

# Racial Irredentism, Ethnogenesis, and White Supremacy in High-Apartheid South Africa

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*During the period of high apartheid – the 1960s and early 1970s – there was a resurgence of scientific racism in small but concentrated intellectual circles with strong transnational links to Britain and the United States. This resurgence was closely tied to the efforts of J.D.J. Hofmeyr, an eminent but little-known plant geneticist based at Pretoria University, to establish ‘anthropogenetics’ as a dimension of human genetics. Using networks associated with the radical right-wing journal *The Mankind Quarterly*, Hofmeyr and his associates sought to argue that biological superiority and inferiority was natural and ineradicable. They also argued in favour the biological basis of culture, encouraging the view that apartheid’s Bantustans were the natural fulfilment of underlying cultural and ethnic differences. This idea was picked up and developed in the thinking of leading volkekundiges like P.J. Coertze. A range of intellectuals and activists, some on the margins of academia, others with permanent positions, mobilised these ideas in an attempt to justify apartheid and to position support for apartheid South Africa, along with Rhodesia, as part of a broader defence of white supremacy. The term ‘racial irredentism’ is used to signal how the new scientific racists sought to recover and reconfigure the intellectual territory of prewar scientific racism.*

## Keywords

South Africa, racism, racial science, apartheid, white supremacy, Afrikaner nationalism, *Mankind Quarterly*, *volkekunde*, Bantustan

If there is a historiographical consensus about scientific racism in South Africa, it is that the phenomenon played only a limited role in the history of apartheid.<sup>1</sup> Paul Maylam maintains the postwar generation of Afrikaner nationalist writers moved away from ‘cruder racial theories’ and increasingly explained racial differentiation by recourse to theories of ethnic pluralism and historical experience.<sup>2</sup> Aletta Norval, one of the few authors who covers both the segregationist and apartheid periods, acknowledges the existence of a ‘subtradition’ of explicit racism in Afrikaner thinking

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1 I make grateful acknowledgement to Andrew Bank, Stan Blecher, Krista Kuljan, Alan Morris, and Kees van der Waal for their most helpful comments. Translations from Afrikaans are my own and are rendered freely. Thanks, too, to Priscilla Hall and William Lu for editorial assistance.

2 P. Maylam, *South Africa’s Racial Past: The History and Historiography of Racism, Segregation, and Apartheid* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 212–3.

in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>3</sup> Yet she has little to say about conceptions of race either in the period of ‘high’ apartheid during the 1960s, or during the period of apartheid’s structural reforms from the mid-1970s. Hermann Giliomee sees little evidence of biological conceptions of race in the construction of apartheid and asks rhetorically: ‘How does one square the absence of a racist ideology with a racist program?’ His answer is that ‘apartheid with its racist outcomes was not a goal in itself; political survival was.’<sup>4</sup> My own analysis in *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* (1995) and elsewhere is congruent with this approach, though with one important qualification: although scientific racism was by no means the most important or determining ideological strand of apartheid, it was an indispensable component or trace element in apartheid discourse, an assumption that helped sustain the everyday assumptions of difference. In Jonathan Jansen’s striking phrase it was ‘knowledge in the blood’<sup>5</sup>

Most of the substantial studies of apartheid ideology focus on its early formative period, from the 1930s to the 1950s. This is so because scholars were keen to establish the differences between apartheid and its precursor, racial segregation, and also because historians tend to assume that analysis of origins helps to explain intent and outcomes. There is also a very substantial body of work that looks at the evolution of apartheid ideology from the reformist moment of the mid-1970s, when apartheid underwent an extended period of deracialisation in an effort to decontaminate itself ideologically. In the extended late-apartheid era, justifications of continued minority rule were increasingly cast in the rhetoric of anti-communism, the defence of free enterprise, and the rights of minority ethnic ‘groups’ to statutory protection. Biological notions of race were actively disavowed to the extent that leading government ministers denied that apartheid remained government policy or that it had anything to do with the defence of white supremacy.<sup>6</sup>

There are two distinct problems that arise from this. In the first place, concentration on apartheid’s rise, and its fall, means that the era of high apartheid – the 1960s and early 1970s – remains relatively unexplored in terms of the history of political thought. This is curious because it was the era of high apartheid that made white supremacy synonymous with racial rule. The point of this article is to show that the moment of high apartheid was characterised by a resurgence – or a new sub-tradition – of explicit hyper-racism that scholars of South African racism, myself included, have so far overlooked. This networked form of micro-politics may not have been broadly pervasive, but it was reasoned, purposive, and clearly directed. The resurgence of scientific racism in the 1960s displays some clear continuities with prewar scientific racism but it also has some distinctive features. Whereas

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3 A. Norval, *Deconstructing Apartheid Discourse* (London: Verso, 1996), 88–92.

4 For a critical response, see P. Furlong, ‘Apartheid, Afrikaner Nationalism and the Radical Right: Historical Revisionism in Hermann Giliomee’s *The Afrikaners*’, *South African Historical Journal*, 49, 1, 2003, 207–22. I am grateful to Hermann Giliomee for sending me the text of a talk he delivered at the Hugenote-gedenkskool, Paarl on 25 October 2004. ‘Piet Cillie en Moontlike Invloede op *Die Afrikaners*’, where he reflects on the influences on this book of the editor of a leading Cape newspaper *Die Burger*. Here Giliomee cites approvingly Cillie’s views that nationalism, rather than race, was the decisive shaping force on apartheid, and his disdain for ‘pseudo-scientific myths of race’.

5 S. Dubow, *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); J.D. Jansen, *Knowledge in the Blood: Confronting Race and the Apartheid Past* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

6 S. Dubow, *Apartheid 1948–1994* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 202, 204, 274–5.

obsessive fears of race mixture, white degeneration and contamination marked the phase of apartheid's rise, this was no longer the case during apartheid's heyday. Nor was Afrikaner nationalism any longer the key focus of divisions within South Africa's ruling classes. The science of race that emerged in the 1960s was, on the one hand, directed outwards in order to position South Africa as part of the defence of Western, Christian civilisation (a very different conception to Unesco's contemporaneous efforts to formulate the idea of 'world civilisation').<sup>7</sup> On the other, it was intended to reassure apartheid's internal supporters that the Bantustan policies of ethnic self-determination could be justified in biological as well as cultural terms.

The second problem has to do with the potential for historical revisionism in respect of apartheid. If the exculpation of apartheid as an expression of systematic racialism gains traction, such an interpretation might feed the view that apartheid was an experiment that went radically wrong but whose intentions were not malign. F.W. de Klerk, South Africa's last white president, has consistently held to this position; separate but equal, in this view, was not necessarily altogether a bad idea in theory.<sup>8</sup>

At the University of Stellenbosch, intellectual home to every South African prime minister from Smuts to Vorster, there has of late been animated debate about apartheid's true intentions and meaning. A plaque honouring H.F. Verwoerd was removed in an official ceremony in May 2015 in an act of recognition and contrition. This event was at least in part a response to public debates following the discovery, in 2013, of physical anthropological measuring implements at the local university museum, including items purported to be directly connected with the racial scientist Eugen Fischer. The revelation gave rise to passionate, and sometimes tendentious, discussion as to whether apartheid could be said to have been inspired by 'Nazi' ideology. One creative response was the inauguration at Stellenbosch University of the multi-disciplinary 'Indexing the Human' project in 2014. This seeks to understand the legacy of racism both at an institutional and at a societal level.<sup>9</sup>

My own small involvement in this initiative was an occasion to reassess the persistence of scientific racism into the era of high apartheid in the 1960s and early 1970s. The initial departure point of my research was the case of J.D.J. ('Hannes') Hofmeyr (1903–1980), founding president of the South African Genetic Society and one of its elected life members. J.D.J. Hofmeyr is an obscure figure who does not feature at all in the literature on apartheid. Few if any South African geneticists currently working today seem to recall anything about him, and if they do, their memories are partial or fragmentary. Google the Genetics Society's website and you will find that it honours its founder through the award of Hofmeyr-Van Schaik medals – gold, silver

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7 P. Betts, 'Humanity's New Heritage: Unesco and the Rewriting of World History', *Past and Present*, 228, 1, 2015, 249–85.

8 *Christian Science Monitor*, 18 May, 1994; *Telegraph*, 11 May 2012; F.W. de Klerk, *The Last Trek: A New Beginning* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 16.

9 For a selection of newspaper reports, see S. Robins, 'When Science Turns Monstrous', *Cape Times*, 3 May, 2013; L. Scholtz, 'Maties Bekyk Wéér die Nazi's', *Die Burger*, 3 May 2013; Kees van der Waal, 'Apartheid en die Akademie', *Die Burger*, 8 June 2013; and letters in *Die Burger* from Piet Jonas, 18 June 2013 and Pierre du Toit, 19 June 2013; also D. Newling, 'Debate over Nazi "Race Index" Tools Found at Stellenbosch', *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 21 October 2013. On Indexing the Human, see <http://indexingthehuman.org/>.



Figure 1 (above left): J.D.J. Hofmeyr, Stellenbosch graduate, 1927. © University of Stellenbosch

Figure 2 (above right): J.D.J. Hofmeyr as a University of Pretoria professor, 1968. © University of Stellenbosch

and bronze – for outstanding achievements.<sup>10</sup> The society's website contains some snippets about the organisation's history, yet there is nothing to suggest anything disturbing or discordant in its intellectual lineage and objectives. To the contrary, the society states its mission 'to promote all aspects of genetics and guard against the inappropriate use of genetics'.<sup>11</sup>

The society's history is in fact rather more complex since it was dedicated from the start to a highly ideological view of human genetics under the leadership of J.D.J. Hofmeyr.<sup>12</sup> Born in rural Pietersburg, 'Hannes' Hofmeyr was one of four children,

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10 The medals jointly honour J.D.J. Hofmeyr and Nancy van Schaik, an American-born maize geneticist who served the society (which changed its name from Genetic to Genetics sometime after 1970) for many years as its secretary/treasurer before becoming its president in 1992–4. Nancy van Schaik studied at the University of Wisconsin, where she gained her PhD in 1957. Her interest in the genetics of maize led her to Pretoria, where she married Theo van Schaik. After Theo's death in 1959, she became a lecturer at the University of Pretoria. She joined the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) Department of Genetics in 1975, from where she retired in 1995 as professor emeritus. For an appreciation, see M. Silberbauer, 'People of Note: Nancy van Schaik', *Veld and Flora*, 96, 3, 2010.

