

# **‘A fragile inheritor’: The post-apartheid memorial complex, A.C. Jordan and the re-imagining of cultural heritage in the Eastern Cape<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Introduction**

At a recent ‘Oral History Indaba: Giving Voice to the Voiceless’ in the Eastern Cape, at which ‘all the major stakeholders involved in heritage’ were present, (including national agencies like SAHRA and the NHC, as well as representatives from local government and the heritage, library and archives sectors), and which was organized by ‘Libraries and Archives’ of the Provincial Department of Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture, ‘heritages of tradition’ as part of ‘giving voice to the voiceless’ were put on public display.<sup>2</sup> This ‘Indaba’ had followed on from the earlier provincial ‘Heritage Indaba’,<sup>3</sup> which had identified the need to insert ‘the intangible’ into heritage. ‘[G]iving voice to the voiceless’ can be seen as the response to this ‘lack’, as essentially the lagged official heritage extension of this ‘intangible’ heritage brief into ‘new and neglected areas in the Province’, but also increasingly read as the seemingly only possible, realizable tangible way to collect and archive ‘the intangible’.

In essence, though, the ‘event’ of the Oral History Indaba (and in pre- and post-Indaba deliberations, discussions and concerns to frame policy, identify stakeholders, ensure participation, extend directives and frame understandings) oral history

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1 I wish to acknowledge the contributions of the NRF and Sanpad projects in this paper. As is usual responsibility is all mine, but work with Ciraj Rassool and Leslie Witz, and with the postgraduate students in the Culture, Heritage and Social Transformation Research Niche Area at UFH are important influences. I also wish to point out that this paper bears all the marks of a very unfinished, assertive and related cross-disciplinary hesitancy. I further would like to acknowledge the instructive and productive comments of the reviewers.

2 ‘Oral History Indaba’, Regent Hotel, East London, 13-14 February 2008. Essentially this indaba was constituted to establish a local branch of the Oral History Association of South Africa, and the hosting of the 2008 ‘Oral History Conference’, in the Eastern Cape, and was organized around ‘explaining’ what oral history is, of retrieving and celebrating memories and discussing the means to ‘collect’ and ‘audit’ oral sources and traditions. The programme included both general presentations under such headings as ‘Essence of oral history recordings’, ‘Role of orature in society’ and ‘Oral history in the new South Africa’, as well as ‘Retrieving and venerating our memories’ and the ‘Audit of oral sources in the Eastern Cape Province’, amongst others. Also included was another presentation of a more particular evidence of ‘oral history’ at work in Ginsberg township, together with a workshop section on the second day, concerned with constituting the committee and the framework of the Oral History Association in the Eastern Cape. The ‘Concept document on Oral History Indaba’ for the workshop sets out the legislative ‘mandate’ derived from the Provincial Archives and Records Service Act, Act no 7 of 2003, Section 3(d), and outlines its ‘aims and objectives’ These are ‘to explore the meaning of the oral history concept’, ‘share experiences of how to collect oral history recordings’, ‘establish a Provincial Oral History Forum’, and so on. The key pre-determined, pre-stated ‘outcome’ of the workshop, apart from establishing the Forum, was to ‘increase knowledge on what is covered by oral history, how to collect it, who to be involved including ethical issues around the exercise’. In essence, as I suggest, the actual Indaba drew on and celebrated oral tradition as the ‘essence of oral history’, its ‘orature’. I also suggest that these traditions were the basis of ‘retrieval’, of ‘celebration’, and of the audit and archive, and that oral history in the ‘new South Africa’ is no different from the ways that indigenous people have always communicated their history – orally – in ‘our traditions’; and thus that oral history was not new, but an old, well-established indigenous tradition, and so on. The venue itself and the poetics of display visually re-inforced these views, with their emphasis on these oral traditional processes and holdings.

3 ‘Heritage Indaba’, Regent Hotel, East London, 12-13 September 2005.

was regularly collapsed into what was read as the more important - oral tradition. In turn, these 'traditions', represented in the lexicons of 'the Xhosa', but read primarily as 'African' and 'indigenous', were interpellated into post-apartheid nationalist discourses of 'the people', translated through the grammar of the 'popular' and of the Freedom Charter, consequently being held up as the exemplary sign of national heritage. In so doing, particular trajectories of 'indigenous tradition' and 'popular resistance' were con-joined as a national heritage whose legacy was to be recorded through the necessary archiving of the 'voice of the voiceless'. The overall tone of the Indaba, then, was not about 'giving voice to' complex oral histories and memories, but as experts, 'our job'<sup>4</sup> was to act as custodians, protectors, preservers and carriers of this particular trajectory of popular oral and indigenous tradition as the 'people's heritage of resistance'. Significantly, the figures who exemplified this tradition, and who carried it 'orally' were male 'elders' ('our libraries'), chiefs, and 'community' and 'local struggle' leaders. 'Their stories are untold!' we were conclusively told.

In this paper I wish to engage these formulations of heritage, tradition and resistance, and begin to suggest that they form one component of what Ciraj Ras-sool, Leslie Witz and I are increasingly calling a 'heritage complex'. We argue that this complex needs to be subject to - from the side of public history - a critical exploration and engagement of its genealogy, changes, developments and forms of constituting the modern power/knowledge complex of the post-apartheid 'national estate'.

But, let me briefly return to the 'voice of the voiceless' by way of introduction. At the Indaba A. C. Jordan was heralded, and held up as one of the iconic narrators, and, as importantly, key sources of 'the indigenous tradition', of resistance and the recorder of 'the voice' and the stories of the people.<sup>5</sup> I want to begin, then, not with any further discussion of the Oral History Indaba, but with this figure of A.C. Jordan, and his texts, *The Wrath of the Ancestors* and *Tales from Southern Africa*,<sup>6</sup> as represented in public and commercial space. There are, of course, many representational possibilities, depending, amongst others, on time, place, interest, association, academy, and politics, I want, though, as an entry point to this paper, to offer what I hope to suggest is a contemporary South African public reading representation of A.C. Jordan and the texts. It is primarily drawn from the digital public medium, which James Chandler and Roger Chartier have recently defined as our newest 'arts of transmission'<sup>7</sup> and forms part of what Charles Taylor has called 'metatopical common space'.<sup>8</sup> In another frame, then, I am also seeking

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4 The Indaba event generated a discourse of 'our responsibility' and 'our work' and 'our job'. This 'our' was primarily defined by the notion of a 'stakeholder- driven' state relationship (and discourse) to identifiable 'experts' who could be seen as allies, and that included, importantly, for legitimacy, the Universities in the region.

5 Statements from the floor, in discussion, and more discursively around the event, where A.C. Jordan, together with S.E.K. Mqhayi, was constantly referred to as one of 'the father figures', the 'doyens' and 'sources' of understanding and for referring back to 'our traditions and their way of life'.

6 A.C. Jordan, *The Wrath of the Ancestors* (Cape Town, Jonathan Ball, 2004); *Tales from Southern Africa* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1978).

7 J. Chandler et al, 'Arts of transmission: An introduction', Special Issue of *Critical Inquiry*, Autumn, 2004; R. Chartier, 'Languages, books and reading from the printed word to the digital text, *Critical Inquiry*, Autumn, 2004, 147.

8 See C. Taylor, 'Modern social imaginaries', *Public Culture*, 16, 1, 2002. Although I am aware of the debates about civil society and the public sphere in African contexts, for the moment I am simply provocatively asserting its emergence in the 'new South Africa', but utilizing Taylor's term to reflect a means to associate public space.

to implicitly comment about the ways that digital technologies (in South Africa) have transformed the way we relate, and think about public culture and history in particular, but perhaps more how these, as they become ‘virtual realities’, mutually echo and reinforce already amenable and transferred public representations around the heritage complex.<sup>9</sup>

Leon de Kock, in a *Sunday Times* review situates A.C. Jordan in one of two most significant locations. Called ‘Getting onto the A-List’, De Kock suggests that the process of ‘selective republication’ or recuperation of books that have gone out of print, entails a key step towards what literary critics call the ‘canonisation’ of certain literary works. He suggests that ‘... the recent re-publication with the mantle of canonization’ applies to A.C. Jordan’s *The Wrath of the Ancestors* and *Tales from Southern Africa*, amongst a few others. In effect he argues ‘[f]ew people would dispute the importance of Jordan’s *The Wrath of the Ancestors* as a founding work of black written literature. Originally published in Xhosa in 1940 by Lovedale Press – ‘the first real novel written in Xhosa’, writes Rosalie Finlayson in the new edition’s preface – its translation by A.C. Jordan himself, with the help of his sister, Priscilla P. Jordan, is itself a literary event of note’.<sup>10</sup> De Kock continues, and it is useful to quote this at some length:

It is a historical narrative written with a grand Shakespearian sweep of noble characters – Xhosa princes and princesses, priests and councilors – and it conjoins stories from an oral world with the modern order of the printed book. ... Similarly Jordan’s *Tales from Southern Africa* ... offers that unique hybrid of black South African literature: a view through the frame of printed book-English of tales (in this case, folktales that include elements of the supernatural) originating in spoken Xhosa. Has anyone noted the fact that this book pre-dates, by many years, ‘magical realism’ in South African fiction written by more fancied names?<sup>11</sup>

Gcina Mhlope, storyteller and author, reflects this canonical trajectory when she describes A.C. Jordan as ‘her all-time hero... who wrote a stunning Xhosa novel. ... These writers make me feel lucky to be able to read. They inspire me to want to write better all the time’.<sup>12</sup>

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9 This is, of course, part of a much larger set of debates about ‘digital culture and technologies’. Discussed are issues regarding ‘virtuality’, the relationships between the virtual and the real, the body and machine, place, space, hypertext, cyberspace and interactivity. It could be argued, in relation to public history, that this area needs to receive much more attention. Digital cultural heritage as a political concept and practice and the representation and interpretation of cultural heritage and of public pasts in relation to digital objects (and debates about aura and virtual and real) need to be given consideration. So should issues of mobility and interactivity both for objects and for producers and consumers of digital heritage and for histories as well as the relations between cultural heritage and between ‘communities’ and heritage institutions, See, for example Y. E. Kaley et al, eds, *New Heritage: New media and cultural heritage* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).

