

## REVIEWS

*Bushmen in a Victorian World: The Remarkable Story of the Bleek-Lloyd Collection of Bushman Folklore* by ANDREW BANK (Cape Town: Double Storey, 2006). ix + 422 pp. ISBN 1-77013-091-8.

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Andrew Bank's study of the conditions under which the collection of /Xam oral materials was made by Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd during the 1870s is unique in a number of respects. It allows the historian's concern with 'source critical' historiography to turn itself into a kind of action research endeavour, where hermeneutics, pure detective work and reflexivity meet. In addition, it manages, in its close reading of all the materials available - from scribbled words, meaningful elisions, and positions on the notebooks' pages, to photographs, drawings and artefacts - to provide a convincing guide across the contours of human interaction in a drama of cultural 'translation' that is probably unrivalled in the history of cross-cultural encounters.

In its careful profile of each of the individuals involved in the documenting of /Xam oral tradition and social and economic life, *Bushmen in a Victorian World* manages to step beyond colonial history as the defining context of the work of Bleek and Lloyd and their /Xam 'informants', and into a domestic world of daily routines, family relations, windows, chairs, garden conversations and all the tittle-tattle of household business. It is from these mundane particles that Bank manages to re-construct a very compelling account of how each of the 'players' scooped up in the Victorian family home where these encounters took place, were wholly individuated, idiosyncratic selves at the same time as being actively present in the wider sea of historical events.

The objective conditions of the /Xam of the northern Cape at the time of Bleek and Lloyd's involvement with /A!kunta, //Kabbo, ≠Kasin, Dia!kwain, /Han≠kass'ο and the others, are well known and their prelude has been well- documented by Nigel Penn and other writers. Theirs was the final fate of a people in relentless conflict with voortreker expansion as well as the less determined but undoubtedly contributory conflicts with the Korana Khoi. What was happening to them at the time of the Bleek Lloyd encounter was nothing short of genocide. The imprisonment in the Breakwater Prison, where Bleek first met them, of numbers of /Xam and Khoi, was partly the backwash of a commando system expressing the bluntest end of European capitalist expansion and racist ideology. All the more remarkable, therefore, that amongst the many thousands of pages in the Bleek and Lloyd collection there is so little that refers to that larger picture, although there is more than sufficient detail to witness to the tragic circumstances transecting the lives of several of Bleek and Lloyd's collaborators listed above. Remarkable too, is that Bank has managed to locate his protagonists within that historical setting whilst enabling the individuals to live on the page, interacting as they did through the production of one of the most remarkable expressions of a culture, one previously silent beyond its own patch of stony land.

Bank's interpretations of the circumstances of this European-/Xam collaboration – distorted by power relations though that collaboration inevitably was – provide a model for a methodology that would be difficult for others, I suspect, to operationalize.

His eye for detail, his curiosity and his refusal to take up easy answers, his persistence in the face of elusive truths, would make his footsteps hard to follow. Yet this book does seem to me to be ultimately as much about historical method as it is about its substantive content. Despite his obvious scholarship, Bank seems at his best when following his own nose more than when he is importing concepts. Indeed, even his importations, such as the use he makes of Elizabeth Edwards' work on photography and anthropology in *Raw Histories* (the starting point of Bank's account of Bleek's contribution to Thomas Huxley's project to photographically record all the 'races' of the British empire) get turned to his own purposes. Thus his use of Edwards' notion of photography as 'performance' merges the notion of 'performance' with the slightly different ideas of the 'theatricality' and 'staging' of photographs, passing over the more philosophically loaded notion of 'performativity' which is fundamental to Edwards' account. Yet what he gives us in its place is many times more interesting, because of its acute attention to detail, than anything that merely pursuing the abstract parallel text would have achieved. What he does not know for certain he plausibly imagines, thus:

Let us begin with the photographic occasion itself. The setting, these photographs reveal, is a room with a tiled floor, which we know to have been somewhere in the harbour complex. We may imagine all the prior arrangements involved: communications between Bleek and the photographer by letter or perhaps face to face at the Strand Street studio of Lawrence and Selkirk. Bleek, with /A!kunta in tow may have arrived at the prison carrying his clicking sheet and even a manuscript dictionary ...

It is this ability to imaginatively and doggedly re-construct, even when actual information is in short supply, that so illuminates Bank's interpretations when information is more plentiful, giving him a powerful analytical tool and laying the ground for the more familiar tools of historical scholarship, which he also comfortably assumes.

The book is an entire journey through an important manuscript collection with which I have long been closely familiar. Yet I feel that through this excellent, thoughtful book I have come, again, to know it for the first time. It is essential reading for anyone interested in the Bleek and Lloyd collection, Khoi-San studies, late Victorian South Africa, and historical method.

ROGER HEWITT

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This work is a significant new study of the South African frontier in the eighteenth century. The study reinvigorates an old theme in the historiography of South Africa, but one that has been neglected in recent decades. Penn argues that a turning point in frontier studies was Martin Legassick's 1970 paper 'The Frontier Tradition in South African Historiography'. This paper is referred to by Penn as 'paradigm smashing', because it challenged the idea that the frontier was a key to understanding the origins of later South African racial segregation. 'After Legassick', Penn observes, 'no one has been quite so bold as to give primacy to the frontier experience when analyzing the nature of South African society or the peculiarities of the South African character (if such a thing exists).' If Penn is not ready to claim the frontier should have the primacy once accorded it, he does claim that it was on the frontier 'that truly vital issues were decided in a short space of time: issues such as who should own the land and under what conditions, and who should work for whom and under what conditions.' Issues of this magnitude, to the extent that they were decided on the frontier, would obviously restore the frontier to a central place in South African historiography, one not held since the seminal studies of P.J. van der Merwe and Eric Walker.

Penn tackles the task of understanding the frontier as a contemporary historian with a perspective and critical tools that make his work truly path-breaking. This work should help to reinvigorate frontier studies in South Africa by making it clear that the societies of the frontier came about as the result of the complex interactions among all peoples who, willingly and unwillingly became participants in shaping its character. This perspective allows Penn to give us a picture of the frontier that is lively in terms of the drama of the story being told, chilling because of the cold-blooded manner in which many frontier settlers sought to achieve secure livelihoods for themselves in a new situation, and tragic in terms of the disruption and genocide that European settlers inflicted on so many pastoralists and hunter gatherers who were unable or unwilling to abandon their traditional life ways. The essence of Penn's approach lies in the detailed way he examines the episodes that defined the frontier during the eighteenth century. He provides the reader with a sense of being on the frontier he is describing in a way that is truly enlightening in respect of the peoples whose stories he is telling.

Penn covers his subject by dividing it into four parts: the early colonial frontier from 1700-1740, the period immediately following from 1740 to 1802, the north-western frontier zone from 1700 to 1802, and a final part dealing with the San in the period from 1790 to 1799. This division permits Penn to cover distinct aspects of the frontier process. Thus, the early period covers the first phase of frontier expansion in which there are few settlers who insert themselves in a land still supporting a considerable number of independent Khoisan groups. This phase ends with the settlers tipping the balance of frontier power in their favour in the disturbances of 1739. Penn then analyses the complex character of the period from 1740 to 1802, which saw a steady expansion of European settlement at the expense of the Khoisan, whose situation became increasingly desperate as their ability to sustain themselves declined. The closing years of the eighteenth century were ones in which the level of frontier violence escalated with casualties

on all sides, but taking the heaviest toll on the San in terms of the number of people maimed and killed.

The violence occurring within the colony spilled over into what Penn describes as the north-western frontier zone, a region lying beyond the jurisdiction of the VOC (Dutch East India Company). In this region people who were impacted upon directly and indirectly by frontier expansion sought to carve out a living for themselves in an environment in which the protection of a strong leader was often the key to survival. In the final part, covering the years 1790 to 1799, Penn analyses the impacts of missionary activity on the San. He examines in some detail the logic driving the location of missionary stations and relates their locations to the prevailing government policies toward the indigenous peoples.

The approach Penn takes in dividing his work into themes that cover specific areas, periods and peoples works extremely well. History as it evolves is seamless and any divisions are by definition somewhat arbitrary, but this does not mean any division is as good as the next. What Penn does in organizing his material is to focus on what might be considered the defining characteristics of each period or topic he addresses. In doing this Penn is able to provide the reader with a coherent picture of the frontier as it evolves during the eighteenth century. This process is a dynamic one leading to continuous change in the way people on the frontier relate to each other. Penn has organized his work around crisis situations that are associated with times of innovation and rapid change, resulting as time passes in a reconfiguration of the frontier life for all participants. Penn has done the work an author should do in organizing the material in a way that allows a reader to make sense of an exceedingly complex historical situation, without imposing an agenda that promotes a specific theoretical or ideological point of view.

When, in 1679, the VOC first allocated land in Stellenbosch to settlers, it envisaged a colony in which the colonists and Khoisan would share the land: settlers working their farms and the Khoisan persisting in their traditional nomadic ways of life. This scenario did not long survive. Settlers were quick to recognize the advantages of using the unimproved pasture all around them, and the VOC eventually sanctioned this development by granting them grazing permits. Once settlers had a legal mechanism to settle the frontier a clash between settlers and Khoisan was inevitable, but for several years the two groups, notwithstanding some sporadic violence, were able to coexist, because there were few settlers and lots of land. A key development occurred in 1715 when the ground rules of the burgher commando were established. In this prototype of future commandos the key development, Penn argues, involved the VOC legitimizing burgher control of how and to what degree the Khoisan would be punished for resisting the settlers, and underwrote the cost of the ammunition that might be used in the process.

The VOC's hold on frontier settlers was further reduced in the tumultuous year of 1739. In that year the Khoisan stepped up their resistance to the settlers targeting their cattle and sheep, and generally disrupting the advance of settlement. Penn describes the ensuing crisis in which a colonial rebel was able for a brief moment to capture the sympathy of settlers by advocating a hard line policy against the Khoisan. The VOC responded to this challenge to its authority by appeasing the settlers as a means of regaining their loyalty and isolating the rebel leader. The upshot of this episode was to strengthen the settlers' hold on the frontier and to reduce yet further the VOC's role as an arbiter of settler-Khoisan conflicts.

Taking advantage of their newly acquired power the settlers expanded their activities on the frontier pushing aside anyone who sought to oppose them. Penn demonstrates how the early commando became an effective mechanism of settler power, fully integrated into the society which it sought to protect and advance. The frontier became increasingly complex as the Khoisan strove to come to terms with settler hegemony. Many sought to survive by working for the settlers, often keeping their own cattle. Others were reduced to the status of employees without cattle, while a few clung on to their existence as independent graziers or hunter-gatherers. Amazingly, this one-sided settler advance was helped by VOC agents who still sought to acquire cattle from the Khokhoi and were not above putting pressure on them to part with their animals against their will. Yet further complexity was added to the frontier society by nonconforming settlers finding Khoikhoi women partners and producing hybrid families. Such people were not easily accepted by the racially conscious settler community and formed a distinctive new community of their own.