11 See <http://www.sagene.co.za/default.aspx?id=13>.

12 The fullest account is the entry by C.F.B. Hofmeyr, J.D.J.'s brother, in W.J. de Kock (ed), *Dictionary of South African Biography* (Pretoria: Nasionale Boekhandel, 1968–87). In trying to establish details about J.D.J. from members of the South African Genetic Society, I found that he is only dimly recalled. J.H. Hofmeyr, also a member of the Genetic Society (and a nephew of J.D.J.) was not certain when I spoke to him on the phone on 6 August 2014 whether the Hofmeyr-Van Schaik medal honoured himself or J.D.J.; Professor Carl Roux, whom I spoke to on the same day, could not cast light on the Hofmeyr-van Schaik medal; Professor J.M.P. Geertsens, whom I telephoned on 14 August 2014, confirmed that the medal honoured J.D.J. He added that J.D.J. was a 'strong conservative' and 'honest about what he thought'. He remembers him as a humane, religious man, who was well liked by his students. Professor Louise Warnich, dean of the Faculty of Science at Stellenbosch, was unable to provide details about Hofmeyr from living associates but she helpfully sent me published biographical details and confirmed that the Hofmeyr-Van Schaik medal honours J.D.J. and Nancy van Schaik (email communication, 22 August 2014). Also helpful was Dr Vida van Staden of the University of Pretoria Department of Genetics, who put me in contact with some of the people named above.

all of whom developed careers in agriculture and veterinary science. Hannes gained a BSc in agriculture at the University of Stellenbosch in 1925 and an MSc in horticulture two years later. He proceeded to Cornell University, where he studied under the renowned plant geneticist Rollins A. Emerson, graduating with a PhD on the genetics of maize in 1930. With jobs scarce during the Depression, Hofmeyr took a position at the Nelspruit Research Institute for Citrus and Sub-Tropical Fruit. During this period he gained a second doctorate at the University of South Africa before joining the Department of Agronomy at Pretoria University as a lecturer in 1943. He became the inaugural professor and head of genetics in 1953, built a substantial department, and remained at Pretoria as a senior professor until his retirement in 1968.<sup>13</sup>

As an academic Hofmeyr was a leading researcher who published some 100 scientific articles on citrus and tropical fruit, pineapples and tomatoes. He was best known, internationally, as an expert on the genetics of papaya (pawpaw), specifically the genetic mechanisms underlying sex selection in this fruit. For these achievements he is said to have been dubbed 'Father of pawpaw genetics in the world' at an international congress held in Venezuela in 1967.<sup>14</sup> A fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and life member of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science, Hofmeyr was also a member of the Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns (Academy for Science and Arts), which awarded him its science and technology prize (biology) in 1965. Read alongside the careers of contemporary Afrikaner scientists, Hofmeyr's is comparable to other aspiring Afrikaner nationalists who, growing up in the immediate post-South African war era with memories of trauma fresh in their minds, and making the most of their rural agrarian upbringing, studied in the United States (rather than Britain) and returned to South Africa ideally positioned to ascend the academic elevator of rising Afrikanerdom.<sup>15</sup>

Along with these distinctions and accolades there is another side to Hofmeyr's career. The clue is present in the *Dictionary of South African Biography*, which notes in passing that Hofmeyr was an executive member of the International Association for the Advancement of Eugenics and Ethnology before concluding that he was 'a Christian of unblemished character who dedicated himself to serving his fellowmen and his country'. Hofmeyr's parallel passion had little to do with pawpaws. He was an enthusiastic and inventive scientific racist like the better known (to historians) but rather less scientifically accomplished Gerrie Eloff, with whom he shared the Havenga prize (biology) in 1965.

Hofmeyr was the founding president and moving spirit behind the South African Genetic Society established at the University of Pretoria in 1956–1957. It was the

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13 University of Pretoria, Human Resources, Personnel File, UPA-D-4-3, J.D.J. Hofmeyr, Curriculum Vitae and associated materials. My thanks to Karen Harris for making these available.

14 Entry by C.F.B. Hofmeyr in the *Dictionary of South African Biography*. In a letter (19 February 1980) to Professor Hamman, rector of the University of Pretoria, following J.D.J.'s death, C.F.B. Hofmeyr said that his brother was 'always the model of a steadfastly principled Afrikaner'. University of Pretoria, Human Resources, Personnel File, UPA D-4-3.

15 See, for example, the discussion of H.S. du Toit by William Beinart in *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa: Settlers, Livestock, and the Environment 1770–1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) ch 7. The generational aspect of Afrikaner nationalist mobilisation is addressed by Andrew Bank in "Broederbande" [Brotherly Bonds]: Afrikaner Nationalist Masculinity and African Sexuality in the Writings of Werner Eiselen's Students, Stellenbosch University, 1930–1936, *Anthropology Southern Africa*, 31, 3, August 2015, 2–3.

fulfilment of an ambition that he, Gerrie Eloff, and D.J. Nolte and others had been seeking to achieve since 1942. Although Hofmeyr and all the other principal figures were experts in plant and animal science, the society soon declared a marked interest in human genetics. The Genetic Society's first congress was held in Pretoria in 1958 with around seventy delegates in attendance. The congress received strong official backing in the form of the zoologist H.O. Mönning, who opened proceedings, and guest of honour S.M. Meiring Naudé, head of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. Two resolutions were unanimously passed at the 1958 Congress: to establish an institute for research in human heredity, and to achieve greater recognition of genetics at schools and universities. In his opening address, Hofmeyr stressed the need for South Africa to undertake research of racial intermixture on a scientific basis. Although the society (referred to in 1962 as an anthropogenetic institute) was not successful in formally establishing an institute for the study of human heredity – most likely because of official concerns that this might be controversial on religious and political grounds – it focused much of its energies on this ambition.<sup>16</sup>

The Genetic Society's location in Pretoria, administrative capital of South Africa and seat of government, was a statement of confidence in Afrikaner science and scientific institutions. At a time when the tendency in other academic organisations was to split away from English-speaking learned societies in order to create exclusively Afrikaner equivalents, the fact that the Genetic Society was known both by its English and Afrikaans names and that it conducted and published its proceedings in both official languages, was an indication of its desire to be taken seriously at a national and international level. Further congresses in 1966 and 1970 continued the interest in human genetics and eugenics.<sup>17</sup> The Genetic Society drew in some scientists from the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg, in particular the cytogeneticist D.J. Nolte, a cytogeneticist and expert on locusts, and N.P. Badenhuizen, a botanist with particular interest in starch cells. The society's primary orientation and patronage network nevertheless remained closely linked to Pretoria University.<sup>18</sup> As we shall see, there was pronounced political and intellectual rivalry between Wits liberals led by Phillip Tobias and Pretoria conservatives led by J.D.J. Hofmeyr. This became manifest in public and professional feuding over the meaning of race and its relevance to apartheid policies.

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16 *Proceedings of the First Congress of the South African Genetic Society, July 1958* (Pretoria: Pretoria University, 1958), 3, 8, 11. Stan Blecher informs me that his own bid to do genetic studies on 'Cape coloureds' was turned down by the funding agency on the basis that it was not government policy to fund research on racial genetics. This may be because Blecher was associated with Phillip Tobias. Hofmeyr was, however, credited with helping to establish human genetics at the Africa Institute, Pretoria.

17 For example, M.A. Schweppenhauser, 'The Genetic Fate of Man', *Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the South African Genetic Society, July 1970* (Pretoria: South African Genetic Society, 1971), 14–18.

18 Twenty-seven founder members are listed on the Genetic Society website, including J.D.J. Hofmeyr, J.H. Hofmeyr, G. Eloff, D.J. Nolte, N. van Schaik and T. van Schaik. J.D.J. Hofmeyr served as president with D.J. Nolte as vice-president from 1956 to 1966, whereupon D.J. Nolte became president with J.H. Hofmeyr as his deputy until 1974. See <http://www.sagene.co.za/userfiles/file/Founder%20members.pdf> and <http://www.sagene.co.za/userfiles/file/Officers%20Society.pdf>. The institutional boundaries between Wits and Pretoria were by no means impermeable. D.J. Nolte was Wits-based and Nancy van Schaik moved to Wits. Trefor Jenkins was for a time listed as a member of the Genetic Society and published 'Genetic Studies on the Khoisan Peoples of Southern Africa' in *Proceedings of the Third Congress of the South African Genetic Society, July 1966* (Pretoria: South African Genetic Society, 1968), 106–11. Gerrie Eloff, also closely associated with the Genetic Society, moved from Wits to the University of the Orange Free State.

Soon after its launch in 1960, Hofmeyr joined the international advisory board of the *Mankind Quarterly*, a pugnacious journal conceived by right-wing intellectuals as a reaction against the liberal anti-racism of postwar anthropology in the United States and Britain. Through the networks of the *Mankind Quarterly* and with the support of Pretoria University, Hofmeyr became closely involved in promoting a profoundly racialised view of human genetics geared to the defence of high apartheid. Under Hofmeyr's leadership the South African Genetic Society became the institutional fulcrum of this movement. The pro-apartheid prognostications of Hofmeyr and his associates gave direct support to a small but well dispersed network of international white supremacists who, in the postwar world, felt themselves to be a beleaguered scientific minority standing up for unpopular truths. These causes focused on opposition to civil rights legislation in the United States and the totemic defence of white supremacy in Rhodesia and South Africa.

### Verwoerd and Eiselen Reconsidered

In order fully to appreciate the distinctive aspects of this reassertion of scientific racism, it is important to understand that that it was not merely a survival from earlier times. During the crucial formative period of Afrikaner nationalism, from the 1930s, racial intermixture had been treated with alarm and horror, but overt appeals to eugenics were treated cautiously. In the first place, Christian-nationalist thinking, which underpinned the origins of apartheid theory in the 1930s and 1940s, was chary of appeals to evolutionist theory because this challenged the ultimate authority of Scripture. Secondly, as a nationalist movement, apartheid was premised on ethnic antagonism between English and Afrikaans-speakers. In the 1920s and 1930s much of the eugenic literature, as well as psychometric testing, raised the possibility that the cause of 'poor whiteism' (which disproportionately affected Afrikaans-speakers) was organic rather than environmental in origin.

In the 1940s, when the term 'apartheid' was first coined, many populist Afrikaner nationalists flirted with fascism and racial tropes were broadcast widely. It was at this point that racial ideas hardened within the Afrikaner nationalist movement. But, as the tide turned against fascism in Europe, senior nationalist leaders became acutely aware of the dangers of identifying too closely with 'foreign' Nazi ideology. After 1948 the new apartheid regime was rapidly sensitised to overseas and domestic criticisms that saw South Africa's racial policies as a new form of *herrenvolkism* (master-race ideology).

Apartheid was most often explained by its advocates as a nationalist response to Afrikaner experience, religion and national history. Recourse to culture and ethnicity, rather than biological race, proved to be both a more pliable and palatable means of explaining the desirability of different peoples or nations (*volke*) to develop along their own independent lines. The construction of a theory of immanent group difference based on culture and inner spiritual qualities (*volkseie*) coalesced in the new ethnological discipline of *volkekunde* (Afrikaner nationalist anthropology). This ethnological view of culture was intimately associated with Afrikaner ethnic

mobilisation, and thereafter with the institutionalisation of apartheid. *Volkekunde* began at Stellenbosch University in the 1920s and subsequently took institutional root at Pretoria, Potchefstroom and Bloemfontein Universities. Its practitioners, the *volkekundiges*, made a fetish of the concept of ‘ethnos’, which served as the ontological building block of apartheid after 1948.<sup>19</sup> Emphasis on culture and ethnicity meant that separation did not necessarily require explicit reference to matters of innate inferiority or superiority. Yet, as new work by Bank shows, it is both misleading and anachronistic to think of the *volkekundiges* as exponents of ‘culture contact’ or ‘cultural relativism’ in the sense of Anglophone social anthropology.<sup>20</sup>

Many leading politicians and ideologists (with notable exceptions, like Prime Minister J.G. Strijdom, an unabashed defender of race mastery) insisted that apartheid had to do more with the preservation of cultural and ethnic differences than racial hierarchies. This line of argument was perfected by ideologues of high apartheid like Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd and his Native Affairs administrative supremo Werner Eiselen, both academics by training and vocation. Ever keen to demonstrate the ‘positive’ aspects of apartheid, they maintained that their radical proposals to create new ethnic black homelands, later Bantustans, were also fully consonant with processes of decolonisation in the rest of Africa. Indeed, Verwoerd spoke about creating a ‘commonwealth’ in southern Africa, a formulation that was subsequently revived in the late-apartheid era by means of the idea of a ‘constellation of states’.