10 L. De Kock, ‘Getting onto the A-list’, *Sunday Times*, 6 August 2004.

11 L. De Kock, ‘Getting onto the A-list’.

12 See *Mail and Guardian*, ZA @ Play Books, 21 November 2003. Interestingly, De Kock also asks ‘why not add Noni Jabavu’s *The Ochre People*, a poignant and touching narrative ... doesn’t she figure as one of the very earliest black woman writers, upstaging her famous father ... and grandfather ...’

So here we have the canonisation of a founding work of black written literature, together with the connecting tissues of translation, and the framing of its status as historical narrative: stories from the oral world are conjoined with the modern order of the printed book and a frame of the printed book-English originating in spoken Xhosa. I will return to De Kock and the suggested ‘conjoining’ of the oral world (and the spoken) with the modern order of the printed book and the written world, but also how this ‘conjoining’ operates differently, and is constrained under the auspices of a ‘heritage complex’ as one of its defining limiting features.

In public (and commercial) space, though, these careful and provoking observations of De Kock’s are also taken up, or represented, in a different more dichotomous and starker manner, while also losing the nuance of the ‘unique hybrid’ suggested by De Kock. In 2000 the translation of *Wrath of the Ancestors* (*Ingqumbo Yeminyanya*) into Afrikaans as *Toorn van die Voorvaders* (by SJ Neethling) was one of three finalists for the South African Translators Institute (SATI) Award. Although not the eventual winner (and A.C. Jordan and P. Jordan’s original Xhosa to English translation was overlooked), the following was said in the citation:

What impresses one most about this nomination is the fact that the original Xhosa novel was manifestly far in advance of its time in respect of theme and structure. Besides the fact that the theme still has resonance for modern Afrikaans-speakers, the translation appears to succeed in giving readers an interesting view of the culture and world of the Xhosa – exactly what is needed to promote understanding between black and white in our country. The translation is regarded as a literary work in its own right and makes an outstanding contribution to the promotion of multilingualism and the development of indigenous languages of South Africa.<sup>13</sup>

Here we have *Wrath of the Ancestors* read much more narrowly as ‘originary’ and representative text for ‘the culture and world of the Xhosa’, knowledge of which is what is needed to promote understanding and ‘reconciliation’. Reading the text as one where ‘the sovereignty of African traditional governance and the kingdom of custom’, in which ethnic subjects claim, and are claimed by ‘another species of authority’ is apparent.<sup>14</sup> Cast in the ‘language of subjects and collective being’<sup>15</sup> and of ethno-politics, this view dominates the public reading of A.C. Jordan and his texts. The irony, of course, is that colonialism and later apartheid produced volumes of constituted and translated ‘knowledge in Afrikaans’ on ‘the Xhosa’ as a means to separate and differentiate histories and futures. They, though, promoted mis-understanding and resistance, based on precisely the same terms of

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13 See The SATI Award of Outstanding Translation 2000, [www.translators.org.za](http://www.translators.org.za), (updated 22 April 2006), 2. Accessed 6 June 2006.

14 See J. and J. Comaroff, ‘The struggle between the constitution and “things African”’, *Interventions: The International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 7 (3), 2005; 299-303; 300.

15 J. and J. Comaroff, ‘The struggle’, 301.

‘the customary culture’ of ‘the Xhosa’. It is these ‘vernacular sentiments of collective identity’, the apparently ‘true-life experiences of ethnic subjecthood’ that are constituted in the heritage complex as not just ethnic, but the basis of national ‘vernacular’ or indigenous heritage praxis and belonging.<sup>16</sup>

But, as De Kock also remarked in his short piece, re-publishing, translation, and value needs to be seen in the meeting of aesthetic (literary canonical) and commercial publishing interests as well. So what do these publishing interests say? As it turns out, they effectively read Jordan the same way as the ‘translators’ and SATI do, but are even more explicit in setting out a tradition – modernity dichotomy of cultural clash and ‘conflict’ and of re-claiming the ‘cultural’ as part of diversity and multiculturalism.<sup>17</sup>

Kalahari.net, for example, describes Jongilanga as a

young modern man ... whose progressive ideas prove to be too far ahead for most of his people, enabling his uncle to lead a revolt against him. ... Jordan does not pass judgement, but through the lives of ordinary and ambitious people he contrasts Christian converts with those holding traditional beliefs, school people with ‘red ochre’ people, boarding school activities with the assembly at the royal palace. One of the central themes of the novel is cultural conflict between the more western way of life and African customs and traditions.<sup>18</sup>

Jonathan Ball publishers website similarly describes *The Wrath of the Ancestors* thus:

A Xhosa prince reluctantly leaves the University College of Fort Hare and goes back to the land of his ancestors to take his place as king of the Mpondomise. The clash of his modern ideas and traditional beliefs of his people mirrors the clash of the western way of life with African custom and tradition – church people versus traditionalists, school people versus ‘red-ochre people’, boarding school activities versus the inkundla or assembly at the royal palace. The conclusion that disaster can be averted only by the willingness of opposing forces to work

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16 J. and J. Comaroff, ‘The struggle’, 303. I have drawn on their formulations about a ‘vernacular praxis’ and ‘vernacular sentiments of collective identity’. However, they are arguing more for a broader tension between this ‘new [vernacular] form of popular politics’ and the new liberal modernist state and its conceptions of an enlightened democratic pluralism, and thus the continuing coexistence of citizen and subject (and individual against group rights) that configures the practical terms of national belonging, amongst other broader arguments.

17 I am aware that these readings rely heavily (and closely) on the 1980 ‘Introduction’ to *The Wrath of the Ancestors*, written by R. L. Peteni (in 1979), but apart from the fact that they are decontextualised and unacknowledged in the current website representations, which are significant, they are also not situated entirely within Peteni’s overall argument, although this does bear significantly similar arguments as those offered through the websites. Of particular importance, though, as a different strand to Peteni’s argument is his key observation that the novel is a tragedy, where hope lies not only in a ‘compromise’ between ‘extremism’ and ‘progress’, but also in a ‘calling back’ of difference in new ways. Perhaps, however, that is reading too much into Peteni, who, as I have said, presents a more conventional ‘nativist’ interpretation of the novel.

18 See [www.kalahari.net](http://www.kalahari.net), accessed 13 June 2006. One can, also find literal translations of Xhosa images, idioms and proverbs.

together for mutual comprehension of the legitimate claims of tradition and modernity, gives a foretaste of the spirit that governed modern South Africa's political transformation.<sup>19</sup>

Let me jump, then, to this political transformation and to the other equally dominant location of A.C. Jordan: and first to the relatively obscure: the *Order of the Companions of O.R. Tambo*, a state award to 'foreign nationals' for 'friendship shown to South Africa'. 'It is therefore an order of peace, co-operation and active expression of solidarity and support. The Order constitutes an essential pillar of international and multilateral relations.'<sup>20</sup> What has this to do with A.C. Jordan? Well, central to the description of the symbolism and design elements is the *majola* (mole snake), as the 'watchful eye', and is described thus:

the snake that visits babies when they are born. It never harms the baby or members of the family and the only friendly way to drive it away is for mother to squirt it with her own breast milk. It visits the baby to prepare it for a successful and safe adult life. It comes as a friend and protector. ... The snake lives on in African mythology because of a classical narrative called *The Wrath of the Ancestors* by A.C. Jordan. This narrative subverts the conventional notion of a snake as merely venomous and introduces a broader African interpretation that understands the serpent as a friend and a member of a dynamic ecology.<sup>21</sup>

Here we have A.C. Jordan as source of African 'mythology' and of African interpretation and as new state symbolist. His text provides the source for both African understandings of friendship and protection translated into the new state and as dynamic in relation to ecology, but also in its association with 'foreign nationals'. It thus also provides for a trajectory of indigenous critique of 'Europeanised' 'conventions' of the snake as 'venomous'.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, perhaps, to emphasize another view, earlier on, from Mandela's address to the International Press Institute Congress in February 1994 of

an outstanding South African linguist and writer A.C. Jordan, in his novel,... published in the Xhosa language in 1940, compares 'truth' to a powerful wrestler. No matter how hard its adversary, 'falsehood', may try to overwhelm it, truth refuses to yield. And even at the very

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19 See Jonathan Ball website:<http://www.jonathanball.co.za/modules.php?op=modload&name=books&file=index&req=search>, accessed 9 Nov. 2008. The entry continues to describe '*The Wrath* as a classic of Xhosa literature. A.C. Jordan has a keen eye for detail, a delightful sense of humor and a dramatic style. Literal translations of Xhosa images, idioms and proverbs transport readers to the Tsolo district and conjure up the memorable speeches of the Mpondomise councilors'.

20 See South African Government Information, The Order of the Companions of O.R. Tambo, [www.ingo.gov.za/aboutgov/orders/ortambo.htm](http://www.ingo.gov.za/aboutgov/orders/ortambo.htm), Accessed 17 June 2006.

