted that the tapestries would be out of place in the venerable atmosphere of [the monument's basement, where the cenotaph of the Afrikaner hero Piet Retief is located. They eventually] decided to go ahead with the plans to place the tapestries in the basement – not in the vicinity of the cenotaph, but in fact against the furthest wall' (Van der Watt 1998, 104).

11 My translation of *Ek was 5 jaar oud, maar ons kon nie by mekaar speel nie. Hulle was ons bure en ek en sy het deur die heining gesels. Ek het vrae gevra … ek kon dit nie verstaan nie.*

12 My translation of *Is daar nog steeds skatte van onreg in die huis?*

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Sculptures on University Campuses

'It's Not Even Past':[1] Dealing with Monuments and Memorials on Divided Campuses

JONATHAN D JANSEN

INTRODUCTION

The urgency of symbolic reparation was brought to public attention in a very dramatic manner at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 2015. Student protestors demanded, and shortly thereafter achieved, the removal of the bronze statue of British imperialist Cecil John Rhodes from its prominent perch on the main campus. Activists would, however, make the point repeatedly that the attack on the Rhodes statue was about something much bigger – a general sense of disaffection with, and alienation from, white institutions, in this case UCT (Ngcaweni and Ngcaweni 2018).

In many ways, the focus on Rhodes was a strategic masterstroke. The statue was a visible and tangible representation of black student discontent with the institutional cultures and practices of former white universities. The statue could therefore be lifted and removed in full sight, offering a political spectacle that demonstrated student power even as it symbolised the uprooting of a concrete symbol of whiteness. It should be no surprise, therefore, that the attack on the statue spread quickly to other former white campuses around the country, from the statue of King George V on the campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) to the monument of President Steyn at the University of the Free State (UFS).

In real time, images of statues defaced, toppled or removed were carried through social media platforms across the country and around the world, thereby boosting the student cause as well as mobilising further activism around these visible representations of South Africa's colonial and apartheid past (Jansen 2017). In the minds of activists, these physical attacks on statues were a starting point for deeper

changes to white institutions, from addressing the paucity of black professors to eliminating the Eurocentrism of the resident curriculum.

It would be a mistake, however, to think that student discontent started with the UCT student Chumani Maxwele pouring human excrement on the Rhodes statue; in fact, activism around race, culture and the curriculum at UCT began much earlier, when postgraduate students protested the closure of African Studies as an independent department, and when Senate decided to stop using race as the only measure of disadvantage in decisions on student admissions (UCT 2014). The word 'decolonisation' was used during these protests, long before the discontent boiled over in 2015.[2]

It would, likewise, be mistaken analysis to conclude that universities had done nothing about campus transformation until the toppling of the Rhodes statue. This chapter offers an account of symbolic reparation on one campus, in the preceding years, and shows how the drama of Rhodes's removal at UCT eclipsed, and to some extent set aside, the steady transformation of campus symbols that was already under way. In particular, this chapter addresses the question: What does changing campus symbolism look like from an engaged leadership perspective?

I wish to engage the question from the vantage point of a black academic leader on what had, for more than a century, been a white, conservative campus catering to a group until recently known as Afrikaners. This narrative analysis of the politics of symbolism on one university campus in the rural heartland of the Free State province draws mainly on a series of interactions with staff and students through what was called the *Monday Bulletin*. In this weekly communication, I would put out a critical question on one or other topic concerning the transformation of campus in relation to teaching, research, public duty and, of course, symbolic reparation. Members of the campus community would respond in writing to an email address, and I would respond to each and every person who took the time to offer a view on the topic of the week. From these responses, my senior leadership team would formulate strategic change initiatives that would eventually be taken for further consultation through the student and staffing structures and eventually through Senate, for academic consideration, and finally to Council, for final decision-making. The two staff unions and the Student Representative Council (SRC) were, of course, consulted on these change initiatives formulated for Council, but not before the Institutional Forum – the

representative body of all university stakeholders – made a recommendation on such management proposals.

THE CRITICAL QUESTION

The *Monday Bulletin* of 8 March 2010 cast the problem statement simply enough:

> In front of my office stands the impressive statue of President M. T. Steyn [Fig. 5.1]. More and more people tell me that it has to move. Some believe it is an architectural disaster, blocking the beautiful path past the fountains to the main building. Others believe it is one-sided, that it communicates a symbolism that is partial to the history of the province and the country. A few believe it is useful as a marker of the campus and a shady spot where you can eat your lunch on the steps.
>
> There is a strong view that the statue should not be removed but that it should be lowered and stand in conversation with a statue of equal size, that of the great King Moshoeshoe of this region. Such a move would signal the reconciliatory stance of the university.
>
> So here's my question: Should we keep the statue of President Steyn and rather use other spaces on campuses to build and bring in new symbols? (Jansen 2010)

This question about the iconic symbol occupying centre stage on the historic Bloemfontein campus of the University of the Free State was bound to stir anger and resentment among conservatives, both on and off campus, and also in the white alumni community with its decades-long emotional attachment to *Kovsies* (the affectionate nickname comes from *Kollege van die Oranje Vrystaat* (KOV), the original name of the university). This attachment stretches back to a time long past, many years before the admission of the first black student. I was fully aware of this, and the local Afrikaans newspaper, *Volksblad*, did not disappoint. This century-old regional newspaper, as old as the university itself, has long seen itself as the defender of the *volk* against familiar ideological enemies – the English and the blacks – and their foreign ideas.[3]

It mattered little that I had issued a university invitation to debate and exchange ideas, and that various options were proposed for the statue, from retention, to modification, to replacement. For the *Volksblad*, the mere fact that the question

Figure 5.1. Anton van Wouw, *Marthinus Theunis Steyn*, 1929. Bronze, University of the Free State. Photograph by Paul Mills.

was posed seemed to signal an existential danger to Afrikaner place and identity in post-apartheid South Africa. Letters to the editor, often written in relation to a provocative lead story and/or editorial on the latest campus outrage – in this case, the Steyn statue – made it clear that the rector was behaving in an outrageous manner. Out of line, this black leader had revealed his true colours: he was set on destroying this most visible and treasured of Afrikaner accomplishments in the very heartland of South Africa.

This 'racist trope', recurrent in public discourse, was a regular feature of public response to any hint of change in the settled arrangements of the university; it is important, therefore, to understand the racist nature of that response to the question relating to the statue of President Steyn. The following response to my suggestion that a statue of King Moshoeshoe be placed alongside that of President Steyn was not atypical:

The little half-breed actually surprises me. He apparently knows his history. He wants to place a statue of a cattle thief alongside that of a venerable President. This is a good example of how everyone falls for the rainbow nation. He wants us to accept as a norm the idea that criminals should be accepted and honoured. The great King he wants to honour was a cattle thief. Thieves and people who want to plant bombs have become our heroes in the new South Africa. Bra Jansen probably wanted to be a gangster on the Cape Flats. Now he wants to honour his heroes. I shudder to think that this half-wit *hotnot* is now in charge of a world-class university. (Rooikat, n.d.)[4]

While the racist trope is intended to convey shock and disgust, a more common response is captured in the 'erasure trope' articulated by many black students at UFS. As one respondent wrote:

Statues are symbols, not just materials. Ideals of people are embodied therein. Statues are to celebrate people. People must be worthy of celebration based on the honourable lives they lived. We must honour what is honourable and shun what is not. Rhodes was not honourable [and] I do not think Steyn or Swart are either. This is my application to have them, and any other vestige of the regime that nearly destroyed the soul of black people, removed at UFS.[5]

The demand for erasure is certainly what drove the student protests at UCT, which eventually brought down the imposing statue of Rhodes on the Cape Town campus. This approach to statues and symbols, the removal of visible reminders of the past, was vigorously opposed by means of the 'realist trope' among UFS students who alleged the inescapability of the past:

In South Africa we have a shared history and therefore a shared heritage that should be cherished. We can't escape our past by destroying its symbols because history and the sources from which it stems should be our tutors. ... One thing history repeatedly teaches us is that an attempt to wish the injustices of the past away is not successful. To use an eraser on the past will benefit no one.

The realist trope calls for the retention of Afrikaner statues, at the very least in order to learn from them (or be tutored in) a balanced account of a troubled but inescapable past. The retention argument often comes with the charge that there

are more 'substantive issues' to attend to on campus, and in the country as a whole. Why 'meddle' with these statues, especially if such meddling might merely stir racial anger and division among staff and students (Steyn 2010)?

In the midst of replies deploying these three tropes – racist, erasure and realist – there was an unexpected turn when the question of the Steyn sculpture was addressed by his great-grandson, Colin Steyn, then director of public prosecutions in the Free State. For the younger Steyn, his great-grandfather was a freedom fighter who took up arms against imperialist Britain; furthermore, 'he had nothing to do with apartheid' and should therefore not be targeted for removal. Indeed, this had been the argument defending other anti-imperialist Boer heroes, such General De Wet, whose statue was not removed from the city of Bloemfontein in the post-democratic period (Steyn 2010).

The resistance notwithstanding, it was clear to the UFS leadership team that symbolic reparations were a crucial part of the transformation of this old Afrikaans university and that the best way to take on these changes was during peacetime. After all, the first call to reconsider the Steyn statue took place about five years before the attack on the statue of Cecil John Rhodes at UCT, when local activists launched a national student protest movement against campus cultures under the umbrella of 'decolonisation' of the white universities that later morphed into a more enduring struggle for 'free higher education' (Jansen 2017; 2019). The agenda for symbolic reparation in this earlier period went far beyond the Steyn matter.

We began with proposals to replace the UFS motto, *In Deo Sapientiae Lux* [In God is the Light of Wisdom] (News24 Archives 2011). Given the history of UFS, we argued that a particular sense of God was communicated in the old motto: a Calvinist God who sanctioned the separation of the races and blessed an all-white university for almost a century. Given the new clientele of the university, where black students were now a majority, the old motto kept the institution captive in an apartheid past. The problem was that UFS, even with its new demographic of mainly black Africans and a minority of white Afrikaans-speakers, was still a deeply religious community: staff and students were located in a conservative part of the country where spiritual commitment was an integral part of citizens' lives, both black and white. To 'do away with God', as some critics unfairly charged, was the ultimate act of evil that 'Management' might commit.

It was left to the now deceased Father Patrick Towe, a senior member of UFS Council, to propose a compromise. The Irish-Catholic Towe, an ecumenicist and a

liberal, made a critical concession: the motto would be changed to *In Veritate Sapientiae Lux* [In Truth the Light of Wisdom]. 'Truth' and 'Light' are themselves transcendent concepts, Towe argued, and they embrace many faiths and beliefs rather than being limited to the Christian-Calvinist God of one group of campus citizens.

Next to change was the UFS academic crest (Fig. 5.2) with its three-trumpets motif.

This crest, symbolising the South African War that was fought in the old Free State republic, was removed; so, too, was the image of a book probably representing the Christian Bible. In its place came a new academic crest depicting a book of learning, and beneath this a head of corn, capturing the agricultural context of this rural university. In fact, the academic crest had undergone changes ever since the university's inception as the University College, when it shared a crest similar to that of Grey College next door. The orange, white and blue of the old South African flag were part of the university's crest until the late 1990s, when the orange was changed to cherry red. One argument advanced by the university leadership to the anxious white Afrikaans-speaking community was that the motto and image of the university had changed often over time, keeping pace with changing social and political contexts (Schmahmann 2013, 84–86).

Yet even before I arrived as rector in 2009, the university leadership under my predecessor, Professor Frederick Fourie, had already made important changes to the

Up to 1935, the same coat of arms was used as the Grey College School

By 1935, with the name change to University College of the Orange Free State, the coat of arms fell into disuse, especially among students

In 1947, an agreement between management and students led to the new motto *Per Fidem ad Sapientiam* [Through Faith to Wisdom]

In 1952, it was changed to *In Deo Sapientiae Lux* [In God is the Light of Wisdom]. The traditional orange, white and blue, linking the UFS to the South African national colours, changed in the late 1990s. The orange was replaced by cherry red

The academic brand – the historic University of the Free State crest that has been the symbol of the university since 1952 – has evolved to embrace the aesthetic expectations of the stakeholders. The shape of the traditional academic shield has been simplified and contemporised. Much of the symbolism of the crest remains intact, acknowledging the location of the UFS brand as one of the country's premier institutions of higher education, with a proud history of academic excellence and an ever-evolving, vibrant culture

Figure 5.2. Diagram illustrating changes in design of the University of the Free State coat of arms. Courtesy the University of the Free State.

overwhelmingly white Afrikaner symbolism of the university. In September 2009, UFS received funding from the National Lottery Distribution Fund, which allowed for contemporary art to be commissioned by progressive artists to mark certain pathways on the main Bloemfontein campus (UFS n.d.). These creative works, under the auspices of the Lotto Sculpture-on-Campus Project, included:

- *Thinking Stone*, a sculpture by Willem Boshoff, installed to the left of the Main Building, alongside Rooiplein [Red Square]
- *Seeds*, by Brett Murray, an installation on the side of Thakaneng Bridge
- *Unity is Power: Let Us be United*, sculptures by Noria Mabasa, in the Computer Laboratory and also on Thakaneng Bridge
- *Walking Fish*, a sculpture by Thomas Kubayi, installed near the fountain on Red Square
- *Bull Rider*, a sculpture by Willie Bester, installed opposite the Information Centre near Thakaneng Bridge (Fig. 5.3)

Figure 5.3. Willie Bester, *Bull Rider*, 2010. Metal, 270 x 155 x 255 cm, University of the Free State. Photograph by Paul Mills.

- *Tree of Knowledge*, a sculpture by Strijdom van der Merwe, installed in front of the Winkie Direko Building
- *Philosopher's Circle*, a sculpture by Jaco Spies in partnership with Dina Grobler and the Tshiamo Arts and Crafts Project, installed in the Garden Quad of the West Block
- *Melodi ya Matsha* [Birth of Rhythm], a mosaic by Patrick Kagiso Mautloa in partnership with Spier Architectural Arts, installed in the foyer of the Odeion School of Music building
- Seven sculptural pieces by Azwifarwi Ragimana: *Baboon, Flying Fish, Fish Bench, Adam & Eve, Olive Bench, Natural Flare 1* and *Natural Flare 2*, installed in the Garden Quad behind West Block.

Also, in the middle of the campus, an Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice was established. Its artworks and curricula reflect a committed and inclusive African agenda that draws black as well as white students into its programmes. Then, taking the view that the curriculum wields immense symbolic power, UFS designed and implemented the country's first compulsory undergraduate core curriculum. It requires all first-year students to engage questions of race, identity, power, knowledge, science, ethics, culture and authority, regardless of their disciplinary majors. Needless to say, the disruptive knowledge at the heart of this curriculum innovation generated considerable resistance from students in the initial months of the programme (Jansen 2016).

Names or residences have gradually been changed; one bearing the name of apartheid ideologue JBM Hertzog has given way to Beyers Naudé, thereby honouring the anti-apartheid theologian who suffered at the hands of the white National Party government. This act of transformation elevated an irreproachable Afrikaner over a member of his tribe who had promoted racial segregation from the time of Union in 1910. The reaction from old boys of 'JBM', as the residence was formerly known, has been intense, leading to further outcries in the *Volksblad*. This culminated in a special meeting of the – by then – largely defunct Convocation, which degenerated into a serious attack on the university leadership and, eventually, the loss of the dean of students, a white Afrikaans-speaking colleague, because of his insistence on the transformation of this residence. The personal costs of pushing the symbolic transformation of UFS took its toll on

the leadership, and especially white Afrikaans-speaking colleagues. But the transformation programme continued, and residences were given new names chosen by the students; apart from Beyers Naudé residence, names tend to be neutral, for example, Harmony and Outeniqua – the latter the name of a southern Cape mountain range.

Thus, by the time these student protests engulfed old English liberal universities such as UCT and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), UFS had already moved a considerable way along the path of symbolic reparation. A major undertaking was the drive to replace the dual-medium language policy (English and Afrikaans). This had, on the one hand, effectively segregated black students (in English classes) from white students (in Afrikaans classes) and, on the other, created different curricula and examination preparation in some of the classes. This was partly because of the English-language competence of Afrikaans mother-tongue lecturers, and partly because of what many black students considered to be prejudicial treatment. In regard to the latter, delegations of black students with competence in both languages would attend classes in English as well as Afrikaans, especially in the days before a major examination, and would complain consistently about the different ways in which white students and black students were prepared for examinations. On one occasion, a group of visiting Dutch students requested to see me and made the same point emphatically after they too had sat in on English and Afrikaans lectures given on the same subject: 'You have apartheid education,' they told me. While the process of transforming this most symbolically important subject, Afrikaans, was long in the making, the constant challenges it faced through the higher courts would only be resolved in early 2018, when the Constitutional Court approved the new UFS language policy as just. English would now be the primary medium of instruction, with implications for other historically Afrikaans universities, such as Stellenbosch.

At the same time, the UFS Naming Committee was kept busy with a constant string of proposals brought by students, staff and, mainly, the university leadership itself. But there were still remaining symbols that required urgent attention, and the way the UFS leadership decided to tackle the more contentious public architecture was to call for creative ways in which to go about this. Simply tearing down the campus's very large statue of MT Steyn or the smaller, less prominent statue of CR Swart (Fig. 5.4) was too crude an option.

Figure 5.4. Johann Moolman, *CR Swart*, 1991. Bronze, University of the Free State. Photograph by Paul Mills.

We asked ourselves, and the student leaders, questions such as: What would a more progressive statement of change look like – beyond removal from public view?

In order to encourage a more considered view of the remaining statues and a more creative response to them, I raised funds and organised a tour to Germany and Poland to examine the crucial question: How did the Germans and the Jews deal with the challenges of memory and identity in the wake of the *Shoah*?[6] Led by Tali Nates from the Johannesburg Holocaust Centre, about 30 student leaders from UFS were sent on a study tour that included old and new symbols from World War II as well as various concentration camp sites in Europe. The programme was carefully designed to encourage reflection on the question of how to deal with statues and other symbols after the Holocaust. Student leaders would interact with older persons who had lived through that period of devastation, as well as youth in both countries. A critical assignment was required in which the UFS students

would draw out comparative insights from South Africa and post-war Germany, and make suggestions for how to deal with the remaining Afrikaner symbols on the main campus.

In the meantime, UFS had experimented with other modalities for the transformation of the Steyn and Swart statues. And so, in Cigdem Aydemir's public art project *Plastic Histories* (Fig. 5.5), the two statues were 'shrink-wrapped in a bright, fluorescent pink … [thereby questioning] the nature and meaning of these nationalist statues on the campus and others in the city of Bloemfontein' (Schmahmann 2017, 29).

In the conservative Free State, this recasting of nationalist statues was, of course, meant to be provocative. It was meant to draw out discussion and to question the white, gendered power represented in the two statues – the one representing the first president of the Free State republic and founder of the university (Steyn), and the other the first law graduate of the university, who went on to become the prime minister of the South African Republic (Swart).

Figure 5.5. Preparation of the *CR Swart* sculpture by Cigdem Aydemir for *Plastic Histories,* 2014. The work has been covered in plastic and is in the process of being sprayed pink. Photograph by Paul Mills.

The shrink-wrapped statues were integrated into the social media environment in ways that allowed for public interaction. Commissioned by the university and *Vryfees*, an annual arts festival in Bloemfontein, the pink statues on campus and in the city could be viewed on a smartphone or tablet, with the accompanying 'voices of South African poets Kagisho Kolwane, Charmaine Mrwebi, Tessa Ndlovu and Gisela Ullyatt … in different languages', thereby becoming 'a base onto which other histories could be injected' (De Jesus and Peach 2015). Interviewed at the time, I made the point in relation to the two projects:

> Plastic can and does change shape and colour under the hands of real human beings. Here is the case for agency and activism; history is not simply given, it is made and remade by all of us in formal settings like schools and universities but also in everyday life by what we talk about, remember and construct alongside, or in the place of, others' sacred statues. (Jansen in De Jesus and Peach 2015)

The idea of *repurposing* existing statues in ways that created discord in the Afrikaner nationalist narrative of these powerful symbols, and at the same time provided for multiple narratives on these images, was strongly motivated by what the institutional leadership regarded as the ideal of the public university. Universities, after all, are places where the commonplace is questioned, but also spaces where learning informs activism, beyond merely *removing, replacing or relocating* what we do not like.

In this spirit, various kinds of repurposing ventures were discussed on campus, including retaining the statue of CR Swart, but placing it in dialogue with a new statue of Bram Fischer, the Afrikaner anti-apartheid activist. Fischer had for a while been a UFS student, and also served on Nelson Mandela's legal team before being imprisoned for his support of the liberation of black people; he died shortly after his release from prison. A plaque on the existing statue would list Swart's contributions to South Africa, while another would record what Fischer did for the country. In this way, students would learn history, with the repurposing of an existing statue being brought into critical dialogue with a new statue. It was our hope, too, that they would learn lessons about interracial solidarity in the Free State heartland, thereby disrupting the oversimplified narrative of white-versus-black in the apartheid years.

It was at this time also that we tried to persuade the students that, while both men were graduates of Grey College, CR Swart was not MT Steyn. Charles Robberts 'Blackie' Swart (1894–1982) was an apartheid-era politician who had served as the last governor general of the Union of South Africa (1959–1961) and as the first state president of the Republic of South Africa (1961–1967). Among his more notorious achievements was his role in passing the Immorality Act (1927), which made intimate relations between black and white persons illegal, and the banning of the Communist Party of South Africa as well as certain persons who were members of the African National Congress. Marthinus Theunis Steyn (1857–1916), on the other hand, was a pre-apartheid figure better known for his anti-colonial credentials in the fight against the British, and the establishment of educational institutions such as the university and the Christelike en Nasionale Meisieskool Oranje. That said, the Steyn sculpture itself was conceived at a time of a fervent Afrikaner nationalism and was made possible by fundraising efforts of the conservative Afrikaanse Studentebond.[7] It is not clear, however, whether these finer distinctions influenced the thinking of politically organised students in relation to these white symbols on the campus.

THEN EVERYTHING CHANGED

By the time the #RhodesMustFall campaign began in March 2015 on the UCT campus, more than a thousand kilometres from Bloemfontein, it was clear that the steady progress made at UFS with respect to symbolic reparation was about to be overtaken by the urgency of that movement. The central message of cultural alienation on former white English campuses would find its symbolic target in the bronze statue of arch-imperialist Cecil John Rhodes on the Cape Town campus. The students' complaints captured a range of alienations, including the paucity of black professors (not a single black African woman was, at the time, a full professor at UCT), the Eurocentric curriculum and the predominance of 'white' artworks on the campus. Collectively, these called for *decolonisation*.

'Why is the Free State so quiet?' tweeted one of South Africa's leading newspaper editors. Shortly afterwards, the protests spread to the Bloemfontein campus of UFS, in solidarity with events at UCT, Wits, Rhodes and UKZN. The UFS protests escalated into large-scale violence when student and worker protestors interrupted an inter-varsity rugby game on campus. They were beaten up by spectators, a group

made up of white students and outside elements, including parents, who demanded that the field be cleared so that the game could continue. Enraged by these events, a group of black students gathered at the Rooiplein and, after a tense stand-off between black and white students near one of the men's residences, the campus symbols came under sustained attack. The limited campus security, later bolstered by additional outside resources, was barely able to hold off the small but persistent band of students making a run on the Steyn and Swart statues. Eventually, the Swart statue was doused in petrol, set alight, and the stone hammered at until it fell to the ground. The statue was eventually dumped in one of the campus canals where a transgender student stood atop it, declaring to the media, 'I can't breathe.'[8]

What followed were long deliberations involving students and members of the Swart family, as well as Heritage Free State, the provincial heritage resources authority, regarding the removal of the statue and its relocation within the framework of legislation governing national monuments. Given the governance processes of the university, Council had to be part of the decision-making process. Ultimately, the broken statue of CR Swart was donated to the *Voortrekkers* (a cultural movement for young Afrikaners), who restored it and erected it on the farm 'Doornkloof' in the district of Lindley in the Free State.

But Steyn stood firm. Unlike that of Swart, the Steyn statue was massive and could not easily be toppled. In addition, by the time attention turned to MT Steyn, there were sufficient security resources to make its toppling difficult. On the other side of the campus, a former student was chipping away at a statue installed by the progressive black artist Willie Bester. It was the same Willie Bester who had seen his creation on the UCT campus – a sculpture of the much-abused Khoikhoi woman, Sara Baartman – come under attack by students in Cape Town. In 2018, the Student Representative Council (SRC) at UFS again raised concerns about the place of the Steyn statue on campus. In response, the university management sought permission from the heritage authorities to place a cover over the statue while a task team investigated its future (Pijoos 2018).

LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE UFS EXPERIMENT IN SYMBOLIC RESTITUTION

What does this account of the micro-politics of symbolic reparation reveal about the politics of transformation, both on and off campus, at former white South African universities? How did the questioning of visual representations of

Afrikaner nationalism impact on the nature, pace and direction of change in the South African heartland? And why do these prominent symbols of a distant past evoke so much racial animus within the white Afrikaans-speaking community?

On a brief visit to the Bloemfontein campus of UFS, a senior academic and administrator at the University of South Africa (UNISA) asked me pointedly: 'Why did you not just take down your statues?' My first answer was, 'This is not UNISA,' and my second response was, 'This is not UCT either.' What I meant by referencing UNISA was that context matters: where a significant demographic group of white Afrikaans-speaking staff, students, alumni and (to a lesser extent) donors continue to play a crucial role in shaping campus decisions, it is not a simple matter to 'take down your statues'. There is no broad consensus in the Free State on national or Afrikaner monuments on campuses, as might be the case in the more urban context of Pretoria, or Cape Town, where the consensus was to take down the Rhodes statue. In the Senate, on Council and in Convocation, there are still a visible and very audible number of white Afrikaans-speakers who are deeply invested in the retention of memories of their own history, identity and culture. For these older alumni of the once University of the Orange Free State, the threat to Afrikaner symbols was experienced as a sense of ethnic loss and racial humiliation (Jansen 2009, 24–50). They had already lost a country and the political power that came with decades of National Party rule; they felt increasingly vulnerable in an economy that threatened them with displacement through land reform and employment equity; they experienced a sense of vulnerability on farms and smallholdings, portrayed as 'white genocide' by extremists in this community; and now their very own university was also threatened with change, an institution built from the ground up during a period of unprecedented Afrikaner nationalism in the early twentieth century.

With this group of *stryders* [fighters] being aided and abetted by a nationalist newspaper like *Volksblad*, any rector of a university like UFS in the heartland of South Africa would be foolish to think that s/he could take down statues without repercussions. Of course, the leadership response had to be courageous, but it also had to be strategic, building political alliances across racial groups and providing persuasive arguments for change in the public sphere. UFS is, indeed, not UNISA. And nor is this century-old, conservative Afrikaans university the liberal University of Cape Town. Within a few months, the intense agitation of black students was able to bring down the statue of Rhodes and leave a gaping

hole where the British imperialist had once occupied pride of place. Major Cape Town newspapers were supportive to the point of appearing to encourage the symbolic fall of the mining magnate who had once had a country (Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe) named after him – and, controversially, Rhodes University in Makhanda still bears his name. The mainly white Senate of UCT almost unanimously voted in favour of the removal of Rhodes (181 for removal, 1 against, with 3 absentees). These conditions for rapid change simply did not exist in the more conservative Free State.

But there was another reason for UFS not going the route of UCT and its Rhodes statue. It was a sense of institutional pride, on the one hand, not wanting to be seen as undertaking a mere copycat action when it came to the transformation of campus symbols. On the other hand, what was at stake here was institutional mission. UFS remains the only South African tertiary institution that foregrounds 'human reconciliation' in its brief vision statement; this commitment is expanded in the mission declaration as 'demonstrating in everyday practice the value of human togetherness and solidarity across social and historical divides'. Even the naming and renaming policy of the university has, as one of its seven guiding principles, reconciliation, which is defined as 'a commitment to inclusion, recognition and embrace so that all cultures, beliefs and traditions are constantly recognized' (UFS 2013). Accordingly, the elaborate attempts at repurposing the statues of MT Steyn and CR Swart went far beyond simple removal.

It is also the case that UFS was very conscious of its educational mission – a university is a place in which reason triumphs over rage, and where an institutional crisis should offer an opportunity for learning. That is why the rather expensive study tour to Germany and Poland was organised: so that students could think comparatively and rationally through the many options available to them in securing a meaningful transformation of the symbolic heritage of the university.

In the process, the finer distinctions between apartheid henchmen (like Swart) and anti-imperialist fighters (like Steyn) were lost in the heat of battle. It was clear during those difficult weeks that to insist on rational, considered and even-handed debates about these troubling monuments to a white, Afrikaner past was an exercise in futility. Only months later would students come back into seminars and debates on what by now had come to be known as the 'decolonisation' of UFS, including the reconsideration of the remaining elements of the university's symbolic inheritance.

The unseen damage that resulted from a lack of discrimination when it came to the attack on campus symbols and monuments was the removal, in the process, of the works of progressive artists. Nothing came to represent the damaging consequences of that indiscriminate moment more than the attack on the works of Willie Bester on two campuses. At UCT, it was the attack on the sculpture of Sara Baartman, the 'Hottentot Venus', who was exhibited as a freak show attraction on European tours in the early 1800s, with spectators ogling her supposedly large buttocks; at UFS, there was an attempt to destroy *Bull Rider* (see Fig. 5.3), another of his inventive sculptures. *Bull Rider* offered a skilful depiction of inequality, as well as interdependence, in a changing country: one grey figure sitting comfortably on a bull gives instructions while another grey figure walks alongside the animal (OFM 2016).

The UCT leadership would eventually, in response to student sensitivities, cover up the Baartman sculpture. The artist was understandably bitter when he responded, 'I was trying to understand my own suffering'; of the students's action and the educational value of the sculpture, he remarked: 'If they could find a more decent way of expressing themselves. ... That sculpture has been there for more than 12 years and it has created a lot of debate. A lot of people identify it with suffering. There's lots of dialogue created through that work' (Pertsovsky 2017).

In addition to this, there were the consequences regarding social cohesion. It would become clearer during the course of the debates on Afrikaner statues that what was demanded by many black student protestors was displacement – the erasure of one set of nationalist symbols (white) and its replacement by another (black). There was no space for common ground in the erasure trope. The institutional mission of reconciliation and the proposed strategies for creative dialogue through repurposing were effectively wiped off the table in the heat of the national protests and retaliatory strikes following the rugby park incident. It is difficult enough to find inventive ways of dealing with Afrikaner symbols during peacetime; it is virtually impossible during periods of conflict. There is a deeper lesson here: with nagging racial inequalities in the broader society and the enduring hardships that come with living and learning in post-apartheid South Africa, the social cohesion project, though not impossible, will take strain.

In conclusion, the educational consequences of removal or concealment are also serious. When the rage of the moment threatens to remove symbols, without discrimination, the toppling of creative works alongside troublesome image

represents nothing less than the failure of education. In a place of higher learning, one expects considered opinion and principled action rather than indiscriminate anger, and engagement with the subject (however offensive) rather than its outright dismissal. Moreover, the physical removal of the very objects that might constitute the content of a progressive curriculum creates an empty void as far as intellectual engagement is concerned. Moreover, the lack of creative response to these works, that is, the repurposing agenda, does not bode well for future disagreement and disruption on campuses. It might well be that the indiscriminate assault on the visual imagery of universities in 2015–2016 contributed to changing campus cultures in ways that are likely to be intolerant and anti-educational in relation to engaging difficult subjects. In that sense, far more fell than Cecil John Rhodes alone.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

1   'The past is never dead; it's not even past': William Faulkner (1951, 92).
2   Interview with Ari Sitas, 2 September 2018, at the Baxter, UCT, Cape Town.
3   For further discussion of *Volksblad*'s reportage on UFS during 2009–2015, a period of rapid transformation, see Jansen (2015).
4   I am grateful to my friend and colleague, Professor Herman Giliomee, for assistance with the translation of Rooikat's response in *Skadi Forum*, a right-wing online publication: *Die klein half naatjie verbaas my nogal. Hy ken blykbaar sy geskiedenis. Hy wil 'n standbeeld van 'n veedief langs die van 'n eerbare President sit. Dit is 'n goeie voorbeeld van hoe almal wat val vir die reenboog nasie dink. Hy wil hê ons moet die idee dat kriminele aanvaar en vereer moet word, 'n norm moet word. Die groot koning wat hy wil vereer was 'n veedief, en diewe en bomplanters is os helde in die huidige SA. Bra Jansen wou seker in sy jong dae 'n gangster op die Kaapse vlaktes gewees het, en nou wil hy sy helde vereer. Dit laat my sidder om te dink dat die vlak-in-die-kop hotnot 'n wêreldklas universiteit se belange behartig.*

5   The other iconic statue from the past on the Bloemfontein campus is that of CR Swart, which is a short distance from the one of MT Steyn.

6   The Hebrew word *Shoah* means 'calamity' or 'destruction', and is another term for the Holocaust.

7   I am grateful to Brenda Schmahmann for information on the origins and funding of the Steyn sculpture as part of a nascent Afrikaner nationalism; see also Schmahmann (2013, 26).

8   These were the last words of African American Eric Garner as he was strangled by white American policemen trying to subdue and arrest him for selling cigarettes illegally.

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Knocking Jannie off his Pedestal: Two Creative Interventions to the Sculpture of JH Marais at Stellenbosch University

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On 10 October 1950, a sculpture was unveiled at Stellenbosch University on what was then Jan Marais Square but is currently known as Rooiplein [Red Square] (Fig. 6.1). Carved from white granite and one-and-a-half times life size, the figure is elevated on a plinth that is nearly as high as the first storeys of buildings in its surrounds. Yet, its grandeur of scale and expensive materials are belied by the surprising ordinariness of the physiognomy of the bearded individual it depicts. Dressed in everyday clothing and with his left arm bent in a gesture associated with sincerity and honesty, he stands with his weight distributed equally between his firmly grounded feet. The words *J.H. MARAIS ONS WELDOENER* [J.H. MARAIS OUR BENEFACTOR] appear on the front of the pedestal, while on the back are the names of those who donated money to the work's commissioning.

Unassuming as his stance and dress may seem from this rendition, Johannes Henoch Marais (b. 1850), better known as Jannie Marais, was in fact one of the most influential and wealthy individuals in Stellenbosch in the early twentieth century. Its parliamentary representative from 1899 until his death in 1915, he had amassed a fortune on the Kimberley diamond mines and held the largest shareholding in the Stellenbosch District Bank. A primary player in the establishment of the publishing house Nasionale Pers, he was also behind the founding of *Die Burger* in 1915. Its first editor, DF Malan, would become leader of the *Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party* [Purified National Party], following his rejection of the Fusion government

Figure 6.1. Coert Steynberg, *JH Marais*, 1950. Stone, 579 cm in height, University of Stellenbosch. Photograph by Paul Mills.

that JBM Hertzog and Jan Smuts had constituted in 1934, and eventually serve as the first prime minister of the apartheid government elected in 1948. Crucially, in the context of this chapter, Marais's initial bequest of £100 000 had enabled the transformation of Victoria College into the University of Stellenbosch in 1918.

Marais's largesse towards Victoria College was bound up with imperatives to establish a fully fledged and independent university where Afrikaans (Dutch) was foregrounded. Those appointed to manage the Jan Marais Fund were, as Pieter Kapp (2015, 167) notes in his study of Marais and his brothers, 'all impassioned supporters of Dutch-Afrikaans'.[1] Victoria College would only become an independent university if it could demonstrate to the government that it had the resources to run a university, Kapp (2015, 170) explains, indicating that Marais provided that guarantee in his will as well as in a separate letter to the institution. Indeed, it was specifically stipulated that the funds were 'to be used for the salary of professors and lecturers, financial assistance to students, the purchase of books and scientific reading material, all "to promote Afrikaans national interests" '.[2]

In a post-apartheid context, where the conception of a university as a space 'to promote Afrikaans national interests' is no longer tenable, what might be done with a sculpture such as that of Marais? The official approach to heritage in South Africa is not in fact to encourage removal of sculptures associated with particular interest groups, even if they celebrate ideals and values that are no longer in keeping with national imperatives, but rather to enable all histories to be represented across the country's commemorative landscape. Nonetheless, as the removal of Marion Walgate's large sculpture of Cecil John Rhodes from the University of Cape Town (UCT) in April 2015 indicates,[3] it is possible to dispense with monumental sculptures, provided that the consent and involvement of local heritage authorities is secured.[4]

I have argued elsewhere (see Schmahmann 2016) that, while there may be benefits to changing how a monument associated with oppressive histories is displayed, or where it is located on a campus, its total removal or placement in storage – the approach taken for the sculpture of Rhodes at UCT – is not necessarily the most productive or transformative way of negotiating such objects. Overlooking how changed views about individuals and histories affect their interpretation in the present, a perspective that commemorative monuments associated with unpalatable values and ideals should simply be hidden from view

assumes wrongly that contemporary viewers will automatically be persuaded by the sentiments expressed in those works, rather than seeing them as products of their time. Furthermore, the view that they should be removed from access precludes recognition of meanings and significance those works of art may have accrued that are additional to who or what they represent. A case in point is the monumental sculpture of Cecil Rhodes that was formerly at UCT. While produced to commemorate an individual whose actions and beliefs are likely to be viewed as abhorrent by people concerned about human rights and freedoms, the work – ironically – nevertheless has value when examined through a feminist lens. Walgate was one of the first female sculptors to work in the public domain in South Africa, and her sculpture of Rhodes is a rare example of a prestigious early twentieth-century commission for a large-scale public sculpture being given to a woman. Importantly, also, removal of art implies that, through the act of simply wiping the slate clean, we can remake a more equitable society. Yet histories of oppression and inequity inform social structures and institutions in numerous complex ways. Although monuments may have been made in a spirit of admiration for those who perpetuated ideas that were prejudicial or exclusionary, they are in an important sense evidence of how those values took shape and the impact they had. Viewed in light of this evidentiary function, relegating monuments to storage facilities or banishing them to spaces where all traces of their histories are blotted out can amount to denial: it is, consequently, hardly surprising that removal has sometimes been the procedure of choice among those looking to prevent rather than enable social transformation.[5]

Although sceptical of the benefits of automatically opting for removal, I would certainly not advocate that public works associated with oppressive histories be regarded as sacrosanct. Rather, in a tenor somewhat different to that of the National Heritage Resources Act (1999), where the underlying imperative is respect for different cultural traditions, I regard it as necessary that institutions identify strategies and approaches that encourage such works to be sources of interrogation and critique. Carlo Invernizzi-Accetti (2017) provides a good example of how such an approach was adopted via an intervention to a monumental frieze in a civic building in the small town of Bolzano in northern Italy. The frieze represents fascist leader Benito Mussolini on horseback, and includes the slogan *Credere, Obbedire, Combattere* [Believe, Obey, Combat]. A public competition launched in 2011 invited artists and heritage practitioners

to propose creative ideas that might 'defuse and contextualise' the work. Of the nearly 500 proposals received, the jury chose a creative intervention by Arnold Holzknecht and Michele Bernardi that involved superimposing over the frieze, in LED illumination, a quote by Hannah Arendt that reads 'Nobody has the right to obey' in Italian, German and Ladin, a Romance language spoken in northern Italy. As Invernizzi-Accetti (2017) explains, an important aspect of the intervention is that it does not obliterate the original, but leaves it visible. Through this, he suggests, it emphasises that 'memory – and therefore history – is not a "blank slate" on which we can arbitrarily write whatever happens to be congenial to us in the present. Rather, it is a process of sedimentation, by which the past is never completely effaced, but constantly reinterpreted through the lens of the present' (Invernizzi-Accetti 2017).