Hermann Giliomee maintains that Verwoerd ‘rejected the idea that blacks were biologically inferior to whites or that race had anything to do with intelligence and abilities.’<sup>21</sup> Endorsing the work of Roberta Balstad Miller, who argued that Hendrik Verwoerd’s ideas derived not so much from his studies in 1930s Germany but from American social science, Giliomee highlights the absence of explicit racism in Verwoerd’s teachings when he served as a professor at Stellenbosch. Similar claims have been made about Werner Eiselen, a Stellenbosch lecturer and professor, who, as secretary for Native Affairs, played a central role in the elaboration and institutionalisation of apartheid during Verwoerd’s premiership.<sup>22</sup>

The view that racial science played a negligible or declining role in apartheid plainly requires reassessment. Andrew Bank is currently developing a powerful challenge to claims that Eiselen disdained biologically based views of race. This he does by re-examining Eiselen’s university education at Hamburg and Berlin (1921–1924) and the crucial influence on him of the linguist Carl Meinhof, as well as Eiselen’s formative role in the creation of *volkekunde* at Stellenbosch from 1926 to 1929, where racial science and eugenics appear to have been integral to the syllabus.<sup>23</sup>

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19 John Sharp, ‘The Roots and Development of *Volkekunde* in South Africa’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 8, 1, 1981, 16–36; R. Gordon, ‘Serving the *Volk* with *Volkekunde*: On the Rise of South African Anthropology’ in J.D. Jansen (ed), *Knowledge and Power in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1991).

20 Bank, “*Broederbande*,” 2.

21 H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (London: C. Hurst, 2003), 469. See also H. Giliomee, *The Last Afrikaner Leaders: A Supreme Test of Power* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2012), 68–9.

22 Giliomee, *Afrikaners*, 350; T.D. Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 271–4; R.B. Miller, ‘Science and Society in the Early Career of H.F. Verwoerd’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19, 4, 1993, 634–61. On Eiselen, see for example Gordon, ‘Serving the *Volk*’, 80–1.

23 Andrew Bank, ‘Fathering *Volkekunde*: Race and Culture in the Ethnological Writings of Werner Eiselen, Stellenbosch University, 1926–1936’, *Anthropology Southern Africa* (online 1 Oct. 2015), 1–17; also Bank, “*Broederbande*,” 1–18.



In respect of Verwoerd, detailed work conducted by Christoph Marx on Verwoerd's time as a student in Leipzig in 1926 agrees that he was not much affected by German *völkisch* romanticism. Crucially, however, Marx adds that Verwoerd was considerably influenced by German developmental psychology and ethnopsychology. This approach was open to racist explanations that viewed Africans and other 'primitive' peoples as culturally retarded and incapable of catching up with Europeans. Africans, it was inferred, were stuck within a certain phase of development. Their psychological make-up was like that of individuals who had not reached 'adult' maturity.<sup>24</sup>

In Verwoerd's case, there can be little doubting his underlying racist tendencies. Verwoerd's strong support of antisemitism in the 1930s, and the overweening arrogance and paternalism with which he treated blacks and racially intermixed 'coloureds' as the master builder of apartheid in the 1950s and 1960s, cannot be denied. His blunt refusal to accept blacks as political citizens and as thinking individuals, rather than as representatives of government-defined 'groups', relied heavily on racial and ethnic stereotyping. So, too, did the system of 'Bantu' education, which he did much to devise and implement.

True, Verwoerd often insisted that apartheid was intended to advance multicultural diversity rather than racial hierarchy. But his determinedly logical mind and personal political mastery amply conveyed white Afrikaner authority at the height of its power. He reminded parliamentarians shortly before Sharpeville that it was 'his character, his initiative and his other inherent qualities in the form of creative urge and intellectual capacity that have made the White man great'. Where white survival was concerned, as in the case of Rhodesia in 1966, Verwoerd was resolute, even menacing: South Africans, he told parliament, were the 'foremost fighters for white dominance'.<sup>25</sup> The 'illocutionary force' of Verwoerd's words and actions have thus to be seen as well in terms of what he meant by what he said, his intentions, and the contexts and conventions of his espousal of 'positive' apartheid.<sup>26</sup>

Nor does Verwoerd and Eiselen's unease with conceptions of race as the ultimate justification of apartheid mean that they eschewed race entirely. There is an important difference between downplaying biological determinism as the basis of apartheid – as Eiselen did in a lengthy memo to the new secretary of Native Affairs, Jansen, in 1948<sup>27</sup> – and disavowing any connection between race and culture as many post-war anthropologists and sociologists insisted. In fact, racist intellectuals continued to find house room in South Africa's universities and, crucially, in the interfaces between universities and government. Apartheid's leaders became skilled at cautioning against reliance on essential biological differences while condoning racism in practice. They could *gesture* to the ineradicable differences marked by colour without necessarily *explaining* quite what these differences consisted of. Moreover, by distancing

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24 C. Marx, 'Hendrik Verwoerd and the Leipzig School of Psychology in 1926', *Historia*, 58, 2, November 2013, 91–118.

25 A.N. Pelzer (ed), *Verwoerd Speaks* (Johannesburg: Afrikaanse Pers-Boekhandel, 1966), 366; *House of Assembly Debates*, 1 January 1966, 52 col 2.

26 Q. Skinner, 'Hermeneutics and the Role of History', *New Literary History*, 7, 1, 1975, 209–32.

27 Dubow, *Apartheid 1948–1994*, 16.

themselves from extremist arguments, political leaders could render their own radical proposals more reasoned and reasonable.

## Human Genetics and Race

Just as race could be disavowed in theory but endorsed in practice, so we should be cautious of drawing an artificial distinction between ‘race’ and ‘culture’. In effect they existed on a continuum, or perhaps in a continuous loop like a Möbius strip, which possesses only one side or boundary. In North America and Europe the radical postwar idea that ‘race’ was a myth with no solid foundation in science – a view championed especially by Franz Boas and his students and debated at length by experts in the series of Unesco ‘statements’ on race from 1950 – took considerable time to become established. And it remained deeply contested. Boas sought to take the recalcitrant old guard scientific establishment with him because he considered it vital to persuade his antagonists to change their minds through persuasion. The growing anti-racist near-consensus of the 1960s was the outcome of persistent campaigning and persuasion, yet sceptics and dissidents remained voluble and a tradition of racial recusancy defied the new orthodoxy.<sup>28</sup> (It remains an interesting question for intellectual historians or sociologists of knowledge to assess how complete the process of persuasion was, and whether this was accomplished swiftly or slowly.)

Similar processes can be discerned in South Africa from where, according to Brattain, Unesco officers feared that its egalitarian 1950 ‘*Statement on Race*’ would be subject to scientific challenge.<sup>29</sup> Pressures to deny the ontology of biological race were articulated only by a small, if vocal, section of the liberal intelligentsia. Emerging critics of intelligence testing, like the industrial psychologist Simon Biesheuvel, took the view that links between race and IQ could not confidently be established using current scientific techniques. Thus, a verdict of ‘not proven’ should be returned in respect of ‘the charge of inherent racial inferiority’. But critics neither dispensed with such experimentation nor repudiated it.<sup>30</sup>

The most prominent critic of the science of race under apartheid was the Wits anatomist and physical anthropologist Phillip Tobias, who began to question openly the concept of race from around 1961.<sup>31</sup> Tobias developed his critique in a public lecture commemorating the departure from South Africa of the politically outspoken anti-apartheid medical doctor Raymond Hoffenberg. The expanded version challenged associations between brain size and brain matter on the one hand, and racial differences and intelligence on the other. However, the ever-cautious Tobias persisted

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28 On the complex history of the Unesco Statements on Race, see for example E. Barkan, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism: Changing Concepts of Race in Britain and the United States Between the World Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 341–6; M. Brattain, ‘Race, Racism, and Antiracism: UNESCO and the Politics of Presenting Science to the Postwar Public’, *American Historical Review*, 112, 5, 2007, 1386–1413. Alison Bashford reminds us that eugenics remained part of Unesco discussions in the context of demographic debates. See A. Bashford, ‘Internationalism, Cosmopolitanism, and Eugenics’ in A. Bashford and P. Levine (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 162–4, 167–8.

29 Brattain, ‘Race, Racism, and Antiracism’, 1398, 1407.

30 Dubow, *Scientific Racism*, 221; S. Biesheuvel, *African Intelligence* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1943), 195.

31 P.V. Tobias, *The Meaning of Race* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1961).

with the use of already anachronistic nomenclature like 'Negroids' and 'Caucasoids'. And his overall conclusion was tepid: 'vast claims have been based on insubstantial evidence'.<sup>32</sup>

Tobias, in his capacity as a public intellectual, was a forthright critic of the ways in which concepts of race were used politically, stating for example that from a scientific point of view 'race and culture are totally separate concepts'.<sup>33</sup> Yet Tobias the scientist struggled to distance himself from the authority of his physical anthropologist forebear, Raymond Dart. Dart was best known for arguing that a fossilised early hominid skull (*Australopithecus africanus*) found in the northern Cape in 1924 represented a crucial 'missing link' in the story of human evolution. For Tobias, the romantic story of Dart's vindication, in the face of concerted expert hostility, pointed to humankind's unity. But for Dart physical anthropology was always the means to show divergence in hominid development and thus the emergence of different kinds of humans.<sup>34</sup> For all that Tobias sought to modernise and transform the study of physical anthropology in South Africa, he remained in crucial respects the guardian of its tradition and he was reluctant to accept how deeply bound up with racism the typological method remained. Tobias's claim in his 1985 magisterial overview of the subject, that 'It can be recorded that no South African physical anthropologist was involved in providing scientific underpinning for the government's race classification practices' relies on a very narrow understanding of 'practices'.<sup>35</sup>

This is not to underestimate Tobias's ethical opposition to apartheid. His commitment to deracialise South African science and politics was signalled by a willingness to engage with concepts of population genetics which thought in fluid terms of 'pools' and 'flows' and made use of sophisticated statistical models rather than static ideal types. Tobias's receptiveness to this new approach was demonstrated by the appointments of the human geneticist Stan R. Blecher to his Department of Anatomy in 1960, followed by Trefor Jenkins in 1963. It was from this 'new anthropology' that the modern discipline of molecular anthropology was to develop.<sup>36</sup>

For Tobias at Wits (with its liberal reputation) and also for Hofmeyr at the University of Pretoria (which was close to the apartheid establishment) human genetics was uncharted territory. Given that both were ambitious intellectuals based at rival institutions, a public confrontation on the genetic basis of racial segregation was bound to make good copy. In February 1962 a provocative right-wing newsheet, *The South African Observer*, published an article by Hofmeyr which asserted that 'Race discrimination or race prejudice is just as fundamental for the perpetuation of the race as feeding, propagation, or other natural phenomena.' This was picked up in

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32 P.V. Tobias, 'Brain-Size, Grey Matter and Race: Fact or Fiction?', *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 32, 1970, 22. By this time, historians and anthropologists in South Africa were meticulously careful to avoid, wherever possible, offensive racial categorisations.

33 P.V. Tobias, *The Meaning of Race* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 2nd edn 1972 [1961]), 14.

34 S. Dubow, 'Human Origins, Race Typology and the Other Raymond Dart', *African Studies*, 55, 1, 1996, 1–30; S. Dubow, 'White South Africa and the South Africanisation of Science: Humankind or Kinds of Humans?' in P. Bonner, Amanda Esterhuysen and Trefor Jenkins (eds), *A Search for Origins: Science, History and South Africa's 'Cradle of Humankind'* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2007), 9; H. Soodyall and T. Jenkins, 'Unravelling the History of Modern Humans in Southern Africa' in Bonner et al (eds), *Search for Origins*, 9.