21 SAGI, 'The Order of Companions'.

22 Of course, you could argue that I am making a 'mountain out of a mole-hill' here, but the associations are discursively apparent and are, more importantly, constitutive of the discursive formation I am arguing for.

moment when ‘falsehood’ appears to have the upper hand, ‘truth’ gathers new strength from the contest and casts off its adversary.<sup>23</sup>

A.C. Jordan and his texts are, thus, the bearers of ‘indigenous’ truth against the ‘falsehood’ of apartheid, where a set of associations draw indigeneity and truth together and which, in turn, provide an anti-apartheid register and model in his work. Ntongela Masilela, more explicitly, has attributed the need to ‘nativize’ and ‘historicise’ literary cultural studies in South Africa through ‘founding moments’ like A.C. Jordan’s *Towards an African Literature*<sup>24</sup> and these represent important components of this figuration in further different contexts.

However, the ‘anti-apartheid’ strand is more dominantly represented through a more overt and more clearly articulated resistance re-figuration of A.C. Jordan. Masilela has perhaps most forcefully placed A.C. Jordan in this ‘radical genealogy’. In a footnote to ‘New Africanism in a post-New African Age?’, he says, in response to a view put forward by Goran Therborn (in 1996) that ‘b]lack African culture, very distant from the Marxist dialectic of modernity, has not (yet) been able to sustain any significant Marxist intelligentsia’; answers that ‘there have been/and there are many ‘significant [African] Marxist intelligentsia’: Albert Nzula ...; IB Tabata ...; A.C. Jordan, a great African novelist and literary scholar who wrote a great Xhosa novel, ... was a member of the Unity Movement; Govan Mbeki ...; [and so on through a long series of listings].<sup>25</sup> Here we have A.C. Jordan as Marxist intellectual.

Perhaps, as significantly, Jordan’s *Tales from Southern Africa*, published in 1978 with a Foreword by Z. Pallo Jordan is placed most explicitly in this resistance location:

In colonial societies, where the majority of the people are, as a matter of policy, kept semi-literate, the ‘folk’ can be a revolutionary concept employed for the reaffirmation of a national identity. Jordan, therefore, chose the Southern African tale – with its oral tradition, and hence not limited to a reading public – as the medium through which to express his protest against the existing order. He sought to transform the tale into a great collective symbol around which the African people could be mobilized for social and political change.<sup>26</sup>

Here we have, Jordan, not just as a ‘Marxist intellectual’ through his political associations, but also through his ‘literary work’ figured as the work of a political

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23 See N. Mandela, address to the International Press Institute Congress, 14 February 1994, [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za), Accessed 21 June 2006.

24 See M. Daymond, ‘Positions: The future of English studies’, *Unisa Online*, 5, where she is critical of this argument, for, amongst others, setting up oppositions between cultural and literary studies, and between artifact, theory and social developments, and proposes, instead, moves towards inter-textuality and representation.

25 See N. Masilela, ‘Foreword’: ‘New Africanism in a post-New African Age?’ no date; on *New African Movement* website, <http://www.pitzer.edu/academics/faculty/masilela>, accessed 9 Nov. 2008.

26 Foreword in A.C. Jordan, *Tales from Southern Africa*, op cit. xxii. It is also not incidental that it is Pallo Jordan, A.C. Jordan’s son writing this foreword, at a time in exile and a moment of literal political re-positioning, amongst a range of possible important connections. The point, however remains, that it begins the re-setting of A.C. Jordan into a genealogy of ‘acceptable’ and ‘inclusive’ resistance literature and politics.

activist, mobilizing ‘the African people’ through orality and the South African tale transformed into ‘great collective symbol ... for social and political change’.

These are snippets, cut from a potentially much larger set of representations, but most of which would, I would argue, fall into one of these two camps in reading A.C. Jordan. Crudely, on the one side are the primarily ‘white readers’, reading from a vantage of racialised apartheid modernity, ascribing ‘literary / cultural’ value to Jordan in his provision of the traditional life and world views of ‘the Xhosa’ ‘other’ and, on the other, largely black modern intellectuals reading Jordan from the vantage point of an ‘alternative modernity’ as representative of indigenous meaning and of African modern political resistance.<sup>27</sup> Importantly, in this process another principle genealogy of A.C. Jordan and a politics of resistance located not in the ANC, but in the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM), and actually outside of, and critical of the ANC from what has been caricatured as the ‘Trotskykite left’, is simultaneously erased as it is ‘deported’ into canonization and ‘resistance’.<sup>28</sup> In essence, an entire marginalization of A.C. Jordan had essentially reduced him to the position of literary academic figure and ‘father to ANC cultural nationalist Pallo Jordan’ prior to this moment. He thus seemingly disappears in this textual re-discovery and re-situating of him as historically and politically canonical.

Thus, as Isabel Hofmeyr has path-breakingly argued, ‘texts change shape and form as they travel’ and we need to see how, in their ‘portability’ – of publication, translation, and circulation - [they] are re-interpreted, refashioned and recrafted to suit localities, articulate convictions and relate to the complexities and contingencies of ‘textual compulsion’, amongst other possibilities.<sup>29</sup>

Significantly, then, this portable appropriation of the figure of Jordan is able to bring the two seemingly opposed viewpoints or representations together in order to construct a third inter-connected or combined viewpoint where the traditional and this broadened inclusive umbrella-ANC resistance meet in a particular combination as ‘real heritage’. Given that liberation resistance politics in the ANC has been framed historically around a ‘post-ethnic universalism’ which (albeit ambiguously and unevenly) seemed to ‘dismiss culture and custom as instruments of colonial overrule’,<sup>30</sup> this should seem surprising at least, and more generally a problematic and provocatively contradictory concern.

I explore below how this particular combination of tradition and resistance becomes ‘real heritage’ and how, centrally, it can and must be seen to be a significant component in the ‘heritage complex’ which has particular ‘implications of

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27 There is, of course, another whole intellectual project, which would seek to engage the reading of A.C. Jordan’s work in Xhosa, as it was intended and written for, and what ‘portable’ meanings and interpretations emerge out of those processes.

28 See, for example, the interview with Bernard Magubane, generated as the transcript of one of the interviews that was part of the research for the book *No Easy Victories: African Liberation and American Activists over Half a century, 1950-2000*, no date; as just one such example [http://www.noeasyvictories.org/interviews/int06\\_magubane.php](http://www.noeasyvictories.org/interviews/int06_magubane.php), accessed 28 October 2008.

29 I. Hofmeyr, *The Portable Bunyan: A Transnational History of The Pilgrim’s Progress* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2004).

30 As already argued above, that ‘tradition’ seems to speak the language of ethno-politics, of subjects and collective being in the ‘kingdom of custom’, which entails this ‘another species of authority’. See J. and J. Comaroff, ‘The struggle between the constitution and “things African”’, 300.



constraint' for the making of public histories in South Africa. In essence, this can be characterized as a return to a heritage complex in which its hegemonic discourse is to frame the 'national estate' as comprised of the indigenous and traditional and the root and route of resistance as the basis of inherited 'entitlement'. Paradoxically, though, this entitlement, within the re-constituted 'postcolonial heritage complex' comes to be further framed within an age-old ideology of 'culture'. This 'vernacular sentiment of collective identity' is defined and demarcated from within the heritage complex by the unremarked routines, definitions and 'legacies' of colonialism and apartheid. However, these are trans-ported, mobilized and articulated in order, to seemingly counter the old and the signs of apartheid from within the logics of this apparently new reworked complex. In particular, the centrifugal heritage claims of diversity and multiculturalism are seen to be reduced by the continuing presence of the real tangible signs of the existing visible built 'South Africanism' of the white settler 'national estate'. Heritage needs to be 'indigenised' and a particularly demarcated and defined 'African tradition to/of resistance' has become its watchword. As such 'new heritage' has become productive of significant continuities between old and new heritage, but also of contradictions and contestations in its reworkings as a post-apartheid heritage complex.

Before moving to this discussion, though, I want, to reflect on another reading, one located in a kind of in-between space, between the literary-cultural and the political – in the 'crossroads' between tradition and modernity. In this space, A.C. Jordan's 'own real politics' of the NEUM are also visible, as are perhaps the intellectual influences of Malinowski and 'culture contact' anthropology, but these are not my direct concerns here. Phyllis Ntantala, A.C. Jordan's widow, characterizes him as 'peasant in outlook, one who remained suspicious of city ways to the end of his life, and yet, as a Classical and European scholar of literature, history and music, one who could field with the best'.<sup>31</sup> Elsewhere in her autobiography, Ntantala describes A.C. Jordan as '... a humble man of simple and frugal tastes, a loyal and faithful lieutenant, warm but never demonstrative ... A.C. was very understanding, trusting and conservative, a respecter of custom and tradition, a man who always had his feet on the ground. He had a tremendous intellect of staggering breadth and depth; a scholar who followed each pursuit with an analytic mind, searching for the essence. And yet for all that he never lost the human touch, the respect for the common man'.<sup>32</sup>

Relatedly, this is how Ntantala describes *Wrath of the Ancestors*:

Though he could have written in English as well as in Xhosa, he wrote his first novel ... in his native tongue, addressing himself to an African readership, a readership that was already in existence, for Africans had been writing for other Africans since the middle of the nineteenth cen-

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31 P. Ntantala, *A Life's Mosaic: The Autobiography of Phyllis Ntantala* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1992), ix.

32 P. Ntantala, *A Life's Mosaic*, 109.

ture. ... It is a novel for all time, showing the African at the crossroads. It treats African culture in a dignified and wholesome way, showing its qualities and beauty. Yet at the same time, the author is very much aware of the new forces at work among the people, depicting the new man who is beginning to look critically at the old ways and trying to forge for himself a course that will perhaps serve his interests better...<sup>33</sup>

It is through taking up some of these ideas of 'the poetics of the crossroads'<sup>34</sup> and with De Kock's concept of the 'unique hybrid' as well as with A.C. Jordan's own sense of the 'calling back' of difference in the context of tragedy in mind that I want to reflect on the state of heritage in the Eastern Cape and of how we might critically engage post-apartheid modernity and tradition as it is constituted within the contemporary heritage complex.