In this chapter, I explore two critical interventions to the sculpture of Jannie Marais, revealing how they too convey a sense that memory is 'a process of sedimentation' in which the past is 'constantly reinterpreted through the lens of the present'. I begin by outlining how this commemorative sculpture came to be commissioned – a hitherto undocumented series of events that I have reconstructed from correspondence in the University of Stellenbosch archives. I thereafter explore the two interventions to the work. First indicating how they were undertaken in the context of student protests against an institutional culture perceived as exclusionary and that tended not to confront the various Afrikaner nationalist interests and agendas that shaped its past, I then analyse their content, suggesting how engagements such as these may potentially play a role in fostering valuable critical understanding of the culture and history of the institution where they are located.

A COMMEMORATIVE SCULPTURE FOR STELLENBOSCH

While the nationalist interests that framed Marais's bequest to Victoria College were directed at promoting a nascent language and culture, the imperatives and ideas that were at play in Stellenbosch in the lead-up to the unveiling of the commemorative sculpture of Marais in 1950 were of a different order. The record indicates that moves to commission a sculpture occurred over at least a ten-year period. Taking place against the backdrop of World War II (as well as resistance to support of Allied forces by many of an Afrikaner nationalist persuasion and indeed admiration for Hitler among more extreme groups such as the *Ossewabrandwag*),

this was also the period in which the National Party positioned itself to become the party of choice for a sufficiently broad range of political groups and sectors within a splintered white Afrikanerdom, and was elected to power in 1948. More specifically, the commissioning and production of the sculpture took place in what Joanne Duffy (2006, 11) emphasises was a period of 'increasing politicization of everyday life' among Stellenbosch academics, one in which various Afrikaner nationalisms exerted influence and were hotly debated on campus. Given these competing nationalisms, the sculpture of Jan Marais may well have been envisaged implicitly as a means of inspiring a sense of commonality of purpose and unity in white Afrikanerdom, which was in fact far more of an aspiration than a reality. Nonetheless, lack of consensus, variant allegiances and competing drives probably also had much to do with its commissioning and making being so protracted.

On 11 November 1940, Ivan Mitford-Barberton, a sculptor on the staff of the Michaelis School of Fine Art at UCT, wrote to the rector of the University of Stellenbosch, Dr RW Wilcocks, indicating that he had heard moves were afoot to acquire a commemorative work and asking if he might submit designs and quotations for it. Choosing not to take up this offer, the university proceeded with a general idea to commission an architectural structure in a landscaped commemorative garden. Early in 1941, Wilcocks commenced discussion in this regard with Wynand Hendrik Louw, an architect in Paarl who had spent two years at Victoria College, and whose involvements included being a director at Nationale Pers. Louw's work – like that of Gerhard Moerdyk, the architect of the Voortrekker Monument with whom he was in partnership for five years – is associated with Afrikaner nationalism.[6] But fractiousness in the larger political arena seems to have been matched by divisions of opinion about how an icon such as Marais might best be commemorated. Correspondence between Wilcocks and Louw from May 1941 to April 1945 indicates that the architect could not arrive at a design or concept acceptable to all members of council; therefore, following agreement between the university and the architect, steps were taken to look elsewhere.

By January 1946, the university was considering approaching a sculptor rather than an architect. Mitford-Barberton was not considered, it seems, even though he had again contacted the university in July 1943, after completing his work on its newly built Carnegie Library. Nor was Florencio Cuairan, a Spanish sculptor who had moved to South Africa in 1938, considered, this despite Louw venturing

that Cuairan might be approached in his communication with Wilcocks on 5 November 1945.

One reason for not considering Cuairan may have been the fact that he had recently completed a commemorative sculpture of Johannes du Plessis (1868–1935). A modernist and reformist who had antagonised fundamentalists in the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in the early 1930s, Du Plessis had consequently been prevented from teaching at the Victoria College seminary, where he had served as a professor since 1920, when it had begun awarding Bachelor of Theology degrees. Commissioned by a group calling itself the 'Friends of Du Plessis', this work – which was installed initially on the corner of Plein and Van Riebeeck streets and unveiled on 25 July 1944 – was viewed with suspicion and dislike by many on the right of the political spectrum. Nicknamed *Pienk Piet* [Pink Pete], this was not only a literal description of the pink marble from which it was carved but also a disparaging reference to the person it commemorated, and it was repeatedly vandalised (see Schmahmann 2013, 37–42).

A further reason for the lack of interest in both Cuairan and Mitford-Barberton was, however, made clear in a letter from the rector to JFD Grosskopf in the Department of Agriculture in Pretoria. Dated 17 January 1946, the letter indicated that, if the monument was to assume the form of a statue, 'it is of course of the utmost importance that we employ the services of a good artist and, preferably, an Afrikaner'.[7] The point of Wilcocks's letter was to elicit Grosskopf's insights and opinion about the sculptor Stephanus (Fanie) Eloff, whom the university was considering. Eloff certainly had an appropriate Afrikaner pedigree in the sense that he was the grandson of Paul Kruger. But having accompanied Kruger into voluntary exile in Europe in 1900, when in his mid-teens, he had ended up spending most of his life in Paris. Nonetheless, he had been back in South Africa since 1941 and had in fact been awarded a medal of honour by the South African Academy of Arts & Science in 1944.[8] Reassurances must have been provided because the university did in fact contract him. But Eloff died on 20 November 1947, and a month later, on 17 December, the registrar approached Coert Steynberg to ascertain his interest, inviting him to visit the university to discuss the matter further. It was Steynberg who ultimately produced the work.[9]

When Steynberg (1905–1982) was approached, he had already completed the Andries Pretorius Monument in Graaff-Reinet (1937), the Centenary Monument in Potchefstroom (1939), the Blood River Monument in KwaZulu-Natal (then

Natal) (1942) and the equestrian sculpture of Louis Botha at the Union Buildings (1946).[10] Besides having thus begun to acquire renown as a sculptor of monumental figures and forms associated with Afrikaner nationalist interests, Steynberg was open to working mimetically as well as in a more symbolic or stylised way – and indeed offered to provide the university with two models (or maquettes) that would enable members of council to choose between the two possibilities before finally awarding him the commission. The models were duly produced and, while the university continued to prevaricate, their mind was made up by the widow of Jannie Marais, Elizabeth, being unequivocally in favour of the mimetic portrait. The contract was eventually signed on 25 April 1949. Anxious to avoid a repetition of the scenario that had transpired with Eloff, the university insisted that Steynberg take out a life-insurance policy that would reimburse the institution for any down payments towards the sculpture if illness or death were to prevent his completing the project.

If Afrikaner nationalist interests underpinned the choice of individual the work commemorates, as well as the commissioning process, these also informed its unveiling in two respects. Firstly, the day chosen for the unveiling – 10 October – was Kruger Day (currently Heroes Day) in honour of Paul Kruger's birthday. Secondly, those taking on key roles at the event were themselves ardent Afrikaner nationalists. Elizabeth Marais, who would be responsible for the physical unveiling of the work, was a formidable force in this regard. A founding member of the women's branch of the National Party in Stellenbosch in 1923, she would subsidise the £10 000 needed to enable the establishment of an Afrikaner mineworkers union in 1936 and, besides her continued interests in Nasionale Pers, was a founding member of the Voortrekkerpers [Voortrekker Press] in the Transvaal (see Kapp 2015, 28–29).[11] Although the university had hoped that the prime minister (and chancellor of the university), DF Malan, would speak at the unveiling, his diary proved too full and they had to settle instead for the vice chancellor (then a separate portfolio from the rector) – a post that had recently been filled by Karl Bremer, who had become a member of council in 1947. Formerly the National Party representative for Stellenbosch, he had become a National Party senator by the time of the unveiling and would become minister of health in Malan's government in 1951.[12]

The sculpture would remain in its original position for more than 30 years. However, Jan Marais Square underwent some alteration between 1981 and 1983,

when, to avoid obstructing this central space with a new building, the university's Gericke Library was instead constructed underneath it. What was once a lawn with intersecting pathways would consequently become a paved area. While the position of the sculpture on the square would be adjusted in response to the demands of this restructuring, its orientation would remain the same. More significantly, these changes saw no reduction in the work's prominence. Indeed, the proximity of the work to both the library and the student centre meant that this tribute to Marais was even more noticeable than it had been previously.

AFRIKANER NATIONALIST VISUAL CULTURE
IN A POST-APARTHEID CONTEXT

The year 2006 saw the theology faculty at the University of Stellenbosch restoring and installing Cuairan's sculpture of Johannes du Plessis in the garden outside their building as a signifier of an impetus towards accommodating diversity and enabling reconciliation. Nonetheless, this accommodation of a previously disregarded and neglected work associated with anti-establishment values was unfortunately not coupled with critical and discursive engagement with those monuments and examples of visual culture associated with Afrikaner nationalist imperatives that had enjoyed currency and support at the institution. On the contrary, Stellenbosch University was mostly slow to take cognisance of visual culture on campus and to engage actively with it. For example, the institution's ox-wagon from the centenary of the Great Trek that had been acquired and located in the Langenhoven Student Centre in 1975 (see 'Magdalena' 1975) would remain in the student centre, without any explicit contextualisation two decades after 1994.[13] Relatedly, a display of portraits of the institution's chancellors, rectors, vice chancellors and chairs of senate at the university museum that I encountered when I visited the institution in 2008, accompanied as it was by sanitised biographical texts, had a hagiographical rather than critical tone. It failed to mention that portraits of individuals such as DF Malan, BJ Vorster and PW Botha offer evidence that, to use the words of Chris Brink (2006, 1), 'the association of the University with the power structures of Afrikanerdom was a close one' for much of its history, and that previous rectors of the university were 'typically, prominent members of the *Afrikaner Broederbond*'.[14]

An apparent reluctance to acknowledge and engage with the institution's associations with Afrikaner nationalist interests in its past, and the impact of these allegiances on the present, would be decisively challenged during the student

protests that arose in 2015 and escalated in 2016. In April 2015, a movement called 'Open Stellenbosch' came into being in the wake of the #RhodesMustFall campaign. 'Taking the language policy as a point of departure', its spokesperson, Lwazi Pakade, commented in a report published on 17 April that 'we intend to reframe discussions about transformation to include aspects of institutionalised racism, as well as acknowledging the flagrant racism which is the result both of the legacies of apartheid as well as colonialism'.[15] Further attention was directed at the institutional culture of the university in a video, *Luister* [Listen], which was distributed via social media in August and included accounts by 32 students and a lecturer of what they experienced as highly exclusionary and derogatory practices.[16]

A survey of Open Stellenbosch's Facebook page indicates that the university's tendency to venerate Marais came up for discussion on 3 September 2015, when it was reported that a display in the library commemorating the institution's benefactor had been quietly taken down. Describing this display as an entirely uncritical homage to Marais that included an array of quotes 'in praise of him given by white Afrikaner nationalists of the past', Open Stellenbosch posed a series of questions about it:

> Open Stellenbosch asks: why was the commemorative wall display put up in the first place, who commissioned the memorial and who authorised it? Furthermore, why has the university chosen to remove it now? … in the absence of any kind of statement regarding why the display was put up or why it was taken down, the whole affair reads as an attempt to assert the primacy of Afrikaner nationalism at the university and then to pretend that was never the intention.[17]

The sculpture itself would be mentioned in a post from 6 November 2015. Open Stellenbosch supported the motivation to remove the statue of Cecil Rhodes from the exterior of Oriel College in Oxford, making the following sweeping claim: 'It is Cecil John Rhodes and his friends (among them is Jan Marais whose statue stand [*sic*] tall at our own campus) who played a huge role in the establishment and maintenance of the slave/migrant labour system in South Africa which laid the foundations for an exploitative and racist economy.'[18] But it was only on 3 March 2016 that the movement's Facebook page indicated that it was setting out to engage directly with Steynberg's sculpture by calling for a mass meeting to discuss the work – the outcome of which was unfortunately not reported.

Greater focus on visual symbols specifically would be enabled through Open Forum, an initiative formed in response to student activism at Stellenbosch that ran a residency programme for artists in October 2016. Judging from its Facebook page, its activities culminated in an exhibition '*Phefumla*!' [Breathe!] at the Goethe Art Centre and Tshisimani Centre for Activist Education in July and August 2017.[19]

In June 2017, a 'visual redress' committee was established under the auspices of the vice rector for social impact, Nico Koopman, and the transformation office which undertook as its first task the drawing up of a policy on visual culture on campus. Working with projects and research on student responses to art on campus undertaken under her auspices since 2014 (Costandius and Perold 2016; Perold and Costandius 2015), Elmarie Costandius, an associate professor in the visual art department, began this task. In a document titled 'First Draft Visual Redress Plan', dated 26 September 2017, she indicated that, while the 'erection of new statues of relevant and popularly agreed-upon figures will assist in diversifying the University's visual landscape and would aid in fostering inclusivity', it would be potentially more beneficial for the institution to create a scenario in which Rooiplein might serve as a forum for the staging of weekly exhibitions, performances or other events that could enable critical engagement with visual culture.[20]

TWO INTERVENTIONS TO STEYNBERG'S SCULPTURE

The work that Costandius had been undertaking, while leading eventually to the formal establishment of a committee in the transformation office, also had impact on activities in the visual art department. In 2015, Costandius approached Ledelle Moe, a sculpture lecturer, with the request that a project on 'visual redress' be set for her students. Working in response to this, Moe followed a discussion on the history of monuments with her second-year students by initiating a project in which they were asked to come up with an idea for a new and critical type of structure, casting their idea in bronze.[21] One student, Nicolene Burger, designed a staircase going up to a sculptural pedestal. A year later, in October 2016, the residency for artists organised by Open Forum offered a 'month-long "opening" of the university museum, gallery and surrounding spaces in Stellenbosch to explore what a decolonized university could look like' (Burger, email communication with author, 24 November 2016); Burger used this opportunity to develop her idea into

an engagement with the statue of Jannie Marais that had a performance-based dimension. Involving the placement of a set of wooden steps that she constructed and positioned alongside the monument, Burger named her work *Flight*; while descriptive of a flight of stairs, the title is also suggestive of taking flight or perhaps fleeing responsibility.

In reworking her initial idea of a pedestal with a stairway, Burger enabled the work to become what one might term 'performative'. Derived from a study first published in 1962 in which the philosopher JL Austin draws a distinction between descriptions or statements of fact or assumed fact and those instances in which 'the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action' (Austin 1975, 6), performativity is a somewhat inexact term. It is nonetheless useful in fine art because, as Dorothea von Hantelmann (2014) observes, it signifies a shift away from what an artwork depicts and represents to the effects and experiences that it produces – or, to follow Austin, from what it 'says' to what it 'does'. In other words, performative works tend to acquire meaning not simply through a process of viewing, but rather through participative or relational encounters with them.[22]

Burger describes the intervention (Fig. 6.2) as follows:

> ... some Open Forum friends and I carried the sculpture to Jan Marais on Monday morning, after which I did a performance. I climbed the stairs, looked up at the figure of Jan Marais, climbed on the pedestal with him and looked over the campus like he does. A small crowd of interested students gathered, asked questions and joined in the intervention with Jan Marais by also climbing the stairs. Other artists draped printed banners with messages to the university around the sculpture and the monument; some bystanders also wrote messages to the university on the wooden sculpture. (email communication with author, 24 November 2016)

According to Burger, the intervention was intended to evoke the following meanings:

> It addresses the problematics around safeguarding monuments in public spaces which threaten and violate the identities of so many people. More specifically, it comments on the ever-present hierarchical structure within our university and society insofar as it contributes

Figure 6.2. Nicolene Burger, *Flight*, 2016. Addition of wooden sculpture and performance at Coert Steyberg, *Jan Marais*, 1950, at Stellenbosch University. Courtesy Nicolene Burger.

to this violation by denying access and opportunity to those who are historically deprived. *Flight* interrogates Jan Marais (as a symbol of white posterity) by asking: 'Isn't it time to step down?' (email communication with author, 24 November 2016)

Although this commentary suggests that the intervention was envisaged as an argument for the sculpture itself to be removed, it could in fact also be read more generally as a call for the university to cease conceiving of itself as, in essence, a home for white Afrikaners, and instead to explore ways of embracing cultural diversity. In other words, rather than the actual statue, it is what Jannie Marais himself seems to symbolise that is being called to 'step down'.

Presumably because of heightened security on the part of an institution anxious to prevent damage to property during the 'Fees Must Fall' campaign, Burger was denied permission by the facilities management section of the university to undertake the intervention. Just over an hour after the sculpture had been put in place, security forces employed by the university arrived at Rooiplein, loaded the wooden stairs onto a van and asked Burger where the object should be delivered. But these actions, she notes, served to enhance the impact of the work and in fact 'drew more attention to the piece than the initial performance' had done. Indeed, she observes, an undermining of freedom of expression changed the scenario from one where students were 'critically and peacefully engaging with what surrounds them' to a scenario in which students felt angry 'because they were silenced' (email communication with author, 24 November 2016).

The steps from *Flight* would be placed at the entrance to the visual art department, where I saw them in February 2017 (Fig. 6.3). Embellished with graffiti the object had acquired during the performance – most prominently 'DO THE RIGHT THING' – the words could be read as an admonition to the university to conduct itself correctly, but perhaps also as criticism of an institution with a history of favouring right-wing approaches to social issues. It may be supposed that the stairs will gradually become shabbier and shabbier until they eventually fall apart – an escalating unsightliness that some may interpret as a metaphor for the increasing ethical decay likely to characterise the university if an impetus towards recalcitrance trumps that of welcoming change.

Another key intervention would make an appearance on Rooiplein in 2016. *Intersection* (Fig. 6.4) is a concrete object in the shape of a Greek cross, or, depending
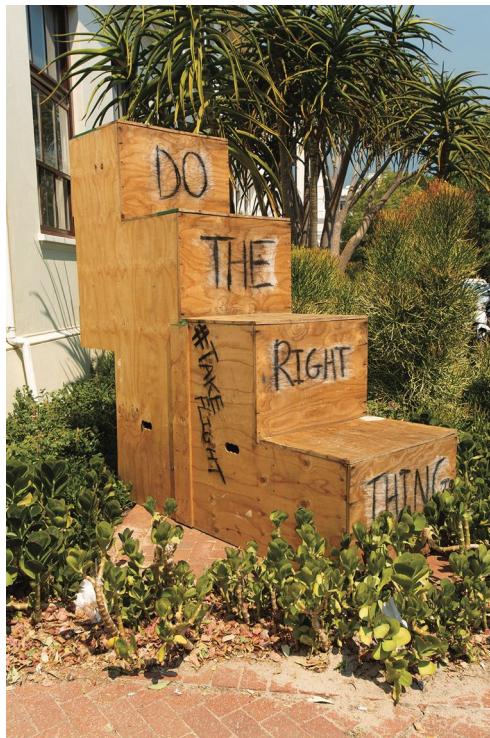
Figure 6.3. Nicolene Burger's wooden sculpture from the *Flight* performance outside the visual art department, Stellenbosch University, February 2017. Photograph by Paul Mills.

on the angle it is looked at, an 'X'. Placed on top of it are postcard-sized bronze panels or objects, each designed by a different person. Conceptualised by Moe in collaboration with Isabelle Mertz, a master's candidate who was co-teaching with her, it involved the second-year class each making one of the small bronzes. Although the project commenced in April, permission to place it in Rooiplein was only forthcoming in October, and it was eventually installed in November. When I examined the work in February 2017, there were 21 panels on the object, though the work had space for further additions, should others wish to contribute. Indeed, while its title – *Intersection* – indicates on one level 'these white lines [that] kind of intersect the Rooiplein and the X', Moe explains, it also refers to 'the intersecting of different voices, different conversations', including creating an intersection between 'the bubble of the Fine Art department' and the wider public.[23]

Figure 6.4. Ledelle Moe, Isabelle Mertz et al., *Intersection*, 2016. Cast concrete and bronze, Stellenbosch University. Photograph by Paul Mills.

Moe indicates that she sought to position the sculpture in relation to that of Marais: 'I chose this spot in particular because it is right in front of him. There's a sight line towards him that's of a particular nature, so that you could sit here and look at him, and look away.'[24] The relationship between the two works is in fact dialogical. As Quentin Stevens and Karen A Franck (2016, 69) explain, monuments assuming a dialogical form 'reference existing commemorative works through co-location, related naming, and formal and conceptual imitations or oppositions', and a work of this type 'draws critically from an existing memorial's formal vocabulary and values, and in doing so, enriches that language by redeploying or inverting the meanings of existing forms and adding new inflections'.

The shape of the work is particularly important in this regard. The Greek cross is the guiding shape for the architecture in key Dutch Reformed churches, including the Moederkerk [Mother Church] in Stellenbosch, and, in that sense, serves to highlight, through reiteration, the Afrikaner nationalist interests signified by the representation of Marais. But when viewed as an 'X' shape, it takes on very different associations. On one level, the 'X' functions as an allusion to the mark used in voting and is thus a sign that all at the institution should have a say. On another, it signifies something unknown. On yet another level, it makes reference to the idiom 'X marks the spot', which is not only used to suggest the location of treasure but was also 'put into common usage by the British army, who performed executions by marking a piece of paper with a black X and positioning it on the heart of someone sentenced to death'.[25] In light of this latter association, it might be understood as a displaced and symbolic 'execution' of the sculpture of Jannie Marais, to which it has a critical relationship.

Apart from being dialogical, *Intersection* might be contextualised in terms of what James Young (1992) termed the 'counter-monument' – that is, a work that troubles and counters the traditionalist form of the monument and which simultaneously enables alternative understandings of the role of commemoration. In the first semester of 2016, Costandius had run a project in which students were required to re-imagine monuments on campus and to find out what people occupying those spaces had in mind for them. Research undertaken had revealed that, if another work were to be placed on campus, the preferred piece would be 'a place to sit, a place to reflect, a bench, an environment – not another person up on a pedestal'.[26] *Intersection* provides just such a facility, as the work can be literally sat on and thus serve as the space of reflection spoken about here. In so doing, it

is, furthermore, experienced through touch and physical contact rather than (as with the sculpture of Marais) being viewed from afar or below. But its 'X' shape has still further subversive implications. A low-lying or horizontally orientated monument, it seems in fact to make ironical reference to its own departure from the usual phallic-shaped commemorative structure, as typified in the Steynberg work, by assuming a form that alludes to female chromosomes.

While making this work, Moe had read Derek Hook's 'Monumental Space and the Uncanny', which offers a psychoanalytical interpretation of the impact of the former Strijdom Square in Pretoria, where a gigantic portrait head of Strijdom, also by Coert Steynberg, was displayed underneath a dome-like shape. Moe was, she says, moved by one particular detail.[27] Observing how sculptures may seem to be imbued with the actual presence of those whom they represent, Hook (2005, 699) refers to a commentary by Frans Legodi, a member of the cleaning department at Strijdom Square: 'We used to clean ... Mr Strijdom's head. We would order soap to keep it shiny, even inside the nose. I would look to see if a white man was passing. If not, I would slap the face. That would make me feel good.'[28] Relatedly, *Intersection* might be understood as a work that endeavours to defuse the power of Jan Marais's uncanny presence on Rooplein through its own type of associative 'slap in the face'. Apart from the work assuming a 'feminine' form, the small bronze plaques attached to its surface (Fig. 6.5) perform a critical function; the intended meanings on the part of the individuals who made them are outlined in a document that is available on the site. Including imagery that, on the one hand, reiterates the idea that *Intersection* is a counter-monument, each of these bronzes also reinforces its dialogical relationship with the Steynberg sculpture by exposing a dark underside to the university, the Stellenbosch environment, and/or Dutch/Afrikaner histories in the Western Cape.

Two of these bronzes speak of sexual violence. Esteé Skein indicates that *The Humble Park Bench* refers to a bench in front of the Harmonie Ladies Residence, a building completed in 1905, when it was part of Victoria College. In ironical counterpoint to its name, this bench was 'where a girl was raped and held at gunpoint less than 10 metres from the front door', Skein observes, adding that people are 'afraid to go near this bench now, never mind sit on it. We also don't speak of the incident because we need to maintain the image of our "perfect" Matieland.'[29] Representing a broken bench, Skein's plaque is intended to counter 'the silence that we are indirectly sworn to' and encourage students to 'speak up

Figure 6.5. Details of the following bronze plaques included in *Intersection*: top left: *The Humble Park Bench* by Esteé Skein; bottom left: *Role of Tape* by Brad Jackson; centre: *A Message from Stellenbosch* by Charles Palm; top right: *Shit* by Stephanie Pereira; bottom right: *Pulling the Plug* by Chelsea Young. Photographs by Paul Mills.

about things that are happening on campus'.[30] Correspondingly, in *Role of Tape*, Brad Jackson speaks of what he sees as 'a growing impact around varsities in the country, including Stellenbosch', of 'rape culture'.[31] Representing a material often used in violent crimes to muzzle a victim, the roll of duct tape alludes to the silencing of rape victims specifically. The use of this motif was inspired by the annual Silent Protest, started at Rhodes University in 2006 under the auspices of the One in Nine campaign ('one in nine' indicating the proportionally small number of rapes reported to the police), when participants taped up their mouths to refer to those who feel neither willing nor able to disclose their experiences of rape.

In a *Message from Stellenbosch*, Charles Palm explores the contradictions surrounding attitudes to education among the Dutch in the Cape. A keyhole motif is cast from the front door of the Ou Hoofgebou [Old Main Building], the oldest edifice in the Stellenbosch University complex, which was built on land donated by Reverend Johannes Henoch Neethling, Jannie Marais's uncle by marriage, after whom he was named. Palm writes: 'Inaugurated in November 1886', the building was constructed 'as a monument to education and progress in Stellenbosch. Today it houses the law faculty and is still used as an important ceremonial space for important university events.'[32] However, this reference to a building associated with education, law and progress is juxtaposed with an allusion to a letter emanating from Stellenbosch, which refers to a Dutch ruling order whose actions were characterised by suspicion of education, lack of justice and retrogressive thinking. In 1760, Upas, an enslaved man in Stellenbosch, had been ill for two months; of Bugis descent (the Bugis are from southern Sulawesi in today's Indonesia), Upas had sent a letter asking for assistance to September van Bugis, an individual enslaved in Cape Town and known as a healer. Shortly thereafter, a group seeking to escape slavery killed a burgher and his family. One of the antagonists, Baatjoe van Bugis, suffered an injury to his hand during the attack, and met up with September for treatment before retreating to the mountains. Shot by a commando and prior to dying, Baatjoe betrayed the healer. Found in a chest owned by September, the letter – which was improperly translated and interpreted – was regarded as evidence of his involvement in the murder, and September was sentenced to excruciating torture at the rack until such time as he died. Underlying this shameful and inhumane sentence was not only prejudice against those of Bugis descent but also suspicion that literacy among the enslaved

posed a threat to the ability of the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* [United East India Company] to maintain order at the Cape.[33]

Some of the plaques on *Intersection* have evocative titles. Chelsea Young's *Pulling the Plug*, while literally a representation of water running out of a drain, carries the implication in its title of bringing something to an end. In this context, it might be read as an act of 'pulling the plug', not necessarily on water wastage only, but also (given the overall purpose of the work) on the concept of the University of Stellenbosch as a bastion of white Afrikaner power. Similarly, the representation of a toilet by Stephanie Pereira, entitled *Shit*, may be read not simply as 'a reflection on the water and sanitary crisis in our country', as she indicates,[34] but also as a signifier of *Intersection*'s status as a counter-monument. Alluding to the resistance against traditionalist concepts of gallery spaces that was implemented through Marcel Duchamp's exhibition of an actual urinal entitled *Fountain* in 1917, Pereira's work picks up on a history of critique and subversion that is also manifest in, for example, the representations of toilets that Claes Oldenburg made in the 1960s.

CONCLUSION

After initially requesting that the work be in place for only a couple of months (thus increasing its chance of acceptance), Moe's plan was to ask for an extension and, indeed, for *Intersection* to become an ongoing project. With this in mind, she offered open invitations to others to design additions to it: 'We're going to do another casting until the whole X is covered *or* until we get permission to put one [of these crosses] on each intersection, so that they start to colonise the Rooiplein and interrupt the space.'[35] Happily, permission was granted to extend the installation. In December 2017, Moe indicated that work had started on the production of additional bronze plaques, and that this would resume in 2018 (email communication with author, 27 December 2017). 'The reception of the work continues to be positive and one that creates conversation in creative and productive ways,' she noted.

While highlighting how creative responses to monuments prompt thoughts about their histories, *Intersection* – as with Burger's *Flight* – simultaneously reveals that a sculpture such as Steynberg's representation of Marais need not be viewed deferentially. Indeed, by being performative, dialogical or serving as counter-monuments, the interventions discussed in this chapter disrupt the monument's original commemorative function, encouraging recognition of how

the institution was shaped and affected by biases and prejudices that have provided it with a difficult and complex inheritance. Thus, in a way that could not be accomplished by simply removing the offending work, these creative interventions encourage viewers to ensure that the University of Stellenbosch reconstitutes itself into something removed from that bastion of white Afrikanerdom that Marais, the benefactor represented in the sculpture, had in mind for it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

1   My translation of *almal vurige kampvegters vir Hollandse-Afrikaans*. Responding to Cecil Rhodes's plan to establish a university in Cape Town, advocates for establishing Stellenbosch as a locale for a specifically Dutch or Afrikaans institution articulated an emergent nationalism in a memorandum authored by Malan, Professor Morrees of the Theological Seminary and Mr JG van der Horst, as Chris Brink (2006, 41) observes: 'Stellenbosch has been closely bound up for many years with the spiritual, moral and national life of the Dutch-speaking part of the nation. This is the place where the Afrikaner people have been best able to realise their ideals and from which they have been able to exert the strongest influence on South Africa. It is the best means the people have so far found to meet a deeply felt need. *It stands for an idea!*'

2   My translation of *aangewend word vir die salaris van professore en dosente, geldelike hulp aan studente, die aankoop van boeke en wetenskaplike voorlesings, alles 'ter bevordering van die Afrikaanse nationale belange'*.

3   For a detailed engagement with the removal of the sculpture and its implications, see Schmahmann (2016).

4   The post-apartheid government's National Heritage Resources Act (1999) indicates that public monuments and memorials would require 'the special consent of the local authority … for any alteration or development affecting' them and that, should such an alteration or development be undertaken 'without the consent of the local authority, the local authority may require the owner to stop such work instantly and restore the site to its previous condition within a specified period' (National Heritage Resources Act, no. 25 of 1999, Chapter II, section 30, pp. 23–24).

5   The circumstances surrounding the removal of a bust of Cecil Rhodes at Rhodes University are particularly noteworthy in this regard (see Schmahmann 2013, 49–51).

6   A brief background on Louw can be found at http://www.artefacts.co.za/main/Buildings/archframes.php?archid=1001. See also Roux (2008) and Freschi (2009).

7   My translation of *dit is natuurlik van die grootste belang dat ons die dienste van 'n goeie kunstenaar kry en wel liefs 'n Afrikaner*.

8   For biographical details on Eloff, see Jeppe (1963, 124) and Ogilvie (1988, 206).

9   It seems that Coert Steynberg had in fact been considered when Eloff was approached instead. In his letter to Grosskopf in January 1946, prior to asking about Eloff, Wilcocks remarks: '*Vertroulik kan ek së dat daar moeilikheid sou wees in verband met Steinberg.*' [Confidentially I can say that there would have been difficulties in connection with Steinberg (*sic*).] The vagueness of the remark makes it impossible to construe the nature of these 'difficulties'.

10 See Jeppe (1963, 137), Ogilvie (1988, 639–640) and Bosman (1968) for biographical details on Steynberg.

11 Just 38 when she married the 54-year-old Jannie Marais in 1905, Elizabeth Marais (née de Villiers) died in August 1953.

12 In her overview of his career, Joanne Duffy (2006, 58–60) reveals Bremer's shifting political leanings, including his seeming attraction to Oswald Pirow's New Order – a group with fascist sympathies – in 1941, while an MP for Graaff-Reinet. During World War II he was also embroiled in the 'Denk Affair', having been present when Malan met the wife of Hans Denk. A German official, Denk wished to convey a message about Nazi policy towards South Africa should a separate peace agreement be struck with the country, without the knowledge or sanction of the government. A more sanitised account of Bremer's life may be found in an obituary in the *South African Medical Journal* of 5 September 1953. http://journals.co.za/docserver/fulltext/msamj/27/36/28969.pdf?expires=1513523452&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=C6FD092675BF3FC279AF7B54CCA8BE45.

13 When a renovation of the centre was undertaken in 2015, the object was enclosed in the office of Bennie Malan, the university's compliance officer.

14 Chris Brink was rector and vice chancellor of the university from 2002 to 2007.

15 https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/transformation-spotlight-on-stellenbosch-1846961.

16 See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sF3rTBQTQk4.

17 See https://www.facebook.com/openstellenbosch/posts/864587563590422. What would clearly have complicated responses on the part of the management of the university to Open Stellenbosch is the fact that the institution's vice chancellor, Prof. Wim de Villiers, has family links to Marais: Elizabeth Marais was his paternal grandfather's sister, i.e. his great aunt. When he took up his position in December 2014, this legacy may simply have seemed a sign of a profound and long-standing commitment to the university (where his father had also served as dean of law and where he had studied during his undergraduate years); however, by the time Open Stellenbosch expressed their objection, the scenario had changed. Contestation in regard to the commemoration of founding fathers in monuments, which became a focus in 2015 through the #RhodesMustFall movement, meant that this family heritage had in fact mutated into a liability. Indeed, this was particularly true of a situation where participants in *Luister* were claiming that the University of Stellenbosch was an insular and elitist home for white Afrikaners.

18 See https://rmfoxford.wordpress.com/2015/11/06/open-stellenbosch-message-of-support-to-rhodes-must-fall-in-oxford/.

19 See https://www.facebook.com/openforumarts/.

20 Document supplied by Elmarie Costandius.

21 Interview with Ledelle Moe at Stellenbosch University, 21 February 2017.

22 For further engagement with performativity in relation to the visual arts, see Widrich (2014).

23 Interview with Moe at Stellenbosch University, 21 February 2017.

24 Interview with Moe at Stellenbosch University, 21 February 2017.

25 See http://www.theidioms.com/x-marks-the-spot/.

26 Interview with Moe at Stellenbosch University, 21 February 2017.

27 Interview with Moe at Stellenbosch University, 21 February 2017.

28 Hook's source is a film by P Diphare flighted on e.tv on 25 November 1999. Moe explained how this passage caught her attention in my interview with her at Stellenbosch University, 21 February 2017.

29 '*Matieland*' is a nickname for the University of Stellenbosch ('*Matie*' [friend] refers to a student of the institution).

30 PDF file with explanations of the various works available at the site, a copy of which was provided to me by Ledelle Moe.

31 PDF file with explanations of the various works available at the site.

32 PDF file with explanations of the various works available at the site.

33 For a discussion of the sequence of events and the misreading of Upas's letter, see Koolhof and Ross (2005).

34 PDF file with explanations of the various works available at the site.

35 Interview with Moe at Stellenbosch University, 21 February 2017.

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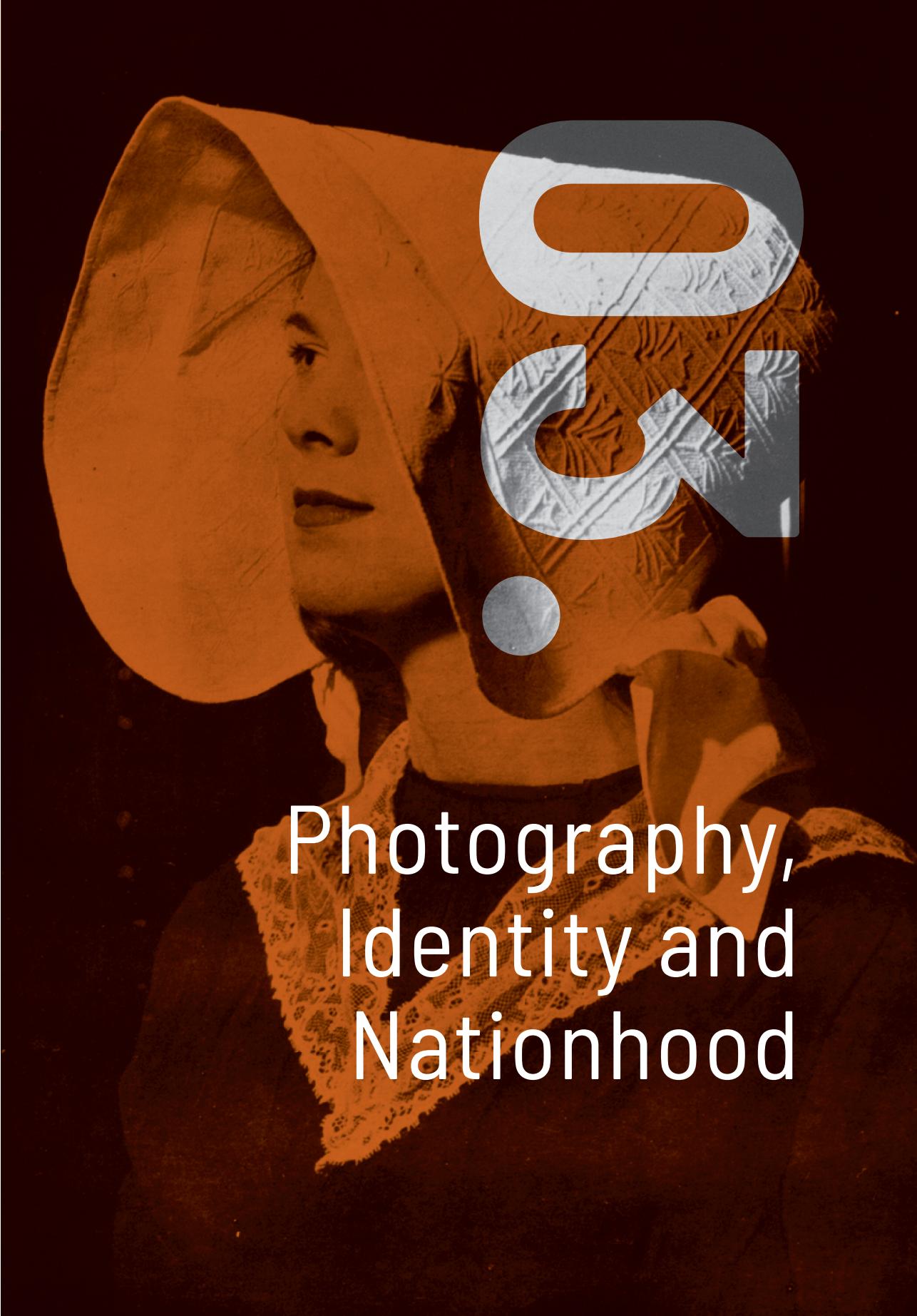
Photography, Identity and Nationhood

Celebrating the *Volk:* The 1949 Inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument in State Information Office Photographs

KATHARINA JÖRDER

In the mythology of the Afrikaner nationalism of the first half of the twentieth century, the narrative of the Great Trek played a pivotal role (Thompson 1985, 180). The heroisation of the emigration of the Voortrekkers from the British-ruled Cape Colony to the allegedly empty hinterland becomes most evident in the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria/Tshwane. When the Monument,[1] the 'national shrine of the Afrikaner[s]' (Moerdijk n.d. (a), 37), was solemnly inaugurated on 16 December 1949, the celebrations attracted a crowd of 250 000 people (Botha n.d., 75). Prime Minister Daniel François Malan (1950, 1) proudly declared that this was 'presumably the greatest [assembly] that has ever gathered on South African soil'.

The idea of constructing the Monument originated in 1931 and it initially was planned to be completed for the centenary celebrations of the Great Trek in 1938. But problems of financing, the process of making a decision about an appropriate site, and the outbreak of World War II caused a delay in completing the Monument (Crampton 2001, 224–226; Delmont 1992, 2–4; Jansen n.d., 24–25). While the foundation stone was laid as part of the so-called *Tweede Trek* [Second Trek] in 1938,[2] the inauguration had to be postponed to 1949. This played right into the hands of Malan's National Party government, which had come into power only shortly before in 1948.

