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- Redaksioneel -

Hierdie uitgawe van Tydskrif vir Nederlands en Afrikaans word gewy aan studies oor Suid-Afrikaanse en Nederlandse outobiografiese tekste. Die artikels in hierdie uitgawe is verteenwoordigend van die referate wat gelewer is tydens die Durbanse Colloquium oor Nederlandse en Suid-Afrikaanse Outobiografiese Tekste wat op 30 en 31 Mei 2003 plaasgevind het by die Program vir Afrikaans en Nederlands aan die Universiteit van Natal (Durban). Die colloquium het deel gevorm van die akademiese samewerking tussen die Program vir Afrikaans en Nederlands (UN) en die Afdeling Theorie en Geschiedenis van de Literatuur van die Universiteit van Tilburg. Jaap Goedegebuure en Léon Hanssen het die Universiteit van Tilburg by die colloquium verteenwoordig. Die Noordelike Kennisnetwerk vir Neerlandistiek en die Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe van die Universiteit van Natal (Durban) het 'n onontbeerlike geldelike bydrae tot die colloquium gelewer en hulle aandeel in die sukses van die byeenkoms word hiermee met dank erken.

Hierdie uitgawe oor outobiografiese tekste gee uitdrukking aan die groeiende belangstelling in biografiese en outobiografiese tekste, nie net binne die veld van die literatuurstudie nie, maar ook by die breër leserspubliek. Egotekste word wyd gelees en behaal goeie verkoopsyfers. Literatuurwetenskaplikes besef toenemend die belang van egotekste as 'n lewenskragtige groeipunt in die literatuur. Tydens sy verwelkomingstoespraak by die Durbanse Colloquium het Michael Chapman, dekaan van die Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe by die Universiteit van Natal, opgemerk dat biografieë en outobiografieë tot dusver nie dieselfde literêr-kritiese aandag ontvang het as die roman nie en die hoop uitgespreek dat literatore hulle toenemend sal toespits op vroeë rondom: "how to interpret the life; how to narrate the life".

Tydskrif vir Nederlands en Afrikaans het in die verlede reeds 'n betekenisvolle bydrae gelewer tot die studie van die egoliteratuur. In 2002 is nommer 1 van jaargang 9 gewy aan egodokumente onder die gasredakteurskap van Ena Jansen. Ook by die verskillende universiteite in KwaZulu-Natal is daar sedert die jare negentig van die vorige eeu 'n lewendige belangstelling in die studie van biografieë en outobiografieë. By die Program vir Afrikaans en Nederlands van die Universiteit van Natal in Durban het Helize van Vuuren en Eduan Swanepoel byvoorbeeld 'n nagraadse kursus oor outobiografieë aangebied en onder die studieleiding van Swanepoel is 'n goeie aantal M.A.-skripsies oor outobiografiese tekste voltooi waaronder Outobiografie as protesliteratuur van R.P. Chetty en Die aard van outobiografiese geskryfte deur gevangenes en ballinge: Die Suid-Afrikaanse Oorlog (1899-1902) van Nico Lamprecht. Swanepoel se eie navorsing oor die outobiografie vind onder meer neerslag in sy 1996-artikel "Ubuntu en individualisme: enkele opmerkings oor die Suid-

Afrikaanse outobiografie" in *Stilet* 8(1). Nog 'n personeellid van die Program vir Afrikaans en Nederlands, Vasu Reddy, voltooi in 1997 'n M.A.-skripsie, *From Private Voice to Public Protest: Diary Narrative as Testimony*, oor onder meer Deneys Reitz se oorlogsdagboek *Commando*. In 2002 publiseer Andries Visagie 'n artikel oor Henk van Woerden se outobiografiese werk in *Tydskrif vir Nederlands en Afrikaans* 9(2).

Die KwaZulu-Natalse karakter van hierdie uitgawe van *Tydskrif vir Nederlands en Afrikaans* blyk ook uit die bydraes van literatore wat kenners is van die Engelstalige Suid-Afrikaanse literatuur, naamlik Nicholas Meihuizen, J.U. Jacobs en M.J. Daymond. 'n Onlangse voorbeeld van die navorsing wat reeds 'n geruime tyd deur lede van die Program vir Engels van die Universiteit van Natal oor die outobiografie onderneem is, is die bloemlesing *Women Writing Africa: the Southern Region* (2003) waarvan M.J. Daymond 'n mederedakteur is.

By die Universiteit van Durban-Westville het Johan van Wyk en Judith Lütge Coullie sedert die jare negentig aktief gewerk aan uiteenlopende projekte rondom outobiografiese tekste. Onder die energieke leiding van Johan van Wyk verskyn drie outobiografieë in Durban sedert 2001 in die "Life History Series" waaronder *No Way Out: Story of an X-Street Kid* (2001) van Zinhle Carol Mdakane asook Van Wyk se eie omstrede outobiografiese teks *Man-Bitch* (2001). Judith Lütge Coullie se proefskrif *Self, Life and Writing in Selected South African Autobiographical Texts* (1994) verskaf 'n nuttige oorsig van Suid-Afrikaanse outobiografieë wat in Engels geskryf is en dit is jammer dat hierdie studie nog steeds nie gepubliseer is nie. Ook buite Durban is daar navorsers wat hulle werk toespits op die outobiografie. By die Universiteit van Zululand doen onder meer Nicholas Meihuizen, Myrtle Hooper en Gina Buijs navorsing oor outobiografiese geskrifte. Hierdie beknopte oorsig van die literêre navorsing oor die outobiografie in KwaZulu-Natal maak nie aanspraak op volledigheid nie, maar wil eerder die KwaZulu-Natalse konteks skets waaruit hierdie uitgawe van *Tydskrif vir Nederlands en Afrikaans* ontstaan het. Ook die tekening op die buiteblad van hierdie tydskrif getuig van die KwaZulu-Natalse inslag van hierdie uitgawe: die Durbanse kunstenaar en romanskrywer, Ingrid Winterbach, word hartlik bedank vir die toestemming om haar tekening, *George Dyer Reconsiders* (3), hier te reproduseer.

Die eerste drie bydraes in hierdie tydskrif word gewy aan die outobiografiese werk van drie invloedryke Suid-Afrikaanse skrywers, naamlik Karel Schoeman, Breyten Breytenbach en Roy Campbell. Die outobiografiese tekste van hierdie drie skrywers lewer blyke van 'n hoë vlak van literêre sofistikasie en 'n toegespitste belangstelling in die identiteitskeppende funksie van die outobiografie.

Een van die belangrikste skrywersoutobiografieë wat die afgelope paar jaar in Afrikaans verskyn het, is ongetwyfeld *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek van Karel Schoeman*. In "*Bolwerk teen tyd en vergetelheid*": Karel Schoeman se outobiografiese aantekeninge" toon Willie Burger aan hoe Schoeman in sy

outobiografie 'n doelbewuste poging aanwend om sy identiteit te bestendig teen die vergetelheid. Burger dui aan hoe Schoeman, soos ook in sy romans, steeds bewus is van die stemme uit die geskiedenis wat hulle by die romanskrywer en historikus aanmeld om opgeteken te word en sodoende 'n identiteit te verkry. In Die laaste Afrikaanse boek is Schoeman daarop ingestel om sy eie stem 'n plek in die geskiedenis te gee deur die proses van narratiewe identiteitskepping. Burger se artikel is 'n aanskoulike toevoeging tot sy literêre navorsing oor die wisselwerking tussen geskiedenis en narratiewe identiteit.

J.U. Jacobs het reeds verskeie publikasies van gehalte oor die werk van Breyten Breytenbach die lig laat sien. In "White Skin, Black Masks: Breyten Breytenbach's African Selves" is Jacobs, net soos Willie Burger, geïnteresseerd in die identiteit(e) wat die skrywer in sy fiksionele en outobiografiese werk projekteer. Jacobs vergelyk Breytenbach se selfrefleksiewe selfprojeksie met soortgelyke prosesse in die werk van Italo Calvino, Salman Rushdie en Fernando Pessoa. Hy konsentreer verder op die spanning tussen Breytenbach se kulturele identiteite as Afrikaner en Afrikaan, identiteite wat geensins as homogeen beskou kan word nie. Jacobs se artikel is uiteindelik ook 'n staalkaart van die Afrika-maskers van die self wat Breytenbach in sy prosa projekteer.

Die derde bydrae in hierdie tydskrif gaan oor die werk van Roy Campbell, die modernistiese digter wat in Durban gebore is. In "Campbell's Autobiographies: Versions of a Life" besin Nicholas Meihuizen oor weersprekende gegewens in Roy Campbell se twee outobiografieë, Broken Record (1934) en Light on a Dark Horse (1951). Volgens Meihuizen is Campbell se botsende verslae van dieselfde insident op die jagveld 'n doelbewuste misleiding wat veel dieper strek as Campbell se openlike bekentenis dat hy mildelik gebruik gemaak het van fiksionele gegewens in sy eerste outobiografie. Met verwysing na die psigoanalitiese konsepte van herhaling en repressie lê Meihuizen 'n verband tussen die weersprekende gegewens in Campbell se outobiografieë en die ontwrigtende effek van sy vrou, Mary, se verhouding met Vita Sackville-West tydens die Bloomsbury- periode.

Die helfte van die bydraes in hierdie uitgawe van Tydskrif vir Nederlands en Afrikaans (die artikels van Andries Visagie, M.J. Daymond, Ena Jansen en Gina Buijs) word afgestaan aan die lewensverhale van individue wat hulle nooit aktief toegelê het op die ontwikkeling van 'n eie skrywersloopbaan nie. Die outobiografiese vertellings van hierdie individue toon dikwels groot verskille met die uitgesproke literêr-outobiografiese werk van byvoorbeeld Schoeman, Breytenbach en Campbell. Die artikels in hierdie tydskrif weerspieël dan ook die diversiteit wat tans merkbaar is in die studie van outobiografiese tekste. Die lewensverhale van mense sonder 'n literêre agtergrond word tans met ewe veel belangstelling bestudeer as die outobiografieë van literêre figure wat 'n hoë mate van estetiese beheer oor hulle tekste het.

Net soos Nicholas Meihuizen in sy artikel oor Campbell, betrek ook Andries Visagie die kwessie van manlikheid in sy studie van Ek, Joseph Daniel Marble

(1999), naamlik "Bendegeweld, seksualiteit en manlike subjektiwiteit in die outobiografie van Joseph Marble". Marble kyk in sy boek terug op sy eie jeug as 'n bendelid in die kleurlingbuurte van Johannesburg in die jare sewentig van die twintigste eeu. Visagie skakel die diskontinuiteit wat baie outobiografiese ervarings tussen hulle posisie as verteller enersyds en hulle jonger en andersoortige self andersyds met Marble se verskuivende projeksies van sy manlike identiteit. Die volwasse Joseph Marble gee gestalte aan sy manlikheid rondom sy rol as verantwoordelike gesinsman en broodwinner terwyl die jeugdige Joseph hom tot seksuele verowerings en bendegeweld wend in 'n oorkompenserende poging om die integriteit van sy jeugdige manlike subjektiwiteit te beskerm. Visagie besin verder oor die implikasies wat beskouings van die outobiografie as "autrebiografie" (Cixous en Coetzee) en "outobiokopie" (Lejeune) mag hê vir die pogings van die vertellende manlike subjek om die koherensie van die self te verseker.

M.J. Daymond skryf in "Generic and Discursive Tensions in Winnefred and Agnes: The True Story of Two Women by Agnes Lottering" oor Lottering se lewensverhaal as 'n uitdaging van die rassestereotipering waaraan gekleurde Suid-Afrikaners in die twintigste eeu onderwerp is. Daymond konsentreer op twee aspekte van Winnefred and Agnes, naamlik Lottering se problematisering van die outobiografiese pakt (Lejeune) deur die verdubbeling van die outobiografiese "ek" en haar ietwat problematiese keuse om haar jeug voor te stel met verwysing na 'n diskoers van natuurlike onskuld. In haar (outo)biografiese verslag oor haar familie se trotse geskiedenis in KwaZulu-Natal bied Lottering sowel haar moeder se lewensverhaal as haar eie lewensgeskiedenis aan as eerstepersoonsvertellings. Daymond ondersoek hierdie vertelstrategie deur Winnefred and Agnes te situeer binne die korpus Suid-Afrikaanse outobiografiese tekste wat sedert die jare negentig van die vorige eeu in Engels verskyn het.

Die diskontinuiteit, verdubbeling en fragmentasie van die outobiografiese vertelinstansie figureer nie net prominent in die artikels van Jacobs, Visagie en Daymond nie. In "'Ons samelewing sal nog ingewikkelder gemaak word." Twee vertelmomente van Anna Barry se dagboek *Ons Japie* (1960)" stel Ena Jansen ondersoek in na die inhoud van Anna Barry se dagboek uit die Anglo-Boereoorlog en beskou daarna die konteks rondom Barry se publikasie van haar dagboek bykans sestig jaar later. Volgens Jansen is die "skaduwee van die Vader" die bepalende faktor vir Anna Barry se identiteitsbesef. Haar vader het naamlik die eed van neutraliteit teenoor die Britse magte afgelê en na die oorlog is die Barry-gesin gevolglik as "hendsoppers" gestigmatiseer. Jansen merk op dat die titel van *Ons Japie*, asook ander elemente in die boek, in 1960 'n poging was om die één lid van die Barry-gesin wie se identiteit as "lojale Boer" nie bevraagteken kon word nie, voorop te stel. Met haar tweede vertelmoment in 1960 skep Barry 'n ander beeld van haar familie as wat moontlik was direk na die oorlog. Volgens Jansen beding Anna Barry vir die eerherstel van die Barry-familie sonder om die ingewikkelde posisie van die familie tydens die oorlog te verdoesel.

Ena Jansen en Pamela Pattynama skryf albei oor aspekte van die koloniale en

postkoloniale literatuur wat oorspronklik in Nederlands geskryf is. Tydens die Durbanse Colloquium oor Nederlandse en Suid-Afrikaanse Outobiografiese Tekste in 2003 het Pamela Pattynama, Jaap Goedegebuure en Léon Hanssen referate gelewer oor die verwerking van outobiografiese gegewens in die Nederlandse literatuur. Pattynama se referaat verskyn hier onder die titel "Herinnerd Indië: autobiografiese tekste van Indiese migrantenschrywers". In hierdie artikel neem Pattynama die literatuur van die eerste en tweede generasie migrante uit die voormalige Nederlands-Indië (tans Indonesië) in oënskou. Sy merk op dat dié migranteliteratuur gekenmerk word deur die vervaging van die tradisionele grense tussen literatuur, geskiedenis en outobiografie. Een van die redes waarom die Nederlands-Indiese literatuur vir so lank in Nederland beskou is as 'n "exotisch buitenbeentje" is die beeld van dié literatuur as realisties en outobiografies en daarom van mindere literêre gehalte. Pattynama maak die gevolgtrekking dat die herinneringe van die eerste generasie migranteskrywers berus op 'n representasie van "eie ervarings" terwyl die tweede generasie hulle verlaat op sogenaamde postherinneringe. Die tekste van die tweede generasie word gekenmerk deur intertekstualiteit en oorlewering waarin verwysings na 'n gemeenskaplike herkoms, die teleurstellende reis na Indonesië, die oorlogsvader en familieverhale gereeld voorkom.

Weens omstandighede kon Gina Buijs nie soos beplan die Durbanse Colloquium bywoon nie. Die referaat wat sy sou lewer, verskyn wel hier as "Presenting and Re-presenting the Past: African Childhood Recalled". Buijs se artikel funksioneer as 'n belangrike kontrapunt in hierdie uitgawe van Tydskrif vir Nederlands en Afrikaans aangesien haar navorsing hoofsaaklik antropologies van aard is en gebaseer is op mondelinge onderhoude met 'n groot groep bejaarde Vendas. Buijs bied hier 'n blik buite die gepubliseerde letterkunde op die dinamiek wat betrokke is by die insameling van outobiografiese inligting vir antropologiese doeleindes. In hulle vertellings lê die bejaarde respondente klem op die kommunale aspekte van hulle kinderjare in Venda in die jare twintig en dertig van die twintigste eeu en brei uit op die belangrike funksie van rituele, gebruike, dans en musiek in hulle lewens as kinders. Met verwysing na Cavarero se *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood* (2000) kom Buijs tot die volgende gevolgtrekking oor die gemeenskapsgerigtheid van die individuele Venda-respondente in hulle vertellings: "each life does not indicate a life lived in isolation, but rather the "togetherness and intercourse" of these single existents".

Die agt bydraes in hierdie temanommer van Tydskrif vir Nederlands en Afrikaans oor Suid-Afrikaanse en Nederlandse outobiografiese tekste gee 'n beeld van die wye verskeidenheid tekste wat tans die basis vorm van navorsing oor die outobiografie. Op uiteenlopende maniere besin die skrywers egter almal oor die representasie van identiteit in die outobiografiese vertelling. Die geesteswetenskappe word wêreldwyd al vir 'n geruime tyd verryk deur 'n toegespitste belangstelling in identiteit. Dit is daarom nouliks verbasend dat die artikels in hierdie uitgawe van Tydskrif vir Nederlands en Afrikaans ook deeglik aansluiting vind by die huidige debat oor literatuur en identiteit.

Ten slotte wil ek graag vir Beverly Pennington bedank vir haar hulp met die organisasie van die Durbanse Colloquium oor Nederlandse en Suid-Afrikaanse Outobiografiese Tekste. Ek is verder ook baie dank verskuldig aan Siegfried Huigen, hoofredakteur van Tydskrif vir Nederlands en Afrikaans, en Lizette Grobler, sy redaksionele assistent, vir hulle waardevolle hulp en raad met die voorbereiding van hierdie tydskrif vir publikasie.

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Tydskrif vir Nederlands &
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"Bolwerk teen tyd en vergetelheid": Karel Schoeman se outobiografiese aantekeninge

- Willie Burger -

Abstract

Karel Schoeman's attempt in his "autobiography", as well as in his historical works and fiction, is to create a "bulwark against time and oblivion". By narrating the past, an important contribution is made towards constituting an identity. Utilising Paul Ricoeur's notion of "narrative identity", the way in which Karel Schoeman emplots his life is explored. Although Schoeman does not yield totally to any popular plot provided by the tradition, he seems to utilize the plot of the journey to a large extent. However, in the last chapter he seems to undo the Jungian identity that was created by his narrative in order to reject the idea of a totalizing identity.

"o, mag van die geskrewe woord, bolwerk teen tyd en vergetelheid!"

Schoeman, 2002: 328

1. Bolwerk teen tyd en vergetelheid

Terwyl Karel Schoeman in Ierland besig was met sy novisiaat, is hy toegelaat om 'n dagboek te hou. Die Ierse dagboeke is later gepubliseer (1) maar Schoeman wou nooit weer daarna kyk nie, omdat hy voel dat dit "oordrewe positief" is en gekenmerk word deur "eensydige optimisme en die gevolglike oppervlakkigheid" (2002: 328). Wanneer hy nietemin jare later weer na die dagboeke kyk, is hy verbaas oor alles wat daarin opgeteken staan wat hy al vergeet het. Hy kom daardeur onder die indruk van die mag van die geskrewe woord: "indien dit nie swart op wit hier gestaan het nie, sou ek niks meer daarvan geweet het nie en alle wete ontken". Hierdie besef word dan opgevolg deur die lof aan die geskrewe woord wat as titel vir hierdie opstel gebruik word: "o, mag van die geskrewe woord, bolwerk teen tyd en vergetelheid!" (328).

Reeds in die titelnovelle in sy eerste gepubliseerde werk, *Veldslag*, was Karel Schoeman gemoeid met pogings om die verlede weer te gee. Hy skryf daaroor in *Die laaste Afrikaanse boek*:

Vir my was "Veldslag" in die eerste instansie 'n poging om Afrikaans te skryf, om vas te stel of ek dit kan doen of om te

bewys dat ek kan; maar baie gou het dit tot meer as dit uitgegroeï, 'n uitdruklike, haas Proustiaanse poging om daardie verre en verlore wêreld in woorde vas te lê... (299).

Die Proustiaanse poging om na verlore tyd te soek, staan sentraal in Schoeman se historiese werk sedert die vroeë tagtigerjare, maar ook in sy romans (veral in die Stemme-drieluik en in Verkenning wat eksplisiet met die verlede en die (on)moontlikheid om die verlede te ken, gemoeid is) en uiteraard ook in Die laaste Afrikaanse boek, sy "outobiografiese aantekeninge", waarin hy veral die laaste sestig jaar se persoonlike ervaring in herinnering roep. Schoeman herhaal telkens dat hy onthou en neerskryf wat hy ervaar het – niks meer nie.

Wat ek in hierdie tyd gedink en gevoel het, weet ek nie meer presies nie; maar ek het gekyk en geluister, gesien en gehoor, onthou, en dit wat ek gesien en gehoor het vir 'n deel uiteindelik ook opgeteken, sy dit eers vandag in hierdie aantekeninge. Dit is niks om my op te roem nie en ek wil so iets ook nie probeer nie. Ek skryf wat ek weet, wat ek onthou, wat ek self ervaar het (272).

Hiermee word iets te kenne gegee oor die aard van die geheue; oor die aard van outobiografiese skrywe: Dit behels 'n subjektiewe belewenis, "wat ek self ervaar het"; 'n selektiewe geheue, (alles kan nie onthou word nie – in ieder geval "weet ek nie meer presies nie"); en 'n gedeeltelike optekening ("vir 'n deel uiteindelik ook opgeteken").

Wanneer Schoeman in 1979 terugkeer na Bloemfontein, is hy ontstem deur die wyse waarop die historiese geboue wat hy uit sy vroeëre verblyf in die stad onthou, besig is om voor die stootskrapers te verdwyn. Dit lei daartoe dat hy geskiedenis begin skryf in 'n poging om die ou stad vas te lê, "voordat dit vir goed nie net uit die oog verdwyn nie maar ook uit die herinnering" (477). Van hierdie ywer om die verlede na te vors en op te teken, om 'n bolwerk teen tyd en vergetelheid op te rig, sê Schoeman dat dit sy lewe verander het: "'n onverwagte ontwikkeling waardeur my verdere lewe aanmerklik verander sou word, nie net sover dit my skryfwerk betref nie, maar uiteindelik ook wat betref my kennis van en verhouding teenoor die land waar ek gebore is, my plekbepaling in die wêreld, en my eie identiteit" (477).

Aan die einde van sy loopbaan (soos hy dit stel) het Schoeman in meer as twintig losstaande maar oorvleuelende boeke "die hele geskiedenis van die blanke in Suid-Afrika gedek ..., van so ver terug soos wat dit redelikerwys gevoer kan word" (483). Waar sy aanvanklike motivering, in sy eie woorde, "persoonlike piëteit" was om "die verlede van Bloemfontein aan die vergetelheid te ontruk" (483), het sy historiese navorsing uiteindelik vir Schoeman veel meer geword en hy beskryf dit as van deurslaggewende belang vir sy "persoonlike ontwikkeling en as deel van ... [sy] eie plek- en identiteitsbepaling" (483).

2. Die vertel van die verlede en identiteit

Die konsep "narratiewe identiteit" word gedurende die laaste twee dekades al hoe meer dikwels gebruik. Trouens, die waarde van narratiewe as navorsingsmetode het in verskeie navorsingsterreine (nie slegs die menswetenskappe nie maar ook selfs in die natuurwetenskappe) al meer aandag ontvang. (2) Verskeie teoretici, soos onder meer Alisdair MacIntyre (1997), wys op die belang van narratiewe as singewende strukture, maar dit is veral Paul Ricoeur wat 'n bydrae lewer wat nuttig betrek kan word by 'n refleksie op Schoeman se outobiografiese aantekeninge.

Soos hierbo aangetoon, verbind Schoeman die vertel van die verlede met 'n "eie identiteitsbepaling". Vir Ricoeur is persoonlike identiteit inherent narratief van aard. Om te verstaan wie ons is, is om in staat daartoe te wees om ons stories te volg. Een van die belangrikste funksies van narratiewe is, volgens Ricoeur, om te medieer tussen kontinuïteit en diskontinuïteit. (Soos elke nuwe gebeurtenis in die verhaal ander moontlikhede oopmaak en sekere moontlikhede sluit, bring dit dus eers diskontinuïteit maar die enkele insident word in die plot opgeneem en die kontinuïteit word herstel.) Narratiewe verskaf op soortgelyke wyse die skakel tussen die kontinuïteit en die diskontinuïteit van die self. (Aan die een kant is ons voortdurend aan die verander, die bejaarde persoon is anders as die middeljarige wat hy eers was en verskil radikaal van die rebelse tiener wat hy nóg vroeër was. Biologies, is daar nie eens meer een sel in 'n volwassene waarmee hy/sy gebore is nie. Maar aan die ander kant is dit tóg waar dat ek as volwassene steeds verantwoordelik gehou kan word vir 'n misdaad in my jeug.) Die self is histories en is daarom altyd aan die verander, maar nietemin bly dit steeds "dieselfde" self. Juis daarom is narratiewe geskik om die self uit te druk. (Ricoeur, 1988: 244-249).

In die driedelige *Time and Narrative* (1984, 1985 en 1988) ondersoek Ricoeur die verband tussen tyd en vertelling, die manier waarop vertelling tyd "menslik" maak. Hy onderskei deurgaans tussen "historiese narratiewe" en "fiksie", om verskeie redes waarop nie vir die doel van hierdie artikel verder ingegaan word nie. Wat wel van belang is, is dat Ricoeur veral aan die einde van die derde deel, die begrip "narratiewe identiteit" voorstel. Een van die belangrike aspekte van narratiewe identiteit is vir Ricoeur die "historiese narratiewe", die vertellings oor die verlede – hetsy 'n individu se persoonlike geskiedenis of 'n kollektiewe geskiedenis van 'n groep (Ricoeur, 1988: 244-249).

Identiteit is vir Ricoeur altyd 'n interpretasie. Ricoeur verskil van Descartes wat die idee het dat die mens die voorreg het om direk bewussyn (die cogito) te ondersoek. (Dié argument word breedvoerig uiteengesit in die eerste hoofstuk van *Oneself as Another* [1992]). Die menslike subjek is nie so self-onderzoekbaar nie, maar is altyd 'n wese in tyd, wat spore van bestaan agterlaat wat geïnterpreteer moet word: "The subject thus appears constituted simultaneously as reader and writer of his own life" (1988: 246). Die self is dus

'n "ondersoekte" lewe: "a life purified and clarified by the cathartic effects of historical as well as fictional narratives carried by our culture" (Ricoeur, 1988: 246). Teen hierdie agtergrond word die manier waarop Schoeman die verlede vertel, ten einde 'n lewe te kan interpreteer, ondersoek.

Deur al sy skryfwerk het Schoeman Suid-Afrika, waarheen hy in 1976 "blindelings en teësinnig teruggestrompel het", geleidelik beter leer ken en betrokke geraak by die land en sodoende uiteindelik ook ervaar dat hy "tuisgekom" het (483); dat hy "êrens tuisheer" (484).

Hiermee lê Schoeman uitdruklik 'n verband tussen geheue, of dan die geskiedenis, en identiteit. Identiteit, persoonlik sowel as kollektief, is vir Schoeman ten nouste gemoeid met ons vermoë om te onthou, om die verlede te ken. Individue en groepe se huidige bestaan word grootliks bepaal en gevorm deur herinneringe aan die verlede en deur toekomsverwagtings. Hierdie beskouing stem grootliks ooreen met die beskouings van Ricoeur (1988: 244-249).

Ook oor Die laaste Afrikaanse boek merk Schoeman op dat die verslag oor sy lewe ook 'n verslag geword het van sestig jaar se Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis en "'n rekord van 'n wêreld wat in my eie tyd tot niet gegaan het of besig is om rondom my uitmekaar te val waar ek sit en skryf: laat ek ook dit dus opteken en beskryf voordat ook dit vergete raak" (483-4).

Hiermee word ook eksplisiet gestel dat Die laaste Afrikaanse boek nie gewoon 'n outobiografie is nie, nie net die lewensverhaal van die outeur is nie, maar dat dit 'n sosiale geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika word. Die outobiografiese aantekeninge is dus 'n bolwerk teen die vergeet van 'n wêreld wat besig is om rondom die skrywer uitmekaar te val.

Die subtitel "outobiografiese aantekeninge" kan dus gelees word as aantekeninge van die hoogs subjektiewe (en daarom "outobiografiese") ervarings waarin 'n verlore tydvak, 'n verbygaande wêreld, vasgelê word. Die outobiografiese, baie subjektiewe aantekeninge van sy eietydse geskiedenis word 'n bolwerk teen die vergetelheid van dit wat besig is om rondom hom te verdwyn en te verkrummel. Daarom noem Schoeman die boek uitdruklik nie 'n outobiografie nie. (3) Maar "outobiografiese aantekeninge" is óók outobiografie. En as sodanig is dit óók 'n bolwerk teen Schoeman se eie verdwyning in vergetelheid, en uiteindelik ook die vind van 'n eie tuiste en individuele identiteit. (4)

3. Bolwerk van stemme

Die opteken van stemme uit die verlede staan sentraal in Schoeman se stemmedriël. (5) Telkens word deur hierdie "stemme" wat aan die woord kom, iets weergegee van 'n wêreld wat in vergetelheid verdwyn het. Die stem

van die ou vrou in Hierdie lewe (1993) word "'n herinnering aan die leefwyse en "die hele plattelandse kultuur wat deur die Afrikaanssprekende tot stand gebring en vir meer as twee honderd jaar hier gehandhaaf is, maar wat intussen ... onherroeplik ten onder gegaan het"" (Kannemeyer, 1998: 247). In Die uur van die engel (1995) word op verskeie maniere, deur verskillende "stemme" gepoog om Daniël Steenkamp se visioen van die engel in herinnering te roep, maar slegs die "getuienis" het bewaar gebly, "die belewenis waarna dit verwys, het onredbaar verlore gegaan en kan nie meer op oortuigende wyse herwin word nie" (Schoeman, 1995: 46).

Die getuienis van die stemme uit die verlede is dus ook hier die enigste bolwerk teen vergetelheid. In Verliesfontein (1998) dring die stem van Kallie Magistraat daarop aan om vertel te word, dat sý lewe nie in vergetelheid moet verdwyn nie: "Kyk na my; luister na my. Ek het ook eens gelewe." (Schoeman, 1998: 148). Soos Kallie verlang dat oor sý bestaan getuig moet word, is dit in Die laaste Afrikaanse boek Schoeman se eie stem wat opgeteken word, wat daarop aandring om gehoor te word, wat eis: "Kyk na my; luister na my. Ek het ook eens gelewe." Schoeman se eie stem word 'n getuie van die belewenis wat "onredbaar verlore gegaan het" en word gekenmerk deur dieselfde dringendheid van Kallie Magistraat se stem.

Oor die opteken van die "stemme" skryf Schoeman baie in sy outobiografiese aantekeninge. Hy vergelyk die gevoel wat hy soms kry wanneer hy artefakte en dokumente uit die verlede hanteer, met 'n aandrang van stemme uit die verlede om gehoor te word. Schoeman verwys herhaaldelik na die drama Will Shakespeare, deur Clemence Dane, wat hy as kind gelees het. In een toneel uit die drama wat Schoeman diep beïndruk het, sien Anne Hatheway hoedat 'n jong Shakespeare omring word deur die skimme van die karakters wat hy eendag sal skep (207). Wanneer hy probeer wegloop, dring die stemme daarop aan dat hy hulle onderskeie stories moet vertel: "Tell my story! And mine! And mine! And mine!" (547). Die byna waansinnige aandrang van al die karakters dat hulle stories nie vergeet moet word nie, dat dit opgeteken moet word, dien vir Schoeman om sy eie ervaring met die opteken van "al die stemme" (uit die verlede) te verduidelik. Dit geld sy fiksiekarakters eweseer as byvoorbeeld die "stem" van die slavin Armosyn (in Armosyn van die Kaap [2001]) of die ander biografieë. (6) Hierdie onvermydelike dwang om die stemme uit die verlede op te teken, brei uiteindelik uit om ook sy eie stem in te sluit. Ook Schoeman se eie storie dring daarop aan om vertel te word.

Schoeman se eie stem, sy eie lewensverhaal, word soos die ander stemme wat hy, volgens eie beskrywing, byna koersagtig opteken. Hy kan byna outomaties te werk gaan. Hy verduidelik selfs op 'n stadium hoeveel bladsye hy per aand skryf. Sy eie bestaan word deur hierdie getuienis uit die vergetelheid ontruk, net soos die bejaarde vrou van Hierdie lewe, net soos die siener-digter in Uur van die Engel, net soos Kallie Magistraat in Verliesfontein, net soos die slavin in Armosyn van die Kaap. Selfs in Afskeid en vertrek (1990), wat nie in die eerste plek gemoeid is met die verlede nie, is die besef van die hoofkarakter dat hy "getuie" is, dat hy as kunstenaar, as digter, maar net kan waarneem en opteken in 'n land waarin so baie deur geweld vernietig word. In

Verliesfontein wat as "Stemme 1" ook 'n oorsig oor die stemmedrieluik bied, sê die verteller:

Die verlede glip weg en raak verlore, vloei weg soos water, stroom weg soos sand, en ons hoor die lae geruis en merk hoe dit verlore gaan. Ek is al wat dit sien, die enigste waarnemer, die enigste getuie: die stof op die blink swart stewels, die spore van die perde in die pad, die wiegende gordyn voor die venster of die lintjie op die drumpel; ek is al wat daarvan weet, en as ek dit nie opteken nie, sal dit verlore gaan asof dit nooit bestaan het nie. Ek is al wat hoor, en as daar stemme uit hierdie duister sou opklink, sal die woorde verlore gaan as ek nie luister en dit opteken nie.

(Schoeman, 1998: 89)

In Die laaste Afrikaanse boek stel Schoeman dieselfde gedagte so:

As ek dit nie opteken nie, voel ek toenemend namate ek ouer word en Suid- Afrika al hoe vinniger rondom my verander, as ek dit nie opteken nie, sal niemand anders dit doen nie; as ek hul stemme nie vaslê nie, sal dit vir goed verwaai en wegsterf in die stilte. Tell my story! And mine! And mine! And mine! (674).

Deur die onderskeie stemme op te teken, het Schoeman aan sy fiktiewe karakters, aan die historiese figure, en uiteindelik in Die laaste Afrikaanse boek ook aan homself, 'n geskiedenis en 'n plek gegee. En deur 'n geskiedenis en 'n plek, verkry hulle ook 'n identiteit.

Identiteit ontstaan, soos reeds hierbo aangetoon, vir Paul Ricoeur in vertelling. Die skep van plots, of handelingskomposisie, staan sentraal in die werk van Paul Ricoeur oor identiteit. Reeds in *Time and Narrative* roer Ricoeur die saak van "narratiewe identiteit" aan maar wat hy in *Oneself as Another* (1992) probeer doen, is om 'n teorie van narratief te rekonstrueer vanuit die perspektief van die bydrae wat dit lewer tot die konstituering van die self (1992: 114). In *Time and Narrative* was die begrip "narratiewe identiteit" vir Ricoeur die manier om die narratiewe van geskiedenis en die narratiewe van fiksie te versoen. Hy som dié poging soos volg op in *Oneself as Another*:

Following the intuitive preunderstanding we have of these things, do we not consider human lives to be more readable when they have been interpreted in terms of the stories that people tell about them? And are not these life stories in turn made more intelligible when the narrative models of plots – borrowed from history or from fiction (drama or novel) are applied to them? It therefore seems possible to take the following chain of assertions as valid: self-understanding is an interpretation; interpretation of the self, in turn, finds in the narrative, among other signs and symbols, a privileged form of

mediation; the latter borrows from history as well as from fiction, making a life story a fictional history or, if one prefers, a historical fiction, interweaving the historiographic style of biographies with the novelistic style of autobiographies.

(Ricoeur, 1992: 114)

Na aanleiding van hierdie redenasie van Ricoeur, word Schoeman se "bolwerk teen tyd en vergetelheid", ondersoek ten einde te kyk hoedat 'n eie identiteit tot stand kom in die vertelproses.

Die bolwerk teen tyd en vergetelheid, die storie wat gemaak word oor die verlede, bied uiteindelik 'n historiese bewussyn. Ricoeur onderskei tussen "insidente" en "gebeurtenisse". Dit is juis deur vertelling, deur die individuele insidente wat plaasvind op te neem in 'n plot, dat van individuele insidente, gebeurtenisse met kousale verbande gemaak word. Deur die insidente in 'n plot op te neem word betekenis daaraan gegee. Die narratief oor die verlede bied uiteindelik aan die leser 'n historiese bewussyn omdat dit losstaande insidente in tyd orden. Dit is hierdie historiese bewussyn wat ook vir Schoeman so belangrik is – in sy outobiografie, maar eweneens in sy fiksie. (Dink byvoorbeeld aan die kommer wat by die verteller ontstaan in Verliesfontein oor die motorbestuurder se totale gebrek aan 'n historiese bewussyn – volledig bespreek in Burger, 2002.) Deur 'n historiese bewussyn aan ons te skenk, verskaf narratiewe ook 'n identiteit.

4. Neerslag van stemme in 'n verhaal

Uiteindelik vind die stemme neerslag in 'n narratief. Die laaste Afrikaanse boek is immers ook 'n lewensverhaal. Die verlede word weergegee as 'n narratief. 'n Plot word geskep om die flitse, skerwe, splinters van herinneringe, te orden en te integreer. Schoeman skryf oor die manier waarop hy sy eie ervarings opteken:

Flitse, fragmente, splinters, skerwe: dit is my eie ervarings en herinnerings, my eie getuienis; dit is my eie lewe waarvan ek hier verslag lewer, met al sy beperkings, en op hulle manier is selfs die beperkings seker veelseggend genoeg (271).

Die persoonlike herinnerings word veral aangevul deur aanhalings uit 'n leeftyd se leeswerk en deur doelbewuste navorsing oor die verlede. Wanneer Schoeman skryf oor die invloede van boeke wat hy gelees het, lê hy klem op die ingewikkelde aard van die geheue:

Deur my verbeelding omgesit, skryf ek asof dit [die invloede van boeke op sy verbeelding – WDB] so 'n regstreekse en eenvoudige proses was; dog niks wat met die geheue of

verbeelding te make het, is eenvoudig of regstreeks nie (242).

Boonop is die geheue nie net ingewikkeld nie maar dikwels gewoon onbetroubaar. Een voorbeeld van die onbetroubaarheid van selfs sy eie fenomenale geheue lê Schoeman eksplisiet bloot wanneer hy eers beweer die foto's van Lomax het die impuls gegee vir die skryf van "Veldslag" maar dan dui hy in die volgende paragraaf aan dat dit tog nie moontlik kon wees nie aangesien die boek van Lomax met 'n versameling van foto's wat tydens die oorlog geneem is, eers in 1964 uitgegee is – vier jaar ná die skryf van "Veldslag". Hy merk dan op:

Mens skryf wat mens onthou, sóos mens dit onthou, te goeder trou; en wat ek hierbo geskryf het, laat ek staan as illustrasie van die bedrieglikheid van die geheue. Wat mens onthou, is ten slotte nie noodwendig wat in feite gebeur het nie, maar dit wat vir jou belangrik is of was, dit wat vir jou belangrik lyk, en ook jou vertolking van die gewens is subjektief (300).

Soos Schoeman dus oor die verlede skryf in die openingsin van Verliesfontein, is die verlede 'n ander land. Daar is geen maklike manier om daardie ander land te bereik nie omdat die geheue nie altyd betroubaar is nie, die artefakte en argiewe, die "spore van die verlede" wat in die hede bewaar gebly het, is eweneens onbetroubaar. En boonop word al hierdie spore, die navorsing, uiteindelik deur die verbeelding georden in 'n plot.

4.1 Plot, karakter, identiteit

Die vertellende subjek, Schoeman, skep 'n plot, waarin hyself 'n karakter is wat aangedui word deur die persoonlike voornaamwoord "ek". Deur die handelingskomposisie (emplotment) kom die storie van die self tot stand. Ricoeur gebruik Aristoteles se idee van handelingkomposisie, die maak van 'n plot, as 'n proses waardeur die sintese van uiteenlopende elemente plaasvind ("a synthesis of heterogeneous elements" [Ricoeur, 1991: 21]). Uiteenlopende gebeurtenisse word van betekenis voorsien wanneer hulle in die plot van 'n betekenisvolle storie opgeneem word. Die losstaande gebeurtenis kry slegs betekenis in die plot (7) omdat 'n plot meer is as die opeenvolging van gebeurtenisse, 'n plot skep betekenis uit die eenvoudige opeenvolging: "In short, emplotment is the operation that draws a configuration out of a simple succession" (Ricoeur, 1984: 65).

Hierdie "konfigurasië" word deur Ricoeur beskryf as 'n "saambegryp" ("grasping together"). In hierdie verband is die stam van die woord "begryp" beduidend. Dit impliseer dat die konfigurasië, deur die plot, 'n "saam-gryp" is, die kry van 'n greep op 'n reeks uiteenlopende gebeurtenisse. Hierdie "saamgryp" van uiteenlopende gebeurtenisse word moontlik gemaak deur die leser se vermoë om 'n storie te volg. Om 'n storie te kan volg, is om te verstaan hoedat al die gebeurtenisse kan lei tot 'n slot wat nie voorsien kon word nie, maar wat geloofwaardig is in die lig van al die voorafgaande gebeurtenisse. Schoeman maak dus 'n plot van sy lewe deur sekere momente te selekteer,

sekere herinneringe neer te skryf en om hierdie herinneringe, aanhalings en sy besinning daaroor, te organiseer in 'n begin, middel en betekenisvolle einde.

Maar Schoeman dink juis na oor die vertelling. Hy is dus nie alleen die vertellende subjek en die vertelde subjek nie, hy reflekteer ook oor die handeling en gevoelens van die vertelde subjek. Die vertellende subjek is dus terselfdertyd ook die interpreteerder van sy eie narratief. Maar, soos Paul Ricoeur verduidelik, wanneer 'n mens 'n verhaal lees, is die leser nooit onaangeraak deur die leesproses nie.

Die wêreld wat gekonfigureer is deur die plot, word gerefigureer deur die leser. Dit beteken nie dat die betekenis van die plot ontrafel word deur die leser nie, dat betekenis in of agter die vertelling "ontdek" word nie. Deur die leesproses ontstaan 'n moontlike wêreld "voor" die teks en die leser betree hierdie moontlike wêreld deur middel van die verbeelding. Sodoende ervaar die leser gelyktydig die wêreld van ervaring en lyding (die wêreld van die leser) en die wêreld van die teks. Hierdie proses laat die leser nie onaangeraak nie. As ons sê dat ons "ontroer" is deur 'n kunswerk, is dit in die sin van die stam van die woord – dat ek geroer het, beweeg het uit my wêreld in 'n ander wêreld in, en dat hierdie beweging my ervarings verander en my visie op my eie wêreld verander het.

As 'n nuwe "ek" nou uit die outobiografiese proses ontstaan, is dit 'n "ek" wat die produk is van vertelling én van interpretasie. Die interpreterende ek is egter nie 'n vaste, voorafbestaande subjek in 'n metafisiese sin nie. Die interpreterende ek word gekonstitueer deur die proses van vertelling en interpretasie en is daarom voortdurend aan die verander. Ten einde die wêreld van die teks toe te eien, moet die leser immers voortdurend sy/haar eie wêreld verlaat, al sy dit tydelik. "If fiction is a fundamental dimension of the reference of the text, it is no less a fundamental dimension of the subjectivity of the reader. As a reader I find myself only by losing myself" (Ricoeur, 1981: 144).
(8)

In Die laaste Afrikaanse boek is hierdie proses, waarvolgens 'n identiteit deur vertelling tot stand kom, opvallend. Die vertellende Schoeman versmelt herinneringe, aanhalings, en navorsing in 'n enkele plot. Die plot is grootliks die oeroue plot vir outobiografieë, naamlik die lewe as 'n reis. Conway (1998) wys daarop dat die "manlike" outobiografie (van Augustinus via Rousseau tot die hede) geskoei is op die lees van Homerus se Odysseus. Die lewe is 'n lang reis, vol moeilike probleme wat telkens oorkom moet word deur die harde werk, intelligensie, krag en geluk van die hoofkarakter. In Die laaste Afrikaanse boek wys Schoeman telkens doelbewus in Jungiaanse terme na die lewe as 'n reis, 'n lang en moeisame tog, as 'n individuasieproses – "'n lang labirintiese weg van selfverwesenliking" (405). Die vertelling self, hierdie "outobiografiese aantekeninge", is soos 'n mosaïek opgebou uit herinneringe en aanhalings uit ander tekste en word (om by die Jungiaanse terme te hou) sy mandala, 'n simboliese voorstelling van die heel / totale Self. Sy sorgvuldige aantekeninge van wat dikwels as onbenullige besonderhede voorkom, word aangebied in 'n proses wat aan vrye assosiasie herinner en dit lyk soms asof hy

soveel afdwaal dat sprake van 'n sentrale verhaallyn ondermyn word. Schoeman verduidelik egter dikwels dat hy gedrewe is om hierdie (oënskyklik onbelangrike) dinge op te teken en hy herhaal telkens dat niks toevallig is nie, dat daar redes moet wees waarom hy sekere indrukke onthou. Hierdie herinnerings word toegelig deur verwysings na ander tekste. Saam vorm hierdie herinnerings en die verwysings uiteindelik 'n patroon – 'n samehangende voorstelling van 'n heel self: "Werklikheid, fiksie en verbeelding het mekaar ingehaal en oorvleuel, en die onderskeie fasette van my lewe het saamgesmelt tot 'n enkele geheel" skryf hy vier bladsye van die einde af.

Hierdie "geheel" wat geïnterpreteer word is dus die gevolg van die subjek wat terselfdertyd verteller en interpreteerder van sy eie lewe is. Die self is dus 'n "ondersoekte" lewe, soos Ricoeur dit stel: "a life purified and clarified by the cathartic effects of historical as well as fictional narratives carried by our culture" (Ricoeur, 1988: 246).

Dit is egter voorts interessant om daarop te let dat Ricoeur, binne die hermeneutiese tradisie, ook bewus is van die voorkennis (horison) van die individu, selfs voordat daar nog 'n eie poging is om te vertel. Die individu is altyd reeds gebed in 'n kultuur, in 'n taal, in 'n manier van verstaan (wat Ricoeur mimesis1 noem). Daar is 'n soort "voorverstaan" van tyd en van plot wat die verteller reeds het, selfs voordat hy begin vertel. Hierdie "plots" word deur ons kultuur aan ons gebied, redeneer Jill Ker Conway (1998). Conway onderskei veral twee basiese plots wat in die Westerse wêreld die struktuur verskaf vir byna alle outobiografiese vertellings. Aan die een kant is daar die "manlike" outobiografieë (na aanleiding van Homerus se Odysseus). Hierin is die hoofkarakter 'n heldefiguur wat deur sy eie deursettingsvermoë en harde werk uiteindelik talle probleme en lyding te bowe kom en sukses behaal. Hierdie struktuur is bv. volgens haar aangepas deur Augustinus vir die meer godsdienstige weergawe (die "held" wat allerlei versoekings van sonde moet teëstaan) en uiteindelik op bevrydende wyse benut deur Rousseau.