The accommodations that the Khoisan were able to make on this open frontier and the ways of life it fostered were not sustainable. Penn shows how, with the passage of time and the growth of the settler population, the Khoisan people were reduced to desperate straits. Most Khoikhoi were deprived of their cattle and lost what little independence they had managed to retain and became labourers on trekboer farms and subject to the whims of their employers. Deprived of ever more of their hunting grounds the San initiated guerrilla war against the colonists in a determined attempt to stop their advance. The 1770's saw an escalation of violence, in which the San were to a degree successful in temporarily driving the trekboers back, but in the process suffered appalling casualties from the commandos assembled to eliminate their resistance. These commandos killed the men they captured and distributed the women and children among the participants where they would become virtual slaves on settler farms. The evolution of the frontier, within the bounds of territory nominally controlled by the VOC, had major repercussions on lands bordering the colony. These areas attracted an assortment of peoples dissatisfied with colonial life and produced its own distinctive ways of life. Penn notes:

Namaqualand and the Orange River were not just a crucible where different races were mixed; they were also a haven of opportunity, a destination for people of mixed race or lowly social status... This was a mixed blessing. For every runaway slave or deserting soldier who wanted nothing more than to lead an independent existence, there was another who saw the freedom of the frontier as a license to violence.

The lawlessness of this zone beyond the frontier provided an opportunity for the formation of new communities under strong leaders who could then use their power to intimidate and terrorize people less well-organized than themselves. This zone was particularly attractive to the hybrid peoples of the frontier who, under effective leaders managed to achieve the kind of social status denied them in the colony itself. Penn has done a superb job in describing the emergence of new societies in this area, and tracing the complex relationships that developed between groups as they manoeuvred for advantage in a violent and harsh environment with limited resources. There were raids and counter raids, alliances and betrayals which Penn has meticulously reconstructed, seemingly using every shred of archival evidence he could lay his hands on.

It was somewhat of a relief for me as a reader to arrive at part IV: Civilising the San, 1790-1799. Although the violence associated with early periods was not yet at an end there was at least the prospect of something more enlightened than the brutal mindset of the earlier frontier. The coming of the missionaries combined with new government policies opened a new era of frontier history. As Penn demonstrates this period was shot through with politics, but there were new rules and different values added to the old mix. In this new environment the colonial government began to reassert control over what was more of a neglected than a forgotten frontier, and with these changes the old frontier came to an end. Penn concludes his book with a final chapter on 'The closing of the northern frontier', providing a detailed account of how new government policies would shape a new social order that retained its colonial character, but incorporated new thinking about the rights of all peoples.

In the preface to his book Penn notes:

A long time has passed since I first began writing the doctoral thesis that became this book. Like the eighteenth-century hunters and herders of the Cape interior who form such a large part of this study, I seemed to be moving at the pace of an ox, towards an ever-receding point on an illimitable horizon. The journey itself, the endless trek over fascinating terrain, seemed to sustain me more than the promise of arrival.

In producing this work it is understandable that Penn would feel that he had undertaken a seemingly never-ending journey, but the result of his efforts is a truly impressive study of the Cape frontier. This is well researched, mature work that is very different in its composition from a hastily published doctoral dissertation. There are few clues that suggest a doctoral study, instead there is an overwhelming sense that this work has benefited from its author becoming deeply immersed in his subject while gaining a perspective on it that only time can provide. In this work Penn has made a case for the importance of the northern frontier in Cape history, bringing new insights and material in support of his thesis. This work must now be considered the definitive study of the early Cape frontier. There is, in making a case for the significance of the frontier in Cape history, no need to set it against other formative influences such as slavery. There were several factors that produced a distinctive society in South Africa. Penn's outstanding work conclusively demonstrates that the frontier was one of these formative influences: it deserves to be given far more attention than it has received in recent years.

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What have we here? Let's start with the good news. It is forty years since Omer-Cooper published *The Zulu Aftermath*, thirty years since Webb and Wright published the first volume of their monumental edition of the Stuart Archive, nearly twenty years since Cobbing's seminal paper on 'The Mfecane as Alibi', and fifteen years since Hamilton convened the famous Mfecane Aftermath conference at the University of the Witwatersrand. And in all this time, and in spite of all the academic blood and ink which has been spilled in the so-called Mfecane debate, nobody before Dan Wylie has had the guts to confront the historical figure in the eye of the storm, Shaka Zulu himself. For this alone, Wylie deserves our thanks and our respect, a respect deserving to be multiplied ten times over inasmuch as his book is firmly based on the full range of hitherto underutilised Zulu sources recorded by Stuart. Even better, Wylie's book is not a rehash of former articles; not a rerun of his previous book; not an exercise in literary criticism; not full of words like 'enterrment' and 'layback'; with references to the likes of Barthes and Bhabha notable only by their absence.

What we have here is what Wiley calls an 'anti-biography' of Shaka, 'laying out, as far as possible, all the available evidence on Shaka's reign and, deciding item by item, what we can make of it' (3). There is indeed an urgent need for such a book, a book which we could all agree on, a book which could serve as a platform for some kind of historical consensus. But this is not such a book. Wylie is absolutely frank about his intellectual debt to Julian Cobbing, but, even if he were not, his allegiances could be inferred from such passages as 'the general upsurge of trade and slaving along the whole Mozambique coast between 1750 and 1790, combined with evidence of more ships visiting Delagoa Bay than before, implies that we can include the Bay in that upsurge' (69), 'We do not have ... an unambiguous report that the Ndwandwe sold off slaves to the Bay at this point in time. Nevertheless I think it's safe to say that slaving was the most important factor in stimulating the kinds of attacks being made' (164) and 'There is no record of Shaka's forces trashing Faku's main *umuzi* [in 1828] ... this sounds like a classic slave-raid' (462).

Shaka's reputation is naturally enough a beneficiary of this general line of argument. Hence 'Shaka's tough kind of rule was bound to breed enemies prepared to say just about anything about him. Many anecdotes about his viciousness were almost unquestionably misrepresented' (424). It is difficult to believe that Wylie's final verdict on Shaka – 'a leader utilising customary practices – including death sentences – to achieve a consolidation of power and control, rather than a tyrant pathologically addicted to cruelty for its own sake' (431) – is very different from the assumptions he made when he started to read the Stuart Archive. What Wylie is attempting to do in *Myth of Iron* is not to simply lay out the evidence but to open a new front in the Mfecane debate.

*Myth of Iron* is structured just like the biography which Wylie says it is impossible to write. There are 14 chapters in all, starting with Zulu origins in Chapter 1 and ending with Shaka's death in Chapter 14. The narrative mode is signalled by constant recourse to the apostrophe ('it's' rather than 'it is') and a facetious style of witticism that might go down well among the festinos but which reads uncomfortably on the printed page. Presumably this conversational style is intended to make the book more

accessible to the ordinary reader, but it seriously undermines the integrity and credibility of Wylie's enterprise. Some of the jocularities, especially those relating to circumcision ('isolated in the bush, nursing their doctored members' (p.51)) seem almost calculated to upset black readers. Serious points of debate – the changing nature of the *amabutho*, for example – pop up as digressions and are never systematically analysed. Disagreeable secondary authorities – Elbourne on the Delagoa Bay slave trade, for example – are summarily ignored.

Worst of all, the biographical format enables Wiley to assume the role of omniscient narrator, taking the readers into his confidence and showing them the scenery as it appears through his own blinkers. Did Shaka fill a donga with Qwabe bodies? 'The story is nonsense' (166). Did he maybe kill his own mother? 'The whole thing was a fabrication' (415). Wiley has spoken. Did Shaka have a speech defect, as several informants maintain? Wiley does not have to answer that one because he has already laughed off the entire question of Shaka's physical features, through discussing the appearance of his buttocks as early as page 6, seemingly a part of the body which people like Wiley find intrinsically amusing. Was Shaka circumcised (almost certainly not)? Was he illegitimately conceived when his father was still an uncircumcised youth (almost certainly)? If Shaka was not circumcised and his father was not circumcised, might that not tell us something about Shaka's decision to abolish circumcision? Wiley does not think so because – unlike five of Stuart's Zulu informants who are categorical that 'when Tshaka began his rule he put an end ... to circumcision among us Zulu'<sup>1</sup> – he is convinced that the practice died out of its own accord. So much for 'laying out, as far as possible, all the available evidence'.

For an academic writer so attuned to theoretical referents in *Savage Delight* (2000), his earlier book on 'white myths of Shaka', Wylie has made little apparent effort to come to terms with the equivalent literature on African oral tradition. The great potential contribution of *Myth of Iron*, as I have already pointed out, is that it attempts to exploit for the very first time the evidence of Stuart's informants. However, as it entirely fails to consider the nature and the status of this evidence, *Myth of Iron* misconceives and misunderstands it. I am not referring to such obvious aspects as the extent of Stuart's editorial interference, or the fact that so-and-so's father was a Qwabe raised among the Langeni. Black sources differ very little from white sources at this superficial level and Wylie's analysis is certainly as competent as anyone else's. The vital point which Wylie misses entirely, however, is that the Stuart testimonies are not eyewitness accounts but actual oral traditions.

Stuart's interviews took place between 1897 and 1922. The implication of this is that even those informants born before the death of Shaka in 1828 were not relating direct evidence acquired by themselves personally, but repeating oral traditions heard from their parents or grandparents. It is well-known of course, that oral tradition mutates along its chain of transmission, in the course of which mutation it shifts from literal to metaphorical truth. If I can digress to an example I know better, it is universally believed among the Xhosa that Governor Grey engineered the Nongqawuse catastrophe. Literally speaking this is untrue, and the different versions of Sir George hiding in the reeds, tricking Nongqawuse with brown sugar etc, are ludicrous and contradictory. Metaphorically, however the tradition is exactly right, as is the myth gener-

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1 C.D.B. Webb and J.B. Wright (eds.), *The James Stuart archive of recorded oral evidence relating to the history of the Zulu and neighbouring peoples* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 19??), vol. 2, 54.



ally believed in Grahamstown that the head of an old Xhosa chief lies buried in the foundations of the great Anglican cathedral. Furthermore, although oral traditions may distort or mislead, may be blatantly false and self-serving, may euphemise the seizure of power by a cliché or even a Bible story, they never ever distort for no reason at all. They can not be discounted simply because they relate events which are palpably impossible, or because the different variants contradict one another. Oral traditions often reveal precisely what they are doing their best to hide, and the task of the historian is to decode the tradition not to accept or reject it.

This is not Wiley's view. Six of Stuart's informants give six different variants of a tradition to the effect that Shaka filled a donga called Tatiyana Gorge with the corpses of the defeated Qwabe. Wiley has been unable to find Tatiyana Gorge anywhere and he feels that this entitles him to dismiss the oral tradition ('the story is nonsense' (166)); 'there was no massive slaughter of the Qwabe' (177); 'it is a legend' (313). We are lucky to have Wylie to put us right about these things; else we might be inclined to believe Melapi who 'was a young lad at the time ... and heard men speaking of the incident'.<sup>2</sup> Even legends need to be explained.