### **Performing Indaba heritage cultures**

At the earlier Eastern Cape Heritage Indaba, held at one of the East London beach-front hotels,<sup>35</sup> the provincial heritage department, SAHRA, the NMC and related organizations, together with various 'stakeholders' and representatives from communities (in line with the Act), discussed and debated the heritage of the province. Under the heading 'Looking back, marching ahead',<sup>36</sup> issues of heritage and development, heritage transformation, heritage fragmentation and co-ordination and heritage resource mobilization were highlighted as key themes. Sessions were organized around 'Early history'; 'Intangible heritage', 'Museums, collections and communities', 'Heritage and development', 'Heritage and cultural tourism', 'Heritage management', 'Place names' and 'Reparations'.

In effect, as I have argued elsewhere, the Indaba provided a lens and a spectacle through which to critically review the meanings and constructions of heritage. While it is apparent, even through a cursory glance at the session headings, that the relationships between heritage and development and the insertion of heritage into tourist and development discourses is central, it is not directly with these aspects that I am concerned here. Rather, I want to suggest that the majority of characterisations outlined above, which are stark and narrow in relation to A.C. Jordan's work, can be paralleled in the public discourses and practices constituting heritage meanings in the province. In summary form this means that 'real' heritage is represented as that which is indigenous and associated with resistance, and that this is primarily located as oral, performative and 'intangible'. Set in opposition to this is tangible built heritage which is located as settler and 'western' or 'European' and which is essentially seen as foreign and as that which needs to be countered.

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33 P. Ntantala, *A Life's Mosaic*, 109.

34 See B. Peterson, 'Monarchs, missionaries and African intellectuals', PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1997, 103.

35 'The Heritage Indaba', 12-13 September 2005.

36 The first of many discursive 'connections' drawn between the indigenous past and the liberated future, in which the military associations between chiefs, the frontier wars of dispossession, and the 'Spear of the Nation' marching to freedom and the road 'ahead' are made.

Interestingly, the first ‘Early history’ session of the Indaba focused solely on the ‘Khoi’ and ‘San’ and their self-represented need (spelt out by ‘Khoi-san chiefs, or more accurately, chiefs and chieftainness’ delegates<sup>37</sup>) to ‘amplify their voices’ in heritage. Delivered through narratives of exclusion, marginality and neglect, perhaps the most significant workshop/ indaba-based critique of current heritage practice emerged in this session. The critique centred on the current delimitations of defining indigeneity and belonging as ‘black’ (meaning African, tribal) and the silenced and silencing of prior claims of ‘Khoi-san first peoples’. The almost comic scene of major heritage officials, literally racing around, conferring, sending notes and disappearing behind closed doors with the ‘Khoi-san’ chiefs during tea spoke of the discernible ‘failed’ politics of recognition and highlighted the ways that heritage is not inherited, but produced (although the Indaba overwhelmingly asserted the heritage narrative of ‘inheritance’). The performance of recognition, though, effected an act of transfer as ‘Khoi-san’ history was ‘added to heritage’ at the Indaba; its omissions acknowledged as a ‘serious oversight’ and the promise of its future resolution through funds and projects highlighted.

The distinction drawn between the categorization of ‘Early history’ as ‘Khoi-san’, as distinct from ‘black history’, indigenous knowledge systems and intangible heritage, was clearly significant. In effect, this only move to periodisation explicitly provided at the ‘Heritage Indaba’ served to continually distance and to disassociate – to write out – this past, contained in its designated ‘pre-’ slot.

By session two on intangible heritage, though, all that had passed in the ‘Early history’ session was ‘settled’ and separated out. Thereafter ‘Intangible heritage’ translated as indigenous knowledge systems and into ‘black (African) history’. Effectively, from this point onwards, ‘real’ heritage – that worth speaking, performing and proclaiming about – was designated as African, defined as indigenous, essentially narrated as tribal culture and performatively cited by the (male) chief and the bare-breasted young woman.<sup>38</sup> The concern, thereafter, was how to transmit, to translate and to transfer this defined heritage into and as part of development.

What this meant was clearly articulated. Then Provincial Arts and Culture Minister Nomsa Jajula provided the framework. She called for the need to ‘walk in the footsteps of our ancestors’ in the societal need to ‘participate in indigenous aims’ and record the legacies of ‘our old’; while also rejecting the ‘non-true infections’ (as she called them) of the colonial and modern west. Jajula further called for a heritage ‘programme of action’ under the banner of ‘to strengthen our roots’ and through this, enforce a national culture and build popular participation,<sup>39</sup> demo-

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37 Part of the public engagement at the Indaba also reflected a debate about names – ‘Bushmen’, Khoi, San and the claimed preferred title of ‘Khoi-san’, delimiting association, but also distinction, between so-called Khoi and San, although some participants sought to claim/re-claim ‘Bushmen’, echoing the vigorous debate prompted by the *Miscast: Negotiating Khoisan History and Material Culture* Exhibition, which opened in 1996 at the South African National Gallery in Cape Town and which, in turn, echoed many earlier moments of engagement.

38 These representations can be read from the programme, the list of speakers, narrations of explanation, stories told and performances given, as well as from the posters adorning the walls of the venue, prominent of which were those of a young bare-breasted rural woman and of the region’s chiefs. ‘Heritage Indaba’, 12-13 September.

39 The discursive re-appropriations of the 1950s and the ANC’s Defiance Campaign and later Freedom Charter and thus the linking of ‘programme’s of action’ to ‘strengthen our roots’ are significant here, and cuts through much of the discourse of heritage.

cratic rights, and as a national resource, also build and sustain development, raise living standards and manage heritage resources.<sup>40</sup>

In effect the Indaba, as a heritage spectacle, mediated a series of social relations about the traditional, the indigenous and the Africanness of 'living heritage' by images. It effectively tied individuals into an economy of looks and looking that can appear more invisibly normalising in its representation, and its demonstrations of the social processes of accumulation, possession, circulation and exchange of images of living culture as one of traditional/ indigenous fixed positions, related to stable identities and recognizable difference. In this sense the value and meaning of images of indigenous culture and tradition is not premised on representation alone, but of how 'community representatives' and most of the people at the Indaba, reflected varying, largely positive relationships of ownership, possession and exchange of these visualities of indigenous culture. 'That is our culture', pointing at poster images of chiefs, traditional dancers, cattle herders and other largely rural depictions; 'this is what we want' as heritage, and 'this heritage can be something, if it is like this' (gesturing to the visual representations).<sup>41</sup>

In addition, living/ intangible heritage was principally defined, and usefully summarized as 'that which is ours'.<sup>42</sup> Tradition, defined as indigenous, oral and embodied, was also constituted as oppositional, as against colonial, settler and modern autographic.<sup>43</sup> This production of living heritage as indigenous, African and as framed by the oppositional, or 'resistance frame', was visible, for example in the concern in regional heritage politics of representation to name the currently labeled 'frontier wars' as the wars of dispossession, in the concern to generate heroic and oppositional narratives for forts, battle-sites and colonial/settler buildings, and to celebrate and memorialize the chiefs and their 'great places' as sites of alterity.

At one level, this is certainly important, given a prevalent documentary and autographic set of representations that, in fact, continue to commemorate and memorialise settler modernity as civilisational and 'progressive'. The notions of 'providing recognition for neglected heritage sites' and of 'redressing imbalances' guides these processes, providing some level of recognition and redress. I have argued elsewhere, however, that they effectively function as 'add-ons' to what remains a dominant tangible heritage production of 'unremarked masculinist white-

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40 In a remarkably powerful set of representational oppositions, men were aligned with time, history, voice and gravitas; women with space, emotion, performance, drawing distinctions between time and space, and thus between agency and 'passive' subjectivity. See D. Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

41 This echoes Corinne Kratz's wording in *The Ones That are Wanted: Communication and the Politics of Representation in a Photographic Exhibition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2002) where, importantly, she highlights the complex constitutions of meaning and agency around the production, circulation and reception of the visual. My point here is somewhat less engaged and possibly rather crude, but simply wishes to point out that there is a much wider and more nuanced 'reading' that is required.

42 Interview with EC District Heritage Officer, 14 November 2005.

43 B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'World heritage and cultural economics', in I. Karp et al. eds., *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/ Global Transformations* (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2006). I am using the term autographic here, following Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, who argues, following Goodman, that autographic is the material instantiation and the work being one and the same, as against allographic, where the work and its instantiations in performance are not the same, and where the tangible heritage list is dedicated to the autographic and the intangible 'should be' to the allographic.

ness'.<sup>44</sup> The museums, tourist routes and wider tourist and heritage industry all reproduce these meanings and understandings in the names of multi-culturalism, nation-building and global competitiveness.

However, what I am concerned with understanding here is the ways that meanings between the traditional, the indigenous and the struggle/ resistance are articulated together and simultaneously reduced to chiefs, massacres, heroes and leaders.<sup>45</sup> Following David Scott, I want to suggest that the heritage narratives (particularly the community heritage site narratives) are founded on translated documentary lists (of various historical, cultural and political 'struggle' repertoires) which have drawn on a distinctive narrative form – that of romance – in order to tell a traditional, chiefly and indigenous based, but also an anticolonial and a co-joined anti-apartheid story. Romance, according to Scott (after Hayden White) is 'fundamentally a drama of self-identification symbolized by the hero's transcendence of the world of experience, his victory over it, and his final liberation from it ... It is a drama of the triumph of good over evil, of virtue over vice, of light over darkness, etc. ... in short [it] is a drama of redemption'.<sup>46</sup> Scott says '... on the whole, anticolonialism has been written in the narrative mode of Romance and, consequently, has projected a distinctive image of the past (one cast in terms of what colonial power denied or negated) and a distinctive story about the relation between that past and the hoped-for-future'.<sup>47</sup> In this sense it constructs '... a Romantic narrative that demonstrates that the resistance of the oppressed – whether in the name of African culture or of a cultural discourse of alternative modernities' is the explanation of past, present and future. In effect, a 'reading' and viewing of the sites in the Eastern Cape reproduces this narrative time and again.