35 P.V. Tobias, 'History of Physical Anthropology in South Africa', *Yearbook of Physical Anthropology*, 28, 1985, 32.

36 Soodyall and Jenkins, 'Unravelling the History', 82.

the *Sunday Express*, which reported the ‘shocked’ reactions by Tobias as well as the Wits anthropologists J.A.R. Blacking and M.D.W. Jeffreys.<sup>37</sup> Tobias stated that there was no objective scientific evidence to support the idea of ‘pure races’ and he added that a very high percentage of genes was common to all humans. Stan Blecher recalls that Tobias ‘laid a very dangerous trap for himself, by saying that there were probably no more than a few percent of genes that were different between the Negroid and Caucasoid races. Hofmeyr’s response was that there were probably no more than a few percent of genes that were different between humans and apes.’ Before the advent of modern molecular genetics and genomics, neither were equipped to pronounce on gene frequencies and, in hindsight, Blecher considers Hofmeyr ‘really won that exchange’.<sup>38</sup>

There was a further confrontation in 1963 following a lecture at Pretoria given by the Oxford professor of botany Cyril Darlington in July 1963, whose visit was sponsored by Pretoria University with support from the government Department of Information. Based on his own preparatory notes for his Pretoria lecture on ‘Genetics and the Origin of Society’, Darlington argued that the character of tribes depended on their ‘breeding’. He also maintained that language was genetically determined – as N.J. van Warmelo, the government ethnologist, agreed when he later wrote to Darlington of his thesis that ‘the structure of the organs of speech (genetically determined as a matter of course) must seem acceptable even without proof, when one considers how minor are the differences sufficient to produce variations in articulation.’<sup>39</sup>

Blecher’s memory of Darlington’s Pretoria lecture was that he ‘made some outrageously ignorant racist remarks’. During the lecture, Tobias whispered to Blecher *a propos* of Darlington’s views on the origin of language, ‘it’s culture, man’, but he refrained from challenging Darlington openly. After the lecture, when their respective parties happened to find themselves in the same restaurant, Hofmeyr and Tobias ‘greeted each other affably, as if they were old friends’ with introductions all round. But Tobias refused Hofmeyr’s offer to pay for the coffees consumed by the visiting Wits contingent. J.M.P. Geerthsen, who succeeded Hofmeyr as professor of genetics at Pretoria, recalls this incident too. His impression was that there was mutual respect between Hofmeyr and Tobias – and indeed the Darlington papers show that Tobias was eager to invite Darlington to visit him and Dart in Johannesburg and to lecture to the Wits Anatomy Department on the same topic as his Pretoria lecture which Tobias was quietly disapproving of.<sup>40</sup>

Notwithstanding his eagerness to entertain Darlington, Tobias was greatly concerned by the effect that the racist tendency in Hofmeyr’s South African Genetic

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37 J.D.J. Hofmeyr, ‘Importance of Race Discrimination’, *South African Observer*, 7,10, 1962, 5; S.E.D. Brown, ‘Some Shock Treatment – for the Rand’s “Shocked Scientists”’ and R. Gayre, ‘The “Sunday Express” – and Its Scientific Authorities’, *South African Observer*, 7, 10, 1962, 1–5.

38 Emails from Professor Stan R. Blecher, 23 and 25 August 2014.

39 MS Darlington, Bodleian library, Oxford, C100 H.101, Darlington’s notes for lecture on ‘Genetics and the Origin of Society’, Pretoria, 22 July 1963; *ibid*, H.98, N.J. van Warmelo to C.D. Darlington, 12 November 1963.

40 Email from Professor Stan Blecher, 23 August 2014; telephone conversation with J.M.P. Geerthsen, 14 August 2014. For records of Tobias’s invitation to Darlington to lecture at Wits and meet with him and Raymond Dart, see MS Darlington, Bodleian library, Oxford, C100 H.96, P.V. Tobias to C. Darlington, 17 July and 27 June 1963. It is highly unlikely that Darlington gave the lecture at Wits which Tobias proposed for August 1963.

Society might have on public opinion. Thus, when Blecher attended a 1962 World Health Organisation training course on human genetics in Copenhagen, he was charged by Tobias to assure anti-apartheid international scientists that 'there was a strong cohort of South African scientists' who opposed the racist 'cabal' in the South African Genetic Society. Amongst the geneticists Blecher met in Copenhagen were Lars Beckman and Hermann Lehmann. 'All of them were very supportive and asked me to assure Tobias that we, the good guys, would get all the support that the community could muster.'<sup>41</sup>

These confrontations or standoffs were part of the public reverberations arising out of the Genetic Society's forays into the field of human genetics. The original convenor of the committee tasked with creating an anthropogenetic institute associated with the Genetic Society was Gerhardus 'Gerrie' Eloff, an outspoken eugenicist with radical-right nationalist credentials. Eloff presented two papers in Afrikaans at the 1958 Genetic Society congress, one on 'psycho-genetic' racial differences between whites and blacks and the other on the degenerative dangers of population inbreeding (*inteelt*) 'close to home'. He was joined by J.D.J. Hofmeyr and D.J. Nolte in a final session devoted to human genetics.<sup>42</sup>

During the Second World War Eloff had been a leading member of the extreme nationalist *Ossewabrandwag*, a militant populist organisation with openly fascist inclinations. He was arrested in 1942 for planting incendiary bombs at the Liberty Cavalcade exhibition at Zoo Lake, Johannesburg.<sup>43</sup> Eloff was interned along with other extremists at Koffiefontein as a wartime security measure, where he passed the time taking physical measurements of his fellow prisoners. Strongly influenced by Nazi racial theorists, Eugen Fischer among them, Eloff was a convinced believer in the racial superiority of the Afrikaner *Boerevolk*. Unusually, he sought to give Christian-national ideology a scientific anthropological underpinning. His 1942 book on races and racial intermixture, *Rasse en Rassevermenging*, argued in favour of a form of positive eugenics – at least in the case of Afrikaners. Eloff presented Afrikaners as a new, vigorous race combining the best qualities of their Nordic and Alpine forebears (53 per cent Dutch, 28 per cent German and 15 per cent French Huguenot). As a result, Afrikaners were well served by a strong constitution, tanned skin, plentiful sweat pores, as well as fertility, perseverance, and a disinclination towards miscegenation. Over a period of ten generations of endogenous intermarriage, Afrikaners had developed distinctive and desirable racial characteristics. They were pledged to build white Christian civilisation and to exercise trusteeship over nonwhites.<sup>44</sup>

In 1959 Eloff became the inaugural professor of genetics based in the Agriculture Department at the University of the Orange Free State where he was an expert,

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41 Ibid. Also email communication from Blecher, 12 August 2015. Lehmann made reference to this meeting in Copenhagen in a letter to Anthony Christie, secretary of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 21 October 1962 (Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI) archives, A98/6/30).

42 G. Eloff, 'Die Inteeltprobleem Nader Tuis', *Proceedings of the First Congress of the South African Genetic Society*, 19–21 and G. Eloff, 'Psigo-Genetiese Rasverskille Tussen Blank en Nie-Blank', *Proceedings of the First Congress of the South African Genetic Society*, 22–4.

43 B.K. Murray, *Wits: The 'Open' Years* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1997), 25.

44 G. Eloff, *Rasse en Rassevermenging: Die Boerevolk Gesien van die Standpunt van die Rasseleer* (Bloemfontein: Nasionale Pers, 1942), 51–2, 61.

among other things, on moles and rats.<sup>45</sup> During the 1960s he published occasional papers on topics in genetics in the *Tydskrif vir Natuurwetenskappe* (Journal of Natural Sciences). According to Patrick Furlong, Eloff's initial appointment at Orange Free State University's Department of Psychology in 1948 came with direct support from Verwoerd, who went out of his way to press the executive of the secret *Afrikaner Broederbond* (Afrikaner Brotherhood) to secure an academic position for him. This does not necessarily mean that Verwoerd gave intellectual endorsement to Eloff's eugenic ideas but it does at least indicate that Verwoerd the politician may have seen advantages in giving this loyal and hardline member of the Afrikaner movement a secure academic berth.<sup>46</sup>

Whereas some might be tempted to write off Eloff, together with other notorious racial theorists like Geoff Cronjé, as symptomatic of the Afrikaner nationalist flirtation with Nazi and fascist thinking of the 1930s and 1940s, his re-emergence within the counsels of the Genetic Society of the late-1950s suggests that the influence of such thinking was not entirely exhausted. Indeed, it was being revived but in ways that were framed in terms of white rather than Afrikaner supremacy. Eloff seems to have been no more than a transitional or continuity figure in the Genetic Society: the real motive force came from the grouping based around J.D.J. Hofmeyr, who was keen to lead racial science into new territory and to forge links with racial supremacists in the English-speaking world.

Under Verwoerd's stewardship the dream of self-sufficient ethnic homelands (a radically new departure in apartheid that had barely been thought of prior to the late 1950s) was now in the offing. Apartheid ideology was ready to be retrofitted with freshly adapted scientific racist ideas. Intellectual exchange between South African and overseas researchers therefore became central to the Genetic Society's ambitions. In the words of Hofmeyr's collaborator, Helmut W. Hitzeroth, the 'study of racial genetics should receive more serious consideration. A multi-racial country like ours provides excellent opportunities for such studies, which may serve to clear up misconceptions based on false premises.'<sup>47</sup>

In 1962, Hofmeyr invited the Canadian-born botanist and geneticist Reginald Ruggles Gates to deliver the keynote address to the Genetic Society's second conference. Gates was a senior if controversial figure in the world of biology and eugenics, long active in North America as well as Britain. Briefly married to the birth control pioneer Marie Stopes, he occupied the chair of biology at Kings College, London from 1921 to 1942 and he was elected to become a fellow of the Royal Society in 1931. From 1942 to 1957 Gates was a research fellow at Harvard. He was also an associate editor of the *Mankind Quarterly*, which catered to a transnational community of racial scientists.<sup>48</sup> With his longstanding African interests and wide connections,

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45 Rodney Moffett, *A Biographical Dictionary of Contributors to the Natural History of the Free State and Lesotho* (Bloemfontein: SUN MeDIA Bloemfontein, 2014), 99.

46 P.J. Furlong, *Between Crown and Swastika* (Hanover NH: University Press of New England, 1991), 228–9. See also Carina Venter, 'The Influence of Early Apartheid Intellectualisation on Twentieth-Century Afrikaans Music Historiography' (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2009), 23 and ff.

47 H.W. Hitzeroth, 'The Second Congress of the South African Genetic Society', *Mankind Quarterly*, 3, 3, 1963, 161.

48 Schaffer, 'Scientific Racism Again?', *Journal of American Studies*, 41, 2, 2007, 264–5, 269 and ff.

Gates was an ideal choice to help launch the South African Genetic Society: he had visited the country on the occasion of the 1929 joint meeting of the British and South African Associations for the Advancement of Science and he renewed his acquaintance with the country in 1955 on a Wenner-Gren Foundation grant in order to study the hair forms of different races as well as the inheritance of hairy ear rims.<sup>49</sup> Gates's influential book *Heredity in Man* (1929) addressed the problems associated with racial intermixture and made specific reference to the undesirability of 'crosses between European and Bantu peoples'.<sup>50</sup>

Before he could take up the Genetic Society's invitation, Gates died, aged 80. To make matters worse, the Columbia University psychologist Henry E. Garrett, also an associate editor of the *Mankind Quarterly*, was unable to attend.<sup>51</sup> In their place, and at short notice, an invitation was issued to Robert Gayre whose trip was paid for by Pretoria University. Gayre's scientific credentials were far less assured than Gates's but they had worked closely together on *Mankind Quarterly* and shared many of the same views. Aside from a brief stint as professor of 'anthropo-geography' at the University of Saugor in Madhya Pradesh (1954–1956), Gayre inhabited the margins of academia. He had been active in wartime intelligence in Italy (there were accusations, defended in law, that he had evinced pro-Nazi sympathies before and during the war) and he was connected with neo-fascist groupings such as the Northern League. Gayre was also an authority on obscure chivalric orders and heraldry – his curriculum vitae boasted a surfeit of dubious-looking titles and honorary doctorates. Following the death of his father in 1957, he changed the spelling of his name from Gair and bought a decrepit Scottish castle in Lochore (with title attached). Henceforth, he styled himself Lieutenant-Colonel Baron Gayre of Gayre and Nigg.<sup>52</sup>

Freed from any constraints associated with academic rigour, and with a propensity to answer critics by recourse to the law, Gayre vigorously pursued his racial theories as editor of the *Mankind Quarterly* from 1960 to 1978. Financial backing was forthcoming through the American-based International Association for the Advancement of Ethnology and Eugenics (established in 1959) and the Pioneer Fund established in 1937 by Wickliffe Draper, American heir to a textile fortune and an enthusiastic eugenicist. The International Association, founded by the Columbia psychologist Henry E. Garrett and a biochemist Robert Kuttner, was dedicated to opposing the civil rights movement and the pernicious influence of anti-racist science; Garrett characterised their ideas as 'equalitarian dogma'.<sup>53</sup> The International Association was white

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49 R. Ruggles Gates, 'Forms of Hair in South African Races', *Man*, 57, 6, 1957, 81–3. For Gates's extended obituary and curriculum vitae, see RAI Archives, 98/2/17.