It should therefore come as no surprise that Wylie is equally dismissive of the equally widespread tradition that Shaka killed people simply to feed the vultures ('Wo! the birds of the king are hungry!')<sup>3</sup> Indeed, this story is less likely to be literally true because, unlike the story about the Qwabe and the donga, it is not located in a particular place at a particular time among particular people. Let us, however, pursue the thought that an oral tradition must mean something. Since feeding vultures is not a good reason to kill people, I would suggest that the meaning at the core of this particular tradition is that Shaka killed people without any sufficient justification. This is not very different from the statement of Shaka's aunt Mkabayi, as related by Magema Fuze in *The Black People and Whence They Came* (1922), that 'Shaka had terminated his father's people, killing them for nothing and no reason.' Nor, it is salutary to reflect, does the message of this oral tradition differ much from Nathaniel Isaacs's statement that 'in ordering any of his subjects to be killed, Chaka never gave his reason for consigning them to death until it was too late.'<sup>4</sup>

Another very interesting set of traditions coming out of the *James Stuart Archive* is that relating to the death of Nandi, Shaka's mother. This is discussed by twelve of Stuart's informants who, in the course of their testimony, mention another five informants making seventeen in all. Sixteen out of the seventeen associate Nandi's death with her attempt to protect a mother and/or child who had been fathered by Shaka. Fourteen of the seventeen agree that Nandi was murdered either by Shaka personally or on Shaka's orders, and that the mother and/or child were also killed. Of the three who acquit Shaka, one tells the story in full and only denies Shaka's responsibility at the very end. Another denies the story, but his friend who accompanies him to Stuart supports it. The entire evidence of the only informant who unequivocally asserts Shaka's innocence consists of no more than a single sentence.

On the basis of the (not very surprising) contradictions between the different versions of the story Wylie airily concludes that 'the whole thing was a fabrication' and as usual lays the entire blame on Henry Francis Fynn, ignoring the fact that neither

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2 Webb and Wright (eds.), *The James Stuart Archive*, vol. 3, 80.

3 Webb and Wright (eds.), *The James Stuart Archive*, vol. 1, 7.

4 N. Isaacs *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1937), Chapter 18.

Fynn nor Isaacs mention the story in their memoirs. The arithmetic as well as the balance of probabilities is clearly against Wylie but to depend on conventional historical argumentation is besides the point. It should make little difference to our interpretation whether the events being narrated actually occurred or not. There is no point in seeking literal truth where literal truth is not meant to be found. What this tradition is telling us is that, true or not, Zulu people came to believe that Shaka was the kind of man who was capable of killing his own mother and his own child. It is this perception – that Shaka was possessed of a will to power which negated the most elementary principles of human and family affection – that identifies him as a monster and a madman far beyond anything written by Fynn or Isaacs and which lend credibility to the tales of revolting cruelty related not only by the usual suspects, but by Baleka kaMpitikazi and other Zulu-speaking people.

Wylie clearly intends his book to reopen the Mfecane debate, in his view sadly and inexplicably stalled after the 1991 Wits conference (438-9). The ‘Ghost of Cobbing Past’ haunts these pages. Slave traders run amok as is their wont. The two hundred and fifty defeated and pathetic Griqua/Bergenaars of Adam Kok terrorise the Highveld. The second Zulu invasion of Mpondoland is nothing but a cover for a Henry Fynn slave raiding expedition. The Bhalule campaign was not aimed at Soshangane as we all thought, but at the booming slave port of Delagoa Bay. The phantasmagoria of the Mfecane-busters parade in all their fearsome glory, accompanied by the customary paraphernalia – selective quotation and straw men, not forgetting Fynn and Isaacs, the canned lions of the Mfecane-busting fraternity, long dead and discredited but once again put to the sword to impress the folks back home who don’t understand the situation. Wylie has likened the impact of Cobbing’s intervention to a ‘lightning bolt ... delivered to a complacent South African historical establishment’ (66). This is not the analogy I myself would have chosen. A more appropriate comparison would be a small monastic community discussing serious matters suddenly disturbed by a bunch of journalists asking questions about the Da Vinci Code. I once had some sympathy for the viewpoint that one could rescue the Cobbing hypothesis from its empirical errors and create a platform for going forward. Dan Wylie and Norman Etherington have finally disabused me of this illusion. I may not agree with Cobbing’s statements about ‘the trans-continental cross-fire of interrelated European plunder systems’ but Cobbing, at least, is always admirably clear. Wylie, on the other hand, explicitly states that ‘my own aim is not to whitewash Shaka’ (424), but the book as a whole amounts to nothing but.

The oral traditions concerning the murder of Nandi clearly show that in the last years of his life Shaka crossed a moral threshold over which the Zulu people were not prepared to follow him. Indications are that he envisaged the Zulu kingdom, which he had brought to fruition, not as a temporary expedient pending the defeat of the Ndwandwe enemy but as a permanent state of war, a state to be sustained not by normal economic production and human reproduction but by the plunder of other nations’ cattle and the recruitment of other nations’ youth. Such states were not unknown in Africa – the *ki-lombo* of the Imbangala in Angola is a case in point – and historians who would like to understand the reign of Shaka would be better advised to spend their time reading Joe Miller’s *Kings and Kinsmen* or E.V. Walter’s inadequately researched but nevertheless suggestive *Terror and Resistance* than ploughing their way through *Myth of Iron*.

JEFF PEIRES

*King William’s Town*

A True Story of a Sunburnt Queen is not, at first glance, the kind of story that attracts either feminists or historians of Africa. The title - and subtitle - are not promising. The chapter headings suggest that one has wandered into Princess Di terrain: 'The Wife-Beater King and the Trader'; 'The King-Killers and the Queens'; 'The Seer, the Drunk and the Rapist'. The dedication is breathless: 'for Kash and Ky, splendid men of the future'. The cover features four blondes, including the artist-author, and a sepia girl with smouldering eyes, surveying a tempestuous sea. One suspects, wearily, that a tale about a Shipwrecked Maiden looms.

The blurb confirms this. The book is about Bessie, the little English Castaway, wrecked long ago upon alien African shores. '*The Sunburnt Queen* is Bessie's mesmerising story, woven into the backdrop of the ... violent history of eighteenth and nineteenth century South Africa and the turbulent Eastern Cape Frontier.' The ten reviewers featured on the blurb share whiteness, English and journalism; all seem entranced. 'Crampton ... is set to give SA history a new perspective and a totally more readable face' (Winnie Graham, *The Star*.) '[R]eading *The Sunburnt Queen* is a Big Adventure' (Charlotte Bauer).

There is, in truth, more than enough in this 'Big Adventure' to explain why scholars might give it a miss. *The Sunburnt Queen* is a flawless rainbow-nation text. It is premised on the assumption that South African history should be about 'our diversity and unity as equal parts of a complex and interesting whole' (255). (South African history - extending beyond the author, her subject, her descendants, their immediate environment - is not Crampton's strong point.) The alleged readability of *The Sunburnt Queen* is apparently due to its effortless mix of tabloid hyperbole, scatological Americanisms and Victorian clichés. Crampton's topic required, one might have imagined, familiarity with the language that rooted her subjects in Africa - but here reigns *ubusuku obungenanyanga* (darkness without a moon.) Even Gquma (Roar), the name given Bessie, who lived and died as an Mpondo woman, has been poorly glossed.

Yet this *True Story* cannot be so easily dismissed. First, Crampton has a somewhat unusual background for a liberal historian. She was, in the 1980s, one of the few white female members of Umkhonto weSizwe, the military wing of the African National Congress. Transgression of racialized/sexualized codes and cultures is, undoubtedly, of more than academic interest to her. Second, women and genealogies feature prominently in her narrative - which Africanizes it, since peasants, too, accorded fertile wives and family trees more significance than westernized traditions often allow. Third, Crampton has not written a conventional castaway story: given the limitations of colonial sources, this is almost impossible. (Not even the ship in which Gquma was wrecked, or her family origins, are known.) She has instead focused on Gquma and her leading female descendants (extending to a great-great-granddaughter who died in 1906), who are all embedded in a broader canvas. This widens out from Mpondoland (where Gquma was wrecked around 1740), to the entire eastern frontier of the nineteenth century. The 375 pages, spanning some 150 years, thus contain much about staple frontier topics: indigenous polities, stretching from around Port Elizabeth in the south to the Zulu kingdom in the north, together with wars, trade, religion, diseases, shipwrecks.

Crampton is nothing if not passionately dedicated to investigating these themes. She has pursued almost any primary source that remotely relates to her subjects or their environment, spending at least a decade researching, writing and lavishly illustrating this book. She has trekked to, worked in or lived at almost every relevant site: not least by moving home, changing jobs, travelling extensively along hair-raising roads, and working in numerous archives, libraries, museums. *Umntu ononyawo*, one might say: a person with a foot. She has also carefully sifted through contradictory primary and secondary sources, emerging with numerous revisionist assessments.

Consequently, her text is dotted with thought-provoking statements and nuggets of information. A catastrophic smallpox epidemic, for example, swept through the eastern Cape and its frontier zones in the eighteenth century, fuelling widespread dislocation and dramatic changes. The epidemic has typically elicited but a phrase in standard secondary sources. Here, for the first time, is a convincing account of its date and origins (a shipwreck). Not surprisingly, amaXhosa demonstrated almost pathological fear of the plague-ridden sea for generations thereafter. Similarly, in the course of pursuing one of Gquma's granddaughters, Nonibe kaMjikwa, and her husband, Mdu-shane kaNdlambe, Crampton encountered intriguing details, previously unpublished, about nineteenth century frontier politics, and includes them here. No other secondary text, for instance, explores the cross-border raid that resulted in the imprisonment of the prophet Nongqawuse, or explains why the paramount ruler of Xhosaland, Rhili kaHintsisa, was classified as 'half-black'. (He descended, in the maternal line, from a female castaway.)

An overarching concern structures Crampton's arguments. People with hybrid genealogies, often stigmatized as amaLawu ('coloureds'), were historically more significant than many latter-day assessments allow. This argument is extended into the present. 'It would appear, therefore, that several present-day Xhosa-speaking royal families are descended from white castaways and, perhaps, from Bessie in particular' (185-6). If this disturbs nationalist promoters of sons of the soil, so be it. Crampton is not one to shy away from a world composed of amaLawu.

The True Story of a Sunburnt Queen, then, is unexpectedly rich - if the reader can swallow a paradigm and style approximating 'Barbara Cartland comes to iKapa'. An ex-guerrilla has outranked many a guild historian in her appetite for primary research. And, not least by forefronting women, procreation and Euro-African hybridity, she will undoubtedly attract a broader audience.

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In spite of an explosion in mission historiography over the last twenty years or so, historical accounts of the Vhavenda engagements with missionary Christianity remain relatively sparse. Kirkaldy's book seeks to fill this void with an account of the encounter between Venda chiefdoms and the Berlin Mission Society (BMS) in the late nineteenth century. Relying mainly on mission records, Kirkaldy approaches this history through the voices of both the missionaries and the Vhavenda. The missionary voices are 'strident' and demand only to be heard, whilst the 'quieter voices of local African rulers and people' are 'hidden' and need to be accessed. Although he promises an 'African voice' seldom heard in the nineteenth century sources, the results are remarkably familiar. Kirkaldy concedes far too much to the missionary voice from the outset: their voices are central to the story while African voices never quite emerge from the shadows.

Kirkaldy asserts that the encounter between the missionaries and the Vhavenda is best understood as a contest for supremacy between 'the power of Mission Christianity and the power of African Religion'. In his view, conversion entailed the substitution of one religion by another without any room for a 'blending of Christianity and African religious beliefs' until the emergence of independent African churches. The Berlin missionaries had assumed all the initiative and effectively silenced the 'African voice', forcing converts to accept their version of Christianity. African rulers or members of royal families expressed the 'African voice' by rejecting Christianity and reaffirming their commitment to their own religion. What conditions prevented African Christians from doing so at this stage Kirkaldy leaves unsaid.