Hierteenoor stel Conway die ontwikkeling van die vroulike outobiografie wat volgens haar gewortel is in religieuse geskifte deur vroue waarin die klem val op 'n intense nie-verbale kontak met God. Vroue skryf slegs oor hulle eie emosionele ervarings van God, in openbarings wat hulle ervaar (passief ondergaan). Een van eerste voorbeelde is die Heilige Theresa van Avila (Conway, 1998: 12) wat 'n mistiese ervaring van God in haar outobiografie uitdruk. In hierdie soort geskifte staan die emosionele, mistieke ervaring van 'n verhouding met God sentraal, eerder as die reis, die soektog, wat sentraal staan in die manlike outobiografieë.

Die sekulêre vorm van die vrouevertellings spruit uit die kleinburgerlike bemoeienis met romantiese liefde, die huwelik en gesinslewe. Selfs wanneer vroue hoogs individualistiese outobiografieë skryf, met politieke en intellektuele doelwitte, word dit meestal geplaas in die gesinslewe of in die huwelik.

Die argetipiese vroulike geskiedenis verskyn in die vroeë 19de eeu in die vorm van die gesekulariseerde romanse – die lewensplot is die erotiese soektog na die ideale man (met eiendom en sosiale mobiliteit). Die vrou is net emosies en weinig intellek en moet net haar rol vervul as die ideale maat vir die selfskeppende held. Haar lewensverhaal eindig wanneer sy hierdie man kry, want daarna word haar bestaan voortgesit in hom.

The consuming bourgeois preoccupation with erotic adventure, family, property and the primacy of the emotional fulfillment of private life led to the transformation of the female life plot from the visionary encounter with God, a God often viewed in extremely abstract terms, to the quest of the ideal hero, a quest which gave shape to the fiction, theater, opera and ballet of nineteenth-century Europe.

(Conway, 1998: 14)

Die belangrikste eienskap van die Westerse romantiese heldin, is dat sy weinig beheer oor haar lot het. Sy moet wag dat sekere gesinsituasies of klasverskille of ander sosiale beperkings opgehef word, of deur ander vir haar uit die weg geruim word, sodat sy uiteindelik by die held kan uitkom. Sy het weinig mag om in eie belang op te tree.

Hierdie soort "vroulike" plot maak beslis een deel van die Schoeman-lewensplot uit. In sy keuse van leesstof maak Schoeman vroeg reeds die keuse vir meisiesboeke bo seunsboeke:

"Régte" seunsboeke soos die gewilde reekse oor die Hardy Boys of Biggles met hulle spanning, avontuur en lewensgevaar het my ewe koud gelaat as jag- of dierverhale, en wat ek in die jeugafdeling gelees het, was klassieke Engelstalige "meisiesboeke"... (197).

En verder:

Hierdie "meisiesboeke" het my iets gebied wat my bevrediging gegee het: nie aksie, dadigheid of fisieke avontuur nie, maar die subtiele innerlike spanning van onderlinge verhoudings tussen mense, dikwels in die klein, beskutte kring van die familie, die "stil avontuur" waaroor Elisabeth Eybers geskryf het... (197).

Dit is duidelik dat Schoeman in sy romans ook aansluiting gevind het by hierdie "'meisiesboeke" as model, maar ook in sy outobiografie is daar tot 'n groot mate sprake van die "passiewe ervaring van die lewe" soos wat Conway dit in vroulike outobiografieë aantoon. Schoeman beskryf dikwels gebeurtenisse asof dit vanself met hom gebeur, eerder as wat daar "inspanning van sy kant" is:

Na afloop van die Uniefees het ek my taamlik abrupt, soos genoem, sonder werk gevind, met die noodsaak om so gou doenlik iets anders te kry, 'n proses waarmee ek nie veel raad geweet het nie. Hier, soos so dikwels in my lewe, het dinge egter vanself gebeur sonder inspanning aan my kant, met 'n advertensie in die koerant vir 'n assistent by die openbare biblioteek (...) Ek is sonder moeite aangestel, en na 'n kort tydjie in die uitleenafdeling na die katalogiseerafdeling oorgeplaas; ek meen amper dat ek ook in die naslaanbiblioteek afgelos het (306).

Opvallend in hierdie aanhaling is die eksplisiete opmerking dat dinge in sy lewe gebeur "sonder inspanning van my kant". Hierdie indruk word versterk deur die gebruik van passiewe sinskonstruksies: "Ek is sonder moeite aangestel, (...) is (...) oorgeplaas".

Dit is egter nie moontlik om Schoeman se vertelling te beperk tot hierdie "passiewe" plot nie. Daar is dikwels ook sprake van "beslissende besluite" en optrede van sy kant. Hy skryf byvoorbeeld oor sy besluit om in 1976 na Suid-Afrika terug te keer, die volgende:

... dit was, meen ek, een van die min kere in my lewe wat so 'n beslissende besluit nodig was, iets wat my hele verdere bestaan onherroepelik sou bepaal (...) Oor die algemeen was my lewe egter nie 'n kwessie van dramatiese en oorwoë besluite van eenkant of anderkant toe nie, maar van 'n reeks geringer keuses wat op haas vanselfsprekende wyse die een uit die ander voortgevloei het (...) en in hul aaneenskakeling op onbewuste wyse die uiteindelijke vorm van my lewe bepaal en Jung se proses van individuasie uitgemaak het (455).

Juis die Jungiaanse beskouing beïnvloed uiteindelik sy vertelling sodat dit enersyds wel die "labirintiese weg" is waarop talle probleme oorkom word ten einde die individuasieproses te voltrek, maar andersyds is daar ook 'n aanvaarding van die lewe, van dinge soos hulle gebeur, sonder om daaraan te probeer verander. Juis om te vorder tot die punt van aanvaarding, is die te bowe kom van een van die struikelblokke op die reis. Geleidelik is dit tog asof die plot van die reisende held wat probleme oorkom, oorheersend word. Hy skryf oor die gevorderde boeke wat hy vroeg reed gelees het en die "volwasse" gesprekke wat sy moeder met hom gevoer het:

Ek was met ander woorde 'n vroegryp en vroegwys kind, en hierdie gang van sake is bevorder deur bioskoopbesoek en die feit dat ek taamlik vroeg reeds begin het om meer gevorderde boeke te lees, wat my saam met my persoonlike aanpassingsprobleme nie gehelp het om maklik by kinders van my leeftyd aansluiting te kry nie en my besonder irriterend moet gemaak het vir volwassenes.

Uit opvoedkundige oogpunt was dit alles natuurlik heeltemal onwenslik; dog ek is nie besig om 'n opvoedkundige handleiding te skryf of pedagogiese oordele te vel nie, maar om te vertel wat in my eie lewe gebeur het. Miskien het hierdie versnelde gang van sake my van die wondere van 'n "normale" kindheid en ontwikkelingsproses beroof, wat dié ook al mag wees, maar in my lewe was daar genoeg wondere soos dit was; en as dit tot my eensaamheid, isolasie en onaanpasbaarheid bygedra het, kan ek slegs opmerk dat ek hierdie belemmering darem oorleef en my eie voordeel daaruit getrek het (134-5).

Schoeman gee hier toe dat baie "wondere" in sy lewe plaasgevind het, en dat hy die slagoffer van sekere omstandighede was – sy ouers wat vroeg geskei het, sy aanpassingsprobleme. Hy beskou dit alles egter by nabaat as "belemmering" wat hy oorleef het. Hierdie passiewe houding van belemmering wat bloot "oorleef" word, word egter verder geneem wanneer hy sê dat hy voordeel daaruit getrek het. Die idee van 'n reis waarin die belemmering uiteindelik lei tot voordeel, verteenwoordig dus 'n oorgang van 'n passiewe ervaring tot 'n aktiewe deelname.

5. Slothoofstuk

Dit wil dus lyk asof Schoeman, deur die plot te maak, deur te vertel en te reflekteer oor die vertelling, uiteindelik 'n identiteit skep. 'n Identiteit kom tot stand deur vertelling, deur 'n bolwerk teen vergetelheid op te rig. Die self kan simbolies voorgestel en dan herken word in die mosaïek van die verlede. Maar in die slothoofstuk van Die laaste Afrikaanse boek vind daar tog 'n verskuiwing plaas.

In hierdie hoofstuk is daar 'n intense bewussyn van tyd. Talle van die lang paragrawe begin met 'n tydsaanduiding – "in die middag" ens. Daar is telkens verwysings na die wekkertjie wat tik. In opeenvolgende paragrawe word die geskiedenis van Trompsburg (hetsy uit argiewe of die inligting van grafstene gekonstrueer); die antieke geskiedenis waarvan Schoeman lees, met die hede waarin Schoeman hom bevind, gekontrasteer.

By Schoeman ontstaan daar 'n toenemende besef dat die opteken van die verlede nie noodwendig 'n standhoudende bolwerk teen die vergetelheid kan bied nie. Die implikasie is dat die narratiewe identiteit ook nie vas kan wees nie. As hy die antieke geskiedenis lees, besef hy dat die bietjie inligting wat in geskiedskrywing behoue gebly het, wel 'n bolwerk teen vergetelheid is, maar dat ook die optekening in die vergetelheid kan verdwyn. Schoeman sien byvoorbeeld dat hy nie eens genoem word in 'n boek oor wêreldletterkunde nie. Hiermee kom daar dan 'n verskuiwing van die Jungiaanse konstruksie van 'n identiteit, van die individuasie wat voltrek is as eindbestemming van 'n reis, na 'n posisie waarin ook daardie narratief laat vaar kan word. Die identiteit wat

deur die vertelling tot stand gekom het, word in 'n sekere sin afgelê. Die vrede wat hy vind in die Jungiaanse versoening is wel waardevol, maar van daar af lyk dit asof Schoeman in hierdie laaste hoofstuk 'n verdere stap neem. Die self gee identiteit prys deur die verlede af te lê vir 'n aanvaarding van slegs die huidige moment.

In die laaste paragraaf van die boek word Schoeman se wandeling terug na die dorp beskryf, maar skielik nie meer in die eerste persoon nie, in die tweede persoon – "[m]ens moet wag (...). En dan wanneer jy klaar gekyk het (...) kan jy met die paadjie aan die steil kant, die skadukant, van die heuwel stadig langs die afdraande terugstap tussen die klippe en ongelyktes met die wye wit vergesig oor die veld in die laaste sonlig voor jou oë" (679).

Hy het as't ware klaar gekyk na die patroon wat hy tot stand gebring het. Dit het 'n sekere mate van heling gebring, maar hy suggereer dat daar op 'n punt klaar gekyk kan word daarna. Eers aan die einde van 'n lewe (nie net sý lewe nie, só word deur die gebruik van die tweedepersoonsvorm gesuggereer) kan 'n mens die woorde, die beelde en die herinnerings oordink. Maar dan vind 'n mens ook berusting en selfs die geheue en verbeelding kan tot rus kom voor mens kan "tuiskom". Om vrede te hê met jouself, word hier as 'n tuiskoms (terugstap) beskryf. 'n Terugkeer wat moontlik is nadat ook die herinnerings tot rus kom.

Die optekening van die gebeurtenisse, die onthou van alles en die pogings om dit op te teken, om 'n bolwerk teen vergetelheid op te rig, kan ook uiteindelik staak wanneer mens beseft dat dit nie noodwendig standhoudend is nie. Al die herinneringe is egter 'n punt wat mens moet bereik – dit is 'n uitsig wat mens voor jou sien, waarna jy kan kyk. Dit is egter wanneer jy klaar gekyk het wat jy kan terugkeer. Hierdie proses van verkenning van die verlede, deur te onthou en te verbeel, is noodsaaklik. Eers as klaar teruggekyk is, as 'n identiteit tot stand gekom het, is dit moontlik om sonder oordeel of besinning die verlede te kan oorskou, om vrede te vind daarmee en dan "terug te keer" na 'n soort identiteitloosheid – die einde tegemoet omdat die aand op hande is.

Schoeman baseer dus ook sy lewensverhaal grootliks op die reismotief. Aan die einde is daar vir hom ook, soos vir Odysseus, 'n tuiskoms. Hierdie tuiskoms interpreteer Schoeman in Jungiaanse terme as 'n herkenning van die self uit die hele mosaïek, die mandala. Maar dit wil lyk asof daar vir Schoeman ook iets verder is – 'n bewustheid dat daar dalk nog agter hierdie patroon, agter die narratiewe identiteit – ook die aflê van die self, van 'n eie identiteit is, waarop die stilte moet volg. Logieserwys is hierdie vir Schoeman dus 'n "laaste boek".

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(1) Berig uit die vreemde. 'n Ierse dagboek. (1966) en Van 'n verre eiland: 'n tweede Ierse dagboek (1968).

(2) Die gemoeidheid met narratiewe is al as 'n "obsessie van die era" beskryf (Nash, 1990:xi). Kreiswirth (1990) beskou dit as die "narratiewe wending" in die menswetenskappe. Hinchman & Hinchman (1997: ix) noem die tendens om aandag te gee aan narratiewe as ondersoekmetode 'n "paradigmaskuif": "away from nomological models and toward a more humanistic language and approach, in which narratives are central". Kyk in die verband ook byvoorbeeld na Jerome Bruner (2003) Making Stories: Law, Literature, Life. Harvard: Harvard.

(3) Só beskou is Hennie Aucamp (2003) se kritiek teen die subtitel, "outobiografiese aantekeninge", nie geldig nie.

(4) Bloot die woordkeuse van Schoeman, dat hy 'n wêreld wat besig is om "uitmekaar te val" opteken, onderstreep die nostalgiese toon wat sentraal staan in hierdie werk. Die opteken van die verbygaande is nie 'n neutrale boekstaving nie, maar telkens word die verlies ook betreur. Dit plaas Schoeman natuurlik in 'n ongemaklike posisie ten opsigte van die politiek-

maatskaplike verandering in Suid-Afrika. As daar terugverlang word na 'n vervloë era, lyk dit asof die aanbreek van die nuwe era betreur word. Hierin ontstaan 'n spanning. Om hierdie rede is dit seker ook noodsaaklik vir Schoeman om telkens sy afkeer teenoor sekere aspekte van die verlede te onderstreep – iets wat Brink (2003) in sy resensie gehinder het. Die vraag wat Brink vra, is waarom Schoeman nie as veranderingsagent probeer optree het as die sake hom toentertyd gepla het nie en waarom hy dan steeds nostalgies oor die verlede dink. Dit skep die indruk van 'n politiek-korrekte inkleding by nabaat. Hierdie kritiek beklemtoon juis die manier waarop die subjek as lesers van sy eie verhaal, ook interpreteerder daarvan is en wat die invloed van die interpretasie uit die hede op die vertelling van die verlede is.

(5) Stemme 1, Verliesfontein (1998); Stemme 2, Hierdie lewe (1993); Stemme 3, Die uur van die engel (1995).

(6) Dit is opvallend dat Schoeman dikwels sy historiese werk, die opteken van geskiedenis, benader vanuit 'n biografiese perspektief – die verlede soos dit deur 'n enkeling ervaar is. Hy skryf self oor die aard van geskiedskrywing (en ook terselfdertyd oor die verband tussen roman en geskiedenis): "Altyd – en hier veral kan mens die benadering van die romanskrywer seker van dié van die historikus of akademikus onderskei; altyd was dit hierby (geskiedskrywing) vir my belangrik hoe die verlede fisiek ervaar is: die kers of lamplig met sy flakkerende skadu's (...) die onvoorstelbaarheid van 'n wêreld waarin daar geen groter helderheid was nie as die lig van kerse, fakkels of vuur, en geen groter spoed moontlik was nie as dié van galopperende perde. Altyd was dit my doel om met inagneming van elemente soos hierdie die tekstuur van die verlede te probeer weergee..." (529).

(7) Benewens Ricoeur, wys onder andere ook David Carr (1991, 1997) en MacIntyre (1997) op hierdie betekenisgewing deur die plek wat aan die enkele gebeurtenis in 'n plot gegee word. Merleau-Ponty wys daarop dat elke persepsie eintlik slegs sin maak binne 'n konteks van herinnering en verwagtings: "As we encounter them, even at the most passive level, events are charged with the significance they derive from our retentions and protensions" (in Carr, 1991: 163).

(8) Hierdie proses kan uiteraard nooit ten volle voltrek word nie. Herinterpretasies, hervertelling van gebeurtenisse is moontlik. 'n Proustiaanse "madeleine-ervaring" kan byvoorbeeld verlore herinneringe terugbring wat die selfnarratief opnuut verander, terwyl die betekenisvolheid van sekere gebeurtenisse kan verander in die lig van ander ervarings. Dit is hierdie proses van voortdurende verandering in selfbegrip wat Ricoeur "narratiewe identiteit" noem:

(...) allow me to say that what we call the subject is never given at the start. Or, if it is, it is in danger of being reduced to the narcissistic, egoistic and stingy ego, from which literature, precisely, can free us. (...) In place of an ego enamoured of itself arises a self instructed by cultural symbols, the first among which are the narratives handed down in our literary tradition. And these

narratives give us a unity which is not substantial but narrative.

(Ricoeur, 1991:33).

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White Skin, Black Masks: Breyten Breytenbach's African Selves

- J.U. Jacobs -

Abstract

Taking as its point of departure Breyten Breytenbach's many different names for himself, this article compares his elaborate strategy of literary self-masking with that of Italo Calvino, of Salman Rushdie and of Fernando Pessoa. I argue that Breytenbach attempts to overcome Afrikaner and African cultural identity discourses (which mutually oppose and exclude each other) by deploying his literary masks in a postcolonial inversion of Fanon's "black skins with white masks". By adopting, among his many masks, specifically African ones, the autobiographical subject Breyten Breytenbach tries to synthesise "Afrikaner" and "African" into an identity which transcends the ambivalence of belonging to neither culture quite fully. The masquerade begins when Breytenbach defines himself, in terms of *métissage*, as the fictional figure of the "coloured" protagonist of his novel *Memory of Snow and of Dust*. This protagonist must be integrated into Africa when segregationist Afrikaner culture ends. The next figure, *Ka'afir*, embodies the identity of the nomadic African of the diaspora. Breytenbach then synthesises this diasporic African and the bastard culture that he advocates into the generic identity of the "Afriqua". As artist, Breytenbach identifies himself with the ancient African tradition of the trickster, whose gameplaying is incorporated into the persona of *Dog*, his African writer alter-ego. All these masks are contained, finally, in Breytenbach's Afrikaans-African *nom-de-plume*, *Jan Afrika*.

1. Introduction: Breyten Breytenbach, "different names with different meanings"

Possibly the most extreme instance of "self-conscious self-consciousness" (Eakin, 1985: 219) in South African autobiographical writing is Breyten Breytenbach's introduction of himself at the beginning of his prison memoir, *The True Confessions of an Albino Terrorist*:

The name you will see under this document is Breyten Breytenbach. That is my name. It's not the only one; after all, what is a name? I used to be called Dick; sometimes I was called Antoine; some knew me as Hervé; others as Jan Blom; at one point I was called Christian Jean-Marc Galaska; then I was the Professor; later I was Mr Bird: all these different names with

different meanings being the labels attached to different people. Because, Mr. Investigator, if there is one thing that has become amply clear to me over the years, it is exactly that there is no one person that can be named and in the process of naming be fixed for all eternity.

(Breytenbach, 1984a: 3)

Various critics have discussed Breytenbach's many pseudonyms, nicknames, noms de plume, aliases and fictionalised self-projections. Louise Viljoen (1993: 37-47) has offered a typology of names created by Breytenbach for himself as subject: names derived from his imprisonment (bandiet B. Breytenbach, Gev. Breytenbach, Bangai Bird); poetic modifications of his real name, Breyten Breytenbach, which echo its principle of duplication (Breitenbog, Prenten Prentenbog, Breipen Breytenbach, Bullebach, Braakinpag, Bibber Breytenbach, Beide Buidelbek, Buffalo Bill, Broer Bebe); and names unrelated to the autobiographical proper name (Rip Lasarus; B. B. Lasarus, the pseudonym under which he had published 'n Seisoen in die Paradys (A Season in Paradise) in 1976; Don Espejuelo (Spanish for Mr. Mirror), Breytenbach's mirror-mentor who appears in the volumes of poetry *Lewendood* and *Buffalo Bill*, and in *The True Confessions of an Albino Terrorist*, *Mouiroir: Mirrornotes for a Novel* and *Return to Paradise*; and Panus, a name which combines "penis" and "anus"). In an article on *Return to Paradise* Viljoen (1995: 13) further points out the recurrence of the name Jan/Jean adopted by Breytenbach for versions of himself. These are: Jan Blom, the name under which he published his book of love poems, *Lotus*; Christian Jean-Marc Galaska, the alias under which he entered South Africa in 1975; and Jean, or Jan, Walker, the name Breytenbach gives to his nomadic alter ego, an old Africa-hand through whom he depicts the writer as "whore, clown, tramp, disabled traveller and opportunist" (14). To Viljoen's list can now be added Jan Afrika, the nom-de-plume which Breytenbach adopted for his volume of poetry, *Papierblom*, in 1998.

Autobiography is a paradoxical "... process of [both] self-discovery and selfcreation" (Eakin, 1985: 3). The autobiographical act represents a final stage in the coming together of self and language; its "act of composition" reaches "back into the past ... to repeat the psychological rhythms of identity formation, and [reaches] forward into the future to fix the structure of this identity in a permanent self-made existence as literary text" (226). The developmental model on which Paul John Eakin bases his theory of autobiography begins with the initial acquisition of language, then leads to the origin of self-awareness (which he calls the "I-am-me" experience), and culminates in the "self-conscious selfconsciousness" (219) of autobiography. These three moments of self-definition yield "a constitution of self" in which language "is not merely a conduit for such self-knowledge but a determination and constituent of it" (219).

2. Literary self-masking: Calvino, Rushdie, Pessoa, Breytenbach

Breytenbach's proliferation of selves in his writing is reminiscent of that of one of Italo Calvino's narrators in *If on a winter's night a traveller*. In Calvino's book the ambiguous metaphor of speculation, or reflection, explains the many selves:

"Speculate, reflect: every thinking activity implies mirrors for me. [...] I need mirrors to think: I cannot concentrate except in the presence of reflected images, as if my soul needed a model to imitate every time it wanted to employ its speculative capacity" (1981: 161). This narrator, a financial speculator as well as a collector of optical instruments, has built his business empire on illusion, multiplication and concealment, on the principles of "the catoptric instruments of the seventeenth century, little theatres of various design where a figure is seen multiplied by the variation of the angles between the mirrors" (162). He has also endlessly multiplied his own image, his person, his presence, in an act of selfprojection for self-protection. Its trajectory, like that of his narrative, is both centrifugal and centripetal: "Together with the centrifugal radiation that projects my image along all the dimensions of space", he says, "I would like these pages also to render the opposite movement, through which I receive from the mirrors images that direct sight cannot embrace. [...] [P]erhaps [...] a system of mirrors that would multiply my image to infinity and reflects its essence in a single image would then reveal to me the soul of the universe, which is hidden in mine" (166). The ironic outcome of the narrator's endless self-reflection is that one of the images he has cast into the world comes to take his place and relegates him "to the role of reflected image" (168).

A comparable and more recent example of such self-reflexive self-projection is provided by the elaborate *mise en abyme* in Salman Rushdie's novel *Fury* in which the protagonist is the Bombay-born Professor Malik Solanka, retired historian of ideas and dollmaker, now living in New York. Solanka is the novelist's mouthpiece. Like his author, Solanka uses the material of his own life and surroundings to create fictional beings – in his case dolls – to do his work for him. The dolls debate his ideas in public on television. When, however, his female, time-travelling doll, Little Brain, becomes a star in her own right, metamorphosing from puppet into animated cartoon, actress, cover-girl, supermodel, recording artist and talk-show host, with her own fictive autobiography, actual fan club, videogame and movie, she outgrows her creator. She transcends the work which created her and attains, in Rushdie's words, "the fiction's version of freedom" (2002: 97). Little Brain, her fans argue, is "no longer a simulacrum. She [is] a phenomenon" (98). Although she has made him very rich, Solanka disowns this "monster of tawdry celebrity" (98) and expels her from his life. She is succeeded by Solanka's later, even more spectacularly successful creation, the cyberfictional story of Galileo-1, for which Rushdie's dollmaker, Solanka, creates, in his own image, the

cyberneticist Akasz Kronos, who in turn creates a series of distinctive cyborgs known as the Puppet Kings. These are string-free artificial life forms which are endowed with psychological and moral freedom. Each is given its own blueprint, to enable it, in theory, endlessly to re-create itself in its own image. The dollmaker Kronos creates as one of the cyborgs, "in his own image and imbued with many of his own characteristics" (166) a Dollmaker, which learns to override its programming and usurps Kronos's role. This imaginary world, peopled by endlessly reflected images of, amongst others, Solanka and his lover Neela, eventually displaces the real world at the end of the novel when "a strange piece of mask theatre is played out on [a] remote island stage" (235).

Solanka pursues Neela to her home country, the post-colonial South Pacific island-state of Lilliput-Blefuscu (a thinly disguised Fiji) which is in the throes of coup and counter-coup, only to find himself confronted and taken prisoner by militant images of himself and his lover. The revolutionaries have raided the local toy store and made off with its supply of Kronosian Cyborg masks and costumes to disguise themselves in what, Solanka realises, is yet another "revolt of the living dolls" (227).

Breytenbach first articulated his version of elaborate self-revelation and selfconcealment, of self-proliferation through self-masking, in *A Season in Paradise* in what he calls "The self-image in the eye of the I" (1985a: 147). He explains this concept, a combination of self-perception and self-conception in the optic pun he uses, in terms of a mask. This mask – or, more accurately, as he maintains, *imago* – is one which writers create and project as a substitute or shield for the self/"I". The mask, or *imago*, is doubly determined and doubly coded. Although we may create it, others perceive it differently from the way we do, and they also contribute to determining its shape. So it is co-created – by the individual self and communally. Co-creation of meaning can have the result that the mask gradually becomes inseparable from the self, and the self begins to take the shape it is constrained under by the community. The mask may be seen as a dynamic, changeable and unstable site of identity. Breytenbach expresses this interplay between the image and the "I" as: "I create Image; Image makes "I"" (149). This is the dynamic which underpins his description of the relationship between an author and his creations: "Every portrait [...] is a self-portrait" (1996a: 68).

To appreciate such literary masking as Breytenbach's, one must turn to the figure of the Portuguese poet, Fernando Pessoa, who fragmented "his Self into well delineated other selves" (da Silva, 1986: 9). Pessoa labelled them "heteronyms", "a neologism based on the Greek for "other name"". To each heteronym is attached "a persona with attendant biography, world-view, civil status, and even physical details" (9). Pessoa's three principal heteronyms are: Alberto Caiero, a naïve poet with no literary background, but a natural bard, "a believer in natural religion, [and] in the objectivity of his senses" (10); Ricardo Reis, an Epicurean neoclassicist living in self-imposed exile in Brazil and the author of terse Horatian odes [...] in a conspicuously "classic" Portuguese" (Zenith, 1998: 97); and Álvaro de Campos, a bisexual, "cosmopolitan, multi-lingual naval engineer educated in Glasgow", whose verse, as Jaime H. da

Silva describes it, moves from fin-de-siècle decadence via Futurist exuberance to existential angst (1986: 11). There was also an "orthonym" who wrote poetry under the name of Fernando Pessoa, but who is "the most stylistically varied and least stable of Pessoa's poetic non-persons" (10) and is "just as much a fiction as the heteronyms" (Zenith, 1998: 3).

All four poets are in constant dynamic interaction with each other, collaborating and also criticising, translating and revising each other's work. Pessoa's splitting and grafting of personality among multiple personae created a dramatic ensemble, as Edward Honig and Susan M. Brown point out, that would "allow for paradox and embrace self-contradiction" (1985: xv). The extent of the depersonalisation wrought through this wilful self-dispersion – which Richard Zenith calls "autometamorphosis" (1998: 34) – may be appreciated from the large number of personae created by Pessoa. There is Bernardo Soares, a "semiheteronym" who authored the fictional diary, *The Book of Disquiet*; António Mora, a philosopher and sociologist; the Baron of Teive, an essayist; Thomas Crosse, an English critic; I. I. Crosse, his brother and collaborator, Coelho Pacheco, a poet; Raphael Baldaya, and an astrologer; Maria José, a young, hunchback, consumptive writer of love letters. As Zenith explains: "At least seventy-two names besides Fernando Pessoa were "responsible" for the thousands of texts that were actually written and the many more that he only planned ... " (5). Da Silva points out that, serendipitously, "[t]he Portuguese word *pessoa* is derived from the Latin *persona*, denoting the mask used in the Roman theatre, and originally from the verb *personare*, "to sound through"" (1986: 9).

To return to Breytenbach's own statement in *A Season in Paradise*, namely "[...] all of us live behind projections of ourselves" (1985a: 147). Like Calvino's anonymous speculator-narrator, Rushdie's "Malik Solanka" and the orthonym "Fernando Pessoa", the subject "Breyten Breytenbach" is finally just another persona. In *The True Confessions of an Albino Terrorist* he refers to his police interrogators "coming across a mask called Breytenbach under a mask named Galaska" (1984a: 9). Breytenbach's act of narration takes place in an echo chamber as well as in a hall of mirrors in which the self engages in dialogue with its self-deceptions – as he describes himself speaking his prison experiences into a tape recorder after his release:

... there's always another language behind the present one;
there's always another world living in the shadow of the one we
share; there's forever another room behind this one and in this
other room there's another man sitting with a little tape recorder
whispering in his own ears, saying: "There is another world
living parallel to this one, there is another language on the other
side of the wall being spoken by another man holding a little
instrument, etc. etc."(28).

The Afrikaner as African: white skin, black masks

The autobiographical subject, Breyten Breytenbach, whose name, he has said, "sounds so much like an echo" (1998a: 177), has been determined by two conflicting discourses, with each of which he has had a conflictual relationship. On the one hand, the exile's frequently expressed, deep longing for his Afrikaner heartland was always offset by his equally frequently reiterated abhorrence of Afrikaner exclusionary nationalism and apartheid. On the other hand, his repeatedly stated affiliation with Africa as a continent essentially of "myth and magic and animism" (1995b: 29) and predicated on metamorphosis is troubled by his constant despair over its civil wars, corruption, starvation, despotic leaders and AIDS. On the one hand, Breytenbach, employing a linguistic metaphor, said of his Afrikaner filiation in 1985, "I am the syntax of the people. The tense and the tenseness" (1986: 209). In contradiction he has said of his extensive journeys into Africa, "My travels bear the scansion of this continent's rhythms" (1993: 4).

How, then, to resolve the conundrum, to reconcile the paradox of his Afrikaner identity, of which he has said, "We are in Africa and we are not Africans" (1985a: 157), with the increasingly problematic identification he formulated in the title of a 1972 poem, "Ek is Afrika" – "I am Africa" (1995a: 145-6)? How, in short, to combine two cultural identities which under apartheid were mutually exclusionary – African and Afrikaner? In the protean figure of a diasporic Afrikaner, resident in Paris, Spain and Montagu in the Cape, writer-in-residence at universities in North America and South Africa, regular performer at international writers' gatherings, and nomadic African wanderer who described himself in his Fernando Pessoa Lectures at the University of Natal in Durban in 1996 as an inhabitant of the Middle World (1996b, 1996c)?

"Afrikaner" and "African" are not, as I have also indicated elsewhere (see Jacobs, 2000), in themselves uncomplicatedly homogeneous identities. In an essay about cultural identity and diaspora, Stuart Hall has argued that there are at least two different ways of thinking about cultural identity:

The first position defines "cultural identity" in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective "one true self", hiding inside the many other, more superficially or artificially imposed "selves", which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common. Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as "one people", with stable, unchanging, and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history.

The unearthing of such an essential identity, Hall points out, has constituted an important act of imaginative rediscovery for colonised cultures, and should not be underestimated. In this connection it needs to be borne in mind that Breytenbach's attempts to come to terms with what it means to be an "Afrikaner" and an "African" may in a certain sense also be seen as an effort to impose "an imaginary coherence" (235) on a personal and national history of alienation and division. It remains a paradoxical aspect of Breytenbach's fictionalised autobiographies and autobiographical fictions that he keeps gravitating towards the two persistent themes of Afrikaner and African identities. Despite his rejection of fundamentalist Afrikaner nationalism and his insistence that Afrikaner identity is heterogeneous and contingent and not homogeneous and unchanging, there is nevertheless a certain "essentialising impulse" in Breytenbach's constantly seeking out the cultural codes he shares with his fellow Afrikaners and testing the basic meaning of what it is to be an Afrikaner. And similarly, despite his repeated insistence that African identity is heterogeneous and diasporic, there is also a generic "Africa" which seems to underlie the variety of African experience. This he records in his writings and it provides him with a stable frame of reference and affords him a basic sense of belonging.

The second view of cultural identity, according to Hall, recognises that "what we really are" (236) is based not only on points of similarity, but also on "critical points of deep and significant difference" and of separate histories of rupture and discontinuity:

Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of "becoming" as well as "being". It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history, and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous "play" of history, culture, and power. Far from being grounded in mere "recovery" of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past (236).

From this perspective, Hall says, cultural identity is neither a fixed origin to which we can return nor something universal and transcendental within us; rather, "[i]t is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative, and myth. Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a positioning. Hence, there is always a politics of identity, a politics of position, which has no absolute guarantee in an

unproblematic, transcendental "law of origin"" (237).

In this article I will briefly try to indicate how, notwithstanding the paradoxical traces in his work of the first notion of identity as a cultural core, what it means to be an Afrikaner and an African is not fixed for Breytenbach, but these identities are constructed through various positionings by means of his various masks in an ongoing process of "autometamorphosis" (to use Zenith's term for Pessoa).

Breytenbach deploys his literary masks in a postcolonial inversion of what Frantz Fanon described as black skins with white masks, that is, the colonial "situation of split perception or double vision" in which nationalist élites were trapped: "[b]ilingual and bicultural, having Janus-like access to both metropolitan and local cultures, yet alienated from both" (Boehmer, 1995: 115), and challenging hegemony through compromise with it. By adopting, among his many masks, various specifically African ones, the autobiographical subject Breyten Breytenbach tries to achieve a synthesis of "Afrikaner" and "African" in a process of identity formation which strives to transcend the ambivalence of belonging to both cultures, yet to neither fully. Marilet Sienaert points out that Breytenbach's strategy of self-masking derives also from a specifically African cultural tradition and that "the mask as archetypal African image has [...] become synonymous with [his] work" (1999: 83). In my discussion of Breytenbach's narrative masquerade, however, I would like to emphasise some of the ways in which the dynamic between the autobiographical subject Breytenbach and his African personae is grounded in the contradictory and disjunctive histories, separately and together, of Afrikanerdom and Africanness, and therefore in the experience of heterogeneity and diversity. The masquerade begins with Breytenbach's definition of himself in terms of *métissage*, which he then fictionalises in the figure of the "coloured" protagonist of his novel *Memory of Snow and of Dust*, whose integration into Africa is predicated on the dissolution of segregationist Afrikaner culture. The figure of Ka'afir embodies the diasporic identity of the nomadic African, which Breytenbach then synthesises with the bastard culture he advocates into the generic identity of the *Afrika*. As artist, Breytenbach identifies himself with the ancient African tradition of the trickster, whose game-playing is incorporated into the persona of Dog, his African writer alter-ego. All these masks are contained, finally, in Breytenbach's *nom-de-plume*, Jan Afrika.

Mask 1: autobiographical bastard, "Breyten Breytenbach"

For the purposes of my argument, the first stage in Breytenbach's "autometamorphosis" is the mask "Breyten Breytenbach". In his 1998 travel memoir, *Dog Heart*, Breytenbach traces his ancestry. On his mother's side, the Cloetes go back to the seventeenth century, to Jacob Cloete, the original owner of Constantia. The tribe increased wondrously, Breytenbach says, especially when early on Gerrit Cloete took as his second and third wives, "non-white"/Hottentot women. As Breytenbach puts it: "He [made] Afrikaners, the first meaning of the word indicating a descendant of the mixing of "European" and

"African"" (1998a: 97). The brown part of the Cloete family further grew dramatically when slavery was abolished and the freed slaves inherited or took on the family's name. On his father's side, he says, people soon lost all remembrance of their German land of origin, and "[t]heir language [was] phased out imperceptibly to be replaced by a vigorous bastard tongue" (101). On this side of the family history, too, Breytenbach draws attention to Ouma Annie's typically Khoisan "high cheekbones and flattish nose" (102).

Breytenbach is here doing what he poetically says is his aim in *Dog Heart*: writing "the penetration, expansion, skirmishing, coupling, mixing, separation, regrouping of people and cultures – the glorious bastardization of men and women mutually shaped by sky and rain and wind and soil" (41). He has regularly returned to this theme of people being "the products and protagonists of mixing" (69). In *Dog Heart*, as in his earlier writings, he celebrates his Afrikaner identity in terms of its mongrel character, "I mix Europe and the East and Africa in my veins, my cousin is a Malagasy [...], I'm a Dutch bastard, my father is French and my mother is Khoi" (183). His language, Afrikaans, he continues, "is the visible history and the on-going process not only of bastardization, but also of metamorphosis". This bastard language is most apt for pursuing what he says is the specificity of a writer: ""writing the self" and rewriting the world. In other words, self-creation and revolution" (184). Nor can bastardization be turned back, Breytenbach reminds us, "neither can one just escape from white into brown. One has to keep on making and finding oneself and then situate and orientate that temporary find" (186).

In his novel, *Memory of Snow and of Dust* (1989) Breytenbach had already defined his Afrikaner and African selves in terms of diaspora and hybridity, thereby effectively positioning them within a conception of identity, as Hall formulates it, "which lives with and through, not despite, difference" (2003: 244). Diaspora identities, Hall says, "are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (244). In *Memory of Snow and of Dust* Breytenbach had himself anticipated his own later appeal in *Dog Heart* that "[w]e should define more clearly the trajectory and the territory of the *métis*, the *baster*, the *bastard*, the *hybrid*, the *Creole* – identify the "colonies of reflection", the frontiers, the limits of integration", to establish whether they are "lines of tension, edges of creativity or barriers of exclusion" (1998a: 186). His main fictional personae in *Memory of Snow and of Dust* can be approached as hybrid manifestations of their author and of each other – or, still more precisely, as different masks of the Afrikaner "bastard", "Breyten Breytenbach" as well as masked versions of each other.

Mask 2: fictional bastard, Mano

The second African mask, for the purposes of my argument, which Breytenbach adopts is the figure of Mano in *Memory of Snow and of Dust*. Mano is a "coloured" South African actor living in Paris, who echoes his author's own often repeated sentiments when he asserts his mixed racial identity, "Our bastardization was our most potent antidote to apartheid" (1989:

63). Breytenbach has appealed to his fellow Afrikaners, thus:

"We Afrikaners ought to look closely at themes such as: bastardization as motivation for an intellectual, cultural and political renaissance; or a more sensitive definition of South, and an attempt to see where we fit in the Third World; from there an effort to outline our function in the North- South relationship, and therefore a theological, political, ideological and practical enquiry into the methods and contents of Africanization ...".

(1996a: 35)

The hybrid Mano describes himself in diasporic terms as "a knockabout, a hack actor, a stateless unemployed marginal, a shifta" (1989: 6) – someone whose identity is less a matter of essence than a matter of positioning and transformation (to resort again to Hall's formulations). A nomadic being with a chameleon identity, he ironically defines himself in the language of the South African townships as "a location kid" (26). He himself is invisible behind the role he is acting; he is, he says, simply "a situation of view, a transit point, an impersonation – better still, a translation" (24). His very name, Mano, is not fixed, but changeable; as an anagram, a translation, or an impersonation, it masks the English "man", the Greek onoma ("name"), and also the Italian word for "hand", mano. In this last meaning it suggests his complementarity with the exile Barnum (another Breytenbach heteronym) who has a withered hand, and to whom Mano refers as his "older ego".

Part Two of the narrative, entitled *On the Noble Art of Walking in No Man's Land*, consists mainly of an account of the consequences of Mano's decision "to mayibuye, to let Africa come back to me" (225) – or, to paraphrase this, to restore Africa into presence in his life. Mano returns to South Africa, ostensibly to do background research for a film in which he is to play Barnum. The reader accompanies Mano into the heart of "the geography of absence" (6), as he used in Paris to refer to his South African homeland where, as a child, he was mocked with the words, "The little bastard is nobody's child" (221). The real purpose of Mano's return to South Africa, however, is to seek out his Afrikaner father, Noma Niemand. Noma Niemand is a symbol of absence and negation: Noma is the inverse of Mano, incomplete as a name (onoma), and suggestive of "no-man", whereas Niemand is the Afrikaans word for "no-one". Noma Niemand is Mano's apartheid parent who had refused to acknowledge his bastard offspring and abandoned him to the laws of his state. Mano carries forged identity documents under the name of Anom ("Anonymous"? / "un homme"?) Niemand and passes for "white" in the racist country of his birth. However, like Solanka's puppets which become autonomous beings in Rushdie's novel *Fury*, the persona Anom Niemand turns into the person Anom Niemand, in whose identity Mano becomes trapped.

He has wanted to make a flesh and blood person out of Anom Niemand, but is ironically betrayed by his mask when, as Anom Niemand, he is arrested,

convicted, and sentenced to death for the murder of an elderly white woman. For Africa to return to the Afrikaner, and for the Afrikaner to be returned to Africa, this impersonation must be tied to the hangman's rope. In a series of letters written to his father from Death Row, Mano recognises that there is no coming to terms with the Afrikaner patriarch who conceived him: the God of Whiteness, true to his character, can only be one of negation. In the guise of the white Anom Niemand, Mano experiences the full extent of his depersonalisation. The dissolution of the segregationist discourse that has defined Mano in terms of absence is a condition for the recovery of Africa for and by the Afrikaner.

Mask 3: diasporic African, Ka'afir

Breytenbach's third African impersonation is the figure of Ka'afir, whose name, besides containing the denigratory "kaffir", is also an anagram of "Afrika". Ka'afir embodies the truth that "[d]iasporic subjects are marked by hybridity and heterogeneity – cultural, linguistic, ethnic, national – and these subjects are defined by a traversal of the boundaries demarcating nation and diaspora" (Brazier and Mannur, 2003: 5). Ka'afir is Breytenbach's African acolyte with whose life, Breytenbach says in *Return to Paradise*, his own became entwined. He first met Ka'afir on the West African island of Goreé, and describes his African imago as a "[p]oet, student, world wanderer, stray dog, dealer in thises and thats with North America", someone "[d]eeply saddened and offended and angered by the fate of the brothers and sisters in Azania" (1993: 20). In *Memory of Snow and of Dust*, Ka'afir features as the cynical voice in a Socratic dialogue introduced as an entr'acte into the narrative, about political corruption in Africa and about "that no man's land" (1989: 50), South Africa. Later Ka'afir appears as an African philosopher-poet who visits Mano in Paris. And finally, he appears in the cell opposite Mano's on Death Row, which leads to a moment of identification and bonding when Ka'afir calls Mano "Mfowethu" – brother.

In the mask Ka'afir is configured not only as the hybrid cultural identities of the masks Breyten Breytenbach and Mano, but also as the cultural reality of the contemporary African who is marginal to the West and belongs to a heterogeneous continent. The distinction which Lisa Lowe makes between cultural hybridity and cultural heterogeneity, with reference to the diasporic Asian American community, is worth bearing in mind here. Hybridity, she suggests, refers to "the formation of cultural objects and practices that are produced by the histories of uneven and unsynthetic power relations [...] for example [...] racial and linguistic mixings" (2003: 138). Heterogeneity, however, indicates "the existence of differences and differential relationships within a bounded category" – differences of national origin, of class background, of economic conditions, et cetera.

In the name Ka'afir/Afrika are also coded the memories from Breytenbach's forays into different African countries he describes in *Return to Paradise*, countries whose diversity oblige one to think in terms of a heterogeneous rather than an essentialist "African" identity, namely, Lagos, Nigeria,

synonymous with robbery and corruption; Timbuktu in Mali, a symbol of the loss of the wisdom and education that had been unequalled in Africa in the twelfth to fifteenth centuries; Senegal, where the historic meeting between the exiled ANC and representatives of the South African government took place in Dakar in 1987; Gorée, the former slave island now a symbol of African reconstruction and home of the Institute for Democracy in Africa; Tanzania where African religious artifacts are illegally sold at Dar-es-Salaam airport; Zambia, into which the traveller has to bribe his way; Burkina Faso, where the head of state, Thomas Sankara, was assassinated two days after he had hosted in Ouagadougou a Pan-African meeting on apartheid; Mozambique, a country whose inhabitants have been maimed, dislocated and impoverished by civil war; Zimbabwe, where the sculptures outside the Art Museum in Harare symbolize what is fine in the art of Africa; Swaziland, where tradition is still observed with the Incwala or annual feast of the first fruits; and Libya, where the blown-up photos, posters and banners of the personality cult around Muammar Al-Gaddafi disguise the history of enslavement underlying the relationship between Arabs and black Africans.

Mask 4: generic hybrid, Afrika

The fourth persona in Breytenbach's process of autometamorphosis is a more selfconsciously generic one than those before described. In the fourth he devises it must contain the hybrid and heterogeneous Afrikaner and African identities of Breyten Breytenbach, Mano and Ka'afir. Breytenbach poetically revives the ancient term "Afrika" to designate a syncretic African-Afrikaner identity for the future. He explains that Afrikas was the name by which "the mixed offspring of Khoi (Hottentots) and passing sailors were known. Later the word was deformed to "Grikas". The suffix -kwa (-qua) to Hottentot names indicated "the people, the sons, the men of" (1993: v). Afrika, for Breytenbach, is therefore the most suitable name for an Afrikaner son or daughter of Africa, since it conveys the true mongrel nature of Afrikaner culture which has developed in South Africa over three centuries. Breytenbach argues in *Return to Paradise* that "the unwritten history and customs and attitudes of the vanished Khoi and San constitute an invisible presence in the make-up of South Afrikas"; similarly the Malay-Portuguese spoken by the "slaves, political exiles and convicts from Africa, Madagascar, Ceylon, India and the area today known as Indonesia" survives as a core element in the Afrikaans language" (1993: 210-1). Through the mask "Afrika", Breytenbach can speak as Afrikaner qua African, and as African qua Afrikaner.

Mask 5: African trickster(s)

The fifth African persona which can be identified in Breytenbach's writing is actually a composite one, consisting of a number of characters who may be regarded as versions of the African figure of the trickster. In *Dog Heart*, Breytenbach provides a cognitive map of his Western Cape "heartland" in an attempt to reterritorialise Afrikaner culture in African terms. He locates the formative topography of his childhood by means of its place-names – Montagu, Robertson, Stormsvlei, Wakkerstroom, Bonnievale, Swellendam,

Riviersonderend, Bredasdorp – in what he regards as a South African zone of bastardization, between the settled Boland and the interior, where people "are the products and protagonists of mixing" (1998: 69). *Dog Heart* is a mongrel text: Breytenbach's rhizomic narrative cartography combines, amongst many other things, personal anecdotes and childhood recollections, reflections on the nature and operation of memory, poems, commentary on post-1994 South Africa, descriptions of some of the other residents of Montagu (where Breytenbach owns a house, Paradys), snippets of family and local history, and meditations on art, narrative and language. Much of this wandering narrative is occasioned by items Breytenbach discovers in the Montagu village museum, the memorabilia of local history which are developed into narrative segments. One of the things he finds in the museum storeroom is "the clean and very neat skull of a Bushman, no teeth, a bullet hole in the forehead. On the skull is written: Koos Sas" (88). This skull, which later mysteriously disappears, meta-discursively brings together important aspects of the narrative, namely, a conception of the artist as nomadic hybrid and trickster-figure, both in the ancient Khoisan and in the more recent popular imagination.