50 S. Dubow, *Scientific Racism*, 185. Like some eugenicists, Gates was prepared to accept that hybrid vigour could also occur as a result of racial intermixture.

51 Hitzeroth, 'Second Congress', 161.

52 'Robert George Gayre', *Dictionary of National Biography; HeraldScotland*, 17 February 1996. For more on Gayre's biography and accusations of fascist sympathies during and after the war, see for example RAI Archives, A98/4/17.2, E.R. Dodds to Mr Christie, 8 August 1963; and on his curriculum vitae see *ibid*, A98/4/10.2, 'Curriculum Vitae [sic] of the Laird of Gayre'; also *ibid*, A98/4/10.5, William Fagg to Miss Wood, British Museum, 9 March, 1962; *ibid*, A98/4/10.6, Wood to Fagg, 19 March 1962; *ibid*, A98/5/1.4, Charles Singer to Brenda Seligman, 19 March 1945.

53 Winston, 'Science in the Service of the Far Right: Henry E. Garrett, the IAAEE, and the Liberty Lobby', *Journal of Social Issues*, 54, 1 1998, 184. On the *Mankind Quarterly* see also C. Lane, 'The Tainted Sources of the "Bell Curve"', *New York Review of Books*, 1 December 1994.

supremacist, antisemitic, and anti-communist. Its international executive committee overlapped closely with the *Mankind Quarterly* and drew in well-placed scientists like Gates, the Oxford botanist C.D. Darlington, and the fascist Italian demographer and sociologist Corrado Gini (inventor of the Gini coefficient). Members of the International Association enjoyed extensive links with far-right networks like the Liberty Lobby in the United States and the Northern League in Britain.<sup>54</sup>

Gayre rewarded his South African hosts with a number of lectures, including 'A Rational System of Ethnological Classification' (in which he introduced his own bespoke terminology), another on 'The Speciation of Mankind', and a third on 'The Caste System of India'.<sup>55</sup> There was a flurry of controversy when several Johannesburg scientists boycotted the Genetic Society conference. J.T. Robinson, a palaeontologist at the Transvaal Museum, objected that Gayre was 'misusing scientific evidence to bolster up ideological concepts'. Gayre sued the South African *Sunday Times* which, in an article on 23 September 1962, with the banner headline 'Pro-Apartheid Scots' Visit causes Stir', implied that Gayre was a 'Fascist geneticist'. South African Associated News' lawyers took private advice from Phillip Tobias and the Royal Anthropological Institute as to whether his views on genetics were 'fascist', whether this accusation could be said to be defamatory, and enquired if there was scientific evidence to support apartheid. In 1963 Judge Hiemstra ruled that Gayre's reputation as an anthropologist had been impugned and a settlement was reached together with a 'terse apology'.<sup>56</sup> It is of interest that Bram Fischer, who soon went on to lead the defence of the Rivonia trialists, served as the lead counsel for the *Sunday Times*.

In response to criticisms of Gayre's visit in 1962, J.D.J. Hofmeyr rose immediately to the Laird's public defence, lamenting the fact that 'the question of race has become tangled up with politics'.<sup>57</sup> Acting as host and guide, Hofmeyr accompanied Gayre on tours through the northern Transvaal accompanied by Mr Zimmerman, a representative of the Bantu Administration Department, who did the driving and translating. Gayre went on to publish his research on the various racial types he encountered, confidently identifying Negroid, Caucasoid, Mongoloid and other elements as he swept by, while pausing to take photographs.<sup>58</sup>

This was the first of several visits Gayre made to southern Africa. In 1965 he entered the controversial and deeply racialised debate on the origins of the archaeological site of Great Zimbabwe and Mapungubwe.<sup>59</sup> Inspired by the speculative work

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54 Winston, 'Science in the Service of the Far Right', 179–210.

55 Hitzeroth, 'The Second Congress of the South African Genetic Society', 164–5.

56 See, for example, RAI Archives, A98/5/2.5, 'Gayre vs S.A. Associated Newspapers Ltd.'; *ibid.*, A98/6/71, Charles White (solicitors) to Anthony Christie (RAI), 14 May 1964; *ibid.*, A98/6/73, White to Christie, 22 May 1964; Gayre vs SA Associated Newspapers Ltd 1963 (3) SA 376 (T). I am most grateful to Constitutional Court Judge Johan Froneman for tracking down the judgment. Also the *Mankind Quarterly*, 5, 1, 1964, 23–4. In 1962, Gayre was also involved in a concurrent libel action against the RAI and its journal *Man* over allegations that contributors to the *Mankind Quarterly* had Nazi sympathies. This turned on the resignation from *Mankind Quarterly* of Bozo Skerlj.

57 'Gayre of Gayre v. South African Associated Newspapers Ltd.', *Mankind Quarterly*, 5, 1, 1964, 22.

58 R. Gayre, 'The Bantu Homelands of the Northern Transvaal', *Mankind Quarterly*, 3, 2, 1962, 98–112. See also T.S. van Rooyen, 'The Bantu and European Occupation of Southern Africa', *Mankind Quarterly*, 4, 1, 1963, 3–11. The article is placed in response to critics of Gayre and includes a lengthy (unsigned) editorial comment that supports Gayre's general views about the peopling of Southern Africa, including the editor's claim that an 'Epiolithic' race combining Caucasoid and Negroid features was responsible for the Great Zimbabwe civilisation.

59 R. Gayre of Gayre, 'Zimbabwe', *Mankind Quarterly*, 5, 4, 1965, 212–43; Gayre, 'Some Further Notes on the Lemba', *Mankind Quarterly*, 11, 1, 1970, 58–60.



of South African-based physical anthropologists like Raymond Dart and Alexander Galloway, and picking up on long-discredited claims that racially inert black Africans were incapable of developing a civilisation of such complexity, Gayre claimed to have found new evidence to support an old theory, going back to Theodore Bent, that a maritime trading network linked to the 'Judaized Sabaeans' of the Arabian peninsula was responsible for Great Zimbabwe's creation.<sup>60</sup> The presence of the Lemba in the region of Zimbabwe, said to have strong Jewish/Arabian ancestry, was presented by Gayre as further evidence to disprove the view – already well established through the archaeological researches of David Randall-McIver (1906) and Gertrude Caton-Thompson (1931) – that Great Zimbabwe was of indigenous origin and most likely built by the local Shona people.<sup>61</sup>

Gayre's intervention into the 'mystery' of Great Zimbabwe perfectly suited his predilection for racialised physical anthropology and diffusionism; it also fitted in well with the Rhodesian government's determined efforts to delegitimise any form of African nationalism. If an earlier, foreign race was responsible for Great Zimbabwe's creation, then by analogy the dominion of white settlerdom represented by Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front could be seen as a new civilising force. In 1969 Rhodesia adopted a new constitution that severed it from the British Crown. During this period of the consolidation of white settler power the question of the origins of Great Zimbabwe received a great deal of local attention. This was also the moment when Robert Gayre delivered lectures to 'senior officials' and medical experts in the Rhodesian government. His message: fundamental differences in race and intelligence meant that 'separate development' or 'self determinism' along South African lines was the only political means of avoiding disaster in Africa.<sup>62</sup>

Gayre's conclusion was more or less consistent with J.D.J. Hofmeyr's own views on apartheid South Africa. In an 'anthropogenetic' study of 'facial conformity' in four Bantu sub-groups, jointly written with H.W. Hitzeroth, the authors came to a remarkable conclusion, namely, that the Bantu have a 'strong tendency to form tribes'.<sup>63</sup> Hitzeroth, who joined the government-established Africa Institute in Pretoria, spent his whole career measuring the 'distances' between indigenous population groups in South Africa, deploying a combination of serogenetic and physical anthropological techniques to do so.<sup>64</sup> At Stellenbosch the zoologist C.S. Grobbelaar published on the blood types of the Korana, arguing that they were probably Hottentot-type descendants of 'Boskop Man', while plugging on for over a quarter of a century

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60 R. Gayre of Gayre, *The Origin of the Zimbabwe Civilisation* (Salisbury, Rhodesia: Galaxie, 1972), 97, 215–6; J.T. Bent, *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland* (London: Longmans, Green, 1892).

61 D. Randall-McIver, *Medieval Rhodesia* (London: Macmillan, 1906); G. Caton-Thompson, *The Zimbabwe Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1931); R. Summers, *Zimbabwe: A Rhodesian Mystery* (Johannesburg: Nelson, 1963). The literature on the origins of Great Zimbabwe is vast. For a good overview of the debate, see M. Hall, 'Great Zimbabwe and the Lost City: the Cultural Colonization of the South African Past' in P.J. Ucko (ed), *Theory in Archaeology: A World Perspective* (London: Routledge, 1995).

62 R. Gayre of Gayre, 'Practical Considerations Which Are Fundamental in Bantu Affairs in Rhodesia and for an Understanding of Negroid-Caucasoid Problems Generally', *Mankind Quarterly*, 10, 2, 1969, 77.

63 J.D.J. Hofmeyr and H.W. Hitzeroth, 'Differences in Facial Conformation of Four Sub-Groups of the Bantu of South Africa', *Mankind Quarterly*, 2, 1, 1961, 18.

64 H.W. Hitzeroth, 'On the Genetic Interrelationships of South African Negroes', *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 69, 1986, 389–401.

with an anthropometric study of 6500 white boys and girls in an attempt to capture the characteristics of South Africa's European population group.<sup>65</sup> Much of this material is repetitive and seemingly purposeless but, as the Bantustan policy was being put into practice in the 1960s, the approach remained fully consonant with apartheid's obsessive concern to prove differences within populations of Bantu-speakers. As Alan Morris points out, the huge quantity of typological studies in the field of physical anthropology carried out in South African universities provided an automatic 'mechanism for identifying and separating groups on morphological grounds' – whether or not its practitioners chose to frame their work explicitly in political terms.<sup>66</sup>

Hofmeyr's scientific advocacy of apartheid was also essayed in a chapter on the 'Racial Biology of the Bantu of South Africa' which he contributed to Robert E. Kuttner's *Race and Modern Science* (1967). The expensively produced volume drew together scholars opposed to the notion that race could be dismissed as a 'myth'. On this occasion, Hofmeyr argued that old-style physical anthropology, far from being made irrelevant by modern population genetics, was in fact being given a new lease of life. Whereas physical anthropology had been a 'measuring, descriptive science' in the past, today it was a 'dynamic, explanatory discipline' offering 'an integrative view of the process of racement'. The novelty of Hofmeyr's contribution lay in his recasting of work by Isaac Schapera, Raymond Dart and Phillip Tobias, to develop what he called Bantu 'ethnogenesis and ethnology'. In short, Hofmeyr sought to demonstrate a genetic component to the ethnically defined Bantu homelands. He concluded that 'the high degree of polymorphism and genetic diversity occurring in the Bantu should equip them for adaptation to the demands of a changing world. The result would be that qualities of leadership in different directions may be realized in the different communities.' The Bantustans, in other words, offered the potential for different racial abilities to become politically expressed. But this could only occur if the 'fostering of panmixia' was arrested, since this outcome would obviate the purpose of 'realizing to the fullest extent the genetic potentialities present in a population.'<sup>67</sup>

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65 C.S. Grobelaar, 'The Distribution of the Blood Groups of the Koranas', *South African Journal of Science*, 51, 11, 1955, 323–6; Grobelaar, *Suggested Norms of Physical Status for White South African Males Based on an Anthropometric Survey* (Cape Town: Struik, 1964); Grobelaar, *Graphs of the Growth and Norms of the Physical Status of Girls Aged 6–20 Years, of the Departmental Schools, Colleges and University, Bloemfontein* (Stellenbosch: n.p., 1971); [http://www.s2a3.org.za/bio/Biograph\\_final.php?serial=1155](http://www.s2a3.org.za/bio/Biograph_final.php?serial=1155).