While monuments and festivals may differ in the sense that the former are mostly made from durable materials and the latter are ephemeral, they share the ability to

express national values and to construct histories. The long-lasting architectures are built for the same reasons as the short-lived events are organised: to present achievements, to commemorate important historic events, to honour eminent personalities and to celebrate culture. In this way, they articulate ideologies of the socio-political context from which they originate. This ability in turn makes them amenable to propagandistic purposes. While being moulded through, and responding to, existing identities, they also shape new ones – a process involving separation from or exclusion of (opposing) groups who do not identify with the monument or festival (Crampton 2001, 222–223; Deile 2004, 7–8; Marschall 2010, 102–103). As a combination of monument and festival, the solemn inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument therefore offered the new government a unique opportunity to articulate ideas about white supremacy and to celebrate the *volk* – the Afrikaner people.

Referring to Benedict Anderson's concept of the nation as an 'imagined political community' (2016, 6), and arguing that photographs may serve 'to generate a sense of belonging to a community and to foster the idea of nation', Joan Schwartz (2014, 20) has shown how photographs can be deployed and interpreted as expressions of national ideas. This was true of the inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument, which was extensively photographed. While the documentation of the event by the highly acclaimed American photographer Margaret Bourke-White has recently attracted scholarly attention (Lichtenstein and Halpern 2016; Mason 2012), there has not yet been a discussion of how the emerging apartheid state itself visually propagated the festival.[3] A selection of black-and-white photographs by the State Information Office (SIO), South Africa's central propaganda apparatus at the time, which created a photographic discourse bolstering apartheid ideologies, was published in the photobook *Die Gelofte* (n.d.).[4] The images and their compilation reflect the ideas of an Afrikaner *volk* and a white nation, exemplifying the involvement by the emerging apartheid state in the production and dissemination of an Afrikaner imagery that was characterised by the internal bond of the imagined community.

THE INAUGURATION

The date chosen to celebrate the inauguration of the Monument marks a central moment in Voortrekker history. On 16 December 1838, a commando of

Voortrekkers under the leadership of Andries Pretorius fought against an army of Zulus in the so-called Battle of Blood River/Ncome. According to nationalist Afrikaner mythology, a few days prior to the battle, on 9 December, the Voortrekkers had made a vow to God: if they triumphed over their Zulu opponents, they would erect a memorial church and celebrate the battle's anniversary every year in honour of God.[5] Although the troops of King Dingane outnumbered the Voortrekkers, the Zulus could not compete with the whites' firepower and were defeated. Especially during the increasing Afrikaner nationalism of the first four decades of the twentieth century, the victory was interpreted as a confirmation of divine protection and the vow was turned into a central aspect of the Great Trek narrative, conveying the idea of the Afrikaners as a chosen people (Crampton 2001, 232–233; Etherington 2001, 279–282; Thompson 1985, 144–188).

Situated on a hill outside of Pretoria/Tshwane, the Voortrekker Monument is a landmark that is visible from a great distance.[6] A granite wall of 64 ox-wagons forming a protective *laager* [a fortified, circular formation of wagons] surrounds the massive structure designed by Gerhard Moerdijk.[7] One of the most important architectural elements is the oculus in the large dome of the Monument. Every year on 16 December, at noon, if the weather permits, a beam of sunlight falls through the oculus into the Hall of Heroes. Another circular aperture in the floor directs the sunrays into a second, lower hall. Here a cenotaph, as the centrepiece around which the whole building is organised (Moerdijk n.d. (a), 32), is positioned so that the beam spotlights its inscription '*Ons vir jou, Suid Afrika*' [We for you, South Africa].

The inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument in 1949 was preceded by three days of festive events. From 13 December onwards, choir and theatre performances, folk dances, sermons, a historical exhibition, film screenings, speeches, special programmes for children as well as historical tableaux entertained the crowd (VMIC n.d., 5–20). A vast tent camp was erected on the slopes of Monument Hill, providing accommodation 'on more than 5,000 sites' for festival participants (Botha n.d., 77). When Prime Minister Malan eventually gave the sign to open the doors of the Monument at noon on 16 December, the festival crowd, according to the Monument's official guide, spontaneously started to sing 'Praise the Lord'. The scene was later described as 'an experience never to be forgotten' (Botha n.d., 75).

THE STATE INFORMATION OFFICE AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Besides various cultural organisations, the State Information Office was involved in the planning of the inaugural festival. The governmental institution, established in 1947 as part of the Department of the Interior, replaced the former Information Bureau which had functioned as 'a war propaganda office' during World War II. Under the new government of Prime Minister Malan, it was the institution's general task 'to co-ordinate the publicity services of the State' (SIO 1950, 5). From the beginning, the production and circulation of photographs was part of its mandate. In the course of a reorganisation that took place at the end of 1948, the Visual and Photographic Sections merged to form the Visual Publicity Section that was 'responsible for the design and working drawings of all publications, posters, exhibitions and photographic and other displays produced by the State Information Office' (SIO 1950, 24). By picturing various aspects of the country, this institution created a visual network that represented South Africa in favourable terms and – often subtly – bolstered apartheid ideologies. Involving the documentation of cities, various industries and the beauty of the South African landscape – which served to suggest a prospering country – this visual network also reinforced and legitimated government policies through its recording of the homelands, as well as landmark festivals and official events. Over the years, the State Information Office and successive institutions built up a photo library from which a substantial number of illustrations for the ministry's publications derived.[8]

Against this background, the involvement of the State Information Office in the inauguration celebrations comes as no surprise. As noted in the ministry's annual reports, 'The State Information Office, at the request of the Voortrekker Monument Committee, also undertook the Press and publicity arrangements for the opening of the Voortrekker Monument.' This included a preview of the Monument for the press as well as the national and international distribution of information material and photographs prior to the celebrations. A press office was set up on the festival site and a working infrastructure was provided for '[a]bout 100 representatives of the press, radio and film ...' (SIO 1950, 23–24). The presence of a considerable number of national as well as international journalists and reporters resulted in a plethora of publications picturing the inauguration. Photographs were published in newspapers and magazines, special albums were compiled, and commemorative publications were issued.[9] Moreover, it might be

supposed that some visitors brought their own cameras, taking pictures, which were viewed and circulated privately.[10]

A series of photographs by the State Information Office relating to the inauguration festival of 1949 is archived at the Voortrekker Monument Heritage Centre. Circular stamps and an indexical reference system on the back of the photographic prints allow us to ascribe them to the Visual Publicity Section of the governmental institution. These stamps as well as occasional captions attached to the prints are important indicators of a thoroughly curated photographic production that was introduced at an early stage of the propaganda activities, and continued throughout the apartheid years. As photographs which had been approved to be officially issued, they are valuable sources in unravelling the self-representation of the emerging apartheid state.

To date, no details about the photographers of this series are known. Neither the annual report for the year 1949, which lists only one staff photographer employed in the Visual Publicity Section (SIO 1950, 57), nor the photographic prints reveal their names. However, it is doubtful that the State Information Office sent only one photographer to document a festival of such importance and which took place over several days. Moreover, the body of work covers different aspects and perspectives – including architectural photographs, aerial views and pictures of the official inauguration programme – suggesting that more than one person was entrusted with the photographic documentation. Notwithstanding all the bureaucratic operations underpinning the process of stamping and labelling photographs, this is a somewhat fragmentary series, with little information conveyed by their captions. The individual pictures are thus entangled in the ambiguity of photography, not ultimately disclosing with clarity the narrative they were intended to construct.

DIE GELOFTE

The photobook[11] *Die Gelofte* exemplifies how 39 black-and-white photographs from this body of work were combined into a visual account of the Monument and its inauguration. A brief note at the beginning of the volume mentions a collaboration with the ministry, without specifying, however, that this applied to the reproduced photographs.[12] Again, the photographers are not credited and remain anonymous.[13] Issued shortly after the celebrations,[14] *Die Gelofte* formed

part of a selection of publications which the State Information Office distributed to information attachés overseas and various other addressees: 'These books are chosen with discretion. Where justified, Attachés receive as many as 25 copies of a particular publication for distribution to foreign diplomats, libraries and leading newspapers as they may deem fit and necessary' (SIO 1951, 26).[15] As one of the publications that was 'chosen with discretion', *Die Gelofte* provides a good example of the official photographic representation of the Afrikaner *volk* and the white nation on the occasion of the inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument.

On the dark-green cover the book title appears in Afrikaans, English, German and French, indicating the publication's multilingual concept, and that it was thus intended for international distribution. The design combines the title with a stylised depiction of a man pushing the wheel of an ox-wagon – a symbol of the Great Trek, which is also frequently repeated in the book. On the preliminary pages, the vow is presented to the readers. An illustration in the style of woodcuts frames the text while clearly referring to architectural elements of the Voortrekker Monument.[16] Photographs in the book are mostly reproduced to be two-thirds of a page in size. Combined with descriptive or explanatory captions, which provide some rudimentary background information about the festival and the Monument's architecture, they are grouped in three thematic sets.

The first set mainly concentrates on the Monument, showing it in aerial and wide-angle views during the inaugural celebrations. Pictures of the crowded amphitheatre emphasise the huge number of people who attended the festival. In the first photograph (Fig. 7.1), individuals are unidentifiable within the sheer mass of people. Only the white *kappies* [bonnets] of female Voortrekker costumes, as well as parasols, peek out in the foreground, mingling into an indefinite conglomeration of black and white spots towards the middle ground. In the background, the Monument rises monolithically into the cloudless sky. Because the crowd is cropped on three sides of the picture, Monument Hill seems to be covered with an endless multitude of people. Four aerial views offer a more distant perspective on the site and its surroundings. Besides the crowded amphitheatre, the extensive tent city is clearly visible. As Andrew Crampton has argued, the festival's scale was interpreted as an indicator of Afrikanerdom as a modern society which was able to organise an event requiring a town-like infrastructure (2001, 236). In *Die Gelofte*, however, the photographs in combination with the text elements rather engender

Figure 7.1. Double page from *Die Gelofte*, c 1950, 10–11: 'A QUARTER OF A MILLION ATTEND DEDICATION CEREMONY: In one of the most impressive ceremonies in modern times, a quarter of a million people gathered at the Voortrekker Monument near Pretoria, in the Union of South Africa, to honour the promise made by their forefathers 110 years ago before the historical Battle of Bloed River. The picture [...] shows part of the crowds taking part in the solemn dedication ceremony. In the background rises the grey mass of the great Monument.'

the notion of pilgrimage. The caption of the aerial views in the book speaks of the inauguration festival as 'the occasion of a great pilgrimage of Afrikaans people from all parts of the Union, South-West Africa, the Rhodesias and Kenya' (*Die Gelofte* n.d., 13), and an extant caption by the State Information Office for a photograph showing the vast tent camp designates the festival participants as 'pilgrims' (VMHC, inv. no. 39.6.98k).[17] Even though Bartho Smit does not use the term 'pilgrimage' in '*Die Heldeverhaal*' [The Heroic Story] at the end of the book, he leaves no doubt as to the quasi-religious significance of the Monument: 'The Voortrekker Monument which now stands on the crest of a hill in Pretoria – that is the Temple' (n.d., 58).

According to Benedict Anderson (2016, 53–58), religious pilgrimages as well as their 'secular counterparts' (as social life-journeys) are crucial for the formation of imagined communities. People from different places and of different backgrounds experience the reason for their pilgrimage as a shared element and the pilgrimage itself as a unifying enactment. In other words, the shared experience of pilgrimage, whether religious or social, invokes an imagined community. Relevant to the 1938 centenary trek, which culminated at the site of the Monument, Anderson's argument is pertinent also to the aerial photographs in this section of *Die Gelofte*. When interpreted in combination with the text, they visually establish the Voortrekker Monument as the temple of the Afrikaner *volk*, their new destination of pilgrimage. While the photographs of the Monument's exterior and interior that follow thereafter introduce the new temple to viewers, the vast perspectives that emphasise the size of the crowd and the scale of the festival underscore the Monument's significance and validate its ideological and political implications at the time.

The second thematic set consists of six photographs presented under the heading '*Voortrekkerdrag*' [Voortrekker clothing]. The State Information Office had started to promote traditional Voortrekker clothing prior to the inaugural celebrations. With the assistance of Gertruida (Trudie) Anna Kestell, an expert on traditional dress, articles on 'authentic historical Voortrekker costumes' were assembled, and photographs of men and women wearing the clothing were taken and distributed internationally (SIO 1950, 34). It may be assumed that five of the images in *Die Gelofte* formed part of this project.[18]

The '*Voortrekkerdrag*' series gives special attention to female clothing. In four photographs, young women model long, bouffant skirts with slim waists and tight

bodices, which are often combined with a fichu or shawl, and are completed by *kappies*. The photographer carefully modulated the costumes through lighting. This is pushed to extremes in the photograph entitled *Ensemble for Travelling* (Fig. 7.2). Characterised by a stark chiaroscuro, the model, who is gazing into the distance, poses in front of the wheel of an ox-wagon.

In the nationalistic context of the inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument, the photographs are not mere representations of historical costumes but invoke the ideal of the *volksmoeder* [mother of the nation] and its iconography. Elsabé Brink (2011, 8) has outlined how 'the Volksmoeder as figurehead' emerged in the 1880s, when it was claimed, in the context of the Dutch Reformed Church, that women's range of activity had to reach beyond the home, into the church and nation. Originating from there, the idea of the mother of the nation was defined differently throughout the twentieth century, adapting to social and political shifts and to the mutations within Afrikaner nationalism (Brink 2011). In summary, the *volksmoeder* ideal 'combined domesticity with service and loyalty to the family and the Afrikaner *volk*' (Van der Watt 2005, 94).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, when Afrikaners had to come to terms with their defeat by the British in the South African War (1899–1902) and a united Afrikanerdom was beginning to be forged, the *volksmoeder* ideal started to find visual expression. Traditional female dress, especially the *kappies*, became the visual signifiers of this ideal (Brink 2011, 10; Van der Watt 2005, 94). In 1907, Anton van Wouw created the small figurine *Noitjie van die Onderveld, Transvaal, Rustenburg, sijn district* [Girl from Upcountry, Transvaal, Rustenburg district], which became the emblem of the magazine *Die Boerevrou.* Shortly thereafter, in 1913, the National Women's Memorial in Bloemfontein was inaugurated. Commemorating the women and children who had suffered and died in the concentration camps of the British during the South African War, the central sculpture by Van Wouw shows two women with mournful expressions, one holding a lifeless child on her lap (Brink 2011, 5–7; Van der Watt 2005, 96–97).[19]

In *Die Gelofte,* three of the architectural photographs show another *volksmoeder* sculpture designed by Anton van Wouw.[20] The bronze figure is placed on the central axis of the flights of stairs leading up to the entrance of the Voortrekker Monument. Standing upright, the woman is flanked by two children looking up at her. Devoid of mourning or suffering, her level gaze resolutely faces every visitor approaching the building. As architect Moerdijk (n.d. (a), 36) explains in the official guide,
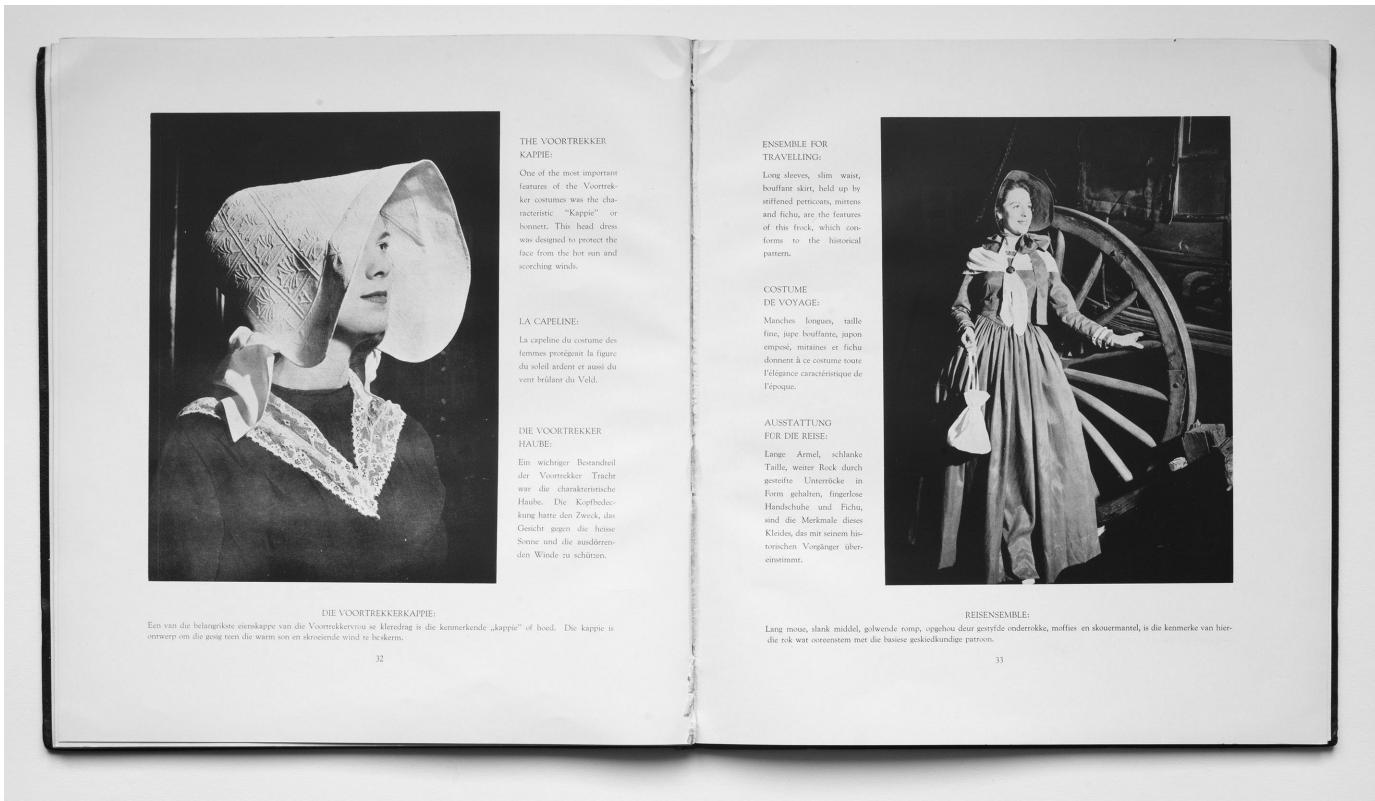
Figure 7.2. Double page from *Die Gelofte,* c 1950, 32–33, right page: 'ENSEMBLE FOR TRAVELLING: Long sleeves, slim waist, bouffant skirt, held up by stiffened petticoats, mittens and fichu, are the features of this frock, which conforms to the historical pattern.'

'The place of honour has been given to the woman because it was she who ensured the success of the Great Trek and thus brought civilization into the interior of South Africa. She made everything possible by trekking with her husband. Her courage and enterprise founded a white civilization in the interior of the black continent.'

The *Tweede Trek* of 1938 had already seen the revival of traditional clothing: 'The Voortrekker outfit of Van Wouw's *Noitjie* became the fashion statement of the time' (Brink 2011, 10). Now, in 1949, the State Information Office was involved in the visual articulation and promotion of the *volksmoeder* ideal. In contrast to Van Wouw's sculptures, the photographs in *Die Gelofte* depict beautiful and optimistic *volksmoeders*, proud to wear the traditional clothing. And if the memorial in Bloemfontein symbolises the nation weeping over past losses caused by the South African War, the photographs in *Die Gelofte* convey a confident and future-orientated portrait not only of the nation but also of 'white civilisation'.[21]

The photobook's capacity to arrange pictures into series and sections offered the editors the opportunity to extend this narrative of the *volksmoeder*. While a single photograph of the men's costumes brings into play the male component necessary for the preservation and perpetuation of the Afrikaner *volk*, another photograph in the section stands out from the series (Fig. 7.3). A family of four, wearing Voortrekker garb, is huddled together around a campfire. They seem lost in reverie, as the father and one of the girls *braai* [grill] some *boerewors* [farmer's sausage]. In the dark night, only the fire illuminates their faces while bathing the scene in a romanticising chiaroscuro. The photograph firstly presents the result of the State Information Office's promotion of Voortrekker dress, launched before the celebrations. The visual representation of the *volksmoeder* ideal was enacted not only in these photographs, but also by the people participating in the festival. But secondly and more importantly, this photograph also represents the smallest cell, the nucleus of the Afrikaner nation: the family. In his inaugural address, Malan (1950, 5) elaborated on the role of the family for the Voortrekkers, stating that 'they had a national calling which had set them ... to see to the maintenance of their own white paramountcy and of their white race purity. They were insistent on maintaining the unity and the inviolability of family life, which was an outstanding characteristic of the Voortrekkers, and upon which alone a healthy national existence can be built.' This comment demonstrates how closely the idea of the family was linked to the
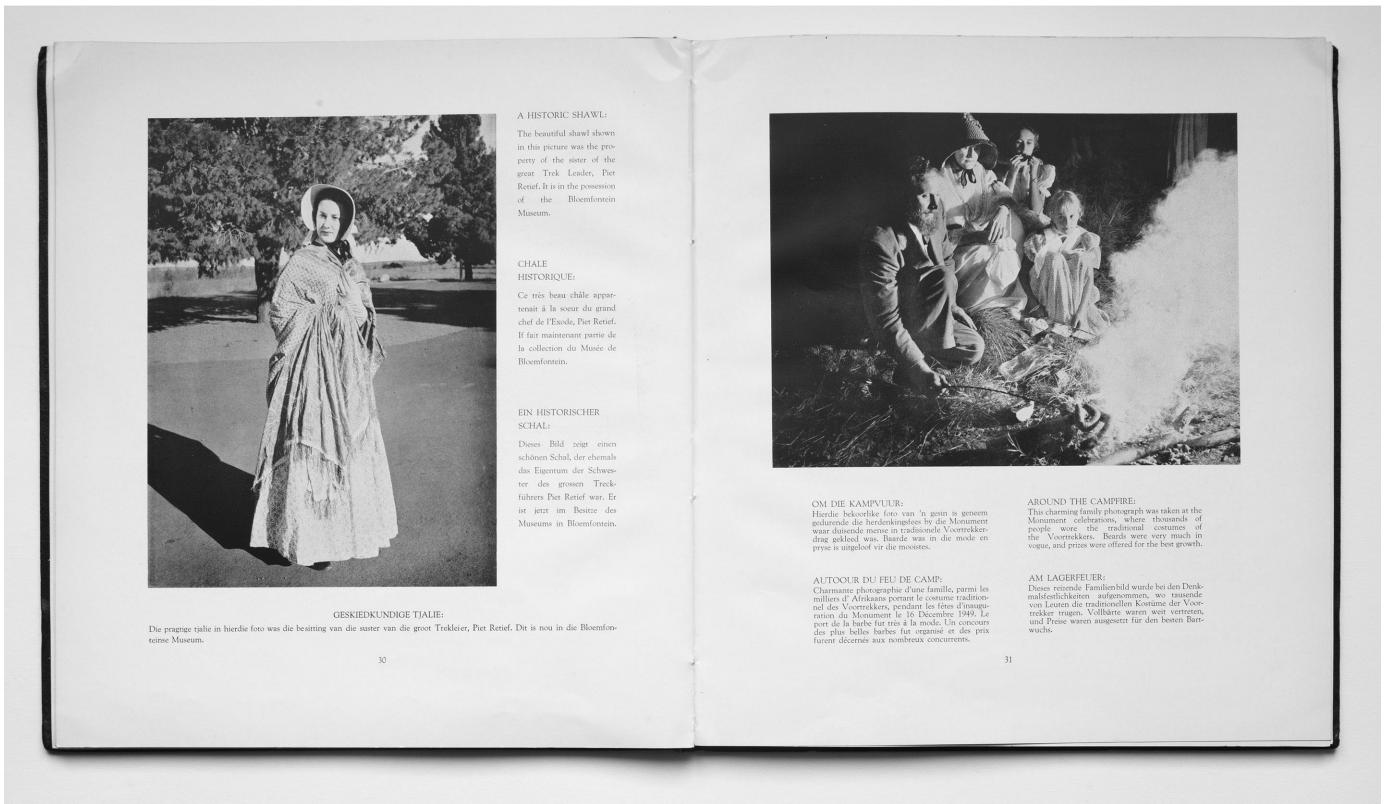
Figure 7.3 Double page from *Die Gelofte*, c 1950, 30–31, right page: 'AROUND THE CAMPFIRE: This charming family photograph was taken at the Monument celebrations, where thousands of people wore the traditional costumes of the Voortrekkers. Beards were very much in vogue, and prizes were offered for the best growth.'

building and the preservation of a white nation. As Liese van der Watt (2005, 104) remarks, 'At mid-century ... the trope of the family – central to the icon of the *volksmoeder* – was an important way to relay the need for unity, security and continuity on a national level'.

Focusing on the festival programme, the third set of photographs, entitled *'Hoofsprekers en Tableaux by die Monument'* [Main Speakers and Tableaux at the Monument], is more heterogenous. The photographs show scenes from displays and performances, officials delivering speeches on a stage in the amphitheatre, as well as the solemn opening of the Monument's doors. Yet, it is especially this part of the book which provides an insight into the self-concept and structures of Afrikaner society at the end of the 1940s.

Two photographs of Prime Minister Malan during the inaugural speeches, characterised by busy and imbalanced compositions, offer revealing glimpses into these structures (Fig. 7.4). In a first picture, a tripod, prominently positioned in front of the heavy wooden podium or altar, occupies the foreground. Malan stands before a group of people under the striped parasol that dominates the photograph, with men and women in Voortrekker dress peering from behind it. In a second photograph (not shown here), Malan is pictured as sunk into an armchair, an apparently unmoved listener to a speech by Professor Van de Leeuw. While the prime minister is dressed in a three-piece suit, his wife, next to him, is wearing Voortrekker dress. These pictorial compositions, especially in the first photograph, distract the viewer's attention from Malan. Also, the merely identificatory captions do not underline his political role and importance. As a consequence, Malan is not represented as a powerful statesman or even the sole leader of the nation. Yet, on a more general level, the white supremacists' role of leadership is articulated via their clothing. During the inauguration festivities, Margaret Bourke-White photographed Minister of Finance Charles Robberts Swart with his wife in dress similar to that of the Malans. Referring to this photograph, Okwui Enwezor has commented on the proximity of tradition and modernity expressed in the different styles of clothing: 'This depiction of modernity and tradition, a pre-1948 Afrikaner ideal of feminine virtue and a post-1948 vision of masculinist modern nation builders, captures a central tenet of Afrikaner nationalism' (Enwezor 2013, 28).[22] Thus, the Voortrekker costumes especially worn by the politicians' wives not only recall the ideal of the *volksmoeder* but also contrast the men's modernity and role of leadership.
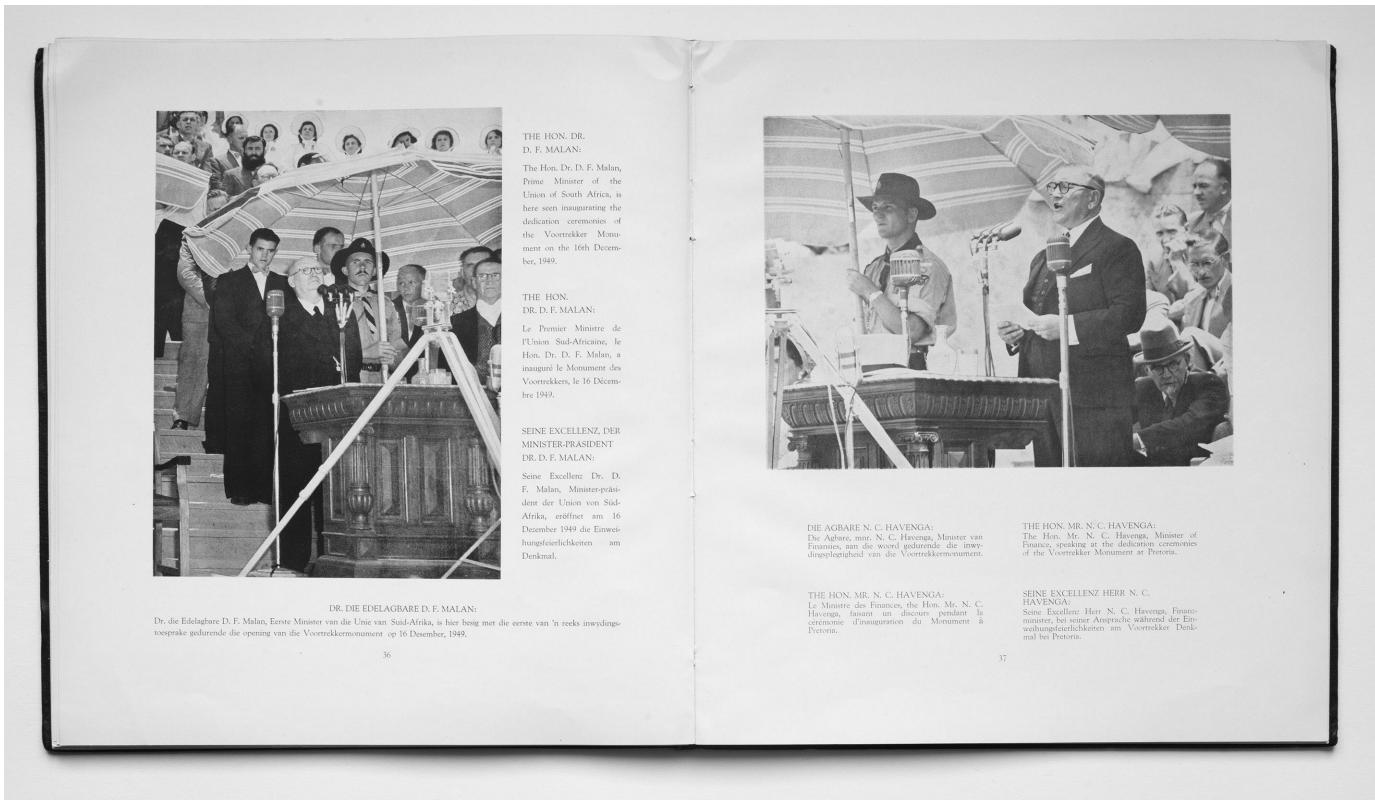
Figure 7.4. Double page from *Die Gelofte*, c 1950, 36–37, left page: 'THE HON. DR. D. F. MALAN: The Hon. Dr. D. F. Malan, Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, is here seen inaugurating the dedication ceremonies of the Voortrekker Monument on the 16th December, 1949.'

Similarly, the appearance of members of the Voortrekkers, a youth movement, indicates the demarcation from the British. After the Girl Guides and Boy Scouts had emerged in England at the beginning of the twentieth century, they soon spread to the Union of South Africa. But since these movements pledged loyalty to the British king, the Afrikaners had reservations about joining them and, in 1931, they instead established the Voortrekkers as their own counterpart organisation (Proctor 2000, 605–606). An extant caption to one of the photographs of the festival site emphasises this impetus to articulate a distinction from Britain when stating 'South Africa has its own Scouts and Guides, known as Voortrekkers ...' (VMHC, inv. no. 39.6.107k).[23] The movement, which was characterised by quasi-military structures, was often involved in public ceremonies such as the Monument's inauguration (Popescu 2009, 125, 128). Authoritarian in flavour, it recalls similar youth organisations seeking indoctrination of children and teenagers in other totalitarian states – notably, the *Hitler Jugend* [Hitler Youth] during the Third Reich. Against this backdrop, the presence of these young Voortrekkers in the pictures of *Die Gelofte* is indicative of a militarisation of Afrikaner society which began at a young age. These are, however, incidental details. Like the costumes of the women and the suits worn by ministers, the appearance of the uniforms in images of people making speeches is imbued with a sense of normality.

There are additional national signifiers in the subsequent photographs: folk dances point to the white culture and 'civilisation'; the former republican and Voortrekker flags are presented in the amphitheatre both by *rapportryers* [dispatch riders] and the Afrikaans Students Union; and again, the ox-wagon is featured in the form of a replica and as a tableau vivant shaped by performers wearing Voortrekker clothing. In his analysis of the festival programme, Andrew Crampton has named three aspects which functioned in ways similar to the pilgrimages described by Anderson (2016) in mapping out an imagined community and the national territory: firstly, the dispatch riders delivering messages from various parts of the nation; secondly, the so-called flame of civilisation that was carried across the country to be placed in the Monument; and thirdly, the ox-wagon replica that had travelled the Union during the *Tweede Trek* in 1938 (Crampton 2001, 235). Thus, while *Die Gelofte* surprisingly does not feature the so-called flame of civilisation, the symbolism of the other photographs in this section of the book implies a geographical scope which becomes particularly evident when examined in combination with the captions.

They mention repeatedly how people from all over the Union took part in the performances and how the dispatch riders and the ox-wagon had crossed the entire country (*Die Gelofte* n.d., 43–50). In this way, the captions evoke a sense of territorial extension of the nation and of spatial dispersal of the community that add up to the notion of pilgrimage conveyed by the photographs at the beginning of *Die Gelofte*.

In the last double-spread of the book, the photograph of the ox-wagon tableau vivant is juxtaposed with Thomas Baines's historic painting *Battle of Blaauwkrantz 1838* (Fig. 7.5).[24] The photograph combines the signifier of the Voortrekker costumes with the ox-wagon symbol as well as the flags in one frame. While the symbol of the ox-wagon is not necessarily recognisable as such in the photograph, the painted ox-wagon stands out clearly within the scene of the fierce battle between Zulus and Voortrekkers. As the final picture of the illustrated section of the book, which not only presents the Voortrekker Monument but also the culture and 'civilisation' of the Afrikaner community, the painting serves as visual demarcation from the 'Other' and alludes to the origins from which this white nation – in its self-perception – has developed: from 'barbarism' to 'civilisation'.

CONCLUSION

In the years 1949 and 1950, the State Information Office was still in its infancy. The publication section was not yet fully established, and the ministry's pictorial mouthpiece *South African Panorama* as well as other periodicals were only introduced some years later.[25] Thus, in terms of photography, and considering the selective character of the book medium, *Die Gelofte* was one of the few channels through which the State Information Office could disseminate its message via a curated visual narrative. As demonstrated above, the book not only presents the newly built Monument and documents the inauguration festival, it can also be read as a photographic account of the fulfilment of the covenant made by the Voortrekkers in 1838. However, as the discussion of *Die Gelofte* in the light of national signifiers featured in the photographs makes evident, the book was far more than just a record of an occasion. By promoting the Voortrekker fashion as a unifying element, by picturing the family as the nucleus of the Afrikaner nation, by indicating the distinction of Afrikaners from the British, and, most significantly, by showing the mass of people united in the experience of pilgrimage to the new Afrikaner
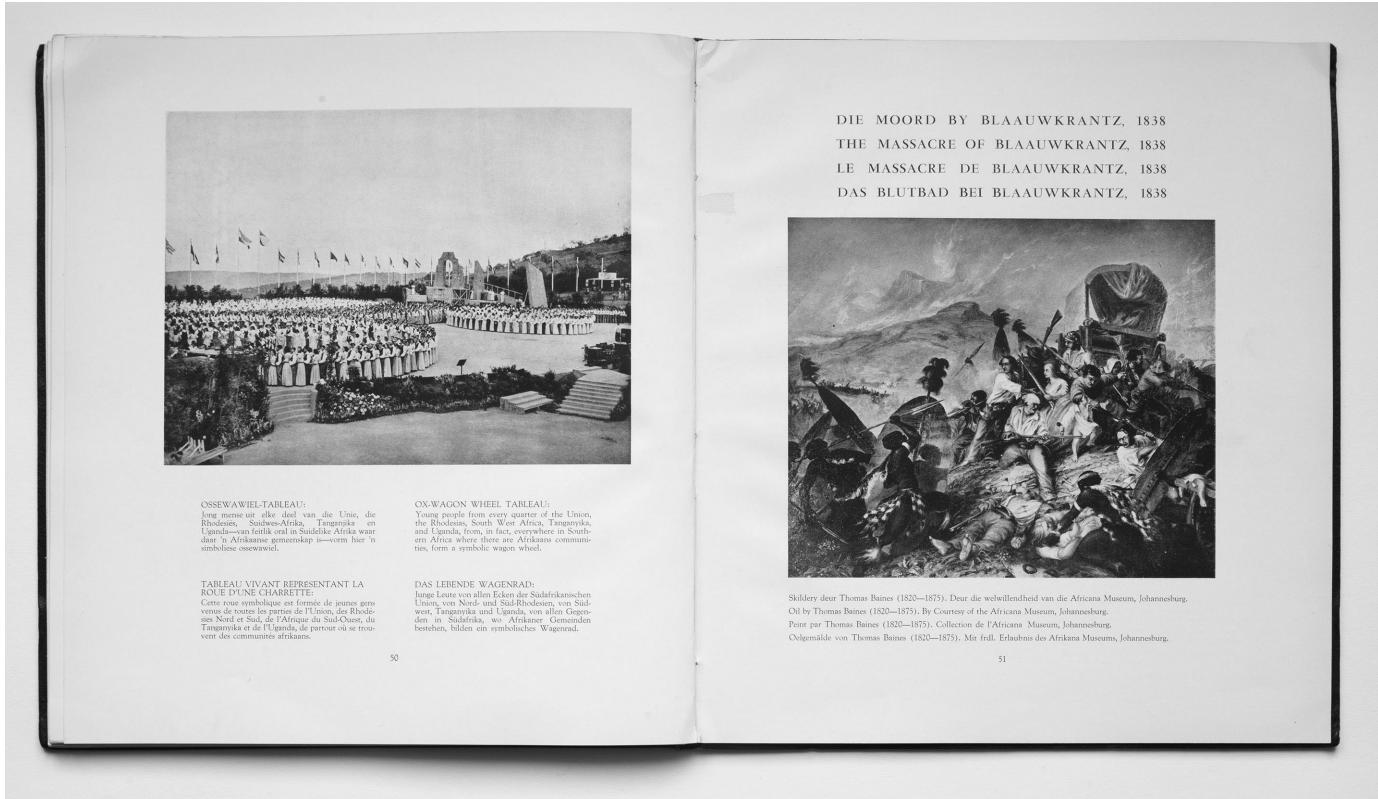
Figure 7.5. Double page from *Die Gelofte*, c 1950, 50–51, left page: 'OX-WAGON WHEEL TABLEAU: Young people from every quarter of the Union, the Rhodesias, South West Africa, Tanganyika, and Uganda, from, in fact, everywhere in Southern Africa where there are Afrikaans communities, form a symbolic wagon wheel.'

temple, the social and national bond within the community was illustrated. To put it differently, *Die Gelofte* visually (re-)affirmed the Afrikaner *volk* as an imagined community, as a white nation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

1   The distinction between 'monument' and 'memorial' is blurry and the terms are often used interchangeably (Marschall 2010, 11–12). As this chapter does not aim to enter the discourse on monument and memorial architecture and since 'monument' is part of the official name of the Voortrekker Monument, this term will be used throughout. When it refers to the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria/Tshwane, the term will be used with an upper case.

2   For the centenary celebrations of the so-called Great Trek, the Boer emigration from the Cape Colony was re-enacted in the *Tweede Trek*. The so-called flame of civilisation that had been lit at the Jan van Riebeeck Statue in Cape Town was carried to the site of the Voortrekker Monument and, departing from Cape Town, nine ox-wagons travelled on different routes across the country to Pretoria/Tshwane (see, for example, Crampton 2001, 226).