Writing about the well-known Montagu painter, François Krige, Breytenbach suggests provocatively that Krige "... despite a certain timelessness and universality – works in Afrikaans, both in terms of the subject matter and the technique" (117). Partly by instinct and partly by choice, Breytenbach says, Krige's work shows this most strikingly "in the observations of his brush, the subjects of simplicity, people and objects and landscapes of earth, of unpretentiousness and humility. And in the joy of his clean line, the celebration of colours, the jubilation of paints [...]". And, just at the point where Breytenbach's view of Afrikaner identity might begin to become problematically essentialist, he subverts it by qualifying it, "... as Afrikaans as only that mixture of Boer and Khoi and Oriental can be".

The text of *Dog Heart* includes a reproduction of one of Krige's many paintings of the "coloured" man known only as Krisjan, whom Breytenbach describes as "the emblem of a broken humanity" (108), a Lear-like figure of majestic presence, "a deposed ruler seen through the eyes of Rembrandt. He comes from a long way down the ages". There is, however, also a less tragic image of Krisjan – the more pathetic figure as Montagu knows him and that Krige has painted as well, "a hang-about, bum, drifter, beggar, sleeping wherever the alcohol closes in upon him in rain or in sun, the sad nomad with filthy rags twisted around the head, an oversized and shapeless and torn overcoat, all his belongings in the one bag slung across his shoulder". Behind the figure of this decrepit wanderer, however, lies the ancient legacy of his nomadic Khoisan forebears, "the old people [who] trek through the mountains with across their shoulders all their belongings in bags made of soft skin".

Dog Heart records another contemporary nomad, not as pathetic a character as Krisjan but rather more carnivalesque, the elderly Outa Lappies who "pulls along a hand-made cart abundantly embellished with signboards, ribbons, tassels, pennants, flapping black sheets, drawings, strips of handwritten texts [...]. He is clothed in a multi-coloured patchwork coat of his own design"

(165). This elderly black man embodies more creatively and flamboyantly the principle of nomadism with which Breytenbach has so frequently identified himself: "Life is a journey", Outa Lappies insists. "It is a never-ending story. A man without the traces of his travels has no life to speak of. How can you remember if you have not travelled? He shows [Breytenbach] his diaries – sketches of places and things over the face of the earth visited by him, the written worms of wisdom which emerge from the night-house of his mind, still blackened by their trajectory".

Behind these two social outcasts and wanderers lurk another two figures who have become a permanent part of the popular imagination in Montagu. The first is the diminutive but fleet-footed Koos Sas, whose passion for meat and history of stock theft led to a career of conflict with the local farmers and the authorities. Spells of imprisonment and being declared a habitual criminal followed, as did his frequent escapes from custody. After having murdered an employer, Sas was again captured, and again escaped, but was injured and finally shot dead by his pursuer, Constable Dreyer. His skull, considered to be typical of the "pure Bushman race" (139), was sent to the University of Stellenbosch for study, but later returned to Montagu. The second folk hero celebrated in the oral tradition of Montagu ("People softly pass these tales from mouth to mouth, painting the pictures in roundabout ways" [140]) is Gert April, of whom Breytenbach says that, like Koos Sas, he might be regarded as a resistance fighter rather than as an outlaw. Although Gert April ("also known as Gert Kaffer") regularly warned the police every time about the exact place of his next strike, they never succeeded in capturing him, and his killing spree with a stolen gun continued until he was eventually outwitted and shot, dishonourably in the back, by the baster, Piet Alexander.

If the socially marginalised nomads Krisjan and Outa Lappies may in a certain sense be seen as latter-day descendants of Koos Sas and Gert April, Sas and April, in turn, may themselves be seen as descendants of two more ancient trickster figures. Heitsi Eibib is a magician-deity, "the "God" (the I-dea) of the Khoisan" (157), who embodies a principle of metamorphosis and "who can change his shape whenever he needs, and slip away unnoticed". Heitsi Eibib dies time and time again in many places, Breytenbach says, only "to be reborn in another form" (148). His graves are scattered all over the country: "It brings good luck to the traveler to pass by a grave and add a pebble to the pile of stones there, or to leave a branch, some clothing, maybe a skin of his own". In the chapter called "(Trickster)", Breytenbach elaborates on these shamans, "subterranean travelers, wind runners, death dancers who change themselves into rocks and ant heaps etc. to become invisible to the others who invade this land" (157), and he recounts one of the creation-stories connected with Heitsi Eibib. The second trickster is Kaggen, who is both of the "ouvolk", the early people from whom the Khoisan believed they were descended, and of the "real people" (158). Kaggen, we are told, "can be a magician, but also stupid". This trickster god speaks like a child, and in one of his stories he takes on the form of a hartebeest in order to deceive young girls – only to be himself eventually outwitted and his pet eland killed and eaten.

If, as is sometimes claimed, every portrait is a self-portrait, Breytenbach, like his fellow Afrikaans artist, François Krige, has portrayed a number of nomadic characters who exist on the edges of society, subverting its rules of behaviour and embodying the artistic principles of deception and metamorphosis. The genealogy of the trickster may be traced down from Heitsi Eibib and Kaggen, through Koos Sas, Gert April, Outa Lappies and Krisjan, to Breyten Breytenbach himself.

Mask 6: Dog, black writer

The motif of the Dog occurs in various forms throughout *Dog Heart*, as a figure of death (1998: 9), as a vicious animal of nightmare (57), as an anagram of God, as Breytenbach's name for the Truth and Reconciliation Commissioners, "the dogs of God" (27), and as the name Nietzsche gave to his pain (58). In *Woordwerk* (Wordwork, 1999 – all English translations from this Afrikaans text are mine) it appears as the persona to whom Breytenbach refers as "my friend Dog, the black writer" (1999: 46), "Mr. D." (49), "my brother Dog, the black writer" (118), and as "the black writer Dog who never utters a word" and who is the faithful shadow and manservant of Breytenbach's father. Dog is the most cryptically presented of Breytenbach's African masks, and also the one with whom his own identity is most syncretically merged. Dog is the mask through which he projects himself as an African writer, but also the mask which has usurped Breytenbach's function and relegated him to the role of reflection or mask. The implied author Breytenbach, addressing himself in the second person, presents himself in *Woordwerk* in the person of an authorial "shadow figure" whom he has thought up: "Skrywer/Skreeuer [Writer/Shouter] (honoured is the name) – to whom you will entrust the conclusions that will be called "book", *Woordwerk*" (52). Further on in the text, Breytenbach recounts an earlier, catastrophic venture by Dog which resulted in a soon-to-be-forgotten autobiographical text (a certain similarity to Breytenbach's own life story is obvious here). As a consequence, Dog decided many years later to resurrect the story and rewrite it – but this time in collaboration with a ghost-writer, a certain Writer/Shouter. In a sense, Writer/Shouter and Dog are mutually-created personae, or, to return to Breytenbach's own formulation referred to earlier on in this essay, each stands in relation to the other in the chiasmic configuration: "I create Image; Image makes "I"" (1985a: 149).

The implied author, Breyten Breytenbach, describes *Woordwerk* as

... an in-between book. Also an interim. It is of course a self-fiction, but this in itself says nothing. It consists of notes, observations, incidental thoughts, remissions. Sometimes it is an effort to pin down the bizarre or the grotesque that seeps through the seams of our community (or consciousness). It often seizes the beginning of a story by the tail, a different approach, which then may surface elsewhere in modified form. Mainly never to be written. Chunks have nevertheless already been included in published reflections, but in other languages. This is *Book, Part Two*. Certain characters and situations recur, since

these are also nomadic writings, the travel journal of a wanderer, and one returns, after all, to old obsessions with disorientation and maiming like deserted stands at dark waterholes. These are The Many Travels of Mister Dog. This is the way the mind operates, this is the way the hand moves: in leaps or traces from fragment to fragment, splintering, possibly consuming, in pursuit of the worm of the word, in-between and in the meanwhile

(1999: 125).

Woordwerk is Breytenbach's most rhizomic work to date, a narrative agglomeration of memories of people and incidents from the Catalonian village of Poble Gran where he also has a house, Paris which is his home base, the West African island of Gorée where he spends a great deal of his time, the various other countries of his travels, and the vast world of his interests. It is a work at once encyclopaedic, autobiographical and highly personal, baroque in its textual richness, fantastical in many of its descriptions, and idiosyncratically self-reflexive about writing in general and the problems of writing about Africa in particular. Woordwerk is authored by Breytenbach alias Dog alias Writer/Shouter, all three of whom are also the joint fictional subjects of the text. One can speculate that it is Dog whose particular concerns contribute to Woordwerk, amongst other things, the discussion of the marabout, an African sacred conjuror or spiritual counsellor, the account of a meeting with the Polish writer Ryszard Kapuściński, chronicler of civil wars in Africa, the fact that the church in Poble Gran is named for San Feliu, an African, the history of the preserved Bushman in the Darder Museum in Banyols, and the passage on the difficulty of writing about Africa: "To write about Africa is to go on a journey, to be confronted by the endlessly unfolding articulations of an elusive reality [...]" (108). Dog is, on the one hand, the recipient of Breytenbach's thirty-seven ironic and sometimes scatological moral and artistic lessons, of which the second states, "There is no such thing as a writer; only a wordworker" (201), and the thirtieth asks, "Are you a writer or a kaffir?" (202). (In terms of Breytenbach's African masquerade, Dog is, of course, both.) On the other hand, it is Dog who, in dialogue with Breytenbach and despite the latter's interjections, pronounces on the heteroglossic nature of this text, and of writing in general:

A book, says Writer Dog, is a parliament. In the sense, of course, that "parliament" means talking-place. It is a house of many voices, a cacophony, people who shout down one another [...]. Even the single voice has many speakers, he continues. The writer is a talking-place where there is a great deal of argument. Imagination is, after all, only the creation of images of things that already exist. This is why I say that this one is a fiction of the self [...]. Wordwork is the flame in the book, not the wood or the ash (212).

Woordwerk is Breytenbach's fiction of the self, in which the voices of the triad

Breytenbach, Dog and Writer/Shouter may be heard in dispute, in counterpoint, and also in unison with each other.

Mask 7: Jan Afrika, Afrikaner African/ African Afrikaner

This brings me to the seventh and final heteronym for Breyten Breytenbach and to the conclusion of this essay: the name under which he published his volume of poetry, *Papierblom* in 1998, the Afrika, "Jan Afrika". Jan Afrika (John Afrika) is the dyad into which the triad of Breytenbach, Dog and Writer/Shouter has become still more succinctly compressed. It is the identity into which are subsumed all the others of the diasporic Afrikaner and diasporic African, Breyten Breytenbach, and in its combination of a particular history and identity with those of a nation and a continent, Jan Afrika is perhaps the most appropriate mask with which to leave the Breytenbach masquerade. As Pessoa expresses it cryptically in one of his English sonnets:

How many masks wear we, and undermasks,
Upon our countenance of soul, and when,
If for self-sport the soul itself unmasks,
Knows it the last mask off and the face plain?

...

And, when a thought would unmask our soul's masking,
Itself goes not unmasked to the unmasking.
Pessoa, quoted in da Silva (1986: 14)

Or alternatively, the way best to approach and try to understand Breytenbach's adoption of his various African masks may be through the truth of the Igbo proverb: "a na no ofu ebe ekeri nmawu" – "you don't stay in one place to watch the masquerade".

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Campbell's Autobiographies: Versions of a Life

- Nicholas Meihuizen -

Abstract

Between the publication of the first and second versions of his autobiography, *Broken Record* (1934) and *Light on a Dark Horse* (1951), Roy Campbell edited out numerous details pertaining to his personal sensitivity and fragility, but yet allowed others to remain; at certain points (the Javan deer incident examined in the present article seems to me of paramount importance in this regard) he changed the details. These facts alert us to various pressures disturbing the surfaces of his narratives of self, and militate against the popular misconception that Campbell merely romanticized his life in the light of an heroic image which he nonchalantly and at all times assumed. The central foci of the present study, contradiction and repetition, seem to me important and useful passages into his work that might enable a richer and more complex exploration of Campbell's self-image than has previously been undertaken.

1. Background

Born in Durban in 1901, Roy Campbell grew up in a world that might have fired any sensitive and enthusiastic child's imagination. It was a frontier world of hunting expeditions, Zulu guides, guns, horses, buck and other forms of wildlife (Alexander, 2000: 108). It was a world of African bush, of sub-tropical sugarcane plantations, of thorn-trees and scrub, of the rolling Natal midlands backed by the mighty Drakensberg Mountains in the west, and to cap it all, in the east, on the boy's doorstep, so to speak, the brilliant blue expanse of the Indian Ocean, once traversed by Campbell's great Portuguese precursor poet and hero, Luis Vaz de Camões. This was a world fit to be romanticized, and from this point of view Campbell certainly did it justice in his two autobiographies. The first was *Broken Record* of 1934, of which Peter Alexander, in his recent essay on Campbell in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* writes that Campbell filled it "with any adventure he could remember, adapting other people's anecdotes to his purpose and giving himself a leading role in all of them. This first autobiography might have been designed to make the life of his future biographers difficult, for distinguishing fact from fiction in it is a major problem" (Alexander, 2000: 111). His second volume, *Light on a Dark Horse*, was published in 1951. Alexander sees this work as being even more inherently imaginative than the previous one: "He drew on *Broken Record* but retold the tales and embroidered them until they

bore scarcely any resemblance to the original event" (ibid.: 116). In the context that Alexander paints, of imaginative wheels within wheels, what the "original event" actually was seems somewhat beside the point.

What might the point be? I would suggest the following: though we cannot trace what actually happened in Campbell's life from his autobiographies (I would query Alexander's absolute certainty in this regard, however), we can certainly glean a great deal about what was happening within Campbell himself. The notion has been hinted at, at least, by Campbell's most recent biographer, Joseph Pearce (2001: 156), although he tends to rely overmuch on the persona of Campbell the Catholic convert, valid to an extent, but not inclusive enough regarding attitudes, emotions, predispositions and tendencies in Campbell. The present essay, then, aware of conceptual limitations among Campbell's critics as far as his autobiographies go, draws rather on certain of the theoretical insights that have emerged over the past few decades in the field of autobiographical criticism. While it offers no definitive conclusion concerning the relation of Campbell the actual man (whatever that may mean) to his autobiographies, it provides, it is hoped, a starting point for a fuller investigation. It does so specifically by first looking at the role of contradiction in Campbell's autobiographies, and then, leading from this, looking at the pattern of repetition in his writing in general.

2. Fiction and deception

Campbell's open declaration about the fictional component in his first autobiography, *Broken Record*, chimes with numerous views expressed by various scholars, critics and writers of autobiography. Campbell declares, for instance, that his memory and imagination work as one, that he is not a person to bore his reader "with a list of facts. Rather a manipulation of such facts into some sort of design" (1934: 11). Georges Gusdorf, pioneer of autobiographical criticism, observes, "the original sin of autobiography is first one of logical coherence and rationalization. The narrative is conscious and since the narrator's consciousness directs the narrative, it seems to him incontestable that it has also directed his life" (1980: 41). Campbell, though, appears to be well aware that his manipulation of facts into some sort of design is involved in this original sin when he declares that his readers may take *Broken Record* with "a pinch of salt" (1934: 12).

Some critics and scholars might differ as to whether this pinch of salt flavoured a fictional ingredient in the writing or a deceptive one. As Barrett Mandel notes, "in both autobiography and fiction "falsehood" resides too. Some autobiographers, of course, come right out and admit that they are telling lies, thereby achieving a deeper honesty... Others do not. But as I read Schweitzer's *My Life and Thought*, part of my mind never forgets that he has to be distorting, misremembering, enhancing, perhaps even lying" (1980: 56). Mandel, as we will see in a later section of this article, needs to include the

reader's response in his overall conception of the relation between truth and fiction, falsehood and non fiction. Gusdorf also questions ordinary notions of veracity in the genre when he notes, for instance, that Lamartine wrote about a non-existent but suggestive vine on his childhood home (subsequently planted by Madame Lamartine, who wanted reality to mirror art [Gusdorf, 1980: 43]); and Ernest Renan, following Goethe's Truth and Poetry, said writing about the self is always poetry as opposed to simple truth (in Gusdorf, 1980: 42). Derrida, with his notion of crossed archives, might also appear to be paraphrasing Goethe, but he tells of a level of need for what did not exist linked to the story-telling impulse of autobiography:

"the unique event [of the past] whose trace one would like to keep alive is also the very desire that what does not happen should happen, and is thus a "story" in which the event already crosses within itself the archive of the "real" and the archive of "fiction"" (1992: 35). Campbell wanted at one point in his life so much that which was not real, that he suppressed a key moment in his autobiography, as if he sought solace in the archive of fiction's near relative – the right to remain silent in the face of the archive of the real. Is this silence an instance of deception? Writing of Nietzsche as Freudian precursor, Michael Sprinker states: "If autobiography can be described as the self's inquiry into its own history – the self-conscious questioning of the subject by itself – then Nietzsche offers the most fearful warning for any autobiographical text: "The danger of the direct questioning of the subject about the subject and of all self-reflection of the spirit lies in this, that it could be useful and important for one's activity to interpret oneself falsely"" (1980: 334). Sprinker further notes that crucial Freudian ideas (and I think now in particular of repression) are related to Nietzsche's fundamental insight given above. Drawing also on Vico and Kierkegaard, Sprinker associates autobiography with repetition, subject, in the case of Freud, to the silence surrounding repression (ibid., 338). Following Mandel, we might indeed suspect the repressive nature of autobiographical silence, where "ego has attempted to manipulate and distort, to prevent disclosure" (Mandel, 1980: 65).

Campbell's silence is surely linked to a Freudian unplumbable point, a navel of the unknown or unacknowledged beyond which he will not go (Freud, 1965: 143). But from this psychological perspective, the distinction between deception and fiction is perhaps not important. (1) What causes the deviation from reality seems to be the issue. Yet the distinction is still of importance to me in my approach to the cause. Here is the problem: Campbell emphasises a fictional component in his first autobiography, but when we come to examine both versions of his autobiography there is not much that is inherently unbelievable in them, for all Campbell's reputation as a teller of tall tales. He is, on the contrary, remarkably candid concerning the more sensitive, fragile side of his nature. We find, for instance, the following in *Broken Record*: he says he was not a good shot (Campbell, 1934: 65); he believed hunting was not justified unless the beauty one destroyed passed into one to influence one's art (ibid.: 70); he says he was the worst rod-fisher in the district (ibid.: 92); he depicts whalers as real killers (ibid.: 94); he tells of his deep fear in Provence when what turned out to be a calf followed him at night, and when a hen

startled him soon after (ibid.: 185-8); regarding bullfighting, he tells, approvingly, of the higher religious tradition of not killing the bull in Provence (ibid.: 192); and he also tells of his distaste for blood-letting in the arena with spectacle as its only object (ibid.: 195). We find the following disclosures in *Light on a Dark Horse*: he says he was a bookish youth due to ill-health (Campbell, 1951: 61); he says he had a poor sense of balance because of myasthenia from deep-sea diving, and sometimes could barely walk, let alone ride a horse (ibid.: 63); he could never bring himself to shoot a bull eland (ibid.: 87); his trigger had now become a pen (ibid.: 87); he refers to himself as a heartless and trigger-happy urchin of 14 – but even then, he says, it was difficult to kill a particular antelope (ibid.: 88); regarding bullfighting, he says he was allowed to participate in unskilled comic acts, such as those involving the Botta, a giant basket that protected one from the bull's horns (ibid.: 190); and he is appalled by an airman who deliberately slaughters flamingos with his propeller (ibid.: 214).

Considering the amount of information pertaining to the sensitive side of Campbell's nature here (opposite to that of his usually projected image), and the fact that there is nothing essentially unbelievable in most of the rest of the material in the autobiographies, why should he make such a point of alerting us to the archive of fiction in *Broken Record*? His concern about his reality being recast by writerly design and on our being free to take his words with a pinch of salt (although the latter might be seen as a challenge to those of little faith) points to something other than what is immediately apparent in his accounts of his life.

We come closer to this sense, it seems to me, when we compare the one incident related in both versions of his autobiography that diverges in its concluding statement, the killing of the Javan deer. I quote first from *Broken Record*. The deer has been trapped in a stream; Campbell wrestles with it and drowns it in less than eighteen inches of water:

In the end he was drowned just at the moment when I began to feel a real affection for him. A truly taurobolic and Mithraic sensation. I never killed another animal since then.

(Campbell, 1934: 66-67)

Here is the concluding statement from *Light on a Dark Horse*:

I lost interest in hunting with guns as being too dull, having experienced the hand to hand stuff. I have often before and since then gone in to a wounded bushbuck and fought it out with a knobkerrie.

(Campbell, 1951: 66)

Perhaps Campbell did engage in "the hand to hand stuff" before the Javan deer incident, but since? The incident took place during the time of his brief return

to South Africa in the 1920's. When after that did he go hunting bushbuck on the scale suggested by the word "often"? He did hunt a buffalo in Kenya on behalf of a local farmer while he was on leave from the army (Campbell, 1951: 192), and perhaps he took part in some hunting during a surprise spell of wartime leave in Natal, but I remain unconvinced as to the veracity of Campbell's sentiments portrayed at the conclusion of the second version of this story. He deliberately sets up a totally different image of himself to the one portrayed in the earlier version. (2) One senses that something very odd is taking place here, something that relates to Mandel's following distinction: "The reader experiences dis-ease with [this type of autobiography – N.M.]. It seems as if the author is lying (not, please, writing fiction), although readers cannot always easily put their finger on the lie" (1980: 65).

3. Deeper assumptions

The contradictory concluding statements of the Javan deer incident, taken together, make us sense the lie. They form an impasse, a blockage to do with a conflict among what Mandel calls the deeper assumptions underlying conscious knowledge of oneself (1980: 68). We can posit two sets of assumptions linked to the incident: a tough, manly set, and a gentle, sensitive one. The manly assumptions, apart from reflecting his own needs, seem to be based on what Campbell considers the world wants of him as a colonial enthusiast, committed to intensely lived experience (Campbell, 1934: 10). Fiction in *Broken Record* is heralded as the harmless spice to this sauce. Set in the stark terms of the second version of the Javan deer incident, however, these assumptions help constitute the lie. The presence of possible fiction is displaced by a sense of probable deception. Is Campbell's emphasis on harmless fiction a false trail to lead us away from the door of this area of far from harmless deception?

In the autobiographies as a whole, though, as already shown, Campbell is not programmatic in editing out references to his sensitive side. His autobiographies, as opposed to certain of his letters, say, give him some space; space to constitute himself in more complex terms. Maybe he hopes the reader will detect the lie as revealed in the discrepancies between the conclusions of the Javan deer incident, as well as appreciate the sense of the continuity of the gentler elements of his nature in both books. Why should he want this? According to J.M. Coetzee, confession is intimately involved with the need to arrive at essential truth about the self (1992: 252), and perhaps the near inchoate strategy embedded in the confluence of autobiographies can be read as Campbellian confession, (3) where Campbell actually wants us to glimpse a complex truth about himself, a truth not limited by the simplifying mask that he usually shows to his friends, and dependent on both (albeit contradictory; more, even necessarily contradictory) versions.

4. Repetition, Freud and Lacan

I would tentatively suggest, then, that Campbell's purpose in his autobiographies (conscious or unconscious) is to reveal the bundle of contradictions that makes up the man, or, to put it another way, the negative capability involved in being Campbell. I now turn to a suggestive pattern in his writing implicated in his playing with contradictions, the pattern of repetition, mentioned above. For it is repetition in the autobiographies that generates in the one important case just examined difference; and there is something significant in the difference that must make us interrogate the phenomenon of repetition, not so much for the sake of the one case in isolation, as for the sake of general resonances in Campbell's work. We have already noted that Sprinker looks at repetition in Freud; he does so particularly in the autobiographical sections of *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Of significance to Sprinker is the fact that Freud's dream of Irma's injection never moves beyond a certain point of interpretation (1980: 339). Freud does not want to go that far, claims to be satisfied with what he has already gained (1965: 154). Over and over the narrative of his book comes back to this point and then branches out, the repetition of the movement thus leading to differences in the narrative. As Sprinker sees it, the unconscious, through repetition linked to repression, structures narrative expression. Repetition in Campbell, however, has a more obstructive function, both regarding repression and expression. To explain the possible mechanics behind this, let me now turn to Lacan.

What I want to draw on from Lacan also ties in with Mandel's notions of autobiographers' assumptions; I think of Lacan's discourse components which inform the libidinal investments that go towards our structuring ourselves as subjects. (4) Here's a brief outline of the Lacanian process, which I apply in broad terms to Campbell. The human subject is seen as a border within which various discourse components are combined and modified. The discourse components might be based on, in the case of Campbell, various valued areas of existence such as tradition, equestrianism, enthusiasm for life, taumomachy, poetry, antiindustrialism, spirituality, and so on. The discourse components are combined and modified according to several processes linked to subject-functions such as desire and repression. (5) What results is a particularization of the subject, a structuring of the subject in unique terms, terms related to the interplay of internalized discourses which directly influence, according to Lacan, the very nature of our subjectivity, and which can alter the nature of our subjectivity. The biological body plays an important role here, as Marshall Alcorn notes (1994: 208). That is, discourse systems are contained by a biological body. A machine can contain contradictions as information about contradiction, but in the human body certain kinds of discourse contradiction produce conflict and suffering, which have biological components, such as peculiar speech-mannerisms or the inflated self-assertion and obsessive hectoring we find in Campbellian polemic; I think of *Flowering Rifles*, or, more to the point in terms of resistance and conflict, *The Georgiad*. Repetition here is seen as a psychological symptom, then, generative of art, but which

manifests itself in Campbell in a far more circumscribed way than in Sprinker's example of *The Interpretation of Dreams*. (6)

5. Bloomsbury

Rereading *The Georgiad* and the history surrounding it makes one aware that personal problems underlie much Campbellian polemic, and that these personal problems relate directly to Bloomsbury – specifically, Mary Campbell's affair with Vita Sackville-West, central in the web of insecurities entangling the poet. (7)

Campbell certainly lashed out at Bloomsbury in *The Georgiad*, but for all the poem's androgynous play he never really confronted Mary's role in the Sackville-West affair in any realistic way. In fact, in a revealing manoeuvre in the poem, psychological questioning about the matter is turned on its head, as we see from the following extract. "Androgyno" is the lusty and sexually ambiguous hero of the piece; s/he has been engaged in a night of wild lovemaking with all and sundry in the Georgiana home:

Next morning while Androgyno, still tight,
Was sleeping off the efforts of the night,
The indignant boarders all together got
And held a great mass meeting on the spot,
Then telegraphed their horror and distress
To Freud and Jung – an urgent S.O.S.
On the next aeroplane was shipped a yellow
Professor, a most melancholy fellow,
With a great lumping text-book in his fist
And strict instructions (written in a list)
To prove Androgyno did not exist.

(Campbell, 1949: 238-9)

While the above might be deemed a necessary blow against an unthinking acceptance of the institution of psychology, it also strikes the reader as being highly defensive in its relegating all of Freud and Jung to the field of quackery. And in the end, after all, it seems to be Campbell, rather than the yellow professor, who wants to prove that Androgyno (in the form of Mary's bisexuality) does not exist.

Mary was surely Campbell's greatest libidinal investment; he loved her with all his heart, to put it in terms less sterile. What happens to Campbell when this investment is totally undermined as regards the antinomic but complementary component discourses both of his love and of his thickly-painted masculine selfimage? Further, the affair may have caused Campbell to engage with a complex whirl of forces centred on a sexual ambiguity within his own nature.

(8) The whole composite of cause and effects must have been far more fundamentally conflictual than anything else Campbell had ever experienced. And what it brought into the half-light was immediately repressed. Campbell and Mary certainly reconstituted their relationship after the Sackville-West affair, and in many respects it must have been fulfilling for both of them. "The Clock in Spain", at least, suggests mutual sexual fulfilment (Campbell, 1957: 58). But it is curious that from this time both Campbell and Mary became absorbed in the Catholic religion. In other words, a new and vital component discourse was incorporated into both their lives, that would enable each – in an area outside that of day-today human relationships – to remain within the orbit of the other's deepest concerns.

6. Conclusion

Campbell writes of the Bloomsbury saga in *Light on a Dark Horse* that it was "the most comically sordid and silly period of our lives" (1951: 255). No details are given. He remains disturbed, I would hazard, until his last days because of the conflict catalysed by this "sordid and silly period". As a consequence he developed an excessive scorn of all things to do with Bloomsbury and its perceived extensions, including communism, the republican forces in Spain, aestheticism, effeminacy, the English worship of pets, and so on. The repeated Javan deer incident was, in truth, a mild and oblique off-shoot of this scorn, perhaps initially calculated to shock, perhaps an unconscious reaction; however, the two versions in concert help create a barrier of contradiction around an area of Campbell's thought that he needed to shield from the world's and perhaps from his own disturbed gaze. This barrier, caused by more than a mere pinch of salt inflaming an old wound, is thus related to the much more pronounced formal repetition in the Campbellian polemic of *The Georgiad* and *Flowering Rifles*, which involves numerous returns to the object of scorn that never uncover the true personal basis of that scorn, and that never move beyond the object of scorn to allow a more enlightened perspective, except in rare instances. (9) However, and finally, a more positive general point needs to be made in this connection. The barrier created out of contradiction in the autobiographies is also expressive of Campbell's own sense of discomfort in being Campbell; indeed, it is symptomatic. And yet it encapsulates, though in an extreme way, the extraordinary textual medium that any autobiography can be, where the past is inevitably mediated by the concerns of the present, where manipulation, repression and embroidery of facts are the order of the day, but from where vital and central truths about the subject might nevertheless emerge.

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(1) "We may call it fiction or fraud, but its artistic value is real" (Gusdorf, 1980: 43). It is useful to bear in mind this observation by Gusdorf.

(2) As Gusdorf writes, however, autobiography is "never the finished image or the fixing forever of an individual life: the human being is always a making, a doing" (1980: 47).

(3) Olney writes of autobiography as a literary mode emerging out of autobiography as a confessional act (1980: 13). Campbell returns, unconsciously here, to a "confessional act".

(4) "Libidinal" as used by Lacan, and psychologists generally, is not limited to sex, but incorporates the pleasure to be derived from anything one values (Alcorn, 1994: 4).

(5) Others are the Imaginative (based on pre-verbal images), the Symbolic (based on verbal signs), and the Real (everything recalcitrant to what can be signified by the subject).

(6) Of course, the existence of various sets of assumptions within a subject does not necessarily result in deep conflict; when the assumptions are complementary to each other. Campbell is often at his best; when, to put it in the most simple and general terms, the values of the body complement the values of spirit, in poems such as "Choosing a Mast", "Mass at Dawn", "Horses on the Camargue", "The Zebras", "The Road to Arles", "The Clock in Spain", "Monologue", and numerous others.

(7) A web incorporating colonial inferiority, which involved a sense of intellectual backwardness, cultural naïveté and social awkwardness.

(8) Rumours abound and suppressed materials exist, according to the rumours, regarding matters to do with Campbell's sexuality. The issue is of concern to me as a serious-minded Campbell critic who is attempting to understand the various facets of his poetry. While one appreciates familial reluctance to expose the scandals of the past (if such is the case in this instance), what divergences from supposedly "normal" human behaviour cannot be accepted in this day and age? What indiscretions cannot be forgiven? Our picture of Campbell is incomplete, and the empty spaces on the canvass are filled, it may be, with the creatures of wrong-headed speculation. Certainly, Alexander, in his latest essay on Campbell, states openly that Campbell, because of sexual guilt, castrated himself (2000: 116) and that he had male lovers (ibid.: 107), but his sources (not readily accessible ones, it seems) are not clear, and one remains at the mercy of speculation.

(9) I think, for example, of the poem "Monologue" (Campbell, 1957: 67), which is able to criticise the shortcomings of both Right and Left.

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Bendegeweld, seksualiteit en manlike subjektiwiteit in die outobiografie van Joseph Marble

- Andries Visagie -

Abstract

This article interrogates the representation of masculine subjectivity in autobiographical writing. In her book *Autobiography* Linda Anderson (2001) argues that insofar as autobiography has been seen as presenting a view of the subject as universal, it has also underpinned the centrality of masculine modes of subjectivity. A critical reading of Joseph Marble's autobiography, Ek, Joseph Daniel Marble (1999), presents a more complex situation. Looking back at his youth as a gangster in a Johannesburg township in the 1970s, Marble is faced inevitably with the discontinuity that exists between his position as a (reformed) adult narrator who recounts the story of his life as a violent teenager. This discontinuity in the subjectivity of the autobiographer is not surprising in the light of the dissemination of the masculine subject across a wide range of intertextual discourses. Marble's macho-masculinity as a young gangster appears to have been constructed as a defence mechanism against the violence which threatened to destroy the integrity of his masculine subjectivity. The young Joseph Marble harnessed violent behaviour and sexual prowess in his attempts to present himself as a unified masculine subject. However, it becomes clear that, as an abused foster child, he resorted to overcompensatory male behaviour in an attempt to veil the insecurities that compromised his sense of self in a hostile environment.

In die eietydse Afrikaanse prosa is dit opvallend dat manlike skrywers vir wie manlikheid en identiteit 'n noemenswaardige skryfbelangstelling is, dikwels uiting gee aan 'n begrip van identiteit wat veelvoudigheid en versplintering vooropstel. Vir literêre skrywers soos Alexander Strachan, Koos Prinsloo, Breyten Breytenbach en Johann de Lange is die historiese gegewe van 'n soliede, outonome en enkelvoudige manlike subjektiwiteit nie meer 'n vanselfsprekendheid nie. Net soos so baie ander postmodernistiese skrywers het ook hulle die subjek as 'n problematiese konstruksie begin bejeën en hulle skeptisisme uitgebrei na die geslagtelike subjek en spesifiek die manlike subjek.

Feministiese teoretici soos Luce Irigaray (1985) en Hélène Cixous (1981) het in die jare sewentig en tagtig 'n liggaamlike beleving van vroulikheid as meervoudig en nietotaliserend voorgestaan. Die *écriture féminine* het egter

redelik gou begin weerklank vind in die postmodernistiese literatuur van vroue én mans. As Hélène Cixous in 2002 oor die outobiografie opmerk dat sy verkies om te verwys na 'n "autre-biografie" aangesien die "ek" volgens haar bestaan uit 'n veelvoud van stemme – "le moi est un peuple" (26) – profileer sy haarself nie soseer as 'n voorstander van 'n spesifiek vroulike skryfpraktyk nie, maar eerder as 'n geesgenoot van Montaigne. In sy essays uit die sestiende eeu het Michel de Montaigne naamlik reeds erkenning gegee aan die diverse aard van die self wat nouliks op enige stabiliteit kan aanspraak maak aangesien dit veranderlik en gefragmenteer is.

In sy boek *Doubling the Point* gebruik J.M. Coetzee (1992: 394) in die verbygaan die begrip "autre-biografie" om te wys op die diskontinuiteit wat hy ervaar tussen sy identiteit as volwasse skrywer en sy vroeëre identiteit as kind en student. Die jonger self word nie as die "ek" beskou nie, maar wel as 'n "hy", dit wil sê as 'n ander. Die manlike outobiografiese self is dus nie 'n enkelvoudige geheel nie en net soos die bogenoemde Afrikaanse skrywers onderwerp Coetzee die manlike subjek gereeld aan 'n grondige en soms meedoënlose ondersoek. Die twee parallelle krisisoomblikke in *Disgrace* (1999), die seksuele molesteringsaak met David Lurie in die beskuldigdebank en die latere verkragting van sy dogter deur swart jeugdige, vestig die aandag op 'n grimmige verskyningsvorm van manlike seksualiteit wat onverpoosd voortgaan om in Suid-Afrika die lewens van duisende vroue te verwoes. In sy outobiografiese teks *Dog Heart* toon Breyten Breytenbach (1998: 158) aan hoe die gefragmenteerde manlike subjek steeds betrokke kan wees by die verkragting en onderdrukking van vroue. Die gevaar bestaan dat die gefragmenteerde postmodernistiese manlike subjek gevaar kan word om op te tree in die belang van die sterk en hardnekkige diskoers van die gewelddadige manlike subjek in sy historiese betrokkenheid by die onderdrukking van die ander.

Literêre skrywers is dus sedert die jare tagtig en negentig betrokke by 'n soms intense vraagstelling oor manlike subjektiwiteit binne die denkraamwerk van die postmodernisme en die postkolonialisme. Manlike skrywers wie se literêre werk aansluiting vind by die populêre fiksie (byvoorbeeld Piet van Rooyen, Christiaan Bakkes en Dolf van Coller) toon ook dikwels 'n bewussyn van die uitdaging wat die postmodernisme en die feminisme stel aan manlike subjektiwiteit. Hierdie skrywers bemoei hulle selde met die fragmentasie van die subjek; dit is eerder geweld en die dood wat uitdrukking gee aan die ongemak met die identiteit van die manlike karakters. Skrywers van populêre sportverhale, avontuurverhale en speurverhale wend hulle steeds tot stereotipiese voorstellings van manlike identiteit en daar is feitlik nooit blyke van 'n kritiese verkenning van geslagtelike identiteit nie.

1. Seksualiteit en geweldpleging in die

konstruksie van 'n macho-manlike identiteit

In die lig van die vasstelling dat manlike skrywers wie se werk buite die literêre kanon staan selde krities omgaan met manlike subjektiwiteit, is die outobiografie van 'n manlike skrywer soos die voormalige bendelid Joseph Marble (1999) wat nouliks enige literêre opleiding geniet het, myns insiens 'n belangrike toetssteen en 'n moontlike korrektief op 'n ondersoek na manlikheid in die literêre prosa.

Die vraag is hoe Marble hom posisioneer in die outobiografie as 'n genre wat onderworpe is aan twee teenstellende kragte. Volgens Philippe Lejeune (1998: 54) het die outobiografie per definisie die funksie om die koherensie van die self te verseker. Hierdie konvensie in die outobiografie is gebaseer op die essensialistiese begrip van die self wat tydens die Romantiek ontstaan het: teen die einde van die agtiende eeu het die Romantici 'n begrip van die self begin aanhang waarvolgens elke individu sou beskik oor 'n verenigde, unieke self wat die uitdrukking is van 'n universele menslikheid. Vir outobiograwe is hierdie transendentale konsepsie van die self steeds baie aantreklik aangesien dit die belofte inhou van 'n onbemiddelde toegang tot die self en erkenning gee aan die stabiliserende heelheid van die self; die gevare en belemmerings van fragmentasie word sodoende afgeweer (Anderson, 2001: 5).

Lejeune (1989: 131) erken dat ook hy soos baie outobiograwe hardnekkig glo aan die deursigtigheid van taal en aan die bestaan van 'n afgeronde subjek, maar in dieselfde asem gee hy toe dat enige poging om die waarheid oor die self te vertel om sodoende gestalte te gee aan die self as 'n samehangende subjek, 'n hersenskim is. Eakin (1989: xxi) beklemtoon dat Lejeune wel deeglik daarvan bewus is dat die tradisionele outobiografie berus op 'n geloof in die outonome self wat taal voorafgaan. Hierdie individualistiese ideologie verdoesel egter die feit dat sowel die self as die lewensverhaal van die self konstruksies is wat kultureel bepaal word.

Die aanneemlike verwagting oor Ek, Joseph Daniel Marble is dat hierdie outobiografie van 'n man uit die werkersklas wat nie die voorreg gegun is om langer as nege jaar op die skoolbanke deur te bring nie, waarskynlik nie oor die literêre sofistikasie sal beskik om die self as 'n gedentraliseerde veelheid van stemme of 'n kulturele konstruksie voor te stel nie. Na verwagting sal Marble se outobiografie uitdrukking gee aan die tradisionele Romantiese beskouing van die self (wat immers steeds aanwesig is in die werk van menige outobiograaf) in die konstruksie van 'n soliede manlike identiteit sonder die kompliserende insigte van onder meer Cixous (2002), Coetzee (1992) en Lejeune (1989) oor die onsekere status van die vertellende subjek in die outobiografiese teks.

In hierdie ondersoek na Marble se representasie van sy manlike self word die genderbenadering wat gevolg word, verryk met insigte uit die literatuursosiologie en die genreteorie oor die outobiografie. Aangesien Marble sy outobiografie inkleef as 'n pleidooi vir die verbetering van die sosiale omstandighede van pleegkinders, spesifiek binne die konteks van die jare

sestig en sewentig, is dit nodig om ook sosiologiese en psigologiese bronne te raadpleeg oor die omstandighede wat die swart en gekleurde familiestrukture beïnvloed. Kennis van die sosiale konteks kan hier dien as 'n hulpmiddel om betekenis in die teks te ontsluit (Hall, 1979: 25). Uiteindelik is die vraagstelling in hierdie artikel egter gerig op die implikasies wat manlike subjektiwiteit en die genre van die outobiografie vir mekaar wedersyds inhou.

Marble is in 1964 in die Western Kleurlinggebied (tans Westbury) in Johannesburg gebore in 'n tyd toe hierdie woongebied geteister is deur die gewelddadige optrede van 'n aantal bendes. Joseph Marble se ongetroude ma, Gertrude, het haar kinders versorg met die verdienste wat sy uit drank- en daggahandel verkry het. Op sesjarige ouderdom word Joseph lid van die Young Fighters, die jeugvleuel van die berugte Spalding-bende. Hy word 'n wapendraer vir die volwasse bendelede aangesien die polisie nooit kinders van onwettige wapenbesit verdink het nie (Marble, 1999: 16; sien ook Cruywagen, 2003: 15).

Joseph word as sesjarige deur 'n twintigjarige vrou verlei en hy knoop kort hierna 'n seksuele verhouding met 'n volwasse swart vrou, Mapoelle, aan. Na sy ma se vonnis tot tronkstraf plaas die welsyn vir Joseph en sy susters onder pleegsorg in Noordgesig, 'n kleurlingbuurt digby Soweto. Hoewel die nuwe omgewing hom aanvanklik verwyder van die bendekultuur word hy gereeld geslaan en verneder deur sy pleegouers. Op skool word hy ook gedurig beseer in gevegte met ander skoliere. Hy sluit aan by die Seunsbrigade, 'n Christelike organisasie wat volgens paramilitêre beginsels georganiseer is. Sy lidmaatskap van die Seunsbrigade lei opnuut tot sy betrokkenheid by bendegeweld. Op sestienjarige ouderdom mag hy terugkeer na sy ma se huis in Western. Hy slaag slegs standaard sewe en tree later in diens van Telkom. Ek, Joseph Daniel Marble word gewy aan die skrywer se kinder- en jeugjare en baie min word vermeld oor sy lewe na sy finale vervreemding van sy pleegouers, enkele jare na sy agtiende verjaardag. Teen 2000, na die publikasie van sy boek, maak Marble 'n bestaan deur motors by groot maatskappye te was (Marble & Nieuwoudt, 2000: 5).

In sy boek stel Marble hom primêr aan die leser voor as 'n pleegkind wat groot ontberings beleef het nadat die welsyn hom uit die sorg van sy ma verwyder het. Die lewens van alle pleegkinderen wêreldwyd word geteleskopeer in Marble se lewe wanneer hy op 'n enigsins reduksionistiese wyse verklaar: "Dit is ook 'n storie oor al die kinders wat die hele wêreld oor onder pleegsorg is of was" (7). As subjek stel Marble hom dus voor as die woordvoerder van 'n menigte ander subjekte wat vermoedelik dieselfde ontbering as hy moes verduur. Die vraag ontstaan of die gemak waarmee Marble sy ervarings universaliseer, verband hou met sy situasie as 'n manlike subjek wat hom, ondanks sy onbevoorregte sosioekonomiese posisie, steeds kan beroep op die voorreg wat mans hulle oor die eeue heen toegeëien het om hulle ervaring van hulle subjektiwiteit voor te stel as algemeen geldend. Het vroulike outobiograwe dieselfde vrymoedigheid om namens soveel ander subjekte te praat? Wanneer Marble homself spesifiek as 'n seun karakteriseer, wend hy hom tot beskrywings van sy seksuele verowerings en die geweld van die

bendekultuur om gestalte te gee aan 'n macho-manlike identiteit.

Met verwysing na R. Brannon se navorsing identifiseer Edley en Wetherell (1996: 101) vier geïkoneerde kenmerke van manlikheid wat tans aan 'n intensiewe vraagstelling onderwerp word, maar nietemin steeds bepalend is in die skepping van manlike identiteit in die breë gemeenskap. Daar is eerstens "no sissy stuff" – dit wil sê die vermyding van alle vroulike en homoseksuele gedragspatrone; tweedens "the big wheel" – die verwerwing van sukses, status en die vermoë om as broodwinner op te tree; derdens "the sturdy oak" – innerlike krag, selfvertroue en onafhanklikheid; en vierdens "give 'em hell" – aggressie, geweld en waagmoed. As motivering vir sy stelling dat manlikheid tans in 'n krisis verkeer, merk Anthony Clare (2000: 68) op dat die kenmerke wat voorheen gegeld het as die grondslag vir 'n ideale vorm van manlikheid – dit wil sê om logies, gedissiplineerd, beheersd, rasioneel en aggressief te wees – in die hede gestigmatiseer word as afwykend of onwenslik. Die kenmerke wat in die verlede vroue uitgesonder het as swak en minderwaardig – dit wil sê om emosioneel, spontaan, intuïtief, ekspressief en empaties te wees – word egter toenemend beskou as tekenend van volwassenheid en heilsaamheid.

Weens hulle armoede en 'n gebrek aan geleenthede kan die mans in Joseph Marble se gemeenskap nie reken op finansiële stabiliteit, onafhanklikheid en 'n suksesvolle beroepslewe as steunpunte in die konstruksie van 'n manlike identiteit nie. Geweld en seksualiteit – "give 'em hell" en "no sissy stuff" – word aangegryp as die enigste beskikbare alternatiewe in die skepping van 'n (ongenaakbare) manlike identiteit. Die kommer by Westerse sosiale wetenskaplikes oor die superseksuele en super-macho identiteitskeuses onder onbevoorregte swart mans gaan dikwels gepaard met kommer oor die "ontmanliking" van swart mans weens rassisme en die gebrek aan geleenthede (Segal, 1997: 185). Die persepsie by sommige swart mans dat hulle magteloos is of "ontmanlik" word deur die maatskaplike bestel, lei tot oorkompensasie op byvoorbeeld seksuele gebied en deur aggressiewe, gewelddadige optrede.