66 Alan G. Morris, 'Biological Anthropology at the Southern Tip of Africa: Carrying European Baggage in an African Context', *Current Anthropology*, 53, Supplement 5, 2012, s159. The geneticists Himla Soodyall and Trefor Jenkins conclude that the estimated genetic differences between seven South African Bantu-speaking groups in South Africa amount are insignificant (about 1.4%) suggesting that 'the studied groups descended from a common ancestral population and have not been isolated (perhaps less than 2000 years), even though their languages have diverged within that time period.' Soodyall and Jenkins, 'Unravelling the History', 88.

67 J.D.J. Hofmeyr, 'Racial Biology of the Bantu of South Africa' in R.E. Kuttner (ed), *Race and Modern Science* (New York: Social Science, 1967), 70, 88–9. Compare Corrado Gini's 'Race and Sociology' in that volume. Gini argues 'When, therefore, one speaks of racism, that term should be understood not in the strictly biological sense, but also with cultural and sociological connotation. The term "ethnism" has been suggested, as a consequence, which more scientifically corresponds to the practical disposition of the tendency' (271). Other contributors in this collection include Bertil Lundman, Luigi Gedda, C.D. Darlington and F.C.J. McGurk. The book is dedicated to the memory of R. Ruggles Gates.

## 'Ethnogenesis'

The attempt to provide *genetic* as well as ethnic and cultural justification for the Bantustan idea has been overlooked by historians of apartheid who rely on the ethnological and political arguments associated with Eiselen and Verwoerd as well as the expert *volkekundiges*. Hofmeyr's novel arguments were a response to a changing domestic and international landscape. With the weight of international pressure on South Africa to change its racial policies in the post-Sharpeville era, it was increasingly realised by Verwoerd that Christian-national justifications were inadequate, not least because leading Afrikaner churchmen were registering their doubts about apartheid's scriptural foundations. The chaos of independence in the Belgian Congo, the growing intensity of the Cold War in Africa, and South Africa's departure from the Commonwealth, persuaded Verwoerd that collective white survival, not merely Afrikaner ascendancy, had to be fought for. Verwoerd now focused fully on 'the necessity for preservation of European civilization, specifically associated with race'. He began to 'urge white unity, regardless of differences in history and culture'.<sup>68</sup> Increasingly, South Africa was projected as staunchly anti-communist, a geopolitical 'lynchpin of white civilization' in Africa and, by extension, the world.<sup>69</sup>

This was very much the position of T.E.W. Schumann, deputy chair of the South African Atomic Energy Board, and guest of honour at the 1962 Genetic Society Congress. Trained as a meteorologist and educated at Stellenbosch, Gottingen and Yale, Schumann became head of the Weather Bureau in 1933, successfully improving its scientific capacity in order to predict droughts and floods.<sup>70</sup> He was influential in South Africa's technocratic establishment, as well as in the Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns, which awarded him its Havenga prize. For these and other achievements he was given an honorary doctorate by Stellenbosch University in 1960. Schumann was well connected domestically and abroad. He had lobbied hard in the 1950s in favour of a chain of weather stations in the Antarctic so as to satisfy South Africa's scientific as well as strategic aspirations. Schumann's interests in geopolitics resulted in a Spenglerian tract entitled *The Abdication of the White Man* which muddled through the history of world civilisations, warning of the dangers of communism, socialism and, above all, the loss of white power.<sup>71</sup>

The larger Afrikaans version, published in 1962, included a chapter by J.D.J. Hofmeyr on 'Racial Differences'. Here, Hofmeyr essayed his view that the principles of natural selection were operative in respect of human races just as they were in all other forms of life. He reviewed North American and African psychological

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68 Moodie, *Rise of Afrikanerdom*, 277.

69 K.W. Grundy, *Confrontation and Accommodation in Southern Africa: The Limits of Independence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 268.

70 S.P. Jackson, 'Meteorology and Climatology' in A.C. Brown (ed), *A History of Scientific Endeavour in South Africa* (Cape Town: Royal Society of South Africa, 1977), 399–400, 406.

71 T.E.W. Schumann, *The Abdication of the White Man* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1963); S.M.E. van der Watt, 'Out in the Cold: Science and the Environment in South Africa's Involvement in the Sub-Antarctic and Antarctic in the Twentieth Century' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2012), 94, 107, 108, 113; Stellenbosch University Archives, 'Eredoktorsgraad (D.Sc.): Dr T.E.W. Schumann', 30 August 1960. On 15 June 1977, Schumann wrote a strongly worded letter to the rector of Stellenbosch University objecting to the university's decision to admit blacks.

and psychometric studies purporting to show that blacks were cognitively inferior to whites. Hofmeyr also addressed the postwar race rejectionists, relying on 'new' racist authorities like Nathaniel Weyl, Frank McGurk and Henry E. Garrett to counter the opinion of those, like Otto Klineberg, who maintained that recorded differences in intelligence were largely the result of environmental and cultural factors. Far from culture being independent from biology, Hofmeyr insisted that that the capacity to develop culture was itself genetic in origin and that the principles of evolutionary differentiation were universally valid.<sup>72</sup>

Why Hofmeyr's chapter was excised in the English version of *The Abdication of the White Man* can only be a matter of speculation. Perhaps it was judged to be tangential to Schumann's primary purpose, which was to appeal to anti-communist sympathisers overseas. Schumann affected astonishment that South Africa continued to 'stand firmly by the West'. This was 'nothing short of a miracle, when you consider all the blows we have been dealt by our friends'.<sup>73</sup>

Schumann was undoubtedly in close sympathy with Hofmeyr's genetic views.<sup>74</sup> In *Mankind Quarterly* Schumann insisted not only that South Africa's racial policies were in harmony with nature's principles, but that without 'discrimination in Southern Africa in favour of the Bantu, their position would have been infinitely worse than it is at present' since blacks in South Africa, just as in the United States, were not equipped to compete. A personal friend of South Africa's pugnacious defender of apartheid on the international stage, Eric Louw, Schumann's lurid warnings were directed at the hypocrisy and pusillanimity of the United Nations and Britain, and general Western weakness in the face of communism: 'That the relentless campaign against South Africa and latterly against Rhodesia – the only two independent states in Africa who are natural allies of the West – should be conducted on behalf of Russia by Britain and the United States fills one with utter dismay'.<sup>75</sup>

Writing in a more measured way, and armed with a doctorate supervised by Geoff Cronjé (a prolific apartheid thinker in the 1940s and a virulent opponent of racial intermixture), the sociologist Nic J. Rhoodie developed a sophisticated sociological defence of apartheid. His list of interviewees and sources suggests close acquaintance with opinion formers in government. Published just after Verwoerd's assassination in 1966, a time of considerable political uncertainty, Rhoodie's tract reflects newly gestating ideas about how to perpetuate and adapt apartheid. Cold war tropes, including the defence of Western Christian civilisation in the face of international communism, are given prominent treatment here. But the burden of his argument is to defend apartheid as natural form of 'ethno-national development'.

Rhoodie quoted Verwoerd to the effect that government policy was 'based not on people being inferior but being different'. But how different? The clue lies in his

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72 J.D.J. Hofmeyr, 'Rasseverskille' in T.E.W. Schumann, *Die Abdikatie van die Witman* (Johannesburg: Afrikaanse Pers-Boekhandel, 1962), 115–37.

73 Schumann, *Abdication of the White Man*, 123.

74 Among those thanked in the foreword to the Afrikaans edition are J.D.J. Hofmeyr, the ethnologists P.J. Coertze and P.C. Coetzee, the historian G.D. Scholtz, and Dr E. Holm.

75 T.E.W. Schumann, 'The Unpreparedness of Civilised Countries for the Twentieth Century Racial Revolution', *Mankind Quarterly*, 8, 2, 1967, 88, 92.

appeal to an opaque concept of 'socio-cultural and bio-genetical affinity' to justify, in the case of whites, the 'process of selective dissociation which over the centuries has developed into the binding force of tradition'. As far as blacks are concerned, apartheid represented a response to 'the natural ethnocentricism which lies at the roots of all nationalisms'. This is expressed in terms of 'the existence of several natural ethnic conformations among the Bantu'. According to this logic, apartheid is not principally about the defence of racial superiority; it is a response to collective ethnic desires that are in turn explained by underlying 'bio-genetic identities'.<sup>76</sup>

A year later Rhoodie's more flamboyant brother Eschel published a book entitled *The Third Africa*.<sup>77</sup> Its tenor was closely allied to the government's gestating 'outward' policy which sought to position South Africa as a leading force in Africa. Eschel Rhoodie conceived of the southern African region as a great 'common market' linked by trade, serviced by South African industrial and technological expertise, and underpinned by its strategic role in the 'Free World's efforts to maintain itself against the Sino-Soviet front'.<sup>78</sup> Hard realism rather than systematic racism is the overall framing device, though there are plenty of casual examples of white South African arrogance and ignorance. A key trope is the primacy of 'tribe' and its associated violence: 'The fact is that whenever different races forming disparate communities (culturally and ethnologically) have been thrown together, the end result has been a separation of the ways.' Or 'There have been large scale outbreaks of barbarism in many parts of Black Africa.' And, with his emphasis, '*Tribalism is still the crucible of the Black African's mentality.*'<sup>79</sup>

In support of the notion that kin loyalty and aggressive territorialism trumped everything else, Rhoodie cited Robert Ardrey, exponent of the emerging theory of ethology in bestselling books like *African Genesis* (1961) and *The Territorial Imperative* (1966).<sup>80</sup> Born and educated in Chicago, Ardrey was an accomplished playwright and Hollywood screenwriter. He had been drawn to Africa by the mystery of human origins in the 1950s, his imagination fired by an invitation to inspect Raymond Dart's fossil collection at Wits medical school in 1955. This led Ardrey to adopt Dart's fanciful theory of man's ancestral disposition to violence – as revealed by the 'osteodontokeratic culture' of the Australopithecines. Having apparently run his results through a computer, Ardrey went on to declare that apartheid was 'natural alchemy', a modern political response to irreducible, tribal-based territorialism.<sup>81</sup>

Rhoodie's passing use of Ardrey's ideas may or may not have carried Ardrey's approval. But he certainly had the fulsome support of Professor Stefan Possony, a right-wing Austrian émigré and expert in strategic warfare based at the Hoover Institute

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76 N.J. Rhoodie, *Apartheid and Racial Partnership in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: Academica, 1969), 66–7, 72, 117.