3   A photo-essay of 17 photographs by Bourke-White was published in *Life* under the title 'South Africa Enshrines Pioneer Heroes' (Bourke-White 1950). Notably, the photo-essay evoked divergent readings by Alexander Lichtenstein and John Edwin Mason. The former presents a benevolent reading, in which he interprets the photographs and the way they were published in *Life* as a conscious strategy to win the trust of the government officials so that Bourke-White could pursue her exploration of South Africa without interference for the rest of her stay (2016, 49, 51). Yet Lichtenstein neither takes into account the photographs' visual rhetoric and iconography, nor contextualises them in a broader visual discourse of the time. His analysis therefore remains confined to a historical approach. In contrast, Mason argues that the photo-essay was informed by 'political naiveté' (2012, 161). Although conceding the lack of evidence that *Life* or

Margaret Bourke-White followed a pro-National Party agenda, from his point of view, this political naiveté resulted in a reproduction of Afrikaner myths and nationalist ideologies (2012, 154, 157, 161).

4   The full title of the book reads *Die Gelofte. The Covenant. Le Serment. Das Gelübde. 16 Desember 1949.* To facilitate readability, the book is referred to as *Die Gelofte*.

5   In 1841, a church was built in Pietermaritzburg which was later referred to as the church of the vow (Crampton 2001, 233). The vow, as quoted in *Die Gelofte*, reads as follows: '... Brothers and fellow countrymen, at this moment we stand before the Holy God of heaven and earth, to make unto Him a promise. If He will be with us granting us His protection and give our enemy into our hands that we may overcome Him, we shall ever after keep this day and date as a day of thanksgiving and as a Sabbath. We shall raise a temple unto His glory and enjoin our children to share in this promise with us as also their children and children's children. Thus, will the glory of His Name be made manifest and the fame and honour of our victory be given unto Him ...' (n.d., 9). Renamed several times, 16 December has remained a public holiday in South Africa. Initially known as *Dingaan's Dag* [Dingane's Day], it was renamed Day of the Covenant in 1952 and Day of the Vow in 1980. Since 1994, 16 December is officially called the Day of Reconciliation (Marschall 2010, 285; Thompson 1985, 144).

6   The Monument's site had not been chosen accidentally. As Elizabeth Delmont explains, the hill was selected firstly because Paul Kruger, president of the first independent South African Republic, had lived in Pretoria/Tshwane. Secondly, the city was understood retrospectively as the destination of the Great Trek. Furthermore, Delmont points out how the Monument dominates the surrounding by its elevated position and that a line of sight spans between the Voortrekker Monument and the Union Buildings, which symbolise South Africa's status as a Dominion in the British Empire (1992, 4; see also Coombes 2003, 28). Marschall draws attention to the signifying role monuments may gain in their immediate surroundings. As 'signifying landmarks', they are linked to questions of il/legitimate land claims and ownership and respective ideological concepts (2010, 6).

7   The ensemble of wall and main building is a combination of two designs. While Moerdijk designed the latter, EC Pienaar and AC Bouman planned the surrounding wall of ox-wagons (Delmont 1992, 4).

8   During the apartheid years, South Africa's information service and its photographic section were restructured and renamed several times. A significant alteration was made in 1961, when, under the government of Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd, the Department of Information was established as a fully fledged ministry. By this time,

South Africa had left the Commonwealth and become a republic, but it had also been confronted with harsh international criticism after the Sharpeville massacre of 1960. The Muldergate scandal, which erupted in the late 1970s, eventually brought the Department of Information into severe disrepute. However, the information service continued to operate under different names and in various formations throughout the 1980s and the years of transition (see, for example, Geldenhuys 1984, 16–17, 107–111; Horwitz 2001, 287–288). In this sense, the inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument also marked the beginning of a profound and sustained propaganda programme which aimed to influence and manipulate public opinion, both nationally and internationally.

9   Examples of commemorative albums are *Ons vir Jou, Suid-Afrika, 16 Desember 1949* (VMHC, inv. no. FA 1/2); *Voortrekkermonument Inwyding* (VMHC, inv. no. FA 1/3); *Foto-Album Inwyding Voortrekkermonument, Die Transvaler 16 Desember 1949* (VMHC, inv. no. FA 1/5). For commemorative publications besides *Die Gelofte*, see, for example, Bond n.d.; ISC n.d.

10   One of the photographs by Margaret Bourke-White, which was published in *Life* in 1950, is indicative of the private use of cameras during the festival. A group of young women in Voortrekker dress are sitting in the amphitheatre; one is holding a pair of sunglasses and a camera in her hands (Bourke-White 1950, 22). A photo album, presumably compiled privately, is that of RG Siebert (VMHC, inv. no. FA 1/4).

11   Since the mid-2000s, the medium of the photobook or photographic book has increasingly gained attention among collectors and exhibiting institutions, as well as among scholars. Due to this growing interest, multiple definitions of the photobook have emerged. Martin Parr and Gerry Badger (2004, 6–7) proposed one of the most widely quoted definitions: 'A photobook is a book – with or without text – where the work's primary message is carried by photographs. It is a book authored by a photographer or by someone editing and sequencing the work of a photographer, or even a number of photographers.' They underline, firstly, the specificity of the photobook in binding together a number of photographs, which as a sum gain a greater meaning; and secondly, they define a photobook as being dedicated to a particular subject and theme. Criticising the dominant role that this definition gives to the image, Patrizia di Bello and Shamoon Zamir (2012, 4) emphasise the 'dialectical relationship' between image and text. Given the context of *Die Gelofte,* it is crucial that the medium of the photobook does not only encompass artistic photobooks, but also includes, for instance, commissioned works for companies and governments (Parr and Badger 2004, 9).

12   The note reads 'word bedank vir hulle samewerking: Die STAATSINLIGTINGKANTOOR, PRETORIA' [thanked for their collaboration: The STATE INFORMATION OFFICE, PRETORIA], (*Die Gelofte* n.d., 2).

13   Of the 39 black-and-white photographs published in *Die Gelofte*, 14 correspond to State Information Office photographs archived at the Voortrekker Monument Heritage Centre in Pretoria/Tshwane. The collection holds seven more photographs that were reprinted in the book, though these cannot be attributed to the State Information Office on the basis of circular stamps. Linking this to the fact that the book does not offer any details about the sources of the photographs, their copyrights or even the names of the photographers, one may assume that the entire series published in *Die Gelofte* was originally issued by the State Information Office.

14   Since the celebrations took place at the end of the year, it seems unlikely that *Die Gelofte* was published in 1949. The State Information Office first mentions it in the report for the year 1950 (SIO 1951, 26).

15   An indication of this kind of distribution can also be found in the issue that is archived at the *Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen* [Institute for International Cultural Relations] in Stuttgart, Germany. Here, an official, glued-in note from the South African Embassy reads: 'With the compliments of the Embassy of the Union of South Africa, Cologne.'

16   In total, the publication contains six illustrations in this style (*Die Gelofte* n.d., 3, 5, 7, 9, 28).

17   The photograph was published in *Die Gelofte* n.d., 16.

18   The images on pp. 29, 30, 32–34 correspond to photographic prints archived at the Voortrekker Monument Heritage Centre (inv. nos. 39.6.133k, 39.6.135k, 39.6.124k, 39.6.72k, 39.6.69k). Apart from 39.6.135k, they are all marked with the stamp by the State Information Office.

19   The rather humble and devotional expression of the *Noitjie* – a standing woman in Voortrekker clothing who has lowered her head with her hands clasped in front of her body – clearly differs from the sculpture in Bloemfontein. Here, the women with the child are placed on a plinth, which is inscribed *'Aan onze heldinnen en lieve kinderen'* [To our heroines and our dear children]. According to Brink, the sculpture reflects the attempt to come to terms with the human losses of war: 'Rather than remaining victims of war, women's dignity and worth needed to be restored by portraying them as heroines who made great sacrifices at the altar of the nation' (2011, 7). See also the chapter by Lou-Marié Kruger in this volume.

20   According to Moerdijk, this sculpture, which Van Wouw worked for 'about two years', was the artist's 'last major work' before he died in 1945 (Moerdijk n.d. (b), 52).

21   In 1949, the visual articulation of this *volksmoeder* ideal was not limited to *Die Gelofte* and the wider series of photographs of Voortrekker clothing. Two other examples are

worth mentioning here. The magazine *Die Huisgenoot* published a photograph from 1938 showing three generations – grandmother, mother and child – in Voortrekker dress on the cover of a December 1949 issue. In a commemorative album for the inauguration festival compiled by *Die Transvaler,* a photograph shows a woman in Voortrekker clothing holding a sleeping girl on her lap. In the album, the photograph is presented on the same page as a photograph of the *volksmoeder* sculpture by Anton van Wouw at the Monument. The images are captioned 'VROU EN MOEDER / Beskermers van die Toekoms' [WOMAN AND MOTHER / Protectors of the Future] (VMHC, inv. nos. FA 1/5/17, FA 1/5/18).

22 In Enwezor (2013, 28, Fig. 5), this photograph is accompanied by the following description: 'Margaret Bourke-White, [Costumed wife of Minister of Justice C. R. Swart (left) and another Boer couple dressed like early settlers during a celebration in honor of the Voortrekkers], 1949.'

23 Emphasis added. For reasons of improved legibility, the original caption written in capital letters was modified typographically.

24 In the so-called Battle of Blaauwkrantz (also Bloukrans or Blaauw Kranz) on 17 February 1838, Dingane's regiments surprised the Voortrekkers in their encampments at the Bloukrans River and defeated them (Etherington 2001, 243–268).

25 The periodical *South African Panorama* is the most prominent example today. Inspired by the large photo-essays of *Life* magazine, it was first published in 1956 and ran until 1992 (Groenewald 2012, 57, 81; SIO 1957, 11).

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Reframing David Goldblatt, Re-thinking *Some Afrikaners*

MICHAEL GODBY AND LIESE VAN DER WATT

Some Afrikaners Photographed was David Goldblatt's first major project, begun as early as 1962 and published in book form in 1975. In 2007, Goldblatt republished the collection with 20 additional photographs from the period and one omission, together with essays by Antjie Krog and Ivor Powell, as *Some Afrikaners Revisited*. In the introduction to the first edition, Goldblatt claimed not to have wanted to photograph *the* Afrikaner people, a project that he considered to be impossible, but rather 'a few minutiae of Afrikaner life, with a few people' (Goldblatt 1975, 7). However, far from a haphazard collection of photographs documenting the trivia of everyday life, *Some Afrikaners Photographed* may be seen as a construction of Afrikaner identity that reflected Goldblatt's position among South Africa's liberal Anglophile elite whom he addressed directly in the society magazines in which the first essays of the project appeared.

In the first part of this chapter, the history of *Some Afrikaners* is reconstructed by considering the archive of photographs begun in 1962 that was eventually edited into book form in 1975. In the second part, we look at the production and reception of the publication to show that Goldblatt's selection of images for the book, and his omissions, were guided by a search for a specific kind of perceived Afrikaner 'authenticity'; in the process, however, he denied and silenced the complexity of identity, rather than 'revealing' hidden aspects, as critics have argued.

David Goldblatt created *Some Afrikaners* at the height of apartheid and Afrikaner nationalism, but it does not reproduce the narcissistic and heroic Afrikaner

narratives propagated by the ideological state apparatuses of the time. Nevertheless, Goldblatt's project created an equally problematic representation of the Afrikaner in its failure to provide nuance and texture against the overwhelming ideological constructions of Afrikaner nationalism. Taking our cue from Amartya Sen's idea of the miniaturisation of identity as outlined in his *Identity and Violence* (2006), we propose that Goldblatt effectively reduced his subjects' identities and situated them within narratives that were intended to create distance, rather than proximity.

PRODUCING THE ARCHIVE FOR *SOME AFRIKANERS PHOTOGRAPHED*

The earliest photographs in David Goldblatt's *Some Afrikaners Photographed* date from 1962 (Godby 2001). From interviews he has given over the years, it is clear that Goldblatt's idea of photography at that time was based on the example of the great documentary photographers in England and the United States – Walker Evans, Bill Brandt and others – as he had seen them in illustrated magazines such as the American *Life, Fortune* and *Look* and the English *Picture Post* and *Town*. Speaking of his earliest work, Goldblatt has described how he would hitchhike to Johannesburg and walk about 'the whole of Saturday afternoon and all through the night, talking to watchmen, tramps, prostitutes and all sorts of people and trying to photograph them' (Ozinski 1990, 12). Like his international models, therefore, Goldblatt tended to present his subject matter as different, even exotic, and he would portray it, in the photographic conventions of the time, in a strongly rhetorical style of dramatic tonal contrasts and emphatic perspectives.

In his 1962 photographs, Goldblatt clearly identified the smallholdings that surrounded his native Randfontein as suitable photographic subjects in these same terms. Escaping the comfortable middle-class world of his family home at weekends, Goldblatt toured the communities of Koksoord, Bootha Plots and Wheatlands looking for poor whites similar to the displaced farmers that Walker Evans and others had photographed for the Farm Security Administration (FSA) in America. As he wrote when he first published five of these photographs in 'People of the Plots' in the *South African Tatler*, these were Afrikaners who 'came in the great drift from the platteland to work in the mines and factories of the Witwatersrand' (Goldblatt 1964a, 28); they were, in other words, victims of the same capitalisation of agriculture that the FSA had recorded in the United States from 1935, and the Carnegie Commission of Investigation on the Poor White Question in South

Africa (1928–1932) had documented in South Africa. Volume II of the Carnegie Report, the *Psychological Report* by RW Wilcocks, included 54 photographs mainly of people and their homes that contributed substantially to the creation of the image, psychological and visual, of the poor white Afrikaner (Godby 1998). Goldblatt seems to have drawn equally from this image and the example of the FSA photographers in his images of the Randfontein *kleinhoewes* (smallholdings). The landscape is harsh, the accommodation primitive, the furnishings sparse, the poverty obvious, and the social relations tense: in one photograph (Fig. 8.1), a pensioner sits next to his wife, with no apparent contact between them (Goldblatt 1975, 95).

In another, a family is shown in a dismal kitchen with the son apparently overawed by his father, and his mother helpless to intervene (Goldblatt 1975, 165). Goldblatt's own authorial interventions are manifest: a second photograph of the pensioner shows the exact same setting, but a servant's child has been introduced to the right and the camera swivelled to accommodate her – but not far enough to completely omit the vestige of the wife's dress in the left margin, published for the first time in *Some Afrikaners Revisited* (Goldblatt 2007, 151). A third photograph shows the same setting, though vacated by the pensioner, his wife and the servant's

Figure 8.1. David Goldblatt, *The Pensioner with his Wife and a portrait of her first husband, 1962* (*Some Afrikaners Photographed,* 95). Reproduced with permission from the Goldblatt family.

child, and now occupied by the couple's daughter (Goldblatt 1975, 159); in the caption to the pensioner's photograph in 'People of the Plots', the daughter is described as working in Johannesburg, providing the furniture, and impatient of her parents' ways. Clearly, in selecting and arranging these subjects, Goldblatt knew in advance exactly what he wanted to say about them.

The *South African Tatler*, in which Goldblatt first published 'People of the Plots', was a magazine aimed at wealthy English-speaking South Africans, with features on prominent weddings, private schools and fashion shoots. Goldblatt had likely included some of these photographs in a collection of prints he had sent to the fashionable London magazine *Town* in 1963, and when Sally Angwin, the assistant editor of *Town*, returned to South Africa to take the reins at the *Tatler* in April 1964, she turned to Goldblatt to help her transform the visual appearance of the magazine. And so, Goldblatt's 'People of the Plots' appeared in this first Angwin issue, immediately preceding his own fashion shoot 'Scotch Hop' (Goldblatt 1964b); with its theme of tartans and plaids, the latter's self-conscious stylishness recalls the cutting-edge fashion photography of David Bailey, Terence Donovan and others in 'Swinging London' of the 1960s. This context and this chic – together with the fact that there are only five photographs in the essay – prevents 'People of the Plots' from having significant documentary purpose in the manner of the FSA photographs. The context of an elite, liberal publication arguably reduces the political significance of the South African smallholder phenomenon and rather serves to confirm the privilege of the *Tatler*'s Anglophile readership.

Jeremy Lawrence, who was to take over the editorship of the *Tatler* in 1965 when Sally Angwin retired to care for a growing family, recalls that Goldblatt was determined to provide both the text and the design for these early photo-essays (email communication with author, August 2017). Goldblatt was also responsible for the selection of photographs, down from the dozen that eventually appeared in both editions of *Some Afrikaners* to the five printed in the *Tatler*. In the selection of images as well as in his text, Goldblatt interpreted his own archive in significant ways. Most noticeable is that he excludes any image suggesting direct action, such as the seemingly tense exchange between father and son in Wheatlands, or the raucous singing of young people on Christmas Day (Goldblatt 1975, 165, 55), preferring instead passive, introspective scenes. In the first (see Fig. 8.1), the pensioner sits between his wife and a photograph of her first husband.

The other four photographs are similarly passive: a certificate of a Pentecostal church suggests that some plot-holders fear that the established Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) has abandoned them; a plot-holder stands close to a small '*algemene handelaar*' [general dealer] that will soon be displaced by a supermarket nearby; and a shunter looks over his dam, dreaming, as the caption states, of the garden he will grow. There is a melancholic aspect to this representation of plot life, a distinctly elegiac quality. Moreover, the first photograph in the essay depicts a sign on a fence reading '*Plotte te Koop*' [Plots for Sale] while the last paragraph of the accompanying text begins: 'It cannot last, this way of life.' It is not the poverty that will disappear, of course: it will simply be transferred from the peri-urban to the suburban districts of the growing cities of the Witwatersrand. Goldblatt has contrived the elegiac literary frame for his essay not so much to explain the condition of its smallholder subjects as to cohere the aesthetic mood of his images.

His determination to exoticise Afrikaner poverty is confirmed in the fact that 'People of the Plots' is actually the second of a two-part essay on the Afrikaner in the April 1964 *Tatler*. Frans Venter's (1964) 'The City Volk', which focuses on Afrikaner advances in business, was also illustrated by Goldblatt, but with a single photograph of the Sanlam crest '*Arbeid Saamheid*' [Working Together] on the floor of the massive entrance hall of the company's Johannesburg head office. No portraits were needed to illustrate this article for the obvious reason that Afrikaner business leaders were familiar to – and visually indistinguishable from – the magazine's elite readership.

Superficially, Goldblatt's 'People of the Plots' photographs of 1962 look not unlike Walker Evans's essay 'People and Places in Trouble' (in Campany 2014, n.p.), which dealt with 'new unemployment and old poverty' and was published in *Fortune* magazine in March 1961. Indeed, the close date of the two essays, the similarity in textual voice, and the striking resemblance between Goldblatt's 'Pensioner' – with the framed photograph of his wife's first husband above him – and Evans's 'Slovak Coal Miner's Home' suggest that, for his very first published essay, Goldblatt may well have looked to the American master. Be that as it may, there are also profound differences between the two essays. Whereas Goldblatt is more directorial, Evans clearly tried to have his subjects speak for themselves: they 'were all informed, voluntary (and generous) participants' (Evans in Campany 2014, n.p.). And where Goldblatt composed emotive narratives for his subjects, Evans understood that

[u]nemployment, let alone poverty, has to be lived to be understood and felt. ... The real state of mind of the jobless cannot be read about in the Stygian murk of sociologist prose, or in the Government Report. The plain non-artistic photograph may come closer to the matter, which is sheer personal distress. (in Campany 2014, n.p.)

It is the difference between what Evans terms his 'non-artistic' photograph, an attempt to document poverty, and Goldblatt's more deliberate rhetoric around visualising Afrikaners that distinguishes the two essays. Within the constraints of the documentary project, the one seeks to give a voice to the subject; the other, we argue, has the subject perform the aesthetic of the photographer.

Between April and December 1964, Goldblatt contributed numerous photographs to the *Tatler*, mainly portraits illustrating other people's articles: particularly impressive are his portraits of 'The Sugar Barons' (May 1964), 'The Educationists' (June 1964), 'The Money Lenders' (August 1964), 'Film Makers' (October 1964) and, illustrating an article by Sally Angwin, 'The Vendors of Happiness' (December 1964). During this time, Goldblatt also devised fashion shoots and supplied occasional photographs such as cars, doorways or interior decoration, depending on the need. In July 1964, he was appointed assistant editor and contributed his second major essay to the *Tatler*, which he both scripted and illustrated with eleven photographs: 'Horses and Men' was an account of the horse-racing industry around Johannesburg. More significant for the evolution of his image of the Afrikaner, although not featuring Afrikaners directly, was his collaboration in the September 1964 issue with the writer Lionel Abrahams on 'The Young in Hillbrow', which paired poems by Abrahams with Goldblatt's photographs of children seemingly trapped in the concrete jungle of this inner-city suburb. The collaboration is significant because, on the one hand, it confirmed Goldblatt's interest in validating his visual expression through literary reference; on the other hand, it was certainly Abrahams who introduced Goldblatt to the work of Herman Charles Bosman, through whose eyes he was to see the Marico Bushveld, the subject of his next major essay for the *Tatler*. Again, Goldblatt could well have looked to Walker Evans's essay 'Faulkner's Mississippi' (*Harper's Bazaar*, 1948) as a precedent for his illustrations of a writer's world, but the direct introduction to Bosman was certainly from Abrahams.[1]

Figure 8.2. David Goldblatt, *Oom At Geel, 1965* (*Some Afrikaners Photographed*, 119). Reproduced with permission from the Goldblatt family.

Goldblatt's hectic schedule at this time suggests that all his Marico photographs were done around December 1964, the date of 'Oom At Geel' (Fig. 8.2), which later featured on the cover of *Some Afrikaners Photographed*.[2]

'Bosman's Bosveld Revisited. Text and Pictures by David Goldblatt' was published in the February 1965 issue of the *Tatler*. Goldblatt's text tells how he drove through the Marico looking for traces of Bosman's brief sojourn in that desolate place. His subjects included the school where Bosman had taught in 1925; Bosman's landlady, the owner of the farm on which the school stood; the teacher who preceded Bosman at the school; At Geel, the chairperson of the school committee;[3] and a few locations and characters in some way connected with Bosman's stay in the region almost 40 years before. As with 'People of the Plots', few of these photographs, other than the Afrikaner 'characters', were republished in the *Some Afrikaner* books.

Goldblatt's *Tatler* essay, in other words, aimed to recapture in words and pictures what little remained of Bosman's presence in the Marico. Except in the general image of his character portraits, and, in a way, the landscapes, the essay does not

illustrate Bosman's stories themselves. Nor could it have done, because, while Bosman may have conceived the stories in 1925 – he actually wrote them very much later – almost every one of them is presented as reported speech: Oom Schalk Lourens and others tell stories of their youth which are set in distant historical moments such as one or other of the South African Wars and even the War of Makapansgat in the 1850s. Thus, Goldblatt's lament over the depopulation of the area, with Bosman's 'nubile girls and uncouth lads' who 'go to the towns and seldom return', is actually misplaced. And the nostalgia that is expressed directly in his statement that 'Bosman's bushveld is passing away', and indirectly, but powerfully, in the full-page photograph of an abandoned farmhouse (Goldblatt 1975, 25), is a contrived literary imposition on his subject, similar to his aestheticised reading of 'The People of the Plots'.

Bosman's stories, however, did contribute to Goldblatt's understanding of Afrikaner identity. Both in the full collection of the 1964 photographs – those in the *Tatler* and those published in 1975 in *Some Afrikaners Photographed* – Goldblatt clearly sought out harsh landscapes, remote settlements, weather-worn patriarchs, strong women, nubile – and susceptible – girls and uncouth lads, that could all be related to the Marico stories. He in fact continued to seek out such themes elsewhere in the country, long after he had left the Marico Bushveld. But in these photographs, Goldblatt lost the complexity of Bosman's depiction, notably his 'playful irony', as William Plomer has described it (1963, x). Many of Bosman's characters are indeed patriarchal, self-reliant and ascetic, as Goldblatt contended in his preface to *Some Afrikaners Photographed*. But they are also superstitious, self-deluding, lazy and mildly anarchic in relation to authority figures such as politicians, church leaders, tax-collectors and *veldkornets* [field cornets].

Partly because of the temporal limitations of his medium, Goldblatt tended to flatten the image of these characters. He tended also to reduce their landscape environment to various examples of wilderness, presumably to reflect the straightforward harshness of the Afrikaner character. In the process, Goldblatt's Afrikaner is locked into a rural identity that, as in many Bosman stories, is contrasted with the contaminating sophistication of the town. Goldblatt had already proposed this distinction in 'People of the Plots', linking it to the disappearance of the plot-holders' way of life. The argument presented to the cosmopolitan readers of the *Tatler,* that Bosman's bushveld was also disappearing, effectively identified the

Afrikaner as archaic, as somehow belonging exclusively to the country's primitive rural past.

Of course, the mid-1960s was the height of apartheid and Goldblatt was fully aware that the Afrikaner was not about to go extinct. Developing the theme of the Afrikaner, Goldblatt returned to political expressions of identity that he had first captured in his 1963 photographs of the national festivals of Republic Day, 31 May, and the Day of the Covenant, 16 December (Goldblatt 1975, 113 and 102). In 1964 he photographed a child appearing to listen intently to then minister of justice JB Vorster at a political meeting in Nigel (1975, 81). Similarly, in October 1964, Goldblatt created two iconic images of the Afrikaner in power at the 50th anniversary celebrations of the National Party at De Wildt in the Transvaal: one featured the granite faces of nationalist leaders and their wives, and the other the mythologising escort of a horseback commando (1975, 76 and 69).

By March 1965, immediately following the publication of the 'Bosman's Bosveld' essay, Goldblatt had stepped down from his position of associate editor of the *Tatler*; this was probably, as Jeremy Lawrence recalled, because 'he realised that the magazine had only limited potential for his work' (email communication with author, August 2017). Goldblatt continued to contribute photographs, occasionally quite substantial portfolios – for example, the six dramatic photographs illustrating the article 'Smart Cars and the People Who Own Them' in May 1965 – but to extrapolate from the dates of the images in *Some Afrikaners Photographed*, he was now able to travel freely through the country and, at some point, began to expand his project into a book. Signal points in this itinerary were the political festivals that he had already identified as subjects for his camera. Thus, on Republic Day, 1965, Goldblatt (1975, 113) photographed 'Leaders of the Voortrekkers'; and on the Day of the Covenant that same year, he photographed dancers in traditional *Volkspele* costumes at Aasvoëlkop, near Johannesburg (1975, 71). In the views he chose of these festivals, Goldblatt seems to assert that, while Afrikaner nationalism exercises absolute power in the present, it cloaks its authority in the garb of history and tradition.

Other obvious pillars of the Afrikaner establishment that Goldblatt had already addressed in his two early essays were farming and religion. In 1965 he photographed the farmer Johannes van der Linde seeming to overpower his head labourer 'Ou Sam' (1975, 33); the expressive 'Farmers at a Cattle Auction' in Vryburg, Northern Cape (1975, 61); and a moment of joy in the life of a Fochville farmer's wife (1975, 75). In 1966, he created the powerful portrait of JG Loots

Figure 8.3. David Goldblatt, *Wedding on a farm, 1966* (*Some Afrikaners Photographed*, 31). Reproduced with permission from the Goldblatt family.

with his prize ewe at his farm Quaggasfontein (1975, 29) as well as a whole set of photographs from a farm wedding near Barkly East (1975, 27, 31, 39, 45, 93 and, most likely, 51) (Fig. 8.3). Then, in January 1967, Goldblatt visited an ostrich farm near Oudtshoorn, apparently as the builder of the farmhouse lay dying (1975, 129).

At the same time, Goldblatt was concerned to represent the presence of religion in Afrikaner life. In 1965, at the synod in Cape Town, he photographed JD 'Koot' Vorster, brother of JB Vorster (1975, 131), while in Bloemfontein he photographed Dominee PSZ Coetzee, moderator of the NGK in the Free State (1975, 101) – both images were clearly designed to suggest the power of these two men and the institutions they led. Later photographs in the collection record apparently random aspects of religion in Afrikaner life: a Bloemfontein couple who attended a different church each Sunday, from 1965 (1975, 151); a revivalist meeting in a tent, Randfontein, from 1966 (1975, 141); and a Pinkster church building in Pretoria, from 1967 (1975, 143). Two images from January 1968 that were obviously designed as a pair, but which were separated in the book, record DRC elders with their families in George and Carnarvon, respectively (1975, 139 and 145).

Together, these photographs suggest the ubiquity of religion in Afrikaner life – yet simultaneously its association with political power.

It is not clear exactly when Goldblatt decided to extend the two *Tatler* essays into book form.[4] Goldblatt's dating of his photographs in the two editions may not be always reliable, but seemingly between late 1966 and early 1968 he created a substantial essay on Gamkaskloof, also known as Die Hel. The fact that he seems never to have looked for separate publication for this piece suggests that he may have had a larger project in mind – a project whose coherence would have been ensured through the continuation of several themes he had broached in the *Tatler* essays. The grainy photograph of the Swartberg Pass (1975, 21), through which one has to travel to reach Die Hel, gives a sense of remoteness similar to that of the Marico. Photographs of interiors – a farmhouse kitchen, for example (1975, 19), or a *voorkamer* (sitting room) (1975, 91) – record not just austerity but obvious poverty also. Even more than the plot-holders of the West Rand or the farmers of the Marico, Gamkaskloof was a community that subsisted on the edges of civilisation in appallingly primitive conditions. Or rather, it had once subsisted in this hellish valley, for Goldblatt recorded that Die Hel was being abandoned even as he photographed it. Symptomatic of Goldblatt's understanding of this moribund community is his account of Ouma Hester Mostert, who told him around New Year 1968 that she would be dead before he could return to show his portrait to her: prophetically, her eyes are closed in Goldblatt's photograph (2007, 56) (Fig. 8.4).[5]

Significantly, there are several more references to death in this collection of photographs. In the months preceding his portrait of Ouma Hester Mostert, Goldblatt photographed a grave with funerary tokens in the DRC cemetery in Pretoria (1975, 99) and a family graveyard on the Nels' farm near Barkly East (1975, 163). But the most curious engagement with death in this essay is Goldblatt's story of his visit to an ostrich farm near Oudtshoorn, also in 1967 (1975, 129), mentioned above. The photograph shows a parlour lavishly decorated at the turn of the twentieth century 'with the best that ostrich feathers could then buy', as Goldblatt records in his caption. He then adds that the farmer who had built the house lay dying in another room, even while Goldblatt was visiting. Moreover, Hester, the farmer's widowed daughter, sang psalms 'flatly' in High Dutch, as 'the old man muttered in his dying'. Goldblatt has clearly directed this photograph, placing Hester at the organ (which she is not playing), and suggesting a direct association between the museum-like appearance of the house and the death that is occurring within its walls.

Figure 8.4. David Goldblatt, *Ouma Hester Mostert from Die Hel* (*Some Afrikaners Photographed*, 56). Reproduced with permission from the Goldblatt family.

In fact, Goldblatt's invoking the idea of death in different ways in these photographs relates to a significant strand in his essay on the Afrikaners. As we have seen, it was important to Goldblatt to present the three communities in his first essays as somehow passing into oblivion. In his view, the lifestyle of the plot-holders could not last; the farms of the Groot Marico were being destroyed by encroaching bush, on the one hand, and the loss of the younger generation to the towns, on the other. The community of Gamkaskloof appeared to be dying before

his eyes. From the vantage point that Goldblatt shared with his cosmopolitan readership, rural South Africa, with its Afrikaner inhabitants, had become an anachronism; funerary imagery was, thus, an obvious vehicle to convey this idea.

Other themes that Goldblatt used to supplement the primitivising image of the Afrikaner with which he appears to have started his project are at once predictable and surprising. An emphasis on sheer physicality is apparent in such photographs as the rugby match (1975, 117) and the boy swimming in a dam in Aberdeen (1975, 87). Goldblatt's insistence on the physical as opposed to intellectual qualities of his Afrikaner subjects is apparent in one of his two photographs of policemen from 1967. The caption reads simply 'Young policeman in a café', though the detail of the comic he is reading is surely intended to suggest limited intellectual interests (1975, 157). Goldblatt's other policeman – a chance capture in the back of a squad car at Church Square, Pretoria – translates this mindlessness into sinister power in the deadly stare with which he confronts the photographer's camera (1975, 89). Militarisation, whether in the police force, the youth movement known as the *Voortrekkers*, or elsewhere, is the ultimate embodiment of power in Afrikaner society. Its pervasiveness is terrifyingly expressed in Goldblatt's photograph of a young boy pointing a toy pistol at the head of a baby in New Year festivities at Hartbeespoort Dam in 1965 (1975, 153).

Goldblatt's representation of the South African landscape is similarly harsh and unrelenting. The landscape of the Randfontein plots, the Groot Marico and Die Hel are barren wildernesses of different kinds. His later travels through the country seem only to have brought him to similar hostile environments: for example, the farm Quaggasfontein in the Great Karoo, 1966 (1975 9), and the Karoo veld between Richmond and De Aar, 1967 (1975, 13). In these bleak settings, the dorps, like the farms, seem to struggle for survival – and their townspeople seem stuck in a time warp. Attached to images of Graaff-Reinet, 1966 (1975, 53), Aberdeen, 1966 (1975, 79 and 135), and Calitzdorp, 1968 (1975, 127), Goldblatt's captions describe people seemingly marooned by history with the wider – that is, Anglophone – world passing them by. Thus, Goldblatt writes that the bachelor Katz brothers have kept shop in Calitzdorp for most of their lives and have been cared for during that time by their widowed sister. Indeed, Goldblatt's two photographs of shopfronts in Aberdeen, taken at different times of the day exactly one year apart, in December of 1966 and again in 1967, suggest that only the light changes in these places (1975, 85).

From the dates of the photographs in *Some Afrikaners Photographed*, one can see that it is only later in the project that Goldblatt decided to include representations of South African cities and, with them, some sort of modernity. But two photographs taken in Pretoria in 1967 show young people fitting uneasily into urban life: the 'Young Family on Church Square' appears distinctly alienated from their new urban environment (1975, 109); and the young women 'At a Wedding' also appear ill at ease (1975, 121). Similarly, the sterility of the 'Widow's Parlour in Hillbrow' allows the inference that the woman's bereavement extends beyond her immediate personal loss to include something of her cultural identity in this alien place (1975, 65). In the final image in the book, 'A Young Family in their Hillbrow Flat', through the soulless furnishings and the subjects' awkward response to the camera, Goldblatt subtly suggests the unnaturalness of this environment – compared, presumably, with their *platteland* [rural] origins – and that this generation of Afrikaners can never completely belong (1975, 167).

FROM ARCHIVE TO BOOK: THE PRODUCTION AND RECEPTION OF *SOME AFRIKANERS PHOTOGRAPHED*

Some Afrikaners Photographed was designed in 1971 and eventually published in 1975. Between 1962, the date of the first 'People of the Plots' photographs, and the last photograph of 1971, Goldblatt's style changed radically; his decision to leave the *Tatler* in 1965 doubtlessly accentuated that change. For his early magazine work, as we have seen, Goldblatt used a highly expressive style of strong tonal contrasts, grainy textures, brutal cropping, forceful perspectives, and dramatic juxtapositions of scale. In the *Tatler* of August 1964, and again in an interview in 1966, Goldblatt extolled the Leica M2 and M3 cameras that he had used to get these effects (James 1966; Godby 2001, 412–415). But he soon started to use the large 4×5 negative Sinar and a Hasselblad, which encouraged very different images. The sheer size of the Sinar camera made for a slower, more deliberate photographic encounter; and the large negatives allowed high resolution and subtlety of tone through extraordinary depths of field. Goldblatt has described his style with the large-format camera as a 'contemplative approach' and the change in his style as a move 'from shouting to talking'. In an interview in 1987, Goldblatt acknowledged: 'It's taken me a long time to get the confidence to realise that I could easily make a statement in Middle C, right in the middle of the scale. Not dramatise it, not add anything to it at all, just quietly in Middle C and leave it at that' (Freschi and Kapitza-Meyer 1987, 8).

Seeming to acknowledge this range of stylistic expression, Golblatt described *Some Afrikaners Photographed* as '[r]ather a haphazard collection' (1975, 7). By noting the dates of the photographs in the book – comparing, for example, the portrait of Dominee Coetzee (1965) with the 'Young Family in their Hillbrow flat in (1969) – it may be possible to trace Goldblatt's gradual, if uneven, move towards this contemplative approach. By the same token, this growing preference for a thoughtful quietness most likely helped him edit much early *Tatler* material out of the collection. By 1971, it certainly empowered him to reject Sam Haskins's initial design for the book that continued the expressive principles of his own *Tatler* layouts, and insist instead on the classic pattern of one photograph per page, with caption set out on the facing page (Goldblatt 2007, 14–16; Godby 2001, 414).

In the 1987 interview referred to above, Goldblatt acknowledged that in *Some Afrikaners Photographed* – as with *On the Mines* (1973) – 'there was something in me that required that I turn everything into an experience of extreme contrast, not in order to make the images aesthetic, but in an attempt to make unequivocal statements', Evidently, these 'unequivocal statements' not only involved a strongly directorial approach whereby Goldblatt made very conscious stylistic choices, they also involved a very precise selection and construction of subject matter.

In the period between 1962 and 1971 Goldblatt had built up a very considerable archive, and his choices of what to publish in *Some Afrikaners Photographed* and what to omit obviously affected the nature of the project profoundly. We have seen that Goldblatt's editing of his 'People of the Plots' collection produced a purposefully passive and elegiac view of these subjects. It is a remarkable fact about *Some Afrikaners Photographed* that Goldblatt repeatedly omitted images of prominent urban Afrikaners that he had recorded during his time at the *Tatler*. For example, in the June 1964 issue for the article on 'The Educationists', he had photographed Albert Geyser, professor of divinity at the University of the Witwatersrand; Professor CH Rautenbach, principal of Pretoria University; and Professor Pauw, principal of UNISA. Similarly, for the August 1964 essay on 'The Money Lenders', he had photographed Jan Marais of the Trust Bank; and, for 'The Film-Makers' in October 1964, he had portrayed Jamie Uys, who was described in the essay as a '*gawe kêrel*' [nice guy]. None of these luminaries was included in the book, seemingly because, like the business leaders of 'The City Volk' that he did not even photograph, they represented, individually and collectively, aspects of intellectual cosmopolitanism

that the project was concerned to deny. Significantly, those Afrikaner cultural leaders that Goldblatt did photograph for the book – like the Uys brothers and Etienne le Roux, both in 1965 (1975, 83, 123), and the anglicised actress Martli Malherbe, 1971 (1975, 14) – were all represented in rural settings.

These omissions of cosmopolitan Afrikaners become even more obvious with the republication of *Some Afrikaners Revisited* in 2007, when Goldblatt decided to cut one picture from the original 1975 publication: a photograph of retired civil servant Fred Stiglingh with his wife and family on their lawn (1975, 161) (Fig. 8.5).

Figure 8.5. David Goldblatt, *Fred Stiglingh, retired civil servant with his wife and family, 1966* (*Some Afrikaners Photographed*, 161). Reproduced with permission from the Goldblatt family.

This picture of urban and urbane Afrikaners was found unsuitable because, as critic Ivor Powell explains, Goldblatt felt that 'in retrospect ... it plays into the mythologising self-image of the Afrikaners as a transplanted "European" elite. Note here the domestication of nature, the manicured lawns as opposed to the harsher vision of the natural environment that runs as a leitmotif through the collection as a whole' (in Powell 2007, 22). Similarly, critic Rory Bester (2010, 156) relates that 'Goldblatt repeatedly articulates a lack of interest in what he terms the contrived and inauthentic visibilities of urban Afrikaner identities. They are overly visible in particular kinds of constructed ways that too often have the opposing effect of making other identities invisible.'

This bizarre conceit that urban identities are somehow 'contrived and inauthentic' leads Goldblatt to go in search of what he deems to be a specific kind of Afrikaner *authenticity*: that of rural farming communities, of so-called poor whites and marginal peoples living in isolated areas such as Gamkaskloof, rather than what Ivor Powell (2007, 22) describes as 'the brave new world of Sanlam and Naspers and the Anton Rupert empire'. To evoke – in the economically prosperous 1960s – an image of rural Afrikaners, reminiscent of the depression as depicted by the Carnegie Commission of the 1930s, or to go searching for the charming but naive farm people that Bosman had depicted some 40 years earlier, while denying the existence of a strong and prosperous middle class, is to construct an image that is radically reductive.