1.1. Geweldpleging

Dit is moontlik om 'n verband te lê tussen die jeugdige kleurlingman, Joseph Marble, se neiging tot kriminele geweld en die matriargale familiesisteem wat dikwels voorkom in onbevoorregte swart en gekleurde gemeenskappe (Segal, 1997: 185). In die twintigste eeu het die rassiediskriminasie wat 'n integrale aspek was van die Suid-Afrikaanse regeringspolitiek daartoe bygedra dat die swart en gekleurde bevolkingsgroepe in armoede gedompel is. Dié armoede het die instandhouding van stabiele familiestrukture ernstig gekortwiek. Dit het toenemend die taak van vroue geword om alleen om te sien na hulle kinders. In haar gesprekke met swart Amerikaanse bendeledes het Susan Faludi (1999: 484) ook vasgestel dat die bendeledes by herhaling die afwesigheid van 'n vaderfiguur as 'n rede aangee vir hulle latere betrokkenheid by bendebedrywighede. Anthony Clare (2000: 174) toon verder aan dat die afwesigheid van 'n vaderfiguur ("paternal deprivation") by jong mans dikwels lei tot 'n vorm van manlikheid wat op protes berus: "protest masculinity, characterised by exaggerated attempts to prove manliness, is seen to arise from

a basic fear of being feminine that flourishes in the absence of male models".

Joseph se ma, Gertrude Marble, was die enigste familielid wat deurlopend by sy opvoeding betrokke was. Joseph se pa wou weliswaar met sy ma in die huwelik tree, maar is weens sy poliogebrek deur sy toekomstige skoonpa afgekeur as bruidegom vir sy dogter: "My oupa George wou weet wat kan sy met so 'n halfman doen wat nooit vir haar sal kan werk nie. Maar hy was verkeerd, want my vader was 'n gekwalifiseerde ketelmaker" (9). George Marble se opmerking dat Joseph se pa nie 'n volledige man is nie maar 'n "halfman" berus uiteraard op die konvensionele verwagting dat egte mans liggaamlik sterk moet wees en as broodwinner moet kan optree.

Die sewentien mense wat in die Marbles se drievreterhuisie gewoon het, was hoofsaaklik vroue. As kleuter het Joseph vir Patrick Adams, die man van sy tante, Gladys, as 'n vaderfiguur beskou (11). Patrick, 'n daggasmokkelaar, het egter sy vrou aangerand en hierdie onmin in die huishouding het volgens Joseph gelei tot bakleiery tussen Joseph en die ander kinders in die huis. Een van die mans wat uiteindelik vir Joseph 'n belangrike rolmodel geword het, is Desmond (Twakkie) Stuurman, leier van die Spalding-bende in Western. In die beskrywings van die veelvuldige bendegevegte in die outobiografie word Twakkie uitgesonder vir sy bewonderenswaardige kalmte: "'n Mens kon nie help om trots te voel as jy in sy teenwoordigheid was nie. Jy word dan net soos Twakkie, doodkalm. Vreesloos" (25). Volgens Joseph sou hy en sy maats Twakkie se teenstanders wreed vermoor het indien dit ooit van hulle verlang is.

Joseph het Twakkie se vreesloosheid nagevolg in sy latere bendegevegte. Hy druk dit soos volg uit: "Ek sê jou, ek het nie 'n bang haar op my kop gehad nie" (184). Naas hierdie onverskrokkenheid verkry sy ontluikende macho-manlike identiteit as bendelid ook gestalte deur die opsigtelike vertoon van trots en meerderwaardigheid. Die bors wat met trots uitgestoot word (32, 36 en 66) en die kop wat omhoog gehou word soos dié van 'n koning (94) gee uitdrukking aan die vertoon en gepronk wat dikwels op straathoeke binne die bendelede se afgebakende terrein plaasvind en sorg vir 'n gevoel van gemeenskaplikheid by die individuele bendelede. Hierdie openbare vertoon is veronderstel om vrees en respek by die gemeenskap in te boesem (Pinnock, 1997: 36). Marble gee egter toe dat hierdie bravade van die "breë bors" juis moes kompenseer vir 'n destabiliserende vrees – "die staalvingers van vrees" (36) – vir besering en vernedering deur ander seuns. Die tentoonstelling van manlikheid in die openbaar is ook vir Pierre Bourdieu (2001: 51-52) in sy boek *Masculine Domination* tipies van die voortdurende behoefte wat die "egte" man ervaar om die uitdagings aan te durf wat sy eerbaarheid en aansien sal verhoog in die openbare sfeer en ten aanskoue van ander mans wie se agting geld as bekragtiging van sy manlikheid.

Die ouderdom van die bendelede in Suid-Afrika wissel vandag van jonger as dertien tot in die vyftig, maar 'n aansienlike aantal bendelede sterf voor die ouderdom van dertig in geweldsvoorvalle (Brits, 2003: 42). Ook Twakkie Stuurman, Joseph se rolmodel, sterf op twintigjarige leeftyd in 1974 wanneer hy deur sy vyande, die Vultures- en Fast Guns-bendes, in die hospitaal

doodgekap word (16).

In Ek, Joseph Daniel Marble is die geweldpleging nie beperk tot die bendegevegte nie. Terwyl hy in pleegsorg is, is Joseph voortdurend betrokke by gevegte by die skool wat hy bywoon, maar hy word toenemend self die slagoffer van die huishoudelike geweld van sy pleegouers. Soms word hy deur individuele lede van sy pleegfamilie so wreed met 'n sambok geslaan dat hy beheer oor sy liggaamsfunksies verloor (165) en soms word hy tuis deur 'n hele groep mense aangerand.

Die kwesbaarheid van sy liggaam en sy stryd om die integriteit van sy liggaam te handhaaf, lei daartoe dat hy op tipies oorkompenserende manier gestalte gee aan sy liggaam as 'n bolwerk teen die vyandige gedrag van ander mense. Joseph gryp byvoorbeeld die geleentheid aan om bokslesse te neem sodat hy beter daartoe in staat sal wees om weerstand te bied teen die afknouery wat hy van Mark, sy pleegouers se seun, moet verduur (130). Boks word egter aan Joseph voorgestel as 'n sport vir egte mans wat hulle nie tot aggressiewe geweld hoef te wend nie. Die vaderlike Les Appolis vermaan Joseph nadat hy sy teenstanders herhaaldelik op 'n moedswillige manier beseer het: "Joseph, mens boks nie om ander persone seer te maak nie. Boks is 'n sport vir manne. Nie om geweld te gebruik nie" (156). Te midde van die voortdurende gewelddadige aanslae wat Joseph moet afweer, is dit vir hom baie moeilik om aansluiting te vind by die bokkers se geraffineerde siening van manlikheid en beheersde geweld. Nie al die moontlike alternatiewe in die vorming van 'n manlike identiteit staan tot Joseph se beskikking nie – as onbevoorregte pleegkind moet hy telkens terugval op genadelose geweldpleging om sy oorlewing in 'n ongenaakbare omgewing te verseker. Die luukse van die manlike gedragskode wat met die beheersde geweld van boks geassosieer word, is nie vir hom toeganklik nie. Dit is eers wanneer sy arbeidsvermoë as tiener vir werkgewers aantreklik word dat hy hom in 'n posisie bevind om 'n meer sosiaal aanvaarbare manlike identiteit op te bou.

Die grootste vernedering ervaar hy egter wanneer Ounooi, die suster van sy pleegmoeder, hom dwing om met vroueklere in die openbaar te verskyn (113, 157). Ounooi sou dan op straat haar vriende voorkeer met die volgende spottende woorde oor Joseph: "Hoe lyk die cherry? Wat dink julle van haar?" (113). Vir 'n seun wat gesteld is op die openbare beskerming en vertoon van sy manlike eer is hierdie straf 'n dramatisering van die ontmanliking waarteen hy hom voortdurend in sy vyandige omgewing verset met sy oorkompenserende macho-gedragskodes. Die funksie van die protes wat sy manlikheid bepaal (Clare, 2000: 174), is juis om hom te distansieer van die vroulike gedragspatrone wat die toon aangee in die matriargale gesinstruktuur waarin hy hom bevind.

Namate Joseph vervreemd raak van die bendelewe omdat hy besef het "dat dit nie reg was nie omdat so baie mense gesneuwel het" (173) en omdat sy arbeidsvermoë as tiener meer werd is as toe hy 'n jong kind was, bied werk en die vroulike ruimte van sy pleegmoeder se huis toenemend 'n ontsnaproete uit die destruktiewe rituele van die bendekultuur. Wanneer sy trawante van die

Hursthill Brothers-bende hom eendag versoek om deel te neem aan 'n weerwraakaanval op 'n ander bende is die sestienjarige Joseph se reaksie dat hy eers die sak met klere wat hy by hom gehad het by sy pleegouers se huis moes gaan besorg waarna hy by hulle sou aansluit. Hierna volg die volgende veelseggende woorde in die outobiografie: "Ongelukkig het my pleegmoeder my werk gegee toe ek by die huis kom, en ek kon toe nie saamgaan nie" (187). Indien Joseph hierdie rede aan sy bendemaats genoem het, sou hulle hom waarskynlik uitgejou het as lafhartig. Joseph heg egter steeds minder belang aan die manlike bravade en vertoon van die bendekultuur en spits hom steeds meer toe op die broodwinnersrol – vergelyk Brannon se "big wheel" wat verbind word met sukses en die vermoë om as broodwinner op te tree (Edley & Wetherell, 1996: 101) – as 'n alternatief vir die geweld waaromheen hy in die verlede sy manlike identiteit gekonstrueer het. Hy word die koster van 'n kerk en begin om tuinwerk te doen. Die geld wat hy met sy werk verdien, gee vir hom groter onafhanklikheid (196).

1.2. Seksualiteit

Naas geweldpleging is seksuele prestasie 'n kernelement van die jeugdige Joseph Marble se pogings om 'n soliede manlike identiteit te skep. As volwasse verteller handhaaf Marble 'n ambivalente perspektief op sy seksuele inisiasie en menige seksuele ervarings met volwasse vroue toe hy nouliks ses jaar oud was. Hy vertel meestal van sy seksuele ervarings met trots en selfvoldaanheid en stel homself voor as 'n jong Don Juan. Sy sogenaamde verowerings van vroue op 'n baie jong leeftyd word in diens gestel van sy konstruksie van 'n sterk macho-manlike self. Hy ondervang die leser se waarskynlike ongeloof met die volgende uitdagende woorde: "op sesjarige ouderdom het ek presies geweet wat om saam met 'n vrou te doen, en as jy iets te sê het, dan moet jy maar die welsyn bel" (19). Sy energieke soektog na seksmaats as kind word verwoord as 'n manlike strewe al kan hy as jong kind nouliks aanspraak maak op die status van 'n volwasse man. Hy sê: "Ja, 'n man weet nooit wat jy kan raakloop nie" (17; my kursivering).

By enkele geleenthede verwys hy na sy kontak met volwasse vroue as "[g]oed wat ek graag wil vergeet" (106) en hy ontwikkel 'n intense gevoel van haat teenoor die agtëntwintigjarige Ounooi wat hom seksueel misbruik en manipuleer om slegs haar eie behoeftes te bevredig (108). In Ek, Joseph Daniel Marble (71) en ook in 'n persoonderhoud (Marble & Nieuwoudt, 2000: 5) maak Marble die opmerking dat hy "vroeg ryp en vroeg vrot" was.

Marble beskou egter nooit openlik sy seksuele ervarings met volwasse vroue as voorvalle van seksuele molestering nie. Hoewel daar oënskynlik weinig tekens is van 'n psigologiese repressie van sy pynlike ervarings is dit moontlik dat Marble, soos elders in sy outobiografie, kompenseer vir hierdie aanslag op die integriteit van sy ontluikende subjektiwiteit met die konstruksie van 'n skynbaar volledig outonome, hipermanlike identiteit wat heel moontlik neerkom op 'n vorm van ontkenning. Sy verslag van sy seksuele aktiwiteite herinner in sommige opsigte aan Zackie Achmat se *mémorie* "My childhood as an adult molester" (Achmat, 1994) waarin die jeugdige verteller hom juis nie

as 'n slagoffer van seksuele molestering voorstel nie, maar as die inisieerder van seksuele kontak met volwassenes.

In Marble se teks word dit verder duidelik dat Marble sy verhouding met die volwasse vrou Mapoelle ten dele ervaar het as 'n manier om sy skeiding van sy ma tydens haar tronkstraf te verwerk. Kort na sy ma se gevangening koester Joseph nog die hoop dat sy sal terugkeer huis toe. Hy kom byvoorbeeld eendag huis toe met die verwagting om sy ma in haar kamer aan te tref. Hy kom egter af op Mapoelle, sy oom se vriendin wat pas haar intrek in sy ma se kamer geneem het. Marble beskryf dié toneel soos volg:

Sonder huiwering stoot ek die kamerdeur oop en skielik versteen ek. Hier voor my staan en speel 'n lieflike toneel hom af. Ek kon nie eers 'n woord uiter nie. My oom Boy se vriendin staan naak en was. Dit lyk nie of enigiets haar steur nie. Haar lieflike pruime staan penorent [...]. Ons kyk mekaar lank in die oë. Ons is bewus van mekaar" (54).

Kort na hierdie voorval slaap Joseph een nag saam met Mapoelle in sy ma se bed, 'n ervaring wat hy soos volg opsom: "Mapoelle het oornag 'n seun in 'n man verander" (57).

Marble beskryf sy "verowering" van Mapoelle deur gebruik te maak van geykte strategieë waardeur mans hulle seksuele begeerlikheid vir vroue formuleer. Hy wys byvoorbeeld daarop dat hy as jong kind reeds onder die vroulike geslag bekend was vir die aansienlike grootte van sy geslagsorgaan: "die meisiekinders in ons straat wou altyd saam met my pophuis speel en ek was altyd die pa – hulle het van die groot ding gehou" (57). Onder die volwasse vrou in sy woonbuurt het Joseph glo die reputasie opgebou dat hy tydens seksuele verkeer "lank vat en nie moeg word nie" (57). Volgens Marble is dit sy groot geslagsorgaan en seksuele stamina wat Mapoelle se begeerte vir hom aangewakker het. By Mapoelle wil die onvolwasse Joseph enersyds die troostende moederliefde vind wat hy pas verloor het met sy ma se gevangening; andersyds skeep sy vir hom die "geleentheid" om 'n vroegrype manlike seksuele identiteit aan te neem as 'n verdedigingsmeganisme teen die ontwinging wat sy ma se verwydering deur die polisie veroorsaak het.

Die verwantskap tussen moederliefde en seksuele liefde by die jong Joseph blyk ook uit sy liefde vir die welsynswerker, juffrou Piljani, wat uiteindelik besluit om die Marble-kindere onder pleegsorg te plaas. Die moederlike ontferming wat Joseph van die welsynswerker ontvang, wek liefde in hom op wat hy, na sy seksuele ervarings met Mapoelle en ander volwasse vroue, onmiddellik as 'n seksuele hunkering inkleef. Wanneer juffrou Piljani op Joseph se seksuele toenadering reageer deur hom daarop te wys dat sy net so oud soos sy ma is, aanvaar Joseph haar sonder huiwering soos sy "eie moeder" (76). In hierdie geval hoef hy hom nie tot die erotiese liefde te wend om sy behoefte aan moederliefde te bevredig nie. Hy kan juffrou Piljani se ontferming sonder meer as moederliefde aanvaar. As volwasse verteller is Joseph Marble dankbaar dat die welsynswerker hom tydelik kon stuit in sy

vroegrype seksuele gedrag: "Gelukkig het sy al klaar 'n verslag oor my opgetrek met behulp van ons bure en vriende, en ek kan sien sy weet wat in my gedagte omgaan wanneer sy oorkant my sit en haar bene oormekaar kruis" (76). Die ambivalensie van die volwasse verteller oor sy vroegrype seksualiteit kom hier na vore: hoewel die volwasse Marble sy seksuele verowerings as kind dikwels met manlike trots bejeën, vereenselwig hy hom hier met die welsynswerker se veroordeling van seks tussen kinders en volwassenes.

Dit is moontlik om te redeneer dat die tweedeling tussen die manlike subjek as jeugdige protagonis en die volwasse manlike subjek as verteller voltrek word wanneer die jong Joseph Marble sy identifikasie met sy moeder laat vaar. Na haar vrylating uit die tronk is dit voorlopig nog duidelik dat Joseph se voortgesette Oidipale liefde vir sy ma, Gertrude, steeds deur haar in stand gehou word. Sy belowe haar seun: "As ons ons eie plek kry, dan is jy my man. Jy is die baas van ons huis, ek sweer" (166; sien ook 206). Solank Gertrude die illusie by Joseph laat voortduur dat hy die funksie van 'n eggenoot in haar lewe vervul, is sy ma bepalend in die ontwikkeling van sy subjektiwiteit.

< selfstandigheid sy van begin die wat gebeurtenisse twee huwelik, daaropvolgende en arbeidsmark tot toetreding verslag 'n met Marble nie, het gehad kinders haar een as hom vir liefde genoeg nie ma dat vasstelling hierdie Na (211). nie" ons omgee geglo selfs Ek help. te haarself om lui Of trots. was Sy nie. hulp gegaan nooit "Sy sien: na behoorlik welsyn versuim se oor opmerkings enkele outobiografie, in hoofstuk voorlaaste lewe", nuwe jaar, Nuwe "'n getitel seun. tussen vervreemding gaandeweg lei "ontrou" teleurstelling Joseph lewe "man" enigste vrylating lank kennelik is – word swanger eens weer Gertrude wanneer verbreek egter band Oidipale>

2. Diskontinuiteit en "outobiokopie": implikasies vir die outobiografiese manlike subjek

J.M. Coetzee en Hélène Cixous se verwante opvattinge oor die autre-biografie is myns insiens ook van toepassing op Ek, Joseph Daniel Marble. Soos reeds aangedui, bestaan daar 'n diskontinuiteit tussen die stem van die volwasse self en die stem van die self as jeugdige protagonis in die outobiografie. Mineke Schipper (1991: 19) merk op dat hierdie alteriteit tussen die ouer verteller en die jonger protagonis 'n wesensverskynsel van die outobiografie is: "tussen onderwerp en lijdend voorwerp van die outobiografie, de auteur ik en de hoofpersoon ik, ligt onbereikbaar wat voorbij is: ik is altijd anders". In sy voorwoord en nawoord dui die volwasse Marble aan dat geweld en veelvuldige seksuele verowerings nie meer deel vorm van sy identiteit as 'n verantwoordelike vader, eggenoot en broodwinner nie. En in 'n onderhoud verklaar hy dat sy boek gaan oor "die ou Joseph": "Dis 'n waarskuwing aan ander mense wat by bendes betrokke is" (Marble & Nieuwoudt, 2000: 5).

Die breuk met die "ou Joseph", die gewelddadige bendelid, vind plaas wanneer

die adolessente Joseph na die breuk met sy ma daartoe in staat is om afstand te neem van 'n manlike identiteit wat sentreer rondom geweldpleging en seksuele prestasie. Die volwasse verteller konstrueer sy nuwe manlike identiteit rondom die ideaal van die verantwoordelike gesinsman en broodwinner – vergelyk Brannon se metafore van die "sturdy oak" en die "big wheel" (Edley & Wetherell, 1996: 101). Marble se outobiografie as 'n moontlike kans op sukses word in diens gestel van hierdie nuwe ideaal van manlikheid. Hy benader sy outobiografie dan ook as 'n geleentheid om groter finansiële onafhanklikheid vir homself en vir sy familie te verwerf en spreek die hoop uit dat "dié boek een van die blitsverkopers van die wêreld sal wees" (7). Hy het inspirasie geput uit Nelson Mandela se outobiografie *Long Walk to Freedom* en gehoop dat hy net soos Mandela sou "geld maak uit sy storie" (Marble & Rautenbach, 2000: 1). Marble hoop dat sy outobiografie sy familie tot stigting sal wees sodat hulle, nie net deur die moontlike finansiële sukses van die boek nie, maar ook in reaksie op die vermanende en inspirerende boodskap uit sy eie lewe sal ingryp om self 'n einde te maak aan hulle armoedige omstandighede. Hy wil sy familie "help om hulleself te kan help, omdat hul nog in armoede lewe" (215).

Die manlike subjek wat uiteindelik in Ek, Joseph Daniel Marble aan die leser geopenbaar word, is nie 'n enkelvoudige en onveranderlike gegewe nie. Weens die diskontinuiteit tussen die volwasse verteller en die jeugdige protagonis ontstaan daar 'n veelstemmigheid in die teks wat verder gekompliseer word wanneer 'n mens bewus word van die uiteenlopende diskoerse waarbinne Marble se teks gesitueer is. Jerome Bruner (2001: 36) merk tereg op dat die skepping van 'n self in 'n outobiografie in 'n hoë mate afhanklik is van die simboliese sisteem waarbinne die self funksioneer. Philippe Lejeune (1998: 13-16) maak verder die stelling dat die outobiografie altyd 'n "outobiokopie" is, dit wil sê 'n teks wat altyd reeds 'n kopie is van ander bestaande tekste, onvermydelik die resultaat van intertekstualiteit. Die oorspronklikheid van die self en sy of haar lewe word in werklikheid slegs 'n kode namate die self waargeneem word as 'n intertekstuele konstruksie.

Joseph Marble begin sy teks met 'n verwysing na die Waarheid- en Versoeningskommissie, 'n intertekstuele netwerk wat belangrike implikasies het vir 'n goeie begrip van die selfrepresentasie van die outobiografiese subjek. Marble verklaar dat die vergifnis wat 'n oogmerk was van die Waarheid- en Versoeningskommissie ook sy teks sal bepaal: "in die nuwe Suid-Afrika met sy Waarheid- en Versoeningskommissie moet ons maar vergewe wat in die verlede gebeur het" (7).

Nuttall en Michael (2000: 289) merk op dat die merkbare oplewing in die outobiografie as genre in die jare negentig in Suid-Afrika gestimuleer is deur die Waarheid- en Versoeningskommissie en verder simptome is van die groter ontspanning en kakofonie van stemme wat die nuwe bestel na die einde van apartheid tot gevolg gehad het. Teenoor die pogings van outobiograwe in die jare tagtig om genesing en vryheid te projekteer op die nasie van die toekoms, stel Nuttall en Michael (2000: 308) die outobiografieë van die jare negentig wat met die koms van die nuwe veelrassige demokrasie eerder toegespits is op 'n ondersoek van die verlede. In die jare negentig word

genesing en vryheid nagestreef in 'n herbesoek aan die trauma van die apartheidsverlede met die doel om dit te begrawe sodat vergifnis maar nie vergetelheid nie, 'n sentrale beginsel van die Waarheid- en Versoeningskommissie, bereik kan word. H.P. van Coller (1997 en 2002) het ook by herhaling daarop gewys dat die Afrikaanse literatuur in die jare negentig gekenmerk is deur 'n kritiese ondersoek van die verlede wat nie onverwant is aan die bedrywighele van die Waarheid- en Versoeningskommissie nie.

In Ek, Joseph Daniel Marble weerhou Joseph Marble hom daarvan om hom voor te stel as 'n slagoffer van die trauma van die apartheidsverlede. Sy betrokkenheid by die Soweto-opstand van 1976 word byvoorbeeld nie gerepresenteer as die optrede van 'n oortuigde anti-apartheidsaktivis nie. Dit is nie soseer uit beginsel dat Joseph begin deelneem aan die protesoptrede nie maar eerder vanweë die ongemotiveerde optrede van die polisie: "Party van die polisiemanne het onnodig traangas na ons geslinger. [...] Toe besluit ons dat ons nou tog klaar betrek was deur die polisie. Daar was nou geen ander uitweg as om ook klip te gooi nie" (123).

Dit is sekerlik moontlik om Marble se verslag oor sy traumatiese jeug as 'n vorm van getuigenis te beskou van die ontbering wat baie mense van kleur weens apartheid moes deurmaak. Vir Marble is sy poging om aansluiting by die Waarheid- en Versoeningskommissie te vind, egter primêr gerig op die kleiner kring van sy eie familie. Hy wil die atmosfeer van openhartige ondersoek, vergifnis en versoening wat die politieke klimaat van die jare negentig bepaal het, laat afwentel na sy familielewe en na homself. Hy probeer om "die reine waarheid" (7) bloot te lê in 'n klaarblyklike poging om sowel sy misstappe as sy ontbering as jeugdige te beskryf sodat hy homself kan vergewe en ook versoening en vergifnis met sy familie kan bewerkstellig. Marble se beklemtoning van sy individuele ervarings tydens die apartheidsperiode stem enigszins ooreen met die tendensie in die jare negentig by outobiografiese om voorkeur te gee aan hulle individuele ervarings bo die diskoers van gemeenskaplikheid en verbondenheid wat die outobiografiese tekste van die jare tagtig gekenmerk het (sien Nuttall en Michael, 2000: 299).

Dit is verder moontlik dat Joseph Marble hom daarvan weerhou om met 'n gekonsolideerde stem namens die slagoffers van apartheid te praat weens 'n gevoel van marginalisering: die Waarheid- en Versoeningskommissie het immers groter prominensie aan die betrokkenheid van swart en wit mense by die apartheidsgeskiedenis gegee. Vir 'n gekleurde werker vanuit 'n arm agtergrond soos Marble is dit in die lig van hierdie omstandighede nie vanselfsprekend dat hy sy individuele stem uitvergroot tot 'n meer universele stem nie. Die vanselfsprekendheid waarmee veral Westerse manlike outobiografiese volgens Linda Anderson (2001: 3) hulle subjektiwiteit as 'n universele gegewe voorstel, ontbreek dikwels by Joseph Marble wat deurgaans skryf vanuit sy individuele ervaring van die Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis as lid van die relatief klein en gemarginaliseerde kleurlinggemeenskap in Johannesburg. Dit is slegs in enkele gevalle, soos wanneer hy sy beproewinge as pleegkind as verteenwoordigend van alle pleegkinders se ervarings voorstel,

dat hy sy subjektiwiteit universaliseer.

Die diskoers rondom die Waarheid- en Vesoeningskommissie is egter nie die enigste aanduiding van die intertekstuele aard van Marble se outobiografie waardeur sy teks volgens Lejeune (1998: 13-16) se terminologie as 'n outobiokopie beskou kan word nie. In ooreenstemming met Anderson (2001: 80) se vasstelling dat die subjek van die outobiografie altyd buite sy eie grense tree deurdat hy onvermydelik verwickel word by 'n wye netwerk van intertekste en diskoerse, kan Joseph Marble ook nie sy subjektiwiteit definieer sonder om bewustelik (en soms onbewustelik) ander tekste te betrek nie. Wanneer die verteller die einde van sy pleegsorg by die Bezuidenhout-gesin in Noordgesig vergelyk met die bevryding van die Israeliete uit slawerny in Egipte openbaar hy hom ineens as 'n gelowige jong man wat inspirasie put uit die Eksodusverhaal waarin God optree as die hoeder van Israel: "O God, net soos jy vir Israel van ouds uit Egipteland gelei het na die beloofde land Kanaan [sic], lei my nou Heer, lei my nou Heer, want ek is mos U kind" (204). Anders as die Bezuidenhouts kan Marble, die protagonis in sy eie Eksodusgeskiedenis, net soos God se uitverkore volk klaarblyklik reken op sy beskerming. Eksodus word opgeroep as 'n parallel vir Joseph se geskiedenis as pleegkind.

Marble huiwer ook nie om die harde werk wat hy sonder betaling vir die Bezuidenhouts moes verrig, te vergelyk met die gedwonge werk wat die sprokieskarakter Aspoestertjie moes verrig het nie (165). Hierdie vergelyking met die vroulike Aspoestertjie herinner aan die insident toe Ounooi as straf vir Joseph gedwing het om soos 'n meisie aan te trek (113). Joseph het hierdie insident ervaar as 'n aanslag op die integriteit van sy manlike identiteit. Wanneer hy hom met die onderdrukte Aspoestertjie vergelyk, wil hy dan ook aandui dat sy pleegouers se houding teenoor hom neergekom het op 'n ontkenning van sy potensiaal en van sy ontluikende manlike identiteit.

In sy outobiografie verwys Marble verder gereeld na avontuurverhale en -films waaronder die strokiesverhale van Kuifie en Asterix asook die films van Bruce Lee en Chuck Norris. Sy vertelling vertoon dan ook sommige kenmerke van 'n avontuurverhaal en roep eggo's op van Afrikaanse jeugverhale oor ondeunde kinderbendes soos die kerngesonde Trompie (Topsy Smith) en Die Uile (Cor Dircks). In Ek, Joseph Daniel Marble word die jong Joseph se bendegevegte by herhaling gevolg deur tonele waarin volwassenes wat gesagsposisies beklee met hom in gesprek tree oor die redes vir sy geweld teenoor ander seuns. Hierdie tonele is klaarblyklik gebaseer op die topos in die Afrikaanse jeugverhale oor kinderbendes waarin 'n volwasse karakter, dikwels 'n ouer of 'n onderwyser, die onnutsige kinderkarakters tot verantwoording roep oor die gevolge van hulle kattedwaad. Soos in die geval van die helde in die jeugverhale tree Joseph in hierdie vermanende gesprekke gereeld as die onskuldige na vore al was hy ook betrokke by voorvalle van ernstige aanranding. Die verrassend vergewensgesinde woorde van Owen Veldman se ouma wie se kleinseun ernstig beseer is in 'n geveg met Joseph kom byvoorbeeld baie geforseerd en onoortuigend voor: "Ek het gewonder waarom jy vir Owen so aangerand het. Hy het my eenvoudig 'n klomp leuens vertel. Ek ken jou mos, en weet wat 'n soort kind jy is. Jy wil alleen gelos word, nè, my

seun. Is dit nie so nie?" (96). Die topos wat die held in die jeugverhaal gelyk gee in sy botsing met die gesag van volwassenes, bied aan Marble die geleentheid om sy aandeel aan geweldpleging te representeer as daad van selfverdediging. Daar word van die lesers verwag om te glo dat Joseph self nooit enige gevegte geïnisieer het nie.

Die verwagting wat vroeër in hierdie artikel uitgespreek is dat Marble as 'n skrywer wat slegs nege jaar op skool deurgebring het en vermoedelik nie oor die literêre sofistiekasie sou beskik om die self as 'n gedesentraliseerde veelheid van stemme voor te stel nie, moet in die lig van die bespreking van die literêrkulturele diskoerse wat neerslag vind in sy outobiografie heroorweeg word. In Ek, Joseph Daniel Marble blyk dit dat die outeur onder meer kennis dra van die gesprekke rondom die Waarheid- en Versoeningskommissie, Long Walk to Freedom van Nelson Mandela, die Bybel, Westerse sprokies, tekste uit die Afrikaanse jeugliteratuur en aksiefilms uit Hollywood. Hierdie relatief beperkte korpus tekste en diskoerse asook Marble se nuwe vertelstyl maak dit moeilik om sy boek as 'n gesofistikeerde literêre werk te bestempel. Dit is nietemin duidelik dat die onvermydelike intertekstualiteit waaraan geen teks kan ontkom nie, tot gevolg het dat die beeld van die self wat Marble representeer, gedeeltelik tot stand kom deur die veelheid van stemme uit die ander tekste waarna hy verwys. Hierdie intertekstuele desentralisering van die manlike subjek in Ek, Joseph Daniel Marble as 'n "outobiokopie" (Lejeune, 1998: 13-16) asook die diskontinuiteit tussen die volwasse verteller en die jeugdige protagonis lei gesamentlik tot 'n komplekse representasie van manlike subjektiwiteit wat beswaarlik versoenbaar is met die Romantiese siening van 'n verenigde self. (1)

Marble het die publikasie van sy outobiografie waarskynlik te danke aan die redelik resente ontwikkeling in die Westerse literatuur om die lewensverhale van benedeelde te publiseer. In Suid-Afrika het Don Mattera se outobiografiese vertelling van sy betrokkenheid by bendeaktiwiteite in die destydse Sophiatown met die titel *Memory is the Weapon* (1987) en Godfrey Moloi, die "godfather" van Soweto, se *My Life* (1991) die grondslag gelê van 'n subgenre binne die Suid- Afrikaanse outobiografie. Na die publikasie van hierdie outobiografieë in Suid- Afrika kon Joseph Marble in 1999 ook sy Afrikaanse verslag oor die bendekultuur die lig laat sien. Dit is ook in die jare negentig dat die swart Amerikaanse bendelid, Kody Scott aansienlike sukses behaal het met sy *mémoire* *Monster. The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member* (Faludi, 1999: 472).

3. Slot

Vroeër in hierdie artikel is opgemerk dat Ek, Joseph Daniel Marble 'n belangrike toetssteen en 'n moontlike korrektief op 'n ondersoek na manlikheid in die literêre prosa kan wees. Al kan Joseph Marble se outobiografie beswaarlik as 'n voorbeeld van postmodernistiese literêre fiksie beskou word,

is dit uiteindelik opvallend dat die manlike subjek wat hier na vore tree ten minste gedeeltelik ook onderworpe is aan dieselfde desentring en veelstemmigheid as die postmodernistiese manlike subjekte in die werk van Breytenbach, Prinsloo, Strachan, De Lange en andere. Die manlike subjek in Ek, Joseph Daniel Marble word op verskillende maniere gedesentreer: die kwesbaarheid van Joseph se jeugdige manlike identiteit binne sy vyandige omgewing het byvoorbeeld 'n ondermynende uitwerking wat hom sy toevlug laat neem tot 'n oorkompenserende macho-manlikheid. Hierdie hipermanlikheid is in der waarheid die masker wat 'n subjektiwiteit moet verbloem wat aan 'n radikale en destabiliserende fragmentasie onderworpe is.

Die tekstuele prosesse wat betrokke is by die outobiografie dra by tot die problematisering van manlike subjektiwiteit in die teks. Die manlike subjek word onder andere gedesentreer deur die diskontinuiteit wat ontstaan tussen enersyds die jeugdige protagonis, die macho-bendelid, en andersyds die volwasse verteller wat as verantwoordelike broodwinner, eggenoot en vader met ambivalente gevoelens terugkyk op sy verlede. Die intertekstuele netwerk waarbinne Marble se outobiografie, oftewel outobiokopie, tot stand kom, dra by tot 'n verstrooiing van die manlike subjek oor 'n wye verskeidenheid diskoerse wat die konstruksie van 'n gekonsolideerde subjek van meet af aan belemmer.

Linda Anderson (2001: 3-4) het sekerlik gelyk as sy die outobiografie as 'n genre beskryf wat veral sedert die negentiende eeu in die Weste deur mans uit die middelklas oorheers is en sedertdien ook gekenmerk word deur 'n voorkeur vir die universele subjek. Die ideale van outonomie, selfverwesening, outentisiteit en transendensie het weens die prominente werksaamheid van manlike skrywers en kritici op die gebied van die outobiografie deel geword van die genreverwagtinge oor die outobiografie. Anderson (2001: 11; 102-103) dui aan dat die genre van die outobiografie veral sedert die bydraes van vroulike outobiograwe in die twintigste eeu toenemend blyke gee van heterogeniteit hoewel dit tans steeds bewustelik uitgesluit word in die strewe van manlike outobiograwe na universaliteit, enkelvoudigheid en samehang. Anderson (2001: 98) vind aansluiting by Virginia Woolf in haar opmerking dat vroue hulle behoort te wend tot 'n vorm van representasie wat voorkeur gee aan veelvoudigheid: "a multiplicity which cannot be captured within one and the same, the singular "I" of masculine discourse".

Ondanks haar uitvoerige besprekings van Roland Barthes en Jacques Derrida se outobiografiese tekste versuim Anderson om volledig rekenskap te gee van die onlangse ontwikkelinge in die genre van die outobiografie en in die teorievorming oor manlikheid. Daar word immers toenemend erkenning gegee aan die bestaan van verskillende soorte manlikhede (sien Connell, 1995) wat 'n ongekwalfiseerde gelykstelling tussen 'n enkelvoudige manlikheid en 'n gekonsolideerde en universele subjektiwiteit toenemend onhoudbaar maak. 'n Kritikus soos Lejeune (1989 en 1998) het verder aangetoon dat talige en tekstuele faktore dit vir sowel manlike as vroulike outobiograwe onmoontlik maak om hulle vertellings te laat sentreer rondom 'n enkele gekonsolideerde

subjek.

'n Outobiografie soos Ek, Joseph Daniel Marble is byna onvermydelik 'n outobiokopie en 'n autre-biografie waarin veelstemmigheid die totstandkoming van 'n gekonsolideerde manlike subjek ondermyn. Marble se outobiografie kan as 'n toetssteen vir die representasie van manlikheid in die literêre prosa beskou word in soverre dit onvermydelik, net soos die werk van literêre skrywers, onderworpe is aan die tipies desentrerende werking van tekstuele prosesse. Die desentrering op tekstuele vlak het noodwendig tot gevolg dat die representasie van die manlike subjek meegevoer word in die momentum wat enige poging ondermyn om 'n gekonsolideerde sentrum na te streef.

As outeur stel Marble nie soos Strachan, Prinsloo en Breytenbach doelbewus ondersoek in na die strategieë en implikasies wat betrokke is by die desentrering van manlike subjektiwiteit nie. Die genre van die outobiografie, waarin die diskontinuiteit tussen die verteller en die jonger protagonis 'n genrekenmerk van die outobiografie geword het, fasiliteer egter Marble se representasie van 'n komplekse veelvoudige manlikheid: die jeugdige Joseph wat hom wend tot 'n macho-identiteit wat sentreer rondom seksuele prestasie en geweldpleging staan uiteindelik op gespanne voet met Marble as volwasse verteller wat homself voorstel as 'n verantwoordelike broodwinner en gesinsman. Die volwasse verteller beskou soms die macho-identiteit van sy jeugdige "ek" met trots en met 'n mate van identifikasie. Opvallender is egter die diskontinuiteit tussen verteller en protagonis: die jeugdige bendelid se mobilisering van 'n manlike identiteit rondom gewelddadigheid en seksuele verowering kontrasteer uiteindelik met die volwasse verteller wat hom identifiseer met sy rol as broodwinner, vader en eggenoot.

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(1) Meer as een resensent het na die verskyning van Marble se outobiografie die vermoede uitgespreek dat die stem van Marble se uitgewer by Kwela Boeke ook baie sterk hoorbaar is in die netjiese versorging en vormgewing van die teks. Cecile Cilliers (1999: 7) merk op: "Die redaksionele hand is te sigbaar, die Afrikaans soms skokkend, soms té korrek" (sien ook Lategan, 2000: 6). Indien hierdie resensente gelyk het, kan Ek, Joseph Daniel Marble beskou word as 'n kollaboratiewe outobiografie waarin die stem van die manlike verteller aangevul en gewysig is deur die stem van die wit vroulike uitgewer van Kwela Boeke, Annari van der Merwe, wat ook die foto van Marble geneem het wat op die voorblad van sy boek verskyn. Die vermoedelik kollaboratiewe aard van die outobiografie problematiseer die representasie van manlike subjektiwiteit in die teks aansienlik en dra by tot die versplintering en meervoudige karakter van die manlike subjek. In verband met die

kollaboratiewe outobiografie merk Lejeune (1989: 188) byvoorbeeld op: "The division of labour between two people (at least) reveals the multiplicities of authorities implied in the work of autobiographical writing, as in all writing". Onsekerheid ontstaan oor wanneer Joseph Marble aan die woord is sonder die tussenkoms van Annari van der Merwe. Is daar hoegenaamd enige passasies waarin die manlike subjek aan die woord is sonder dat sy woorde vooraf deur sy vroulike redakteur geweeg is?

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Generic and Discursive Tensions in Winnefred and Agnes: The True Story of Two Women by Agnes Lottering

- M.J. Daymond -

Abstract

In telling her remarkable life-story in such a way as to convey her pride in the identity she has inherited from her coloured parents and grandparents, Agnes Lottering has chosen narratological and discursive options which result in a less than comfortable celebration of that identity. She does not deal directly and at length with the apartheid years. Rather she focuses on her sense that her peoples' story is a neglected but important part of South African history and what she once knew but has lost. The result of this decision is that her narrative does not share in what has been said to be the dominant tone and discursive choices of post- 1994 autobiography in South Africa. Lottering's use of a doubled autobiographical firstperson and of the discourse of original innocence (which locates her outside culture) are considered in relation to the likely impact of historical socio-political forces on her as author, as distinct from the autobiographical subject which she seeks to create in her writing.

The pride in her identity and complex cultural heritage with which Agnes Lottering begins her remarkable autobiography has little of the defensive or defiant self-assertion which has marked much black South African life-writing in the past. She begins her Author's Introduction with, "I am a coloured: designated by the apartheid regime an "Other Coloured" For I am a true half-and-half mixture of black and white, of Zulu and Irish. to be precise – and extremely proud of that" (Lottering, 2002: 7). (1) Her sharpness with the opposition between her term "true" and the regime's "Other Coloured" (ironically an admission of difference within what was supposedly a self-evident racial category) is indicative of new potential in life-storytelling by a coloured person in South Africa. She seems not to have internalized the idea of a racial hierarchy, but to enjoy a secure, teleological pride in her identity that gathers the narrated Agnes Lottering as the outcome of a hitherto unrecognized, but currently very important, history. Lottering's confident tone is not, however, entirely supported by her unusual choices of form and discursive framework through which to narrate her story: she tells two distinct stories, the first about her mother, Winnefred, and the second about herself. They are told as separate stories but as their events are made to mirror each other and as both are narrated in the first person, with Lottering ventriloquizing her mother's voice, their form also seems to strive for an effect of continuity,

an effect which Lottering's later married life under the direct impact of apartheid tends to undermine. Her chief discursive frame also seems to work against her desire to present as continuously viable a way of life she once knew.

The setting for Lottering's story is mainly northern KwaZulu-Natal and her two stories cover most of the twentieth century. Telling her mother's story allows Lottering to reach back to a time when colonial discourses of race were operative, but only at a distance, and before the rigid binaries of apartheid had been imposed. (2) Her setting, being what Pratt has called a "contact zone" (1992: 4), allows us insight into a functioning of difference which has not been recorded elsewhere in South Africa, and may guide a reader to speculate how social life might have developed had white domination not been the primary concern of the country's legislators and administrators for much of the twentieth century.

Lottering, writing as a third generation member of the family, also presents herself as a product of constant interaction with their Zulu neighbours and friends and as living through the implications of cultural difference in her daily life. Her narrative explores with delight the variety of cultural practices amongst the many peoples who made up her childhood world in the remote Ngome forest, building many of its scenes around the range of personal exchanges – from sympathy to hostility – that were shaped by this variety. The story she has to tell offers a unique insight into the personal interactions that made up what she calls pioneering life, a life regulated not by the desires of imperial or indigenous conquest and trade but by the daily realities of making a living from the soil. Protected as it was by its remoteness, the way of life Lottering remembers with such affection as having satisfied three generations of her family could not, however, hold her within its fold and did not itself survive. Her fondly remembered world came to an end when her parents were compelled to leave their home because Ngome had been declared a State Forest Reserve. (3)

In her Introduction to her own and her mother's stories, Lottering says that her paternal great grandfather was Irish, the "Rorke who established Rorke's Drift" (7) and that her grandfather was the renowned warrior Jim who, having rescued a son of "the Great Chief Myeni of Ubombo" from captivity "in a war in Swaziland" (8), was given the Chief's daughter as a reward. On her marriage, this princess was named "Chithekile, meaning "the one who was forced to leave"" (10) but to her grandchildren she was known as "Gogo Joko" (11) because of the fondness for that brand of tea which she developed after marriage. The "mixture" in Lottering's maternal lineage is similarly bound up with the history of the region. Her great-grandfather was an Englishman who "had been noted for making the spears for Dinizulu's impis", and her grandfather was known as "Mgodini" because his "father took out hot iron from a big hole somewhere in the mountains between Ulundi and Isandhlwana" (11). As both grandfathers had several wives, the family was large but "closely knit," and as she comments on their bond Lottering again indicates the gap between her sense of her lineage and the racist myth of

degenerate coloured "blood" (Coetzee, 1988). In her extended family, people

... looked after one another's material and physical needs with utter dedication and concern, and planned and organized their lives together. It is a pity there is not more in the history books and archives about the original bold and fearless men and their Zulu wives who started it all. "The marginal man" – that's what the coloured has been called. It is a pity that so little has been written about the interesting way some of us came into the world – with raw sex certainly not the only factor (12).

With this quiet pride and pointed comment Lottering counters the humiliating assumptions about miscegenation (illicit if not "raw" sex) that underlie the colonial and apartheid creation of the category "coloured". Although it is disturbing that only the women in her account of her family's origins carry a racial descriptor, the men being more simply represented by the narrator as "bold and fearless," Lottering's story goes some way to respond to the question that Wicomb raises in her discussion of the meanings which might accrue to the burial of Saartje Baartman in South Africa – specifically whether it would "also bury the black woman as icon of concupiscence, which is to say the shame of having had our bodies stared at, but also the shame invested in those (females) who have mated with the colonizer" (Wicomb, 1998: 92). (4)

Lottering's account of her lineage and of the customs her family followed, as well as her indications of the languages shared on her father's farm (English, Afrikaans, siSwati and isiZulu), reveal that extensive cultural exchanges and mutual respect were the norm and, despite the occasionally severe conflict which she narrates, continued into her own generation. For example, the phrases of respect which Winnefred crowds together as she remembers her mother-in-law come from several cultures: "the lady of the manor, the Missus, the Nona, the Nkohosikazi, the maitre d'hotel. The Ndlovukazi – all the Zulus around held her in high esteem ... she was totally immersed in this illustrious life of being Mrs. Rorke" (86). In discursive terms, what her ancestry gives Lottering is a wide and extraordinarily mixed frame of reference through which to convey the excitement of thinking of her family as pioneers, as well as the rich personal potential (and for her subsequent narrative purposes, the sheer interest) of living amongst people of several very different cultures. As Lottering's life unfolds, the question arises whether and where such interacting cultural differences, leading on the whole to a fluidity of selfhood could have survived.

One of the most interesting narrative strategies Lottering has used for her auto/biographical account of her family's proud history is presenting her mother's life as a discrete narrative followed by her own discrete life-story, and telling both stories in the first-person. This strategy is unusual in that it strains against the "autobiographical pact" which Lejeune says is a characteristic of the genre of written autobiography and which distinguishes it from fiction. This contract allows the reader to believe that the narrator of the text, the protagonist of the story, and the author whose name appears on the

title page are one and the same person, and that the writer will sincerely try to respect this identity (Lejeune, 1989: 3-30). In his Introduction to Lejeune's work, Eakin has pointed out that while much of Lejeune's later writing exploded "the structures of medium and person" (1989: xix) on which the idea of a pact is based, the problems of the defining characteristics of autobiography have not gone away:

"identity, sincerity, the pact – all the familiar issues that attend the solitary individual writing the story of his or her life – seem destined to crop up willynilly whenever it is a question of telling the truth about the self" (1989: xix). The pact survives not as an obligation under which a writer must work but as a generic signpost by which a reader may guide her expectations. Thus, in a work which presents itself as written autobiography and not fiction (notwithstanding the valid poststructuralist points about the constructedness of the self, the life and the writing that Coullie [1991] has made), it is not possible to grant a double reference to the narrating "I", both Winnefred and Agnes. We must conclude that something unusual is happening. (5) Including the life-story of another person is frequently an important element in autobiography, as in Ellen Kuzwayo's *Call Me Woman* which recounts the lives and achievements of many women besides the author. And the narrative point of view can be extended to include, briefly, that of the additional person being represented. Kuzwayo, for example, allows her narration to inhabit the figure of Alice Biko when she represents her learning of her son's death in detention (Kuzwayo, 1985: 47-8), but this is a momentary expansion of the focalization and does not have the effect of Alice Biko's telling her own story. *Call Me Woman* was written when the representation of a community of women, from within which Kuzwayo could write her metonymic selfhood (Sommer, 1988; Daymond, 1991), was an important gesture of political resistance (Coullie, 1996). (6) As Nuttall and Michael have put it in their periodizing of the characteristics of autobiography in the recent past, "[t]exts from ...[the 1980s] invariably foreground the representivity of the autobiographical voice. It is the exploration of self-in-community that they rely on, invest in, and sometimes precariously seek to formulate" (2000: 299). But Lottering is not of this moment in South African autobiography, and this understanding of community is not what she writes from or in order to create.