77 In 1972 Eschel Rhoodie joined the government as secretary for Information, charged with gaining influence abroad. His department was revealed by journalists to have misappropriated substantial public funds in pursuit of its secret propagandist projects. The scandal culminated in the resignation of Prime Minister Vorster in 1977. Eschel Rhoodie fled to Ecuador.

78 Eschel Rhoodie, *The Third Africa* (Cape Town: Twin Circle, in association with Nasionale Boekhandel, 1968), 26.

79 *Ibid.*, 222, 231, 238.

80 *Ibid.*, 36.

81 R. Ardrey, *The Territorial Imperative* (London: Collins, 1967), 316: 'Every law of the territorial principle has been set in motion: the proprietor's innate defense, enhancement of energy, co-operation and acceptance of leadership, and the final A=E+H.' On Ardrey and Dart, see for example C. Schrire, *Tigers in Africa* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2002), 39–40.

(he is credited with conceiving Reagan's 'star wars' initiative). A prolific writer and contributor to the *Mankind Quarterly*, Possony co-wrote *The Geography of Intellect* (1963) with Nathaniel Weyl, which revived eugenic theories of the causes and distribution of human intellectual inequality and warned of the dangers threatening natural elites.<sup>82</sup>

Possony also contributed a final chapter in Rhoodie's *Third Africa*. Here, he developed the view that apartheid was a much better response to race relations than the discredited American 'melting pot' experiment. 'Far from being racialistic, the South African policy is an attempt to get rid of racialism and to prevent and reduce antagonism and strife which arise because several races are living together.' (This was precisely Verwoerd's argument about apartheid as 'good neighbourliness'.) Once again, the primacy of the ethnic group is restated on the assumption that the collective sentiments underlying ethnicity, race and tribe are deeply rooted in nature.<sup>83</sup>

The defence of apartheid mounted by Schumann and the Rhodie brothers was projected outwards as part of a deliberate effort to garner white support from overseas. Their arguments were endorsed by senior right-wing intellectuals like Possony who saw apartheid as a legitimate or natural response to the undeniable facts of biological nature and the realities of Cold War geopolitics and decolonisation. This outward-facing geopolitical realism was mirrored by an inward-looking discourse that was concerned with the inner workings of apartheid, crucially the need to bolster the legitimacy of the Verwoerdian Bantustan project. Here, the ethnological discipline of *volkekunde* and the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs' dual-medium *Journal of Racial Affairs* placed a key role.

John Sharp, a trenchant critic of *volkekunde*, explained the significance of its core concept of 'ethnos' and showed the discipline's importance to the conceptualisation of apartheid and the training of its higher administrators. However, he did not highlight the significance of biological race in *volkekundiges'* understanding of culture and ethnicity. By contrast, Robert Gordon, concludes that 'Race was an integral component' of the brand of *volkekunde* pioneered in Pretoria by P.J. Schoeman and P.J. Coertze, who drew the conclusion that, since race was inherent and linked to levels of civilisation, 'friction and conflict between white and black were inevitable.'<sup>84</sup> Fanie Jansen van Rensburg and Kees van der Waal, both trained in the discipline of *volkekunde*, have likewise reflected on the reification of culture by *volkekundiges*, based on an assumption that the ethnos has a primordial existence that is inescapably linked to the determination of racial, cultural and ethnic differences. These points have been reiterated by van der Waal in an illuminating recent memoir.<sup>85</sup>

Quite how the concepts of race and culture work in counterpoint remains to be explicated. One place to begin is with P.J. Coertze, who dominated the field as one

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82 N. Weyl and S.T. Possony, *The Geography of Intellect* (Chicago: Regnery, 1963). Much of the evidence produced here was recycled from *Mankind Quarterly*.

83 Rhodie, *Third Africa*, 262–3, 264–5, 268. Thanks to Robert Vitalis, who alerted me to the Possony-Rhodie connection.

84 R. Gordon, 'Apartheid's Anthropologists: The Genealogy of Afrikaner Anthropology', *American Ethnologist*, 15, 3, 1988, 543, 538–9; Gordon, 'Serving the Volk', 86.

85 Fanie Jansen van Rensburg and Kees van der Waal, 'Continuity and Change in South African Cultural Anthropology (*Volkekunde*): Issues of Essentialism and Complexity', *South African Journal of Ethnology*, 22, 2, 1999, 45–58.

of the co-founders of the discipline and who trained many disciples. Coertze was active as a commandant of the Ossewabrandwag in Stellenbosch, where he helped to formulate the organisation's policies on race, though he left the organisation when the National Party repudiated its fascist tendencies. For many years he exerted a mesmerising effect on his followers, eventually handing over the torch to his son R.D. Coertze.<sup>86</sup>

In 1958 Coertze Snr contributed an article on 'Race and Culture' to the prestigious *Hertzog-Annale* published by the South African Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns. He surveyed the existing literature in some depth, relying considerably on guidance provided by the German anthropologist Wilhelm Emil Mühlmann. For Coertze, the influence of Houston Chamberlain on Madison Grant in the United States, or Rosenberg and Hitler in Germany, amounted to a 'morbid exaggeration of the role of racial capacity in the life of mankind'. But this engendered an overreaction, in particular a repudiation of the idea that there was any connection between racial differences and cultural achievement. The reaction was evident in Unesco's 1950 *Statement on Race*, which concluded that 'biological studies lend support to the ethic of universal brotherhood' and that 'every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main, because he is involved in mankind.' Coertze's response to this claim bordered on contemptuous: 'Behold, a new evangelism: a remarkable conjoining of biological and humanistic religion!' Proceeding further, via a consideration of the views of Otto Klineberg, Melville Herskovits and G.M. Morant, Coertze came to a tentative conclusion: while it was as yet unclear whether racial differences played a role in the creation of cultures, it was reasonable to presume that this was the case.<sup>87</sup>

A little over a decade later, P.J. Coertze was more certain; the direction of intellectual travel in his case was towards hereditarianism. Coertze expounded the fundamental principles of *volkekunde* in a series of articles published in the *Journal of Racial Affairs*, using numbered paragraphs to lend gravitas to his theses. The style of the Afrikaans prose is mannered and congested. An entire article (paragraphs 91–134) was given over to the concept of 'Ethnogenesis'. Coertze asserted that ethnic groups were not merely distinguishable by cultural characteristics or social organisation. They were at the same time differentiated as biological entities. This rendered the process of ethnogenesis more complicated and the question remained as to the connection between racial differentiation and *volk* differentiation.

In the sections that follow, Coertze leans more to an appreciation of the biological component. A new 'ethnos' can only appear as a distinct group or tribe if its members differentiate themselves and live in isolation for an extended period. In such circumstances an endogenous ethnos can become a new race with a shared genetic inheritance. Thus, a self-contained culture of 'bounded' culture forms a new and potent environmental context which, with the influence of genetics, can bring forth

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86 C.S. (Kees) van der Waal, 'Long Walk from *Volkekunde* to Anthropology: Reflections on Representing the Human in South Africa', *Anthropology Southern Africa*, 38, 3, 2015, 19pp.

87 P.J. Coertze, 'Ras en Kultuur', *Hertzog-Annale van die Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns: Jaarboek V* (Pretoria: Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns, 1958), 53, 56.

a particular sort of person. Further complex permutations and refinements were considered before Coertze's summary conclusion that 'under particular circumstances ethnogenesis leads to race formation'.<sup>88</sup>

Given the fact that *volkekundiges* like Coertze were overwhelmingly concerned with the cultural and social aspects of ethnicity, this determined shift towards biological and racial factors marked a significant shift in emphasis. The cautious, measured way in which Coertze develops his theses adds to the sense that his views are of great portent.

An earlier instalment of Coertze's theses appeared in the *Journal of Racial Affairs* alongside a contribution by J.D.J. Hofmeyr entitled 'Fundamental Aspects of Racial Differences'. Here, Hofmeyr betrays none of the Coertze's ponderous caution: in Hofmeyr's view 'the role of the environment is overemphasised and that of the gene minimized'. The 'foundation of life, including man, is *inequality*'. There was, moreover, a 'basic human need for self-identification with one's own kind'. It was common knowledge that integration in the United States had increased, not decreased, racial friction. Quoting Darlington, Hofmeyr argued that mankind's challenge was how best to use the diverse talents and capacities of different races for the mutual benefit of all races. Apartheid was the means to do so. 'The object is to allow the different ethnic populations of the Bantu to develop fully their innate capacities in their different homelands under the sympathetic guidance of the white man.' In a concluding nod to religious sensibilities, Hofmeyr acknowledged that it was true that all men were spiritual equals in the sight of God 'but we are living in a physical world where inequality or differentness is the foundation of our very existence'.<sup>89</sup>

It is unlikely that Hofmeyr's contribution was placed merely as a provocation; most likely, it was editorially positioned to accompany Coertze's contributions. And if there was any doubt about the weight accorded to Hofmeyr's ideas, four years later, in 1975, the *Journal of Racial Affairs* carried another piece by him which made the identical points – and repeated much of the same evidence.<sup>90</sup> The circumstantial evidence therefore suggests that P.J. Coertze's views were being shaped by J.D.J. Hofmeyr, though Coertze remained by far the senior figure. According to Johan Booyens, himself a trained *volkekundige*, Coertze was 'more or less convinced that there is a connection, in a genetic sense, between race and ethno-cultural life' – unlike his *volkekunde* counterpart at Potchefstroom, J.H. Coetzee, who had little to say about race and for whom the Afrikaner ethnos was grounded in religion, nationality and spirituality. Booyens concludes that Coertze's invocation of genetics 'oozes with an unacceptable view of racial superiority'.<sup>91</sup>

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88 P.J. Coertze, 'n Prinsipiële en Feitelike Inleiding tot Studie van die Bevolkingsverhoudingsvraagstuk in Suid-Afrika', *Tydskrif vir Rasse-Aangeleenthede*, 22, 3, 1971, 106 para 93, 108 para 100. See also P.J. Coertze, 'Waarom Afsonderlike Ontwikkeling', *Tydskrif vir Rasse-Aangeleenthede*, 25, 1, 1974, 29.

89 J.D.J. Hofmeyr, 'Fundamental Aspects of Racial Differences', *Tydskrif vir Rasse-Aangeleenthede*, 22, 2, 1971, 50, 52–3.

90 J.D.J. Hofmeyr, 'Genetic Aspects of Race Formation and Racial Differences', *Tydskrif vir Rasse-Aangeleenthede*, 26, 3, 1975, 106–8; also J.D.J. Hofmeyr, 'Biologiese en Ander Aspekte van Rasseverhoudings', *Tydskrif vir Rasse-Aangeleenthede*, 23, 4, 1972, 185–7.

91 J.H. Booyens, "'Volkekunde': Open System and Closed Minds? Some Critical Remarks on Criticism', *Koers*, 54, 4, 1989, 438.



## Radical Racism in the Two Souths

How then, to explain the evidence of greater receptivity to biological views of race for defenders of apartheid in the 1960s and early 1970s and the identifiable spike in the espousal of such views?