I am proposing that, in part, (and rather than only being seen as political elite manipulation or determined by tourism 'destination cultures' and economic globalisation) it is these articulations of the form of heritage production as 'romance' that connects the stories of African culture/tradition and anticolonial/anti-apartheid resistance. Here they are all aligned through the representations of leaders, heroes, struggles and massacres (and their transcendence); through the connections between chiefs, leaders and heroes as representatives of community, virtue and self-identification; through the closely connected apparent modes of oral transmission as living heritage (of both 'culture and tradition' and of struggle and resistance), together with the sense that community identity and the politics of belonging located in African-ness and its traditions (as opposed to being victims and as denial of colonial/apartheid pasts). In effect, particular sites and forms of political struggle are translated into ones of African tradition and culture and these are literally sited and sighted as anticolonial/anti-apartheid.

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44 G. Minkley, 'Heritage, regimes of visibility and marks of modernity in post-apartheid South Africa', unpublished paper to FHISER Workshop, University of Fort Hare, 2007.

45 In South Africa, the term 'massacre' has acquired significant currency, originating around the Sharpeville Massacre, and used to demarcate particular moments of acute apartheid state violence and killing of 'innocent people'. In essence, many of the signs of this violence against collective groups of people in protest have been memorialized as massacres, hence the Duncan Village Massacre, the Bhishe Massacre and so on.

46 D. Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2004), 47.

47 D. Scott, *Conscripts*, 209.

Their material dimension becomes the exemplary heritage type (chief, hero, victim, indigenous, etc.) as the standpoint of a standard notion of typicality and of inheritance, which is repeated across practically every new heritage site. Then inscribed into the documentary 'new heritage list or register', the list itself becomes both the primary transmitter and the object of heritage knowledge. In effect, then, the documentary heritage list enables a transfer of the romantic anticolonial/ anti-apartheid form into writing, an understanding of this as document - as the carrier of information - before this information can be ascertained as factual and then effectively made fact in heritage registers, inventories and data-bases.

As importantly, though, these acts of transfer, interestingly help keep firmly in place a factual dichotomy and hierarchy between lists and knowledges - between the undesirable tangible/settler modern on the one hand and the redemptive intangible/indigenous/traditional and its associations with the anticolonial on the other. In the romantic echo of the anticolonial located in the living heritage lists, the distinctions between intangible 'living' heritage as 'transcendent' in opposition to the contaminated tangible heritage lists are 'factually' reproduced. On the one hand, tangible heritage is tied to its settler objectifications; on the other living heritage is either listed and made textual, translated via objects as representations of context (plants, instruments, artefacts, etc.), translated into images and memorial objects (plaques, statues, signs, pictures), or archived, making memory, performance, etc. into documentary listed material. It is here that all the talk, and all the directives for heritage as development acquire meaning. Living heritage becomes quantity and a commodity through the list, enters the circuits of tourism and aligns heritage with development in the particular ways summarized by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett as 'destination cultures'.<sup>48</sup>

I have argued that 'living' or 'intangible heritage' (here using examples in the Eastern Cape) rely on a process where indigenous 'culture' and living heritage images and objects are conjoined, and where a particular reading of local/ living (what we may call local descent culture) as 'indigenous' and 'traditional African' provides the mode for contextualising particular objects as 'living heritage'.

Increasingly, what this means is that the constituting of indigeneity and African-ness in this way as 'living' also seeks, then, to delegitimize and establish the 'not-true' and 'not-living' (or perhaps more accurately no longer living - but rather tangible yet dead) of colonial, settler and apartheid discourses and practices. As such, these living indigenous heritage meanings, draw on, and reproduce, a set of meanings that can be more widely ascribed to 'nativist' and Afro-radical viewpoints as elaborated by Mbembe, amongst others. He says,

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48 B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museum, Heritage* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1998) They can only become part of heritage of humanity (translocal/ cultural consent heritage) by continuing to bear what this heritage wants - staged authenticity, culture bearers, transmitters of living heritage in the lens of development and of the west, and so on.

[m]ore fundamentally they are opposed to cosmopolitanism, to the thematic of the universal, even to that of modernity, seeing in them nothing but a series of subterfuges whose goal is to mask the violence of imperialism. Both are presented as projects for self-perpetuation, self-constitution, and self-government, whose major argument ... revolves around autochthony. ... the nativist argument consists in defending the idea that every spatio-racial entity should have its culture, its historicity, its own sense of being and relating to the future and the past. ... the concept of identity is impoverished to the point of being reduced to a metaphor of root and soil. Under these conditions it is understandable that the subject is defined as being *separate* rather than as *being in the world* ... [a]s the master signifier ... the past is imagined as the place where truth of the self and its falsification through the violence of the other can be found ....<sup>49</sup>

I have quoted this at some length because it allows me to draw some important connections. Not only are the metaphors of root and soil important in the living heritage discourse, they are objectified in the concentration on graves, chiefs, royalty, great places (the indigenous roots), in memorials of heroes 'of the soil' and massacres that have 'stained the soil', and in indigenous knowledge that is primarily 'natural', of the soil and around plants, animals, names and 'traditional meanings and uses'.<sup>50</sup> Even indigenous skills are those of ploughing, hoeing, water harvesting – designated as rural and equally of the soil. (Of course, some of these are also connected to developmental discourses and meanings as, and of, 'rural' and 'rural development').<sup>51</sup>

Equally, significantly, though, this allows a connection to the ways that 'the past' is mobilized through living heritage as the place where the truth of self is located. Tangible heritage, then, seemingly stands for the falsification of this past, or at least as its 'separate other'. Taken to mark the 'things of the colonial/ settler/ apartheid past', these tangible heritage sites and buildings remain, inscribed into legislation as provincial heritage sites. They are slowly decaying through neglect and growing resource marginality, except if inserted into tourist and development initiatives.<sup>52</sup> Certainly, an understanding that these sites are marks of falsification of an indigenous past and self is strongly evident, and their exclusion and margin-

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49 A. Mbembe, 'Subject and experience', in N. Tazi, ed, *Experience: Keywords* (Chennai, Sage Publications, 2004), 11-12.

50 These citations draw on a range of source localities, including current Heritage Trail developments and guides, Amatola District Municipality (ADM) Heritage Inventory descriptions; heritage site statements, cultural heritage websites and tourist information, among others. In particular, the ADM Heritage Site Inventory, December 2007, and the ADM/ DEAT Tshani Heritage Trail Initiative (2007), which developed, catalogued and generated an inventory and tourist site descriptions, are significant unpublished sources here.

51 See the draft pamphlet 'Indigenous knowledge systems in the Eastern Cape', produced as part of the developmental and heritage initiatives in the Eastern Cape, and yet to be published, June, 2007.

52 A survey conducted, June-August 2007 by the Culture, Heritage and Social Transformation Niche Area at UFH of existing provincial heritage sites found this to be the case, as did work on the Four Heritage routes developed by the ADM, together with the Department of Economic Affairs and Tourism, known as the Sandile, Hintsas, Maqoma and Makana Routes, and also the ADM Heritage Site Inventory, December 2007.

ality (at least in resource and recognition terms) is paralleled by a decay in their importance and declining ability to define old colonial/ apartheid meanings, identities and sources of difference.<sup>53</sup> This understanding also relies on a framework that assumes that objects and culture are 'sutured together in national time-space, and these heritage things (tangible sites/buildings and objects) are extensions of the particularity of the white, settler/colonial to the material world; that specific times and specific objects, and specific 'cultures' (settler/colonial/white/modern and specific objects (tangible heritage) can be conjoined, and the one explained in terms of the other.<sup>54</sup>

### **Traditions of heritage; heritage traditions**

In essence, then, heritage discourse and practice has increasingly constructed an association between indigenosity, authenticity, African-ness and separateness from what is characterized as the 'Western Modern'. Provincial heritage discourse, emphasizing value, respect, and morality, aligns these social imaginaries with 'living heritage' and with inheritance - with local descent culture - in opposition to tangible, imported settler (and by extension modern culture) which is seen as the site of 'non-true infections'. The 'real' is represented as located in the indigenous - in African-ness - which forms the basis for new ideals of citizenship, democracy, participation and nation-building. Authenticity and African tradition are joined and seen to provide the source and the origin of the alternative and post-apartheid reality. As Raymond Williams has further noted, tradition is often imbued with notions of ceremony, duty and respect, as against a relative lack of these qualities (and anxieties) associated with that of the modern.<sup>55</sup> These notions are equally visible in the ways that public heritage constructs African tradition in the Eastern Cape.

In one frame, in relation to heritage, this seems explicable in relation to questions of class and power. The state, read instrumentally as neo-liberal, is concerned to buy-off a traditional elite, and constitute a notion of tradition that is 'nativist' and in these old 'apartheid' ways, precisely because this is seen to re-locate the origins, but also duplicate and extend the apartheid networks for modern power.<sup>56</sup> In this context, this reconstitution of culture and tradition can be tracked as part of the process of reconstituting post-apartheid modernity and the new nation state.

In a similar sense Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has argued that

the possession of heritage – as opposed to the way of life that heritage safeguards – is an instrument of modernisation and mark of modernity.

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53 C. Pinney, 'Things happen – or, from which moment does that object come?' in D. Miller, ed., *Materiality* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2005). This would also relate to the discussion around objects and their meanings, drawing on Pinney's critique of material culture issues, seen as 'empty', once emptied of its subjects and relations.