No wonder, then, that there was significant hostility when *Some Afrikaners* was first published in 1975; no wonder the tone of the National Party-controlled Afrikaans press at the time of publication – 'rising, belligerent, even paranoid defensiveness', as Ivor Powell puts it in his introduction to the later version of the book (2007, 21). Powell ascribes this response to Goldblatt's singular vision and ability to *reveal* an aspect of society that Afrikaners in the centre of Afrikaner power would rather have kept hidden. According to Powell (2007, 25), 'Afrikaners were led to deny, or at least to mistrust, their empirically historical identity as, largely, rural subsistence farmers and as a creole underclass in the history of colonisation', and it is this vision of themselves that Goldblatt's photo-essay apparently contradicts by making visible exactly those people they have worked so hard to renounce. This, according to Powell (2007, 26), was in accordance with the fact that as 'an ideological abstraction the Afrikaners sought above all, forgetting over remembering, and their own reinvention according to the power relations they wanted to inscribe in reality'.

This idea of Goldblatt's ability to reveal something that was hidden from plain view was first articulated by Dimitri Nicolas-Fanourakis (1976), who claimed that it is Goldblatt's ability to *see* where the rest of us are merely looking that distinguishes his work and this photo-essay in particular (in Powell 2007, 21). Nicolas-Fanourakis seems to have inaugurated a critical consensus about Goldlatt's ability to see below the surface, pivoting on this dialectic of visibility and invisibility. For instance, three decades later, in his discussion of the *Some Afrikaners* collection, Rory Bester (2010, 155) contrasts 'a "visible" urban centre and an "invisible" rural periphery' and describes Goldblatt's ability to *expose* the 'quiet ordinariness that had remained invisible on the peripheries' of Afrikaner power and authority. Likewise, Tamar Garb (2011, 32) suggests that Goldblatt's work gave 'insight into a community that seems to betray its own weakness in unguarded, almost unconscious revelations'.

However, while fabrication and a selective use of the past have undoubtedly been part of the Afrikaners' official history that favours a story of racial purity and divine right to the land,[6] the kind of people depicted in Goldblatt's pictures are very much part of that story, and anything but hidden. In the history of the Afrikaners, poor semi-urban characters are anything but invisible, unfamiliar or omitted from view. To the contrary, poor whites, displaced people caught in a rapid process of urbanisation, or unassuming farm people – all apparently 'revealed' by Goldblatt in these pictures – have always been present in the Afrikaner popular imaginary, in Afrikaans literature (see, for example, Mikro 1983; ME Rothmann 1972; and Jochem van Bruggen 1930) and Afrikaans church charities, such as the *Diens van Barmhartigheid* [Service of Mercy]. This is part of the originating myth, and even in the 1960s is fundamental to their sense of achievement and success.

The reasons for the negative reception of Goldblatt's photographs in the Afrikaans press should therefore not be attributed to the fact that something that was hidden or kept from view was suddenly exposed, as so many critics tend to suggest. Rather, we want to propose the exact opposite: the critical response to these pictures – not only in the contemporary Afrikaans press, but also in our reading of these pictures – has nothing to do with what was being *revealed*; in fact, it has everything to do with what was *silenced*. Goldblatt's search for a certain kind of authenticity reveals not much about the Afrikaners, but instead everything about Goldblatt's own choices that lead him to omit contradictory images. Even as he tries to pre-empt accusations of generalisation by claiming that these are only *some* Afrikaners in a 'haphazard

collection', the careful selection from an archive of images, and the framing of the album under an overdetermined and loaded title, means that Goldblatt does not simply reflect what he finds, but *constructs* meaning for his viewers.

In both versions of *Some Afrikaners*, Goldblatt imposes a predetermined reading on his subjects, and influences them to perform his ideas for the camera. In the selection of subjects to suit these predetermined narratives, from the hardship of subsistence farmers to the grim face of political and ecclesiastical authority, from the repetition of certain naive characters against various threadbare backdrops to his insistence on an unforgiving tonality that casts deep shadows over harsh landscapes and eccentric people, Goldblatt creates a narrative of Otherness – distant portraits of a marginalised, cloistered people, often backwards and at odds with the world around them. His apparently modest ambition to photograph 'some Afrikaners' effectively *produces* them and presents a prejudiced and condescending view of its subject.

In his 1969 introduction to *Camera*, Goldblatt wrote: 'Living here I am not indifferent to them [Afrikaners]. Our lives are entangled and my view cannot be dispassionate. Is it possible to admire, love, abhor and fear, all in the compass of a single exposure?' He continues that he wanted to explore the puzzling make-up of a people who seemed at once hard and soft, simple and complex. Powell, who cites this statement, draws attention to the well-known photograph 'The Farmer's Son with his Nursemaid' (Goldblatt 1975, 49), suggesting that the servant owns the boy as much as he owns her, thereby complicating assumptions about racial relations and forcing the viewer 'to revisit the historically vexed image of the Afrikaners' (Goldblatt 2007, 27). Similarly, other images suggest more nuanced readings: for example, the photograph of 'Ella, Daughter of Freek and Martjie Marais' (1967), which replaced 'Oom At Geel' on the cover of the 2007 edition; the 'Wedding on a Farm in the Barkly East District' (1966) (Goldblatt 1975, 31); 'The Farmer's Wife' (1965) (Goldblatt 1975, 75); and 'The Bride' (1966) (Goldblatt 1975, 27). On their own, these images may well appear subtle and complex, but when read together in essay form, they constitute a strong narrative of type and category.

CONCLUSION

The year 1965, when Goldblatt gradually withdrew from the *Tatler*, was, coincidentally, also the year Walker Evans retired from *Fortune*, having served that magazine for two decades. Evans, like Bill Brandt and others, seemed to recognise

that, for photographers, the era of the illustrated magazine – which, as David Campany (2014, 63–66) put it, had fostered 'the ideal of an intelligent cultural commons' – was passing, and being replaced by the aestheticising values of the art museum. Evans was 61 at this time, and he left documentary work (broadly interpreted) for a teaching position at Yale. Goldblatt, on the other hand, was at the beginning of his career and he soon began to channel his documentary work, such as it was, into the prestigious – and aesthetic – avenues of book publication. In time, Goldblatt would produce major works in this format, notably *In Boksburg* (1982) and *South Africa: The Structure of Things Then* (1998) which, in his terms, completely reject 'unequivocal statements' in favour of 'contemplative' expressions 'in Middle C'. But *Some Afrikaners Photographed*, notwithstanding its mixed, 'haphazard' nature, remains manifestly an 'art' book that effectively reinforces stereotypes rather than documents the lived experience of its subjects.[7]

In a passage on the unedited archive of Walker Evans's photographs of labourers, Katie Ryder (2016) writes:

> We find often, here, portraits of pride – not the kind that whistles while it works, but one that peers out coolly, from the shadow of a dapper, straight-brimmed hat, and asks us just who we might think we are. Apparent now are the open threads of story ... and the sometimes painterly compositions, but, above all, the jumping static charge of reality. There is no longer the strange implication of taxonomy, but only people, released to themselves.

Goldblatt's project may well have offered an alternative to the reigning discourse of heroic Afrikaner nationalist self-representation, but due to his selective eye, his directorial ambition, and narrativisation, the essay of photos that became *Some Afrikaners* is a counter-construction of Afrikaner identity that is as elaborate and problematic as the opposite, official version. Goldblatt does not allow his archive to speak through his imposed silences, nor does he permit his subjects to look past the confines of their cropped frames, to imagine themselves beyond their threadbare mise en scène. In the end, neither the official version nor Goldblatt's own allowed characters to escape from the prevailing, suffocating politics – to breathe as people 'released to themselves' into the 'jumping static charge of reality'.

Indeed, to make these images less 'troubled' – and less troubling – would have required a more complex picture and the realisation that singular identities

are inadequate; that people are intricately made up of the various complex and conflicting worlds they traverse.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

1   For his account of Bosman, see Abrahams (1964).

2   Dated December 1964 in *Some Afrikaners Revisited*, 176, but erroneously dated 1965 in *Some Afrikaners Photographed*, 118.

3   It was At Geel who had sold Bosman the rifle with which, on a visit to Johannesburg at the end of the school year, he shot his stepbrother; this event effectively brought his short teaching career to an end.

4   Goldblatt (2007, 11–17) recalls that he began to think of an extended essay around 1965, and that by 1968 he had assembled a fairly substantial body of work.

5   Goldblatt (2007, 16) explained that the disappearance of the Die Hel community contributed to his decision to publish his photographs from the 1960s in the 2007 edition of his book.

6   For further discussion, see Andre du Toit (1983).

7   Similarly, the patent nostalgia for a dying industry expressed by Nadine Gordimer in her essay 'The Witwatersrand: A Time and Tailings' (1968), which was incorporated into Goldblatt's *On the Mines* (1973), clearly dictated the mode in which he conceived his photographs in this early essay.

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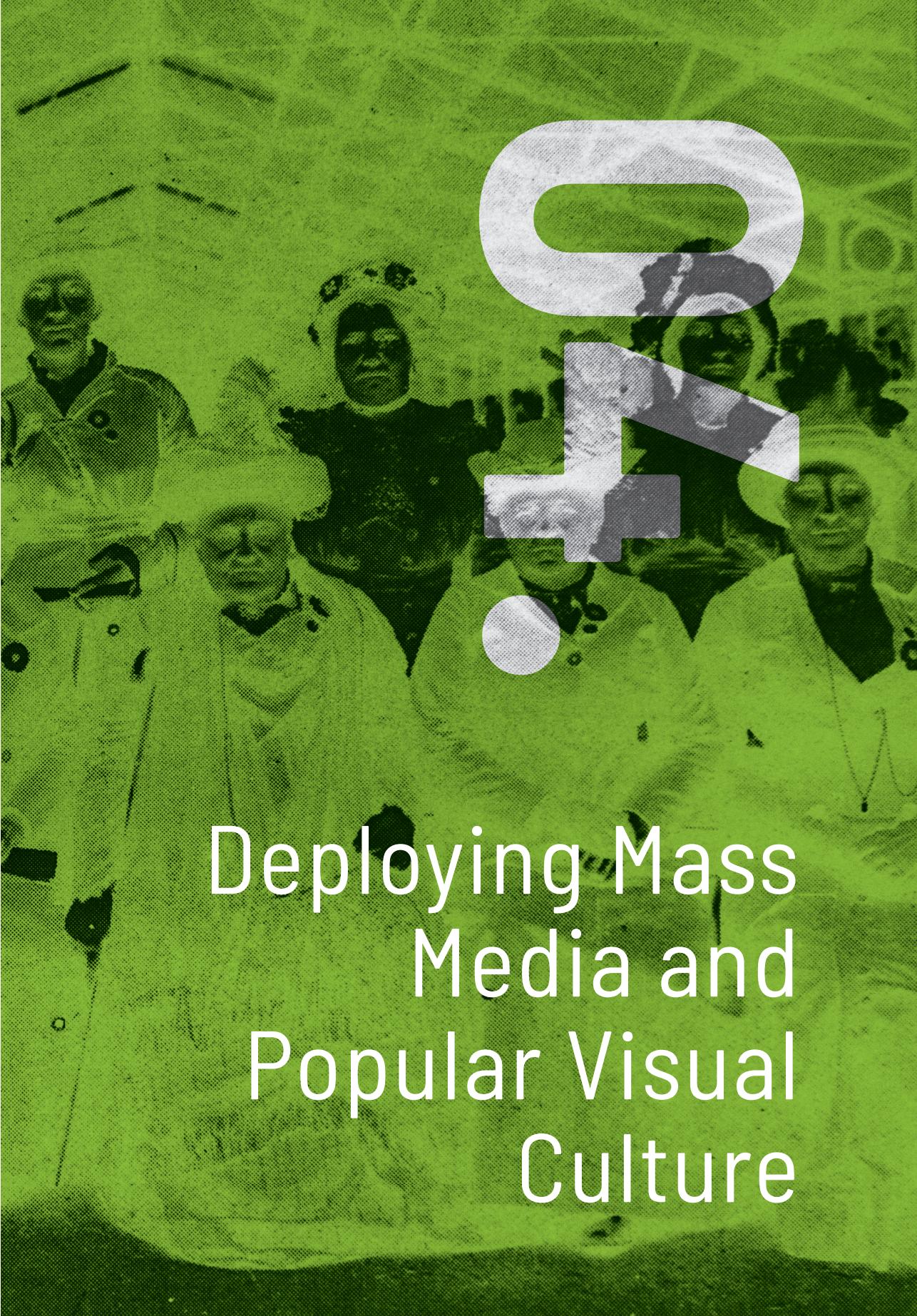
Deploying Mass Media and Popular Visual Culture

Anton van Wouw's *Noitjie van die Onderveld,* Afrikaner Nationalism and the Construction of the *Volksmoeder* Discourse

LOU-MARIÉ KRUGER

'*Nou kom die tyd van die vrou aan!'* [The time of the woman has arrived!].[1] With these melodramatic words, Mabel Malherbe (1879–1964) announced the arrival of the first Afrikaans women's magazine, *Die Boerevrou*.[2] This dramatic statement in the editorial of its first edition is followed by an urgent call to all Afrikaans women to be educated as mothers, for the benefit of their children, but ultimately also for the benefit of the fledgling new nation, the Afrikaner *volk.*

The magazine was first published in March 1919, a time when two seemingly contradictory trends may be discerned regarding the position of Afrikaans women in South Africa. On the one hand, many new organisations and actions in the preceding decade suggested that Afrikaans women were formally starting to organise themselves in spheres in which, traditionally, they had simply been tolerated informally: women were entering the labour market; they were launching political parties and women's organisations; they successfully organised a major political protest march; to a limited extent they became involved in or exposed to the suffrage movement; and they were active in a major public celebration in which women themselves were honoured.

On the other hand, these moves into the public sphere were, paradoxically, accompanied by a deliberate retreat into the domestic sphere – a second trend. Women workers converged in particular employment sectors related to their domestic roles, which did not conflict with established views about their natural abilities. The women's political parties did not take up the issue of women's suffrage, and initially the Transvaal Women's National Party even explicitly

opposed the idea.[3] The most powerful women's organisation in the Transvaal, the *Suid-Afrikaanse Vroue Federasie* [South African Women's Federation], went so far as to formally announce its departure from the political arena.

While the first trend was indicative of gender becoming an issue, with women exploring other spheres in search of a new identity and new roles, the latter was closely associated with the first traces of a new gender discourse, the *volksmoeder* [mother of the nation] discourse, which, in response to this issue of gender, would seek to create a new identity and new roles for Afrikaans-speaking women.[4] It was in this context that Mabel Malherbe started the first Afrikaans magazine for women in 1919. The magazine was compiled by women for women. Most of the contributors were also women. However, the editor and her staff had strong Afrikaner nationalist sentiments and, although the magazine professed to be apolitical, it had a strong Afrikaner nationalist bias. In the first editorial, which amounts to a programmatic statement for the project, Malherbe clearly stated that *Die Boerevrou* would focus on the position of Afrikaans women, but makes it clear that these women would be linked to the ethnic concerns of the rising Afrikaner nationalist movement in particular ways. In fact, what we have here is an announcement of a distinctive gender discourse, that of the *volksmoeder*, which has been analysed by many feminist historians.[5] This discourse associates women with the domestic sphere, and particularly with child-rearing – not only as mother of a private household, but as mother of the nation or the *volk*. In her editorial, Malherbe writes:

> The mother, lovingly crowned as queen of every happy household, will always be the centre of the spiritual development of a *volk.*
>
> The mothers and women are the soul of the *volk*. Men and sons (and currently daughters too) are trained for their life's work, but the woman, who has the most difficult and important calling, has to learn through mistakes and bitter suffering and get her education in this way; in the meantime the whole family suffers.
>
> If the Afrikaans woman comes to realise that her calling as mother and woman requires her to think and learn, this will be of great value to our *volk*.
>
> We will then become a great nation, because everything depends on the mother.

If a woman governs her house with knowledge – knowledge of health care and domestic science – and instils in the children a sense of the value of these in all areas, working with knowledge, not relying on luck or chance, then the children will go far and will do great things for country and *volk*.

Just look at how much the brave little mothers of the past achieved, lacking book learning and outside help, by simply applying their determination and fearless willpower and boundless patience.

I see her waiting, patient and in silence,

as she has suffered through a hundred waiting years.

I see her triumph,

for she is called

Woman and Mother!

This editorial may seem somewhat idealistic and pretentious for an ordinary little women's magazine with no aspirations to literary value or high learning – but lacking ideals, you get nowhere!

It is indeed with lofty ideals that we start this work.[6]

This dramatic editorial ends with a direct appeal to all Afrikaans women to participate in the making of the magazine. Indirectly, it can also be read as a call to Afrikaans women to participate in thinking about or negotiating the notion or identity of the *boerevrou* [the Afrikaans woman; later, the Afrikaner woman]. This occurs, of course, within the parameters of the *volksmoeder* discourse:

We hope that every Afrikaans woman all over the country will cooperate to make *Die Boerevrou* the mouthpiece of all our women. They should feel that the magazine belongs to them, and they should feel free to give advice and tips and to ask questions; to criticise, and, should they have something to share, to make this available to our compatriots by way of our magazine.[7]

The specific focus of this paper is Anton van Wouw's bronze statue *Noitjie van die Onderveld* [Girl from Upcountry] (Fig. 9.1), which served as the cover picture of the new magazine; its use by Malherbe was an important emblem in the construction of an ideal *volksmoeder*.

The image (in Duffey et al. 2010, 19) is a significant and explicit example of how nationalist art and visual culture were deployed in the gendering of Afrikaner nationalism. However, discussions relating to its relevance and importance in letters

Figure 9.1. Anton van Wouw, *Noitjie van die Onderveld,* 1900. Image courtesy of the University of Pretoria.

to the magazine also constitute a powerful example of the role women themselves played in the deliberate construction of a gendered nationalist discourse.

'I SEE HER TRIUMPH, BECAUSE HER NAME IS WIFE/WOMAN AND MOTHER'[8]

The 'ideal woman', the *volksmoeder* with her essential attributes, was embodied in two emblems which remained constant throughout the life of *Die Boerevrou* (1919–1931). Both were created by men.

The first of these was the motto of *Die Boerevrou*: 'I see her triumph, because her name is wife/woman and mother.' This was taken from the poem '*By Die Vrouebetoging*' [At the Women's Demonstration] by Jan FE Celliers, which was first published in *Die Brandwag* [The Sentry].[9] Celliers's poem was inspired by a march of Afrikaans women to the Union Buildings, an event prompted by the Rebellion,[10] with the aim of handing over a petition demanding that the leaders of the Rebellion be freed.

This march was significant in a consideration of the role of women in Afrikaner nationalism. Firstly, it involved national political action organised by women for women. The demonstration was perceived as a conscious political initiative by women, deliberately abandoning their traditional domestic domain and intruding upon the previously male sphere of public politics. Another lyrical description of the event, by a Mrs M Marais, was published in the September 1915 edition of *Die Brandwag*:[11]

> It was particularly impressive to watch from the stoep of the Union Buildings as crowds of mothers and daughters came closer in the winding path, step by step, quietly, like a funeral procession. The rear of the procession was only at the second bend in the road when the front reached the Union Buildings. Like a flood taking over a piece of land, slowly, in the knowledge that it is irresistible, the crowd took over the large semi-circle in front of the Union Buildings.
>
> And like a tidal wave, the realisation of the beautiful, exalted existence of woman suddenly overwhelmed us, when we saw her standing there so silently, outside the quiet *circle of her daily labour of love*, to see whether love could not also accomplish something in *the other circle, the sphere of government*, where the man actually belongs but where he, through lovelessness and callousness, had made a mess of everything [my emphases].[12]

Secondly, this action was Afrikaans women's response to an issue of central importance to emergent Afrikaner nationalism. The women's march was probably the first mass action of Afrikaans women that had clear nationalistic goals.[13] At the time, the march was regarded as important in that Afrikaner women had ventured into the public sphere with confidence and assertiveness.

A striking feature of the magazine's motto is that women are described as triumphant; and this, ironically, in the context of a society where women had not won even the most basic rights for themselves. Moreover, the notion of women as triumphant was linked precisely with the spheres to which she was conventionally confined. Celliers described these in his poem: 'The earth is holy where her feet tread / Be it chamber floor or murder camp or street.'[14] Though victorious in suffering, she was not triumphant in her own right, but rather 'for husband, son and brother'. This suffering for (male) Others was then invested with a religious significance by being linked to Jesus and the way of the Cross: 'I see her triumph, as He did triumph, through suffering / I see her triumph, for husband and son and brother ...'[15] She was victorious in this role of suffering woman (wife) *and* mother, with the suggestion that she had to suffer in order to be triumphant. While women, after their experiences in the South African War, gave many accounts of suffering and endurance, these stories gradually developed into idealised and symbolic constructions. Increasingly, they were appropriated for nationalistic purposes, and by 1918 they were ready and available to be developed even further and for other purposes in the *volksmoeder* discourse. Although the suffering heroines of the war were to some extent idealised even in the earliest accounts of life in the concentration camps, the main emphasis in this early literature was on the ordeals women endured. Now, however, in the *volksmoeder* discourse, the image of suffering women was appropriated to construct a new identity and new roles for Afrikaans women within Afrikaner nationalism.

The second important symbol employed by Malherbe was the cover picture of *Die Boerevrou*. Throughout the 13 years of *Die Boerevrou*'s existence, the same photograph of Anton van Wouw's[16] statue *Noitjie van die Onderveld* served as its cover picture. The *Noitjie* wears an old-fashioned Voortrekker costume – a *voortrekker* dress, a *kappie* [bonnet], a *nekdoek* [scarf] – and she stands firmly in comfortable *velskoene* [rawhide veld shoes]. With her hands folded in front of her and her head slightly bowed, the young girl looks down. Elsabé Brink (2011, 5), in an essay on *volksmoeders*, describes her as follows: '[R]ather a petite girl – has a round

face, a fine, sharp little nose, downcast eyes, a tiny mouth and a somewhat cheeky fringe, escaping from her bonnet. Her small shoulders are pulled downwards under the weight of her shawl and her hands are neatly clasped in front of her. At barely 40 centimetres she resembles a fourteenth-century Virgin Mary, with eyes submissively downcast, waiting pensively, patiently, politely and and passively to be dusted. She is the visual shorthand of the nobility and the beauty of the young Afrikaans girls which should inspire many to simplicity and greater spirituality.'

For a variety of reasons, the choice of the *Noitjie* was particularly interesting. By 1919, the notion of the Afrikaans woman was already closely linked with motherhood, suffering and martyrdom, but also with strength and victory. We see this in the writing about Afrikaans women at this time,[17] but also in events such as the inauguration of the National Women's Monument and in the women's march of 1915. There were also Van Wouw's powerful images depicting suffering women and martyred mothers associated with strength and determination.

Most well-known of those was the sculpture (Fig. 9.2) that formed the centrepiece of the *Nasionale Vrouemonument* [National Women's Monument]; it commemorated the approximately 26 000 women and children who died in British concentration camps during the South African War of 1899–1902, and was unveiled on 16 December 1913 (see Introduction, Fig. 0.1).

Sabine Marschall (2004, 1014–1016) indicates that Van Wouw's sculptural group includes:

> a seated woman with bare feet and a look of sadness, despair, and exhaustion on her face. She is holding a dead child in her lap, clearly evoking the lamenting Mary holding the deceased Son of God. The implied message is one of suffering and martyrdom, but also ultimate triumph. This is expressed through the standing woman next to her, upright and 'properly' dressed in Voortrekker clothes, including the *kappie* or bonnet, which soon became the standard signifier of the traditional Afrikaner woman. With a determined look on her face, she gazes into the distance – spatial and temporal – expressing the women's resilience and determination to survive. Yet it is not so much her personal survival that counts, but the survival and ultimate triumph – through the will of God – of the Afrikaner nation.
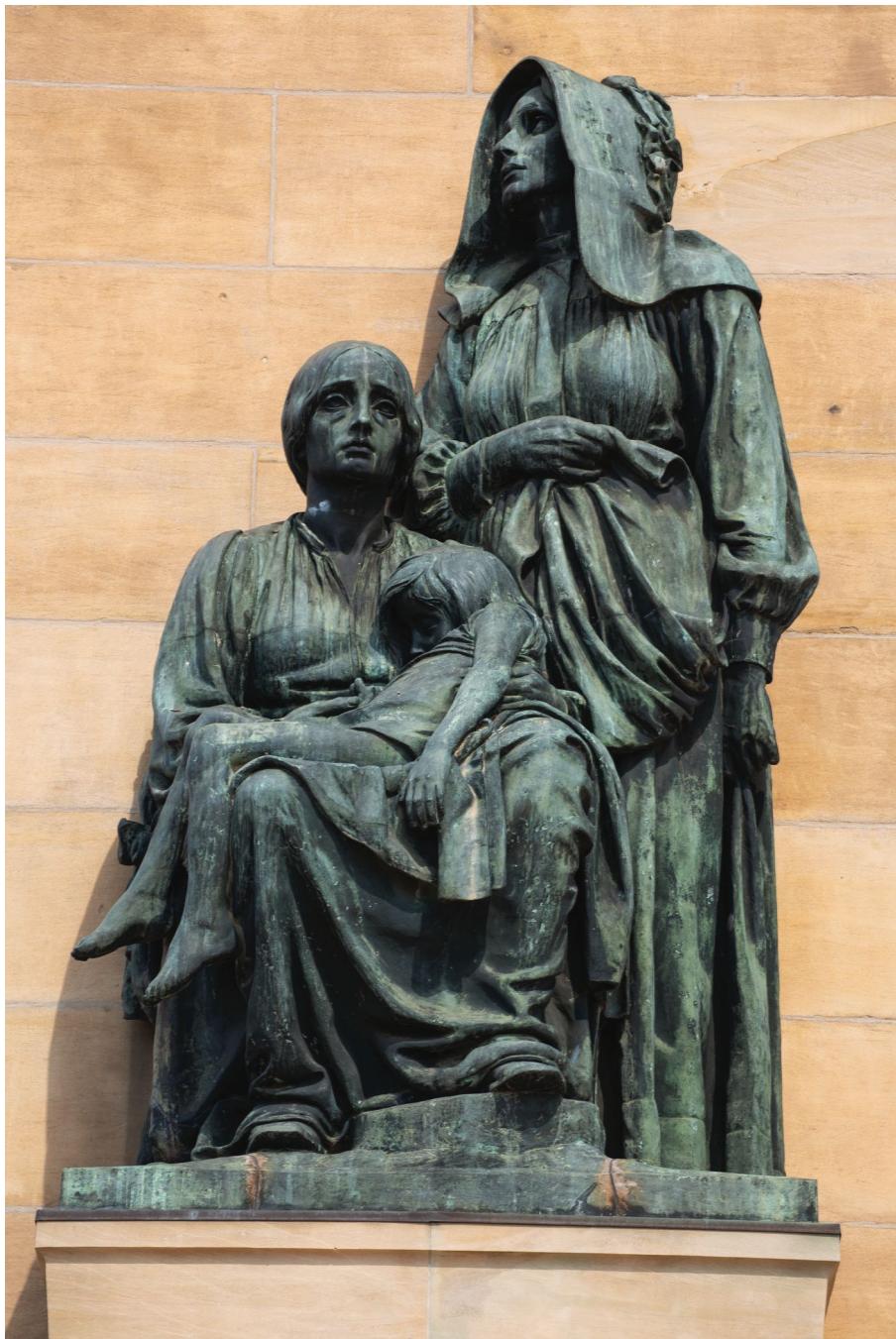
Figure 9.2. Anton van Wouw, central figurative group, National Women's Monument, Bloemfontein, 1913. Photograph by Paul Mills.

Liese van der Watt (1998) contends that Van Wouw's sculpture may be considered one of the earliest visual representations of the Afrikaner ideology of the *volksmoeder.* Marschall (2004, 1015) cites the interpretation by JD Kestell, chairman of the monument committee, acknowledged as a 'father' of the Afrikaner nation: 'The eyes of the woman are saying: "My child is dead, but I shall not entirely die out. My people shall not be exterminated".'[18] As such, in this emergent phase of the *volksmoeder* discourse, the emphasis was on patience and resilience in the face of suffering which, according to Marschall (2004), became institutionalised through the construction of the National Women's Monument.

Despite the prominence of the image of suffering yet victorious motherhood in depictions of Afrikaans women, Malherbe chooses to use instead Van Wouw's *Noitjie* as the cover picture and emblem of *Die Boerevrou*. This depiction of the Afrikaner woman came to symbolise both the magazine itself and the women who were its target readership. However, the *Noitjie* did not look like a mother; and, while pensive, she did not seem to be suffering, and nor was this an image that one would associate with activism or action. The image suggests reflection rather than action, vulnerability rather than strength, potential rather than achievement, and humility rather than victory.

Malherbe herself never explained why this image was chosen, but, as was her way, she enthusiastically encouraged discussion of the image. In a lively 1923 debate on the letter pages, interestingly called '*Om die Koffietafel*' [Around the Coffee Table], it became apparent how the women readers, while interpellated by a discourse in which the symbol became central,[19] were at the same time constitutive of it.

AROUND THE COFFEE TABLE: AN IMAGINED COMMUNITY

In 1919, with the establishment of *Die Boerevrou*, the relatively new *volksmoeder* discourse expressly took on the task of constituting a communal identity. Afrikaans women were to become members of a community of *volksmoeders*. In *Die Boerevrou*, the *volksmoeder* discourse set out to create a community that was defined by gender and ethnicity. It was neither a question of the community of women nor simply of the Afrikaans community. Afrikaner women were constituted in relation to a community of *volksmoeders*, thereby involving both ethnic and gender identity.

The founding of a magazine named *Die Boerevrou* made individual women think of themselves explicitly as *boerevroue*. As readers and contributors, they defined themselves in ethnic (*boere*/Afrikaner) and gender (*vrou*/woman) categories. They were already Afrikaans, and they were also women, but their identities had not been explicitly bound up in these terms. It is this further process, in which the magazine identified and acquired not just casual but committed readers, and Afrikaans women became subjects of the *volksmoeder* discourse, that is of particular interest. In Althusserian terms, it is a question of how the discourse of *Die Boerevrou* 'hailed' or 'recruited' subjects among a larger set of individuals or 'transformed' individuals into particular discursive subjects. By calling the magazine *Die Boerevrou*, Malherbe was already addressing a certain category of readers, 'hailing' them from a more general group of individuals. By responding and becoming committed readers of the magazine, individual Afrikaans women were in turn identified as *boerevroue* and became constituted as subjects of the discourse of the magazine – a process that Althusser refers to as interpellation.

It is important to grasp both the constitutive nature and the limitations of this process. In one sense, discursive hailing of this kind presupposes the existence of *boerevroue* as a social reality. It is not coincidental that the individuals who responded by casually picking up the magazine, or by becoming committed readers, were overwhelmingly Afrikaans and female, and not, for instance, English-speaking, black or male. In this sense, the interpellation embodied in the name of the magazine did not, and could not, create *boerevroue* where none had existed before. On the other hand – and in another sense, responding to this discursive hailing – becoming a committed reader of the magazine amounted to an act of recognition, and furthermore, to a sense of identity not experienced before. Becoming readers of *Die Boerevrou* brought readers to recognise themselves as *boerevroue*; they were constituted as subjects of a particular gender discourse which, moreover, construed their gender identity in ethnic terms.

According to Benedict Anderson (2006, 15–16), the nation is an invented or constructed community, which is imagined by people who belong to that community; as a community, the nation is conceived as 'a deep horizontal comradeship' (even if the reality is one of inequality and exploitation). It can be distinguished from other communities by the style in which it is imagined. It is different in that it is imagined as inherently limited and sovereign. Nations are limited because whatever the size

of the nation, it always has boundaries. Sovereignty is the emblem of the freedom of the nation. Anderson points out that, in the light of the fact that the nation is an imagined community, the concept of representation is important. Because the community is not real in the sense that members of the community know all their fellow members, meet them, or hear of them, the community must be made possible by contact through representation. The popular novel and the newspaper consequently become the technical instruments that represent the new imagined communities. Both the novel and the newspaper (or, in this case, the popular magazine) are aimed at anonymous audiences: writers accept that there is a cultural community as their audience, while readers become conscious of themselves as members of a community of readers.

The development of print commodities such as the newspaper and the novel, which Anderson (2006, 37) refers to as print-capitalism, 'made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways'. A certain way of thinking about oneself and relating oneself to others lies at the basis of any community. While in pre-industrial communities contact and communication was mostly face to face, modern communities can be larger and more complex since contact and communication through representation is possible. It is important, however, to look beyond the significance assigned to culture in a nationalist discourse and to understand why it is that culture became so important at this time in the history of Afrikaner women.

As discussed above, Malherbe indicated from the start that her project was to open up a discussion about what and who the *boerevrou* was. She often told readers that the content of the magazine was guided by their requirements and needs. In March 1921, for instance, she wrote:

> Initially we had many plans of our own. But thanks to the letters of our friends we have been gaining a broader perspective, and we let their letters guide us as to where we should go. We try to stay in touch with our subscribers on a regular basis, mostly through this correspondence, and in so doing to give them what they need.[20]

Die Boerevrou was, seemingly, inundated with letters. In a *Sarie Marais* interview (15 April 1954, 14), Malherbe recalled that the letters were so numerous and took

up so much office space that it was decided to destroy them after they had been answered. The monthly column 'Om die Koffietafel' [Around the Coffee Table] took up between three and seven pages, and it was not possible to publish all the letters. By June 1921, *Die Boerevrou* had corresponded with more than a thousand readers.[21] Malherbe herself wrote the following about the popular appeal of *Die Boerevrou*: 'It was the first reading material in their own language that many rural women in the Transvaal acquired. That it stole the hearts of our *boerevroue* was clear from the numerous letters we received, even from people who did not enjoy writing and did not write easily.'[22]

THE CONTESTED *NOITJIE*

In February 1923, a reader wrote that she did not like the cover picture of *Die Boerevrou*. She felt that the picture was old-fashioned as women were no longer wearing *kappies*. She also felt that the image was a misrepresentation of *boerevroue* as the *Noitjie* herself was not working and did not look cheerful. She thus questioned the *Noitjie's* dress (which indicated a connection with history), her passivity and pensiveness, as well as the general mood of the image.

Significantly, this letter provoked a lively controversy. The letters in response may be divided into two categories. Firstly, there were those who endorsed the symbolic value of the *Noitjie* and asked that the cover not be changed. And secondly, there were readers who, because they thought that the *Noitjie* was an 'unrealistic' and/or inappropriate portrayal of the contemporary Afrikaans woman, asked for a new cover picture.

THE *VOLKSMOEDER*: PASSIVE AND PENSIVE OR ACTIVE AND POWERFUL?

The readers who were in favour of the *Noitjie* as a cover picture regarded the Afrikaans-speaking woman as courageous, cheerful, peaceful, assertive, serious, strong, hopeful, satisfied, pure, simple and humble. To them, the *Noitjie* aptly represented all these characteristics and thus symbolised the ideal Afrikaner woman. For instance, 'P', in total disagreement with the complainant, wrote:

> The artist [Van Wouw] wanted to capture in a sculpture the soul of the *boerevrou* in general, her purity, humility, naturalness and simplicity which she should retain in the face of all the new-fashioned finery and affectation.

I have never seen a sculpture in which the true, unadulterated soul of the Afrikaner woman is so well expressed as in this sculpture. One almost has to kneel in front of it. It is something like the simplicity of the great, silent plains themselves, untouched, unspoilt, naive. Is it not far more beautiful to see something so spiritually elevated and genuine, so all-embracing and profound? We all know that the *boerevrou* is industrious.[23]

Another reader, Mrs AEC, also wanted to keep the existing cover:

There is a seriousness in the sweet, innocent features, yes, because the past of her *volk* is serious, and the present and the future are also serious. But despondent? No! She is just quietly satisfied because she surrenders to the decree of a Higher Hand. It seems to me as if she has escaped for a few minutes from the pressures of life – maybe it was the day for cleaning the house or cake-baking – and she went to a quiet place somewhere in the veld to stand and listen to the voice of nature around her and to the quiet voice of her own soul. And when, before long, she returns home she is strong again. She can again suffer and struggle – and triumph![24]

Both quotations contain a significant contradiction: the symbol of the quiet, passive woman strongly negates the suggestion of an active, industrious woman. While 'P' on the one hand refers to the *boer* woman who is like the 'silent plains', she says everyone knows that the *boer* woman is industrious and busy. Mrs AEC refers to the 'silent soul' of the woman, although 'life's pressures' – house-cleaning and cake-baking – suggest days filled with activity. In both extracts, the contradiction seems to be resolved by making the symbol a reflection of the soul of the *boer* woman, while the activity and industriousness supposedly function on a more superficial level. Images such as 'silent plains' and 'voice of nature' are strongly associated with the soul of the *boer* woman, perhaps serving to naturalise the symbol.

The writer Miemie Rothmann (known as MER),[25] who was also a member of the editorial team, lent her support to the *noitjie* – or, as she referred to her, the *boerenoitjie*. Offering a unique solution, Rothmann contended that, while passivity was not portrayed as the woman's true or deeper nature, it was her 'most beautiful' side: 'For me she represents the Afrikaans woman at her most beautiful, neat, quiet and calm before the world. But when I look at her like this I also imagine how

cheerful and happy she can be when there is merriment, or determined and brave when there is danger.'[26]

If the *Noitjie* represented this ideal of Afrikaner women as *volksmoeders*, it is interesting that so many readers rejected the cover picture. However, on closer examination it appears that it was not so much the concept of an 'ideal woman' that they rejected, but rather the specific image of this ideal. Instead of the traditional image reflecting a passive and silent woman, they wanted a more realistic and contemporary representation. This, they argued, would be the image of a woman who is busy and active, though only in the sphere of the household in service of her husband and children. A Mrs Rabie wrote:

> The *boerevroutjie* is tired of standing so quietly; this is not characteristic of her. Say, for example, you change the picture to an attractive woman sitting down while darning socks, with a baby in a pram beside her. The true *boerevrou* is, as you know, always busy with little jobs for her husband and children.[27]

Other readers, too, rejected the passivity in the symbolic depiction of the *boerevrou* on the front page: Mrs Ries wanted to see her depicted with tables laden with homemade bread and cake; Mrs Brummelkamp saw her as a laughing woman making soap; Miss Elsie Bekker wanted her to be portrayed as a smiling woman, feeding chickens or making porridge; Mrs Joubert proposed different clothing for every season, but 'she especially must have small children around her, dear little things that she looks upon with love'.[28] Mrs Van Vuuren, having highlighted the role of the woman and girl in the idealised nuclear family (to adore, to admire and to listen), wrote:

> Therefore, what to me would be an attractive cover for *Die Boerevrou* is: a portrayal of a room in a *boer* home. Seated at the table are the mother and father. She is busy with a piece of needlework, a satisfied smile playing around her lips as she listens to her husband talking to a small curly-head child. The child stands at daddy's knee with her chin in her hand. He sits with his pipe in his hand; a small boy plays with knuckle-bones on the floor.[29]

Mrs CJ Prinsloo thought that the *nooientjie* [young woman] looked too downhearted, and said that 'she should be feeding her chickens or be stirring her

soap cauldron'.[30] The women the readers described were always busy, always smiling and forever satisfied. They wanted the representation to be similarly modernised, to depict the circumstances in which they supposedly lived and worked.

The point of the *volksmoeder* discourse, however, was to translate the ordinary life of the ordinary mother in more dramatic terms, linking it with the history of the nation. The purpose of introducing the heroines of the past was to compare the ordinary mother's suffering in childbearing and her daily sacrifices for her husband and children to the more dramatic suffering of her foremothers. The ideal woman represented by the *boerenooientjie* was not antagonistic to the readers' experiences and aspirations, but served rather to inspire them to continue with their ordinary tasks. Indeed, the readers' images were never denied, but rather appropriated in the *volksmoeder* discourse.