What her strategy of a single "I" seems to suggest instead has several facets. There is Lottering's need to insist that the way of life she knew in Ngome was able to sustain itself (two generations of the family have their source in a world that Lottering wishes to revisit and sustain and so she uses the same grammatical form for both lives); there is her wish to explain events in her own life through their similarity to her mother's experiences, and there is her will to assert a degree of narrative control over the functioning of this now vanished world. And yet she has chosen to present her subject matter as two stories, not one. This tension between the structure and the narration of Lottering's auto/biography, and its possible connections with the world she knew and represents, is of interest not because it indicates, as might once have been said, the author's failure to control her material, or even because it could seem to indicate a degree of insincerity (untruthfulness) in the narration. It is important,

rather, in the light of recent celebrations of fluid identity and "multiple belongings" (Wicomb, 1998: 105) into which, in a period of nation-building, South Africans are bound to inquire.

Lottering's writing of her own and her mother's lives came about some time after her mother's death when she persuaded her aunt to tell her "the full story" (13) of her parents' life together, (7) and she says that her book is partly an attempt to compensate for her earlier failure to understand what they had been through. The validating origin of her insistence on connection and continuity is given in a passage which forms the transition from Winnefred to Agnes. In it Lottering tells how she overheard her mother's sorrowing because she believed that she, Winnefred, was fated to "carry her [mother's] pain and ... pass it on to my own eldest daughter" (154). Both Winnefred and Agnes have their children taken away from them for a time, and it is this somatically expressed bond that seems to be the foundation of Lottering's narrative mode and structure. She could easily have absorbed her mother's story by making it the larger context of her own, but she chooses instead to present her mother's story separately, "as though my mother were speaking it" (14). Her unusual decision to ventriloquize her mother's utterance is grounded in the claim she makes while her aunt is telling her about their lives: "I knew exactly how to write my parents' story. I could not only hear the words as they spoke them – I could see how their mouths moved to make the sounds" (14).

Lottering maps her own life by following the contours of her mother's story, and she does so by making certain events salient, events which substantiate her belief that she has indeed, in the words of their Zulu neighbours, "taken her mother's womb" (96). These events are, as she puts it, that they both "conceived outside marriage experienced an intense love ... [and] utter despair [and both] had husbands who treated ... [them] with cruelty" (246). In themselves these events are not unusual in women's lives, but Lottering's phrase "utter despair" ranges beyond the familiar to inaugurate the central and somewhat disturbing matching of one particular event in their lives. Her mother experienced bewitchment as a result of the regional Zulu chief's desire to punish her husband; later, in choosing to mirror this ordeal in her own life, Lottering represents her miscarrying a child as a kind of bewitchment. Winnefred's marriage to Benjamin is given full approval by the Chief, who had been a good and powerful friend to Benjamin's father. Then the Chief suddenly takes offence, thinking that Benjamin, who has fathered three daughters with Winnefred, is mocking him because he has been unable to beget girls with any of his many wives. They are already quarreling over cattle which have strayed into the Chief's mealie fields and when Benjamin angrily refuses to pay the full six oxen or heifers which are demanded in recompense, things turn serious.

The Chief, stating that his might and position have been dishonoured, threatens Benjamin that because of his "boiling brains [he, the Chief] ... will cause his destiny to be an open grave" (113). Sibiya, the herdsman and Benjamin's closest friend, understands what might be in store but the headstrong Benjamin is deaf to his warnings. First one of their daughters falls mysteriously ill; then

their cattle are all killed by a bolt of lightning on a clear, sunny day; finally Winnefred is lured to a hidden cave by mysterious laughter (interpreted as a tokoloshe) because the Chief "wanted ... [her] to spill ... [her] seed, mixed with his, so that he could make strong muthi to conceive girls, in order to obtain lobola" (136). This is how the episode is later explained to her by the wife of Mtembu, the powerful inyanga who saves her and gets rid of the repulsive, evil something that is in her womb. (8)

Like her mother, Agnes miscarries but in her case it is the result of an accident. She has fallen in love with Pieter, the son of a white farmer in the vicinity; when she finds that she is pregnant they plan to run away to Swaziland to marry beyond the apartheid state's control, but she loses the child she is carrying when she falls out of a fig tree. Lottering's representation of what follows renders it as strange, as otherworldly, as was her mother's ordeal. After the first sharp pain and before Pieter can reach her, she sees a "big baboon mother" (176) hovering over her and, as she puts it, "I didn't really know [what was happening]. I was half choking with tears and pain. The mother baboon had taken my baby. I had to run and chase the baboons to get my baby back" (176). Agnes is inconsolable even when Pieter and her mother remind her of what she knows from having seen sheep miscarry: "It's not yet a baby, it's still just like a thick clot of blood" (177). Against their attempts at consolation, her closest friend on the farm, the Zulu girl Tobile, confirms her fears about the baboon and she, as she puts it with hindsight, "believed her [b]ecause in my heart I wanted to believe that it was still alive" (178). Her explanation will seem rational to a reader educated in western psychological norms, and it seems to have become Agnes's chief means of understanding her actions, (9) but what Lottering, the autobiographer who is recreating the event, needs to emphasize are the wombcontinuities with her mother which she figures through bewitchment and nonhuman forces. These continuities are probably all the more important to Lottering because of the consequences of her miscarriage: her father is furious when Pieter asks permission to marry Agnes and to live in Swaziland; when news comes of Pieter's death in a climbing accident Agnes and her mother, fearing that the secret of her miscarriage will reach Benjamin who has already severely beaten them both, agree that Agnes should leave Ngome. Thus begins her loss of the way of life that is so important to her identity and has become her reason for writing.

The relatedness of events in the two stories Lottering tells has to bear a selfvalidating function – an intense emotional burden. But the doubled first-person is not stable in its effects, for while it may convey the continuity of mirrored lives, it also has the effect of introducing a polyphonic potential that runs somewhat counter to the intentions which I have read into Lottering's unusual narration. The more a reader reflects on the idea of two distinct (although connected and sequential) lives, each told from an apparently distinct subjectivity, the more autonomy and dialogue rather than sameness will present themselves as options. At this point of considering the genesis and effects of Lottering's narrative mode, it is also important to remember that she is able to ventriloquise her mother's voice because of a third, mediating but unheard voice – that of her cousin, whom she calls Aunt Irene, who told her

the details of her parents' story. Another way of suggesting the somewhat paradoxical outcome of Lottering's doubled "I" is to say that in coupling her own memories of her mother's speech with what she learnt from her aunt's stories about Winnefred and Benjamin, she is able both to perform her mother's voice so that it seems at first to be authentically present in the text, and at the same time to re-write her mother as she needs her to be at the time of writing. This doubled connection between her mother and herself is reflected in Lottering's saying that subjectivity and impersonality are folded together in her feelings about the narrativizing of her life: "If I read it in a book, then I'll feel as if it happened to someone else. After all, it is just a story, though it's more than that too: it's the story of my life" (211).

Entertaining seriously the claims of the doubled "I" in Lottering's text is to destabilize the generic norms of autobiography, as I have suggested. But this is an instability which registers itself on reflection rather than at the moment of reading. The more immediate effect of a lived instability comes from the discursive range that Lottering inhabits and uses in representing the richness of her family life and of the communal interactions in the Ngome setting. But this kind of instability, the stimulation of a constantly open, developing sense of self at the fluctuating meeting points between cultures, is positive in its effects. It is a source of energy in the narrative and is somewhat different from the anxieties which belong to the doubled "I", associated as they are with the closing and even destruction of identity which apartheid imposed on the "coloured" Agnes Lottering. This loss is figured in her text when her parents have to leave Ngome and again in her marriage to Lemmie Lottering. Finally, however, these differently sourced instabilities merge and compel Lottering to reject the discourse of original innocence through which she has represented herself in the forest of Ngome, and her love for Pieter in particular.

The discursive framework on which Lottering draws in depicting her parents' courtship gains its social authority (Mills, 1997: 9) from the ways in which members of the family seem to have spoken of their pioneering days, and these are accompanied by a strange blend of images derived from the genre, adventureromance, on which she draws when representing the pioneering past. (10) The result is a heady blend of chivalry, Christianity, frontier machismo and sexual desire, but there are tensions in this mixture in that some of the ingredients do not seem to belong to the person, Winnefred, in whose mouth they are placed. Winnefred lived all her life in the Ngome region as a member of an extensive pioneering, coloured family – over the generations members of the Rorke, Nunn and Dunn families had married each other (Brink, 2003) – which leased land from the State and farmed it. On her marriage she again lived in close communion with her Zulu neighbours and farm-workers, and her closest friend and confidante was Nyawo, the senior wife of Sibiya who was like a brother to her husband, Benjamin Rorke. When Benjamin proposed to Winnefred he was a young widower with two infant children and she was the mother of two sons born "outside marriage." Lottering represents her mother as knowing that it was a marriage of convenience, for her elders told Winnefred that she and her suitor were expected to feel "pity" (31) for each other; but she also gives full credence to her mother's claim that she fell deeply in love with

"the most striking, handsome man anyone could dream of" (25). In doing so, Lottering chooses this way of representing Winnefred's watching her father, her future husband and his brother, Walter, approaching the house where she is waiting for her father's consent to the marriage:

You'd have had to have seen them with your own eyes as I did to believe that these were humans. There they were: giants, knights belonging to King Arthur. My father, George Nunn, shining like the angel Gabriel – Sir Lancelot. Walter Rorke, who resembled a noble emperor, Sir Galahad, Benjamin William Rorke, looking like the angel Michael. They strolled with ease and confidence as though the world was all theirs – no one dictated to them. Men, I mean real men. Amadoda. Hunks of muscle and bone (32).

Winnefred was raised a Catholic but was not taught to read (55) and so it is likely to be Agnes, who was a boarder at the Little Flower Convent School in Eshowe for several years and who has remained an avid reader, (11) who has followed a Tennysonian lead in blending Arthurian legend with archangels. Her Introduction has prepared us for a glamorous fusing of the ethereal and the physical in her depictions of frontiersmen for she writes: "The pioneers were like knights – not in shining armour – in tattered and torn old battered ten-gallon hats, galloping, with the wind, leaving a trail of male essence" (8). But then phrases such as "real men ... Amadoda" and "male essence" might well be a direct echo of Winnefred's more down-to-earth code switching as she brings her view of masculinity into focus.

When the Agnes-Winnefred gaze rests on Benjamin himself, the language of adventure, of frontier-myths and marauding warrior-cowboys, of sexuality and desire, is even earthier, less tempered by chivalric or religious idealizing:

He was bandy-legged so that his leather gaiters had a slight crease on the left leg. He must have worn a size ten shoe or boot. He had kruisbande that were genuine cow-hide leather, and a big thick belt with a big square heavy iron buckle. His holster and gun, slung carelessly on his hip, gave him an air of such striking breeding and machismo, I felt like running back indoors and not looking any further. Almost resembling a Norse Viking. Rather like a pirate he had tied a scarf around his head; black shining curls protruding at the nape of his neck; a well-trimmed moustache attached to his mouth, that parted occasionally to reveal his teeth. The sideburns met with the line of the twisted pirate scarf to show off a curly fluff of black hair and a very strong jawline. This was the Prince, the youngest son of James Michael Rorke, the heart-throb of the Ngome Forest. Almost like the Greek god Hercules in Greek mythology, his mysterious gaze had a disturbing sadness about it (32-3).

While Agnes probably knew many western legends and adventure stories, the

nature of first-person narrative means that there can be no independent indication whether her mother also knew them. Winnefred might have used "prince" and maybe even "pirate" for her bandy-legged, bandoliered husband but, although she understands western gentility and advises her daughter to serve tea to Benjamin as a "lady" (27) would, it seems unlikely that "the Greek god Hercules" was part of her frame of reference. On the other hand, it is probable that she told Agnes about Benjamin's discussing sexuality with Sibiya in the forthright terminology of animal husbandry and Zulu proverbs. Sibiya is represented as drawing on the links between cattle and masculinity in Zulu culture in order to advise his friend: "I think Nkhosana needs to strengthen his male organs by eating the very testicles of the bull and drinking a little warm blood from the bull's heart" (28). Not all aspects of these beliefs seem to have resided comfortably with the Rorke family however, for Agnes ventriloquises her father's reply as, "My father said you must teach me to fight with sticks, and to learn all your hunting tricks, and teach me to respect the elders – but not teach me your barbaric lust for many women" (29). (12) As Benjamin's father had in fact had several wives, this invoked hypocrisy seems to be one of those moments when self-assertion requires that cultural division be momentarily reinstated despite the powerful personal bond which has hitherto transcended difference.

When one remembers that all this is a daughter's narrating her father's as well as her mother's presence, the language becomes doubly charged, but because Agnes is writing out of her own needs while echoing her mother, her discursive blend can be taken to indicate not so much an Electra complex as her general delight in frontier masculinity because it contrasts so strongly with her own troubled marriage and because it is a means of correcting her past failure to understand her parents' relationship. In this way the discourses which she mobilizes are historically specific and they take their effect from the particular network of relationships in her text. They do not have an immanent, steady, or predictable effect (Mills, 1997: 11-17). A further factor which may have given rise to Agnes's constant references to her father's proud breeding is likely to have been the racial denigration and political powerlessness which she and her people had to confront once their life in Ngome came to an end. Thus Agnes represents his looks and behaviour on his wedding day as signifying to his new wife, "Look at me properly, woman. I am not the type to be taken lightly. Be careful. I am a full-blooded, half-caste English Irish stud" (55).

Lottering's representation of the unique blend of cultures her parents knew, with their idealizing as well as their practical strains, continues in the account of Winnefred's wedding and the feasting which followed. It is Winnefred's liminality, precariously poised as she is at the meeting of several cultures, which dominates the representation of these scenes. For example, the day after their marriage in the magistrate's office at Nongoma, Benjamin shoots the now dangerous bull that had been part of his first wife's dowry and the praise songs which accompany him back to the homestead evoke the 1879 battle at Rorke's Drift in which his grandfather, Jim, was involved, "Wena wegebu likaJimu" (69). (13) Despite her happiness that day, Winnefred herself is represented as

unsure of the semiotics through which to read the killing of the bull:

Was I going to see black all my life? Was darkness my destiny?
Oh, you know how the Zulus are. Everything has always to do
with ancestors and death, good luck and bad luck Hayibo!
This thought made me feel deeply troubled and quite frightened.
Maybe because I was a Catholic (70).

As her narrative reaches the moment of her own birth, Lottering turns from the discourses she inhabits in her daily, social life to draw increasingly on a more literary trope of prelapsarian innocence and fusion with the natural world to write about her mother's falling pregnant and, later, to recount her own conception of a child "outside marriage". (14) This means that she takes herself and her mother outside culture and history, placing them in a paradise she wants to believe could have endured for ever, and protecting them in a discourse through which she seeks to resist the (still bracketed in her narrative) pressures of institutionalized racism which were finally to destroy her world. Responding to Lottering's discursive choice (15) is thus a matter of recognizing both resistance to and suppression of historical change (Mills, 1997: 27) in the nature of her nostalgia and its undeclared political origins. When the glade near the Ntendeka waterfall which Benjamin has chosen for his sexual union with Winnefred is described by Lottering, its beauty is represented as that of an abundant paradise.

Used again when Winnefred falls pregnant after three years of marriage, this discourse takes the fulfillment of her love for Benjamin away from the institution of marriage (perhaps, in her case, because she tended to feel somewhat unworthy of the Rorke family), beyond the family's delight (even beyond the presence of western, chivalric knights or Zulu, heroic warriors) and out into nature – into a realm of innocent, romantic passion in which Winnefred feels self-confident and productive (110). The long awaited child is Agnes who is born on Christmas day and while her arrival brings forward several references to a socio-religious institution – "an angelic Christmas present" (111) – the importance to Winnefred at the time, and later to Agnes, of her conception being locatable beyond culture soon becomes apparent. In Winnefred's case it protects her image of the husband she loves from his increasingly jealous and violent behaviour once he suspects her of infidelity with the chief. In Agnes's case, it has to validate her memories of her forbidden love for the white man, Pieter, rather than sustain an actual relationship. When they are lovers, Agnes and Pieter are aware that although they do not see themselves as sinful they are committing a crime in the legal terms of apartheid – a force which can for the moment be kept out of the scene but not out of the emotional need with which Lottering later writes about it. (16) Ortner (1974) has argued that the four part homology "culture" is to "nature" as "man" is to "woman" has been used to denigrate and subordinate women, but at this stage in Lottering's narrative her self-protection (which will prove inadequate in the end) and her self-validation come from representing herself more and more as a child of nature.

Although their circumstances differ, Agnes's account of her lovemaking with Pieter is a conscious echo of her mother's story:

I was lost in a symphony of the wilds, and Mother Nature took her course. I heard a buzzing in my head – I didn't know if I was being transported to another world, but as long as we were together we would be all right. He was so gentle and he kept calling me "my lieflinkie, my baba" and he panted like a tired calf that had run away from the stable ... only nature could see us, and the spring heard our lovemaking. It's as though she hid the secret in her bosom, and in turn played us a lovesong, and sealed our love by giving us all she could give (170).

In this account of rapture and fulfillment there is, however, a yearning nostalgia that is not present in her mother's story: Pieter is young, a tired calf rather than a bull – to Winnefred, Benjamin's love-making was like that of a "wild raging animal a bull" (80) – and Agnes is a cherished infant. They are both protected by "Mother Nature" and the scene is read as an idyll rather than an event in the world.

Her father's rage when he finds out about their wish to marry (he at least brings in political realities when he insists that since the death of General Smuts a union between coloured and white has become impossible) and then the news of Pieter's death force Agnes to leave the farm. On the day she arrives in Vryheid she meets Lemmie Lottering and, very soon and still in a state of shock, she "humbly agree[s] ... to a relationship" (189); almost immediately she is pregnant again. Benjamin refuses to agree to their marriage because, unlike his daughter, he sees Lemmie as a member of one of the "Bushman tribes of the Karoo or Kalahari" (192). Finally Benjamin agrees but renounces his daughter; her wedding is a nightmare and Lemmie's unprovoked insults and beatings begin almost immediately. Agnes knows that his violence, like his drinking, arises from the humiliations of being a "coloured" person in the world of apartheid, and she feels herself trapped between a violent husband and a violent father. When she runs back to her parental home, she declares: "I am never going back to that murderer! I'd rather have my own father sjambok me till I am black and blue" (96), but she knows that this option is not really open to her for the violent anger she has provoked in her father is as often turned on his wife as on his daughter. (17) As her plight worsens, Agnes again summons what has turned out to be her major personal mode – to think more and more of herself, and childhood friends such as Tobile, as spirits of nature:

We were born free in spirit and we lived with the wind, with the birds and all of nature ... I longed for the wild days of freedom, for now I felt caged, like a circus animal that has to be lashed and forced to do things that it doesn't really understand (223).

She retreats into memories of Pieter which are similarly sanctified by her preferred discourse, but the tensions of using it can be seen in Lottering's having to supplement it with echoes of a pastoral mode as she places her

imagined marriage ceremony itself (usually the key social sanctioning of a sexual union) beyond the reach of culture so as to escape the realities of apartheid:

We did get married, Pieter and I, long ago in the wilderness in Ngome. My ring was plaited grass, my wedding dress of finest green was woven by nature in the form of ferns, my necklace was a garland of wild African violets, my headgear creamy-white wild apple blossoms. We had the crickets shrieking our wedding march, and the bumblebees hummed along (220).

Once her parents are forced to leave Ngome, Lottering knows that her connection with the place and her primary source of a remembered self-validation will go too. Her strategy for coping with their forced removal is explicitly to equate their loss with mankind's expulsion from Eden: "It put me in mind of Paradise when Adam and Eve were chased out of the garden and left all its beauty behind. But these poor people had committed no sins at all" (227). And as two incompatible discourses – natural innocence and racial othering – are drawn together by forces beyond her control, Agnes can no longer find her sustenance or solace outside culture. It is at this point that she mentally rejects Pieter and with him the discourse of natural innocence. She now sees him as not dead but as having betrayed her: "They were all the same, those with a white skin. They had just one intention – to fool around with anyone who wasn't white" (229). Although this generalization does not persist, Agnes, having lived in later life in segregated Durban as well as Vryheid, retains the idea that Pieter had not died but had chosen a way out of a love that could not "have worked out" (233). As must have happened to many South Africans, the State's racism eventually denies her even her dreams.

The tensions which develop in Lottering's writing reveal themselves in both the discourses and the auto/biographical structure and narrative mode she has used. I have pursued the tensions here, not to suggest that they reveal the impossibility of what Lottering wishes to achieve in her narrative or that they affect the value of her family's rare story, but because they compel a reader (or compelled this reader) to reflect on the gap between the world of several cultures that made her what she is – a world which Lottering has had to remember as idyllic because it is now lost – and the scarcely represented but nevertheless pressing realities which enveloped her once she left Ngome. Lottering has, as I suggested at the outset, a remarkable and vital story to tell and one that challenges the racial stereotyping to which South African coloured people have been subjected. The quandary revealed in her narrative is that in order to undertake this important story and her place in it, she has had to place her emphasis on continuity and stability of being rather than on the pain of her later experience, and to write somewhat at odds with the resources of her genre and her discourses. Although her story is a fascinating one of cultural interactions and how they shaped individual lives, the discourse of natural innocence she is compelled to use in order to represent the value of her lost world does not always sit easily with what her life story asks us to think about today – the need in South Africa to live within an understanding of flexible,

fluid forms of acculturated selfhood and "multiple belongings".

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(1) Further references to this text will be given as a page number only; references are to the first edition.

(2) Elsabé Brink, tracing the lives of members of four families descended from the traders John Dunn, Herbert Nunn, Arthur Nicholson and Piet Louw (whose histories are similar to the one that Agnes Lottering, born into the Nunn family, is constructing) says, "During the twentieth century, in an increasingly racially polarized South African society, the offspring of these traders and their Zulu wives formed the basis of a unique, racially mixed community that survived despite the ravages of apartheid" (Brink, 2003: 37). She describes the trading life of Herbert Nunn, which seems to predate that of Agnes Lottering's great-grandfather, in this way, "Since the 1860s, Herbert Nunn had been a trader in the district ruled by Hamu, a half-brother and supporter of Cetshwayo ... but who later sided with the British against ... [him]. Hamu's land lay in the far northwestern part of the Zulu kingdom, in the hills sloping down from the

Ngome forest to the Mkhuze River" (2003: 45).

(3) In this case the decree was not motivated by racism; it affected everyone in the area alike and meant that "in future nobody of any race would be allowed to live or farm there" (226).

(4) What I am reading as Lottering's "answer" to Wicomb's question depends on the seclusion of Lottering's childhood home in the Ngome forest; it affords her a locatable origin and family ethos, and so her self-respect. Lottering's certainties set her apart from Wicomb's reading of the coloured people of the Cape, many of whom are the descendents of slaves, a diasporic origin about which there is an "amnesia" (Wicomb, 1998: 100) in formal and in folk history. Although the title of Wicomb's article suggests that what she says of the "shame" of coloured people in the Cape encompasses all coloured people in South Africa, she in fact repudiates the idea of "totalizing colouredness" and suggests instead the notion of "multiple belongings" (105). For further discussion of coloured identity as a cultural, not racial, matter see Erasmus (2001).

(5) The splitting of the autobiographical "I" is customarily sanctioned in written autobiography when several aspects of the self are being represented (for example, those that have existed over time as in younger experiencing selves and an older writing self), but autobiography as distinct from fiction has seldom, if ever, invited a reader to contemplate a singly-sourced "I" that represents two distinct people.

(6) Coullie proposes that Kuzwayo carves out a "new discursive practice" which, drawing on both western and traditional black autobiographical discourse, creates new "positions for the autobiographical subject" (1996: 132). She suggests that the praise poem, in which the individual subject is also "a palimpsest of the innumerable selves of South African black women" (140) is one of the traditional discursive practices which makes possible Kuzwayo's auto/biography.

(7) Annari van der Merwe at Kwela Books told me in a telephone call (9/5/03) more about the origins of Agnes Lottering's book. As she understands it, the book began with the anthropologist Robert Papini (then working at Durban's Kwa Muhle Museum) who was interested in Agnes's extraordinary life. Lottering confirms that she met Papini when she went to the museum looking for information about the customs she had known in Ngome; information which she seems not to have found. He interviewed her and proposed his annotated version of her story to Kwela Books who responded that they would rather publish her story in unmediated form. Agnes then submitted a handwritten document which the publisher's reader praised but suggested that Agnes be asked to tell more fully what, for example, had happened to her parents. Some time later the manuscript was returned, now twice its original length. Winnefred's story had been added and it was to be able to do this that Agnes Lottering consulted her aunt. At this stage Kwela Books asked Peter Strauss to be her editor. His task was to order and structure the material, but

without changing Agnes's content or style. Peter Strauss confirms that the double use of the first-person was Agnes's independent choice; he has also indicated that several passages of narrative had to be cut.

Annari van der Merwe did not see the final result until after the first edition had appeared; then she thought that there was too little about Agnes's childhood in her section. For the second edition, the last chapter was dropped and Agnes was asked to write about her childhood (keeping to the length of what had been cut). So Agnes extended the first chapter of her story and added one or two other brief sections. The new passages arrived at Kwela Books typed in block capitals throughout. This was done by Agnes's daughter because her mother had had a stroke and could not write. Then another version arrived which had been revised by a relative who had "corrected" the story-telling by adding explanations and commentary. Kwela Books have not published this latter version. The photographs were all provided by Agnes.

[\(8\)](#) Winnefred's ordeal is narrativised as a dream during which she lies insensible for three days in a cave.

[\(9\)](#) As she says in the narrative present, "Something inside me likes to believe that I really had that baby, and somewhere he is alive today" (246).

[\(10\)](#) Pioneer life seems to have demanded extremes of masculinity and of femininity. In women this showed itself as a strange blend of hardy independence and sexual submission (Driver, 1988; Daymond, 1994) as in Daphne Rooke's novel, *Mittee* (1987).

[\(11\)](#) Information from Agnes Lottering, July 2003.

[\(12\)](#) The narrative indicates many points at which Benjamin allows the mutual respect between cultures at Ngome to come apart. When he teases a Zulu woman, Hoswayo, by suggesting that she should invite her dead father to his marriage feast, Hoswayo rebukes him, "Oh son of the white chief, your own mother was a Zulu. Why then do you mock the customs of your womb? We have listened to your father and done some of the customs of the white man ... Why then do you so hate our customs? You should not treat this matter lightly for it is true that the spirits don't die ... " (106).

[\(13\)](#) This was translated by Agnes Lottering as meaning something like "you are a chip off the old block" (July 2003).

[\(14\)](#) Nuttall and Michael consider the "trope of transgression" to be a significant marker of the autobiographies of the 1990s and point to Ramphela's (1995) having to "rewrite available versions of adulthood, especially as an independent woman in a conservative patriarchal society that infantilizes women" (2000: 311). Lottering is up against comparable forces, but her wish to celebrate her lost world and her love for Pieter leads her in a different direction, namely that of using her trope of original innocence in order to

contain or even mask any sense of transgression.

(15) Discourses are "ways of constituting knowledge" including subjectivity (Weedon, 1987: 107-135), and we inhabit discourses rather than freely choosing what suits us; nevertheless, it seems appropriate to use "choice" when indicating that Lottering was obscuring certain painful realities when using a literary trope of "original innocence" as one of her key modes of self-representation.

(16) At the time it is only the idea of fleeing to Swaziland and Winnefred's warning to Agnes that she, but not Pieter, will go to jail if their act is discovered (178) that touches directly on the power of apartheid. Otherwise it is Tobile's curiosity about how umlungu men and women make love (219) that strikes the note of cultural interchange that is still part of Agnes's world.

(17) Benjamin seems not to have been able to accept that his wife was an innocent victim of the Chief's designs and when their next child is born, his suspicions overcome him and he turns violent. As Agnes sees it, her parents' relationship never really recovers.

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"Ons samelewing sal nog ingewikkelder gemaak word." Twee vertelmomente van Anna Barry se Boereoorlogdagboek Ons Japie (1960) [\(1\)](#)

- Ena Jansen -

Abstract

A young South African girl Anna Barry kept a detailed diary during the South African War (1899-1902) which differs in many respects from all other published autobiographical accounts by South African Boer women who wrote mainly about their experiences in the concentration camps. Anna Barry's family members were initially staunch supporters of the Boer war effort. Her brother Japie died in a prisoner of war camp on Ceylon, but her father and uncles swore the oath of allegiance to the British during the winter of 1900. The family then crossed the border into Basutoland. This article focuses on Anna Barry's identity changes because of her confrontations with loss, borderlines and shifting images of nationhood. Barry's little-known diary *Ons Japie: dagboek gehou gedurende die Driejarige Oorlog* was published sixty years after the war. I structure my article by differentiating between the time during which the diary was written (1899-1902) which I consider to be, in Pierre Bourdieu's terms, the "first moment of telling", and the time of publication (1960) which can be described as a "second moment of telling". I therefore focus firstly on the content of the diary and then on the presentation of it, i.e. the format of the published diary.

1. Inleiding

In hierdie artikel analiseer ek die identiteitskonstruksie van 'n Suid-Afrikaanse vrou aan die hand van haar dagboek oor die Suid-Afrikaanse Oorlog, oftewel die Tweede Anglo-Boereoorlog. Ek gee 'n omskrywing van die vorm en inhoud van die boeiende egodokument en identifiseer twee "momente van vertelling" daarvan. Ek gaan hierby onder andere uit van Pierre Bourdieu (1986: 69-72) se opvatting dat 'n lewensverhaal 'n "illusie" is wat vir die oomblik van die vertelling geskep en gestruktureer word deur die verhaalverteller se posisie in tyd en ruimte. Die moment van vertelling bepaal dus 'n variabele presentasie van herinneringe. Die eerste moment van vertelling van Anna Barry (1884-1974) se dagboek is wanneer sy dit skryf tussen 1899 en 1902. Die tweede vertelmoment is wanneer sy haar teks in 1960

publiseer. Dié vertelmoment val saam met die halfeeufes van die Unie van Suid-Afrika en die Republiekwording van Suid-Afrika kort daarna en is volgens my 'n poging van die skryfster tot 'n hernieude identiteitskonstruksie deurdat sy die waardigheid en verwickelde lojaliteit van haar familie te midde van komplekse omstandighede uit die verlede op 'n baie spesifieke manier in die hede van die publikasiemoment op die voorgrond stel. Sowel die titel van haar boek, *Ons Japie*, as die voorwerk, bylaes en foto's is daarom ook van belang.

In die diskoers van lyding en verset wat so kenmerkend is van die outeurs van herinneringsgeskrifte uit die Boereoorlog-tyd (sien o.a. Jansen, 1999; Van Niekerk, 2001, Stanley, 2002), is Anna Barry 'n boeiende buitebeentjie. In talle opsigte is haar gepubliseerde dagboek 'n uitsonderlike geskrif wat nooit verveel nie.

1.1 Identiteit as konseptuele instrument

Outobiografiese tekste soos dagboeke en lewensverhale is nie slegs ryk bronne vir historici nie, maar ook vir identiteitsondersoek. Die insig dat identiteit nie 'n vasstaande iets is wat jy "besit" en aan "vassit" vir die res van jou lewe nie, maar dat dit voortdurend verander, dus 'n proses en konstruksie is, het gemeengoed geword. Identiteit, hoe konflikterend en gefragmenteerd ook, gee aan individue en aan groepe mense 'n plek. Dit verteenwoordig die skakel tussen "ek" of "ons" en die gemeenskap waarin 'n individu of groep leef. Identiteit is 'n konseptuele instrument waarmee sosiale, kulturele, politieke en persoonlike veranderinge verstaan kan word. In talle teoretiese studies en gevallestudies oor die soeke na identiteit, die behoud en verlies daarvan op internasionale, nasionale en persoonlike vlak word dramatiese gebeure soos oorlog en migrasie, maar ook veranderinge op persoonliker vlak soos gesinsformasie en werkstatus aangedui as van invloed op 'n individu se gevoel van "wie jy is". Sekse, etnisiteit, sosiale klas, geloof, taal, seksuele oriëntasie, gesondheid en leeftyd is verder enkele van die belangrikste komponente van identiteitskonstruksies. Veranderinge in een of meer van hierdie omstandighede kan lei tot 'n bevraagtekening van eie identiteit.

Trouens, "identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experiences of doubt and uncertainty", soos wat Mercer (1990) dit bondig saamvat. Identiteit word op 'n opvallende wyse gemarkeer deur polarisasie ten tyde van nasionale of etniese konflik, deur die markering van insluiting en uitsluiting, van "insiders" en "outsiders", van "ons" en "hulle". Dat identiteit ten nouste saamhang met verskil, is daarom tereg deur Kathryn Woodward in die titel van haar bekende handboek *Identity and Difference* (1997) op die voorgrond gestel.

In Anna Barry se dagboek kan haar prosesse van identiteitskonstruksie op die voet gevolg word teen eers die agtergrond van die Anglo-Boereoorlog en dan weer in 1960. Sy het pas vyftien jaar oud geword toe die oorlog uitbreek het. Dat sy op daardie moment 'n goed-ontwikkelde ek-bewussyn besit het, bekend

was met die boekstawingsmag van woorde asook 'n helder historiese aanvoeling gehad het, (2) blyk uit die sin waarmee sy op 26 September 1899 haar dagboek begin: "Ek het besluit om 'n dagboek te hou want daar is sterk gerugte van oorlog teen Engeland en as ons in 'n oorlog gedompel word, sal daar dinge gebeur wat van groot historiese belang sal wees" (1).

Die oorlog het op 11 Oktober 1899 begin en sou voortduur tot 31 Mei 1902. Meer as drie jaar lank hou Barry haar dagboek by en sy skryf ten slotte op 3 Januarie 1903:

Ons verneem dat die Britse regering Engelse setlaars op die plase wat oom Jan Keyter verkoop het gaan vestig. Die plase is oor die ganse Ficksburgdistrik versprei en dit sal beteken dat daar nou nog 'n ander element in ons gemeenskap ingevoer word en ons samelewing dus nog ingewikkelder gemaak word. Nou sal daar wees "Wilde Boere", "mak Engelse", "vlugtelinge", "Khaki-boere", "hensoppers", "krygsgevangenes" en "Engelse Khaki's". Ons sal almal bure wees en met mekaar in aanraking kom. [...] [O]ns vertrou dat ons nasie, hoewel oorwonne, 'n toekoms het. Mag president Brand se leuse: "Alles sal regkom", ook ons leuse bly (114).

Anna Barry se aanvanklik eenduidige ervaring van "ons" teen "Engeland" verander tydens die oorlog tot haar bewussyn van die kompleksiteit en die gefragmenteerdheid van wat sy deurentyd as "ons nasie" bly beskryf. Die insig dat die "ons" en die "nasie" waartoe sy duidelik wil behoort, nie 'n vasstaande iets is nie maar onderworpe is aan sosiale, kulturele, ekonomiese, politieke en persoonlike veranderinge word met verloop van tyd steeds duideliker in die dagboek.

Ander vroue wat oorlogsdagboeke en -memoires gepubliseer het of deel gehad het aan die versamelings van honderde vroue se getuienisverklarings, was oortuig van hulle plek in die lydingsgeskiedenis van die Afrikaner-"volk" en van hulle eie martelaars- of heldinnerol daarin, (3) maar uit Anna Barry se dagboek blyk dat die oorlog vir haar 'n uiters verwarrende ervaring was. Aan die einde van haar dagboek benadruk sy daarom juis die gefragmenteerdheid van die "nasie" of "volk" in 'n poging om ruimte vir ook haar en haar familie in 'n komplekse geheel te beding. Dat Anna Barry nie soos byvoorbeeld die eweneens jong maar wel agt jaar ouer Johanna van Warmelo (1876-1964) (4) kort na afloop van die oorlog die openbaarheid opgesoek het deur haar dagboek te probeer publiseer nie, is dan ook begryplik. Sy het immers nooit 'n voet in een van die berugte konsentrasiekampe gesit wat so dramaties bygedra het tot die status van lyding wat aan Boerevroue toegeken is en wat gekonsolideer is in die oprigting van die Vrouemonument nie. (5)

Anna Barry was ten tyde van die oorlog jonger as alle ander vroue wat ook dagboeke gehou het en wat later gepubliseer is. Terwyl die meeste ander Boereoorlogtekste geskryf is deur vroue wie se subjekposisie deur hulle moederskap en getroude status bepaal word, is Anna nog ongetroud ten tyde

van die oorlog. Haar gesinsposisie is wel ook in haar geval van bepaalde belang en haar gevoel van identiteit wissel voortdurend na gelang van die besluite en lotgevalle van haar broer en vader. Sy is sowel die suster van 'n dapper jong Boereverkenner wat nooit wou oorgee nie maar dan in krygsgevangeneskap op Ceylon sterf, as die dogter van 'n vader wat weliswaar eers veldkornet is, maar dan die eed van neutraliteit aan Brittanje aflê en gaan skuil in Basoetoland. (6) Alhoewel Anna Barry die grootste fokus op haar broer plaas deur sy naam as titel aan haar dagboek te gee, is dit die rol van haar vader wat tot gevolg het dat haar gepubliseerde dagboek in talle opsigte afwyk van die oorheersende vrouevertoog tydens die Anglo-Boereoorlog.

Anna se vader Thomas Barry was 'n telg uit die beroemde, oorspronklik Ierse, Barry-familie van Swellendam. Hy het op sewentienjarige leeftyd van Swellendam eers na die Harrismith-distrik gegaan om 'n plaas van 'n familielid te bestuur. Anna skryf: "My moeder, Johanna de Villiers, wie se ouers op Ficksburg gewoon het, was destyds op 'n naburige plaas by haar suster op skool, en hier het sy my vader ontmoet. Toe sy sewentien en hy drie-en-twintig jaar oud was, is hulle getroud" (1).

Haar broer Jacob (Japie) is in 1883 gebore en sy in 1884. Haar pa het die plaas Abrikooskop in 1885 gekoop en haar susters Tiny en Hilda is in 1885 en 1888 in Ficksburg gebore. Terwyl die meeste egodokumente van Boerevroue oor hulle kampvering handel, bepaal die vertroude familieplaas vir die grootste gedeelte van die oorlog Anna Barry se waarnemingsposisie. Abrikooskop is geleë hoog teen die hang van een van die mooi sandsteenformasies in die Oos-Vrystaatse distrik Ficksburg met 'n uitsig op gebiede waar sommige veldslae plaasgevind het. Haar dagboek is dus nie slegs 'n intieme toevoeging tot die meervoudige weergawes van die oorloggebeure nie, maar bowendien 'n ryk historiese bron omdat dit so 'n duidelike beeld gee van die omstandighede in die Oos-Vrystaat tydens die oorlog.

1.2 Die belang van demografiese gegewens: die grens tussen Basoetoland en die Vrystaat

Die feit dat die Barry's se plaas Abrikooskop ongeveer vyftien kilometer buite die dorp Ficksburg geleë is en dat die grens met Basoetoland, die Caledonrivier, (7) op die suidelike grens van die dorp en distrik loop, is van ingrypende belang vir die verloop van die Barry-gesin se lewens. Dit het allerlei moontlikhede geskep wat sou bydra tot die keuses wat Anna se vader en ander familielede gemaak het.

Anna benadruk self die nabyheid van die grens: "Ek en my suster Tiny was van die begin van 1899 op Kommandonek op skool. Dit is op die Basoetolandse grens, aan die Caledonrivier geleë" (1). Wanneer haar vader op 29 September 1899 opgekommandeer word en die plaas verlaat, is dit nog nie met die direkte doel om teen die Engelse te gaan veg nie: "hy moet vir beskerming teen Basoeto invalle na die grenslaer aan die walle van die Caledonrivier gaan" (2). Eloff (1985: 1) beskryf die situasie so: "Vir Vrystaatse burgers langs die grens met Basoetoland was die tydperk wat die oorlog tussen Brittanje en die

Boererepublieke voorafgegaan het, vol vertwyfeling en onrustige afwagting." Die Basoetos, waarvan sommige – soos die Barry's se "troue ou Willem" – wel gewaardeerde plaaswerkers op Vrystaatse plase was, is oor die algemeen as die vyand beskou en die grens is voortdurend met geskille en gevaar geassosieer. (8) So skryf Anna Barry op 20 Mei 1900:

Ons kaffers was vanoggend vroeg hier om te vertel dat ons beeste in die nag gesteel is. Moeder het hulle dadelik op die spoor gesit en vanmiddag het ou Willem teruggekom en gesê dat die spoor oor die Caledonrivier gaan; dus is dit die Basoeto's wat die diewe is" (14).

Basoetoland het buite die oorlogsgebied van die Anglo-Boereoorlog geval. Die klein land was lonkend digby vir die talle Oos-Vrystaatse boere wat die Vrystaatse Republiek se deelname aan die Anglo-Boereoorlog nie (meer) ondersteun het nie: aan die anderkant van 'n rivier waarin hulle in vreedsame tye dikwels geswem en langs piekniek gehou het. Eloff (1985: 2) skryf:

Terwyl daar by baie Vrystaters 'n soort oorlog-psigose posgevat het omdat hulle bevrees was dat die Basoeto as Britse onderdane hulle aan die kant van hul beskermheer sou skaar en die Vrystaat onverhoeds kon binneval, het ander Vrystaters juis in Basoetoland veilige asiel gaan soek.

In Julie 1900 het talle Republikeinse burgers daagliks hulle wapens by die verskillende Britse grensposte ingelewer en dan oor die grens na Basoetoland getrek. Die stroom vlugteling na Basoetoland het al hoe meer toegeneem en teen Augustus 1900 het soveel wapenneerlêers (die sogenaamde "hendsoppers") probeer om hulle vee per trein na Basoetoland te vervoer, dat daar aansienlike spoorwegprobleme ontstaan het. Nadat die Britse leër in September 1900 verplig was om weens militêre druk van die Republikeinse magte die grensdistrikte Ficksburg en Ladybrand tydelik te ontruim, is die wapenneerlêers wat nog daar gewoon het onbeskermd gelaat en het hulle in nog groter getalle na Basoetoland gevlug. Ook burgers wat op parool vrygelaat was en die eed van getrouheid of neutraliteit afgelê het, is in die loop van 1901 deur Britse offisiere na Basoetoland gestuur om hulle daar skuil te hou. Hierdie mense – meestal vrouens, kinders en enkele bejaarde mans – kon nie toegelaat word om op plase aan te bly nie uit vrees dat hul lewens in gevaar gestel kon word tydens Britse dryfjagte en opruimingsoperasies in distrikte langs die Basoetolandse grens. Blankes in die Vrystaat is ook deur ander oorwegings gelei om hulle as vlugteling na die oostelike buurstaat te begeef. Om te voorkom dat hulle gevang en na Britse konsentrasie- of krygsgevangenekampe gestuur word, het baie Vrystaters by die Basoetolandse regering om asiel aangeklop. Ander het weer om materiële redes en uit eiebelang na Basoetoland gevlug. (9)

In Julie 1901 was daar 2 043 blanke Vrystaatse vlugteling in Basoetoland: 483 volwasse mans, 403 vrouens en 1 157 kinders. Onder hierdie vlugteling was daar na bewering twee voormalige Republikeinse kommandante, twee

veldkornette en een generaal (Eloff 1985: 3). Anna Barry se pa was een van hierdie veldkornette. Vergeleke met die "bittereinders" en lojale Vrystaters wat aansienlike materiële skade gely het, kon die uitgewekenes hulle boerdery- en ander bedrywighede in die na-oorlogse periode met relatief min probleme voortsit. Op grond van die "verraad" wat vlugteling teenoor die vaderland gepleeg het en die onetiese gedrag waaraan party hulle skuldig gemaak het, was bittereinders in die voormalige Boererepubliek met 'n gevoel van wrewel, selfs haat en bitterheid jeens hierdie uitgewekenes vervul (Eloff 1985: 3). Hierdie wrewel het ook die gesin Barry getref. Dit was die oorsaak van Anna se groot twyfel en onsekerheid, vir haar besef dat identiteit, in die reeds genoemde Mercer se terminologie, inderdaad 'n "issue" is. Haar gevoel van "wie is ek" is tussen die jare 1899 en 1902 dus volledig bepaal deur die dramatiese gebeure van oorlog en die tydelike migrasie na Basoetoland. Hierby was haar posisie as jong meisie, dus sekse, die belangrikste komponent in haar identiteitskonstruksie en daarom bestee ek baie aandag aan die invloed van die lotgevalle van manlike gesinslede op Anna se identiteitsbesef. [\(10\)](#)

2. Eerste vertelmoment: Anna Barry skryf haar dagboek

Die eerste vertelmoment van Barry se dagboek is die inskripsies wat sy, meestal daaglik, gemaak het tussen 26 September 1899 en 13 Januarie 1903. Volgens die inleiding van haar dagboek het sy aanvanklik ink gehad en 'n swart boek met 'n harde band, maar met verloop van tyd het haar ink en papier opgebraak:

Toe moes ek ink maak van roet en asyn en flentertjies papier, o.a. my vader se runderpesvorms [...]. Dikwels moes ek kruis en dwars op dieselfde vel skryf om papier te bespaar. Met die rondswerwery en die jarelange bewaring van die dagboek het dan ook sommige velletjies papier verlore gegaan en tot my leed is daar nou sekere gapinge in die boek (ongenommerde bladsy).

2.1 Anna se identiteitsbesef tydens die oorlog

Anna Barry se familiebesef en haar posisie as jong vrou het 'n groot invloed gehad op die manier waarop sy die oorlog beleef het. Die meeste slagoffers van die Anglo-Boereoorlog was Afrikaner-vroue en kinders, [\(11\)](#) maar soos die meeste oorloë is ook die Boereoorlog as veral 'n mannesaak beskou. Anna skryf op 29 Oktober 1899: "Gisteraand het ons vier kinders na ete op die gras onder die groot boom gelê en gesels. En ons het gewonder wat nog vir ons voorlê. Ons het almal besluit om alles in ons vermoë vir ons land en volk te doen" (4).