54 C. Pinney, 'Things Happen', 261; 262.

55 R. Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1985)

56 Which, furthermore, emerges out of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) discourses as the current reformulation of African nationalism – and as effectively South African new modernity's tradition, but which can re-mobilise the existing networks of power and accumulation.



... [w]hile persistence in old life ways may not be economically viable and may well be inconsistent with economic development and with national ideologies, the valorization of those life ways as heritage (and integration of heritage into economies of cultural tourism) is economically viable, consistent with economic development and can be brought into line with national ideologies of cultural uniqueness and modernity. Fundamental to this process is the heritage economy as a modern economy.<sup>57</sup>

It also seems fairly clear that while heritage has emerged as an important discourse for publically redefining the past and for imagining the post-apartheid nation, it remains a deeply problematic term in other ways as well. One of these, I would argue, is precisely because, as a global discourse that marks particular views of modernity, it does this within the ambits of what we can call 'destination cultures' and Eurocentric/bounded constitutions of 'third world' otherness of tradition as 'culture'.<sup>58</sup>

In effect, heritage representations and practices constitute 'the idea that Africa, or at least real African culture is rural, and in some sense pre-modern', and that '... the modern is essentially embedded in Western political and social institutions, in Western economies and contemporary technology'.<sup>59</sup> These sets of dichotomous understandings run through heritage and public history constructions in the Eastern Cape, as I have argued above. However, as Nettleton has contended, 'African modernity is based in African history as much as it is in Western modernity, but this does not mean that, to be 'African' this modern identity must always be referred back to a primitivist paradigm [or 'authenticity discourse']....'<sup>60</sup>

As Nettleton outlines, issues which are fundamentally rooted in questions of authenticity are also masked behind political and revolutionary imperatives. She shows how the political imperatives in the time of apartheid required or was perceived to require that African subjects of colonial power acquire a modernity which would qualify them for 'civilised' status. This modernity she outlines was rooted in the epistemological and linguistic apparatus, if not by the ontological underpinnings of Western society as offered, first by the missionary, and later, by state educational institutions. Such modernity was opposed to the supposed 'primitiveness' of 'authentic', indigenous African cultures', but also, ironically, set these in place, as the space of the traditional and the indigenous. However, equally ironically, in drawing on a modern 'politics of realism' as a tool for revolution, the question of identity was referred backwards to these same African 'traditions'. This entailed

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57 B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'World heritage', 61.

58 A. Escobar, 'Beyond the Third World: Imperial globality, global coloniality and anti-globalisation social movements', *Third World Quarterly*, 25, (1), February 2004, 207-230.

59 A. Nettleton, 'Public memory and the English language', *Kronos*, 31, November 2005, 233.

60 A. Nettleton, 'Public memory', 234. As Nettleton outlines, European Modernism's foundation in primitivism extends to an understanding that 'it is impossible to make modern or contemporary art without an awareness of western art principles because they are the very foundation of all fine art and even all aesthetic practice, however primitivising they may be, and even if an autodidact status is claimed for the artist'.

drawing on 'a realism' rooted in European (colonial) modes of modernity and its forms of representation that, (drawing on primitivism), constituted the real African as rural and pre-modern. What emerged was a resistance nationalism, rooted in a modern realism, but which required verism as a form of authenticity and which also entailed an authentic located-ness, signaled or figured through its representation of recognizable subject matter and subjects.<sup>61</sup>

Critically, then, as Upton has argued the 'adjectives traditional and modern are themselves artifacts of modernity: tradition did not exist until it was imagined as the defining complement of modernity'. Similarly, as Jane Jacobs argues, tradition is brought into being by modernity's own imaginary and proposes a formulation that reads 'tradition is (not) modern'.<sup>62</sup> Of course, as Jacobs suggests, what is not being argued is that tradition is invented, or that there are no social and material practices and imaginaries outside of the modern, but that particular aspects are taken up and constituted as that of tradition. Under colonialism and apartheid, as Hamilton, Wylie, Mamdani<sup>63</sup> and others show, tradition is constituted around tribe, the customary and the connecting forms of pastoral power. These apartheid re-inforced and re-constituted forms of power and moral authority were prescribed as being located in the tribal chief, headman and the particular tribal hierarchical structures of lineage and custom. Relatedly, assertions of moral order were located in the natural 'course of things' and in the hierarchical division into types as the proper 'order of things', and of laws that always already exist, time out of mind, and so on. It is these features and characteristics that post-apartheid heritage calls the critical component of 'indigenous'; although there is also, effectively, a conflation of the tribal and 'the resistance' into this definition of indigeneity.

This is apparent in the ways that public heritage now re-emphasizes 'our culture; our heritage' as one that is visually represented through chiefs, women in traditional dress, in the architectures of the round hut and cattle kraal, in the celebration of chiefs graves, and Great Places. Its presence, seen in the stock and core markers of heritage routes, trails and destinations, are thus also seen to spatialise and place these sites in the location of moral order in respect for elders and ancestors and in traditional customs and practices, as in the timeless laws and of 'being Xhosa' and its indigenous knowledges, names, meanings and belongings. Just recently, in a letter to the *Daily Dispatch*, a writer says, in response to an article entitled 'suburban uproar over traditional slaughter of cow', that '[t]hey [the complainants who are identified as white by their names] are not fighting Mr ..., but the whole Xhosa tribe and Ngunis in general. There is no compromise. They can go and jump in the lake'.<sup>64</sup> Or, in a very different context, on Monday 20 February

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61 A. Nettleton, 'Public memory'.

62 See D. Upton, 'The tradition of change', *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, 5 (1) 1993, 5-18; J. Jacobs, 'Tradition is (not) modern: deterritorialising globalisation' in N. AlSayad, ed., *The End of Tradition?* (London and New York, Routledge, 2004).

63 See C. Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty: The Power of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention* (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1998); D. Wylie, *Myth of Iron: Shaka in History* (Scottsville, University of Kwazulu-Natal Press, 2006); M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996)

64 *Daily Dispatch*, 21 June 2006, Letters page.

2006, the Provincial Premier of the Eastern Cape province in South Africa, Premier Nosimo Balindlela allocated R500 000 towards research on traditional leadership protocol<sup>65</sup> at the opening of the Eastern Cape House of Traditional Leaders. This was because it had been ‘haphazard and confusing since the dawn of democracy’. ‘Lack of knowledge by the government and other institutions on this matter [regarding traditional leader protocol] has outraged our royals. But traditional leaders themselves should take the blame as they themselves contradicted each other – exposing them as knowing very little of their own practices’, said Balindlela.

The premier then expressed the concern that ‘... black children had been whitewashed of their identity, deserted their cultures and become whites and copy-cats of western culture. ... our children are getting whiter than they are black. They don’t know who they are. They have confused identity’. She further argued that the protocol on traditional leadership would be made available to schools, government institutions and other sectors, so that these confusions of identity could be resolved and ‘... this would restore the pride of Africanness’. I would argue this effectively summarizes heritage discourse in the Eastern Cape within which the conjoined resistance narrative equally coheres.<sup>66</sup>

The paradox, to return to the central part of my argument here, is that the connections between the defined indigenous/ African spaces of ‘African-ness’ and the transmissions of culture and tradition and those of apartheid difference and ‘separate development’ are conjoined as the ways of constituting heritage in the Eastern Cape. They do not mark the transcendence of the basics of apartheid separate development, but rather reproduce them in new ways – and that these are the regional heritage marks of post-apartheid modernity. Heritage, then, delineates a powerful public point where the ‘complicities’<sup>67</sup> between royal ‘pastoral power’ and apartheid ‘separate development’ intersect, and where the notions of separate and bounded ‘cultures’, ‘culture clash’ and ‘our culture, our heritage’ reproduce the ‘natural order’ of tribe and the customary as celebratory indigenous tradition.

As importantly, then, in the defining of living culture as separate and distinct, and as being rooted and routed into the ‘authentic’, tradition becomes the origin and source of the ‘indigenous’, the place where ‘the real’ and the ‘truth’ resides – the place of the not ‘not-true infections’. Paradoxically, though, what I am arguing is that this space of the ‘traditional’ is one actually constituted by, ‘infected’

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65 *Daily Dispatch*, 20 February 2006.

66 D. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2003). Thus it seems particularly instructive that when critique is now offered in the public sphere, it does so on the basis of morality (cf the premier’s statements). Following Diana Taylor, the fundamental contradiction/ tension is shown where ‘violations’ are met with a backlash that transcends the merely human realm. Such deviations are those from the course of nature to injustice, organic and soul metaphors, organism as the paradigmatic locus of forms at work, striving to heal wounds and cure maladies (those of the ‘soul’), hierarchical complementarity, etc.) and, on the other hand, modernity’s moral order which is one of natural rights and the presumption of equality (of society existing for the mutual benefit of individuals and a defence of their rights (of popular sovereignty and consent, being industrious and rational, of concord and mutual service). The point, here, though, is that, while on the one hand this view represents that of rights (new state, democracy, etc.) on the other it is also caught in the double moment of the postcolonial – where rights are historically denied. In this space, the resolution back to the ‘African’ as the source of the ‘course of things’ is both narrow and limiting. This is significantly so because racial modernity has essentially constituted this ‘course of things’ to the realm of modernity’s tradition. And thus invoking it repeats the gestures of the colonial modern project in all kinds of ways.

67 Drawing on the ways that Mark Sanders has suggestively argued for a notion of ‘complicities’. See M. Sanders, *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2002).

with, the colonial and apartheid modern. As such, tradition as re-conceptualized and re-invoked through heritage here actually serves to maintain and reproduce the dichotomies of apartheid and its racially modern relations and basis of difference.