In the image of the *Noitjie*, the link with history would be made through the fact that she was wearing the attire of women of the previous century.

THE *KAPPIE:* AN INVENTED TRADITION[31]

For the modern reader, the meaning of the costume seems obvious: the costume (especially the *kappie*) clearly signifies the traditional Afrikaner woman in history. In 1923, though, the symbolism was not that obvious to readers. They themselves were still involved in the process of constituting the meaning of the symbol, which they did by questioning it and reinterpreting it. It is not surprising, then, that readers complained that the *Noitjie* looked old-fashioned.

In a rather humorous letter from Mrs GM Joubert, the *Noitjie*'s *kappie* is seen as in no way representative of what *boerevroue* wore in reality.[32]

> If the poor woman had to change her dress to what many of us wear on the farms, she'd be worse off than the grasshopper that apparently sheds its skin every other day. So, what does the *Boerevrou* wear? One wears an old church hat, one a bonnet, a cap, Pietie's hat, hubby's church hat, a sunbonnet a la mode, a *doek,* a towel, etc. etc. too much to mention. I myself go bare-headed ...[33]

This letter is important not only because it questions the traditional attire of the *Noitjie,* but also because it is the only instance of a suggestion that there is no one ideal of the *boerevrou*, no single image or emblem that might capture her essence.

Indeed, it was more usually implicitly accepted by readers and contributors that there is such a thing as a *boerevrou* who in some way or another leads a life of sacrifice for husband, children and *volk*.

Interestingly the *boer* woman's *kappie* – along with her other clothing, because it was practical and useful – became, for Olive Schreiner, a symbol of women's work and thus women's liberation. In a powerful passage dated 1898, Schreiner relates the story of a Boer woman whose husband was too ill to work (Andriessen 1903). In it, Schreiner (1923, 219) makes it clear that the woman's resultant behaviour made her vulnerable to ridicule:

> In the veld, some ten miles from the town, we saw approaching a large wagon with a team of ten donkeys ... As the wagon approached we saw it was laden with wood and dried cakes of manure for the next morning's market in the town ... Then it came nearer and we saw, in truth for the first time in our lives in such a position, a huge Boer woman of perhaps forty. She wore a black dress made without regard to fashion with a full short skirt and short jacket. On her head she had a large white cotton *kappie*, such as Boer women make, projecting far forward with white curtains hanging on to the shoulders. In her hand she had a wagon-whip made from bamboo eight or nine feet long, with the plaited leather cord long enough to reach the front donkeys of the span. She sat massively upright on the front-box ... We found out afterwards that she had nine children and was the wife of a man, an invalid and too feeble to work, that they were what is known in South Africa as bywoners, poor people living on the land of a richer farmer, and that she has supported her family entirely. She would take her wagon of fuel to the next morning's market, and the little clerks and shopkeepers and women with flowers in their hats would laugh at her *short black skirt* and her resolute scowl [my emphasis].[34]

Schreiner (1923, 219) is full of admiration for this woman, even holding her up as a kind of feminist ideal:

> Had we but been able to sit beside her on the *voorkist* and been able to make clear to her our meaning, we would have said: 'The new women

from all the world over send you their greetings, *Tante* [Aunt]! In you and such as you we see our leaders, and we are following in your steps. For God's sake, *Tante*, hold fast to your seat on the front chest and your fuel and carry it to market in spite of all the fools. I see in you, *Tante*, something that harmonises strangely with this great blue African sky above us ...

Prior to 1920, the *kappie* did not yet have the symbolic significance it was to develop in the 1920s. Grobler (2009, 31–32) observes that the women in the 1915 protest march were dressed *pynlik netjies* [painfully neatly]:

Almost all of them wore smart dresses and shoes, gloves and hats. It was the typical formal dress of the late Edwardian era in Britain, when black, brown and navy dresses, skirts and blouses with a rigid, almost male style was high fashion. Extravagant big hats decorated with plumes, artificial flowers and ribbons were also the trend of the time and were worn by protestors.

In a photograph taken at the time of the 1915 march (Fig. 9.3) it is clear that there was not yet uniformity of dress and the hats certainly were extravagant, each very different from the other.

In fact, the editor of the *Pretoria News* remarked at the time that it was a pity that only one *kappie* could be detected in the crowd of women; rather mockingly, he also lamented the fact that the women 'follow fashions from afar':

Ah, you daughters of the veld! Twenty years ago I knew you and I loved you in your kappies and your dimity for weekdays and your Princess robes for Saturday and Sunday ... What are you today? A Parody! You wear distorted hats, a year behind the fashion ... You follow the fashions from afar and they don't suit your rotund figures.[35]

However, in *Die Boerevrou*, the symbolic significance of the *kappie* was gradually being claimed. In December 1922, in an article titled '*Die Herinnering van 'n Ou Kappie*' [The Memories of an Old *Kappie*], the *kappie* was given a life of its own as the first-person narrator in the story of a young Voortrekker woman: 'It is almost

DIE DAMES AFGEVAARDIGDES VAN NATAL.   Foto: Otto Husemeyer.

Figure 9.3. The female delegates from Natal. Photograph by Otto Husemeyer in *Die Brandwag,* 1 September 1915, 116.

85 years ago that I saw the first light of day on the trek from the old Colony ... Sannie's mother made me on the long trek route to the north.'[36] The *kappie* goes on to tell the love story of Sannie and Piet, which ended with Piet being 'murdered' together with Piet Retief and Sannie also being killed at the hands of the Zulu. The *kappie* remarks: 'Yes, it is better for Sannie and for Piet – their Trek is over – but [what of] the poor *kappie*? Many changing fortunes, and finally, this little place in the cold museum, with memories, memories – nothing but memories!'[37] Though the *kappie* comes to symbolise the more general story of Sannie and Piet and the Voortrekkers, it represents, in particular, the sufferings of Sannie.

An even more notable episode in the construction of the symbol of the *kappie* was Mrs RT Steyn's request early in 1929 that women should wear national dress to the 'Dingaan's festival'. A letter written by Mrs Steyn to the mothers and the

daughters of the *volk* stressed the importance of the *kappies* (a prime example of an object from the past) in representing the history that Afrikaans women shared:

> If all the mothers and daughters, however, do their best to obtain something characteristic of Voortrekker dress for their outfits on Dingaan's Day, it will add immeasurably to the lustre of the festival day and enable us to immerse ourselves in the history of our *volk,* which should be a lasting inspiration for us ... *The dress of the Afrikaans woman, which represents the Voortrekker history, would not be out of place in the shadow of the monument, which merely represents another trek on the journey of suffering that the Afrikaans woman has walked on the road to freedom and independence* [my emphasis].[38]

Later in 1929, a letter from Rikie Postma about the festival was given editorial prominence. She suggested that women should, as far as possible, wear replicas of Voortrekker attire to the festival. For this purpose, examples would be on display in the archives in Pretoria so that women could copy them. Pictures would also be published in magazines. *Die Boerevrou* put its full weight behind this endeavour.

By the 1930s, the *kappie* was firmly established as a symbol of the suffering, yet strong, *volksmoeder*. At the centenary celebrations of the Great Trek (1938), and again at the march of Afrikaner women to the Union Buildings in 1940, the women all appear fully attired in Voortrekker dress with their *kappies.* By this time, as has been pointed out by Van der Watt (1998, 55) and Marschall (2004), the issue of racial purity had also become of central concern in the *volksmoeder* discourse. The Afrikaner woman was seen not only as the educator of her children, but also as the representative of white, Christian civilisation and as the guardian of the racial boundaries of her *volk*. In 1949, Malherbe would say: 'Now that it's fashionable to wear this dress at festivals everywhere, one barely realises how recently it all began.'[39]

The *kappie* had, in the 1920s, gradually begun to symbolise the *volksmoeder*, and the debate about the front page of *Die Boerevrou* is but one example of how this symbol was eventually constructed.

A TENTATIVE BECOMING

While readers of *Die Boerevrou* differed initially on what the essential characteristics of the *boerevrou* were, and how she should be represented, they were, however,

capable of imagining themselves as *boerevroue*, with shared interests, concerns and characteristics, and how these might be represented in an idealised depiction. They actively participated in this process of imagination, but always within the limits of the already available v*olksmoeder* discourse.

While they themselves were shaped by Afrikaner nationalism, it is clear that women were also actively involved in its shaping. However, it is necessary to critically evaluate the identities, roles and actions that they helped to construct for themselves in discussions such as the one about the *Noitjie*. Within the *volksmoeder* discourse, there was an important re-evaluation of those roles, skills and characteristics that were traditionally associated with women. This celebration of 'the Feminine', which is an undeniable and significant aspect of the *volksmoeder* discourse, is an important development from a feminist point of view. In a sense, the positive value attached to the traditional roles, skills and characteristics of women is a challenge to the male world and might, therefore, constitute the beginning of resistance. However, even though such a celebration of the feminine might contain the potential for genuine feminist resistance, it could also potentially affirm the very conditions of women's oppression. This is because such affirmations are often couched – as indeed with the *volksmoeder* discourse – in essentialist and naturalist terms.

The paradox of the *volksmoeder* discourse is thus that, although the emphasis on difference and the celebration of the Feminine on the one hand elevated women, the constructed nature of the differences was obscured: the discourse ultimately restricted women since it made it necessary for them to remain in certain biologically determined spheres. Accordingly, nationalism was portrayed as an ideology that was beneficial to women *as women*. However, although women as women could obtain various benefits, privileges and rights, this was conditional upon them assuming the traditional roles of mothers and wives. If, in this discourse, they were to some extent empowered, this was directly and necessarily related to their identity as mothers in the limited and private sphere of the domestic domain. This identity was regarded as essential and natural to women, and it was not left up to women themselves to make a choice.

Therefore, while the *volksmoeder* discourse had a compensatory aspect in its celebration of the Feminine and thus contained the potential for resistance, it nonetheless concealed the fact that the identity and role of women was part of a web of social relations. Within the discourse, this role and identity was deemed essential

and natural to women, and therefore the discourse could not be emancipatory in any real sense. It may be that Malherbe, a uniquely sophisticated and liberated woman, chose the *Noitjie* as an emblem so as to emphasise that the Afrikaans woman was still in the process of 'becoming': it was up to women themselves to choose whatever identity they wished to assume, and what role they might want to play in the discourse of Afrikaner nationalism. The *Noitjie* as a representation of the *boerevrou* was questioned and contested in various ways by the readers of the magazine. Interestingly enough, while readers questioned her passivity and her conservatism, they never questioned her youthfulness. Malherbe's chosen emblem was not an assertive, active and strong *boerevrou* or mother: whether consciously or not, she chose the image of a reflective, pensive, humble young woman. Despite the essentialist tendencies of the *volksmoeder* discourse, the tentativeness and ambiguity of the *Noitjie* may suggest that Malherbe wished to highlight potential rather than achievement, contemplation rather than action – that she was genuinely interested in making Afrikaans women engage in a conversation with one another about themselves.

In a discussion of Tanya Poole's 2014 exhibition *The Becoming Child*, Bert Olivier (2014) writes as follows about the notions of being and becoming:

> ... being denotes the condition of something enduring, of it being somehow permanent, not subject to the vicissitudes of time, decay and erosion, while becoming signifies the opposite, namely a condition of incessant change, of subjection to time, erosion and decay. The problem was to think of something remaining identical to itself and at the same time demonstrably changing. Think of ... a human being, particularly a young human being.

Although never stated, one cannot help wondering whether the aim of Malherbe's project, as symbolised by the *Noitjie,* was to facilitate Afrikaans women deciphering their own being, thereby figuring out who they might become in the Afrikaner nationalist movement. One could argue that, at the very least, the two emblems chosen by Malherbe sent contradictory messages. However, Malherbe's decision to conduct the discussions within the parameters of the *volksmoeder* discourse meant that there were very few opportunities for women to engage in an authentic process of becoming. As such, *Noitjie*'s future was foreclosed: she was destined to be a *volksmoeder*, triumphant only in her suffering and service.

NOTES

1   *Die Boerevrou,* March 1919, 2.

2   In addition to founding *Die Boerevrou*, Malherbe became mayor of Pretoria and represented Wonderboom in Parliament in 1938. For an engagement with her story and the contradictions she negotiated, see Kruger (1991).

3   *Die Boerevrou*, September 1919, 2.

4   Women are referred to here as 'Afrikaans-speaking 'or 'Afrikaans' because 'Afrikaner' carries a particular ideological meaning – one that was not yet apparent in 1919.

5   See, for instance, Blignaut (2013); Chetty (2015); De Vaal (2007); Dick (2004); Du Plessis (2011); Engelbrecht (2011); Froneman (2012); Kenny (2008); Swart (2007); Swart and Van der Watt (2008); Van der Westhuizen (2018); Van Heyningen (2008); Viljoen (2004 & 2008); Vincent (1998 & 2000); and Willoughby-Herard (2010).

6   My translation of *Die moeder, die met liefde gekroonde koningin van iedere gelukkige huisgesin, is en sal tog altyd bly die middelpunt van aile geestelike ontwikkeling van 'n volk. Die moeders en vrouens van 'n volk vorm die siel daarvan. Mans en seuns (en teenswoordig die dogters ook) word opgelei vir hulle lewenswerk, maar die vrou, wat die moeilikste en mees gewigtige roeping het, moet maar deur foute en bittere lyding haar opleiding kry: en ondertussen ly die hele huisgesin.*

   As die Afrikaanse vrou nou gaat in sien dat haar roeping as moeder en vrou tog wei degelik eis dat sy dink en leer sal dit vir ons volk van baie groat waarde wees.

   Dan groei ons seker tot 'n groat volk, want dit hang tog alles van die moeders af.

   As 'n vrou haar huis met kennis regeer, kennis van gesondheidsleer en huishoudkunde, en die kinders 'n gevoel kan inwortel van die waarde van, op iedere gebied, met vaste kennis te werk te gaan, en niks op geed geluk of toeval te laat nie, sal die kinders dit seker baie ver bring en groat dinge vir land en volk doen.

   Kyk maar hoe ver het sy, die dappere moedertjie in die verlede gekom sender boekekennis of enige hulp van buite, net deur haar vasberadenheid en onverskrokke wilskrag, en haar groat geduld.

Ek sien haar wag, geduldig, sender woord,

soos sy al honderd jaar gewag het en gely.

Ek sien haar wen,

> *want haar naam*

> *is Vrou en Moeder!*

Miskien is dit 'n baie idealistiese voorwoord en 'n bietjie hoogdrawend vir 'n gewone vroueblaadjie wat heeltemal nie wil poseer vir iets besonder letterkundig of hooggeleerd nie, maar tog sender ideale kom ons nêrens nie!

En dit is wel met hoë ideale wat ons die werk begin. (*Die Boerevrou,* March 1919, 2)

7   *Die Boerevrou,* March 1919, 2.

8   My translation of *Ek sien haar wen, want haar naam is Vrou en Moeder!*

9   *Die Brandwag*, 1 September 1915, 101.

10 In the Rebellion of 1914, a group of Afrikaans-speaking South Africans engaged in violent protest against the involvement of the Union in World War I. The men involved in the Rebellion were either executed or detained for an extended period of time (Kruger 1991).

11 M Marais, '*Bij die Vroue-Betoging*', *Die Brandwag,* 1 September 1915, 100.

12 My translation of *Besonder indrukwekkend was dit om bo van die stoep van die Uniegebouw die skare van moeders en dogters te sien nader in die slingerpad, voetjie-vir-voetjie, stil, soos 'n lykstasie. Die agter-end van die stoet was nog bij die tweede slinger van die pad toe die voorpunt by die Uniegebouw aankom. Soos 'n oorstroming 'n stuk land inneem, stadig in die sekerheid dat hij onweerstaanbaar is, so het die skare die grote halfrond ingeneem voor die Uniegebouw.*

En soos 'n vloedgolf het meteens die besef van die skone verhewe bestaan van die vrouw ons oorstelp, toen ons haar daar so swijgend sien staan, uit die stille kring van hear daaglikse liefdewerk, om te probeer of liefde ook nie iets kan volbreng nie in die ender kring, die gebied van die staatsbestuur, waar die man eintlik thuis behoor, maar waar hij deur liefdeloosheid en gevoelloosheid alles verbrouw het. (M Marais, 'Bij die vroue-betoging', *Die Brandwag,* 1 September 1915, 100).

13 It was, however, not the first mass action by women. In 1900, there were protests against the continuation of the South African War, the removal of women and children from their homes, and the destruction of farms by the British. The first meeting, held on 9 July 1900 in Cape Town, attracted 550 women, while a national meeting, held in Paarl on 10 November 1900, was attended by 1 550 women. The latter, attended by representatives from all the provinces, was the first 'Women's Congress' in South Africa. Neither of these meetings was predominantly Afrikaans (De Villiers 1975, 47; Malan n.d., 201–205). In 1913, black women staged an anti-pass campaign in the

Orange Free State, and 600 of them marched to the office of the mayor of Bloemfontein to present him with a petition. See Walker (1982, 30–31).

14   My translation of *Die grond is heilig waar haar voete gaan– / op kamer-vloer, in moord-kamp, oor die straat ... .* Because this poem was written in the context of the women's march, the fact that it contains only one phrase that might be a reference to the march (*'oor die straat'* / across the street) was highly significant. Despite the march being one of the first mass ventures of Afrikaner women into the public sphere, the poem portrays them as largely confined to the domestic sphere.

15   My translation of *Ik sien haar win, deur lije, net soos Hij. / Ik sien haar win, vir man en soon en broeder.*

16   For a discussion of Van Wouw's work, see Berman (1983); Cohen (1938); Duffey (2008); and Ogilvie (1988).

17   See, for instance, Andriessen (1903); Brandt (1905); Neethling (1902 & 1917); Postma (1918); and Totius (1915).

18   My translation of *De ogen doen de vrouw spreken: Mijn kind is dood, maar ik zal niet geheel en al uitsterven: Mijn volk zal niet uitgeroeid worden.*

19   Here I make use of Althusser's (1972, 160–163) description of the interpellation of the individual as a subject. Where he uses the term 'ideology' I have used the term 'discourse', for an individual can be constituted as a subject by a discourse without the discourse necessarily being ideological. An ideological discourse, in short, is one that 'will try and reconstitute a new ideological unity using a "system of narration" as a vehicle which disarticulates the ideological discourses of the opposing forces'.

20   My translation of *In die begin het ons so baie planne gemaak. Maar uit die briewe van ons vriende het ons 'n ander en 'n breer blik op die saak gekrij en dit is uit hulle briewe en skrijwe dat ons die leidraad krij wat ons in die rigting neem waar ons moet gaan. Nou soek ons gedurig in ons briefwisseling om voeling te hou met die intekenaars en so te probeer gee wat hulle nodig het.* (*Die Boerevrou*, March 1921, 2)

21   Malherbe in *Die Boerevrou*, July 1921, 17. See also *Die Boervrou*, January 1927, 2. What is more difficult to establish, however, is who the readers actually were. *Die Boerevrou* was ostensibly aimed at white Afrikaans women of all ages and classes, both rural and urban. Whether it succeeded in reaching all these women cannot be established with any certainty.

22   My translation of *Dit was die eerste leesstof wat baie plattelandse vroue in Transvaal in hul eie taal gekry het. Dat dit die hart van ons boerevroue gesteel het, was baie duidelik uit die talryke briewe wat ons ontvang het, selfs van mense wat nie graag of maklik skrywe nie.*

23 My translation of *Die kunstenaar (Van Wouw) wou … in 'n beeld die siel weergee van die boervrou in die algemeen – haar reinheid, nederigheid, natuurlikheid, eenvoud, wat sy ook behoort te behou teenoor al die nuwerwetse opskik en gemaaktheid.*

    Nou wel het ek nog nooit 'n beeld gesien waarin die egte onvervalste Afrikaner vrouesiel so goed uitgedruk word as in hierdie beeld nie. Dis iets om amper voor op jou kniee te gaan. Dis iets soos die eenvoud van die groot swyende vlaktes self, ongerep, onbedorwe naïef. Is dit nie veel mooier om so iets geestelik hoogs en egs te sien nie, so iets allesomvattends en diepgaands? Ons weet almal dat die boerevrou werksaam is.

24 My translation of *Daar is iets op die soete, onskuldige gelaatstrekke, ja, want die Verlede van haar Volk is ernstig, en die Hede en die Toekoms is ook maar ernstig. Maar moedeloos? Nee! Sy is net stil tevrede, want sy berus in die beskikking van 'n Hoër Hand. Dit lyk vir my asof sy vir 'n paar oomblikke weggevlug het uit al die drukte van die lewe – miskien was dit huisskoonmaakdag of koekbakdag – en toe het sy erens op 'n stil plekkie in die veld so gaan staan en luister na die stem van die groot natuur om haar heen en die stille stem van haar eie siel. En as sy aanstons weer huis toe gaan, is sy sterk. Sy kan weer ly, en stry – en oor wen!* (*Die Boerevrou,* April 1923, 17)

25 ME Rothmann, one of seven children of a Swellendam wagon builder, was a graduate of the University of Cape Town. As a career woman, nationalist activist and single mother, she was far ahead of her time.

26 My translation of *Vir my stel sy die Afrikaanse vrou op haar mooiste voor, netjies, stil en kalm voor die wereld. Maar as ek haar so bekyk dan stel ek my voor hoe sy ook vrolik en plesierig kan wees as daar vrolikheid is, of beslis en heldhaftig as daar gevaar is.* (*Die Boerevrou*, April 1925, 15)

27 My translation of *Die Boerevroutjie is al moeg om so stil te staan, dit is nie in haar natuur nie. Se bv. u verander die prentjie in 'n mooi vroutjie wat sit en kouse stop en langs haar 'n waentjie met 'n babetjie daarin. Die regte boerevrou is mos altoos besig met werkies vir haar man en kinders.* (*Die Boerevrou*, April 1925, 15)

28 My translation of *veral moet sy kindertjies om haar hê, liewe goedjies wat sy met weerliefde beskou.* These three letters were published in *Die Boerevrou* (April 1923, 15; April 1923, 17).

29 My translation of *Wat vir my dus 'n mooi buiteblad vir die Boerevrou sal wees is: 'n voorstelling van 'n kamer in 'n boerewoning. By die tafel sit die vader en moeder. Sy is besig met 'n stukkie naaldwerk terwyl 'n tevrede glimlag om haar lippe speel en sy luister naar wat haar man aan 'n klein krulkoppie vertel. Die kind staan by pa se knie met haar ken op haar hand. Hy sit met sy pyp in sy hand, 'n klein seuntjie speel met dolosse op die vloer.*

30 My translation of *sy moet haar hoenders kosgee of haar seeppot roer.*

31 Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) describe the nation as an 'invented tradition'. This concept is used to refer to 'a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual of symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past'. Furthermore, the bond of tradition with the past is largely fictitious, while custom's continuity with the past is real. An invented tradition is a response to a new situation that is structured in accordance with old situations; it thus displays a degree of invariance. But custom is not at all invariant: although it allows innovation and change, it has to show compatibility with the precedent. The nation, then, is an invented tradition: the 'cultures it claims to defend are often its own inventions or are modified out of recognition' (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, 57). The historical consciousness of nationalism consists of 'amnesias and selections which ... can be profoundly distorting and deceptive' (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983: 12).

32 *Die Boerevrou*, April 1923, 15.

33 My translation of *As die arme vroutjie haar drag moet verander na wat baie van ons op die plaas dra sou sy erger wees as 'n sprinkaan wat glo al om die anderdag vervel. Nou ja wat dra die Boerevrou? Een dra 'n ou kerkhoed, een 'n kappie, 'n 'keps', Pietie se hoed, manlief se kerkhoed, 'n 'sunbonnet' a la mode, 'n doek, 'n handdoek ens. ens. te veel om op te noem. Ek myself loop kaalkop ...*

34 For the feminist Schreiner, the 'full short skirt and short jacket' would have represented liberation.

35 *Pretoria News*, 5 August 1915, cited in Grobler (2009, 32).

36 My translation of *Dit is byna 85 jaar gelede dat ek die eerste lewenslig aanskou het op die trek uit die ou Kolonie ... Sannie se ma het my gemaak op die lang trekpad na die Noorde.*

37 My translation of *Ja, dit is beter so vir Sannie en vir Piet – hulle Trek is oor – maar vir die ou Kappie? Menig wisselende lotgevalle, en eindelik, hierdie ou plekkie in die koue Museum, met herinnerings, herinnerings – niks as herinnerings!*

38 My translation of *As al die moeders en dogters hulle egter wil beywer om vir hulle kleredrag op Dingaansdag iets kenmerkends van die Voortrekkersdrag aan te skaf, dan kan dit onsaglik veel doen om die feesdag op te luister en ons te laat inlewe in die geskiedenis van ons volk, wat vir ons 'n blywende besieling moet bly ... Die kleredrag van die Afrikaanse vrou, wat die Voortrekkers-geskiedenis voorstel, sal nie uit sy plek wees nie in die skaduwee van die monument, wat maar net 'n verdere trek voorstel op die lydensweg, wat die Afrikaanse vrou bewandel het op die pad na vryheid en onafhanklikheid.*

39 My translation of *Noudat dit oral mode is om op die feeste die drag te dra, kan 'n mens amper nie besef hoe kort gelede dit was dat daar 'n begin gemaak is nie.*

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Cartoonists, Intellectuals and the Construction of Afrikaner Nationalism

PETER VALE

... [T]he archive may be largely about the past, but is always re-read in the light of the present: and in that reprise it always flashes up before us as a moment of danger.

Walter Benjamin quoted in Stuart Hall (2001, 89)

The fact that the study of nationalism is so voluminous should hardly come as a surprise. After all, the most powerful narrative of modernity is that of the nation state, which, in essence, is underpinned and driven by the idea of nationalism (Smith 1991, 71). Given this, we duly note that nationalism has been analysed in most disciplinary frames, including history, political science, sociology, law, economics, literature, cultural studies, gender studies, war studies and international relations. The list, it seems, is endless.

But nationalism has a vulgar life, too. It is inherent in everyday life, because it is 'deeply engrained in the dominant discourses of society' (Delanty 2007, 475). This life manifests itself especially in cultural form – in that crucial space where the everyday encounter becomes a lifetime of commitment to a particular cause and a way of life. This is where, as the record shows, nationalism can become the most destructive of human forces.

This chapter traces a South African version of this potential pathway to barbarism. Because of this, we will spend time – in the company of Walter Benjamin – thinking about the archive.

In recent times, cartooning about Afrikaners has become a subject of some interest (Verster 2003, 2004 & 2016). But establishing a link between Afrikaner

nationalism and the work of those cartoonists who reflected and sought to advance this fateful ideology is not a feature of the literature. An exception is a history master's thesis, written in Afrikaans, by political scientist Dirk Kotze (1988). I will try to draw these two threads a bit closer together: as will become clear, however, the biggest problem in this kind of exploration is to find a suitable vocabulary.

Three framing questions present themselves. Why view nationalism through the optic offered by cartoons? Why, at this point, view one genus of nationalism in South Africa through cartoons that were drawn half a century ago? And, finally, how does one establish a link between the craft of cartooning to the formidable power of nationalism? The answer to the first question is provided through a comparative lens: writing about the Philippines, Helen Yu-Rivera (2005, xi) suggests that the editorial cartoon – typically a humorous and satirical visual comment on matters of the day – can be a 'rich source of information' about nationalism, and other things besides.

So, cartoons are not just drawings that offer insights into the politics of the moment; they peer into the lives and cultures of the times in which – and for which – they are drawn. This 'reading-in' process can be a hazardous exercise because it tries to do the impossible, namely to reconstruct the environment, both intimate and distant, in which a cartoon was created. This raises deep and complex challenges of how to approach the archive, and indeed of understanding the task assigned to the cartoon.

Like other forms of art, cartoons are 'aesthetic interruptions' that can be disruptive as well as constitutive; they can also be critical or conservative. Not all editorial cartooning – either in South Africa or elsewhere – is, however, critical or disruptive. The cartoons that will be discussed in the latter section of this chapter were drawn by a 'supportive insider', to use a term suggested by Edward Said (in Kennedy and Suny 2001, 14).

As Said points out, 'supportive insiders' are interested in promoting the status quo – patriotism, corporatism, and a sense of race-, class- and gender-privilege: this suggests that they share the value system of those in power. In contrast to these are thinkers (or artists) who believe in a competing value system. In Said's terms, these are 'subversive outsiders', and their calling is critique, subversion, and speaking the proverbial truth to power.

Can the cartoonist be seen as an intellectual? To answer in the affirmative requires two things. Firstly, that we appreciate that the agency of the cartoonist

is often yoked to that of the editor: anecdotal evidence suggests that this was the case in the pages of *Die Burger*, the newspaper from which the cartoons in this chapter are drawn. The final product was, invariably, joint work. Secondly, we are required to expand the term intellectual 'to include all those involved in the sphere of culture, that is, in the world of symbols' (Coser 1998, 288). In positioning the cartoonist's work as intellectual work, we need to push this idea out a bit further by drawing on the writings of Antonio Gramsci, and specifically on his notion that intellectuals are central to the politics of transformation. Gramsci draws an important distinction between 'traditional' and 'organic' intellectuals – these are, respectively, Said's 'supportive insiders' and 'subversive outsiders'. Like Said, Gramsci was concerned with the latter, who, he hoped, would effectively move a target audience into action.

I focus here on a single cartoonist whose work shifted between the traditional and organic – TO Honiball (1905–1990), the second of three celebrated cartoonists for the Cape Town-based *Die Burger* (the others were DC [Daniël] Boonzaaier and, more recently, Fred Mouton). For many decades, this daily newspaper was the official mouthpiece of the National Party in the Cape province, and widely regarded as the most authoritative mirror of, and vehicle for, Afrikaner nationalism in the country. Honiball's long career spanned the periods in which Afrikaner nationalists aspired to political power, achieved it at the ballot box in 1948, and sought to maintain and consolidate it in the face of growing domestic and foreign threats and pressures. I will largely focus on the sketches and symbols in the third period.

An answer to the second framing question, relating to cartoons drawn 50 years ago, emerges from the belief that the concept of nationalism is greatly burdened: although embedded in history, nationalism is invariably called upon to explain the present. There is an immediate edge to memory: Afrikaner nationalism returns to South Africa again and again. In early 2018, a decision by an Afrikaans-language high school in Vereeniging, south of Johannesburg, to refuse admission to 55 English-speaking learners, all of whom were black, triggered extensive community protests.

The third question, regarding the link between the craft of cartooning and the power of nationalism, must remain hanging, unfortunately. This is because the grammar required to bridge the divide between the comic and the nation(al) has yet to be discovered. Its resolution will be mediated, it seems, through the social

theory that links the growing uncertainty about the future of nationalism – are we in a post-national moment, or is nationalism on the rise? – with the explosion of interest in political satire driven by social media.

On the latter issue, one thing seems clear: the complexity of the times suggests that the form of the political is changing, and rapidly too. As a result, the importance of the cartoon – in a multiplicity of forms, traditional and electronic – as a means of political participation is on the increase. This may well make the relationship between the cartoon and the idea of nationalism more complex than this chapter is able to encompass. Indeed, it could be suggested that the cartoon is a kind of a doppelgänger to the national – a shadow, certainly; even, perhaps, its ghost.

CARTOONS AND THE NATIONALISMS OF SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa, the cause – and course – of nationalism has been convoluted, which is why it continues to be both complex and contested. Several strains of nationalism stalk just about every political conversation in this country. We will need a nodding acquaintance with each of these – and the attention paid to them by successive generations of cartoonists – before we consider the case of Afrikaner nationalism.

The counterweight to all forms of nationalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, namely British imperialism, was hostile to the idea of an inclusive South Africa. The authority of empire and the legitimacy of imperialism were vested in and carried by successive waves of English-speaking settlers, whose fidelity lay with the British Crown. With few exceptions, they were what Benedict Anderson (2001, 576) has referred to as 'privileged metropolitans'. Basically, their identity and sense of belonging – essential conditions for achieving any form of nationalism – reached beyond the conceptual and territorial limits that could be imposed by national borders.

As Ken Vernon (2000, 13) has pointed out, the first editorial cartoons published in South Africa were supportive of imperialism. One reason for this is that the craft was carried into the country's earliest publications by British subjects whose political judgements were infused with the understanding that imperial power should reign supreme. So, the metropolitan 'home' was transposed to the colonial 'place' – beliefs, tropes and symbols of Mother England were used to caricature South African events. On complex colonial frontiers, like the Eastern

Cape, cartoons – as early as 1831 (Schoonraad 1983, vi) – evinced a pro-English settler bias and, equally, a decided anti-liberal and anti-missionary tilt. Those same jingoistic pens would later come to depict Afrikaners as 'scoundrels, murders, lunatics' (Vernon 2000, 24).

As a general rule, cartoonists drawing for the English-language press continued to work in this tradition. They seemed unable to identify with the Afrikaner patriarch – a bearded, pipe-smoking figure imbued with the aura of working the land. If anything, this image was used to lampoon Afrikaners. One reason for this is that cartoonists working for English-language publications were often expatriates who had no deep connection with the country or its landscape, not to mention an understanding of Afrikaner history; they were, as Ken Vernon (2000, 49) put it, 'graphic mercenaries'.

This hope that South Africa would form part of a greater imperial purpose was gainsaid by the idea of republicanism. Originally encouraged by the American and French revolutions, this form of sovereign organisation – and the loyalty it engendered – was stimulated in many corners of an expanding world throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Like other forms of republicanism, the one that prevailed in South Africa not only believed that national loyalty was based on the consent of the governed within sovereign national borders, it was also antagonistic to the expansionist ambitions of empire.

The beliefs that underpinned Afrikaner nationalism were cast in essentialist terms: the nationalism to which people who increasingly called themselves Afrikaners aspired was, as Jonathan Jansen (2009) has put it, 'in the blood'; their identity was God-given, and they were united primarily by their faith. They saw their culture as distinctive and unique, and the language of Afrikaans, which was used to carry it, as ordained by a Higher Hand. Their understandings of 'freedom' were crafted within a narrative of exclusive interpretation of deliverance in Old Testament terms. As a 'chosen people', the Boers (as they chose to call themselves) had – like Moses and the Jews – been delivered from the hands of an oppressor.

This idea of deliverance was underpinned by the belief that the Boers had heroically escaped British oppression by embarking on the Great Trek, an odyssey representing a form of Manifest Destiny in which a chosen people journeyed deep into the hinterland to claim their freedom from British colonial rule, and the space to express their burgeoning identity.

Many of these understandings of Afrikaner nationalism emerged as tropes in their evolving culture. Periodically, insider cartoons presented *nasieskap* [nationhood] and *vryheid* [freedom] as two celebratory sides of the same coin. Drawn by Honiball, a cartoon along these lines appeared in the pages of *Die Burger* on 21 May 1954, the 80th birthday of Dr DF Malan.

Because Malan features repeatedly in the pages that follow, I should note that this one-time editor of *Die Burger* led the Herstigte Nasionale Party [Reconstituted National Party] when it won the 1948 general election, and went on to become South Africa's first Afrikaner nationalist prime minister. Malan was also a trained dominee in the Dutch Reformed tradition, and, although this will not be discussed here, it is as well to remember that organised religion acted as a support – a bannister, to use Hannah Arendt's term – for Afrikaner nationalism.

The Great Trek is a powerful theme in the imaginary of Afrikaner nationalism; indeed, images drawn from the mythology around this event return again and again in the archive. The distinctive garb – almost a uniform – said to be worn by those who left the Cape to escape the yoke of British colonial rule and venture into the unknown interior to live out their greater destiny appears in many of those images; so, too, does the Voortrekker Monument, which commemorates this seminal moment in the development of their nationalism.

A cartoon drawn by Honiball and published in *Die Burger* on 15 December 1949, the day before the monument was formally opened, depicts a Boer family – father, mother, daughter and son – dressed in Voortrekker garb, walking determinedly and arm-in-arm towards the viewer, with the distinctive outline of the monument behind them. This is a celebration of the notion of homeland, the idea of *patria,* that runs through all narratives of nationalism.

Early efforts at state building – through not fully sovereign 'nation states' – in the country's interior helped to mythologise the idea that Afrikaners enjoyed a fairly distinctive form of nationalism. Deliberately proclaimed 'republics', those states were little more than small territories staked off by clans who had gathered together for protection (or worship) around a charismatic leader. There were, however, two important exceptions: the *Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek* [South African Republic] (ZAR) of 1852–1902, and the *Oranje-Vrystaat* [Orange Free State] of 1854–1902, both of which were substantial polities, and may be regarded as fully fledged states. Heroic narratives around those entities provided an emotional hinterland which, from the 1920s onwards, sought to

claim that Afrikaner nationalism 'was anchored in tradition' (Delanty 2007, 473). Writing about women and nationalism in South Africa, Anne McClintock (1991, 104) has called this 'an august and immemorial past' through which a golden age could be recalled.

An emotional edge was added to this 'golden age' by the dogged resistance of those states to imperial intrusion, not only into their own territories but also into the rest of the southern African interior after the discovery of diamonds and gold. This pushback against Britain resulted in the South African War (1898–1902), which deepened the divide between metropolitanism and republicanism among South Africa's settler communities. Known as the Boer War, it divided the states of Europe, too. Its 'internationalisation' was also evidence that the southern African region had incorporated the system of European states (Vale 2014); in many of these, cartooning and its relationship to nationalism were already established.

Although jingoistic in both form and message, the work of British cartoonists during the Boer War reflected some doubts about British policy (see Williams 2013). Importantly, a generation of Afrikaner cartoonists was inspired by the anti-British work of influential Europeans. The Dutch cartoonist Johan Braakensiek (1858–1940) and his French counterpart Jean Veber (1864–1928) used – often imagined – symbols from South Africa to comment on events relating to the plight of the Boers.

Prior to the war, the British were portrayed as *uitlanders* [outlanders] who were intent on exploiting and excluding locals while extracting from the country the maximum possible amount of wealth. This was drawn into an analytical frame whereby imperialism and capitalism were perceived as one and the same thing. In a loose fashion, these European cartoons, which were critical of the British and supportive of the Boers, may be regarded as the origin of the 'tradition' of Afrikaner nationalist cartooning.

Fundamentally, this cartooning portrayed Afrikaners as devout, hard-working, civilised and rational, in contrast with various Others in broader society. The cartoon targets were mostly the British, and South Africa's black inhabitants – the Boer's fellow countrymen – were seldom depicted. There was certainly no preoccupation, as in the United States, for example, with producing cartoons focusing on the facial features of the African 'Other'. That said, the portrayal of nationalism in Afrikaner cartoons reinforced interpretations of ethnic purity that were as racist (and masculinist) as those that celebrated British imperialism.

Over time, however, Afrikaner cartoonists came to explicitly reflect – and bolster – the racist institutions shaped under apartheid.

Underpinning the Afrikaner hope for freedom and nationalism was a constant search for a cultural tradition, and the question may be asked where cartoonists fitted into this yearning. A three-part book series issued in 1947, the year before the National Party rose to power, offers a revealing account of Afrikaner nationalist thinking on this issue (Van den Heever and Pienaar 1947). There is no mention of cartooning as a form of national culture, nor is it considered under the rubric of art. Yet a publication that appeared three years later to celebrate the second victory of the National Party ran twelve editorial cartoons over four pages (Goosen 1953, 150–153).

The latter cartoons were culled from various newspapers that were supportive of Afrikaner nationalism. They dealt with various issues: the power and influence of capitalism, the threat of communism, and the false promises of the opposition; in one such cartoon, Prime Minister DF Malan is depicted as a steady helmsman of the ship of state on a choppy sea. Two cartoons, both penned by Honiball, draw on a trope familiar in patriotic art, namely land and landscape: one depicts a woman in Voortrekker garb rapturously celebrating a sunrise, while in the other a flood of water labelled 'Nationalism' breaks through a dam wall.