Van hulle vier kinders is dit egter slegs die seun Japie wat kan aanmeld en

aktief deelneem aan die oorlog. Hy is nog minderjarig en toevallig weens siekte op die plaas terug van Stellenbosch waar hy skoolgaan. "Ons Japie is in 'n korporaalskap van sewentien man onder Roelof van der Merwe" (4), skryf Anna later trots.

Haar vader word verkies tot veldkornet van die Ficksburgse kommando en 'n broer van hulle moeder, oom Jan de Villiers, tot veldkornet van die Senekalse kommando's. Vader Barry se status as veldkornet is 'n groot aanwinst vir sy dogters se posisie. So skryf Anna op 5 Oktober 1899: "Vader het 'n mooi groot tent en almal was só vriendelik met die veldkornet se dogters!" (3). Hulle ma se oudste broer, oom Japie de Villiers, is kommandant van die Harrismithse kommando by Ladysmith waar ook sy twee seuns Paul en Piet veg (3). Paul de Villiers, 'n ander broer van hulle moeder, is kommandant van die Ficksburgse kommando. Talle manlike lede van die familie is dus aktief en selfs in leiersposisies betrokke by die oorlog. Wanneer oom Japie de Villiers tydens 'n veldslag by Platrand (5) sterf, skryf Anna: "Ons kom al hoe meer onder die indruk van wat oorlog nou eintlik vir die familie beteken" (6).

2.2 Die posisie van vroue

Anna beklemtoon dikwels die hulpeloosheid van vroue. Anna se moeder kry hierin die sentrale hulpelose rol. So vra hulle vader aan "elkeen van ons [...] om ons moeder op te pas en haar te gehoorsaam. Ou aia Sophie het op haar knieë gegaan, Vader se hand gesoen en gesê: "Ek sal die oumiesies vir Oubaas oppas"" (7). Anna is ook baie beskermend en skryf op 21 Februarie 1900 oor haar moeder:

Ek sal my belofte aan Vader om haar soveel moontlik op te pas, probeer hou. 'n Vrou se lot in oorlogtyd is eensaamheid, verlange en wag, wag op nuus van hulle dierbares. As ons net self meer kan doen. Moeder sê ons kan veel vir ons land en volk doen met gebede, maar ek word opstandig en voel ek wil self opofferings maak en swaar kry (8).

Die onaktiewe waarnemersposisie van die vroue word gekenmerk deur frustrasie en onmag. As die stryd toeneem, is die spanning van "wag, wag, wag" en die dae van "onrus en angs" wanneer die "gebulder van kanonne" aanhou, dikwels onuitstaanbaar vir Anna (21).

Sy en haar susters doen tipiese vrouedinge. Hulle borduur die Vrystaatse wapen op hoedbande vir die manlike lede van die familie (3) en met haar moeder woon Anna Rooikruisklasse op Kommando-nek by en leer hoe om wonde skoon te maak en te verbind (4), 'n vaardigheid wat hulle later gebruik wanneer Japie swaar gewond tuiskom (12). Die oorlogsgebeure is dikwels digby Abrikooskop en die vroue kan van alles waarneem. Op 5 Januarie 1900 skryf Anna: "Ons hoor vandag duidelik kanonskote in die Maluti's van Natal se kant" (5) en op 12 Junie 1900: "Van die bergtop [agter die plaashuis – EJ] kan ons met 'n verkyker massas troepe op Hammonia sien rondmaal" (16). Op 18 Junie 1900 meld sy dat die Ficksburgse kommando met talle familieledes

digby die plaas gestasioneer is. "Dit is dus vir ons baie gelukkige dae" (17). Die Barry-vroue bied "huislike gerief" en is druk besig "met die voorbereiding van koek, brood en ander lekkernye vir die besoekers" (p. 18). Op 28 Junie skryf Anna:

Die aangename dae vlieg verby. Ons onthaal, kook, bak en maak klere heel. Japie en sy maats kom gereeld saans met verlof huis toe en dan maak ons musiek en sing saam. Maar die skaduwee van Vader is altyd in die agtergrond; ons weet nog nie waar hy is nie en verlang werklik na nuus (18).

Op 12 Julie klim hulle weer teen die berg uit en sy herken selfs vir Japie op sy wit perd en beskryf die volgende toneel: "Toe hulle by Moreson se rand uitry, spring hulle van hulle perde af [...]. Toe hoor ons die skote – een sarsie na die ander, en ons sien net Engelse voetvolk terughardloop langs Moreson se rand af" (19). Op 23 Julie 1900 skryf Anna:

Is dit verkeerd om moed te verloor? [...] Ek is nog maar 'n kind en twyfel soms aan wat reg is, maar as ek dink aan al die ander burgers wat reeds hulle lewe vir ons vryheid gelaat het, voel ek dat as ons wankelmoedig word en nie in die stryd volhard nie, ons hulle in die steek laat. Maar hoe kan ek praat? Ek is 'n vrou, veilig in ons huis en ek waag self nie my lewe nie (22).

Kort hierna word hulle huis minder veilig. Op 27 Julie word al hulle tee, koffie en suiker op "die mees onbeleefde wyse" deur Engelse soldate opgekommandeer, op 28 Julie word hulle "spider" (die ou ruim rytuig), alle skape, perde, koeie, kalwers en hoendereiers weggeneem. "Al wat vanaand op die plaas lewendig is, is ons vier vrouens, die hoenders, twee katte en ons hond Sultan" (23), skryf Anna.

Die situasie op Abrikooskop word veel meer kompleks wanneer Anna Barry gebrandmerk word as die dogter en niggie van "hendsoppers". Dan het die aksies wat sy saam met haar moeder en susters onderneem om die Boeresak met hulle bak- en naaldwerk te ondersteun, weinig effek.

2.3 Vader en die ooms

Die "skaduwee van Vader" (18) is die bepalende faktor vir Anna Barry se identiteitsbesef, sowel tydens maar ook nog lank ná die oorlog. As veldkornet van die Ficksburgse kommando wat kort ná die begin van die oorlog reeds "300 manskappe verloor (het), meestal gevangenes" (8), veg hy by Koedoesrand, naby Bloemfontein en by Sannaspos. Nadat sy ryperd Peits onder hom doodgeskiet word en hy reeds twee weke lank dieselfde klere dra, skryf hy 'n moedelse brief huis toe: "President Steyn was gister hier. Dit lyk vreeslik sleg met ons saak" (8).

Op 2 April 1900 (9) daag hy onverwags op die plaas op: "Hy lyk sleg, moeg en mismoedig". Meer as 'n bladsy lank volg een van die uitvoerigste inskripsies in

Anna se dagboek waarin die burgers se ontevredenheid oor verwarrende bevele om Bloemfontein gewonne te gee en na die Transvaal uit te wyk, beskryf word. Volgens haar vader is veral die Ficksburgers "besonder bevrees dat die Basoeto's op hulle plase 'n aanval sou maak, en hulle het eenparig geweier om die bevel te gehoorsaam". Anna skryf dat die gevolg hiervan was dat haar vader en oom, bevelvoerders van die Ficksburgse en Senekalse kommando's, "toe aan generaal De Wet van die gebeure gaan rapporteer, en daarop het hy aan hulle verlof gegee om vir 'n week huis toe te gaan. Vader is moedeloos en neerslagtig en hy voel dat die Vrystaters se moed gebreek is omdat hulle hoofstad sonder weerstand prysgegee is, en omdat nou van hulle verwag word om alles wat vir hulle dierbaar is, hulle families, plase en wonings aan die genade van die vyand oor te laat" (11). Anna verneem wel dat President Steyn in 'n toespraak "spesiale melding gemaak het van die dapperheid van die Ficksburgse kommando onder bevel van my vader te Sannaspos" (11). Op 18 Mei kom Vader met 'n dag verlof weer op die plaas aan:

Hy is mismoedig en sê dat die offisiere nie die minste idee van die planne van die krygsowerhede het nie. Die burgers is opstandig en ontevrede. 'n Verkeerde gees is aan die toeneem, dog Vader, as veldkornet, moet die bevele uitvoer. Baie burgers sê openlik dat hulle nie hulle plase gaan agterlaat sonder 'n poging om hulle families en besittings te verdedig nie (13).

Op 24 Mei kom hy weer vir 'n nag huis toe van die Lindley-distrik want "hy was te ongerus oor ons". Anna skryf: "Hy vertel dat lord Roberts 'n proklamasie uitgereik het waarin hy belowe dat elke burger wat vrywillig oorgee die beskerming van die Britse troepe sal geniet en sy besittings sal behou" (14).

'n Week later word hy gewond na die plaas terugbring saam met 'n ander gewonde burger. Hierdie "Mnr. Vermaak" (vermoedelik een van die skuilname wat Barry gebruik in haar dagboek) "probeer om Vader oor te haal om saam met hom op Ficksburg te gaan wapens neerlê en dan aldaar mediese behandeling te ontvang. [...] Vader weier egter om te gaan oorgee" (15). [\(12\)](#)

"Mnr. Vermaak" gaan wel na Ficksburg. Op 7 Junie maak hulle vader die gesin wakker en "wys [deur die eetkamervenster – EJ] hoe dit teen die bergrand, agter ons huis van Khaki's wemel". Nog voor hy kan vlug is die Engelse in die huis en word hy beveel om saam te gaan, met die versekering "hulle sal nie 'n gewonde man molesteer nie" (16).

Hierna begin 'n periode van groot onsekerheid vir die gesin. Op 9 Junie 1900 wag hulle die hele dag op sy terugkeer, op 12 Junie "leef [hulle] in angs en eensaamheid en daar is geen tyding van Vader of Japie nie" (16). Op 11 Julie 1900 is daar besoek van kommandolede, selfs van koloniale rebelle, en Anna skryf:

"Ons was maande laas so gelukkig soos nou en soms voel ek skuldig, want ons weet nog steeds nie waar Vader is nie en die

stryd om vryheid is nog in volle swang. Maar ek troos my daaraan dat ons ons burgers opbeur en vir hulle tot diens is" (19).

Meer as 'n maand na hulle gewonde vader deur die Engelse "as gevangene weggeneem is" (20) en hulle steeds niks van hom hoor nie, skryf Anna op 14 Julie 1900: "Daar is 'n gerug dat generaal Brabant van Hammonia 'n proklamasie uitgevaardig het dat, indien die burgers nie oorgee nie, hy die Basoeto's op die vrouens en kinders sal loslaat". Die volgende dag besoek president Steyn die Ficksburgse Kommando. Hy bemoedig die burgers en waarsku hulle teen die proklamasie. Allerlei beangstigende berigte bereik die vroue op "Abrikooskop". Op 16 Julie 1900 skryf Anna:

Dit word vertel dat oom Jan Keyter, wat met 'n suster van Moeder getroud is, oorgegee het. Hy is volksraadslid van Ficksburg en sy voorbeeld sal 'n groot invloed op die distrik hê. Ook oom Leonard Bornmann, wat met die oudste suster van Moeder getroud is, het oorgegee. Hy is 'n baie vooraanstaande persoon (21).

Sy het dan nog geen idee dat ook haar vader die eed van neutraliteit afgelê het nie, waarskynlik terselfdertyd as die ander ooms. (13) Dan, op 2 Augustus 1900, is daar nuus. Sy skryf: "Tot ons grootste verbasing kom Vader gisteraand hier aan. Hy het die tien myl van Ficksburg met 'n groot pak op sy rug geloop. Vanaf die 7de Junie het ons geen tyding van hom gehad nie en ons was so bly om hom te sien". 'n Uitgebreide vertelling oor sy lotgevalle volg. Hy sou in Ficksburg geweier het om aan die Britse offisiere inligting "ten opsigte van my eie mense" te gee, maar hy is toe wel "onder invloed van die lieue ou dokter [Taylor] op parool losgelaat [...], nadat hy die Eed van Neutraliteit afgelê het. Oom Jan Keyter, Moeder se swaer [oor wie Anna vroeër reeds met verbystering geskryf het dat hy volgens berigte oorgegee het - EJ], het hom toe genooi om by hom en tant Nellie te kom bly en daar was hy die hele tyd tuis. Ons waardeer hulle goedheid" (26 en 27), skryf Anna gelate.

Vanaf Augustus 1900 volg allerlei inskripsies oor onderhandelinge wat haar vader reeds in Julie op tou begin sit het om weiding vir sy vee in Basoetoland te huur. 'n Skermutseling tussen Boere-kommando's en die Engelse word op Ficksburg verwag en die Britse troepe begin dan om die dorp te ontruim:

Winkeliers, handelaars en 'n menigte van die inwoners het oor die Caledonrivier na Thlotse gevlug. Ook [Vader] het opdrag gekry om na Thlotse te gaan [...]. Dit is vir hom bitter om saam met die "mak Engelse" te vlug en hy begin reeds twyfel of hy ooit die Eed van Neutraliteit moes geneem het. Hy is dus in 'n ongelukkige posisie en terselfdertyd baie ongerus om ons hier op die plaas sonder beskerming te laat. Ons toestand is waarlik onbenydenswaardig en Moeder se droefheid is so hartverskeurend (35).

Haar broer, oom Paul de Villiers, het oorgegee en woon gewoon weer in Ficksburg en kry al sy vee terug. Op 12 Augustus skryf Anna dat "daar van die

kant van die families van sy burgers 'n bitter gevoel teen hom [is] omdat hulle hom aanspreeklik hou vir die oorgawe van sy kommando en omdat hy nou nie sy lot met hulle inwerp nie" (30).

2.4 Japie

In teenstelling tot haar vader en ooms, bly Japie steeds 'n begeesterde vegter. Nadat hy hom as minderjarige gaan aanmeld het, was hy tot sy eie misnoeë eind- 1899 eers weer maande terug op die plaas om te oes, maar ná die val van Bloemfontein in Maart 1900 word Japie weer opgeroep: "Ons susters het vir hom sy goed help inpak. Ons sal hom mis. [...] Nou is altwee ons dierbares op kommando, ons vrouens is alleen op die plaas en ons voel so verlate" (9). Op 4 April 1900 rapporteer Anna dat 'n besoeker aan die plaas vertel dat Japie steeds dapper veg. Op 15 April word die onverskrokke Japie vir 'n tweede keer gewond tydens 'n geveg by Wepener en vanaf 25 April word hy twee weke lank tuis verpleeg. Maande later kom Japie een aand weer onverwags op die plaas aan: "13 Junie. Gisteraand toe ek sit en klavier oefen, kom Tiny in my oor fluister: "Japie is hier!"" (17). Hy is ondertussen lid van die Ficksburgse verkennerskorps en hoop om aan te sluit by Danie Theron se beroemde korps. Meer as 'n maand na hulle gewonde vader deur die Engelse "as gevangene weggeneem is" (20) en hulle steeds niks van hom hoor nie, skryf Anna op 14 Julie: "Daar is 'n gerug dat generaal Brabant van Hammonia 'n proklamasie uitgevaardig het dat, indien die burgers nie oorgee nie, hy die Basoeto's op die vrouens en kinders sal loslaat". In teenstelling tot sy vader wat duidelik ore het na die proklamasie, is Japie begeester deur President Steyn se waarskuwing daarteen en op 15 Julie rapporteer sy suster Anna in haar dagboek sy woorde: "Al is daar ook nog vier burgers in die veld oor, wil ek een van hulle wees" (20).

As minderjarige is Japie egter deur sy ouers aan sy oom Paul de Villiers, die kommandant van die Ficksburg-kommando se voogskap toevertrou. Tydens die slag van Moolmanshoek word Japie saam met ander burgers as gevolg van oom Paul se besluit om oor te gee krygsgevangene geneem en via Winburg en Groenpunt per skip na Ceylon weggevoer. (14) Op 23 Januarie 1901 bereik die berig Abrikooskop dat hy reeds op 23 Desember 1900 daar aan ingewandekoors gesterf het. Japie is die enigste helder baken in Anna se onheroïese familiegeskiedenis. Terwyl alle ander manlike lede van die familie oorgee, bly Japie se status deur sy dood op Ceylon onaantasbaar.

2.5 Die posisie van vroue (vervolg)

Die optrede van Anna se vader en ooms het reeds vroeg in die oorlog groot gevolge vir die Barry-vroue se posisie op Abrikooskop gehad. Op 15 Oktober 1900 skryf Anna verbitterd: "Om te dink dat ons nie meer een familielid onder die vegtende burgers het nie" (37). Sy weet ondertussen dat hulle vader nou in 'n Basoetohut woon by Teya-Teyaneng. Op 20 November kom Hermaans Theron op besoek en "volgens hom noem die burgers Vader 'n "hensopper" en ons Engelsgesind. Dit is 'n skok vir ons en dit maak ons baie seer" (39). Op 25 November skryf sy: "Ons voel nou selfs verlate en verstote deur ons eie

mense" (39). Op 9 Desember word haar moeder op Ficksburg deur Kommandant Steyn "verskriklik beledig. Hy het ons "hensoppers" genoem en gesê dat al ons goed gekonfiskeer sal word. Moeder het baie verdrietig huis toe gekom" (40). Terwyl sy weg was

het hier 'n burger by name Jordaan, aangekom en hy was vreeslik brutaal teenoor ons dogters wat hy as "julle Engelse" uitgeskel het. Ons was byna in trane, maar Moeder het ons getroos deur te sê dat hy sommer 'n "skorriemorrie" moet wees, want geen ordentlike jong Afrikaner sal hom ooit so teenoor dames gedra nie. Boonop is hy ook nog 'n lafaard, want hy weet ons kan ons nie teenoor hom verdedig nie. Tog voel ons baie hartseer en verlate in hierdie dae (41).

Telkens probeer Anna aan haarself die gedrag van haar vader (39) en haar ooms (42) te verduidelik, maar haar verbolgenheid oor die feit dat geen familielid meer veg nie, is duidelik.

Op 22 Julie 1901 skryf Anna oor die ingewikkelde besluite oor die Eedaflegging deur 'n oom wat sy eed later weer verbreek:

Die oorlogstoestande word al hoe meer ingewikkeld: Ons het "hensoppers" en "eedbrekers" verag toe ons hulle eers teengekom het, en nou is daar agbare lede van ons eie familie, manne van beginsel, wat tot die laaste kategorie behoort. Ek voel verward en weet nie hoe om tussen reg en verkeerd te onderskei nie (62). [\(15\)](#)

'n Groep burgers onder korporaal Matthyse vestig hulle op die werf en hy vertel, weer tot Anna se groot verontwaardiging, dat hulle "teen ons gewaarsku is, dat ons Engelsgesind is en dat ons rapporte na Basoetoland deurstuur, maar nou dat hy ons leer ken het, is hy oortuig dat dit kwaadwillige en valse beskuldigings is. Hoe is dit moontlik dat hulle ons kan verdink?" (51). Die woorde "eensaam", "bedruk", "verdriet" en "verwoes" oorheers haar dagboek in 1901 (vanaf p. 44), veral nadat hulle op 13 Januarie 1901 hoor dat Japie "al weke in sy graf" is. Die situasie op die plaas raak onhoudbaar en gevaarlik, maar hulle wil Abrikooskop nie verlaat nie uit vrees dat die plaashuis afgebrand sal word. Anna weet ondertussen dat ander Boerevroue se lot veel erger as hulle s'n is want sy hoor van die "aaklige" konsentrasiekampe en ook van die vrouelaer wat saam met die hooflaer van mans rondttrek (53).

Anna praat konsekwent van "ons" as sy na die burgers en Boerekommando's verwys. Wanneer Boeremanskappe nog soms op hulle werf oorbly, is Anna altyd gelukkig en ook duidelik trots (57). Sy is daarom ook uiters verontwaardig wanneer dit blyk dat een van die boere hulle as "verraaiers" gaan aangee het: "Die hele affêre is 'n vreeslike skok vir ons, want mandelank het ons alles in ons vermoë gedoen vir die burgers hier op ons werf" (64). As gevolg van allerlei beskuldigings teen hulle kry hulle opdrag om ôf na die

vrouelaer in Moolmanshoek te gaan òf "oor die veglinie" gesit te word (65).

Anna se dagboekinskrywing van drie bladsye op 29 September 1901 is in baie opsigte gelyk aan die verhale wat algemeen bekend is van getuienisverklarings deur ander boerevroue. Engelse soldate brand die stalle en skure af en Anna, haar susters en moeder word "gevang" en op 'n wa gelaai met sommige van hulle besittings en na Ficksburg geneem. Die hele toon van die dagboek verander egter hierna. (16)

Die onafwendbaarheid om "oor die lyn" te gaan, om buite spel geplaas te word in die geselskap van lotgenote, is 'n skok maar dit los tydelik Anna se teleurstelling, verskeurdheid en twyfel op. In alle opsigte is die kort verblyf op Ficksburg 'n oorgangsfase en reeds 'n verademing. Anna is selfs "jammer" om daarvan weg te gaan, "want ons het uitnodigings gehad om na 'n konsert te gaan en om te gaan tennis speel. Ons jong vriendinne vertel ons van al die vrolikheid wat hulle geniet, en ek kan nie help om na al die maande van afsondering op Abrikooskop ook na vermaak te verlang nie" (74).

Die dagboekgedeelte tussen 16 Oktober 1901 en 18 Junie 1902 wanneer Anna en haar susters en moeder in Basoetoland woon by hulle vader, wyk in alle opsigte af van die vertoog van Boerevrouetekste vir die ooreenstemmende tyd toe die omstandighede in konsentrasiekampe op 'n dieptepunt was. Ná maande van vrees en onveiligheid op Abrikooskop is dit 'n enorme oplugting om in Basoetoland te wees. "Dit was heerlik, veral die gevoel van veiligheid was wonderlik", skryf sy op 22 Oktober 1901 (75). Dit is opmerklik dat Anna se vyandbeeld van die Basoeto's bowendien volledig verander. Oor kaptein Januari skryf sy: "Hy is so 'n goeie mens en ons het die hoogste agting vir hom. Hy het vyf vrouens en die jongste een is pragtig" (p. 77; sien ook p. 83). Sy verwys ook na "'n deftige ou Indiër, Sahib Noor Mohammed" wat 'n winkelier is (80). Daar is voortdurend aangename geselskap van ander "vlugtelinge"; "dit is verbasend om te sien hoeveel Vrystaters daar oor die ganse Basoetoland verspreid woon" (77). Tog tref Anna 'n groot onderskeid tussen haarself en byvoorbeeld die meisies Dora en Gertie de la Harpe uit Bloemfontein wanneer sy oor hulle sê: "Hulle het nie een lid van hulle groot familie in die oorlog verloor nie, daar is nie een in 'n krygsgevangenekamp of in 'n vrouekamp nie en maande gelede het hulle reeds oor die Caledon gevlug. Ons verskil hemelsbreed in ons opvattinge t.o.v. die oorlog en ons onafhanklikheid" (84). Hierdie verskille staan sosiale verkeer egter nie in die weg nie en Anna skryf dikwels oor pieknieks en tenniswedstryde, visvang en swem in die pragtige natuur, haar verlange om uiteindelik weer skool toe te kan gaan en selfs Frans te leer op die Khana-sendingstasie.

Soms maak sy haar sake oor die toekoms ná die oorlog, telkens in verband met die verraad van familieledes. So skryf sy op 24 Maart 1902:

Vader het van Ficksburg teruggekom met die nuus dat Oom Jan Keyter op Bloemfontein sy 36 plase aan die Britse regering vir £26,700 verkoop het. Nou wil hy ook sy erwe op Ficksburg verkoop en dan na die Kaapkolonie verhuis. [...] 'n Mens vra

jou af: wat gaan ons toekoms na die oorlog in die Vrystaat wees? (87-88).

Tussen piekniekverhale deur verneem hulle die nuus dat vrede op 31 Mei 1902 gesluit is. "Ons was almal baie opgewonde oor die nuus, het 'n kring gevorm en "Home Sweet Home" gesing, maar na die eerste uitbarsting van vreugde het ons almal stil geword" (93). Almal ervaar dit as vernederend om onderdane van die Britse Ryk te wees. In die helder maanlignag van 20 Junie 1902 is die gesin Barry, sonder die enigste seun Japie, terug op die plaas. Van die huis is slegs 'n "geraamte" oor, geskeurde boeke en stukkende glas lê oor die werf verstrooi tussen ysterkatels in verwronge patrone. Al die stalle en skure is afgebrand. Die walglike reuk van 'n dooie perd kom uit die kombuis. Met hulp van twee gehuurde Basoeto's word opgeruim, die plaasgereedskap wat begrawe was, word weer opgegrawe. Hulle vee wei weer ná byna twee jaar in Basoetoland vet en gesond op die plaas. Haar vader verleen dikwels hulp aan bure wat minder gelukkig is en Anna vertel talle verhale van tuiskoms, skade en 'n nuwe begin.

Sy besin ook dikwels oor die "mengelmoes waaruit ons samelewing gaan bestaan" (101). In Basoetoland reeds het haar ouers bespiegel oor "hoe moeilik en ingewikkeld die samelewing nou sal wees. [...] Die gruwelike oorlog sal nog baie wrang vrugte dra en daar sal 'n ongekende verdeling ontstaan onder die Boerebevolking op die platteland. Die vreedsame, gelukkige samelewing van die ou Republikeinse dae, toe nooit aan politieke en rasseverskille gedink is nie, is saam met ons onafhanklikheid verlore," skryf Anna (96). Hulle verneem van "Bittereinders" en "wilde Boere" wat besluit het om 'n spesiale knopie te dra wat hulle van die "hensoppers", die "vlugteling" en die "Khaki-boere" of "National Scouts" sal onderskei. Anna skryf op 27 Oktober 1902 hieroor: "Dit is baie jammer want ons moet tog almal saam worstel om ons land weer op te bou en ons kan dit nie doen as ons verdeeld is nie. O, die vloek wat die oorlog nalaat!" (109).

3. Tweede vertelmoment: die publikasie van Ons Japie

Ná die oorlog het doelbewuste en volgehoue pogings deur politieke leiers uiteindelik begin lei tot versoening tussen die verskillende groepe waardeur "rou oorlogswonde gaandeweg geheel is en die bittere gevoelens deur vergewensgesindheid en verdraagsaamheid getemper is" (Eloff, 1985: 4). Anna Barry het skynbaar besef dat 'n uitgawe van haar dagboek toe aanvaarbaar sou wees. (17) Die publikasie van Ons Japie sestig jaar nadat dit geskryf is, moet daarom myns insiens teen die agtergrond van 'n groter konteks gelees word: die jaar 1960 toe die wrywing tussen hendsoppers en bittereinders begin wegval het ten tyde van die viering van die halfeeufees van die Unie van Suid-Afrika (18) en toe die land al op die drumpel gestaan het van

Republiekwording in Mei 1961. (19) Dit is moeilik om te sê in watter mate Anna Barry self in daardie stadium republikeins-gesind was, maar die feit dat sy Afrikaanse Pers-Boekhandel bereid gevind het om haar dagboek uit te gee, is myns insiens wel 'n aanduiding van toleransie vanuit die Afrikaner-establishment jeens 'n geskrif uit voormalige hendsopper-geledere.

Die titel, Ons Japie. Dagboek gehou gedurende die Driejarige Oorlog, sowel as die opdrag ("Opgedra aan die nagedagtenis van my broer Japie Barry wat op 23 Desember 1900 op 17-jarige leeftyd as krygsgevangene in Ceylon oorlede is") dui op Anna Barry se behoefte om die één lid van die gesin wie se identiteit as "lojale Boer" nie bevraagteken kan word nie, voorop te stel. Sy noem die oorlog in haar inleiding die "Tweede Vryheidsoorlog" – 'n duidelike aanduiding van haar persoonlike lojaliteit. Anna Barry gebruik haar nooiensvan as outeursnaam maar sy sluit die "Ter inleiding" van anderhalwe bladsy wel af met die dubbele ondertekening van sowel haar getroude as haar meisiesnaam: "J.M.C. Reitz (Anna Barry)". Hiermee volg sy nie gewoon die konvensie van die tyd om as getroude vrou haar man se naam te vermeld nie, maar demonstreer sy tegelykertyd haar persoonlike "goeie" alliansie deur haar inlywing by een van die beroemde Afrikaner-families uit die dae van die Vrystaatse Republiek op die voorgrond te stel. Haar man, Charlie Reitz, was 'n broerskind van F.W. Reitz, die president van die Oranje-Vrystaat voor president Steyn. Sy neef Deneys Reitz se dagboek Commando is een van die bekendste egodokumente uit die Anglo-Boereoorlog. (20) Vir Anna Barry sou 'n huwelik met Reitz dan ook sekerlik 'n verhoogde status in die na-oorlogse Afrikaner-gemeenskap beteken het. Anna Barry gebruik die private domein van haar dagboek as 'n argivariese ruimte waaruit sy haar eie geskiedenis en die ambivalensies daarvan aanbied sodat haar dagboek as 'n familieargief beskou kan word, 'n bewysbron van die lewe wat die gesin tydens die oorlog gelei het. Uit korrespondensie met haar seuns en ander familielede (21) blyk duidelik dat die dagboek in manuskripvorm reeds voor publikasie bekend was in die familiekring.

In die tipografiese aanbod van die dagboek word die jare wat die oorlog geduur het benadruk: 1899 (1), 1900 (5), 1901 (44), 1902 (81), met ter afsluiting nog enkele dae in 1903 (113). Die plekke waar sy haar in hierdie jare bevind, is die oorkoepelende indelingskategorie van die dagboek en dit blyk dat Anna Barry se plek in haar gesin en die distrik waaruit sy gekom het van groot belang was vir haar identiteitsbesef. Haar verhaal begin en eindig op die familieplaas. Onder die opskrif "Abrikooskop" word 'n periode van byna twee jaar op die plaas beskryf vanaf 26 September 1899 (1) tot 10 September 1901 (69). In die kort afdeling getitel "Ficksburg" volg inskripsies van ongeveer twee weke, 29 September 1901 (70) tot 13 Oktober 1901 (74). Daarna volg die afdeling "Basoetoland" waarin Anna se agt maande lange verblyf daar beskryf word vanaf 16 Oktober 1901 (74) tot 18 Junie 1902 (96). Die terugkoms op die plaas vorm die sluitstuk van die dagboek. Die laaste afdeling dra weer die naam "Abrikooskop" waardeur die tuiskoms benadruk word. Dit strek vanaf 23 Junie 1902 (96) tot 13 Januarie 1903 (114).

In die Vrystaatse Argiefbewaarplek is slegs enkele bladsye van die

oorspronklike handgeskrewe dagboek bewaar. (22) Anna Barry se skrif loop, weens papierbesparing, kruis en dwars oor die bladsy in 'n rasterpatroon. Of die meeste ander oorspronklike bladsye vernietig is of toevallig verdwyn het, weet ek nie. Daar is wel 'n handskrifkopie wat klaarblyklik veel later deur Anna Barry self oorgeskryf is. Dan is daar ook nog 'n getikte kopie wat in allerlei opsigte verskil van die meer onlangse handgeskrewe kopie. (23) Sonder intensiewe argiefondersoek is dit onmoontlik om te sê in watter mate die dagboek inhoudelik verander het tussen die eerste moment van vertelling (1899-1903) en die publikasie daarvan (1960). In watter mate Anna Barry selfsensuur toegepas het tussen die verskillende vertelmomente, kan wel vir 'n gedeelte van die dagboek vasgestel word met 'n moeisame vergelykende ondersoek. (24)

Oor die waarheidsgehalte van haar dagboek skryf Anna Barry self in haar inleiding die volgende:

Die dagboek maak geen aanspraak op absolute historiese juistheid nie. Wat ek self beleef het, is outentiek, maar my verhale van hoorsê is hoorsê, en het later soms geblyk onwaar te wees. Die foutiewe verhale het ek egter nie by die oorskryf verander nie, want dit sou 'n verkeerde beeld skep van ons lewe in die dae. Die onbetroubare stories en riemtelegramme wat ons bereik het, was per slot van rekening deel van ons lewe soos ons dit ervaar het. Dit is uit die teks van die dagboek in ieder geval duidelik wanneer ek praat waarvan ek weet, wanneer ek inligting uit 'n betroubare bron herhaal en wanneer ek blote gerugte aangeteken het (ongenommerde bladsy).

3.1 Taal

Anna Barry het advies en hulp van ander mense gehad by die publikasie van haar dagboek. In haar inleiding (een en 'n half ongenommerde bladsye) bedank sy byvoorbeeld "dr. J.J. Oberholtser van die Universiteit van die Oranje-Vrystaat [...] vir die moeite wat hy geneem het om hierdie werk persklaar te maak". Hy het waarskynlik veral met die Afrikaanse taalvorm gehelp. Haar dagboek is uiteindelik in Afrikaans gepubliseer, maar dit is die derde taal wat in verband met die dagboek ter sake is. Uit korrespondensie met haar seuns kort na die publikasie van *Ons Japie*, wat trouens in Engels gevoer word waaruit blyk dat Engels weer eens Anna Barry se gemaklikste skriftelike kommunikasie-middel geword het, blyk dat die seuns die "goeie Afrikaans" waarin die dagboek oorgeskryf is, besonder vind en as 'n aanwinst beskou. Taal, wat reeds 'n belangrike rol gespeel het in Anna se ontwikkelende selfbeeld tydens die eerste vertelmoment van haar dagboek tussen 1899 en 1902, is dus weer van belang tydens die tweede vertelmoment. Anna Barry verduidelik in haar inleiding dat die Barry's Vrystaatse Republiekeine was, (25) maar "(v)oor die oorlog was ons huistaal Engels en daarom het ek dan ook gedurende die eerste maande my dagboek in Engels gehou". Engels was nie net die Barry's se huistaal nie, maar was trouens by talle Republikeinsgesinde Vrystaatse families teen die einde van die negentiende eeu gebruiklik. (26)

"Nadat oom Japie de Villiers op Platrand gesneuwel het en ná die vernederende behandeling wat ons van die Britse troepe ontvang het, het daar egter by my so 'n bitter gevoel ontstaan dat ek na Nederlands oorgeslaan het."

Reeds op 7 Januarie 1900 (5) het die Barrys die nuus van oom Japie se dood ontvang sodat ons mag aanneem dat slegs 'n baie klein gedeelte van die oorspronklike dagboek in Engels geskryf is en dat Anna Barry haar hele dagboek verder in Nederlands geskryf het. Op versoek van haar moeder wat die dagboek eers jare na die oorlog gelees het, moes sy "belowe (...) om dit in 'n leesbare vorm" oor te skryf, "sodat ons familie dit as 'n nagedagtenis aan my broer kon hê." Sy skryf dan: "Dit het ek onlangs gedoen sonder om aan die wese of die inhoud te toring. Ek het dit slegs in Afrikaans oorgeskryf en 'n paar sinne weggelaat, wat die gevoelens van ander families kan krenk". [\(27\)](#)

3.2 "Woord vooraf"

Hierdie dagboek word nie soos die meeste ander vroue-egodokumente deur manlike outoriteitsfigure soos kommissarisse van ede of dominees en magistrate ingelei wat die waarheidsgehalte daarvan moet sanksioneer nie. Hier is slegs 'n onpretensieuse "Woord vooraf" (een en 'n half ongenommerde bladsye) deur "Trudie Kestell" wat weliswaar 'n predikantsdogter was. [\(28\)](#) Dat Trudie Kestell verwys na die "hegte vriendskapsband tussen die twee families" moes Anna Barry deug gedoen het omdat die Kestells bekende bittereinders was. Trudie Kestell vind dit "merkwaardig dat die jong meisie dit volgehou het om die dagboek te skrywe." Dit lyk asof Kestell die moeite wat dit Barry moes gekos het om die manuskrip te ontsyfer en oor te skryf hoog ag: "Dit moes 'n reuse taak gewees het om dit oor te skryf". Op 'n naïewe toon verwys sy na kamee's in die dagboek ("Dit maak seer om die kalwertjies in die nag te hoor", "Arme mnr. Clark se valstande word uit die glas in sy slaapkamer gesteel", "Siek oom Andries slaap met 'n byl langs hom – later lê 'n byl langs Moeder se Bybel"), en sy spreek die belangrike versoenende bede uit dat die verskillende groeperinge "almal sal bure wees". Haar "Woord vooraf" is 'n demonstrasie hiervan.

3.3 "Ter inleiding"

Anna skuif, ten spyte van die fokus in die titel op haar broer Japie, haar moeder na vore as "Boereheldin" in die "Ter inleiding" (een en 'n half ongenommerde bladsye). In vergelyking met soveel "volksmoeders" wat in die meeste Boereoorloggeskrifte na vore kom as martelaarsfigure wat "bittere lydingskelke" geledig het, is dit duidelik dat Anna Barry met moeite 'n helderol vir haar moeder bymekaar kan skraap. In 2.2 het ek reeds daarop gewys dat Anna haar moeder dikwels beskryf as die vrou wat volgens haar vader die meeste beskerming nodig gehad het. Anna beskryf dikwels dat haar moeder maer en siek van kommer is.

Deurentyd kom mevrou Barry as 'n godvresende en gekultiveerde vrou na vore wat baie gesteld was daarop dat Anna as oudste dogter steeds sou "skoolhou" vir haar jonger susters. Sy roem haar moeder dus nie op grond van 'n

lydingsgeskiedenis nie, maar heel sober skryf sy:

Dat my moeder as Boereheldin uit die verhaal te voorskyn sou tree, kon sy nooit beseef het nie. Ek noem maar een voorbeeld: te midde van die oorlogsmoeilikhede het sy gesorg dat haar drie dogters geestelik nie verwaarloos nie. Sy het aan my, die oudste, opdrag gegee om in die ou boeke van my broer te studeer en dan my bymekaargeskraapte kennis aan my susters oor te dra. Die "skooljuffrou" en die leerlinge het almal steen en been gekla, en eers veel later in ons lewe het ons beseef dat die nuttige arbeid op vasgestelde tye ons redding was (bladsynommer – nie beskikbaar nie).

Dat die "redding" van haar en haar susters veral figuurlik opgeneem moet word, is duidelik vir diegene wat die dagboek lees.

3.4 Bylaes

Agter in die boek verskyn drie bylaes (114-118). Die eerste is 'n uitvoerige uiteensetting van Anna Barry se voorouers aan vaders- én aan moederskant. Alhoewel albei haar ouers uit beroemde Kaapse families stam (die vader van die Swellendamse Barry's wat met Van Reenen- en Van Breda-vroue getroud is; haar moeder van die Becks en de Villiers' uit die Boland), is dit opmerklik dat Anna Barry veral klem plaas op die rol wat haar direkte grootvaders in die Vrystaat tydens die Basoeto-oorloë gespeel het. Toe was daar immers nog geen sprake van verdeelde lojaliteite nie en veral die De Villiers' en aangetroude Keyters is ryklik met grond beloon vir hulle aandeel aan dié oorloë. Die tweede bylaag is 'n brief van J. Wille, 'n vriend van Japie. Hy het dit in die Diyatalawa-kamp op Ceylon op 28 Mei 1901 in Nederlandsagtige Afrikaans geskryf en hy vertel uitvoerig oor die omstandighede van Japie se sterfbed. Die derde bylaag is 'n beskrywing van 'n besoek wat Anna Barry en haar man (sy gee geen besonderhede oor hom nie) aan Japie se "eensame graf" by die Diyatalawa-kamp gebring het. Die besoek was "agt-en-dertig jaar na Japie se dood", dus waarskynlik in 1938. (29) Sy beskryf die reis soontoe, die kranse blomme wat hulle saamneem, 'n Sinhalese man wat Japie nog onthou en die foto's wat 'n fotograaf van haar en haar man by die graf neem.

Die grafsteen is ná die oorlog deur haar vader laat oprig, maar Anna was die enigste van die familiekring wat die voorreg gehad het om die graf te kon besoek. Sy was "diep ontroerd en het bitter geween". Die laaste sin is "Vaarwel Japie!

Maar nooit sal ons jou vergeet nie" en sy onderteken haar roerende verslag en ook die boek as "Anna Barry". Hiermee benadruk sy ten slotte haar rol in die Barry-gesin saam met haar moeder, vader, broer en susters.

3.5 Foto's

In Ons Japie is vier familiefoto's en 'n tekening. Die boek is dus ook 'n klein

familiefoto-album. In die lig van die geskiedenis wat in Anna Barry se dagboek vertel word, dra die foto's 'n emosionele gewig alhoewel daar niks in die foto's self is wat die ingewikkelde geskiedenis van verlies onthul wat met hulle saamhang nie. Sy gebruik foto's van haar gesinslede soos wat hulle kort voor of ná die oorlog moes gelyk het sodat sy die foto's duidelik in die narratiewe konteks van haar dagboek plaas. Foto's is 'n belangrike skakel tussen direkte familieherinnering en wat Hirsch (2002: 17) "postmemory" noem, tussen wat ek hier die eerste en die tweede vertelmoment noem. Hirsch (2002: 5) skryf oor die konservering van familieherinneringe deur foto's: "Family is structured by desire and disappointment, love and loss. Photographs, as the only material traces of an irrecoverable past, derive their power and their important cultural role from their embeddedness in the fundamental rites of family life." In Hirsch se terminologie sou sulke foto's as die ondersteuning van 'n soort familiemitologie gesien kan word:

[...] an image to live up to, an image shaping the desire of the individual living in a social group. This myth or image – whatever its content may be for a specific group – dominates lived reality, even though it can exist in conflict with it and can be ruled by different interest. It survives by means of its narrative and imaginary power, a power that photographs have a particular capacity to tap. I would like to suggest that photographs locate themselves precisely in the space of contradiction between the myth of the ideal family and the lived reality of family life (Hirsch, 2002: 8).

Anna Barry se gebruik van die foto's ondersteun die imago wat sy van haar familie wil projekteer: as waardig, sterk en trots. Heeltemal voor in die boek is 'n formele vollengte ateljeefoto van 'n ernstig-kykende mooi jongman met die onderskrif "Ons Japie". Dit is waarskynlik geneem nadat hy in 1898 aan die Victoria College op Stellenbosch gaan studeer het. Met Susan Sontag (1989: 70) se uitspraak in gedagte dat alle foto's "memento mori" is, dat dood en lewe gelyktydig in foto's teenwoordig is, is Japie se foto 'n treffende inleiding tot die boek. Sontag stel tereg: "Photographs state the innocence, the vulnerability of lives heading toward their own destruction and this link between photography and death haunts all photo's of people". Verder is daar 'n vollengte ateljeefoto van 'n slanke en waardige "Moeder" (teenoor p. 20), 'n portret van 'n ernstig-kykende "Vader" (teenoor p. 50), 'n groepsportretfoto van "Drie susters" wat almal besonder aantreklik is (teenoor p. 80) en 'n waterverftekening met die onderskrif "Woonhuis. Die huis se strooidak is na die oorlog verwyder" (teenoor p. 94).

Die foto's en tekening ondersteun die beeld wat Anna Barry steeds in haar dagboek sentraal stel van die familie op die familieplaas as weliswaar 'n kragtige sentrum, maar wat blootgestel staan aan die historiese en kulturele aanslae van die tyd. Die huisgesin wat tradisioneel die laaste bastion van beskerming teen oorlog, verwerping, verbanning en kulturele "displacement" behoort te wees, blyk uit die eerste moment van vertelling, die verhaal van haar dagboek, weerloos soos alle gesinne. Slegs tydens 'n tweede moment van

vertelling kan die familie se identiteit mede deur middel van foto's geherstruktureer en in 'n geïdealiseerde vorm bestendig word.

4. Slot

Deur twee vertelmomente van Anna Barry se dagboek te onderskei wil ek aantoon dat sy in 1960 'n ander beeld of mite van haar familie kon skep as wat moontlik was direk na afloop van die oorlog. Sestig jaar ná die eerste vertelmoment struktureer sy 'n kader waaruit haar soeke na eenheid of kohesie duidelik blyk, iets wat volgens teoretici soos Gilroy (1997) en Woodward (1997) tipies van selfrepresentasie is. Met hierdie kader, bestaande uit titel, bylaes en foto's, slaag Anna Barry daarin om eerherstel vir die familie te beding sonder dat sy haar familie se ingewikkelde rol en posisie tydens die oorlog in die hoofteks verdoesel. Deur haar opgetekende verslag van die belewenisse van haar en haar ouers, broer en susters, van familie en vriende te publiseer, beding Anna Barry uiteindelik vir haarself en die hele gesin 'n plek in die geskrewe geskiedenis, op die kruispunt tussen die private en die openbare terrein, die persoonlike en die politieke. [\(30\)](#)

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(1) Danksy steun van die Van Ewijck Stigting vir navorsingsaktiwiteite van die Bijzondere hoogleraar Afrikaanse letterkunde in Amsterdam kon ek 'n ondersoeksreis na Ficksburg en Bloemfontein in Junie 2003 onderneem. My hartlike dank aan die historikus en plaasboer mnr. Felix Sorour van die distrik Ficksburg vir sy gasvryheid en die waardevolle gesprek wat ek met hom gevoer het op 13 Junie 2003, vir die vriendelike ontvangs deur die MacKaskill-gesin wat tans in "die onderste plaashuis" op Abrikooskop woon, advies van Marlene Israel, bibliotekaresse op Ficksburg, en die hulp van die personeel van die Letterkundige Museum (veral Ena van der Walt en Erika Terblanche) en van die Vrystaatse Argiefbewaarplek (veral Ferdi Wheeler). My dank aan Pamela Pattynama wat my op die reis vergesel het. Verder dank ek twee anonieme keurders vir hulle waardevolle wenke.

(2) Die konvensie van dagboek-hou was sekerlik by geletterde mense soos die Barry's goed bekend. Bowendien was dit moontlik dat Anna selfs Lewis Carroll se *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* uit 1865 geken het. Haar impuls om eers in oorlogstyd 'n dagboek te hou, sluit naamlik goed aan by die volgende aanhaling uit Alice: "The horror of that moment, the King went on, I shall never, never forget!" "You will, though," the Queen said, "if you don't make a memorandum of it" (Carroll, 1972: 189-190).

(3) Barbara Harlow stel in *Resistance Literature* (1987) dat tekste wat ten tye van onderdrukking en gevangenskap geskryf word, dus onder uitsonderlik beperkende omstandighede, 'n manier is waarop vroue toegang kry tot die

geskiedenis en tot mag. Harlow betoog dat vroue wat onder sulke omstandighede skryf 'n belangrike vorm van subversie uitoefen deur die ondermyning van die ek, die heilige subjek van die outobiografiese vertelling. In plaas daarvan dat hulle die individuele, burgerlike outeur vooropstel, word 'n kollektiewe outeursentiteit gekonstrueer, 'n soort kollektiewe bewussyn wat "outoriteit/ outeurskap" gee aan die identiteit van die individuele skryfsters wie se getuienisse in druk verskyn (sien Harlow, 1987: 120 en Jansen, 1999: 166). In verband met die Boerevroue se tekste glo ek nog steeds dat dit geld vir die versamelboeke. Kaplan omskryf ingrypende historiese omstandighede met behulp van die noemers "politics of location" en "discourse of situation" (sien Jansen, 1999: 170). Tekste wat onder duidelik dieselfde gemarkeerde omstandighede soos die kampe in die Anglo-Boereoorlog geskryf is, het sekerlik onderling veel ooreenkomste, maar Barry se dagboek het my daarvan oortuig dat 'n mens tog versigtiger moet wees met die konstruksie van monolitiese kategorieë omdat ander meer individuele tekste anders ook uit die outobiografiese vertoog van sogenaamde "outlaw genres" uitgesluit kan word.