### **‘To try on other lives’<sup>68</sup>**

At a recent exhibition, called ‘Early Modern African Intellectuals’ at UFH (and as part of various heritage initiatives) provides a resonant entry point, precisely because it represents the most bold public attempt in the Eastern Cape to re-imagine an African intellectual route to modernity. As the concluding point of the display’s introduction, it is said that these intellectuals (namely Soga, Ntsikana, Mqhayi, Rubusana and J.T. Jabavu) represent unique lives to emerge out of the ‘buffer-world’ between colonial society and the indigenous population, and that ‘[o]ut of two worlds they crafted a unique African identity and went on to make a vital contribution to South African modernity’.<sup>69</sup> What, one can ask, is this South African modernity, or this ‘embodiment of cultural hybridity’, of which they talk?<sup>70</sup>

Ntongela Masilela, drawing on the significant work of Archie Mafeje, Jeff Opland<sup>71</sup> and Liz Gunner, but also importantly of Soga, Mqhayi and A.C. Jordan, offers us one route into this space and one, importantly, that seems to be missing from, or silent in, heritage discourse. Rather, as I have argued, the ‘heritage complex’ constitutes these figures and others as early African intellectuals and characterizes them as African on the basis of essentialised characteristics: of race and of the presence of ‘the indigenous’, the ‘folk’, and the ‘tale of custom and culture’ in their work and life.

Masilela, on the other hand, has argued, for example, following A.C. Jordan (and Tiyo Soga) that ‘Xhosa folklore attained its historicity as a living embodiment of African metaphysical principles and self-consciousness as a form of artistic representation at the moment it encountered the historical divide between tradition and modernity’.<sup>72</sup> Masilela, then, talks of the ‘new history of modernity that was in the process of being made into a living experience’ in the nineteenth century in the Eastern Cape, and Xhosa folklore as ‘a historical bridge across the divide between past and present’, or between tradition and modernity, and the ways that

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68 This sub-title is taken from the editorial of the *Daily Dispatch*, 3 December 2004, written by C. Thomas, as part of a plea for young children to become readers, and for us to build a reading culture, where A.C. Jordan’s seminal novel is not only heard of, but read, in order to ‘try on other lives’.

69 See African Intellectuals Project, at UFH, 15 June 2006 opening, funded by HSRC, ADM, NHC and Amatola Heritage Initiative. The display, with differing contributions, essentially maintains this view. It gives credence to their role as public and activist intellectuals, in lieu of their localities, and sometimes invoking the notions of being ‘the embodiment of cultural hybridity’, and of being leaders, pathbreakers and emblems of various parts of modernity – media, political, cultural, historical, literary, etc.

70 I would argue that the majority of public heritage projects have not been framed with any explicit notion of African modernity; but rather with notions of the ‘heritage complex’ as lived inheritance, and thus with the past, and with the dual, intersecting notions of indigenous tradition and resistance African nationalism, read through the leader and the site of resistance. While a particular notion of modernity is implied from within these discourses, notions of modernity remain tied to ideas of ‘European modernity’ and its particular settler and colonial and apartheid readings and contaminations – thus of ‘the West’.

71 See J. Opland, ‘Introduction’, in *Words that Circle Words*, in J. Opland, ed. (AD Donker, Cape Town, 1992); J. Opland, *Xhosa Poets and Poetry* (David Philip, Cape Town, 1998).

72 N. Masilela, ‘The modern world of Xhosa folklore’, no date, p1. Located on *New African Movement* website <http://www.pitzer.edu/academics/faculty/masilela>, accessed 9 Nov. 2008.

the 'traditional would be made negotiable to the modern (modernity)'. Drawing on discussions about folklore, oral performance and the historical and cultural roles of dynamic imbongi traditions and developments, Masilela says 'the heritage coming from folklore was reshaped anew in the context of the politics of modernity thereby closing the historical divide between print culture and oral performance'.<sup>73</sup>

Thus he argues at various points (again drawing on Opland) that this 'folklore' and these oral performances (in this case in relation to Yali-Manisi), entail thinking about and expressing 'a form of modernity that does not reject tradition', while also questioning the 'individualism of modernity' as part of a political discourse re-figuring 'the commoner' (and not the chiefly) in relation to the 'tribulations of modernity'. He also talks about the search for a 'third way between tradition and modernity' in reflecting on the ways that Yali-Manisi's work, here in terms of the 'cattle-killing' performance, condemns Christianity and its role in colonial domination.<sup>74</sup>

Masilela argues, then, that in the intellectual legacy and work of what he calls the 'New African Movement', consisting of people like A.C. Jordan and S.E.K. Mqhayi (identified as the cultural intellectual historian), that 'the philosophic and cultural systems predicated on traditional societies were more than capable of navigating and negotiating the new novelties of modernity'.<sup>75</sup> Later in the interview Masilela outlines the need to understand that the context of his work on the New African Movement and its database/ website was, amongst other reasons, to

construct a map of the entrance through violence of *European modernity* into South Africa (through imperialism and colonialism) and its subsequent transformation into *South African modernity* by means of political and cultural manifestation of *New African modernity*. Using

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73 N. Masilela, 'The Modern World'. Included in his discussion, and part of what, I would argue (as I do, below) forms the beginning potential 'complicities' of an 'alternative parallel tradition/ modernity framework', which also operates as a critique of the apartheid heritage complex (beyond the tribal and the 'narrow resistance mirror-nationalist' frame). It emerges out of this 'fragile inheritance' and, as such, is also constituted out of the enlightenment's of colonial modernity, and also, importantly, out of imaginative and re-imagined traditions that are not actual, but proposed, like the view of 'the commoners' as the makers of history, for example. This is not 'actual' in terms of existing hierarchies of power but is opened as an imaginative possibility by the new intersections of alternative modernities. A.C. Jordan (and Masilela, drawing on later work by Jeff Opland and others) argues that through Mqhayi, seen as 'cultural historian', the imbongi tradition was transformed, from being a praise paean to the past about Chiefs, to being a critical vessel concerning the present (and the future). Furthermore he suggests that S.E.K. Mqhayi changed the subject of the 'imbongi' tradition from predominantly about personalities, preferably royal ones, to being about commoners, processes or objects at the historical divide between tradition and modernity, and thus of constituting an interrogative mode about historical situations. Furthermore, as Opland has argued, 'oral poetry' relies on participation, but also constancy of style, techniques and themes that make it amenable to being a conduit for cultural and historical heritage – as a 'people's autobiographical ethnography' and it is able to adapt to new social circumstances brought about by modernity (urbanization, literacy, assimilation) (See J Opland, 'Nineteenth-century Xhosa literature', in *Kronos*, 30, Nov. 2004, 22-46). Liz Gunner, Ari Sitas and others have also pointed to the ways that the imbongi tradition was reconstituted and reformulated in the workers movement in opposition to apartheid. Masilela also outlines, via Archie Mafeje, how the imbongi can be thought of as a 'modern imbongi poetic process' incorporating both oral performance and print culture, which has developed a 'self-reflexive mode of criticism', especially in criticizing/interrogating institutional forms of folklore that are 'regressive and not democratic' - like chieftainship - and in mobilizing democratic struggle against the politics of oppression. Masilela says: 'no modernistic cultural form was as effective as the imbongi tradition in intervening in the politics of modernity'. He also points to the ways that 'folklore' could operate as a stabilizing discourse that shows the 'origins' of the nation as inclusive, open, integrative, and as essentially plural (illustrated via the Xhosa – Khoisan connections) rather than as diverse and 'multicultural'.

74 N. Masilela, 'The Modern World', 15. In his 'Foreword' to 'New Africanism', Masilela also talks about an 'entrance into modernity' (at the time of Seme and the call for a new historical consciousness around the monumental event of 1912). Website:<http://www.pitzer.edu/academics/faculty/masilela>, accessed 9 Nov. 2008.

75 See 'Interview with N. Masilela', on the nature of the *New African Movement* website, by Sandile Ngidi, 3-4 July 2004, 1. <http://www.pitzer.edu/academics/faculty/masilela>, accessed 9 Nov. 2008.

the modern dialectic of Hegel, one could say European modernity was the thesis, New African modernity the antithesis and South African modernity the synthesis.<sup>76</sup>

I do not wish to engage Masilela on particular aspects of his argument here.<sup>77</sup> Instead, I want to draw rather loosely on his formulations for further prying open the dimensions and nature of the ‘post-apartheid heritage complex’ outlined for the Eastern Cape. Perhaps I can elaborate on this with further assistance from Homi Bhabha. He argues that the postcolonial is the conviction ‘that being colonial or postcolonial is a way of ‘becoming modern’, of surviving modernity, without the myth of individual or cultural ‘sovereignty’ that is so central a tenet of liberal individualism and its sense of serial progress or cultural evolution. He continues:

The disciplinary and temporal orders of Progress, Rule, Rationality, and the State become corrupted in the colonial and postcolonial conditions where they play a double, aporetic role: as norms of value they make emancipatory claims, crucial to modern citizenship; however, as part of the power practices of the colonial state they create inequality, injustice and indignity. It is from the interstices of this paradoxical situation that the postcolonial perspective emerges. It unsettles the ubiquity, the ordinariness of those orders of common sense, those polarities of perception, that modernization has bequeathed to the rest of the world. So, for instance, postcoloniality is open to the contingent and hybrid articulations of the sacred-in-the-secular, psychic fantasy as part of social rationality, the archaic within the contemporaneous.<sup>78</sup>

In this context I am interested in trying to find ‘noise’ where earlier and existing accounts of tradition and the post-apartheid heritage complex seem to find a proper name, of locating an ‘unbroken sequence of breakage’ where, as Foucault has it ‘an uninterrupted continuity’ was thought to be, or where a foundational presence is desired. As such, I want, following Baucom and Foucault, to track a genealogical method around the critique of this heritage complex (here of ‘tradition/resistance’) that seeks ‘the subtle, singular, and subindividual marks that

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76 N. Masilela, Interview, 2.