The argument is dated and misses much of the complexity of missionary Christianity. Historical agency is poorly defined and thus we know very little about the lives of African Christians, the vast majority of Africans or even the missionaries. The reason is because Kirkaldy almost completely ignores the growing and rich literature on missionary Christianity. One searches in vain for some acknowledgement, even in the bibliography or index, of the excellent and provocative studies of Paul Landau or Lamin Sanneh for example. Where he is aware of such work it is in a limited fashion and its significance is not reflected in the book. Even with the South African literature that he specifically identifies as his main reference, Kirkaldy fails to critically engage with it. This failure has serious implications for the kinds of 'voice' he searches for and finds.

To access the 'African voice,' Kirkaldy starts and ends the book with chapters primarily focused on the African people and rulers. Following a 'background and context' chapter, Kirkaldy begins his account by showing how African male labour migrants to Natal and the Cape colonies had first introduced Christianity in Venda. Although some of these converts later lapsed, a few retained and also 'blended Christianity with aspects of African Religion'. Isolated from other Christians and faced with hostility, they failed to win converts among adults and focused instead on their own children. For 'support and guidance' in their faith, the converts pinned their hopes on the coming of the missionaries. The arrival of Berlin missionaries was transformative: they challenged the converts' faith and demanded 'conformity to doctrinally pure Christianity'

and personal subservience. The converts were equally reduced to the status of 'native assistants' and placed under 'pastoral supervision' and were therefore voiceless. Kirkaldy suggests that two converts accepted their status as 'native assistants' while others rejected it and relapsed to their 'heathen' ways.

The 'African voice' and the battle for supremacy between the two religions, however, are best appreciated in the interactions between the African rulers and the missionaries. Kirkaldy asserts that it was in this context that the 'African voice again cries to be heard.' Focusing on the Mphaphuli chiefdom, Kirkaldy suggests that the missionaries unsuccessfully sought to convert one of the ruler's sons, Makwarela, in order to win more converts. Although Makwarela acquired some literacy, adopted 'western material culture' and even sought baptism, he had largely interacted 'with Christianity in his own terms'. In a triumph for African religion and an expression of the 'African voice', Makwarela ultimately 'breaks free' from the missionaries and 'chose to re-assert his power through the power of African religion' (11). His success was due to his 'character and power (because of his royal position).' It is misleading, however, to suggest that this chapter concerned a ruler: the 'skilful and shrewd' *khosi* completely drops out of view once he allows the missionaries into his chiefdom. Nor is there a convincing explanation of how the son became the 'great hope' for the missionaries.

The bulk of the book is devoted to the 'strident voices' of the missionaries. In terms now largely familiar, Kirkaldy first traces the history of the BMS stressing its roots in 'Pietism', then turns to the social origins and the theological training of the missionaries sent to Venda. Kirkaldy shows how the BMS largely succeeded in transforming recruits drawn from the 'lower-middle and artisan' classes into the ideal missionaries grounded in its conservative theology and 'German culture'. This success was best exemplified by Klaas Koen, a black man from the Cape: he was not only thoroughly Christian, but had also become 'white' or 'German'. The account is more revealing about Kirkaldy's faith in the ability of institutions including mission societies to thoroughly transform individuals with relative ease. He leaves little room for individuals, whether missionaries or African converts, to equally shape these institutions and practices.

The missionary voices proper take up the four remaining chapters. Kirkaldy focuses on the encounter and the relationship between the missionaries, the landscape/environment and the Vhavenda and their rulers. Through texts, iconography, etchings and photography, the missionaries depicted the landscape and the people in negative, pathological terms and fashioned antagonistic relationships with both. Kirkaldy suggests how the missionaries sought to refashion the African body by attacking initiation rituals and further constructed knowledge about the society and beliefs so as to undermine pre-existing institutions of 'authority and influence'. If missionary Christianity was to succeed, both the landscape and the people had to be brought under the control of white, German culture. This is a fine account though it remains wedded to countering the missionaries in their own terms.

Whilst it adds some details about the Berlin missionaries and their presence among the Vhavenda, this is a disappointing and fundamentally flawed book. It therefore fails to significantly advance our understanding of either the nineteenth-century history of Venda and the region or the social history of the Berlin missionary Christianity. What is missing is a more complex picture that rules out the singular, homogenous and ungendered 'African voice' that Kirkaldy privileges. A different voice would centrally place the strategic choices men, women, royals, commoners, young and old made as

more important than those of the missionaries or simply rulers. Equally, the options for people will not be limited to conformity and subservience or for rulers, because of their royal blood, the invocation of the power of an exclusive 'African Religion' that commoners had no access to. Notwithstanding Kirkaldy's protests, his book does, to varying degrees, speak on behalf of or for missionaries and traditional leaders.

For a book concerned with 'capturing the soul', it is resoundingly silent on the day-to-day activities of mission work, or the lives and roles of African Christians in it. One gets an overwhelming impression that the missionaries were mainly concerned with ensuring that the early converts got the 'true' religion and the conversion of a ruler. What passes for a discussion of mission work is limited to scattered references about church and class attendance and baptism classes (see footnote, p. 74). Beyond these tantalising hints, we similarly have no idea either of what categories of the Vhavenda found missionary Christianity appealing. Some people supposedly acquired literacy, but there is no discussion at all about schools or whether they attracted more people than the church and what this might say about African strategic choices. Such a discussion might have led to different voices.

By ruling out 'blending' for African converts after the arrival of missionaries until the emergence of African churches, Kirkaldy further misses opportunities to tease out their full experiences. Passing references are made to evangelization tours, but Kirkaldy conveys the impression that the 'pastoral supervision' was so complete that the African converts could only echo the missionary voices. Nor could they do so in a vacuum: they did so because of equally complex interactions with their own societies, missionaries and the encroaching colonialism of the South African Republic. While aware that African evangelists had continued to play an important role in the spread of missionary Christianity, Kirkaldy fails to appreciate the conclusions of some recent studies - that they also shaped it in important and often contradictory ways in spite of pastoral supervision.

The closest we get to the lives of converts are dry statistics relegated to the 'background and contexts'. It is in the daily lives of converts that intense struggles over meanings and their voices could have been found. Kirkaldy similarly misses finding African voices in colonial discourse because he reduces the missionary voices to a monologue, rather than a complex dialogue, with a largely mute population. The 'creation and contestation' of landscape is not exclusive to either the missionaries or rulers alone, but equally to others.

The silences around women and gender are particularly noteworthy in this work. The 'African voice' is predominantly male and elite with women completely silent. Still, we hear that the wives of two of the 'conventicle' had 'joined the praying and the singing' and had cheered up the men, but we know nothing about them. Neither do we learn in a footnote (47) about the baptism of Mufanatsho, Johannes Mutshae-ni's widow, after her husband's death. Why she had waited to be baptised only after her husband's death, Kirkaldy does not say. Was she, or any woman, involved at all in the missionary project? Are the mission records so silent about her? For the most part, women were followers of either their husbands or sons, or else 'tempting' some missionaries. Moreover, even the missionary experience was an entirely male experience: the women appear as 'mail brides' and remain in the background until they are mourned and buried by their husbands.

Although rulers are accorded a somewhat significant position in this account, the 'African voice' they represent is equally limited relative to that of the white missionar-

ies. Rather than an alternative to the 'missionary interpretations' of Makwarela's interactions with mission Christianity, Kirkaldy largely echoes the missionary voices. Not only was Makwarela the victim of a predictable inner conflict, but Kirkaldy's alternative argument suggests that he was in a 'liminal position' and, worse still, 'traumatised' and through him so was the whole society. The basis of this trauma is rather slender: a single dream that could only be reduced to Christian themes of damnation and salvation. Kirkaldy goes further: royal dreams were equally experienced by society at large with exactly the same meaning. God does work in mysterious ways indeed.

Importantly, however, Makwarela's actions appear to undermine rather than lend support to the battle for supremacy thesis. According to Kirkaldy, Makwarela had pointedly sought baptism not as a replacement, but as a complement to his pre-existing beliefs. Rather than Makwarela, it was the missionaries who insisted on a clear choice because they saw a conflict in combining what they considered irreconcilable religions. Kirkaldy similarly perpetuates this myth, but incredulously pins the conflict on Makwarela. Besides, long before he invited the Berlin missionaries to his father's chiefdom, Makwarela had adopted aspects of 'western material culture' without displaying any symptoms of a 'trauma'. Nor should we treat creative adaptations as the preserve of royalty or a latter development in independent churches. Indeed, complex adaptations were not unique to colonial Africa, but appear to have been the norm in the spread of 'world religions'.

It is, however, puzzling that with the weight he places on the 'power of African Religion,' Kirkaldy does not discuss it any fashion. Nor does he even attempt to directly connect this 'African Religion' to the abundant mission records on the 'structures of local belief'. If we go by his most cited example, the 'African Religion' appears to be synonymous with polygamy. But can we still talk about a single, undifferentiated 'African Religion?' Capitalising it is a lame option: it only calls attention to its questionable status.

It is unlikely that the 'nature of the sources' alone are solely responsible for the 'African voice' from the mission records. Nor is it enough to seek refuge, as Kirkaldy does, in the claim that commoners and outsiders cannot fully understand the 'complexities' of the missionary project. In addition to alternative approaches, one can certainly make a start by reading the sources more critically instead of assuming that a scholar's task is merely confined to listening to them speak. It is puzzling, for example, that the reconstruction of the interactions between Makwarela and Koen predominantly rely on a 'tractate' produced in 1896 to celebrate Koen's life. It needs to be read against other mission sources such as diaries, letters and reports. Admittedly, the Transvaal Republic records are limited, but are they completely irrelevant to an account of missionary Christianity?

However rich the mission records are one wonders, though, if Kirkaldy's work would not have been greatly enriched through oral interviews. Is there anything to learn, for example, from the descendants of the evangelist Nathaniel Lalumbe who are relatively easy to locate? Or from other Christians, many of whom can still be found around the former mission stations, and non-Christians? The closest Kirkaldy comes to doing so are 'informal conversations' with his colleagues who largely confirm how 'certain traditions' continue to this day. Does this reflect some sort of distrust of oral sources? Recent works in the field clearly point out the considerable advantages to be gained by combining both oral interviews and archival sources.

Finally, the 'double' referencing format adopted is odd. Kirkaldy does not offer



any explanation for using an alphabetical format for footnotes and numbers for endnotes. The reader is left to puzzle whether this is one of the reported ‘negotiations’ with ‘academic conventions’ alluded to in the introduction. Unfortunately, some important materials that should have been integrated into the analysis have been relegated to these footnotes. One can only hope this referencing convention never catches on.

While Kirkaldy has taken some first tentative steps, we still await a more complex account and understanding of the history of the Vhavenda and missionaries. To be sure, future accounts will start with this book because of its rich mission records.

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There is a well-known literature on the language of racial difference, and on how images of blackness have been metaphorically incorporated into English discourse about social, economic and political matters. In this book Zine Magubane, an associate professor of sociology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, explores this well-worn field with reference mainly to Britain and South Africa in the nineteenth century. She combines this literature with a parallel literature about the origins and emergence of economic and social thought in the development of capitalism, the rhetoric and imagery in which such conceptualisations were enmeshed, and in particular, the ways in which they facilitated the separation of political and economic into discrete domains, which served capitalism so well. Magubane argues that economic historians have not taken on board the ways in which images and discussions of the colonised world have impinged on the development of economic and social thought generally. That is her task, to bring the metaphorical uses of race to bear on the larger formulations of knowledge in Britain in the nineteenth century. To this end she makes use of colonial South Africa largely as the metropolitan powers did, as a source of raw material rather than as an end in itself. Often the African end of her story disappears from view altogether, partly, one supposes, because the people she's writing for are not terribly interested in it anyway.