This comparison with the search for a national cultural tradition makes an obvious point: while cartooning was not regarded as worthy of inclusion in the canon of high Afrikaner culture, politicians understood the importance of cartoons in the political life of Afrikaner nationalism. Seemingly, Afrikaner politicians realised that cartoons were not cultural pollutants; instead, they had become integral to the politics of the country.

A final thread of nationalism beyond the imperial and republican – namely 'African nationalism' – is woven into the South African story. From slow beginnings, this strain flourished during the anti-colonial struggles that spread across the globe after World War II, even though, in South Africa, its roots pre-date World War I. The struggle for African nationalism in South Africa was not well drawn by local cartoonists.

There are, nevertheless, notable exceptions, including cartoons by the activist and intellectual Eddie Roux, which were published in the Communist Party newspaper *Umvikeli Thebe/The African Defender* (Pretorius 2011). The discovery of these cartoons suggests that yet more such riches may be uncovered.

Since the demise of apartheid, however, South Africa has been the site of some of the most prolific editorial cartooning in the history of the genre (Mason and Curtis 2009). Much of it has focused on the person of Nelson Mandela and his role in encouraging a common South African nationalism through the trope once suggested by Desmond Tutu – who has a separate and very active presence in cartoons – of the 'Rainbow Nation' (see Dugmore, Francis and Schacherl 1999; Verwoerd and Mabizela 2000). But this issue – and, indeed, these historical figures – lie beyond the scope of this essay.

A CAUTIONARY NOTE

Much serious writing in the space where politics and culture meet returns to the work of cultural theorist Stuart Hall, in particular his observation that no archive is without contamination (Hall 2001, 92). Indeed, as events in the twenty-first century teach, cartoons (and their archives) are vexing and vexatious. In 2005, the *Jyllands-Posten,* a newspaper based in Copenhagen, published a series of cartoons depicting Islam and the Prophet Muhammad. Protests by Muslims living in Denmark eventually spread throughout the world. This experience suggests that conversations around cartoons and cartooning are not free of social malice, political mischief or cultural prejudice. The lessons learnt from this fracas suggest that free speech, which is generally cherished by societies that call themselves 'open', needs to be balanced by considerations of possible offence that might be caused to those who feel excluded from society. In the spirit of Hall's warning, nothing that was found in the archives and used for this essay can, thus, be regarded as 'neutral'.

Plainly, it is troublesome that the humour associated with cartoons should be used to describe the rise of Afrikaner nationalism – a form of nationhood that gave rise to a pervasive policy of separatism, namely apartheid, which, in 1976, came to be declared a 'crime against humanity' by the United National General Assembly. In these circumstances, it is difficult to suggest that wit – even, perhaps, light-heartedness – might have played a positive role in the unfolding of the Afrikaner national consciousness. This resonates with Walter Benjamin's celebrated early-1940s claim that '[t]here is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. And just as such a document is not free of barbarism, barbarism taints also the manner in which it was transmitted from one owner to another' (Benjamin 1941).

But it may help to put the archive referred to in this essay in a wider context. As we have established, Afrikaners were lampooned by generations of British (and British Settler) cartoonists, and by countless writers in the English language. Using the idiom of their times, the Edwardians wrote that the Boers were 'dour' and consumed by 'a fatalistic Old Testament religion and an ardent and consuming patriotism' (Doyle 1976, 7).

This was also the way in which Afrikaners (and their leaders) were depicted in caricatures and cartoons. The stock figure was Paul Kruger, the person who provoked the ire of the British (and their supportive insider cartoonists) by a career-long resistance to imperial expansion into southern Africa. Elected as president of the ZAR in 1883, Kruger went on to preside over the rise of the Witwatersrand Goldfields, and lead the ZAR into the Boer War – a conflict today known as the South African War, though it is sometimes referred to as the Anglo-Boer War.

An infamous caricature of Kruger appeared in March 1900 in *Vanity Fair* (1900, 171–172), a British weekly magazine published between 1868 and 1914. Drawn by 'Drawl' (Sir Leslie Matthew Ward), it depicts a stern Kruger in a black top-hat and black coat, wearing a long white beard. He is reading from a book (presumably the Bible), while holding a furled umbrella in his left hand. This image became a template for the image of the Afrikaner as a stubborn and embattled people living in distant Africa. In the same issue of *Vanity Fair* (1900, 172), an anonymous author described Kruger in scurrilous, parodic terms as a '... stupid, sordid, ill-favoured, pious, wicked old man who dresses disgracefully and smokes too much'.

Unsurprisingly, Afrikaner cartoonists responded vigorously and repeatedly to this kind of scorn. The imperial project in southern Africa is portrayed as an exercise in wealth extraction and bullying, while the heroism attached to Afrikaner self-reliance builds towards the goal of establishing Afrikaner nationalism in a hostile world (see Vernon 2000, 26–39). In a striking cartoon (probably drawn in the late 1920s), Honiball's celebrated predecessor, DC Boonzaaier, depicts a lamb quivering before two ravenous wolves. The lamb is labelled *Klein Nasie* [Small Nation], while the wolves are labelled *Imperialisme* [Imperialism] and *Militarisme* [Militarism].

Boonzaaier introduced a series of characters that would shape the ethos of Afrikaner cartooning. The most celebrated – and notorious – was the prototypical Johannesburg mining magnate disparagingly called 'Hoggenheimer'. Ken Vernon

(2000, 32) points out that the 'original name and figure of Hoggenheimer came from a play by Owen Hall, *The Girl from the Keys,* which played in Cape Town in the early 1900s'. Many cartoons were framed by the Hoggenheimer trope – a favourite linked Hoggenheimer to the English-language press, which was considered to be both pro-empire as well as racially liberal. In her seminal biography of DF Malan, Lindie Koorts writes:

> ... a wealthy Jewish capitalist ... (Hoggenheimer) ... was portrayed as the true power behind the scenes ... In Boonzaaier's cartoons, Hoggenheimer was set on impoverishing the Afrikaner in his pursuit of money, and in this quest, dictated to cabinet ministers and newspaper editors alike. Malan himself regarded these cartoons as extremely valuable. (Koorts 2014, 194–195)

The cartoonist and writer Andy Mason notes further that 'Hoggenheimer, in one form or another, has maintained a constant presence in South African cartooning for more than a hundred years' (Mason 2010, 45).

The visual impact of Boonzaaier's vitriolic attacks was immense, and many believed that the failure of Prime Minister Louis Botha (who served from 1910 to 1919) to respond to cartoon representations in *Die Burger* of him as a puppet of the British helped to ruin his health. When Botha died of pneumonia at the age of 57, Boonzaaier was dubbed 'the man who killed Botha' (Vernon 2000, 53). This was critical cartooning at its most destructive.

At this point, it is necessary to consider how understandings of nationalism can change. Essentialist understandings of nationalism – even of Afrikaner nationalism – are not sustainable. Nationalism is a social construction, and cartoons helped to create Afrikaner nationalism.

THINKING ABOUT NATIONALISM

Two well-known remarks about the unification of Italy in 1861 are helpful in navigating the notion that nationalism is constructed. The first was made in April 1847 by Prince Klemens von Metternich, Austria's long-serving foreign minister, who dismissed the idea of Italian unification by claiming that 'Italy is only a geographical expression'. The second came from polymath Massimo d'Azeglio, a crusader for Italian unification, who remarked: 'We have made Italy: now we must make Italians.'

Even though there are multiple approaches to the study of nationalism, it is both possible – and necessary – to position the link between cartoons and the construction of Afrikaner nationalism within the notion of modernity. Historically, Afrikaner nationalism was the consequence of three interlinked features of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, namely 'capitalism, chronometry, and shipbuilding technology' (Anderson 2001, 565). These developments facilitated southern Africa's incorporation into a global system of sovereign-based national states. And, as we have seen, the process of this incorporation was caught between the ambitions of the British Empire and the goals of republican-centred nationalism.

If these framed the burgeoning international relations within which South Africa would emerge as a modern state, the essential condition for the growth of Afrikaner nationalism was the path of literacy, underpinned by economic progress. Both of these were essential to the search for a common identity by means of which Afrikaner nationalism could flourish.

Readers familiar with the literature on Afrikaner nationalism may raise eyebrows over this proposed linkage, because it bypasses many interpretations which suggest that Afrikaner nationalism was driven by a primitive impulse, namely 'race'.

There is much evidence of this, of course, but a one-dimensional explanation ignores the fact that nationalism can live many different lives, and assume many forms. So, as James Kellas (1991, 3) has pointed out, nationalism can appear as an ideal in one form, and behave differently in another. As the philosopher and (now) novelist Leonhard Praeg recently showed, this is a complex issue. He writes:

> People who demanded an apology from the Afrikaner – and back in the 1970s this was the kind of logical outcome that only a radical foreigner could dream up – made the mistake of thinking that there existed a people called the Afrikaner, who devised and implemented a policy called apartheid; this policy was unfair, and they should now apologise for it. Little did they know that they got the causal relationship all wrong: it is not as if the people pre-existed the policy, as if they devised and implemented it. Rather, the Afrikaner people were born from the policy itself. (Praeg 2017, 50)

This is a tangled debate, but for our immediate purposes it is important to appreciate that one-dimensional understandings of nationalism (or any social phenomenon) are seldom sustainable. Praeg's argument reveals the link between imagination and nationalism. In turn, this draws us into the heart of the conceptual debate about the origins of nationalism, which is important for explaining how cartoons came to assist the signing and sealing of Afrikaner nationalism.

In 1983, the Irish-American scholar Benedict Anderson published his influential book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. If the subtitle conveyed the arc of, and approach to, its subject, the main title signalled a new way of thinking about how nationalisms came to be, how they operated, and how they changed. This shift resulted from the social constructivist turn in sociology, and the deepening power of interdisciplinary approaches. Nationalism was no longer seen as preordained – it could not be 'in the blood'. Instead, it was seen as an intersubjective construct, which opened the door to appreciating the importance of imagery, including cartoons, in bolstering its origins and evolution.

In line with the notion of nations as 'imagined communities', Anderson argues that literacy reinforces the web of national understanding through the sharing of symbols and the codification of a common belief through language. In the Afrikaner case, language was a powerful instrument of nationalism – as powerful as, say, the Welsh language in the case of Welsh nationalism. However, it is important to point out that Afrikaans is a Creole language that was captured and codified in order to construct a unique culture around which both the Afrikaner community and a nation-in-construction could be imagined.

Here, the cartoons that appeared in the Afrikaans press, especially *Die Burger*, rendering Afrikaners as 'nation', succeeded in positioning the nationalism they were imagining at the centre of Afrikaner political discourse. Importantly, as Anderson has also pointed out, nationalism is invented by 'print languages', and not languages as such (1996, 134). The fact that these cartoons were idiomatically positioned in a culture that was increasingly shared, and their captions written in a common language, drew them into the promotion of a distinctive form of nationalism. In this process, *Die Burger* was the central vehicle.

Boonzaaier, its seems, understood this point long before Anderson made it explicit. In an interview (that is, unfortunately, undated), Boonzaaier claimed that 'no cartoonist ever achieved great results unless attached to a strong party newspaper' (in Vernon 2000, 53).

FIVE CARTOONS THAT HELPED TO CONSOLIDATE AFRIKANER NATIONALISM

Our focus now falls on five cartoons that appeared in the 1950s and 1960s. However well researched, a choice of cartoons is invariably personal, and therefore subjective. My concern has been to show how one cartoonist, a supportive insider, helped to consolidate and seal the triumph of Afrikaner nationalism. The cartoonist in question, as noted above, was TO Honiball, cartoonist for *Die Burger* from 1941 to 1975. This is a remarkably long period in any career. As noted earlier, it also coincides with the vital years of the National Party's electoral triumph and, ultimately, the consolidation of Afrikaner nationalism.

Thomas Ochse Honiball was born in the Eastern Cape hamlet of Cradock, and was raised at the epicentre of Afrikaner thought, the university town of Stellenbosch in the Western Cape. His father was a schoolmaster at the town's prestigious Paul Roos Gymnasium. In 1927, Honiball dropped out of architectural school at the largely English-language University of Cape Town, on the grounds that the technical-type drawing required by the profession was incompatible with his spontaneous style (Verster 2016, 85).

He then travelled to Chicago to learn the craft of window dressing, but after attending night classes in drawing, he turned to teaching and was eventually employed in advertising, a profession he took up when he returned to South Africa in 1930 (Verster 2003, 208, 210 & 212). Six years later, he was appointed to the staff of Nasionale Pers as a full-time illustrator for its publications. In 1941, he was appointed as the full-time cartoonist for the group's flagship publication – *Die Burger,* the official mouthpiece of the National Party.

Less of a disruptive outsider than his predecessor, DC Boonzaaier, Honiball was nonetheless committed to the cause of Afrikaner nationalism. Although his work was less acerbic than Boonzaaier's, he often returned to themes that had been effectively used by the latter. This included portraying General Jan Smuts, South African prime minister until the electoral upheaval of 1948, as a puppet of the British in much the same way that Boonzaaier had drawn Smuts's predecessor, General Louis Botha.

Both cartoonists understood that the power of the message came from the constant repetition of images, metaphors and tropes which lampooned these two leaders in particular.

A striking Honiball cartoon – drawn in October 1943 – shows a fawning Smuts standing before an expansive, cigar-smoking Winston Churchill outside the British prime minister's residence at Number 10 Downing Street. A sign in a window reads: 'WANTED: Handy man for the Empire'. The caption reads: *'VELDM. Smuts (aan Churchill): Grootbaas, hier's ek weer met my gereedskap voor jou deur'* [Field Marshal Smuts (to Churchill): 'Big Boss, here I am at your door again with my tools'].

For Afrikaner cartoonists, Smuts was both a villain and a hero, drawn ambiguously as, on the one hand, a servant of imperialism, and, on the other, a Boer War hero and author of *'n Eeu van Onreg* [A Century of Injustice], the well-known polemic against British rule.

After 1948, the tone of *Die Burger* cartoons shifted crucially from that of 'disruptive outsider' into that of 'supportive insider'. Like those of intellectuals engaged in other aspects of the nationalist project, the cartoonist's task had changed; disruption was no longer necessary. The new task was constitutive, to deepen the sense that Afrikaners were a community. The 'imagined community' had been established, but for nationalism to succeed, it needed to be consolidated.

Throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s, Honiball's work sought to consolidate Afrikaner Nationalism and to celebrate its achievements. Five formative cartoons are discussed below:

Cartoon One (*Die Burger*, 16 February 1951, Fig. 10.1) uses a birth metaphor – the legend of the stork delivering a baby – to announce a series of new policies that would play a central role in consolidating apartheid. It was drawn at a particularly buoyant moment in the unfolding of the Afrikaner nationalist project. The unity of Afrikaners, which had long bedevilled the search for nationalism, had been achieved.

But the government was building towards the passing of the Separate Representation of Voters Act (1951), an egregious piece of legislation that removed South Africa's so-called coloured people from the common voters' roll. This confirmed that Afrikaner nationalism would be built on the basis of racial and ethnic exclusion.

The names given to the 'bundles of joy' – *Voorspoed* [progress], *Rassevrede* [racial peace], *Volkseenheid* [national/people's unity] and *Vryheid* [freedom] – offer an interesting insight into the political nomenclature of the age. The second of these, *Rassevrede*, may appear strange, given that the national discourse was one
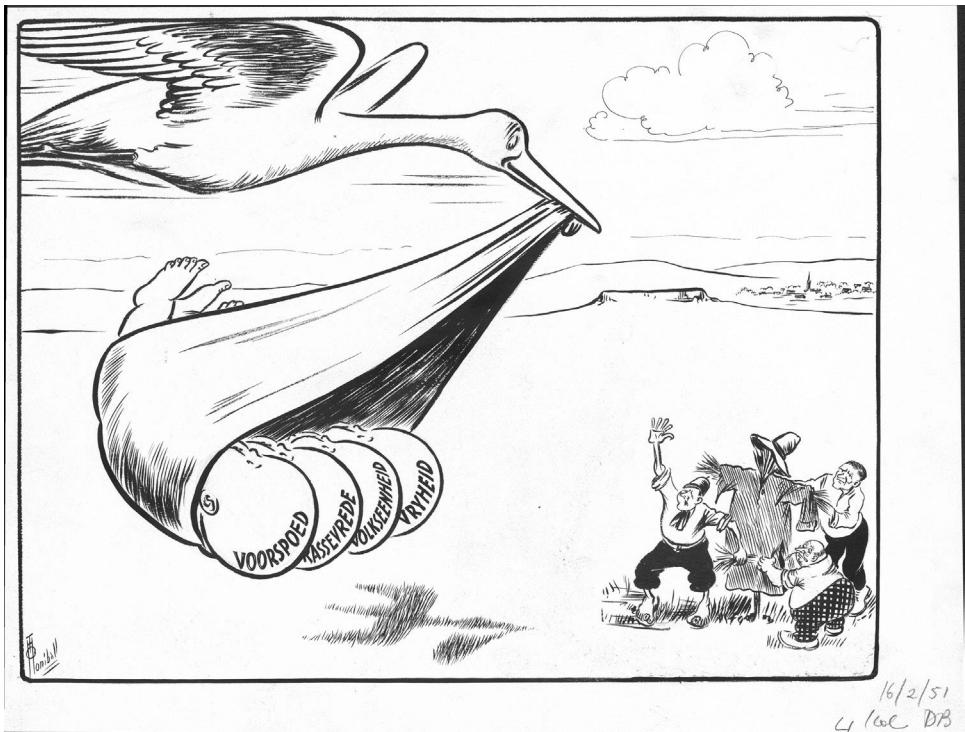
Figure 10.1. Cartoon by TO Honiball in *Die Burger*, 16 February 1951. Naspers: Honiball & Boonzaaier & Fred Mouton Collection, MS 339.2.L.12. Manuscripts section, Stellenbosch University Library and Information Service.

of racial exclusion, but, as Koorts points out, the reasoning was that the retention of 'coloured' people on the common voters' roll was giving rise to racial tensions (email communication, 6 March 2018). The figures in the lower right-hand corner are members of the United Party, the parliamentary opposition at the time, depicted as clutching at straws.

The troublesome (and misleading) political message aside, the drawing reveals the brilliance of Honiball's penmanship. The panoramic background is a familiar trope – that of landscape – and the South African *platteland* [countryside] is drawn with minimal strokes. The *dorpie* [hamlet] in the distance, with its easily recognisable church steeple, was almost certainly intended to be the reassuring sight of a Dutch Reformed church, many of which were, at the time, being built on the *platteland*.

Figure 10.2. Cartoon by TO Honiball in *Die Burger*, 9 October 1954. Naspers: Honiball & Boonzaaier & Fred Mouton Collection, MS 339.2.0.18. Manuscripts section, Stellenbosch University Library and Information Service.

Cartoon Two (*Die Burger*, 9 October 1954, Fig. 10.2) is more enigmatic, and also more ominous. The left-hand figure hovering in the sky is Christiaan de Wet (1854–1922), a Boer War general who was president of the Orange Free State for a single day, and later joined the ill-fated Afrikaner rebellion in 1914. His inclusion in the cartoon is explained by the fact that it was published on the eve of the hundredth anniversary of De Wet's birth, when a bronze equestrian statue by Coert Steynberg of the iconic Boer War figure was unveiled at the Raadzaal in Bloemfontein.

A birth date and a statue help to explain the presence of the other hovering figure – Paul Kruger. His birthday was commemorated (by way of a public holiday) the day after the cartoon appeared. But that year, 10 October fell on a Sunday, with its religious restrictions. The statue, which has since been moved from Pretoria Station to the city's Church Square, could therefore not be unveiled, and so it was decided that the unveiling would take place the following day, a Monday.

This was to be a day of great drama in the National Party. After the unveiling, the cabinet would repair to Prime Minister DF Malan's residence in Pretoria, where he would announce his intention to retire the following month (Koorts 2014, 399). Given Malan's close links with *Die Burger*, the cartoonist (and certainly the paper's editor) probably suspected that this was likely to happen.

On the surface, the message is a return to the 1930s, when urbanisation was seen as a threat to Afrikaners: this was a time when it was thought that the city, especially Johannesburg, would draw Afrikaners away from the rural purity of the Voortrekkers (Koorts, email communication, 6 March 2018). The neatly dressed schoolchildren could be read as symbols of the Christian National Education policy, which was at the core of the country's schooling system. Also significant is the inclusion of a typical 'location' (black township) to the right of the urban landscape, with smoke rising above matchbox-type dwellings, revealing a paternalistic assumption that this formed a self-evident and acceptable part of any cityscape in South Africa. While quite enigmatic in some ways, the cartoon seems to imply that the two young people in the foreground could stride confidently into an otherwise threatening future (marked by the evils of inevitable urbanisation, among others) if they continued to honour the spirits of General De Wet and President Kruger.

Cartoon Three (*Die Burger*, 12 March 1955, Fig. 10.3) portrays a more confident moment. By the mid-1950s, under a new prime minister, JG Strijdom, the National Party government was increasingly turning towards economic matters. Facing a balance-of-payments problem, and the loss of preferential access to the British market as a result of plans to make South Africa a republic, the government embarked on a 'Buy South African' campaign.

This cartoon depicts a shop with a confident-looking (white) shopkeeper. A large sign reads: '*Koop Suid-Afrikaanse goedere!*' [Buy South African goods!] The 'goods' on offer comprise elements of a supposedly desirable South African political order. Those on the top shelf are labelled '*Afsonderlike verteenwoordiging*' [separate representation], and '*Soewereiniteit van die parlement*' [parliamentary sovereignty], a clear reference to the republican ideal. Goods on the second shelf are labelled '*Aparte geriewe*' [separate amenities], '*Moedertaal-onderwys*' [mother-tongue education] – a continual Afrikaner grievance – and '*Anti-kommunisme*' [anti-communism]. The third shelf offers a variety of goods: '*Opruiming van swart kolle*' [clearing of black spots], that is, removing blacks from areas they occupy in 'white' South Africa; '*Een vlag, een volkslied, een trou*' [One flag, one anthem, one fealty] – a further reference

Figure 10.3. Cartoon by TO Honiball in *Die Burger*, 12 March 1955. Naspers: Honiball & Boonzaaier & Fred Mouton Collection, MS 339.2.P.11. Manuscripts section, Stellenbosch University Library and Information Service.

to cutting remaining ties with Britain and the Commonwealth; '*Republikanisme*' [republicanism]; and '*Gebiedskeiding'* [spatial separation]. Goods on the bottom shelf are labelled '*Praktiese tweetaligheid*' [practical bilingualism] and '*Afsonderlike ontwikkeling*' [separate development] – the latter was an elaboration of the apartheid ideology being developed by HF Verwoerd.

The reason for this careful listing of policy programmes becomes clear when we look at the patron, who seems to be carrying alternative goods to those offered in the shop: labelled '*Gelykstelling (made in G.B.)*' [equality (made in Great Britain)]; and '*Integrasie* [integration], *made in U.S.A*'. In his pocket the British *Daily Mirror* can be seen, a newspaper which, at the time, carried virulent attacks on apartheid.

International pressure on the South African government had, the previous month, increased at the 1955 Commonwealth Prime Ministers Meeting. However, the heavily ideological message in the cartoon is modulated by references to
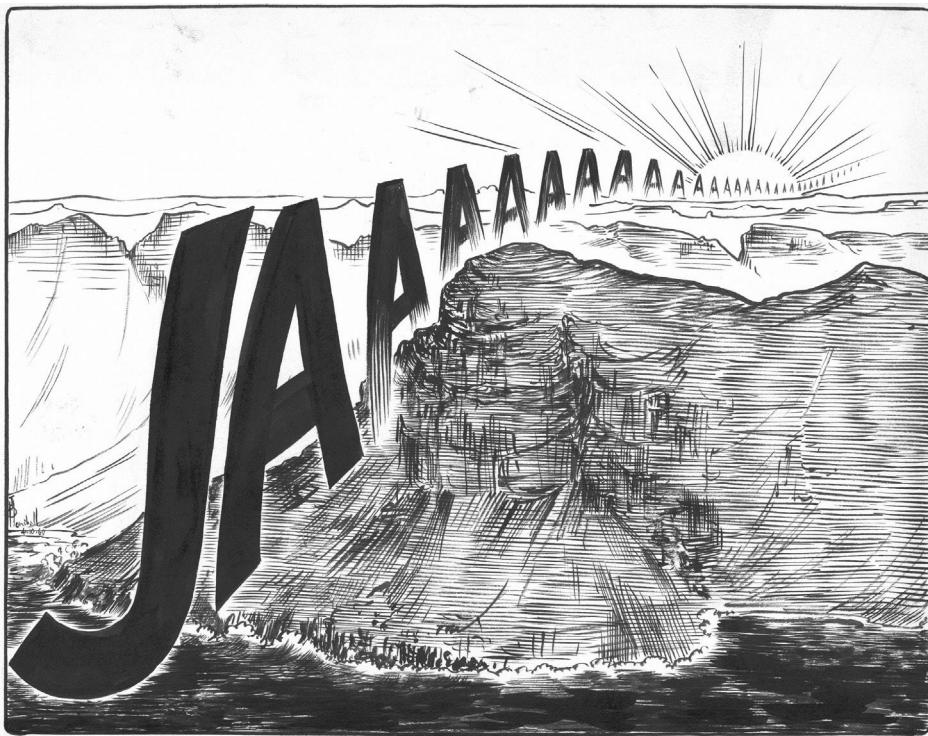
Figure 10.4. Cartoon by TO Honiball in *Die Burger*, 4 October 1960. Naspers: Honiball & Boonzaaier & Fred Mouton Collection, MS 339.2.U.46. Manuscripts section, Stellenbosch University Library and Information Service.

bilingualism – a grudging acknowledgement that, despite the triumph of Afrikaner nationalism, a modernising South Africa could not survive without at least a degree of acceptance of English-speaking white South Africans.

By contrast, Cartoon Four (*Die Burger*, 4 October 1960, Fig. 10.4) is simple, but very effective – a quintessential example, if in a different context, of Mies van der Rohe's dictum that 'less is more'. It appeared on the morning of the all-white referendum on whether South Africa should become a republic. The message is plain: a 'yes' vote would echo northwards from the Cape to the interior, heralding a new dawn.

The cartoon clearly references the first lines of the country's then national anthem, *Die Stem van Suid Afrika* [The Voice of South Africa], in particular the first two lines: *'Uit die blou van onse hemel, uit die diepte van ons see, / Oor ons ewige gebergtes waar die kranse antwoord gee'* [Ringing out from our blue heavens, from our deep seas breaking round, / Over everlasting mountains where the echoing crags

resound]. Interestingly, the Afrikaans word *stem* means both 'voice' and 'to exercise the vote': both meanings are captured in this evocative cartoon.

As it happens, the 'Ja' [yes] vote was less than resounding. A total of 850 450 eligible whites voted in favour of a republic, while 775 870 voted 'no', carrying the vote by a mere 74 580 votes – a tiny majority by today's standards.

Cartoon Five (*Die Burger*, [June, 1?] 1960, Fig. 10.5) celebrates this victory. It shows a giant *kruithoring* [gunpowder horn], the official emblem of the National Party, superimposed on an urban landscape. A cornucopia of riches in the form of diamonds tumbles from the horn: *Republiek* [republic], *Die Stem van S.A.* [The Voice of South Africa], *Leierskap* [leadership], *Wonder van Afrikaans* [the miracle of Afrikaans], *Nywerhede* [industry], *Voorspoed* [prosperity], *Nasionale eenheid* [national unity], *Aparte vryheid* [separate freedom], *Afrikaner sakegemeenskap*
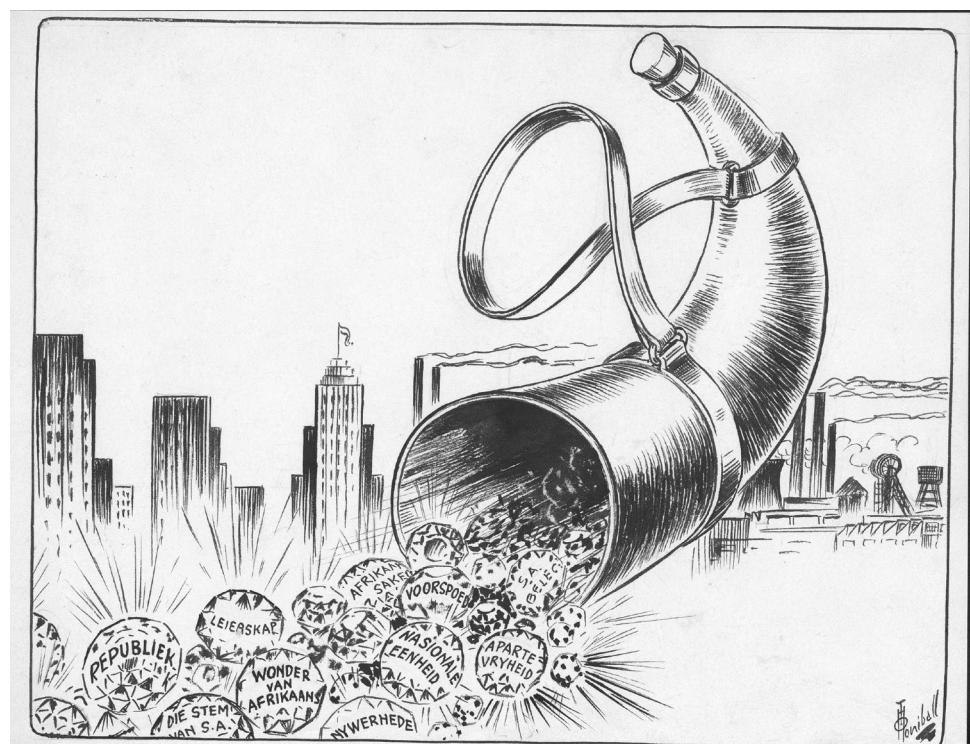
Figure 10.5. Cartoon by TO Honiball in *Die Burger*, 1 June 1960. Naspers: Honiball & Boonzaaier & Fred Mouton Collection, MS 339.2.U.54. Manuscripts section, Stellenbosch University Library and Information Service.

[Afrikaner business community], and *S.A. beleggings* [South African investments], the latter two being partly obscured.

This is an intriguing array that suggests a transitional moment. On the one hand, it emphasises the victory of Afrikaans and Afrikaners, but it also stresses a national unity that includes English-speaking South Africans; furthermore, it blends traditional communitarian tropes such as republicanism and the Afrikaans language with modern ones, including industry, investment and business, which are less community-oriented. This points to a realisation that the struggle for Afrikaner nationalism could no longer be framed by looking backwards, and that nationalism in a more modern form was beckoning the Afrikaner people.

AN ATYPICAL CASE?

At the outset, this chapter pointed out that the study of nationalism is voluminous, and has been conducted in almost every conceivable discipline in the humanities and the social sciences. Cartoons seem to offer an opportunity for viewing nationalism – in this case, Afrikaner nationalism – through a different lens.

Yolking the idea of nationalism with cartoons opens up an understanding that these are more than merely amusing drawings in today's newspaper, or fleeting images on an electronic device. Cartoons tell us about the mood of the moment; they provide an insight into that moment and, if an archive is prudently used, allow that moment to be interpreted from a more distant position.

The insights cartoons offer into the human condition enable us to see cartoonists in the same way as we see intellectuals. In fact, cartoonists *are* intellectuals. As a result, and – borrowing from Gramsci's ideas about intellectuals – we may loosely classify cartoonists into two categories: traditional and organic. Those in the first category support the status quo, while those in the second desire social change, and play an active role in promoting it. Edward Said introduces a similar divide in classifying intellectuals – the 'supportive insider' and the 'subversive outsider'. In fluid social and political situations, these positions are often unstable, and so their analytical labels cannot be fixed.

Just as cartoonists and the fruits of their craft are not easy to categorise, understandings of nationalism are not fixed. Shifts in thinking about (and within) the social sciences can change the way in which crucial categories such as nationalism are conceived and understood. Because of this, we can see how explaining Afrikaner nationalism in terms of identity politics might easily be

countered by a class explanation; indeed, it is difficult to believe that there is a monocausal explanation for the rise and the triumph of Afrikaner nationalism.

In a loose fashion, this essay has followed TO Honiball, whose craftsmanship was built upon almost a century of cartooning in and about South Africa. After the electoral victory of the National Party in 1948, Honiball's vision shifted, as did that of *Die Burger*, from critical outsider to accommodating insider. Although less vitriolic than his predecessor, DC Boonzaaier, who clearly positioned himself as a 'subversive outsider', Honiball's work was mainly in the 'supportive insider' category. Still, both these seminal figures drew upon a tradition of cartooning that was brought to South Africa by European immigrants, and reflected a European eye.

The renewed interest in cartooning, both in South Africa and across the world, together with the intersection of cartooning and technology, promises to further elevate the cartoon as a means of understanding our most complex political and social phenomena, including, in these troubled times, a resurgent nationalism.

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Visual Narratives of the Border War in 1980s South African Print Culture

GARY BAINES

An article appeared in the 23 June 1978 issue of the *Financial Mail* under the header 'The March of Militarism'. Notwithstanding its conceptual confusion,[1] it paints a vivid picture of the way in which militarisation had insinuated itself into all aspects of white South African lives. The piece offered the following vignettes: 'A bakery in central Johannesburg displays in its window a birthday cake in the shape of an army tank. A few blocks away a toy shop reports that sales of "war games", bearing names like Attack on Moscow, have jumped fivefold in the past year' (in Magubane 2006, 82). While vendors cashed in on the market for military merchandise in the country's commercial capital, the executive capital had the appearance of being under an army of occupation. As the headquarters of the South African Defence Force (SADF), Pretoria had a conspicuous number of mustachioed men in nutria brown uniforms. In fact, permanent force members and national servicemen were highly visible in all urban centres that had large military bases. The SADF was capable of mobilising 500 000 men at short notice. It staged regular public relations exercises throughout the land to provide displays of the army's strength and war-readiness by way of military parades, air shows, tattoos, and exhibitions of captured 'terrorist weapons'. White South Africans armed themselves to the hilt in the face of perceived threats on multiple fronts. Indeed, the country was palpably in the grip of a 'war psychosis' (Magubane 2006, 82–84).

The *Financial Mail* article was published during the last days of BJ Vorster's premiership (1966–1978). South Africa's militarisation commenced during Vorster's term but reached its apogee during PW Botha's term as prime minister (1978–1984). Militarisation is multifaceted. It operates in the political,

economic, ideological, institutional, social, cultural and even personal realms. It is difficult to disaggregate these dimensions. Militarisation occurs in order to promote militarism, an ideology that legitimates state violence as a solution to conflict (Cock 1989, 10). Hence it is facilitated by a number of obvious mechanisms such as propaganda and indoctrination, as well as more subtle ones like consumerism. Consequently, it finds expression in cultural forms such as print, film, music and other media produced by the state and the private sector.

Benedict Anderson (1983, 52–58) has argued that the development of print-as-commodity and a reading culture fostered national consciousness in nineteenth-century Europe. The construction of an ethnic Afrikaner identity in South Africa followed a similar pattern during the first two decades of the twentieth century (Hofmeyr 1984). But after three decades in power, the National Party's Afrikaner ethnic nationalist project was transformed into a more inclusive white nationalism. Under these circumstances, South African print media were compelled to address shifts in identity formation and adapt to changing markets. While elite literature still had its niche, pulp magazines and novels, comics, *fotoverhale* [photo stories] and children's books reached a broader audience. These popular forms all reproduced narratives and images of the *Grensoorlog* or Border War in the 1980s.[2] This chapter focuses on the publication of children's books and photo stories as manifestations of militarisation.

THE MAKING OF A SECURITY STATE

The overwhelming majority achieved by the National Party (NP) in the 1977 election appeared to be a ringing endorsement of Premier BJ Vorster's vision and policies. The dissolution of the opposition United Party suggested that the white electorate had all but accepted the primacy of Afrikaner leadership. But while the NP projected an image of strength and unity, it had actually begun to splinter from within. This *broedertwis* [fratricidal war] would result in the breakaway of Andries Treurnicht's[3] Conservative Party in 1982, which, according to Christi van der Westhuizen (2007, 118), marked the end of the Afrikaner nationalist cross-class alliance. PW Botha emerged as the front-runner for the leadership of the NP following the 'Information Scandal' (1978–1979)[4] that had forced Vorster's resignation and ended the political ambitions of his heir apparent and minister of information, Connie Mulder. Botha, the long-serving minister of defence, was duly elected *volksleier* [people's leader] and prime minister in 1978.

He positioned himself as a pragmatist and a *verligte* [enlightened person] on political matters but proved uncompromising on security issues.

Botha's political career had not only survived, but been advanced by, South Africa's ill-advised invasion of Angola (1975–1976). Operation Savannah, the SADF's code name for the invasion, had exposed the deficiencies and outdated military equipment of the SADF (Warwick 2012). Consequently, Botha became a champion of the modernisation and expansion of the armed forces. To that end, he convinced cabinet colleagues of the necessity of increased spending on defence. Indeed, there was a massive growth of the defence budget as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) under Botha's watch, first as minister of defence and then as prime minister. In addition, a Special Defence Account (SDA) was set up as the primary source of funding for covert arms purchases and clandestine projects that went unreported by the media. The SDA amounted to a slush fund as it facilitated massive money-laundering schemes to circumvent the mandatory United Nations arms embargo and the acquisition of arms and state-of-the-art technology through contracts with foreign companies and third parties. Arms smugglers and other agents managed to source a plethora of war materiel on the black market to boost the arsenal of the apartheid state (Van Vuuren 2017). The production of enriched uranium and development of missile technology in collaboration with Israel enabled South Africa to forge a nuclear offensive capability (Polakow-Suransky 2010). Pretoria declined to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty precisely because it fuelled speculation that the country had the atomic bomb; the uncertainty effectively served as a deterrent (Van Wyk 2009).

Striving for self-sufficiency in the manufacture of weapons, Botha sought to create a national arms industry. He recognised that it was necessary to ensure collaboration between government and business in the defence sector in order to achieve his objective. The state-owned enterprise Armscor extended its operations by establishing subsidiaries that manufactured aircraft, guided missiles, ammunition and bombs, computer technology, propellants and explosives, as well as satellites and long-distance missiles (Van Vuuren 2017, 32). Armscor's role was augmented by large corporations such as Anglo American and Barlow Rand. The economy was placed on a war footing and Philip Frankel rightly characterised the government's partnership with the private sector as tantamount to the creation of a military-industrial complex (Frankel 1985, 34–5).

Botha's close relationship with the military was evident from his appointment of former chief of the SADF, General Magnus Malan, as minister of defence in 1979. Botha had initially retained this portfolio but entrusted it to Malan, a technocrat-cum-securocrat whose world view was informed by Cold War logic. As Botha's confidant, Malan introduced him to the writings of exponents of counter-revolutionary strategies; among them were Frenchman André Beaufre and John McCuen, an American. Malan was a proponent of the 'total onslaught' theory, which articulated the notion of the '*rooi gevaar*' [red threat] orchestrated by Moscow against South Africa's vital interests, including the strategic shipping lanes of the Atlantic and Indian oceans, as well as the mineral wealth of the country. Like Botha, he firmly believed that the liberation movements were doing the bidding of the Kremlin, and that African nationalists were surrogates of the Soviet Union (Giliomee 2012, 145). Malan was instrumental in producing the 1977 White Paper that advocated a 'Total Strategy' against the country's enemies. It was a melange of French, American and British counter-insurgency strategic thinking (Frankel 1984, 46; Cawthra 1986, 27, 30; Sanders 2006, 146). The White Paper provided a platform for the government's national security thinking and threat assessment.