(4) Van Warmelo het twee boeke oor haar oorlogservaringe geskryf waarin sy haarself onderskeidelik as lydend en as heldhaftig op die voorgrond stel: Het concentratiekamp van Irène (1905) oor haar rol as verpleegster en Die Kappie Kommando of Boervrouen in Geheime Dienst (1912, vertaal as The Petticoat Commando, 1912), oor haar rol as spioen (sien Jansen, 1998).

(5) Sien Grundlingh (in Cuthbertson, 2002: 18-36) se "gelaagde analise" van die "boodskap" van die Vrouemonument.

(6) Ceylon word tans Sri Lanka genoem en Basoetoland heet Lesotho.

(7) Oor die belang van grense in Suid-Afrika word tans heelwat geskryf. Vergelyk Hamilton (1999) en Thorp (2000).

(8) Tydens talle Basoeto-oorloë wat reeds voor Anna Barry se geboorte plaasgevind het, die eerste was in 1858 en die tweede in 1865, het die grense gereeld verskuif en die strydende partye het telkens weer oor die nuwe grense getrek om vee te steel of terug te steel. In 1866 is tydelik vrede gesluit. Die Basoeto is uiteindelik gedwing om beskerming van die Britse kroon te vra en op 12 Maart 1868 is Basoetoland deur Groot-Brittanje geannekseer. Vyandighede is formeel beëindig op 12 Februarie 1869, maar veral droogtes sou telkens, byvoorbeeld in 1877 en 1880-81, lei tot onrus op die grense (Schoeman, 1989: 81 en Eldredge, 1993: 79). Tydens die 1890's was die omstandighede weer sleg. Albei groepe was uitgeput deur droogtes, maar presies tydens die jare van die Anglo-Boereoorlog was omstandighede besonder gunstig in Basoetoeland. Die verwarrende omstandighede in die hele gebied van suidelike Afrika op die vooraand van die Anglo-Boereoorlog het ook dadelik die onstabiele vrede tussen die twee gebiede ontwig.

(9) Alhoewel Basoetoland tydens die 1890's geteister is deur spinkaanplae, runderpes, droogte en 'n burgeroorlog tussen Masupha en Lerotholi, het omstandighede dramaties verbeter. Teen 1900 was die landbouomstandighede

in Basoetoland uitstekend en die oeste in die jare 1900 en 1901 was uiters suksesvol. Feitlik sonder uitsondering het vlugteling na Basoetoland soveel vee, graan en ander besittings as moontlik met hulle saamgeneem om te verhoed dat dit deur Boeremagte of Britse troepe opgekommandeer word (Eloff 1985:1). Die geweldige toevoer van vee – Eloff vermeld 138 127 stuks, waaronder meer as 20 000 beeste, 110 000 skape, byna 5 000 bokke en meer as 2 000 perde – het uiteindelik tot oorbeweiding asook die uitbreek van veesiektes gelei. Bowendien was die winter in 1902 vroeg en besonder straf. Die gevolg was dat toe die vlugteling-Boere vanaf Junie 1902 begin teruggaan het na die Vrystaat, Basoetoland in 'n erbarmlike toestand was. Vir die eerste keer ooit moes in 1903 voedsel ingevoer word: "Regional politics entailing war and dispossession, colonial rule and taxation, had undermined the once successful BaSotho agricultural economy. The BaSotho continued to sell their grain to meet an increased tax burden, so that grain continued to be exported, but Lesotho, once the grain basket of the Cape Colony and Orange Free State, was no longer self-sufficient in food production." (Eldredge, 1993: 81).

(10) In haar artikel "Gentlemen and Boers: Afrikaner Nationalism, Gender, and Colonial Warfare in the South African War" gee Helen Bradford (in Cuthbertson e.a., 2002: 37-66) 'n boeiende uiteensetting van die gevolge vir die gang van die oorlog van Boere-mans se verknogtheid aan hulle plase en gesinne. Met verwysing na generaal J.C. Smuts wat reeds tydens die oorlog daarop gewys het dat "the Boers are an intensely domestic people", motiveer sy waarom so baie ouer mans nie bereid was om voort te gaan met die oorlog nie vanuit hulle behoefte om gesinne en eiendomme te beskerm. "Penkoppe" kon veel makliker voortgaan om die oorlog as 'n avontuur te beskou en selfs te gebruik "to assert their virility" (47). Die feit dat vroue dikwels veel strydlustiger as hulle mans was, is uit talle bronne bekend. Vergelyk Bradford se samevatting: "Troops began expressing unease about the depth of female hatred, warning that the "Boer woman – strong, fierce, and uncompromising – is a force to be reckoned with"". Bradford voeg by: "A longer historical perspective is badly needed to explain what contemporaries saw: anti-imperialism had a gender gap." (47). Sy wys ook daarop dat vroue se "subpolitieke" status ironies genoeg aan hulle groter politieke vryheid gegee het: "Women did not have to take oaths of neutrality or surrender their guns" (48). Hulle aansien in die maatskappy het uiteraard wel afgehang van hulle mans se beslissings om wel of nie te veg nie.

(11) Ongeveer 26 000 Boerevroue en -kinders het in konsentrasiekampe gesterf. Dit was ewe veel as alle Britse en Boeresoldate saam wat op sowel die slagveld as in krygsgevangenekampe gesterf het. Volgens die amptelike Britse syfer het iets meer as 14 000 swart Suid-Afrikaners in kampe omgekom.

(12) Alhoewel Anna, haar moeder en susters alles in hulle vermoë doen om Boeretroepe by te staan wat die plaas besoek, is daar in die gepubliseerde weergawe van die dagboek geen sprake van die "depth of female hatred" en 'n terugjaag van die mans na die front soos wat soms voorgekom het nie (sien Bradford, 2002:48).

(13) Sien Bradford (2002: 46-47) vir 'n bespreking van die feit dat historici van mening was dat die meeste bittereinders plaasbesitters sou gewees het en hendsoppers veral landlose Afrikaners. Sy skryf: "Yet contemporaries failed to see a pattern of landed men staying on commando. They, unlike historians, noticed confiscation of property and the prominence of notables among those who fled or surrendered. Many wealthy farmers, officers, and middle-class men were the first to abandon the cause, they commented."

(14) Japie was een van die Royal Turks, 'n groep van 17 jongmanne onder korporaalskap van Roelof van der Merwe. Marais (1993: 68) skryf: "[D]it is [...] baie moontlik dat hulle as penkopgroepie bly bestaan het tot hulle in Augustus saam met die groot groep manskappe onder generaal Marthinus Prinsloo by Moolmanshoek in die Brandwaterkom oorgegee het, want Anna skryf in daardie maand dat hulle familie nie kon glo dat Japie en sy besondere vriende, wat sy by die naam noem, sou oorgee nie. Generaal Marthinus Prinsloo het op 29 Julie 1900 oorgegee, en daarna het verskeie groepies en individue in die begin van Augustus sy voorbeeld gevolg."

(15) Marais (1999: 255) wys daarop dat die kwelling van mans wat die Eed van Neutraliteit gesweer het, en soms weer verbreek het, 'n "sielestryd" was. Anna Barry sou dus in haar eie kwelling oor die daede van haar ooms veral "uit godsdienstegevoel redeneer, nie uit vaderslandsliefde nie. Omdat die Here hierby betrokke was, het dit nie by hulle opgekom dat 'n eed wat onder dwang afgelê is, nie geldig was nie, ook volgens die Haagse Konvensie."

(16) Die illusie van 'n kollektiewe martelaarsgeskiedenis vir alle Afrikanervroue is gevoed deur die wyse waarop soveel vroue oor die moment waarop hulle plaashuise vernietig is en hulle die plaas moes verlaat vertel het in "oral history"-onderhoude en skriftelike beëdigde getuienisverklarings, dikwels volgens 'n voorgeskrewe stramien. Sien Emily Hobhouse se beroemde boeke *The Brunt of the War and Where It Fell* (1902) en *War without Glamour or: Women's War Experiences written by Themselves, 1899-1902* (1927), asook E. Neethling se *Mag ons vergeet?* (1938) en M.M. Postma se *Stemme uit die verlede* (1939).

(17) Sy het selfs die waardering gekry van die goewerneur-generaal van Suid-Afrika, C.R. Swart. In dié verband spreek 'n brief wat Anna Barry aan haar seun in Pretoria skryf op 11 Junie 1960 boekdele: "My beloved Son – Thanks again for your praise of "Ons Japie" it is so rewarding. It has been a colossal undertaking for me – lack of ability, a very full life at home, & odd moments all too often interrupted are not conducive to writing." In 'n volgende artikel skryf ek meer hieroor.

(18) Versoening tussen bittereinders, joiners en hendsoppers het waarskynlik eers heeltemal weggeval toe die laaste van die bittereinders of hulle onmiddellike nasate in die jare tagtig oorlede is.

(19) Giliomee (2003: 519-532) skryf uitgebreid oor die jare nadat H.F. Verwoerd in 1958 aan bewind gekom het. Om 'n indruk van die tyd te kry, is

die volgende paragraaf op p. 525 van belang: "In the third quarter of 1960 Afrikaners were caught up in enthusiasm generated by the referendum on a republic that Verwoerd called for October. Verwoerd had taken a huge risk because the NP had not yet secured the majority of votes in any general election, but he never seemed to doubt victory. He sensed that almost all Afrikaners supported a republic, as did quite a minority of English-speakers [...]. Verwoerd argued that only a republic could bring about white unity, which, in turn, was imperative for an effective response to the racial problem. When republican supporters scored a narrow majority of 74,600 votes, Verwoerd told a victory celebration that the whites were now a united people: "We have risen above pettiness and selfishness ... The English-speaking and the Afrikaans-speaking sections have become like the new bride and bridegroom who enter upon the new life in love together and to live together as lifemates."

[\(20\)](#) Uit aantekeninge van Charles John Hobern Reitz in die Vrystaatse argief blyk dat hy by die uitbreek van die Anglo-Boereoorlog as prokureursklerk in Bloemfontein gewerk het en 'n tyd lank president Steyn se persoonlike sekretaris was. Alhoewel ook hy die eed van neutraliteit afgelê het toe Bloemfontein beset is, was die omstandighede waaronder hy dit gedoen het, veel minder kompromitterend as in die geval van Anna se ooms en haar vader Thomas Barry. So skryf Bradford (2002: 41): "When Roberts occupied Bloemfontein, a local ruling stated that unless they surrendered, all men within a ten-mile radius risked loss of their property." Reitz was 'n gesiene lid van die Bloemfonteinse regs- en bedryfslewe. Hy was 38 jaar lank sekretaris van die Vrystaatse Orde van Prokureurs en direkteur van allerlei rade. Die gesin Reitz het in die Koning Edwardstraat in Bloemfontein gewoon.

[\(21\)](#) Dit word saam met die manuskrip van die boek bewaar in die Vrystaatse Argiefbewaarplek in Bloemfontein.

[\(22\)](#) Op die omslag van lêer A553.3 staan: "Ons Japie. 1. Eers 'n handskrif ek dink deur Professor Oberholtzer geskryf. 2. Getikte een deur ek dink mw. Oberholtzer. 3, Briewe ontvang na die verskyning van die boek." Wie die "ek" is, is onvermeld, maar dit is waarskynlik Karel Schoeman. Barry spel die van "Oberholtser" in haar "Ter inleiding". Sien 3.1.

[\(23\)](#) Op die omslag van die Anna Barry-argief in Bloemfontein is die volgende teks getik en onderteken deur Karel Schoeman op 18 Julie 1984: "O.V.S. ARGIEFBEWAAARPLEK per KAAPSE ARGIEFBEWAAARPLEK. Dokumente i.v.m. die Anglo-Boereoorlog te Ficksburg en omstreke en die boek ONS JAPIE deur Anna Barry (mev. C.J. Reitz van Bloemfontein) wat later met behulp daarvan geskryf is. Deur Karel Schoeman aan die Kaapse Argiefbewaarplek oorhandig vir deursending, namens: Mnr. J.F. Reitz, Spray, Hoofweg 105, 7945 St James. Erken asb. Ontvangs aan lg."

[\(24\)](#) Ek hoop om die argiefondersoek wat ek in Junie 2003 in Ficksburg en Bloemfontein gedoen het oor 'n jaar of wat af te rond.

(25) 'n Voorbeeld hiervan is te vind op 29 Julie 1900, nadat Anna Barry se vader na Ficksburg geneem is om verpleeg te word waar hy ook die eed van neutraliteit sou sweer. Anna tref 'n Engelse offisier in die plaashuis aan waar hy deur die ou familie- Bybel blaai waarin die gesin se name geskryf is. Hy sê dan aan haar: ""I see your name is Barry. How come a man with the good old English name of Barry to be fighting against Her Majesty?" Ek antwoord: "My father is not an Englishman. He and his father were born in South Africa and his grandfather was an Irishman." Hy glimlag en sê: "Do you know that his name will tell against him?" Ek sê: "It was his duty to fight for our Republic"" (24).

(26) Die korrespondensie tussen president Marthinus Steyn en sy vrou Tibbie Fraser is waarskynlik die bekendste voorbeeld van hierdie omgangsvorm.

(27) Die polemieë in verband met die eerste uitgawe van Grundlingh (1979) se boek oor die "hendsoppers" en "Joiners" is 'n verdere bewys hiervan. My dank aan een van die keurders vir hierdie opmerking. In my vervolgartikel gaan ek trouens verder op hierdie saak in.

(28) Haar vader was beroemd vir sy "donderpreke". In haar dagboek verwys Anna Barry ook na hom. Ds. Kestell het 'n boek oor sy oorlogservaringe gepubliseer: *Through Shot and Flame. Met de Boerenkommando's*. 'n Duitse uitgawe is ook gepubliseer. Vir hierdie inligting dank ek mnr. Felix Sorour. Hy het my ook gewys op die talle praktiese bydraes wat die Barry's aan die Ficksburgse gemeenskap gelewer het, o.a. die "Japie Barry Nursing Home".

(29) Dit is moontlik dat die besoek van Anna Barry en haar man geïnspireer is deur die Groot Trek-eeufesviering. In daardie tyd is naamlik besonder baie egodokumente oor die Boereoorlog gepubliseer. Vir die publikasie van Anna Barry se dagboek sou die tyd toe nog nie ryp gewees het nie. Paul Gilroy (in Woodward, 1997: 304) wys in sy bespreking van opvallende twintigste-eeuse voorbeelde van sogenaamde "spectacles of identity" op die simboliese Ossewatrek van 1938 as die mees essensialistiese poging om 'n Afrikaner-identiteit te vestig, 'n identiteit wat sy bestending sou soek in die oorwinning van die Nasionale Party in 1948. Tereg beskou Gilroy die Anglo-Boereoorlog nie as 'n dergelike moment waarop Afrikaneridentiteit eksklusief en effektief gevestig is nie omdat die Boere die oorlog verloor het en trouens reeds lank voor die Vrede van Vereeniging dit al duidelik was hoe divers "die" Afrikaner was. Grundlingh se boek *Die "Hendsoppers" en "Joiners"* (1979) en romans soos Christoffel Coetzee se *Wat het geword van generaal Mannetjies Mentz* (1998) en Ingrid Winterbach se *Niggie* (2002) is boeiende uitwerkings hiervan.

(30) Hoeseer die beeld wat die omringende gemeenskap van Anna Barry gehad het gewysig is van die eerste vertelmoment tot ná die tweede vertelmoment, sal blyk uit 'n ondersoek na die resepsie van haar dagboek. Ek het reeds 'n groot deel van hierdie resepsie-onderzoek gedoen, maar ruimtebeperking dwing my om dit later in 'n vervolgartikel te publiseer.

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Herinnerd Indië: Autobiografische teksten van Indische migrantenschrijvers

- Pamela Pattynama -

Abstract

This article explores texts written by two generations of Indo-Dutch migrant authors as autobiographical memory literature. In these texts the remembrance of the former Dutch colony called the Dutch East Indies has a pivotal role. As memory is discursive and never individually owned, this collective memory of the East Indies is always in flux. Postmodern theories on memory, culture and subjectivity are used to examine how the remembered East Indies works in the distinct series of texts and in Dutch postcolonial culture in general. Conclusion is that in the Dutch postcolonial context, autobiographical texts written by Indo-Dutch migrant authors are a case in point par excellence of the way in which national memory, autobiography and identity become interwoven.

Van oudsher heeft de autobiografische tekst op een geïnteresseerd leespubliek kunnen rekenen. Veel lezers hebben blijkbaar plezier in persoonlijke lotgevallen en waar gebeurde avonturen. Ondertussen zijn ook literaire critici zich intensief bezig gaan houden met levensverhalen. Na de "linguistic turn" en de opgang van postmoderne subjecttheorieën zijn zij geïnteresseerd geraakt in de culturele implicaties van herinneringsprocessen. Langzamerhand kunnen we zelfs wel spreken van een ware explosie aan aandacht voor levensverhalen. De autobiografische tekst is zelfs zo in aanzien gestegen, dat sommigen ervoor pleiten haar als beginsel te nemen voor inzichten in de postmoderne en postkoloniale cultuur als geheel (Ashley, Gilmore & Peters, 1994). Niet iedereen is het daarmee eens, maar in ieder geval hebben traditionele ijkpunten als "waarheid", "authenticiteit" en "gelijkenis" plaats moeten maken voor vragen over de ontologische status van het autobiografische Ik. Veel postmoderne critici zien elk subject als onderdeel en effect van een wijdvertakt en gecompliceerd cultureel netwerk waarin sociale machtsrelaties op elkaar inwerken. Het autobiografische subject vormt vanuit hun optiek geen afgerond beeld en nog minder een optelsom van herinneringen die uit een ver en verstaend verleden zijn opgegraven. Toch zijn juist herinneringen en herinneringsprocessen zich steeds meer op de voorgrond gaan dringen van de aandacht voor de autobiografie. Steeds minder wordt de autobiografie uitgelegd als "archeologisch" herinneringsproces.

In plaats van uit te gaan van een afgerond identiteitsbeeld, vinden hedendaagse cultuurwetenschappers inspiratie in de door Michel Foucault (1977) geopperde "genealogie". Ook in mijn benadering van subjectiviteit is de Foucauldiaanse

genealogie zeer bruikbaar, vooral omdat de methode zo geschikt is voor identiteitsprocessen die niet langs gebaande wegen gaan. Een feministisch voorbeeld van onderzoek naar ongebaande wegen geeft Leigh Gilmore in haar *Autobiographics* (1994). In een aantal levensverhalen van vrouwen traceert zij wat John Paul Eakin een "intricate process of self-discovery and self-creation" noemt (1985: 3). Gilmore is niet geïnteresseerd in de "oorsprong" van vrouwelijke identiteit. Zij volgt de autobiografische zwerftochten van een verward Ik dat zich steeds anders voordoet. Uit haar studie blijkt vooral dat het Ik zichzelf in de postmoderne autobiografie eerder zoekt dan vindt. Gedurende deze zoektochten worden herinneringen geconstrueerd, in plaats van opgedolven.

De autobiografische tekst bezien als narratieve zoektocht waarbij heden en verleden door elkaar heen lopen: voor wie zo leest, vervagen de traditionele grenzen tussen literatuur, geschiedenis en autobiografie. Neem bijvoorbeeld de op historische feiten berustende bestseller van Arthur Japin, *De zwarte met het witte hart* (1997). De roman geeft een beeldrijk verslag van het nationale koloniale en imperialistische verleden. De lezer wordt langs de verschillende locaties gevoerd die het buitengewone leven van twee Ashanti prinsjes hebben bepaald. Halverwege de negentiende eeuw werden deze prinsjes cadeau gedaan aan Nederland als onderpand voor een slaventransport uit Ghana. Opmerkelijk is dat auteur Japin meent dat zijn boek "eigenlijk" autobiografisch is: "dat isolement van die twee jongens, neergezet in een vreemd land, gaat over mijzelf (...) ook ik hoorde als kind nooit bij een groep" (Zwijgers, 2002: 7). Japins persoonlijke biografie speelt totaal geen rol in de roman. Wat mij intrigeert, is dat de roman desondanks om herinneringen draait en wel degelijk de conventies van de autobiografie volgt. In *De zwarte met het witte hart* kijkt de oude prins Kwasi Boachi terug op zijn leven. Hij is al oud en verblijft op zijn koffieplantage in Nederlands-Indië. Blijkbaar spelen in en om de roman verschillende soorten van herinnering. Bij mij roepen die verschillende herinneringen vragen op naar de relatie tussen (literaire) autobiografie, geschiedschrijving en identiteit. Nederlands-Indië figureert hier immers niet toevallig als kruispunt van herinnering, terugblik en zelfrepresentatie. (1) In de Nederlandse literatuur is de exkolonie onverbloemd verbonden met herinnering én met autobiografisch schrijven. Bovendien bezet Indië in de Nederlandse geschiedschrijving en in het culturele zelfbeeld een omstreden positie.

Dit essay gaat over dat omstreden Indië. Centraal staat de functie die het herinnerde Indië inneemt in de Nederlandse postkoloniale cultuur. Een aantal teksten van eerste en tweede generatie Indische migrantenschrijvers wordt hierbij als uitgangspunt genomen. In beide generaties worden herinnering en locatie met elkaar verbonden en wordt er een performatieve handeling van zelfrepresentatie tot stand gebracht. Mijn punt is dat de (tegen)herinnering aan Indië, en dus de zelfrepresentatie die daarop wordt geconstrueerd, een andere functie vervult in de verhalen van de eerste dan in die van de tweede migranten generatie. De eerste generatie die zelf in Indië heeft gewoond representeert "eigen ervaring", terwijl de tweede generatie schrijvers zogenaamde postherinneringen in het leven roept. (2)

1. Exotisch buitenbeentje

Nederlands-Indië is verleden tijd. Sinds de erkenning van de republiek Indonesia in 1949 is de vroegere Nederlandse kolonie van de wereldkaart weggevaagd. Als geografische ruimte mag Indië dan verdwenen zijn, als herinnering is het gebied een blijvende aanwezigheid op de culturele landkaart van Nederland. Hoewel het niet altijd openlijk wordt erkend zit Indië in het hart van de Nederlandse cultuur. (3) Er bestaat dan ook een imposante reeks romans, verhalen, levensgeschiedenissen en beelden die teruggaan op de historische ontmoetingen tussen Nederland en haar ex-kolonie. Indische verhalen waren al populair tijdens het imperialistische tijdperk. Ze droegen bij aan nationale trots – waar een klein land groot in kan zijn – en boden het calvinistische moederland met "pikanterieën" en overspelige personages een erotisch escapisme. (4) Met het afsluiten van het koloniale tijdperk heeft vooral het beeld van Indië als "verzonken continent" opgang gemaakt. Tot op heden is "tropisch Nederland" naast de Tweede Wereldoorlog zelfs een van de meest populaire motieven in de nationale literatuur (Franken, 1996). Elk jaar weer komen nieuwe Indische romans in een mum van tijd bovenaan de bestsellers lijsten terecht. Opvallend is dat nog steeds een aantal publicaties afkomstig is uit de eerste generatie Indische migranten. Zij hebben gezamenlijk een schokkende historische periode meegemaakt die hen tot "lotgemeenschap" heeft gemaakt. (5) Nadat Nederland in 1949 onwillig haar zo profijtelijke kolonie prijs gaf volgde een landverhuizing en diaspora waarbij Indische migranten Nederland binnenstroomden en zich verder over de wereld verspreidden (Willems, 2001). De groep was etnisch heterogeen. Er waren mensen bij met een Aziatische, of "volbloed blanke" achtergrond maar de meesten waren van gemengde afkomst, zogenoemde Indo-Europeanen of Indo's.

De nieuwkomers hadden net de Japanse bezetting van Indië en de daarop volgende Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog achter de rug toen zij arriveerden. Voor deze lotgenoten zijn de oorlogen met hun kampen, de migratie en diaspora, en het verlies van Indië in de loop der jaren tot herinnering geworden, die een sterk symbolische en emotionele, vaak traumatische lading bezit. Veelal bleef Indië de primaire bron van identificatie, voorgoed ingeweven in het patroon van hun verdere levensloop: Indië was alles. Alles. (Stolk, 1996). (6)

De literatuur getuigt van deze Indische connectie. Zo zijn het Indische herinneringen die Maria Dermoûts werk bezielen: "Ik heb het verleden nogal hevig doorleefd. Daarom kan ik altijd maar over een onderwerp schrijven, – die tijd, destijds, daarginds, en nooit over een onderwerp nu en hier" (Van der Woude, 1973: 74). En ook Beb Vuyk zei: "Eigenlijk is al mijn werk autobiografisch. Er is geen verhaal waarin ik niet voorkom, voor zover ik weet" (Drayer en van Soest, 1985: 10). Wat deze Indische schrijfsters te berde brengen is van toepassing op de hele Indische literatuur. Vanaf het begin, de

zestiende eeuwse reisverslagen en brieven van Oost-Indië gangers, wemelt het van de Ik-vertellers en referentiële verwijzingen. Dat is de reden waarom de vaderlandse literaire kritiek Indische literatuur lang als nationaal grensgeval en "exotisch buitenbeentje" heeft beschouwd. (7) Anders dan de "echte" Nederlandse polderliteratuur zou Indische literatuur realistisch, (auto)biografisch of oriëntaals en dus minder literair zijn. (8) De vraag naar het literaire gehalte van een tekst is vanuit een postmoderne benadering minder relevant. Liever stel ik daarom de eerste en tweede generatie Indisch-Nederlandse literatuur voor als nationale herinneringsliteratuur. Hieronder zal ik vooral de samenhang van geschiedenis, autobiografie en identiteit in deze Indische herinneringen exploreren.

Imaginary homeland

Maria Dermoûts debuut uit 1951 is een van de eerste Indische na-oorlogse romans. Nog pas gisteren beschrijft het leven van het in Indië geboren Europese meisje Riek en bevat alle beelden die Nederlandse lezers associëren met de kolonie: van de paradijselijke jeugd en de schare bedienden tot aan overspel. De novelle heeft literaire roem vergaard, maar stevast noemen critici ook het autobiografische gehalte van Nog pas gisteren. Wanneer bijvoorbeeld Rob Nieuwenhuys in zijn bekende Oost-Indische spiegel Dermoût geen "echte Nederlandse" schrijfster noemt, verwijst hij naar schrijfsters herinneringen aan "oud-Indische huizen, eilanden, de Molukse zee" (1972: 465). Ook haar twee biografen beschouwen de verhalen als autobiografisch materiaal, maar zelf zegt zij: "het is zo gebeurd en toch ook weer niet". (9) Dat geeft aanleiding om de status van herinneringen te onderzoeken: hoe eigen zijn Dermoûts eigen herinneringen?

Immers, hoe persoonlijk doorleefd gebeurtenissen ook zijn, de herinnering eraan is altijd bemiddeld door taal, discursief, en context gebonden. Herinnering is even dubbelzinnig en onbetrouwbaar als ervaring: "It has always already occurred and yet is still to be produced – an indispensable point of reference, yet never simply there" (Culler, 1985: 63). Zowel de dissidente Russische formalist Mikael Bakhtin (1981) als de herinneringstheoreticus Maurice Halbwachs (1992) benadrukken de dialogische dimensie van taal en herinnering. Zij suggereren dat ieder van ons verschillende stemmen of identiteiten in zich meedraagt die afhankelijk van de context ingezet worden. Wat wij onthouden of omgekeerd, vergeten, is dan onlosmakelijk verweven met dat wat anderen zich hebben herinnerd, neergeschreven of weggelaten.

De dialogische, collectieve dimensie van herinnering maakt dat de authenticiteit van Dermoûts herinnering aan "die tijd, destijds, daarginds" twijfelachtig is. Dermoûts schrijfstijl vol herhalingen, afgebroken zinnen, pauzes, veelvuldige dialogen en gedachtestreepjes is eigengereid. Maar hoe eigen ook, haar stijl toont duidelijke verwantschap met de onder Indonesiërs en Indo's florierende orale verteltrant. Wie haar verhalen echt onder de loep neemt, merkt bovendien dat de schrijfster een verbluffend en ambachtelijk arrangeur is. Haar werk is een evocatief voorbeeld van wat Bakhtin intertekstualiteit noemt: een collage van overal vandaan geplukte teksten,

thema's, motieven, personages en motto's.

Bekende topoi of banale data, fictie of geschiedenis, Aziatisch of Europees, dat alles verwerkt zij tot meeslepende vertellingen die een schijnbaar tijdloos air aannemen (Indische Letteren, 2000). Zo gaat het verhaal "De sirenen" uit haar bekendste roman *De tienduizend dingen* over een vrouw die niet haar lot afwacht, maar een prauw aanschaft en een onbestemde reis begint, van tropisch eiland naar eiland. Het verhaal bevat tal van verwijzingen naar Indië en is gesitueerd in de Archipel. Desondanks reikt "De sirenen" veel verder dan Indische zeeën met hun talrijke eilanden en verraderlijke stromingen. Geleidelijk aan stelt het verhaal de in koloniale ogen onoverbrugbare verschillen tussen "oost" en "west" in een ander licht en subtiel worden ook traditionele genderverhoudingen doorbroken.

De vrouw heeft een jongeman in dienst als scheepsmaat. Deze scheepsmaat houdt van zwemmen tussen de zeekoeien. Aanvankelijk loeien deze, maar later blijken zij, verleidelijk als sirenen, te zingen. In de Indische wereld van prauwen, sarongs en kebang sepatu (hibiscus) die Dermoût oproept, duikt zo opeens de Europees-klassieke held Odysseus op.

Dermoût weeft oude thema's in onbekende beelden, terwijl zij gebruikelijke motieven vermengt en inbedt op een andere plek. In haar verhalen komen "tegenherinneringen" van migranten tot leven die meer dan eens tegenover officiële gedenkschriften staan. (10) Zonder twijfel is Dermoûts emotionele betrokkenheid groot. Maar Indië als locatie van identiteit is bij nader inzien een hybride collage van discursieve herinnering en (lees)ervaring: Dermoûts zelfrepresentatie is een "uitvinding" (Sollors, 1989).

Het Indië dat Dermoût en andere eerste generatieschrijvers ons als bron van identiteit overgeleverd hebben, blijkt net zo'n verzinsel te zijn als Salman Rushdy beschrijft in *Imaginary Homeland* (1992). Dit herinnerde Indië is ook op collectief niveau een identificatiebron geworden. De eerste generatie Indische migranten, al hopeloos verdeeld langs verschillende identiteitslijnen zoals "ras", klasse, gender en seksualiteit, kwamen terecht op verschillende (sociale) locaties in Nederland. Zij moesten zich een positie zien te veroveren in de Nederlandse samenleving. Vooral om politieke redenen was het noodzakelijk een "Indische gemeenschap" te vormen (Raben, 2002). Wat anders kan beter de gemeenschappelijke afkomst belichamen dan Indië, het gedeelde land van herkomst?

Ondanks hun uiteenlopende ervaringen herkenden Indische nieuwkomers elkaar in Indië. Voor de Indische imagined community (Anderson, 1991) functioneerde de literatuur als gemeenschapvormend medium en gezamenlijke identificatiebron.

Texture of Memory

Niet alleen onder Indische migranten, ook op nationaal niveau werd Indië steeds minder als ex-wingewest gezien. Daar trad het proces in werking dat

Marita Sturken technologies of memory noemt: objecten, historiografie, verhalen, representaties of beelden die op zichzelf geen herinneringen bevatten, maar die herinnering fabriceren en deze vervolgens tot cultureel gemeengoed maken (1997: 9-12). Specifiek literatuur kan hier een betekenisdragende rol vervullen als gedenkteken. (11) Tijdens de jaren '50 en '60 was er weinig publieke aandacht voor Indië (Van Vree, 1999). Zoals zoveel natiestaten greep Nederland terug op nostalgie en amnesie ter ondersteuning van haar na-oorlogse ideologie (Renan, 1934). Enerzijds werd het verloren koloniale verleden weggestopt als politiek "familiegeheim", anderzijds leefde het verlies van een idyllisch en heroïsch verleden in het nationale geheugen voort (Locher-Scholten, 1995). Op die manier werd de ex-kolonie voornamelijk geassocieerd met hunkerende, sepia kleurige beelden van een verdwenen paradijs. Schrijver F. Springer reageerde eens verbolgen op de gretig gelezen hausse aan Indische herinneringsliteratuur: wie heeft er nou geen mooie herinneringen aan korte schooltijden, veel zwemmen, zorgzame bedienden en geheimzinnige natuur? (Van Zonneveld, 2002: 156).

Zijn ergernis verwijst ook naar de minder fraaie beelden van de ex-kolonie, ontstaan in de revolutionaire jaren zeventig. In het roerige klimaat van die jaren kantelden de denkbeelden over gezag, cultuur en identiteit onder invloed van kritische tegenculturen. Langzamerhand drong het "vergeten" verleden zich op, werd het nationale stilzwijgen opengebroken en het koloniale verleden ter discussie gesteld. Sindsdien is Indië in het Nederlandse collectieve geheugen een ambivalente en omstreden plaats gaan bezetten. Enerzijds is het verbonden met het voortsudderende koloniale vertoog. Dit vertoog dat verwijst naar een even idyllisch, exotisch als heroïsch verleden is overigens al tijdens de koloniale periode tegengesproken. Daar tegenover bestaan postkoloniale visies, vervuld van schaamte en schuld over Nederlandse rassenwaan, uitbuiting en oorlogsmisdaden.

Daardoor heen speelt het thuisverlangen van Indische migranten, evenals de emoties van de oorlogsveteranen die in Indië vochten, en zich nu misbruikt voelen in een vuile oorlog. De herinneringsbeelden zijn tegenstrijdig, drukken elkaar weg en overlappen elkaar ook deels. Consensus over de meest correcte herinnering ontbreekt. (12) Welke groep heeft meer recht op Indië? Welke herinnering is waarheidsgetrouw? Dergelijke vragen blijven onbeantwoord en tesamen vormen de herinneringen een Indische texture of memory: inconsistente, omstreden, weerbarstige en toch door elkaar heen schemerende herinneringslagen (Young, 1993).

2. Postherinneringen

Nergens anders komt deze palimpsest van herinneringen zo duidelijk naar voren als in de literatuur van de tweede generatie Indische migranten. Postmemory, de term die Marianne Hirsch heeft aangewend voor de herinneringen van de Joodse tweede generatie in Amerika, is hier van

toepassing. Postherinneringen verwijzen weliswaar niet naar eigen ervaringen, maar hebben wel de ervaringsherinneringen van de eerste generatie in zich opgenomen (Hirsch, 1997: 22).

Terwijl de tweede generatie opgroeide, doolden de herinneringen van de eerste generatie rond op het privé terrein van Indische huiskamers, hulpverlening en literatuur (Tinnemans, 1997). De eerste generatie ondervond al snel dat hun ervaringen verdwenen achter de nationale herdenking van de Duitse bezetting (Withuis, 1994). In de na-oorlogse retoriek van wederopbouw, nationale eenheid en goed-fout discussies vonden zij weinig gehoor. Zij slikten hun verhalen in en assimileerden zich schijnbaar succesvol. Binnenshuis hoorde de tweede generatie de heimwee verhalen van de vorige generatie aan. De verhalen over het inslikken, de miskennis en de trauma's werden deel van hun biografie. Buitenshuis groeide de tweede generatie op in de revolutionaire jaren '70 van de Nederlandse "recht voor z'n raap" cultuur. In de snel multicultureel wordende samenleving droegen nieuwe groepen migranten hun etnische eigenheid uit met een "jaloers makende vanzelfsprekendheid" (Serieuse, 1997: 208). In de jaren tachtig begon de tweede generatie zich te keren tegen de koloniale ontkenning van hun Indonesische "roots" en de zwijgende aanpassing van de ouderen. Columnist Theodor Holman brengt bijvoorbeeld de door zijn ouders verzwegen trauma's naar buiten. Zijn vermeend respectloze benadering schetst een tegenstribbelend Ik dat zich tegelijk verbindt met het verleden en zich ertegen verzet:

"Mijn moeder," zeg ik, heeft dus een eh – hoe heet het – ik zal
maar
zeggen...een klein KZ –syndroompje. Ze kan soms niet uit een
droom
komen. Zeg ik dat goed, mam? Dan heeft ze nachtmerries" (...)
"Ja, dat is inderdaad heel erg. Dan ga ik m'n bed uit en dan
begin ik te gillen
en te doen." (...)
"Je praat er niet over, mama."
"Ik praat er niet over, nee."
"Je praat er nooit over, mam."
"Nee jullie begrijpen dat toch niet."
"Wat is dat nou voor gezwets: wij begrijpen dat toch niet...?"

(2001: 264-5)

Weliswaar heeft de tweede generatie Indië met haar oorlogen en kampen niet zelf meegemaakt, hun autobiografische teksten getuigen van verbondenheid, hoe ambivalent ook, met dit zo omstreden verleden. Hun werk, vrij van de mythe van de "eigen ervaring", is een schepping van de verbeelding onder invloed van half verzwegen familieverhalen en historiografie. Juist daardoor werkt hun persoonlijke "Indische mythe" performatief uit voor zelfrepresentatie. (13)

De term "performatief" is afkomstig uit theorieën die identiteit én taal opvatten

als performatieve handeling. Deze theorieën benadrukken het actieve vermogen van taal. Ze helpen ons over taal te denken als een zogenaamde speech act. Dat wil zeggen als een handeling of gebeurtenis waarbij de link tussen betekenis en de persoonlijke intentie van de spreker wordt doorbroken. De handeling die met woorden wordt uitgevoerd is dan niet bepaald door persoonlijke intenties, maar door sociale en linguïstische conventies. Door taal als handeling te zien, wordt ook de link naar identiteit makkelijker gelegd. Judith Butler bijvoorbeeld heeft met behulp van het begrip performativiteit het denken over genderidentiteit radicaal veranderd (1990 en 1993). Zij stelt dat (etnisch bepaalde) vrouwelijkheid of mannelijkheid wordt gecreëerd zoals een belofte wordt gecreëerd door het uitspreken ervan. (14) Mensen zijn niet van nature (zwarte/blanke/gekleurde) "man" of "vrouw". Als cultuur deelnemer krijgen zij de opdracht man of vrouw te zijn. Men wordt vrouw of man door in een continue proces specifiek te handelen en te spreken. Identiteit is dus niet wat men is, men wordt (zwarte/blanke/gekleurde) vrouw of man door middel van, in Butlers termen: "the forcible citation of a norm" (1993: 226). (15)

Gender komt dus, net als etniciteit, tot stand in de herhaling van opgelegde of gebruikelijke handelingen die teruggaan op sociaal-culturele conventies. Maar omdat herhalingen nooit identiek aan elkaar kunnen zijn, voeren wij de opdracht (etnische) man of vrouw te zijn nooit volgens verwachting uit. Daarin ligt volgens Butler de bron van transformatie, verzet en subversie. De gedwongen herhalingspraktijk of performance beperkt het subject wel, maar juist de herhaling geeft haar/hem binnen de toegestane ruimte de kans een eigen draai te geven aan het bindende spreken of de gewoontegebaren. De mogelijkheid tot verzet en verandering ligt zodoende in de verschillende wijzen waarop de opdracht wordt uitgevoerd. Butlers theorie van performance is bruikbaar bij de uitleg van de teksten die zijn geschreven door auteurs van de tweede Indische generatie.

3. Halfbloed

De teksten van de tweede generatie zijn gekenmerkt door intertekstualiteit en overlevering. (16) Steeds terugkomende elementen in de nadrukkelijk autobiografische teksten zijn de verwijzing naar een gemeenschappelijke herkomst, de teleurstellende reis naar Indië/Indonesië, de oorlogsvader, en familieverhalen. (17) Al deze elementen komen voor in het werk van Marion Bloem, de bekendste auteur uit de tweede generatie. Bloem maakt geraffineerd gebruik van alle conventionele middelen van de autobiografie. Wie leest vanuit het perspectief van het performatieve, herkent in haar werk toch eerder collectieve dan persoonlijke Indische herinneringen. Alles passeert de revue: de migratie, het assimilatieproces, de verloochening van herkomst, ondervonden onbegrip en racisme, het geworstel met identiteit. In *Geen gewoon Indisch meisje* (1983) treedt een gesplitste Ik-protagonist op die associaties oproept met "halfbloed", de term waarmee mensen van "gemengd ras" in Indië werden benoemd. De geassimileerde Sonja ligt te "zonnebaden

temidden van haar witte vriendinnetjes". Zon daarentegen slentert rond, "alsof ze het grootste gedeelte van haarzelf ergens vergeten is" (67). Ook verder is de roman opgebouwd uit koloniale opposities als oost-west, vader-moeder, blanke-bruine minnaar. Misschien is dat de reden dat critici de verleiding niet konden weerstaan de gespleten protagonist te duiden als teken van "identiteitscrisis" of "tweespalt". Het personage, hoe gespleten ook, moet echter beschouwd worden als een narratieve constructie. Bloems personages zijn al te vaak langs traditioneel autobiografische lijnen geassocieerd met de "voortdurende problemen" die auteur Bloem zou hebben met het Indo-zijn (Goedegebuure, 1983; Van Leest, 1989).

In mijn benadering vormt "Sonja" een performatief teken van Indische intertekstualiteit: in deze dubbelfiguratie duiken literaire dubbelfiguraties uit Du Perrons Land van herkomst, en Multatuli's Max Havelaar weer op. Ik zie de koloniale stereotypen in Bloems werk dus bovenal als ambivalente herinnering. Zij herinneren ons op dubbelzinnige wijze aan de koloniale geschiedenis die Indo's heeft bestempeld als gedegenererde halfbloeden. Op deze manier is Bloems verhaal te lezen als de literaire uitwerking van Butlers theorie. Specifiek gaat het om Butlers aanwijzing dat het performatieve taalvermogen ligt in de herhaling en opschuiving van eerdere normen. De dubbelfiguratie Zon/Sonja verkrijgt performatieve kracht niet doordat auteur Bloem de autoriteit daartoe bezit, maar door de net even andere herhaling van benoemingen uit het verleden.

Zo roepen de Indopersonages die Bloems werk bevolken de koloniale geschiedenis op waarin "de Indo" als uitgesloten raciaal subject ontstond. In een performatieve link naar het verleden wordt de term als geuzennaam geadopteerd, hetgeen niet de historische beschimping wegneemt, maar wel ruimte voor een politieke strijd creëert. Bloem representeert aldus Indo's die in verzet treden tegen de echo's uit het verleden. Daartoe bedient de schrijfster zich als kind van haar tijd niet alleen van de postmoderne a-chronologische vertelvorm, maar evengoed van het mengprocédé dat herinnert aan voorgangster Dermoût. In Geen gewoon Indisch meisje treedt een externe vertelster op. Door haar geraffineerde tussenkomst vormen Zon en Sonja niet zomaar twee helften van een personage dat verscheurd wordt tussen twee werelden. De drie stemmen wisselen af, vallen samen, spreken elkaar tegen en sprokkelen zo het levensverhaal in stukken en brokken bij elkaar. Via deze tactiek drijft het discontinue personage op een palimpsest van tegenstrijdige herinneringen die verwijzen naar de belichaamde geschiedenis van Indo's. Verrassend is dat Bloem in Geen gewoon Indisch meisje vrouwelijke erotiek introduceert in de collectieve Indo herinnering.

Dwars op de bekende figuratie "Indisch meisje als gewillig exotisch object" en tegenover de bekende macho herinnering van mannelijke jagers en brullende motorfietsen representeert de roman een vrouwelijke visie. Geen terugblik op een authentiek leven, maar de narratieve, discursieve en performatieve zoektochten van een Indisch vrouwelijk subject: "Zij kan niet voortzetten wat al gestorven is. Haar eigen soort moet ze zelf scheppen" (1983: 242).

4. Rusteloze reis

Op een geheel andere wijze gebruikt Alfred Birney het mengprocédé in navolging van Multatuli en Maria Dermoût. Door zijn vroege werk woekeren verlies, oorlog en scheiding, zowel in de microcosmos van het gezin, als in het grotere geheel van samenleving en natie. Ook in het recente *Yournael van Cyberney* (2001) zoekt een thuisloos Ik een zelfbeeld. De titel legt meteen al de Indische wortels van het autobiografische subject bloot: *Yournael* verwijst naar het begin van de Indische letterkunde, de zestiende eeuwse reisverhalen, terwijl ook het pseudoniem *Cyberney* op het verleden zinspeelt. (18) De samenstelling bevat de achternaam van Birney's Chinese grootmoeder Sie en verwijst naar zijn vaders gemengde afkomst. Bovendien is de aanduiding Si een bekende Indische persoonsaanduiding. Deze plaatsbepaling introduceert een discontinue en tegenstrijdig Ik. Anders dan Birney's voorafgaande werk wordt *Yournael* gekenmerkt door bewuste vermenging en doorbreking van onderscheiden genreconventies. Fictie, essays, beschouwingen en reisverhalen wisselen elkaar af. Het autobiografische subject identificeert zich door middel van deze (doorbreking van) genres in verschillende gedaanten. Zo komen wij "Si Birney" tegen als nazaat, zoon, vader, Indisch schrijver, Nederlands schrijver, polemist en vriend.

Hij laat zich tegelijkertijd kennen als product van het verleden en als postmodern, mobiel en toekomstgericht: *Yournael* is begonnen met e-mail berichten in Cyberspace, de virtuele ruimte die, net als Indië, imaginair is. De opeenvolgende e-mail berichten herinneren aan de populaire Paatje Daum die in Indië feuilletons en columns schreef waarin huiselijke tafereeltjes overheersten. De echo's uit het verleden worden evenwel omgekeerd in een performatieve aanwezigheid. Want meer dan een huiselijke feuilleton vormt *Yournael* een bundel polemieken. Zoals voorouder Multatuli het negentiende eeuwse koloniale bastion bekritiseerde, ageert Birney tegen het twintigste eeuwse "Nederlandse literaire bastion" (64). Hij fulmineert tegen de marginalisering van auteurs die buiten de "polderliteratuur" vallen en verkettert het literaire establishment. Het geraas dient om zijn positie van Indische schrijver binnen de Nederlandse cultuur aan te tonen en om de gezeten smaakmakers hun koloniale verleden in te wrijven. Als ratjetoe van getypte teksten, ongelijksoortig van lengte, inhoud, toon en vorm, lijkt *Yournael* eerder een serie toevallige surfsites dan een doorlopend verhaal, eerder een pak van Sjaalman dan een ordentelijke roman.

Toch, zoals ook bij Dermoût, is de ogenschijnlijk losse structuur van *Yournael* illusoir. We worden door de verschillende hoofdstukken heen geloodst door een typisch autobiografisch kenmerk: een vertellende Ik selecteert uit de waaier van mogelijkheden die herinneringen die het subject de gewenste contouren geven.

Zo neemt Birney het begrip *kesasar* (op een zijspoor geraakt) over van de

eerste generatie schrijver Frits van den Bosch. Het anderstalige woord dat vervreemd van de eigen cultuur opduikt in een Nederlandstalige omgeving, en weer wordt opgepikt door de tweede generatie, is niet louter overlevering. Waar kesar bij de eerste generatie drijft op heimwee naar het verleden, krijgt het bij Birney een actieve, toekomstgerichte invulling.