She ranges widely, drawing liberally on Marxist and post-modern traditions, viewed through a strongly feminist prism. She tries to bridge the divides between these approaches, and is at pains to stress the commonalities between them, not least the importance both attach to language and signification as terrains of power and resistance. Issues of language and meaning are central to her treatise. She also joins with those who reject the binary opposition between the metropolitan and the colonial. They both belong to the same analytical field. Thus imperialism and the constructions of racial identity that went with it were not processes external to the metropole. Rather, they were integrally part of Western modernity. Although she does not throw much by way of new and original light on the histories of the countries she looks at, or indeed the 'bourgeois' forms of discourse she attacks, she demonstrates a mastery of the discursive traditions she draws on and the tropes of knowledge they have spawned. To what end, however one asks oneself. She ranges so widely through the forests of current intellectual fashion that the reader can lose sight of what she's trying to achieve.

Issues of gender run through Magubane's analysis. Thus she is very concerned with what she calls the 'transformation of commodification into sexuality'. Racial and sexual 'embodiment', in the Foucaultian sense, was crucial to the making of capitalist ideology. Her contention is that writing women's bodies and women's work out of the narrative of capitalist development facilitated the separation of the 'economic' sphere, so as to sustain the illusion that the 'economic' was driven by an impersonal, invisible hand, in which considerations of power relations had no role to play. The class organisation of production under capitalism however, was largely a function of the gendered division of labour. Women had to be extruded from productive processes before a wage labour system could take root. Women's subsistence labour was the

greatest impediment to the process of primitive accumulation, meaning the divorce of the worker from the means of production. Primitive accumulation, in short, depended on the introduction of political power into the production process, which was in part directed at transforming both the ways in which women laboured and how women's labour was thought about and described. Hence women's bodies were at the centre of the struggle between classes. In this discourse, images of the colonised female was a constant referent

Magubane then moves on to colonised male bodies, how images of them provided a stock set of images and metaphors for constituting public knowledge about the destitute in England. There was a clear association between the able-bodied poor in England and the racialised colonial 'Other'. Discussions on the sources and causes and remedies for poverty drew heavily on racial tropes. In reality these discourses were about controlling and disciplining labour. The poor were demonised particularly for their 'unnatural' gender organisation, for which the colonial Other provided the template.

She also introduces the concept of the 'social body', examining how bodily metaphors were commonly used to diagnose and mend social ills. It was, again, a profoundly gendered concept, requiring male expertise and leadership and female subservience. All social pathologies that stood in the way of capitalist accumulation could be rectified by the proper medicine, informed by a newly formulated social theory according to scientific principles. Thus the cause of societal problems lay in the subjective dispositions of individuals, and remedial action bypassed any consideration of the social relations of capitalist power.

Chapter 5 looks specifically at the South African War and the way it was used by excluded groups in Britain, working-class men and middle-class women, to push their own case for inclusion in the body politic. The war was superficially about the refusal of the franchise to uitlanders in the Transvaal, but it could also be presented as a capitalist war to increase the profits of the gold-mining companies. Both views served the purposes of campaigners in Britain. Thus the war and the images of suffering colonial bodies (black and Boer) that came out of it became symbolic of the narrow and exclusive nature of the power structure in Britain. Despite the historically specific focus of this chapter, the topic is dealt with very abstractly and there is little real history here.

We then turn in two chapters to the question of African resistance, particularly in the context of images and representations. Chapter 6 explores representations of whiteness in the African imagination. Magubane argues that Africans inverted the myth of the civilising mission. Africans, unlike Europeans, never developed an essentialist, biological view of racial difference, but saw it as a social construct. Africans thus were able, up to a point, to demythologise and 'desacralise' whiteness.

Chapter 7 deals with the ways in which Africans imagined and represented blackness. Africans used images of African-Americans as represented in the popular culture of the day (minstrelsy, touring musical groups) to negotiate their identities and to speak back. African political identity was based inevitably on its own forms of exclusion. African women and uneducated black men were stigmatised as unsuited to the exercise of equal citizenship. Again, these chapters are heavy on abstraction and light on historical specificity.

In her conclusion, Magubane ponders the possibility of constructing a general theory of race, class and gender that would be universally applicable. This is a discussion that is heavily America-centric. That is really part of the problem. Despite

protestations to the contrary, the post-colonial view seems strangely analogous to the colonial view. The colonial periphery provides images and representations that serve to inform perceptions and debates at the Anglo-American centre, but have no lived reality otherwise. In fact, one might be tempted to suggest that one purpose of a book like this is to stake a claim to inclusion in a small, select, elite group of high metropolitan theorists who are less interested in the real world than in elaborating an arcane discourse with a suitably impenetrable language from which ordinary mortals, not least the colonised and marginalized groups they claim to champion, are excluded. It would be an interesting exercise to subject this book to the ministrations of one of those plain-language practitioners adept at rendering complex notions in language we can all understand. I suspect it would end up being a fairly slim volume.

There is also something a bit incestuous here. Ideas already in circulation get regurgitated in new and more complex formulations, so that the writer's claim to inclusion in the select ranks depends not so much on saying something original and new, but in demonstrating one's mastery of the ideas and arguments (and not least the arcane language) of those who have gone before. It would be fair to say that much of this book depends heavily on the extant secondary literature (much of it highly abstract), and original empirical research is a bit thin on the ground. What does one say of a literature that summarily dismisses over two hundred years of economic and social thought as capitalist obfuscation and dissembling? Or that cleaves to a vision of the world as consisting of rapacious capitalists and exploited wage slaves as if we do not live in a very different world from the one Marx lived in?

This book provides a depressing insight into the state of American academia. This is not just the view from the ivory tower, but from outer space. America (and the West more generally) is a troubled and self-doubting place. But surely there is something more to be said for liberal democracy and the world of knowledge and perception it has spawned than this withering and self-satisfied condemnation?

I confess to having read Magubane's book with a weary sense of *déjà-vu*. I remember an earlier era (the 1970s), when a rather more structural form of Marxism was the rage. I remember the struggle amongst students to master the language and the concepts required to join the ranks of the academic insiders, the corrosive sense of contempt for those who could not or would not see the world our way, the cliquish arrogance that pervaded the whole exercise. It must often have seemed that the universities were in danger of becoming engines of unthinking conformity. It all seems now to have been such a waste of time, especially as none of it really engaged with the real world, in which real struggles were being waged. Universities are as prone to herd-like behaviour, founded on claims to special knowledge and special expertise, as any other social institution. Perhaps more so.

Having said all that, however, I should in the interests of fairness, add that I did learn much from this book about the state of play in current debates about the cultural meaning of empire. It is a fecund field, which has yielded much exciting scholarship. Magubane has taken much of it on board. Others will respond very differently to her book and see a great deal more of value in it. Having read it, however, I cannot help but see a once open and vibrant debate grown sclerotic and inward-looking.

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More than a century after his early death, Cecil Rhodes - the man and his works - remains controversial and bitterly contested. Despite acres of prose and poetry devoted to assessing him and his accomplishments, robust treatments on the stage and in film, many museum exhibits, paintings and sculptures, and elaborate commemorations, Rhodes' legacy is neither fixed nor secure. Recently, to the consternation of Maylam and others, Rhodes, imperialist of the old Africa, was even tied in perpetuity to Nelson Mandela, icon of the new Africa, through the clever creation of the Mandela-Rhodes Foundation.

Maylam's valuable book recounts all of the myriad ways in which Rhodes has been depicted in print, in other media, and in bronze and stone. It contemplates the grave sites. It also examines the other and much more important institutions through which Rhodes' name and Rhodes' bequests continue to exert profound posthumous influence - the Rhodes Scholarships, Rhodes University, and Oriel College and the University of Oxford. However, Maylam does much more than gather together and untangle all of the octopus-like tentacles that extend out from the Rhodes corpus. Why, he asks, does Rhodes still preoccupy us, in some cases obsessively? Why should lay people and scholars still care?

After all, Maylam believes that Rhodes was overrated, even mediocre and puerile, a racist, and an inebriate. Maylam implies that Rhodes once and for all should be consigned to the dustbin of history. 'How was it', Maylam asks, 'that such a mediocre person could have generated so much historical and fictional literature, so many monuments and memorials, so much commemorative naming, so many anniversary celebrations?' (159)

For Maylam, the answer to that question is found in following the money. Rhodes bequests were critical. So was his 'obsessive desire for immortality' and his ability in life and afterwards of gathering around him a coterie of admirers 'who would initiate and sustain a long hagiographic tradition after his death'. Maylam ends his discussion by writing, flatly, that 'Rhodes desired, and purchased, his own immortality.' (159)

Readers should indulge Maylam's pique. For the book as a whole offers a much fuller and more nuanced contribution to the appreciation of Cecil Rhodes than the above, somewhat silly, baldly-stated, conclusions would imply. At some important level, Maylam does understand that Rhodes is still written about (witness the book under review) and his deeds and baleful influence dissected obsessively, firstly because Rhodes had an immense impact on the imperial project of southern Africa, and secondly because he and his life remain enigmatic.

If Rhodes were so mediocre and puerile, how did he manipulate others - including the British crown - so effectively? If he were so lacking in ability, how did he stumble toward such personal prominence and success (before the Jameson Raid) and do so much to shape the historical trajectory of southern Africa? How did he do so when he had so little money and when others in South Africa (in the 1870s and early 1880s) were much wealthier? Rhodes' short life was multifaceted, enormously complex, and, because he himself was never reflective in letters or diaries, not easy to

epitomize as simply (and crudely) as Maylam and others have wished. Although several biographers have tried to provide a solid basis on which to judge Rhodes, warts and all, the legacy is more expansive and its tentacles reach farther than even those of the man himself.

I am one of those biographers. It is not often that a biographer is provided by thoughtful journal editors with an opportunity to reflect further on his subject and to ponder a responsible, insightful critique of one's approach and also of the subject's standing. Maylam's ideas, in other words, need to be respected. Nonetheless, his more provocative and revisionist suggestions (repeated over and over in each of the chapters, especially chapter 5) should not go un-remarked.

Was Rhodes unintelligent, mediocre, and puerile, as Maylam reports? In *The Founder* (1988), I lay out in some detail Rhodes' many academic weaknesses. He took a very long time to achieve a pass degree at the University of Oxford and never feigned any interest in intellectual pursuits. He would have scored high on any test of emotional intelligence, however, and the fact that he manipulated others in South Africa and in Europe hardly testifies to his lack of 'smarts'. To conclude that Rhodes was a mere agent, not an initiator, also misreads the historical record (146). Yes, he adapted and employed the ideas of others as well as his own, but doing so testifies more to his abilities than to his limitations.