The SADF generals advocated a strong defence force to underpin political stability; it would also oversee the process, ensuring that the changes, circumscribed as they necessarily were, came about in an orderly manner. The generals believed that their sophisticated counter-revolutionary tactics centred on waging low-intensity warfare would be able to maintain law and order while defusing insurrection (McKinley 1997, 72). Botha was persuaded by their paradigm and convinced that the military's professionalism would ensure success. In this way, Botha managed a subtle but seismic shift in the distribution of power from the secretive *Broederbond*[5] and the National Party caucus to securocrats concentrated in the ranks of the SADF. He bolstered the existing National Security Management System (NSMS) and turned it into a highly centralised bureaucratic-cum-military structure. Its nerve centre was the State Security Council (SSC), which was accorded extensive decision-making powers and had its own budget. Consequently, the SSC effectively became a parallel cabinet or shadow government. Members of the SSC saw it as their task to strike a balance between security and welfare by denying 'agitators' the opportunity of exploiting grievances while also providing socio-economic upliftment programmes that would satisfy the expectations of the silent or apathetic majority (Selfe in Schutte et al. 1998, 132).

Under Botha, then, the Afrikaner nationalist project became of secondary concern to national security. A narrow military and state-centric approach to security was adopted whereby the nation was equated with white sectional interests. National security discourse was situated within Cold War binary thinking of the West versus the East. South Africa positioned itself squarely within the former camp. But the anti-communist consensus that bound the country to the West did not spare the South African government from criticism. In the face of international castigation of its policies, as well as its own scaremongering tactics, white South Africans developed something of a siege mentality. Consequently, they closed ranks in defence of the *laager* [protected encampment]. The invocation of national security served to discipline society, defining the parameters of permissible conduct, whether politically, legally or socially. Under the circumstances, the security apparatchiks assumed charge of and coordinated the implementation of policy, favouring military and technocratic rather than ideologically bound solutions to political problems.

The transformation of the Afrikaner nationalist project necessitated a redefinition of the nation. Previously focused on winning the allegiance and promoting the interests of an exclusive ethnic group, the *volk*, the NP now sought to mobilise a broader-based white constituency. With the catchphrase 'adapt or die' in a 1979 speech, Botha signalled that the precepts of apartheid were negotiable and that change was necessary. He co-opted Coloureds and Indians into the Tricameral Parliament, relaxed influx controls and reformed labour laws that hampered the mobility and bargaining position of urban African workers because Botha believed that increased wages would give them a greater stake in the economy. Botha made these concessions partly to improve productivity and grow the economy and partly to buy time. However, he never believed in the inevitability of black majority rule in a unitary state and had no intention of sharing power. Secure in the knowledge that he had the backing of the military establishment, Botha remained defiant and determined to pursue a path of his own making.

South Africa's intelligence agencies mastered the arts of sabotage and 'dirty tricks'. They oversaw missions such as the assassination of anti-apartheid activists and outspoken critics of the regime, both within the country and abroad. At the same time, the SADF Special Forces unit earned a reputation for ruthless efficiency on account of an ability to infiltrate neighbouring states with impunity. They regularly violated territorial sovereignty and conducted

raids on 'safe houses' in neighbouring states assumed to be harbouring political activists and cadres. The purpose of such operations was to teach those who aided and abetted the liberation movements that Pretoria would exact a high price for doing so.

The government was able to screen information about its clandestine acts of destabilisation from the South African public by invoking the national interest in terms of the old Official Secrets Act of 1956 and the new Protection of Information Act of 1982. Censorship prohibited press coverage of security matters that were broadly defined so as to include the armed forces, intelligence agencies and Armscor. Media coverage of the war being waged in Angola/Namibia was tightly controlled, with only carefully vetted military correspondents and (photo) journalists being granted restricted access to the operational areas. Thus the print and visual media were constrained to report and publish only what the Ministry of Defence approved, for fear of losing their accreditation. In addition, strictures were placed upon members of the SADF from divulging details about their deployment and operations. Although many troops carried cameras in defiance of the prohibition, sharing photographs with family and friends, these images did not enter the public domain. The veil of secrecy circumscribed the repertoire of visual images of the Border War.

THE MILIEU OF MILITARISATION

Militarism was advanced partly through the dissemination of propaganda. The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) monopolised the airwaves. The broadcast of radio request programmes dedicated to national servicemen and the 'boys on the border' proved popular. News and editorial commentaries articulated the 'party line' on political and security matters. The introduction of television was delayed until 1976, by which time the state monopoly on radio broadcasting was assured and Afrikaans was accorded a privileged place in the mediascape. Television featured programmes showing military manoeuvres, the army's state-of-the-art weapons and its preparedness for combating the country's enemies. Daily transmissions ended with a roll-call of the names of those who had died on active duty, superimposed on an image of the national flag, with the anthem as a soundtrack. The SABC came to be regarded as a strategic asset in the fight against communism, and as such was brought under the oversight of the SSC. Thus, the extensive resources of state-controlled media

were used to reinforce attitudes that were ingrained through socialisation and indoctrination of white South Africans.

The Botha government disbanded the Department of Information but continued many of its propaganda projects in new guises, a ploy that did little to harm its anti-communist credentials in the international community (Nixon 2015, 100). In the meantime, it also sought to persuade its domestic constituency of its capacity to fight a lone battle against communism. Tomaselli (1984) has identified the key discursive features of the media in this period as including the influence of military strategists' definitions of reality and the rhetoric of siege. Other scholars have focused on the apartheid state's use of disinformation to manipulate the media so that it served to shut down dissent (Phelan 1987). Since it was an authoritarian rather than a totalitarian regime, however, there was some scope for the private sector to pursue its own interests in the media industry. Craig (2003, 2008) has explained how the film industry was coaxed and coerced into a partnership with the government, which involved the use of incentive schemes and subsidies to finance the making of Border War films. These included the commercially successful *Boetie Gaan Border Toe* [Little Brother Goes to the Border] (1984) and *Boetie Op Manoeuvres* [Little Brother on Manoeuvres] (1985), both directed by Regardt van den Bergh. These films valorised national service as fun and adventure in uniform. Notwithstanding the cooperation of the SADF in these ventures, filmmakers like Van den Bergh did not lose creative control of their productions. They were not entirely beholden to the state because box-office success ultimately depended on the support of audiences that frequented the country's bioscopes (cinemas) and drive-in circuits. Moreover, filmmakers frequently breached the fine line between propaganda and entertainment.

Certain institutions prepared white youth for playing its part in a militarised society. Although institutions with quasi-military features dated back to the heyday of British imperialism, they were mimicked or commandeered by agencies of the apartheid state. Thus the *Voortrekkers*, the Afrikaner counterpart of the Boy Scouts, provided a grounding in skills such as fieldcraft and campcraft (Popescu 2008, 47). This type of physical training was regarded as essential in preparing boys to emulate soldiers who served as the country's first line of defence. Likewise, the school cadet system was a 'nursery for national service' (Frankel 1984, 99). Male teachers who themselves were part of the civilian force instructed boys – whom they otherwise taught school subjects – to drill, shoot

and develop the correct comportment to become soldiers. Therefore, during the impressionable years of adolescence when boys begin to form their own opinions about morality, religion and politics, they came under the influence of educators who embodied the values of militarism. Many schools were equipped with shooting ranges, and pupils who proved to be skilled marksmen were able to participate in target rifle or 'Bisley' shooting. The army also arranged other extra-curricular activities such as inter-school drill and shooting competitions. Thus schools became recruiting and training grounds so as to prepare boys for induction into the army. Indeed, all male scholars were obliged to register for national service in order to receive their call-up papers in Standard 8 (Grade 10).

Militarisation became part of the formative school learning environment and thus the ethos of many state and private schools. These followed a curriculum aimed at fostering a ready acceptance of the national priorities of the security state as enshrined in the principles of Christian National Education (CNE). A Youth Preparedness programme that was part of the school curriculum aimed to inculcate values in prospective citizens, such as respect for the authorities, for national symbols, and for a providential version of history. But such lessons were not only taught in the classroom. They were reinforced by activities such as at *veld* schools,[6] where lectures by SADF officers and non-commissioned officers emphasised the need for awareness of the wiles of 'the communists', who sought to undermine the moral fibre of the white nation through insidious messages conveyed via rock music and other media produced by capitalist consumer industries. The government's crude indoctrination comprised an amalgam of CNE teachings and 'total onslaught' rhetoric. Education thus became a tool in the promotion of the values of militarism.

The mainstream churches were complicit to some degree in providing the regime and, by extension, the army with theological and moral legitimacy. The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk [Dutch Reformed Church (DRC)] in particular provided scriptural justification for the status quo being ordained by God, and hence national servicemen were duty-bound to render service to the state. But whereas the DRC's stance went virtually unchallenged in the Afrikaans-speaking community until the late 1980s, national service became a divisive issue within the English-speaking churches (Winkler and Nathan 1989). Equally controversial was the question of religious ministers serving as military chaplains in the SADF. Chaplains underwent military training, wore military

uniforms with insignia and their rank, carried weapons, were paid by the SADF and were subject to army discipline. They were tasked with providing spiritual counsel and guidance, as well as boosting the morale of the troops. Hence they were expected to justify the war; there was no latitude for supporting those with pacifist convictions, or conscientious or political objectors. However, the churches found it increasingly difficult to sanction the war when 'the enemy' was at work in white homes or white-owned businesses, or comprised members of the same church or denomination as the soldier.

The SADF's manpower demands increased exponentially as the intensity of the Border War escalated. In 1977, national service was extended to two years, with a further 720 days of camps over a 12-year period. In that year, nearly 60 000 young men were called up, while applications to join the permanent force increased by 80 per cent between June 1976 and 1978 (Magubane 2006, 82). Frankel (1984, 12) points out that the SADF's extensive reliance on conscripts had two important implications: first, the perennial infusion of civilian influence into military institutions, and the subsequent circulation of personnel between the civil and military sectors of society; and, second, the reach of the national service system provided channels through which military influences could filter into civil society. In fact, ever since the introduction of conscription in 1968, virtually every able-bodied white male school leaver had undergone some sort of military training and was constantly shuttling back and forth between two worlds: 'civvy street' and the armed forces. A decade later, citizen-force service was extended to men aged sixty and over, effectively becoming a lifelong commitment to the institution of the SADF.

In South Africa's patriarchal society, soldiers were portrayed as the protectors of hearth and home, while women were regarded as their dependants. Social norms determined that their duty as girlfriends, sisters or mothers of national servicemen was to be faithful, supportive and proud of their 'soldier boys'. They were expected to nurture and provide emotional support by way of letters, the dispatch of parcels with special 'treats', greetings on radio programmes such as *Forces Favourites*, or accepting collect calls from homesick troops. The wives of Permanent Force (PF) members tried to set an example for their civilian-force counterparts and duly established the Defence Force Ladies Association (DFLA) to provide role models. The DFLA offered training which emphasised that women were expected to have a sound knowledge of communism and the threat it

posed. They were also encouraged to practise meticulous grooming, maintain an optimistic attitude, adopt values shared by their men and nation, be domestically competent, correspond with 'their men' regularly, be able to operate independently while husbands were deployed, and be supportive of the men at all times (Cock 1989, 56–57). The association's ideal of femininity was informed not only by patriarchy but also by the ideology of militarism.

Militarised femininity was itself infused with maternal values. Women were required to act as surrogate mothers by providing moral support for the soldiers. Daniel Conway sees the *Suiderkruisfonds* [Southern Cross Fund] as exemplifying what Cynthia Enloe calls 'surrogate militarised motherhood' (in Conway 2012, 83). The fund was the project of high-profile society women who co-opted celebrities and well-known media personalities to devote themselves to fundraising activities. It boasted 15 000 members and 250 branches that comprised *tannies* [aunties], maternal types who baked cakes, held rummage sales and organised fêtes with the express purpose of raising money to purchase food parcels and reading matter for the troops. The fund's motto was: '*Hulle is ons sekuriteit*' [They are our security]. The fund also set up the 'Dial and Ride' scheme whereby volunteers offered troops free rides between their bases and homes. This was augmented by the *Ry-veilig* [Ride Safe] campaign that, with the cooperation of the traffic authorities, demarcated pick-up points on the country's main routes where soldiers in uniform might obtain lifts. This initiative sought to minimise the risks of hitchhiking and reduce the number of casualties among national servicemen on South Africa's roads. The 'Ride Safe' song also raised awareness of the debt of gratitude that the public owed the troops. All in all, the efforts of the *Suiderkruisfonds* served to bolster the morale of the troops and, indirectly, contribute to the militarisation of virtually all white citizens (Conway 2012, 84; Van Heerden 2014, 2015).

If national service was a rite of passage whereby boys became men, then basic training was the most intensive and often traumatic moment of militarisation. Yet, scholars have paid surprisingly little attention to basic training in the SADF even though each and every national serviceman was subjected to this physically and emotionally debilitating initiation process (Symons 2016). Basic training is typically described as a rupture; an attempt to systematically strip the recruit of his civilian identity, force him to accept military discipline without question, and convince him of the justice and validity of the military system (Bourne in Tal 1996, 127–128). The national serviceman's sense of self is violated and a new identity as

a soldier is constructed in its place. Basic training was instrumental in changing social perceptions and behaviours that, in turn, reconfigured personal and cultural identities. Consequently, servicemen were forced to negotiate and reconcile their (at times conflicting) roles and identities as soldiers and partners, breadwinners, and much else besides.

VISUAL NARRATIVES OF THE BORDER WAR

The process of militarisation commenced at an early age in the average white household. This much is evident from life writing such as JM Coetzee's *Youth*, novels such as Mark Behr's *The Smell of Apples*, as well as the testimony of veterans. For instance, Symons (2016, 4) relates an ex-conscript's recollection of war games he played as a child:

> My friends and I used to play war games in an open plot at the end of our road. No one wanted to be the *terrorists* [*sic*]. I used to wear my Dad's army webbing and his staaldak [helmet]. We used broomsticks and bits of wood as R1s [R1 rifles].

One may thus reasonably infer that the peer pressure reinforcing conformity to social norms influenced most boys, making them want to emulate their older brothers, fathers and male relatives who donned a military uniform and embodied the archetypal hero or warrior. After all, it is in the institution of the family where role models are first learned.

Play is a rehearsal for rites of passage into adulthood, conventionally grooming girls for marriage and motherhood, and boys for going to war. White South African children living in apartheid society engaged in recreational activities much like their counterparts in the Anglo-European world. Boys routinely played cops and robbers, cowboys and Indians, and war games, prior to participating in organised team sports like rugby and cricket. And the toys that they utilised 'embod[ied] social and cultural definitions of what constitute[d] appropriate interests, activities and behaviour of children' in South Africa's militarised society (Jochelson and Buntman in Cock and Nathan 1989, 299). Toys are miniature versions of consumer items or commodities available in the adult world and often mirror its state-of-the-art technologies. Accordingly, parents are inclined to purchase replica guns, toy soldiers, scale models of military vehicles and aircraft, and so on, so that their sons may learn their social roles. As Jochelson and Buntman (1989, 302) note: '[W]ar

games graphically embody the belief that violence is the only solution to endemic social and individual conflict. Killing represents a natural and healthy response.' War games prepare boys for the stage of life when they are literally granted a licence to kill – even before reaching adulthood in many cases.

South African publishers of children's books capitalised on the obsession with war in much the same way as the manufacturers of war games did. The Pretoria-based company Daan Retief Publishers[7] produced a range of children's titles in both Afrikaans and English. One of these was *Jampie Gaan Grens Toe* (1983) (Fig. 11.1), which was also available as *Jimmy Goes to the Border*.

The text is attributed to Andrew McCallaghan and the illustrations to Gerhard Marx.[8] The book tells the story of a young schoolboy who daydreams about joining his absent father, who is deployed on the border. Asked by the teacher to model something from plasticine, Jampie imagines himself undertaking a journey to find his father. He first moulds a troop transport aeroplane – known derogatorily as a '*Flossie*' [Floozie] – which he pilots to the border, and then a Jeep to drive through the *veld* to reach his father's base camp. He encounters a crocodile-infested river that he manages to cross in a motorboat. Jampie avoids dangerous hippopotami on the riverbanks and then successfully follows a track that is land-mined. Suddenly he hears shots and comes face to face with the five '*terries*' [terrorists]. He quickly moulds his plasticine into a machine gun (Fig. 11.2) that enables him to shoot at his foes, who disappear out of sight – or, at least, from the page.

Jampie is conveniently awakened from his reverie by his teacher before he is able to consider the implications of taking lives. The teacher announces to the class that she will display Jampie's plasticine machine gun in tribute to '*ons dapper manne op die grens*' [our brave men on the border] (McCallaghan 1983, 40).

The message and the purpose of the book seem self-evident. It is likely that the publisher envisaged that the story might strike a chord with mothers of young children whose partners were repeatedly absent from home for long periods on account of military service. The demands made by the army on fathers and husbands were undoubtedly disruptive to family life. *Jampie Gaan Grens Toe* sought to explain that such sacrifices were necessary to protect innocent children from the murderous and reprehensible deeds of 'terrorists'. It was necessary for fathers to serve on the border to prevent insurgents from infiltrating the country. Rather than being marketed for any literary or artistic merit, the book's purpose was to drive home this message. It was the product of a cheap commercial operation whereby
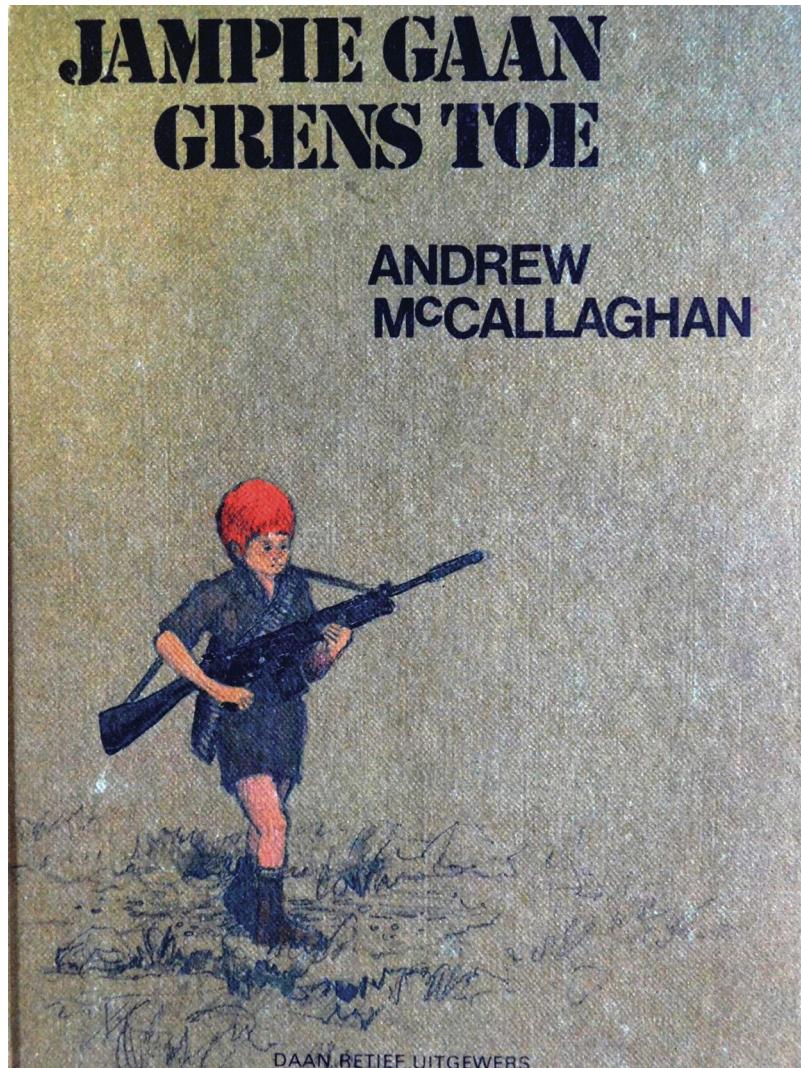
Figure 11.1. Cover of Andrew McCallaghan's *Jampie Gaan Grens Toe,* 1983, illustrated by Gerhard Marx. Published by Daan Retief Publishers. Reprinted with permission from Gerhard Marx. Photograph by Gary Baines.

the publishers contracted school teachers and students on a freelance basis to write and illustrate their children's books (Gerhard Marx, email communication to author, 23 January 2018). I have not been able to determine how many copies of the books were published, but Daan Retief Publishers did offer a service by which subscribers paid for a specified number of titles on a monthly basis. This marketing

Figure 11.2. Image of Jampie moulding a machine gun from plasticine, in Andrew McCallaghan's *Jampie Gaan Grens Toe*, 1983, illustrated by Gerhard Marx. Published by Daan Retief Publishers. Reprinted with permission from Gerhard Marx. Photograph by Gary Baines.

strategy boosted sales because subscribers frequently ordered books that they might otherwise not have purchased (Gerhard Marx, email communication to author, 24 January 2018). It might safely be said that *Jampie* was a popular bedtime story in many homes.

There was also a captive audience for boys' war comics. Many of these were imported from the United Kingdom and distributed via newsagents such as CNA and Paperbacks. These stories were issued in weekly editions and found a ready readership among white South Africans. Titles such as *Battle*, *Tiger*, *Warlord*, *Battle Picture Library* and *Action* were mainly narratives about the two world wars and featured brave and formidable fighters as the protagonists. While the Allied heroes were idealised, the Axis enemy was invariably depicted in stereotypical or racist fashion as an evil villain or subhuman specimen (Symons 2016, 4). As comics are a non-realist mode of representation, readers are thought to retain some sort of separation from reality (Scott 2014, x). Thus, the depiction of explicit gratuitous violence is deemed perfectly acceptable – even for young readers. War

comics introduce such readers to adult topics and dominant social values. In a less self-conscious way than elite writing and art, they reflect the beliefs, hopes, aspirations and fears that shape society. Writers and artists seek to use the medium as a platform for articulating their political agendas, and often interpolate personal prejudices. Comic books both mirrored and manufactured popular attitudes to war (Scott, 2014, xv).

The same can be said of photo stories that were a hybrid of comics and pulp magazines. First published in the 1950s in series form in popular magazines such as *Huisgenoot*, *Keur* and *Sarie*, they morphed into full-length photo stories. The high point of their popularity was from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, when monthly sales reached 400 000, with a total reading public of between three and four million (Scholtz 1978, 25 in Botes 1998, 3). Most of the popular and long-running titles were produced by Republican Press (RP) and included *Louise*, *Tessa*, *Die Swart Luiperd* [The Black Leopard] and *Mark Condor*.[9] The owner of RP was 'Hint' Hyman (1912–1998), who was dubbed *'die vader van die fotoverhaal'* [the father of the photo story] in a 1998 *Volksblad* obituary ('Fotoverhaal Pionier' 2018; Botha 2012). He had started the operation from his farm in the (then) Orange Free State, but when it outgrew its premises it was relocated to Durban. There, writers and photographers set up a production line and worked around the clock to keep up with the demand. Most commentators ascribe the popularity of the genre in South Africa to the absence of television, and its subsequent decline to television's belated introduction in 1976 (Botes 1998; Martin 2005). But photo stories and television were not necessarily competing for the same market. It is equally likely that the popularity of the photo story can be ascribed to its relative cheapness and the convenient size of its A5 format, a stitched or stapled soft-cover booklet of between 80 and 100 pages. The front and back covers were usually in colour, but the inside pages comprised black-and-white newsprint. Its portability made it possible to carry copies on one's person (many troops stuffed them into the pockets of their combat browns). The photo story was, arguably, South Africa's version of the Japanese manga or graphic novel. Its audience was primarily young and white – although there were titles such as *Thandi* that targeted black readers. For many, these books were a guilty pleasure, forbidden in their households because they were regarded as smut or pornography.[10] They were roundly condemned as 'sinful' by self-appointed moral

guardians, or 'distasteful' by the literary elite. However, such pronouncements made no dent in their popularity.

A leading title in RP's stable was *Grensvegter* [Border Warrior], which commenced production in October 1972. Issues were numbered but not dated (Fig. 11.3).

The stories were the work of Andreas du Plessis, a well-known Afrikaans writer of light fiction (Martin 2005, 49–50). Initially, the main character in the series was named Dan Pienaar (presumably after the famed Boer scout). But after 35 issues, the Pienaar character was replaced by Rocco de Wet, played by actor John Elbourne, whose physique and handsome mustachioed appearance presumably made him entirely suitable for the role.[11] The Grensvegter was cast as a retired major in the SADF. His unit is never mentioned, but it is assumed that he is a 'recce', that is, a reconnaissance commando, on account of his ability to use any number of weapons, as well as his fighting skills, ingenuity and bravado. A string of successful operations makes him a legendary figure feared by the country's enemies, who are awed by his reputation for being invincible (Botes 1998, 23).

Grensvegter is a '*ware boereseun*' [true son of the soil] who embodies the notion of a Boer warrior: intrepid, resourceful and tough. He confronts Russians and Cubans who act like self-serving mercenaries, as well as naive Africans who have been beguiled by a godless, imported ideology. Grensvegter declares: 'Africa dislikes Russians and Cubans or any other foreigners ... white, brown, or black. It makes no difference. They should identify with Africa alone'[12] (Botes 1998, 51). This implies that white Afrikaners should be recognised as Africans as they have made the continent their home and are prepared to defend it. Grensvegter's defence of the freedom of all Africans apparently rests on a sense of justice that does not, however, extend to the black people in his own country. His mission includes the elimination of ANC cadres who are labelled 'terrorists' rather than 'freedom fighters'. But it seems that any such irony was lost on the average reader. Instead, his adversaries – both foreign and African nationalist – are equated with the forces of darkness, with the scourge of communism. Accordingly, Grensvegter is described thus: 'In the battle far from civilisation, where mercy is neither sought nor given, the warrior is in his element!' (my translation of the caption to the photograph) (Fig. 11.4).

Virtually every escapade in the book follows a predictable pattern. Grensvegter is summoned to Pretoria (always symbolised by the Paul Kruger statue in Church

Figure 11.3. Four covers of *Grensvegter*, which commenced production in October 1972. Issues were numbered but not dated. The stories were by Andreas du Plessis. Reprinted with permission from Caxton and CTP Publishers and Printers Limited on behalf of CTP Limited. Photograph Paul Mills.

Square), where an unidentified general assigns him a mission to attack an enemy base or free hostages from some unnamed African state (Botes 1998, 27). Following the Western format, there is a showdown with the enemy where the parties

IN DIE OORLOG VER VAN DIE BESKAWING AF WAAR GEEN GENADE
GEVRA OF GEGEE WORD NIE, IS VEGTER OP SY STUKKE!
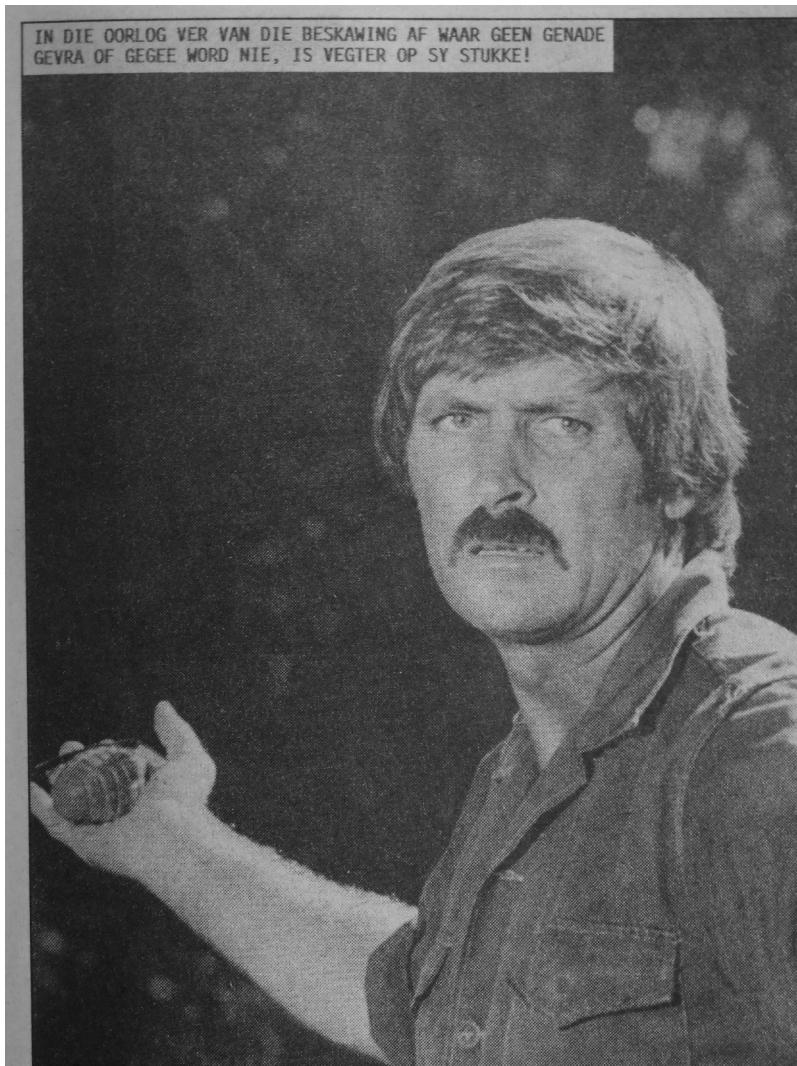
Figure 11.4. Grensvegter about to throw a hand grenade. Reprinted with permission from Caxton and CTP Publishers and Printers Limited on behalf of CTP Limited. Photograph by Gary Baines.

exchange fire and engage in hand-to-hand combat. But there is neither bloodletting nor pain, or any suggestion of psychological harm, with nary a swear word or even the hint of military slang. Women protagonists perform one of two roles: victim or hostage of the enemy, or a spy who infiltrates the enemy base by feigning to be a communist (Botes 1998, 28). Female characters seldom assume a dominant

role and always defer to the superior strength of Grensvegter. The women's weakness and subservience are continually reiterated, and the patriarchal order is re-established. Feminine beauty serves as a counterpoise to Grenvegter's macho masculinity. Botes (1998, 32) contends that Grensvegter may be viewed as a phallic symbol: tall, upright and virile. His intentions are honourable, and the story always ends with the hero embracing the fortunate woman in the final frame (Fig. 11.5). This holds out the promise of a shared future together – until the next mission and another attractive woman needs to be rescued by the Grensvegter.

While *Grensvegter* photo stories were avidly consumed by scores of undiscerning readers, critics lambasted the series. With improbable plots and storylines lacking credibility, *Grensvegter* was fair game. It traded in stereotypes of the dutiful patriot and the treacherous enemy. Dubbing it blatant propaganda, an anonymous End Conscription Campaign (ECC)[13] member contended that *Grensvegter* embodied the SADF ('Somewhere on the Border' n.d.). RP representative Fred Buys (in O'Reilly 1994) denied charges that *Grensvegter* was a thinly disguised form of government indoctrination, holding that '[t]he magazine is a fantasy thing – it doesn't deal with political issues at all'. There is no doubt that *Grensvegter* was escapist fare. However, there is good reason to believe that its creators would have been well versed in total onslaught discourse and the ideology of militarism. The writers, editors, designers and publishers of this and other photo stories were obviously influenced by prevailing attitudes and ideas, and possibly even their own experience of military service. They would also have expected that their readers were exposed to and shared similar values. But whatever meaning authors and artists intend to convey, textual meanings are not fixed but constructed by the interpretive acts of readers. In other words, texts constrain rather than straightjacket readers. Not even the most gullible or naive of readers would have taken *Grensvegter* at face value. Yet, for many readers, the protagonist embodied the spirit of courage and independence that was believed to typify South Africa's Special Forces. Indeed, 'recces' became legendary figures and were celebrated as national – that is, white folk – heroes (Stiff 1999).

We cannot be certain of the impact of photo stories like *Grensvegter* on its readers. The reception of this text is difficult to gauge, given the lack of surveys or statistical data. Some measure of its public appeal might be gleaned from the size and duration of print runs and estimates of the numbers of readers. At best, one might examine opinions expressed in the columns of newspapers and magazines. These comments create the impression that the public was incapable
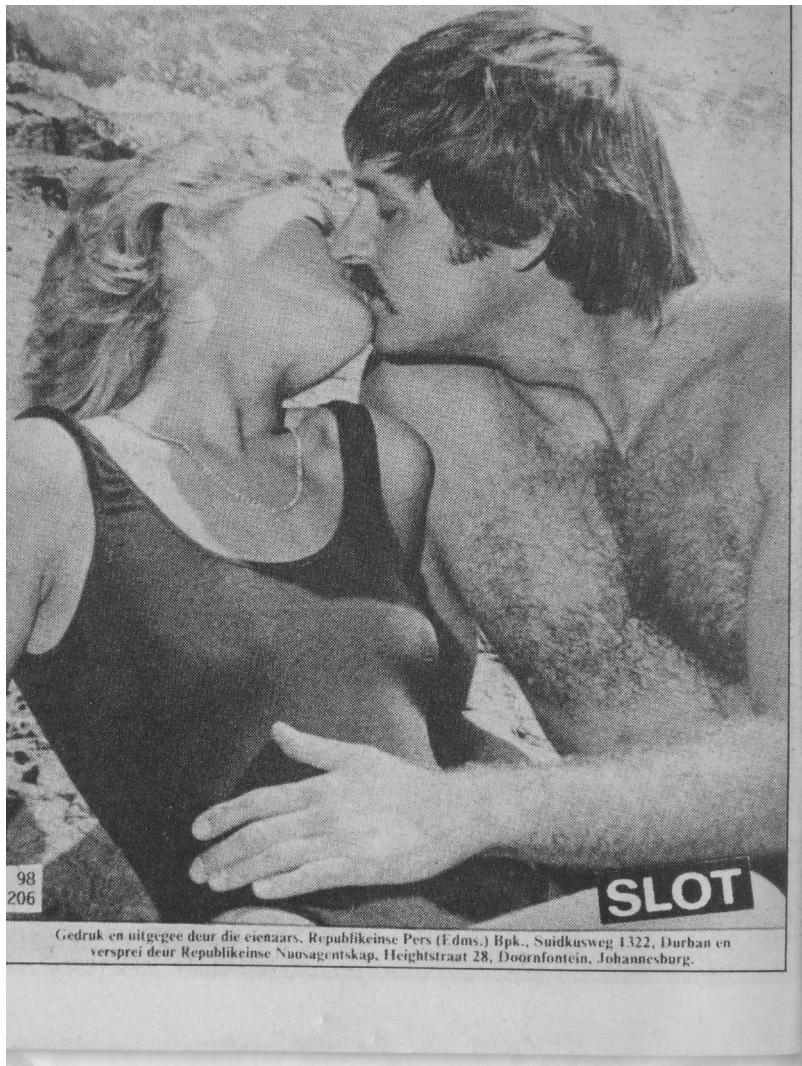
Figure 11.5. A typical final frame in *Grensvegter*. Reprinted with permission from Caxton and CTP Publishers and Printers Limited on behalf of CTP Limited. Photograph by Gary Baines.

of making sound judgements on political and other matters. It is therefore safer to say that people were inclined to have too much faith in their leaders. If embattled Afrikaners displayed great loyalty to their political leadership, as Giliomee (2012) avers, then white South Africans in general placed too much reliance on Botha and the securocrats finding a military solution to the country's manifold problems.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have not adduced any evidence to show that the government intervened or that the military exercised any sway over privately owned publishers that produced stories and images of the Border War. There seems to be no reason to believe that it was able to exert direct influence over the choice of subject matter by publishers. What is, however, suggested is that cultural entrepreneurs such as publishers were accomplices in the militarisation of the country. By virtue of their rootedness in institutions such as families, schools and churches, or because they had served in state apparatuses such as the security forces, these entrepreneurs fell under the sway of an ideology of militarism. Accordingly, most white South Africans did not question the views that they espoused precisely because ideology is 'a set of beliefs that presents the social order as if it were a natural order, that presents asymmetrical relationships as if they were mutually beneficial, and that makes authority appear self-evident' (Harriman and Lucaites 2007, 9). Such compliance tends to be accentuated in a warlike climate such as white South African society of the 1980s.

War licenses the militarisation of art (Bourke 2017, 22). The children's illustrated book *Jampie Gaan Grens Toe* and the *Grensvegter* photo-story series were produced in the country at a time when militarism exercised an ideological hold over the minds of white South Africans, and militarisation pervaded all aspects of their lives. Their visual narratives of the Border War exemplify the connectedness of the practice and representation of war. Their combination of words and images framed a simplified version of an imagined reality, and though the storylines may have been contrived, they resonated with readers fed a diet of 'total onslaught' discourse. Apart from their entertainment value, these texts provided reassurance to many white South Africans feeling vulnerable in the face of myriad threats to their way of life. They did not function as blatant propaganda, but reiterated and reinforced values already inculcated in the white citizenry of the country.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

however, that any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed here are my own, and the NRF accepts no liability in this regard.

NOTES

1   See Cock (1989, 2), who treats 'militarism' as an ideology and 'militarisation' as a process.

2   The *Grensoorlog* or Border War were terms used to describe the war waged in Namibia and Angola from 1966 to 1989. It initially involved the South African security forces in counter-insurgency operations against the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), whose members operated as guerrillas within Namibia. The SADF employed 'hot pursuit' operations in which its troops frequently crossed the Angolan border on the heels of PLAN insurgents, as well as pre-emptive strikes and cross-border operations that involved attacks on specific South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) bases inside Angola. Gradually, the war against SWAPO was expanded as the SADF provided support for its proxy, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), which formed a buffer in southern Angola to hinder PLAN's infiltration of Namibia. This increasingly brought the SADF into conflict with Angolan and Cuban troops seeking to destroy UNITA. From the 1980s, the SADF shifted from counter-insurgency to semi-conventional warfare. The SADF penetrated further into Angolan territory, occupying large swathes of the southern parts for extended periods. Although the SADF seldom engaged the People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (FAPLA) and Cuban forces intentionally, contacts became commonplace. These culminated in large-scale battles in the late 1980s, most famously the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale in 1987–1988.

3   Treurnicht was a *verkrampte* [ultra-conservative person] who believed that any departure from the system of racial separation, or any form of power sharing, would endanger the survival of Afrikanerdom.

4   The Information Scandal revealed that the secretary of the Department of Information, Eschel Rhoodie, had, through the purchase of media outlets and political influence, orchestrated a propaganda campaign against domestic and foreign critics of the apartheid government. The Mostert Commission of Inquiry uncovered a trail of sleaze and corruption before being shut down by the government.

5   Botha was himself a member of the *Broederbond* when appointed prime minister. Shortly thereafter, Ivor Wilkins and Hans Strydom's exposé of the organisation's membership and workings in *The Super-Afrikaners* (1978) revealed the identities of the

'*Broeders*' but also debunked many of the conspiracy theories and myths pertaining to the *Broederbond*.

6   Mandatory camps where school pupils were taught basic survival skills and military preparedness.

7   Daan Retief Publishers was bought out by De Jager-HAUM, which became part of the now defunct Perskor group. I could not establish whether there are any archives or records in existence.

8   Marx freelanced for the publisher while a BA Fine Arts student at the University of Pretoria. He later illustrated a compendium of humorous sketches by Brian Wilmot titled *LA Lore: The Lighter Side of Life in Lower Albany* (Grahamstown: Albany Museum, 1992). He should not be confused with his namesake who graduated with a BA Fine Arts at the University of Cape Town.

9   Republican Press also published magazines such as *Farmer's Weekly*, *Scope* and *Femina*.

10   The female heroes in titles such as *Tessa* wore bikinis or were usually scantily clad, though within the bounds of decency so as to avoid censorship. These books were commonly known as *poesboeke* [cunt books].

11   See http://southafricancomicbooks.blogspot.com/2011/03/photo-story-magazines. html.

12   My translation of *Afrika hou nie van die Kubane en Russe of enige ander uitlander nie ... wit, bruin of swart maak nie saak nie. Hulle moet net met Afrika vereenselwig.*

13   Founded in 1983, the ECC opposed conscription and advocated voluntary forms of alternative service; it also campaigned against the deployment of troops in the townships. The organisation was outlawed by the government in 1988.

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