Yournael eindigt met het verslag van een reis naar het land van herkomst, het thuisland van de voorouders. Het moderne Indonesië verschaft de verteller echter geen thuis en de roots zijn ver te zoeken. Maar aan het eind van Birney's rusteloze reis door het verleden is tot de lezer wel het ironische besef doorgedrongen dat thuisloosheid op zichzelf identificerend kan werken. De laatste zin van Yournael is: "Het maakt weinig uit waar je zit als je een rusteloze Indo bent" (227).

Wie Birney's werk leest als autobiografische zelfrepresentatie, volgt een zoekende verteller. Het vroegste werk, vol heimwee en thuisloosheid lijkt niet af te wijken van veel exponenten van de door thuisloosheid gedreven moderne westerse literatuur. Bij Birney is het uitgangspunt echter niet de westers-filosofische stuurloosheid, maar de postkoloniale, Indische diaspora. Het autobiografische Ik surft langs het zwerf van de Indische identiteit, herhaalt heimwee herinneringen maar overschrijdt de grenzen ervan. Zo ontstaat in elke context steeds weer een ander Ik, product van conflicterende vertogen.

5. Slot

In dit essay heb ik Indische migrantenliteratuur als autobiografische herinneringsliteratuur proberen te exploreren. Meestal wordt Indische literatuur gezien als heimwee literatuur die terugkijkt op het verleden en statisch tussen twee culturen in blijft hangen. In mijn genealogische benadering komt Indische literatuur naar voren als dynamisch discursief vertoog dat zich op het snijpunt van historische, autobiografische en literaire vertogen bevindt. De herinnering aan Indië is het achterliggende motief van Indische literatuur, maar deze kan niet gezien worden als individuele herinnering. Voor de eerste generatie functioneert Indische literatuur als collectieve bron van identificatie en als gemeenschap vormend medium. De ervaringsherinneringen van de eerste generatie vormen daarom niet louter een terugblik op het verleden. In hun teksten is een postkoloniaal Indië gefabriceerd dat in Nederland is gaan circuleren. Dit Indië is als onderdeel van de nationale cultuur de toekomst ingedragen: Indische teksten van de eerste generatie zijn gedenktekens en dragen Indië als "herinnering van de toekomst".

De tweede generatie volgt algemenere postmoderne en postkoloniale tendensen. Representanten Alfred Birney en Marion Bloem herhalen bijvoorbeeld een oud-Indische techniek: het inbedden en omwerken van de "waargebeurde" verhalen waar de Indische vertelkunst zo van doortrokken is. De gebruikte citaten zijn nog net wel en ook weer niet herkenbaar. Ze geven

nieuwe betekenis aan oude herinneringen. In tweede generatie teksten staat dan ook de relatie tussen historische bepaaldheid en postmoderne veranderlijkheid onder hoogspanning. Het subject dat uit die spanning tevoorschijn komt, is meervoudig, performatief en mobiel, zonder het politieke belang van identiteit los te laten. Terwijl Indo's in het koloniale Indië geen recht hadden op zelfbepaling, eigent de tweede generatie Indo's zich het recht toe op zelfbepaling in postkoloniaal Nederland.

In het meer multicultureel geworden Nederland nemen Indische migranten steeds een andere positie in. Daardoor verandert ook hun herinnering aan Indië. Bovendien wisselt de nationale, collectieve herinnering aan Indië al naargelang politieke belangen en aandacht. (19) In de na-oorlogse Indische literatuur verschijnt Indië dan ook als een veelstemmig imaginair homeland. De onophoudelijke stroom Indische literatuur geeft uiting aan een immer voortlevend Indië – wisselend, omstreden en tegenstrijdig als het is. Daarin ligt dan ook haar culturele betekenis. Indische literatuur fungeert als vehikel van tegenherinneringen, veelal verdrongen en vergeten aspecten van de nationale geschiedenis. In postkoloniaal Nederland is Indische literatuur het voorbeeld par excellence van de wijze waarop geschiedenis, autobiografie en identiteit met elkaar verweven zijn.

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(1) Voor de relatie postmoderne literatuur, locatie en identiteit zie Fokkema en Steenmeijer, 2003.

(2) Nadat dit artikel al geschreven was verscheen *Indische Letteren* 2003 dat geheel gewijd is aan het werk van de Indische Tweede generatie. Jammer genoeg konden deze artikelen niet meer in extenso worden verwerkt.

(3) Susan Legêne (1998), hoofdconservator van het Tropenmuseum, schreef bijvoorbeeld over de fascinerende geografische omzwervingen van stukken die elders vandaan komen en thans in Nederlandse musea als nationaal erfgoed worden geëxposeerd.

(4) Zie voor de receptie van Indische romans rond het fin de siècle Bel (1993: 305).

(5) Historicus J.J.A. van Doorn beschrijft de Indische eerste generatie als een met elkaar verbonden "lotsgemeenschap" (1994: 309).

(6) Eerste generatie Indische auteurs zijn onder andere: Maria Dermoût, Beb Vuyk, Hella Haasse, Jeroen Brouwers, Paula Gomes, Vincent Mahieu (Tjalie Robinson), E. Breton de Nijs, Lin Scholte, Elvire Spier, Frits van den Bosch, Helga Ruebsamen, F. Springer, Rudy Kousbroek, Loes Nobel, Hans Vervoort, Aya Zikken, Wies van Groningen.

(7) Ondanks de onopgeloste vraag wat en wie Indisch is, en de problematische definitie van het genre kies ik hier voor de weidse verzamelnaam Indische literatuur ter aanduiding van Nederlandse teksten van en over Indië en/of Indonesië. In dit essay richt ik mij voornamelijk op teksten die na 1945 in

Nederland zijn verschenen (zie ook Pattynama, 2003). Lees voor de niet aflatende discussie over begrenzing van de Indische letterkunde o.a. Nieuwenhuys (1972), Kousbroek (1992: 76-84) Indische Letteren (1992 en 1999), Beekman (1996), Birney (2001: 79-136) en Van Zonneveld (2002).

(8) De naturalistische schrijver en criticus Lodewijk van Deyssel vond P.A. Daum (Maurits) bijvoorbeeld wel "goed", maar niet "literair" (Nieuwenhuys, 1946: 405- 446).

(9) Johan van der Woude schrijft: "Dat werk is Maria Dermoût zelf" (1973: 14), en ook Kester Freriks noemt zichzelf een "dubbellezer" die de biografie niet onderscheidt van het werk (2000: 194-195).

(10) Natalie Zemon Davies and Peter Starn (1989: 2) definiëren "tegenherinnering" als veronachtzaamde of weespannige herinneringen die niet stroken met dominante (nationale) herinneringen. Tegenherinneringen bieden een alternatief voor en uitdaging van de officiële versie van historische gebeurtenissen.

(11) Zo benadert Ann Rigney (2001) alle literaire teksten als gedenktekens en dragers van openbare of collectieve herinneringen.

(12) Het proces dat wel "pluralization ethos" wordt genoemd heeft ervoor gezorgd dat niet alleen "officiële" herinneringen tellen. Debet hieraan is de sinds de jaren '70 toegenomen (ethische) aandacht voor verschillen, diversiteiten en locale culturen met hun meervoud aan verhalen (Plummer, 2001: 12).

(13) Frank Vermeulen (1988) noemt de reconstructie van Indië de "Indische mythe".

(14) Butler grijpt terug op de taalkundige John Austin die taal opvat als handelingen die de wereld veranderen: zij geven de dingen een naam en zetten ze daarmee in de wereld (1975).

(15) Butler spreekt zich niet expliciet uit over etniciteit als performance. Maar volgens het zogenaamde "kruispuntdenken" binnen de feministische theorie gaat haar theorie ook op voor etnische identiteit. Het kruispuntdenken gaat uit van de gedachte dat gender niet verklaard kan worden zonder daarbij de betekenis van etniciteit te betrekken. Gender staat nooit los van de etnische invulling ervan: een zwarte man dient aan andere verwachtingen te voldoen dan een blanke man.

(16) Behalve de genoemde Theodor Holman, Marion Bloem en Alfred Birney zijn tweede generatie schrijvers: Adriaan van Dis, Nicolette Smabers, Glenn Pennock, Ernst Jansz, Frans Lopulalan, Bouke Jagt, Anneloes Timmerije, Merapi Obermayer en Ralph Boekholt.

(17) Zie Pattynama (2003) voor een analyse van tweede generatie teksten

vanuit het perspectief van de invloed die migranten en nieuwkomers hebben gehad op de Nederlandse cultuur.

[\(18\)](#) Voor deze analyse is dankbaar gebruik gemaakt van de ongepubliceerde lezing van Edy Seriese in het Indisch Wetenschappelijk Instituut op 20 mei 2001.

[\(19\)](#) Zie voor Indische identiteitsverschuivingen verschuivingen Pattynama (2000). Zie voor verschuivende Molukse collectieve herinneringen Bel (2003).

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Presenting and Re-presenting the Past: African Childhood recalled

- Gina Buijs -

Abstract

This article examines what the role of the life history and the narrating or telling of these stories in a particular context, namely the lives of African men and women in the first half of the twentieth century, in Venda, Limpopo Province, South Africa, is. Interviewed by young African students, these elderly men and women contrast, sometimes stereotypically and at others with frank realism, African childhoods of the 1920s and 1930s with present day old age in a modernizing South Africa. Born into large peasant families they spoke warmly of their upbringing in a world where safety and happiness lay in obedience to communal norms and expectations and where the rhythm of the pastoral year was punctuated by ritual and ceremonies marking birth, maturity and marriage. (1) This idealised youth was contrasted with the lack of respect they felt that young people today had for their elders. As a result, in their view, crime and disease, largely absent in their youth, had become rampant.

1. Introduction

This paper began in my mind as an account of old age in Venda as portrayed in life histories collected by my students for their third year anthropology practical assignments at the University of Venda in 1997 and 1998. Reading through the several hundred collected, (2) I soon realised that although these Venda informants were mostly elderly (it had been suggested to the students that the life history of an elderly person might be more interesting than that of a younger subject), in keeping with the elderly everywhere, the subjects of these life histories had given, intentionally so, their young listeners a lesson in the virtues of a long-past childhood. The formula the Venda students used to collect their life histories was based on a booklet entitled "Guide to Collecting a Life History" which I was introduced to when I began lecturing in the Anthropology Department at Rhodes University in 1990. I am told that the guide is a collaborative effort. (3) As well as instruction in how to collect a genealogy, students are encouraged to ask about their subjects' residential and educational history, home life and sexual history (amended by me to courtship and marriage!), social and family life, occupation(s), religious affiliation and changes which have been observed by the subject in his or her lifetime. These topics provided between eight and fifteen pages of largely handwritten text. In 1997 and 1998 the third year anthropology classes at the University of Venda

were large; over 90 in 1997 and 200 in 1998.

At the end of a course on research methodology each student was required to use the winter vacation to complete a life history of an elderly non-relative and return two copies to the department at the start of the following term. Not all the students involved were Venda speakers, about thirty per cent were Tsonga/Shangaan and a smaller number North Sotho with a handful of Ndebeles. The subjects of these life histories came from a wide area of mostly present day Limpopo Province, from the Blaauwberg in the west to Acornhoek in the east. Very few life histories were of urban based subjects. The majority of subjects were of peasant origin, families of subsistence farmers or labour tenants on white farms. The childhoods recalled were mostly those of the 1940s and 1950s, a time when John Blacking averred that "the influence of European ways remained relatively superficial" (1967: 16).

2. Narration and Identity

Several themes emerged from these life histories. The speakers presented childhood and youth in a morally approving way, in contrast to the present day situation which was perceived to be degenerate. Topics related included the communal aspects of growing up as an African child fifty or sixty years ago, respect for one's elders, the importance of punishment for wrong-doing, the importance of sexual continence and hard work. The life histories recounted the benefits obtained by youngsters if they kept the rules, the penalties imposed if the rules were broken and the general moral degeneration of present day youth. Connerton maintains:

we may say that we all come to know each other by asking for accounts, by giving accounts, by believing or disbelieving stories about each other's pasts and identities ... the narrative of one life is part of an interconnecting set of narratives; it is embedded in the story of those groups from which individuals derive their identity.

(1989: 21)

These life histories recorded by the students are didactic exercises from the point of view of their subjects – undertaken as a form of instruction for present day wayward youth; representations of a past idealized in ritual and one which has largely disappeared. Adriana Cavarero, writing on Hannah Arendt's view of narrative and the person, says that in Arendt's view "the problem of narration is never configured as a narratological question: it concerns rather the complex relation between every human being, their life story and the narrator of this story. Whether this life story is a written text or oral tale becomes superfluous". And further:

... a unique being is such only in the relation and the context of a plurality of others, which, likewise unique themselves, are distinguished reciprocally, the one from the other. The story of a unique being is never the monotonous and monolithic story of an idem but is always the unpredictable and multivocal story of an ipse. Autobiography does not properly respond to the question "Who am I?", rather it is the biographical tale of my story, told by another which responds to this question.

(2000: 41,45)

Kirsten Hastrup notes (acknowledging Fabian [1983] and Rabinow [1977]) that

... once we realize that "othering" is part of the anthropological practice and that the identity of others as such is relational, we are ready to acknowledge that they have their own self-referential discourse. They have their own project of self-realisation alongside our project of self-transcendence. As "informants" they may actually be in search of an outside observer to whom they can recount their troubles and reflections.

(1992: 120)

Hastrup suggests that this is epitomized by Barbara Myerhoff's study of an elderly Jewish population in the United States: "They were the teachers, and I, surrogate grandchild, was the student. I was deeply moved and saddened when people blessed me for merely listening." (Myerhoff, 1978: 36). What we listen to, says Hastrup, are the informants' own voices, but what they speak are not "cultural truths"; they are circumstantial responses to the ethnographer's presence and questioning (Clifford, 1986: 107). What the informants tell "us" (their others) in the ethnographic dialogue is spoken, not from the centre of their world but from the liminal space of the cultural encounter. The informants' response to the ethnographer's questioning is also an externalisation of an inner (cultural) experience. Hastrup concludes that, "... the purpose of ethnography is to speak about something for somebody; it implies contextualization and re-framing". She adds, "... it is our choice to encompass their stories in a narrative of a different order. We select the quotations and edit the statements" (1992: 122).

Connerton notes that across generations different sets of memories, frequently in the shape of implicit background narratives, will encounter each other, so that, although physically present to one another in a particular setting, the different generations may remain mentally and emotionally insulated, "... the memories of one generation locked irretrievably in the brains and bodies of that generation" (1989: 3). These narratives of long-gone childhood unlock partial memories. Although most of the students who interviewed the elderly subjects came from rural backgrounds themselves, it was apparent from

comments made to me that they knew little of the intricate and elaborate ceremonial and ritual undergone by their grandparents' generation in their youth. First missionary and later state education has meant the virtual end of female, if not yet male, initiation rites and traditional dances are no longer opportunities for young people to choose life partners. The custom of grandmothers telling stories and legends of the past to their grandchildren round the fire at night has waned with the advent of electricity and television and American soap operas are today the preferred form of entertainment, even in remote rural areas. Lufuno Moses Mulaudzi was impressed by his elderly interviewee, Headman Tshitaka Mpephu:

In conclusion, I think Mr. Tshitaka was a very strong man in his time (Headman Tshitaka was 97 years old in 1997) because I had five hours of interviews with him and I never got any complaint of getting fatigued; instead he is the one who motivated me to sit and listen to him. What he told me was interesting. Towards the end of our discussion I could feel that I should keep in touch with him. He is the narrator. He does not believe that he is old because during the evening he put on short trousers for the sake of going jogging. He told me that this year he is going to participate in the marathon as a veteran.

3. Experiences of childhood

The passage of a Bill of Rights and the promotion of a culture of support for basic human rights enshrined in the Constitution have led to considerable debate on the rights and roles of children in recent years in South Africa. That this was not the case as recently as 1986 can be seen in the introduction to a book on children in South Africa which described children as "invisible socially". Sandra Burman (1986: 2) draws attention to explanations by Edwin Ardener (1972) and Charlotte Hardman (1973) on the way that both women and children form "muted groups", unperceived and elusive for anyone viewing a society. Such a comment could hardly be made of contemporary South Africa where HIV/Aids, poverty and domestic violence mean that issues surrounding children appear daily in our newspapers or on our television screens. Growing up in a Divided Society inevitably focused on urban rather than rural children and while early monographs on South African societies have chapters on the lives of children (Krige, 1950, 1943) it is significant that Eileen Krige's chapter on Lovedu youth is entitled "Early Training".

One of the earliest accounts of South African children, Dudley Kidd's *Savage Childhood: a Study of Kafir Children* was published in 1906. Kidd notes in his introduction that he was prompted to write the book by the absence of any volume at the time dealing with what he refers to as "the childhood of the Native Races of South Africa". Kidd's book is essentially an account of the development and growth of African children, often using comparisons with

European children in order to indicate the backwardness of the former. Kidd accompanied his observations with reference to such well-known works by Victorian writers as Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, Kingsley's *Water Babies* and Lamb's *Dissertation on Roast Pig*. While one may be tempted to dismiss Dudley Kidd and his writing as racist even for his time, it is more difficult to point a finger at such an eminent opponent of apartheid and renowned anthropologist as John Blacking. Blacking conducted fieldwork among the Venda for approximately 22 months between 1954 and 1958. This fieldwork became the basis for his ethnomusicological writings which made the Venda people, their songs, music and dance world famous. Blacking was fascinated by the songs of Venda children, about which he published a book based on his Ph.D. More importantly, for my purposes here, he encouraged one of his female field assistants to write her autobiography, (4) which he published in 1964 as *Black Background: the childhood of a South African girl* and subtitled "Based on the autobiography of Dora Thizwilandi Magidi".

Dora was unusual in that she was sent to school by her parents, who were better off than most Venda of the time. The subjects Dora chose to write about (such as "I pass Standard One") emphasise her pride in her western accomplishments, especially her membership of the school choir and choir trips; experiences which few of her peers, who were generally not allowed to attend school, were able to enjoy. Blacking is disappointed in Dora and his commentary on her life experiences reflects a certain ennui. He writes of Dora that, "... she is like a foreign missionary among her people, but at the same time inescapably of her people and this makes her life peculiarly colourless in comparison with those of either her urban or tribal counterparts" (1964: 33). Blacking disapproved (from a musical perspective) of the hymns taught to the choir members and found little of interest in Dora's account of a holiday taken by train with her family to Johannesburg:

For most Venda human relationships are more important than mental or physical experiences, and this comes out again and again in Dora's text: for instance, she has nothing to say about the novel experience of a train journey to Johannesburg, the sight of a vast modern city, she discusses only the behaviour of an old lady in the train, the purchase of a new dress and some very humdrum relationships with other girls in Orlando.

(1964: 27)

In this context we may note that while personal narratives shape how we attend to and feel about events, narratives are also versions of reality, embodiments of one or more points of view and not objective accounts. Each telling of a narrative situated in time and space engages only facets of a narrator's or listener/reader's selfhood in that it evokes only certain memories, concerns and expectations (Ochs & Capps, 1996: 21, 22).

While Dora was proud of her association with missionaries and whites, the general feeling of most Venda at the time was perhaps exemplified in the

account of old Headman Tshitaka Mphephu who said white Christian missionaries only arrived at his village in 1939 and the people of his village, "... regarded the religion as a white man's custom which is there to dominate their own custom". They also appear to have regarded the new religion as somewhat nonsensical, judging from questions put to the missionaries such as "Who is God's wife, if God has a son, Jesus?". Headman Tshitaka told Moses Lufuno of the day when the entire village ran into the mountains, scared by the arrival of a white man (presumably a missionary): "... the white man had to drive back (away from Venda) to where he could find the company of a black man". Mrs. Alidzuli Nephalama commented that she was afraid during the apartheid era to come face to face with a white person, or even to see one nearby as "... she had a perception that white people can kill you innocently" meaning that the glance of a white person could kill. While the well-known writer Sindiwe Magona claims that as a child she had no racial consciousness, she records at the age of four staring at whites in passing cars "scared" and "confused" (Nuttall & Michael, 2000: 301).

While John Blacking may have had little interest in Dora's relationships with white South Africans, his comments on Venda social life generally are perceptive:

For the Venda social skills are the most important of all and they have been developed into a fine art. The Venda try and control their social and physical environment, not by technology, but by ritual Spontaneity is reduced to the minimum. Almost every activity is precisely classified and ritualized.

(1964: 50)

He compares the Venda attitude to life with that of the ancient Chinese, "The Venda attitude to social harmony is very similar to the ancient Chinese who attached the utmost importance to the proper performance of rites, which became at once both skills and regulatory mechanisms" (1964: 51). Connerton, writing on the role of social memory in forming group identity acknowledges a debt to Halbwachs who argued that it is through their membership of a social group – particularly kinship, religious and class affiliations, that individuals are able to acquire, to localise, and to recall their memories – "Every recollection, however personal it may be ... exists in relationship with a whole ensemble of notions which many others possess ... that is to say, with the whole material and moral life of the societies of which we are part or of which we have been part" (1989: 36).

The questions asked by the students of their elderly informants inevitably evoked a mythopoeic view of the past, but it was a view intended to instruct as much as inform. As Whisson remarks, "The significant facts about the past and the reasons for past events largely derive their meaning in terms of contemporary socio-political dispensations and moral or ideological

convictions" (1984: 3).

Ochs and Capps note that a narrative of personal experience is far more than a chronological sequence of events. Aristotle in his *Poetics* used the term *mythos* to characterise how events and emotions form a coherent narrative, stating, "Interweaving human conditions, conduct, beliefs, intentions and emotions, it is the plot that turns a sequence of events into a story or a history" (1996: 26).

Mrs. Ravele Tshavungwe (5) was 65 years old when Casey Setsheni interviewed her in 1997. Like many of these informants she came from a polygamous family, her father having two wives and nine children. She was the eldest child of her father's first wife. She remarked that in her youth neighbours used to share food, tools and other goods, saying, "It was not a problem if one did not eat at home because it was common to have supper or dinner with your neighbours. When white people came up with the idea of regrouping people into formal villages, that was the beginning of protests". (6) Mrs. Phophi Mulovhedzi recalled that her family had good relationships with their neighbours – "... the only time we quarrelled was when my father's goats ate the neighbours' maize. My father would send someone to ask for forgiveness, then life would go on harmoniously."

Good relationships with neighbours might end if a family member died. Samuel Rikhotso recalled that when one of his family died, the family consulted a diviner to find out the cause of the death: "The diviner informed them that a Mr. Shirilele, one of their neighbours, witched him. Samuel's father asked the diviner to do the same to one of Shirilele's children. The family decided to move away from their neighbours so that the revenge should occur in their absence". (7)

Tuwani Frank Luthada grew up as one of 56 sons of his father's thirteen wives (his father had 103 children). He noted that although the neighbours lived "far from our kraal" they were relatives "which was vital for exchanging things like domestic animals, work groups, marriage". Frank said he and his 48 elder brothers were "the working class" in the family, "helping by herding animals, ploughing family farms, making use of animals, harvesting at harvest time, building houses for the family and much other work".

A number of elderly men and women recounted the oppression of the apartheid regime, recalling how white people ill-treated blacks and went unpunished and how, thanks to the change of government, blacks and whites are treated equally. Tendani Mudau wrote (8) "Alilali really likes the political changes which have taken place in South Africa. She sees no problems between different colour groups. She remembers when blacks and whites did not share the same toilets and now they do". But some old men were not so sanguine. Piet Maanda, while telling his young interviewer, "It is difficult to tell you about the feeling of joy and freedom; of being made to feel human (as a result of the 1994 elections)" and "there is only one change which he regards as the big change for all South Africans, young and old: to have a black President and

democratic parliament". At the same time he commented:

Theoretically the apartheid laws were abolished but practically speaking there is no change. The relations between the different colour groups is better, particularly the educated people but (for the) uneducated the situation remains the same as in the past. Politics is like gambling, we voted for a better life in 1994 but we are still suffering.

The student interviewer commented that when Mr. Maanda compared politics to gambling he meant that politics only benefits those who hold political office, while ordinary people continue to suffer. (9)

Forced removals in the name of "betterment" (10) were especially hated. James Mukwevho recounted that in 1948 his family were forced to move from their ancestral home at Luonde to Mpheni, near Elim hospital. Mr. Mukwevho's grandfather said, "I am longing for my place, Luonde, because my place is there; where I was born, where I have lived, where my wife is buried and I shall die there also and there you shall bury me". Mr. Mukwevho noted, "Mpheni was a different place indeed. There were seasons when the rain did not come and the soil was hard and dry and the land was like iron and the grasses were stiff and grey". Later, when the family's cattle had died in the drought and their grandfather from heart disease, the family, heartbroken, and believing grandfather's death was due to the use of witchcraft by their neighbours, moved to a more fertile area where there was sufficient grazing for their livestock, but Mr. Mukwevho said, "They were still homesick for Luonde, for the place was cool and calm". (11)

Mrs. Tshavungwe commented on the respectful attitude of young people to their elders in her youth, "Any old person was treated as one's own parent. Young children in the neighbourhood lived as one big family. They used to share food and live together. There was no grumbling, even if one was told to send a message to a remote area". Youngsters performed tasks prescribed by their elders and Mrs. Tshavungwe noted:

There was no need for anyone to be reminded of his or her task. Work was allocated according to age and sex. Young girls would fetch water from nearby streams, collect firewood from the mountains and do other related female-oriented activities. Mature girls would be responsible for cooking, cleaning the yards and making sure the little ones got their meals. Young men looked after livestock and old men would "make it a point" that everything at home was in order.

Thus, she said, "They acted as managers in large companies". Blacking comments that there is no separate children's world among the Venda as "they are junior adults" (1964: 31). These pointed references to the tasks of the young were meant as reminders to the youthful interviewers of a world in which hard physical labour for the young was an accepted fact of life and

orders from elders and superiors were obeyed and not questioned.

4. The role of ritual and custom, song and dance in the life story

Life was not all hard work, though. Many informants mentioned the pleasure they had in taking part in mahundwane, described by Mrs. Tshavungwe as "play that imitates real family life". While the elderly did not see the need to elaborate on this custom, Stayt (1931: 99) refers to mahundwani as

... the name given to a miniature village built by children when their parents have finished reaping the harvest. The children pair off, each boy taking one or more girls as his wife or wives to work for him. Each little husband and wife builds their own grass hut (and) when the village is complete the wives borrow their baby brothers and sisters to act as their children. Every morning each little wife takes her mealies to her mother's hut and stamps and winnows the meal. The boy-husband borrows a dog and goes off hunting like his father. Sometimes the mothers walk across to see how their children are behaving and scold their daughters if the porridge is not cooked correctly or the house properly cleaned.

The children who took part in mahundwani were between 12 and 15 years old and had often taken part already in one or more initiation ceremonies. Stayt comments that mahundwani "is essentially an organisation to produce proficiency in domestic and family affairs and, as such, is encouraged by the parents" (Stayt, 1936: 99). Mrs. Mercy Madzinge told her student interviewer that, "Nowadays children do not follow parents' instructions. Mahundwane is not there because children are not disciplined." She explained that during her youth (she was 66 in 1997) "boys and girls were strictly disciplined and [were] "law keepers" because during mahundwane boys and girls were alone at the mountain without their parents". Her interviewer commented that, "She thinks that if mahundwane was played today there would be a lot of children without fathers because boys and girls are not disciplined". (12)

Mahundwani represents one Venda cultural institution where boys and girls were allowed to interact but most informants emphasised that there were few occasions when it was possible to meet members of the opposite sex. Resokhetsoe Ntsoane recalled to Damaris Moleke that in her youth (she was 83 in 1997):

Boys and girls did not play at the same place. Boys played at their place and girls played at their own place. They did not mix with each other. Girls only mixed with boys when they danced

traditional dances. If you wanted a youth to dance for you, you asked him and killed a goat and cooked porridge, and then a lot of people came and saw the traditional dance. They enjoyed themselves doing this.

Connerton reminds us that "to study the social formation of memory is to study those acts of transfer that make remembering in common possible ... images of the past and recollected knowledge of the past are conveyed and sustained by ritual performances" (1989: 39,40).

Ravele Tshavungwe referred to tshigombela, a girl's dance, as

... an activity that lets the young women expose their dance skills. If a woman is not yet married the dance showed to what extent the lady could dance. This would cause the young men to adore her. Usually, ladies who could not dance failed to get attention from the opposite sex.

Blacking refers to tshigombela as an "amusement" (mutambo) for unmarried girls which is danced in late autumn, when weeding is finished and the first maize cobs are available (1964: 25). Young men could also meet young women during tshifhase, also known as nzekenzeke, which Blacking says took place on moonlit nights during autumn and winter and especially during the "time of staying at home" madzula-haya. In this dance boys stand opposite girls at some distance and one of the boys dances out and touches a girl, who then dances back with him and touches another boy.

Blacking adds "... girls and boys naturally like to touch a partner in whom they are interested, as they can dance provocatively close to each other while moving from one group to another" (Blacking, 1964: 25). Van Warmelo (1989: 397) describes the dance as follows: "A girl comes across to the boys, hooks her choice by the arm and leads him to her own group, a lad does likewise and so on until the groups are sorted out again" making the dance sound much like an eightsome reel. Tshifhase did not always end happily for all participants, however. Mrs. Phophi Mulovhedzi said she loved tshifhase but hated girls who disappeared after dancing tshifhase. "No-one knew where they had gone, until some months later, they would be seen being pregnant. They would not tell who impregnated them". [\(13\)](#)

Apart from meeting in dances like tshigombela, tshifhase and murula, young girls and young men also got together in activities like dzunde, the ritual ploughing of the chief's fields, when participants were rewarded for their work with meat and beer and singing and dancing took place. Mrs. Tshavungwe commented that unlike the present use of chemicals on the hair, she used to cut her hair short so that it could be made ngwasane which Van Warmelo describes "... as a sort of coiffure made by dressing and twisting the hair when wet so as to form a great number of small knots all over the head". This hairstyle, according to Mrs. Tshavungwe, "was more adorable to young men's eyes". On special occasions she put makunda (pl vhakunda, bangles) on her

hands and feet, together with beads on her head known as lutomolatsie. (14)

These public displays of bodily allure contrast oddly with often repeated comments such as that by Mrs. Denga that:

... during my times sex before marriage was taboo and even adultery was strongly condemned. People believed in keeping their family name pure from gossip and criticism and whenever someone was found committing fornication or adultery he or she would be severely punished by the elders. Even talking about sex in public places or in front of children was condemned. Children grew up to adulthood without engaging themselves in sexual things. (15)

While adults may have been forbidden to mention sex in front of children, children were quite happy to make explicit reference to sex in their songs. Blacking refers to thulwi, a boys' game in which when boys:

aim "spears" at a rolling pumpkin or tuber carved in the shape of a ball and they say that they are having intercourse with girls. When boys hold a long stick (lugathi) made of mutepe (a shrub) they often praise themselves with the following couplet before throwing the spear, "Nyamutepe, thi li maranga" Nyamutepe – I don't eat gem squash – Tshilo tshanga ndi vhasid zana – my diet is girls.

(1967: 73)

It was up to a girl to refuse a boy's importuning as Blacking notes for Tambani zwanu, a boy's song which refers to playful intercourse between boys and girls and which includes lines such as, "You may have refused me today but you won't refuse me tomorrow" (1967: 73).

Samuel Khubayi noted, "If it happened that a girl fell pregnant it was a shame to her parents and the family as well, as the community looked down on them. The girl will be sent to stay with relatives somewhere to remove her from the community". (16) The only life history where the informant admitted to bearing an illegitimate child, recorded the unhappiness of the mother:

Hlushiwe was never married because in those days if you had a child at an early stage you were considered undisciplined and the people around the village will be very strict when their children try to befriend you. This is one of the reasons Hlushiwe left for Johannesburg, rather than staying in her village and becoming the laughing stock of all the people. (17)

5. Education, formal and informal

Formal western education was rare for these elderly people. Mrs. Ravele Tshavungwe said she did not go to school as it was generally believed that girls would go mad if they attended school. Mrs. Tshavungwe commented that she saw this as a parent's strategy not to have their authority challenged, "Boys (but only a few) were allowed to go to school, but only to a level where they could read and write." She commented that those boys who were fortunate enough to attend school were those whose fathers did not have herds of cattle, sheep and goats, "Since it was rare at that time to find a home without domesticated animals, few boys attended school." Selina Mabasa said she did go to school for a few days when visiting her aunt Maria at Dzwerani. Her father got to hear about it and sent people to take her from school. She was beaten severely. Selina maintained that her father wanted to marry her off as soon as possible so that he would get money from the lobola "because he loved money very much." (18) Mrs. Denga, one of the few female informants allowed to attend a mission school, said children generally liked school because they were sometimes given fruit and sweets and "also had the opportunity to run away from the hard work at home for a while".

Mariah Siemole said the villagers recommended the traditional circumcision or initiation schools in preference to western education as "they considered it as a more valuable school". There were five initiation schools for boys and girls in Venda and Mariah attended four of these. She went to musevhetho when she was six years old and when she was 17 attended vhusha and later domba and finally tshikanda when she was 21. She commented that she enjoyed these schools because she attended them with her friends "and those schools were traditionally centred in such a way that if a person did not attend them she became an alien villager in a particular village." (19) Some informants did regret not being able to attend formal schools. Mrs. Netshisaulu (who was 85 in 1997) said the only school she went to was, "... the traditional initiation school. At these schools we were taught how to manage our affairs, especially in our future family. The major subject here was concerned with how a married wife should behave in her new family and what it is that a wife must do to comfort her husband." As a result, Mrs. Netshisaulu said, she was "educationally disadvantaged". She concluded her interview by saying to her student apprentice, "Keep up with education. Don't be like us who have suffered because of being educationally disadvantaged." (20)

Beatrice Nefhere attended musevhetho when she was 15. There she said she learnt to sing and dance, taught by teachers who dictated laws (milayo, precepts) to new candidates. At the school the initiates were shown muhirwa and makhulu. She commented, "Those persons were just like animals. Those who were at the school feared them but were forced to touch them". Beatrice was referring to the spirit of musevhetho, the nonyana – a man disguised in bark and reeds who blows through a reed pipe making a strange noise which frightens the initiates (Stayt, 1931: 139). The nonyana has several boy assistants, vhavhira, who are disguised in reed clothing with reed masks topped

with feathers. They do not speak and communicate by whistling. Stayt maintains that musevheto was introduced to the Venda by the Sotho people.

Musevhetho is a female circumcision ceremony and Stayt claims that the old women cut the clitoris of female initiates but none of the life histories mentioned this. All referred to a cut on the thigh, which appears to have been a brand before razors were available. Stayt writes that "the brand is like two inverted U's joined together, or sometimes it may be two round dots. This brand acts as a password on future occasions and proves that its possessor has undergone the operation" (1931: 139). Mercy Madzinge remarked that the mark, known as basa in TshiVenda, was "like an identity document". Alilali Madula said girls were taught endurance by the ritual, and were also taught not to have sexual relations with boys and the teachers at musevhetho "confirmed whether they had started or not" (i.e. if the initiates were still virgins). Alilali said her grandmother, a very important figure in her life, taught her how a good Venda girl should conduct herself. She told her to report her monthly periods and "some ritual practised by a good Venda young girl". (21)

Vhusha followed musevheto where, according to Alilali, participants were undressed and "checked" to see if they had obeyed the junior school teachings of musevheto. If a girl had remained a virgin, her relatives would shower her with "as many gifts as they could afford" said Alilali. She said she was one of the best students who had "good qualities of a Venda traditional girl." She received presents such as a clay pot, a traditional water jug made out of a pumpkin, grass mats, wooden plates and spoons and a traditional necklace. These gifts were her first utensils to be used in her new family (of marriage), a "bottom drawer" in Venda terms.

Beatrice Nefhere did not enjoy her time at vhusha. She recalled being forced to dance while sitting (lunya), being forced to eat all the food she was given, eating until she vomited and being made to use her dirty hands when she ate. She was also expected to sit in water in the river for a long period: "It did not matter if it was a cold or rainy day." At this initiation school she was taught "how to deal with my husband during sexual intercourse. We were also taught to keep secrets". Jeannerat (1997: 94) contends that it was the younger women she interviewed who mentioned the physical pain associated with much of the ritual of vhusha but since Beatrice was 66 at the time she was interviewed these memories were presumably fairly general.

Domba, the final initiation rite, was attended by both young men and young women. Mrs. Denga commented, "The values that were taught by these gatherings were trust, love, respect and dependence among members of the opposite sex". Beatrice Nefhere recalled learning to sing and dance at domba and being hung upside down when she first attended the school, a procedure called u nembeledzwa mulemani and which was carried out by girls from the royal family to the cry of: "the bat hangs with its head down". The ritual associated with domba is complex and elaborate and has been described in more detail than for most of the other initiation schools. (22) Like musevheto and vhusha, domba prepares a girl for marriage. Mariah Siemole commented

that a person was ready to get married if, and only if, she attended all of these schools, "These schools made a great contribution in the reduction of the rate of divorce, teenage pregnancies, juvenile delinquency and drug abuse. My schoolmates, like myself, were never involved in teenage pregnancy, we listened to our parents and respected adults." Ochs and Capps note that predominantly, narratives of personal experience focus on past events but link the past to the present and future life worlds. Narrators linguistically shape their tellings to accommodate circumstances such as the setting and the knowledge, stance and status of those they narrate to. The narrated past therefore matters because of its relation to the present and the future and narratives are often launched in response to current worries, complaints and conflicts (1996: 25). At the same time, narrators evaluate specific events in terms of communal norms, expectations and potentialities; communal ideas of what is rational and moral; communal senses of the appropriate and the aesthetic. In this way, they note, "We affiliate with other members of society, both living and dead. We come to understand, reaffirm and revise a philosophy of life. Communion with others, elusive and fleeting though it may be, constitutes the greatest potentiality of narrative" (1996: 31).

While most informants insisted on the boy or girl having no choice in his or her prospective spouse, with many indicating that cross-cousin marriage was the preferred norm among Venda people, not all brides and bridegrooms were unknown to their spouses before marriage. Mariah said "... even if the boy and girl are still young, the boy's parents should "book" his partner for the future and they will wait until the couple grow up." Child marriage in the Chinese style also occurred and no doubt for the same reasons, although these were not mentioned by Mariah:

In situations where a young girl is married by an old man the man will go to the girl's parents to propose marriage and if they agree the girl's parents will introduce the old man to their daughter as her husband-to-be. Then the girl will be taken to the old man's family (which will be composed of two or more wives) and will be raised there as a family child. (23) As she grows up she becomes his wife, and will be regarded as a young wife.

She added, "This usually happens if the old man is rich; he might be the chief or a traditional healer."

Mutshinye Munyai (aged 74) noted that if a boy was old enough to be married, the duty of finding a wife for him was carried out by his aunt or his elder sister, if she were married:

The girl must be a hard worker, and she must be considered a loyal person by members of the village in which she is living. A serious issue to be looked at when choosing a girl was to find out if members of her household practised witchcraft. If they did, it would be very hard for the girl to get married. The boy

was not allowed to meet his spouse; they might meet during their wedding day for the first time.

Mrs. Munyai then added (presumably without irony):

My engagement was the same as this, but the difference was that I was married by a local guy whom I knew ... We did have weddings but the difference was that our wedding was done during the night in the presence of only close relatives of the bride and groom. The bride was taken from her family to the home of the bridegroom accompanied by six or seven girls. Those girls stayed for a week helping the bride with household chores. No honeymoon was known during our time. It took some months for the couple to be together in the same room. People were afraid that some of the girls might be married being pregnant, impregnated by another man, not the man who married her. A ceremony was first done by the bridegroom's aunt to examine the bride to see if she is still a virgin or not. After the ceremony the couple are allowed to be together.

Ravele Tshavungwe noted that the bride's friends who accompanied her were known as vhaselwa:

Young men, especially the groom's friends would come during the night to play jokes with these ladies. These ladies would always wear a cloth (tshali) over their faces. Someone who wanted to see the vhaselwa or muselwa (the bride) had to pay a small amount or a bead. This system was known as marengwa. Thus, the more presents or the greater the amount paid, the more time the lady would uncover her face.

She added, "This was very interesting as all girls would be prepared to be admired ... Some girls could even meet their loved ones there, but it should be reported to the parents so that they could follow a formal procedure. Compared to today's way of marriage, there is a great difference."

Maria Maguga complained that she had to leave school in 1937 when her father made arrangements for her to be married. She was then 19 years old:

I remember in 1937 when my father called me and I went and knelt (losha) before him and other people. My father said to me "Maria, these people you see are here because of you. They come from Phadzima, they are from Vhadzanani's royal kraal. They are here to pay lobola for you." I didn't know what to say. I didn't know the husband I was going to be married to. Out of respect, I just accepted the matter. I knew that my family were not expecting me to reject what they had just finalized. The lobola that was paid for me was ten cows and R50.00 cash on top of that ... The old ladies and the aunt were called to give the

commandment to me, "Maria, you are now a grown up person. Your doings must be those of a young lady. You have seen the Vhadzanani paying lobola for you. Your husband needs you. Please, behave yourself. Respect your husband and parents-in-law. Don't disappoint us. We have raised you in a respectable way. Do so to others also. Love your husband and do whatever he tells you. Because he is the head of the family. Gossip and lies won't help you to have a good family. Beware of bad friends who can influence you to commit fornication. Wait for your husband to be back. Bear him a child and then he will love you more."

Maria said she and her bridesmaids were told to pack their bags in preparation for the journey to her new home. Her father's sister gave her an unbroken calabash (tshetembe) as a guarantee of her virginity. Maria said, "I was called in order to have some check up. I don't know what they have seen in my private parts but what I know is that after checking me, they were all happy and ululating." Maria was told to give the calabash to her husband's father's sister when she arrived.

"When I arrived at the gate of my husband's house I stopped. I was told by my aunt to do so. I was given two shillings. I told the girls to continue as the money had been paid. After I entered the house I refused to sleep because the bracelets they had given me were not enough." More were brought and then the bridesmaids were allowed to sleep. Two weeks later when the bridesmaids had gone home, the calabash was brought out and, "The old ladies were all filled with joy, dancing and singing." The women told her, "This symbolizes that you have respected your own body to please your husband." Maria ended, "This kind of marriage was a formal one in our time. Because the lobola was paid for me. The calabash was also there to symbolize purification. The only difference is that we have failed to use the white dress. Our white dress was that calabash." (24) Maria's insistence on symbols and purification as well as the emphasis on virginity could well have come from her interpretation of the teachings of the Catholic Church of which she is a member. She told her interviewer that the only time she left the church was when her father forced her to attend circumcision school. She tried to get out of going by asking to attend the "circumcision school which is controlled by church leaders. But he (her father) refused and said, "At that one they don't teach you many things, only how to read the Bible and pray."

6. Conclusion

The childhood of these old men and women was one that would not have seemed unfamiliar in precepts and endurance to that of many Victorian children. The rituals that seem so strange to the eyes and ears of a younger generation we know to have been common in African societies south of the

Sahara, although perhaps few societies have emphasised female initiation to the extent that the Venda have done. Ochs and Capps note that given that narrative mediates selfunderstanding and that narratives are interactional achievements, the role of the primary recipient can be highly consequential – the primary recipient is positioned to provide "feedback" on a narrative contribution – to align or embellish, to question, tease, refute or ignore (1996: 35). The student interviewers found much to admire in their elderly subjects. Casey Setsheni wrote, "... there are a number of things that were very good during olden days. Things like respect, loyalty and neighbourliness are some admirable experiences. Communal service helped people to share and the bond between members of the community became strong However, there is no reversal of what is happening now," she added. While many of the elderly people welcomed better relationships between blacks and whites in South Africa today, Headman Mphephu drew the line at interracial marriage. Moses Lufuno wrote:

There is only one change which he has not understood and says he is not prepared to understand, that is, that his last born is married to a white lady, a nurse at Baragwanath hospital. He says the boy has trespassed his own culture. He should have married a black lady, irrespective of whether she is a Tsonga, Zulu or Sotho.

The student interviewer commented, "The old man is so conservative, that he wants to die without any relationship with other colour groups".

While these elderly Venda men and women may have been shocked at the "lack of morals" of the youth of today, their life histories recall a past in which life did not always go according to plan. Girls did fall pregnant after tshifashe despite the teachings of initiation schools; gossip, recriminations and witchcraft accusations were (an uncomfortable) part of rural life, along with hard physical labour and the fun to be had at dances and as bridesmaids.

The translator of Cavarero notes that for both Cavarero and Arendt the uniqueness of each life does not indicate a life lived in isolation, but rather the "togetherness and intercourse" of these single existents. By "unique existents" here Cavarero does not mean "the individual" championed by modern political doctrines. The "unique, existent" in Cavarero's sense is in a constitutive relation with the other, with others. Like Arendt, Cavarero begins from the fact that human beings live together and are "constitutively exposed to each other through the bodily senses." To this Cavarero adds that each of us is "narratable by the other, we are dependent upon the other, for the narration of our own life story" (2000: vii-xv).

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(1) But there are few references to death, which was carefully unmarked for commoners, funerals taking place quietly at night with children told someone had "gone away". In contrast, for great Venda chiefs, there was elaborate family funerary ritual, including reburial reminiscent of Madagascan societies.

(2) Since the students were allowed a free choice and did not have to interview an elderly person, some chose younger men or women. It has been impossible to quantify themes coming out of the life histories.

(3) Personal comment: M. Whisson.

(4) I am grateful to Adam Kuper for reminding me of this work.

(5) Students were advised to use pseudonyms for their subjects.

(6) Mrs. Tshavhungwe is referring to the process of "betterment" carried out in the 1950s in much of Venda when people were moved onto allocated stands with defined grazing and arable areas.

(7) Interview with S. Rikhotso by R. Ngobeni 1997.

(8) Interview with A. Nephalama by T. Mudau 1997.

(9) Interview with Piet Lufu Maanda by T.J. Khomunala 1997.

(10) Families forced to move often considered that their land was stolen by white farmers because it was fertile.

(11) Interview with James Mukwevho by R.E. Makhari 1997.

(12) Interview with Mrs. M. Madzinge by L. Nmutandani 1997.

(13) Interview with Morotoba Tshifhiwa 1997.

(14) I have been unable to find this word in Van Warmelo's Venda Dictionary.

(15) Interview with N.J. Maladzhi 1997.

- [\(16\)](#) Interview with Mr. Khozamusa Samuel Khubayi by M.J. Mathonsi 1997.
- [\(17\)](#) Life history of Hlushiwe Khumalo by M.M. Mogale 1997 (p.3).
- [\(18\)](#) Interview with Nwa-Sengani Selina Mabasa by K.G. Sono 1997.
- [\(19\)](#) Interview with Mariah Seapye Siemole by Lufuno Salome Chuchu 1997.
- [\(20\)](#) Interview with Mrs. M. Netshisaulu by A.M. Lishivha 1997.
- [\(21\)](#) This probably refers to the stretching of the labia minora which was practised in vhusa.
- [\(22\)](#) See Stayt (1937).
- [\(23\)](#) Wolf refers to the Chinese custom of t'ung-yang-hsi or "daughter-in-law raised from childhood" (1968).
- [\(24\)](#) Interview with Mrs. Maria Maguga by N.F. Raungedzani 1997.

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