He was a crude man in many ways and (as *The Founder* recounts) described and lived out juvenile-like fantasies. Is it accurate, though, to call him puerile, which implies a kind of arrested development as well as mere immaturity? As for mediocre, no one who accomplished so much (good or evil) should be put down in that manner without some minimal comparative discussion. Mediocre as compared to whom in his South Africa, or in the Empire? There were many more intellectually accomplished and more personable contemporaries in Rhodes' South Africa and beyond, but we are still interested in Rhodes because he did more - influenced more outcomes in a brief few decades (I use neutral formulations) - than anyone else. No outsider is more responsible for the historical outcome of southern Africa in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. That is why Maylam and I, and many others, have written so many words about Rhodes.

As *The Founder* thoroughly details, Rhodes was a heavy drinker - even for the time. What he achieved, he did despite all of the booze. No one, however, ever called him a drunk or suggested that his errors of omission or commission were due to drink. We should also remember (Maylam hardly comments on this aspect) that Rhodes' heart and circulatory problems certainly shortened his life and led him, very early, to think openly about continuity beyond mortality. Maylam criticizes Rhodes for caring and securing his legacy. Maylam derides the grave in the Matopos for its studied simplicity. Given Rhodes' physiological state, his thrust for some measure of 'immortality' seems rational and obvious.

There are many additional interpretations that are worthy of comment. One is Maylam's suggestion that Rhodes was closest to Neville Pickering, briefly his young associate. Pickering was a love object, for sure, but Rhodes was more intimate and more at one with Leander Starr Jameson, with whom he shared a small house, many wild schemes, and bitter failures. Maylam does not question my conclusion that Rhodes was assuredly homosexual. Very recently new Canadian research (supplementing my speculative causal conclusion in 1988) suggests that the biological basis of homosexu-

ality may be influenced by birth order - by the fact that a mother has several boys prior to the subject, in this case Cecil Rhodes.<sup>1</sup>

There are some personal issues that must be dealt with, too, and to respond to them I ask the indulgence of readers of this review. Maylam repeatedly wishes that my 'thorough' biography of Rhodes had been more antagonistic. He calls it 'soft'. Of the new opening chapter (in the second edition of the biography) attempting to link Rhodes' success as an opportunist and manipulator to his early empathic ties to his mother, Maylam complains that it seeks to rehabilitate Rhodes. Nothing of the sort was intended: only an explanation of why he may have behaved in the way that he did.

'Softness' obviously is best judged by readers and critics. Yet, as I tried to say very clearly in *The Founder*, Rhodes was both evil and less evil, even good. To say that the biography, based on the extensive research that Maylam kindly acknowledges, is 'soft' implies that the same acquaintance with the 'facts' should have led to a 'hard' - read slashing - condemnation of the man and his works. But I still contend that Rhodes' motives and acts are too complex and multifaceted - and nearly always so completely situational and opportunistic - to compel a conclusion that Rhodes was purely evil, or consumed by evil, with no redeeming qualities. Certainly Rhodes was not a 'good' person, and *The Founder* makes that point over and over again. He must be blamed (as I said) for the foundation stones of apartheid, for undermining and then subverting the existing Cape African franchise, for hoodwinking the Ndebele, for running roughshod over the weak, for sharp share-dealing practices, for some general 'slimness', and for much more. There are no excuses for the above, but simple condemnations will not do for Rhodes. Maylam and I do not disagree over the facts, only over adjectives and adverbs.

There is a further point. Biographers should try to be even-handed. To praise or condemn is a task more for readers than for those who attempt to capture the full range of actions of multifaceted world figures.

Maylam objects to my calling Rhodes charismatic. However, Maylam's own book, in its entirety, spells out the nature of Rhodes' charisma. That he was memorialized and celebrated, and now tied cynically to Mandela, testifies to Rhodes' magnetism and charisma. There is no gainsaying it.

Rhodes must be discussed in all of his complexity. No person in imperial history is more multi-dimensional (and less mediocre). No person shaped his own time and history as forcefully as Rhodes. Few radiated passion so decisively. Few gathered so many followers and believers, an issue that should be explained, not derided (as in Maylam's book). That is why he remains of profound interest as a magnate and a man.

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1 R.Blanchard, J.Cantor, A.E.Bogaert, S.M.Breedlove and L.Ellis, 'Interaction of Fraternal Birth Order and Handedness in the Development of Male Homosexuality', *Hormones and Behavior*, vol. 49, 2006, 405-414.

*The Maphumulo Uprising* is Jeff Guy's fourth book centred around the tidal waves of troubles that beset the Zulu people at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. In this era of quick and transient analysis, it is good to read a true scholar's interpretation of people and places that he knows well. It is 'nearly 40 years' (268) since Shula Marks' book on the Zulu uprising of 1906 was published, and one gets the sense that Guy has been pondering its historiography in every intervening year.

This is not a story of the entire Zulu rebellion of 1906, sometimes known as Bambatha's Rebellion. Based largely on legal records, it tells an unrelentingly grim story of the second phase of the rebellion in the Maphumulo District, when news of events and forces in the rest of Zululand ignited smoldering local discontent. It is hard to read this book. This is not due to any lack of skill on Guy's part, but rather too much: he is lyrically unsparing in his description of the inane, gory cruelties of the Natal forces as they eagerly interpreted anger against the recently-instituted poll tax as an attempt by 'the natives' to bring down the entire colonial government. Guy's readings of his sources has convinced him that the Natalians saw in the murder of two whites the long-desired opportunity to conquer the Zulu in ways that Shepstonian administrative schemes and circumstances had denied them. Indeed, they took their chances with both hands, each grasping a rifle filled with extraordinarily destructive ammunition, as it were. For the loss of a ridiculously small number of white colonial soldiers, thousands upon thousands of Zulu men were massacred in the middle of 1906. The vengeful Natal armies laid waste to the countryside, and Guy reveals how this violence tore huge holes in the intricate relationships of the fabric of Zulu society. It makes for shameful and indelibly harsh reading.

Because Guy focuses on Maphumulo, he can weave his tragic tale in intricate detail on two fronts. Firstly, the topography of the district becomes an integral part of the story. Readers who are not familiar with Natal may wish for old-fashioned photography of the landscape but they are offered seven nifty computer-generated topographical maps. Guy's combatants march, pillage and plunder (and in one case, cycle) through lovingly described locales. Historians do not often get the chance to match their material so closely to its physical setting, and the chance to do so here was clearly a chance which Guy relished.

The second detailed aspect of this book is the way it follows the histories of four ill-fated patriarchs: two chiefs and two traditional healers. Through their stories Guy is able to evoke the entire sweep of the rapacious colonial project and the waning moral economy of the Zulu.

Six years ago Benedict Carton's *Blood From Your Sons* (2000) brought a gendered lens to bear on the Zulu Uprising of 1906, proposing that the uprising was fuelled and marked by fatal tension between Zulu elders and young men. This, he argued, was a conflict of changing masculinities; not only between the white colonials and 'the Zulu' but between collaborating older men and younger men who wanted to free themselves



of subservience to older patriarchal norms. Thus, the lines of the uprising were drawn in and out of Zulu society, not simply down a colonial/African meridian.

Guy spurns this approach. For him, whatever frictions there might have been between older and younger Zulu men were only a minor aspect of a slowly developing joint consciousness of the colonial intention to finally subdue the Zulu. Decade after decade Zulu sons built on the understanding of previous generations that the white man's world held no brief for any notions of their political or economic agency. Thus, for Guy, the looming hegemony of colonialism vastly overshadows any generational conflict.

In some ways Guy's greater command of his material wins the day over Carton's first foray into Zulu history. The photograph which forms the cover of *The Maphumulo Uprising*, for example, is only identified in Carton's book on page 65 as a photo of a victim of starvation in the early 1900s. Yet this was Mbombo kaSibindi Nxumalo, one of the traditional healers fingered by the colonial forces as an instigator of the revolt, and a great deal of Guy's narrative discusses not only Mbombo's role but the opportunity which this presents to delve into the grisly subject of the use of body parts as a constitutive part of African strengthening medicine. Carton's copy of the photograph of the emaciated Mbombo was drawn from the Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository; but Guy's was sourced from Rhodes House, Oxford, where the subject was identified by name and the photo dated and sourced. Thus the farther-flung metropolitan records ironically prove more facilitative of African history.

In other ways, however, Guy misses the opportunity to build on Carton's gendered insights. We are told on page 85 that Guy has a forthcoming paper on the 'crucial and unrecognized' role of women in war in South Africa. Given his track record of gendered analysis dating from his contribution to Cheryl Walker's 1990 volume, one can anticipate that the forthcoming paper will make a substantial contribution. There are, nevertheless, no women presented in *The Maphumulo Uprising* other than fleetingly, in the hallowed historiographical role of victims, along with children, of military aggression. One could argue that as Guy's Zulu protagonists – some doomed to die on the gallows, some not – wrestled with an implacably racist foe that their image of themselves as men was ultimately at stake. Guy, however, does not use the language of masculinity studies, so such a perspective on Zulu history can be sensed but not really grasped in his pages. It is therefore quite unmistakable that for Guy, 'the Zulu experience' can be accurately and adequately represented in the historiographical absence of women, and with an implicitly rather than explicitly articulated perspective on masculinity.

A final example of the two historian's differing approaches: Ndhlovu kaThimuni, head of the Nodunga chiefdom, survived the rebellion. In 1902 he was interviewed for what became the James Stuart Archives. From Volume 4, Guy chose to emphasize the chief's reported understanding of 'the single, most important fact of Natal's colonial history ... that the colony had been founded on a compromise between the colonial and African authorities; it had not been conquered by force, but acquired by negotiation...' (45): a straight line. Yet Carton (77) focused on another piece of Ndlovu's testimony in the same volume of the Stuart Archives that suggested that the main problem was that a gentleman's agreement between African patriarchs and 'our fathers ... who were magistrates at Stanger' was being eroded due to the disinterest and hostility of younger colonial officialdom: a crooked line.

Of Guy's protagonists, the stalwart Ndlovu best personified the continuity of Zulu history. He was not hung or shot by the colonial authorities after the Uprising, but he was exiled to St Helena. He was returned to Natal in 1910, however, and gradually worked his way back to a position of some authority. He lived until 1928, one feels, as one tenacious link between his people's past and its future.

*The Maphumulo Uprising* will be rewarding reading for experts in Zulu and Natalian history as well as a more popular readership interested in histories of conquest and resistance in southern Africa.

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In 1922 the Rand region of South Africa witnessed an extraordinary explosion of revolt by white workers that combined repulsive race violence against black residents with an insurrection against the despotism of capitalist work relations. For historians of the left this has posed a particular problem leading to ambiguous moral and political responses to a white worker strike that combined aspects of a revolutionary critique of capitalism with the racist ideology that became the central feature of South African politics. Jeremy Krikler aptly describes this dilemma in the Introduction to his book:

Some of what they fought for - white privilege - is repellent. But much of what they fought against - despotic employers, economic insecurity, a state bent to the interests of their masters - can also be viewed as immoral. What repels us in their cause became inextricably linked to that which many still see as worthwhile. This, one of the paradoxes of 1922, is why the historian cannot approach this moment without ambivalence. (17)

Indeed it is this central paradox of 1922 that Krikler attempts to deal with in the book, and it is a measure of Krikler's ability as an historian that he negotiates the ambiguities of this momentous struggle with great skill. Capturing the centrality of race through the lived reality of class, while also understanding struggles around the implementation of the imperatives of mining capital in South Africa, provides the fascinating and terrifying tension through which Krikler negotiates this complex subject.