77 As Anderson has noted, ‘just as Modernity is taken from Europe, it appears to proliferate elsewhere, in lower case’, W. Anderson, ‘Postcolonial technoscience’, in *Social Studies of Science*, 32, 5/6, Dec. 2002, 650. We have never had so many ‘moderns’. Perhaps, as Scott says, this is the “insurrection of subjugated knowledges” to which Michel Foucault referred’. As he, and others point out, Appadurai (amongst others) and Gilroy describe ‘alternative modernities’, Brian Larkin ‘parallel modernities’ in Nigeria, Lisa Roloff talks of ‘other modernities’ in China, the Comaroffs (amongst many others) of ‘multiple modernities’, Marilyn Strathern finds ‘new modernities’ at multiple sites, and Marshall Sahlins has spoken of ‘the struggle of non-Western peoples to create their own cultural versions of modernity, resulting in the production of ‘indigenous modernities’. As Anderson notes, ‘hybrid or incomplete modernities are articulated everywhere, and no pure source can be found’. Anderson argues further, drawing on the work of postcolonial scholar Anil Gupta, to argue that he (Gupta) seeks to ‘unsettle “the binaries of colonial and nationalist thought in pointing to the imbrication of the indigenous in modernist discourse” and thus ‘in becoming variously modern, we have also become aware that we remain latently colonial’, as one line of possible further engagement.

78 H. Bhabha, in conversation with J. Comaroff, 2002, 24, cited in D. Attwell, *Rewriting Modernity: Studies in Black South African Literary History* (University of Kwazulu Natal Press, Durban, 2005).

might possibly intersect [in discourses of heritage and tradition] to form a network that is difficult to unravel' but important to attempt to do. As such it is not about 'the erecting of foundations: on the contrary, genealogy disturbs what was previously thought immobile; it fragments what was thought unified, it shows the heterogeneity of what was thought consistent with itself.' A genealogy, then, is not an 'acquisition or possession that grows and solidifies ... it is an unstable assemblage of faults, fissures and heterogeneous layers that threaten the fragile inheritor from within or from underneath'.<sup>79</sup> Hopefully I have begun to show these faults, fissures and heterogenous layers within and underneath that come to constitute aspects of the post-apartheid heritage complex as a very 'fragile inheritor'.

While I do not want to suggest that the work of A.C. Jordan, or Noni Jabavu (or others) unproblematically provides us with such a genealogical method, I do think that their work offers us the basis for an origin and foundation-worrying mode of critique. Jordan and Jabavu suggest these 'subtle, singular and subindividual marks' that could, collectively, provide a critique of the networks of racial modernity and of tradition as they are constituted by the apartheid and racial modernist continuities of the post-apartheid heritage complex. This means looking for 'disturbances, fragmentations and fissurings which name more than a critical grammar of unsettlement, more than an intellectual project. They also name an unsettled and unsettling way of inhabiting and experiencing the modern'.<sup>80</sup>

In Paul Gilroy's terms, the experience of modernity is an experience of confronting an ontological displacement, of being thrown from a knowable 'place-world' into the bewilderments of a delocalized, despecified world space.<sup>81</sup> Relatedly, (if in somewhat more conventional analytic form) Achille Mbembe has argued that what he calls 'nativism and Afro-radicalism' involve a *fixation* on the past and establish a close correspondence between geographical contingency and destiny'. Here, however he argues against the idea that the historical practices of society's members are organized on models of composition, creative assimilation, mimetic genius, and active desires of imaginative sovereignty. From this, he argues that these practices and histories show the *limits* of the nativist and Afro-radical forms of the African subject. He further suggests that the experience of *radical uncertainty* still remains at the heart of the process of forming contemporary African identities and, therefore, of the need to attach new 'coefficients of truth' to this sign that is Africa. In this, he argues, we need to enrich language and speech in order to escape its 'prisons' through constituting an *archives of the present*. He proposes that this consists of an entire body of visual, chanted, painted, imagined, and spoken texts, in short a 'present archive' that develops an aesthetics of overture and encounter, that '[i]n reading them we can grasp the power of falsification that exists within memory insofar as it bears witness to the experience that the contemporary African subject has of power, language and life'.<sup>82</sup>

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79 I. Baucom, 'Atlantic genealogies', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 100.1, Winter 2001, 3

80 Baucom, 'Atlantic Genealogies'.

81 P. Gilroy, quoted in I. Baucom, *Spectres of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery and the Philosophy of History* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2005) p65.

82 A. Mbembe, 'Subject and experience', in N Tazi, ed., 18.

It is also here that we might begin to engage differently with A.C. Jordan's *The Wrath of the Ancestors* and with a different sense of heritage, beyond the reworked post-apartheid heritage complex. As Peteni observed in the 1980 'Introduction', this is a tragic novel, and we need to ask what it might mean to engage with David Scott's argument that in place of romance, it might be more appropriate to draw on and engage 'tragedy'. Scott says:

[i]n short, tragedy sets before us the image of a man or woman obliged to act in a world in which values are unstable and ambiguous. And consequently, for tragedy the relation between past, present and future is never a Romantic one in which history rides a triumphant and seamlessly progressive rhythm, but a broken series of paradoxes and reversals in which human action is ever open to unaccountable contingencies ... the strategy of tragedy is not to dismiss out of hand claims of reason [enlightenment, civilization], but to honour the contingent, the ambiguous, the paradoxical, and the unyielding in human affairs in such a way as to complicate our most cherished notions about the relation between identity and difference, reason and unreason, blindness and insight, action and responsibility, guilt and innocence.<sup>83</sup>

Thus he says 'tragedy has a more respectful attitude to the contingencies of the past in the present, to the uncanny ways in which its remains come back to usurp our hopes and subvert our ambitions, it demands of us more patience for paradox and more openness to chance than the narrative of anticolonial Romanticism does, confident in its own striving and satisfied in its own sufficiency'. He concludes (discussing the work and implications of a different reading of C.L.R. James) that the sense of the tragic for our postcolonial times is that 'the colonial past may never let go'.<sup>84</sup> This is a 'hard truth', for as he says 'the paradigmatic story of our encounter with the enlightenments of colonial modernity' is how we began and we have never ceased – and perhaps it is our fate to never cease – rehearsing the paradoxical journeys of that tragic encounter.<sup>85</sup>

Premesh Lalu has recently similarly argued that if we are to find ways to let go of apartheid and let apartheid go then we need to find a new way to speak about apartheid. Specifically, for him, this means encountering its disciplinary and institutional legacies and its unseen routines as the means to forge an alternative concept of difference from the trauma of the originating concept. This imaginatively entails elaborating on how to make apartheid a watchword of difference, in order to imagine different futures, and so activate a concept of the postapartheid that is different from the violence named in its transcendent desire. He argues that the

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83 D. Scott, *Conscripts*, 13.

84 D. Scott, *Conscripts*, 220.

85 D. Scott, *Conscripts*. Thus Scott says 'as Segal argues we have tragic art so 'that we may not forget the dimensions of life that our structures cannot encompass ... Without that paradoxically pleasurable pain of tragedy, our order and our structures would become sterile, self-enclosed, solipsistic, arrogant with the hybris of their own intellectual power'.



‘trauma of the originating concept’ (of colonialism/ apartheid) lies in instrumental reason, the recourse to pastoral techniques of power, claims to bounded identity and the retreat into homeland sense and security’.<sup>86</sup> In many respects, read somewhat more narrowly, this could be descriptive of the ‘post-apartheid heritage complex’ and its routines, rituals and performances for establishing the ‘new national estate’.

The critique, though, and the concern to ‘forge an alternative concept of difference’, drawing on ‘tragedy’, seems to me, constitutes a more worthy ‘fragile inheritance’, and offers the basis of a ‘critical heritage’ which is simultaneously a critique of a post-apartheid heritage complex. As Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has so powerfully argued, this needs to be understood here as a particular [post-apartheid] mode of cultural production, not an indigenous inheritance, structured from the present.

I think, too, part of the basis of being able to demonstrate and move beyond the heritage complex is to pluralise tradition, to make traditions parallel to different modalities and marks of the alternative modernities of post-apartheid South Africa. This is, I think, what Jordan and others suggest possible ways of doing. To acknowledge this, then, is to recognize this doubleness – that this work of pluralizing traditions potentially names both a mode of inquiry and a habitus, a critical discourse on modernity and a critical site within the modern (of dwelling in and reflecting on the modern).

The new politics of heritage production in the Eastern Cape, the new post-apartheid heritage, though, complex, produces a more narrow one-sided sense of heritage as cultural difference, race and bounded identity, without transcending this difference as that of apartheid. If, however, we remember that heritage is a construct of modernity, we need to move towards the ways that public histories can constitute ‘critical frictions’ or ‘socially imaginary significations’, doubled from the standpoints of both difference and equivalence – and thus as simultaneously spaces of social domination and as vehicles of emancipatory possibility.<sup>87</sup> To repeat a point made above, this means locating disturbances, fragmentations and fissurings of tradition, of locating parallel, alternative and fugitive traditions, in association with their modernities, in order to name more than a critical grammar of unsettlement, more than an intellectual project. Doing so, would also name ‘an unsettled and unsettling way of inhabiting and experiencing the post apartheid modern’.

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86 See P. Lulu, ‘Nomadism in art’, in *Art South Africa*, 4, (3), Autumn 2006, 24.

87 See G. Wilder, ‘Practising citizenship in Imperial Paris’, in J. Comaroff and J. Comaroff, eds, *Civil Society and the Political Imagination in Africa: Critical Perspectives* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1999), 64-5.