The first part of the book contains five chapters which meticulously set out the background of the 'Forms and Sources of Militancy of the Strike'. The discussion in these chapters provides an overview of the overlapping structural, ideological, community, gender, and international factors that contributed to the particular form of the strike. The structural conditions were centred on the decreasing rates of profit in the mining industry due to such factors as the set price of gold, increase of input prices, increased white wages, rising insurance costs, and the fall in production levels. The response of employers was to fragment the skills of white labour and increase the use of black labour. When this situation was combined with increasing employer arrogance and a clearly partisan relationship between the mining capital and the state, Krikler argues that white workers viewed their position as falling increasingly outside of acceptable white standards of living and moving closer to the unacceptable levels of black labour.

In the ensuing confrontation with mining capital the white workers drew on a range of resources amongst the most interesting of which was the commando system of organisation, discipline, symbol and idioms which the workers were familiar with from their experiences in the First World War. The deployment of this experience produced some impressive early successes in the Revolt, but also contributed to the intensity of the brutal assault that the state would finally inflict on the strikers.

The chapter on women is a finely nuanced discussion on the varying motivations of women's involvement in the strike, drawing out both the gender conflicts within the

mining workers' community, but also the ways in which a distinct conception of white masculinity was used both to characterise the efforts of the strikers and to denigrate those workers opposed to the strike. Drawing on this masculinist discourse of exhortation and insult, women contributed to the strike not only as nurses, but also through confrontations with the police and as the weapons of fierce retribution against scabs. In tightly knit mining workers' communities both the positive reinforcement, and the disciplining and humiliating effect of this language on strikers, could not to be underestimated.

However, it is on the terrain of the relationship between race and class, and the intricate fusion of racism and radicalism, that Krikler's analysis works through the difficulties of understanding the moral economy of a class defined both by the structural pressures and self perceptions of race, and an acerbic critique of despotic capitalist production relations. When beginning my own research on Zimbabwean labour in the 1980's I was struck by this paradox when interviewing a former white president of the building workers union. His background in the Scottish labour movement had immersed him in the socialist critique of capitalism, but in his life as a privileged white worker under white rule, the easy generalisations of settler racism had quickly marked his conceptions of his 'place' in Rhodesia. Krikler's account of the 'hopes and fears' of the white mine workers weaves together the central tropes of race, class, community, gender, and the uses of nationalisms from other places, in the making of a particular working class experience. Thus the context of the perverse slogan of the strike, 'Workers of the World Unite and Fight for a White South Africa', is clearly set out in the book.

The horror of the racial killings that were a key marker of the revolt is never lost in the narrative, though Krikler's concern is always with explanation rather than the quick condemnation. As an explanation for the killings Krikler offers the view that they 'were a last desperate attempt by a besieged white working class to assert its community with that "White South Africa" that despised them, and that was shortly to attack them militarily.' Thus from this perspective Krikler makes his final judgement of 1922; that it was a struggle for dignity and security fought on the 'moral quicksand' of race which should be remembered as 'heroic and cruel, ambiguous and doomed'.

In taking on a subject like the 'Rand Revolt' historians have to walk the fine line between a certain admiration for the subjects under study, and an historical apologia for racially constructed actions. Moreover, there may well be some readers who find that such a slippage has indeed taken place in here, particularly since the voices of black labour are marginal in the book. However, any careful reading of the book could not come to such a conclusion. Jeremy Krikler's book is likely to rank amongst the best studies of labour history for some time to come.

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Identity has been one of the hottest topics in popular and academic discourse in the southern African past and present and a number of studies focusing on the complex processes of identity formation in the region have been produced. However, the numerous analyses of race, ethnicity, nationalism, gender and class which give richness and complexity to southern African historiography have either mostly paid peripheral attention to subject minorities like Coloureds and Indians or have been very shallow in their analysis of the past and present of these groups.

*Not White Enough, Not Black Enough* is one of the few systematic studies of Coloured identity and the history of the present-day Coloured people of South Africa, a group that has not only been marginalized in most general political and academic discourses, but whose history has also been subject to popular misconceptions and assumptions. Cast in the social constructionist approach which pays attention to the role played by subject people in the construction of their own identities, the book shows how Coloured men and women actively participated in the definition and redefinition of their own identities and how Coloured identity, in turn, came to influence both the social and political consciousness and behaviour of Coloured people, right from the time of its emergence in the late nineteenth century through to the post-apartheid period.

The principal focus of this book is change and continuity within the Coloured community, achieved through an analysis of Coloured identity across the major epochs of South African history and politics. The analysis identifies four 'core' elements or constituents of Coloured identity which, in spite of the fluid changes that occurred in the content defining this phenomenon over time, combined to 'reproduce and stabilize' that identity throughout the twentieth century. These principal constituents of Coloured identity are assimilationism, the Coloured people's intermediate status in the racial hierarchy, the 'negative connotations with which Coloured identity was imbued', especially the shame attached to their supposed racial hybridity, and the marginality of the Coloured people.

The Coloured people's assimilationism, which Adhikari describes as 'less of an impulse for acculturation than a striving on the part of the Coloured people for acknowledgment of their worth as individuals and citizens and acceptance as equals or partners by whites', spurred hopes of acceptance into the dominant society and accordingly shaped their political and social behaviour in that direction (8). Their intermediate position between the dominant white minority and the large African majority in the South African racial hierarchy, on the other hand, engendered both hopes and fears - hopes of assimilation and increasing relative privileges and fears of relegation to the status of Africans. These concerns, Adhikari argues, were the ones that reinforced Coloured exclusivity which was, to a large extent, an attempt by Coloureds to carve out socio-economic space for themselves and their community in the racially stratified society of South Africa.

At the other end of the political and social scales, the negative associations attached to Coloured identity, which were mainly a derivative of the racial ordering of South African society that viewed society in the dominant black and white racial bi-

nary and regarded Coloureds as a residual category that did not fit into either the white or black category, meant that 'Coloured identity was not enthusiastically embraced as an affirmation of self and group identity except in relatively rare or transient instances' (14). But, the marginality of Coloured people, according to Adhikari, was the most important determinant of both their being and identity because it placed severe limitations on 'possibilities of social and political action' (xii). This marginality was defined by the fact that Coloured people constituted no more than nine per cent of the population throughout the twentieth century, and lacked significant economic and political power (2, 17).

On the issue of political organisation within the Coloured community, Adhikari convincingly argues that because Coloured people were marginal in South African society and also lacked any meaningful political and economical leverage, Coloured people and Coloured political organisations were doomed to be marginal players in national politics (18). At the same time, apart from placing severe constraints on its choices for social and political action, the Coloured community's marginality meant that it had little choice in the matter of accepting the second class citizenship imposed on it by the state (18). This constraint on choices also led many politically active Coloureds to adopt 'pragmatic incrementalism', a political strategy whose aim and overall objective was to take advantage of every opportunity to reinforce Coloureds' status of relative privilege (18-19 and 66-97).

The book consists of six chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of the history of both Coloured identity and people known today as Coloureds. This well-written chapter succinctly outlines the defining characteristics of Coloured identity in its past and present form and the major themes characterizing the social and political history of Coloured people. By analysing both popular and intellectual perceptions of this past contained in both written and unwritten texts, Chapter 2 examines the changing approaches to Coloured identity and perspectives on the history of the Coloured people within the Coloured community itself and from the outside. Both popular beliefs and intellectual discourses, as Adhikari shows, played an important part in defining and redefining Coloured identity as well as senses of community consciousness. The chapter also examines in detail the main historiographical approaches to the writing of Coloured identity and the history of Coloured people by academics.

The broad themes outlined in the first two chapters are further developed in chapters 3 and 4 through the use of well-chosen case studies of key texts that represented Coloured discourses on the nature of Coloured identity, and were produced by Coloured organic intellectuals. Chapter 3 examines two key texts produced by Coloured organic intellectuals during the first three decades of the Union of South Africa, the *APO* newspaper, the mouthpiece of the dominant Coloured organization of the time, the African Political Organization, and the *Educational Journal*, the organ of the Teachers' League of South Africa, the largest professional organisation within the Coloured community. Through a rigorous analysis of these texts, Adhikari is able to highlight both the forces and motifs behind the expression of a Coloured identity, the contestations as well as ambiguities and contradictions within Coloured identity. The ambiguities and contradictions highlighted in this section clearly demonstrate how Coloured people's reaction to segregation was complex, 'encompassing both resistance and collaboration, protest as well as accommodation' (96).

Chapter 4 uses two more case studies, the *Torch*, a newspaper and mouthpiece of the leftist Non-European Movement that was published between 1946 and 1963, and the

communist Alex La Guma's novel, *A Walk in the Night*, published in the early 1960s, to examine the impact of the radical black unity movement of the period on both the Coloured community and the expression of Coloured identity. Through a close analysis of these sources Adhikari demonstrates that previous analysts have not only exaggerated the impact of left-wing ideology and politics in the promotion of non-racialism before the 1960s but have also underplayed the continued influence of Coloured identity in the shaping of the political behaviour and consciousness of the radicals. His overall conclusion is that the influence of the radical movement on Coloured identity was relatively superficial. By the early 1960s, non-racialism in relation to Coloured identity was still confined to a tiny intelligentsia, 'an elite within the Coloured elite', who could not even influence the organisations they led to adopt the principle of non-racism as their central political agenda. Only from the early 1960s onward did a nonracial discourse emerge as a 'consistent, self-conscious mode of expression within the Unity Movement' (129).

Chapter 5 discusses 'Coloured rejectionism', a political phenomenon centred on denying the validity of Coloured identity as a social category that started within a small section of the Coloured intelligentsia in the early 1960s, grew into a significant movement in the later 1970s and 1980s, before it declined in the early 1990s when the espousal of Coloured identity once again became acceptable in left-wing circles. Focusing on the nuances and complexities of this phenomenon and the divisions it created within the community, Adhikari is able to show that although Coloured rejectionism grew into a significant movement during the mass protest days of the 1980s, like the black unity movement preceding it, 'it was never a broadly based popular current taken up by the mass of the Coloured people' (160). It remained confined to a highly politicised minority active in the anti-apartheid struggle, some of whom did not have any deep conviction about the credo and espoused Coloured rejectionism simply to countenance apartheid thinking on race (160-161).

The final chapter focuses on expressions of, and influences shaping, Coloured identity in a post-apartheid South Africa and discusses the various ways in which Coloured identity and Coloured people have been positioned and have positioned themselves in relation to the changes that have been occurring since 1994. The wide spectrum of positions and responses discussed range from reaffirmation of Coloured identity to Khoisan revivalism, a movement which Adhikari describes as both exclusionist, in its attempt to project the Khoisan as being the true indigenes of South Africa, and Coloured rejectionist, in its attempt to affirm Khoisan as an authentic culture of ancient pedigree in place of Colouredness which is seen as an imposed negative identity (186). Coloured identity, as Adhikari rightly observes, is in flux and experiencing a degree of change unparalleled since its emergence in the nineteenth century. Coloureds are experiencing difficulty with questions of how they should deal with their multiple identities as black, as African, as South African, and as Coloured. Compounding all these difficulties of adjusting are Coloured perceptions of discrimination and marginalisation by the African-dominated government in the new South Africa (182).

Through a close analysis of the texts and narratives produced by members of the Coloured community themselves, Adhikari manages to bare the key impulses shaping Coloured identity. He successfully demonstrates how such factors as the fluidity of Coloured identity, the ambiguities inherent in the identity, and Coloured people's marginality in South African society combined to shape the political consciousness and strategies of Coloureds. Adhikari argues, for example, that the Coloured elite's decision to mobilize on the basis of Coloured identity and their adoption of the strategy of Coloured separat-

ism was born out of a pragmatic assessment of the options open to them. The ambivalences and contradictions manifested in the political behaviour of Coloureds, such as the simultaneous adoption of strategies of protest and accommodation, on the one hand, and assimilationism and Coloured separatism, on the other, he argues further, were a direct consequence of this marginality of Coloureds and of their intermediate status within the racially stratified South African society. Adhikari's account thus manages to relate the political behaviour of Coloureds to their prevailing socio-economic and historical conditions.

The book is one of the few that examines in detail various aspects of Coloured people's history, including the disconcerting and discomfiting aspects of Coloured identity rarely discussed in other texts. These include the racial aversion towards Africans found within the Coloured community and the association with whiteness which was evident in its 'most acute form among those individuals willing to disown their own identity as Coloured, turn their backs on friends, family and former lives to pass for white', the 'prizing of white ancestors in the family lineage', the 'value placed on fair skin and straight hair' and 'taking pride in the degree to which they were able to conform to the standards of Western standardness' (10-11). Given the long-standing controversies over the nature of Coloured identity and its interpretation, the book's interpretation of Coloured identity and the political aspects of Coloured people's behaviour is probably not going to endear the writer to some readers, especially those within the Coloured community trying to deal with questions of adjusting in a South Africa which is uncomfortable with, and often in denial of, its ugly past.

However, even the book's critics will find it difficult to dispute that *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough* is a well-written and strongly argued book with original, stimulating and thought-provoking ideas. The book constitutes a valuable exploration of the complex issue of Coloured social and political identities. Its analysis of Coloured identity is comprehensive, critically discussing its historical character, historical controversies and ambiguities, its fluidity and its adaptability. Its preparedness to tackle the hard and controversial questions, which most writers have decided to shy from, makes it a rare contribution.

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Nakedi Ribane's *Beauty: A Black Perspective* is a journey down memory lane. In just over one hundred pages of text the book contains numerous photographs of some of the female celebrities of yesteryear such as Patty Patience, Hazel Futha and Dolly Rathebe alongside images of more contemporary icons. In the book Ribane draws upon her extensive experiences as model, as actress, as magazine fashion and beauty editor and as the co-owner of a modelling agency to write a largely anecdotal account of her understandings of developments in the local and international beauty industry. The book is empirical rather than analytical and more a record of 'high society' than it is a social critique. The argument running through the book is that black girls and women have been denied the opportunities open to white girls and women, but that things are slowly and unevenly changing.

The book begins with a brief history of colonization and the ensuing global influences Ribane considers important in shaping twentieth century perceptions of beauty. A central theme of this first chapter is the ways in which Western rather than African criteria for measuring or assessing 'beauty' came to prevail in South Africa by the mid-twentieth century. After discussing the role of Christianity and missionaries she turns to the 'Black American' influence in the mid-twentieth century before exploring the 'Aesthetics of Indigenous Culture' and more contemporary international influences. Chapter two, which begins with a focus on South Africa in the 1950s before moving on to the 1960s and edging into the 1970s, explores black resistance to the white racist regime. Ribane records the names of winners of different contests and comments on the ways in which access to beauty industry resources such as salons were confined to white women as well as the pressures on black women to use damaging skin lighteners and hair straighteners. The chapter ends with a somewhat superficial and romantic account of intimate relationships between black women and white men. South Africa owes much, claims Ribane, to those 'beautiful people', that is. beautiful women 'who refused to let the law stand in the way of love, heeding their hearts and paving the way for others to follow.... [i]t was a memorable time, when love conquered all and transcended politics' (54).

'The Black Consciousness Era' is the title of the third chapter and, as Ribane notes on page 73, refers to the 'era when respected activist Steven Bantu Biko founded the Black Consciousness movement in South Africa; when people started realising that their Blackness was actually beautiful'. Focusing on the 1970s and 1980s, Ribane observes that these were the decades in which some women were beginning to demand their rights. The chapter continues by recording more modelling successes as well as by providing a brief survey of developments in the cosmetics industry. Chapter four, entitled 'The Winds of Change', records developments in the Miss Soweto and Miss Black South Africa competitions over the 1990s and tensions over the rights to these competitions before turning to the emergence of the Face of Africa competition towards the end of the decade.

Chapter five, the penultimate chapter, lists some of the 'traditional' cosmetics used by women (but not by men), before going on to discuss the successes of black hair care companies and the challenges of transformation. Transformation is conceived pri-

marily in racial rather than gendered terms, with Ribane largely uncritical of developments in which it is primarily black men who have moved into positions of economic power in the fashion industry, hair care industry, photographic industry and so on. In looking to the future in the final chapter, Ribane dismisses arguments about 'beauty is from within' or 'is in the eye of the beholder' and argues that 'other societies have already tried and discarded' this kind of 'political correctness' (122).

I must confess I found it disappointing that Ribane did not draw on her vast experience to construct a more critical discussion of change and development in the beauty industry. Perhaps, as an historian with a specialist interest in power relationships and the ways in which gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, class and so on have mediated (and continue to mediate) people's ability to make decisions in twentieth and twenty-first century South Africa, my expectations were too high. After all Ribane is not an academic and was not writing for an academic audience. Nevertheless she has, in my view, missed opportunities to help people come to understand the complexities and contradictions inherent in the beauty industry. Furthermore, as I discuss below, in some ways she has pandered to and accepted the very values of the systems of inequality that she is critiquing.

'Beauty' states Ribane in her introduction, 'is about so much more than just aesthetics or appearance. It is art, science, psychology, culture and politics all rolled into one ... [I]t cannot be looked at in isolation but as part of the bigger picture to which it is linked. It has its own politics and is deeply embedded in the politics of the time' (xiii). Indeed. Yet just a few pages later Ribane asks 'Will there ever be a time when the world genuinely stops seeing colour to concentrate on who is "the best" - regardless of politics or which "look" is sanctioned and which is not?' This question, on page six, juxtaposed against the observation cited on page xiii, epitomises the contradictory and often times naïve approach of the book. As topics of considerable interest to many South Africans, these are examples of opportunities for understanding/teaching that she missed. I had been looking forward to interesting discussions and insightful observations from an industry insider about a variety of questions. I expected some commentary around, for example, anorexic role models and the pressures on young South African women to be thin, alongside an engagement with arguments that beauty contests may not reflect South Africa's diversity in the female form. I was anticipating a discussion, or at the very least an acknowledgement, of the ways in which the South African beauty industry is directed for the male gaze, and a consideration of the ways in which the complex webs of power inequalities that overwhelmingly privilege men play out in the local beauty industry. I was hoping for a discussion of ways in which young, vulnerable and sexually attractive South African women have experienced and challenged these unequal power relationships. It is only in the final chapter, however, that Ribane lightly touches on an analysis of contemporary beauty shows, simplistically asserting that they *are* important and citing past beauty contest winners as proof of this.

I had some discomfort with over-generalisations and over-simplifications in the text. In providing an historical context for the rest of the book, for example, Chapter one tends to conflate South Africa with Africa and maintains an uneasy tension between occasionally acknowledging multiple cultures and more commonly representing 'traditional' African culture as if it is both monolithic and largely static. 'Traditional culture' states Ribane, 'has a strict moral code' (15). Cultural and ethnic differences across the continent are swept aside with statements such as '[i]n traditional society,

maidens who had not yet “known” a man could walk around bare-breasted’ (14), while Islam gets obliterated from the African experience in claims that ‘[u]ntil the coming of Christianity to this continent Africans had their own morality and belief systems’ (13). In claiming the 1950s witnessed ‘the beginning of the draconian laws that would leave a [damaging and painful] legacy’ as the decade which saw the ‘onset of forced removals’, Ribane dismisses centuries of racist practices in an oversimplification of complex historical processes.

It is towards the end of the first chapter that Ribane re-engages with the question of defining black beauty. ‘What’ she asks, ‘constitutes a beautiful woman in African terms and what are the characteristics that have traditionally been prized?’ (19). For Ribane ‘beauty’ appears to be understood as something only women possess and, furthermore, seems to be largely defined by the things heterosexual men find sexually attractive about women’s bodies. While the ‘average African’ who finds ‘large protruding bottoms... particularly sexy’ (20) might be of either sex, the following sentence reveals that it is girls’ anatomy that is being discussed: ‘To be desirable, a girl needs to have that specifically rounded “African heritage” prominent in her anatomy’ while ‘[n]ice big boobs, shaped like watermelons, are also considered a turn on’ (20). Bright eyes, good skin and teeth were also important as Ribane points out somewhat anachronistically on page nineteen, ‘[i]n traditional African culture it was unheard of for young women to dabble with cigarettes, so there was never any problem with girls retaining their bright, clear eyes, good complexions and a set of strong, white teeth’. But physical appearance was not everything, as Ribane goes on to explain. ‘In traditional society good character has always been considered integral to the notion of beauty’, and it was girls who were hard workers, respectful of their elders and their culture (20) who were apparently considered beautiful. I wondered whether the young women who entered beauty contests did so with the support of their parents and the extent to which women’s beauty contests were part of ‘traditional’ cultures or whether they represented an urban and western challenge to ‘traditional’ cultures. Were young women who entered beauty contests really doing so with the support of their parents?

Overall, the reader is left with the impression that there is just one problem facing the beauty industry today and that is the uneven remnants of apartheid and white racism. The emphasis on skin colour at the expense of gender or other socially constructed identities is underlined by the manner in which the terms ‘black’ and ‘white’ are capitalised throughout the book, thus seeming to imply that there is something that is concretely and knowably ‘black’ or ‘white’ from which a perspective can emerge. I had hoped (perhaps naïvely) for a more critical analysis that problematised the notion that perspectives on beauty can be neatly divided into essentialist categories of black and white. Furthermore, given the quotations from Biko that appear in the text one might expect an understanding of blackness built around more than just skin colour. While the book’s title provides space for more than one black perspective, there is regrettably little trace of nuance inside the book and over-generalisations abound.

There was no acknowledgement of the parallels between a racism that constructed social and political hierarchies according to one set of physical criteria and a sexism that constructed another (often overlapping and complementary) set of hierarchies according to another set of physical criteria. Given our history of racism and sexism I have some discomfort with social practices that identify specific body features as special and that serve to classify certain bodies as ‘special’ or ‘beautiful’ and worthy of higher salaries and celebrity status, and had wondered what Ribane would have to

say about these kinds of inequities. While Ribane is highly critical of the old racial classifications of apartheid which saw status and opportunities allotted according to skin colour, she is far less aware of the ways in which status and opportunity remain built around the privileging of body parts and body appearance in ways that express and reinforce male privilege and the male gaze. There is little or no sense that politics is about the ways in which access to power is mediated simultaneously by gender, class and race and the ways in which these identities intersect with other socially significant identities such as religion, age and so on. In other words the ‘politics’ to which Ribane refers in her introduction is understood as having to do with racial inequalities only, despite the glaring gender inequalities permeating the beauty industry.

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