In the first place, anxieties related to a Calvinist world view were much less palpable in the minds of apartheid thinkers than they were in the 1930s and 1940s. The age of the *dominees* peaked in the 1940s and early 1950s. Christian nationalism remained an important legitimating ideology for many and a constraint on ideas based on evolution. In 1952 and again in 1963, there were official attempts to close down exhibitions of human origins at the Transvaal Museum on the grounds that evolution was offensive to religious sensibilities. But by no means all Afrikaner churchmen supported the government uncritically and they could therefore not always be relied upon. This was amply borne out in the immediate aftermath of Sharpeville in 1960, when Verwoerd publically rebuked Christian leaders who began to question openly the scriptural foundations of apartheid.<sup>92</sup> During Verwoerd's premiership, apartheid was deliberately recast as a modernising movement in tune with a powerful centralising state that was eager to embrace technological and material progress.<sup>93</sup>

Secondly, the reverberations of Sharpeville had a profound, if contradictory effect, in that they highlighted the fragility of white power while also providing reassurance that the state was fully able to meet any security challenge. The crackdown on all forms of radical opposition, culminating in effecting the suppression of the liberation movements by 1963–1964, ushered in a brief era during which white power attained its highest stage of ascendancy. Regionally, this was underscored by Rhodesia's proclamation of UDI in 1965 (Portugal's position in Africa was far less certain). South Africa experienced unprecedented international criticism in the counsels of international organisations like the United Nations and the Commonwealth, but in the context of the Cold War it remained an integral part of the Western alliance. Thomas Borstelmann has rightly observed that 'Southern Africa and the American South were the two places where the global problem of racial conflict was intensifying most dangerously in the early 1960s.'<sup>94</sup> This was registered in growing official awareness in American foreign policy circles that focused more intently on South Africa's position as a bulwark against Soviet aggression. In 1969 the Nixon administration inaugurated a 'tilt' towards southern Africa, working on the assumption that whites were 'here to stay'.<sup>95</sup>

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92 S. Dubow, 'Were There Political Alternatives in the Wake of the Sharpeville-Langa Violence in South Africa, 1960?', *Journal of African History*, 56, 1, 2015, 128–9.

93 S. Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge: Science, Sensibility and White South Africa 1820–1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 252–6; K. Breckenridge, 'The Book of Life: The South African Population Register and the Invention of Racial Descent, 1950–1980', *Kronos*, 40, November 2014, 233.

94 T. Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 137. See also T.J. Noer, *Black Liberation: The United States and White Rule in Africa, 1948–1968* (Columbia MO: University of Missouri Press, 1985); G.M. Fredrickson, *Black Liberation: A Comparative History of Black Ideologies in the United States and South Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Ryan M. Irwin, *Gordian Knot: Apartheid and the Unmaking of the Liberal World Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

95 E. Lockwood, 'National Security Study Memorandum 39 and the Future of United States Policy toward Southern Africa', *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, 4, 3, 1974, 63, 64.

In South Africa, this period was marked by a mixture of arrogance and defiance that belied deep anxieties as well. The assassination of Verwoerd in 1966 led to his replacement by John Vorster, who was reassuringly strong on matters of state security but altogether less confident about the ideological coherence of apartheid. In 1969 the governing National Party was challenged by a breakaway group of hardliners, the Herstigtes, who regarded any dilution of Verwoerdian apartheid as dangerous in the extreme. One of their latter supporters was S.E.D. Brown, the English-speaking editor of the *South African Observer*.<sup>96</sup> Brown's extreme views, once appreciated by the National Party, were repudiated by Vorster in a major speech at Koffiefontein (the site of his own wartime internment) delivered in 1967. Brown was also attacked at Stellenbosch for sowing disunity by accusing leading Afrikaners of being 'liberalistic'. In 1969 he was given a 'standing ovation' at a meeting organised in Pretoria by ultra-right breakaway actions critical of the National Party.<sup>97</sup>

The response of the far right *verkrampptes* (narrow-minded nationalists) was to underscore apartheid's verities, thereby rejecting their fierce rivals the *verligtes* (enlightened nationalists), who favoured processes of incremental reform. The latter tendency was considerably strengthened by the government's focus on white, rather than merely Afrikaner, unity. It was at this point that the sociologist Heribert Adam wrote his classic study *Modernising Racial Domination* (1971). Its major thesis was that, far from being 'the most outdated relic of a dying colonialism', apartheid represented 'possibly the most advanced and effective patterns of rational, oligarchic domination'.<sup>98</sup>

Even amongst reformists there was, however, no truck with liberal (or 'liberalistic') thinking. A combination of overweening confidence, registered in part through the adoption of science and technology and the display of military strength, offered a niche for a new assertion of racial superiority. There were fewer constraints from disapproving theologians on making claims to biological superiority. Moreover, support from English-speaking conservatives was now actively enlisted in an attempt to de-ethnicise support for apartheid, while promoting ethnic divisions among Africans. Packed afresh in the language of human genetics – not merely eugenic preoccupations with racial intermixture and degeneracy – the new scientific racists essayed concepts like 'ethnogenesis' and were happy, even eager, to find support amongst reactionaries abroad. They shared a worldview that cast international communism as the ultimate threat, and saw the defence of white South Africa and Rhodesia as key to the survival of 'the West'.

Intellectual networks based around *Mankind Quarterly* and the International Association for the Advancement of Eugenics and Ethnology cast South Africa as

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96 *The South African Observer* was established in 1955. It gave voice to far-right, antisemitic and anti-communist views and regarded liberalism as its greatest foe. Brown edited the magazine until his death, aged 80, in 1990.

97 J.D'Oliviera, *Vorster: The Man* (Johannesburg: E. Stanton, 1977), 220 and n14; E.S. Munger, *Afrikaner and African Nationalism: South African Parallels and Parameters* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 67; *A Survey of Race Relations 1969* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1970), 3; *South African Observer*, 13, 1, 1967, 1–2.

98 H. Adam, *Modernizing Racial Domination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 16.

a paradigm case of white ascendancy; in a hostile world, South Africa deserved fulsome support, not condemnation, providing this would help to stiffen the sinews of those struggling to counter capitulation to the civil rights movement in the United States and the growing forces of communism. Beyond the realm of official policy making, and often at variance with it, there were also growing informal connections between communities of the right in defence of the two segregationist souths. On this theme, Zoe Hyman has usefully uncovered strong connections between S.E.D. Brown, who commenced publishing the *South African Observer* in 1955, and international networks committed to the restoration of white supremacy.

Notorious – even in apartheid South Africa – on account of his obsessive brew of scientific racism, antisemitism, and virulent anti-communism, Brown was mostly ignored as a crank. Yet, as Hyman has shown, he enjoyed close connections with far-right organisations and newspapers in North America such as the Citizens' Councils and John Birch Society, and freely swapped copy with publications like the *New York American Mercury*, the *News and Courier*, the *Southern Conservative*, and the *Independent American* and *American Opinion*. Brown also took a close interest in the writings of Wesley Critz George, a University of North Carolina professor and member of the International Association for the Advancement of Ethnology and Eugenics, who wrote on the genetics of race and formed a close association with the Alabama segregationist George Wallace.<sup>99</sup>

It would be tempting, but mistaken, to discount the network of racial irridentists discussed here as of merely marginal significance, the domain of lonely unreconstructed racists. A maverick figure like Gayre may fit this bill, S.E.D. Brown too, but there were many others who cannot so easily be dismissed. The South African Genetic Society under the leadership of J.D.J. Hofmeyr was actively *reconstructing* racism, drawing on the critiques of Unesco's celebration of a common humanity, and picking holes in the intellectual logic of anti-racists. The Genetic Society was not successful in its ambition to establish an institute of human genetics with state support, but racial scientists and other purveyors of racial exclusivity like Hofmeyr, Hitzeroth, Eloff and Sampson found space in academic institutions in Pretoria and the Orange Free State, as well as at Wits and Rhodes.<sup>100</sup>

In America, likewise, the new scientific racism found substantial institutional support and enjoyed visibility, even some credibility, in the 1950s and '60s. Books produced by writers like Kuttner, Weyl and Possony were afforded serious treatment in reviews in academic journals. For the American far-right leader J.B. Stoner and his National States' Rights Party, South Africa and Rhodesia were models of segregationist governance, citadels to be defended and emulated. Alongside such extremists, there were other more moderate voices within the movement of 'massive resistance'

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99 Z. Hyman, 'American Segregationist Ideology and White Southern Africa, 1948–1975' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sussex, 2011), 28, 137, 142–3, 147.

100 This does not necessarily imply official support, though it does suggest that such views were accepted within the principles of academic freedom.

to desegregation in the United States who avoided the traps of overt association with fascism or the Klan.<sup>101</sup>

In South Africa the new scientific racism was not only backward-looking and restorationist in the sense of the American far right and the 'Lost Cause' of the Confederacy. So long as apartheid remained state policy, the future was there to be won and defended. Here, redoubts of racial irredentism were closely linked through domestic as well as international networks and sympathisers. Although extreme and frequently hysterical, racial irredentists could also be attuned to the bounds of acceptability and were therefore capable of modulating their expression accordingly. Geneticists like Hofmeyr and Nolte were highly respected in their specialist fields and took care to maintain their scientific credentials. Schumann had no training in genetics but his expertise in meteorology was considerable and he was well connected and honoured by virtue of his role in the Weather Bureau, the Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns and the nuclear establishment.

The tendency to write in different tones for different audiences may be one reason why this micro-politics of race has largely escaped attention. Authors in the *Mankind Quarterly* were addressing fellow converts and there was little need to modify their strident views, subject to the qualification that this journal purported to abide by the putative rules of academic scholarship and debate.<sup>102</sup> The Rhodes University law professor H.W. Sampson, interviewing a young radical student, Eddie Webster, for a Rhodes scholarship, informed the idealistic young man that he was 'a traitor to the white race' on account of his support for integrated schools.<sup>103</sup> Sampson wrote scurrilous racist invective in the *Mankind Quarterly* and the *South African Observer*, and he was a frequent letter writer (under a pseudonym) to the *Eastern Province Herald*. A minor poet with a fluent style, Sampson was capable of writing in different registers depending on the audience he was addressing. His book-length defence of apartheid, *The Principle of Apartheid*, published a year after he interviewed Webster, adopted a more measured tone, without dispensing with arguments based on biological heredity. G.D. Scholtz, historian and editor of *Die Transvaler* newspaper, presented a copy to the visiting Senator Robert Kennedy in 1966.<sup>104</sup>

If a secular, outward-looking, and defiant assertion of scientific racism was reaching out to sympathisers abroad, it was also detectable within the inner counsels of apartheid's engineers and philosophers. This is amply demonstrated in the columns of the *Journal of Racial Affairs* and the arcane discussions of the *volkekundes*, where

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101 Brattain, 'Race, Racism and Antiracism', 1409; Clive Webb, *Rabble Rousers: The American Far Right in the Civil Rights Era* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 182; see also Clive Webb (ed), *Massive Resistance: Southern Opposition to the Second Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

102 Winston, 'Science in the Service', 187, makes the same point about the use of different registers, noting that Henry Garrett's academic attacks on race equalitarianism differed according to whether he was publishing in the *Mankind Quarterly* or *American Psychologist*. He makes a similar point in the case of Kuttner, 190.

103 Edward Webster, 'Rebels with a Cause of Their Own: A Personal Reflection on My Student Years at Rhodes University, 1961–1965', *African Sociological Review*, 9, 1, 2005, 156.

104 *New York Times*, 6 June 1966. Scholtz sent the book with a deputy, declining to meet Kennedy in person on the grounds that he would not discuss politics on the Sabbath. Hyman, 'American Segregationist Ideology' reports that Sampson enjoyed a close correspondence with Wesley Critz George, sections of whose privately-published book *The Biology of the Race Problem* (New York: [distribution by the National Putnam Letters Committee], 1962) were republished in the *South African Observer* (147 and n 343, 150–1). See, for example, *South African Observer*, 8, 6, 1963, 10–11; *South African Observer*, 8, 7, 1963, 9–12.

interest in hereditarianism increased rather than diminished in the post-Sharpeville era. Within South African intellectual and political discourse about human difference, scientific racism never went away. It remained an essential, albeit never a dominant, strand in thinking about apartheid. Essential in a double sense: first, because it provided a vital counterpoint to arguments based on culture and ethnicity; and secondly because it helped, implicitly, to naturalise ineradicable difference and the denial of rights.

Finally, and troublingly, we ought to recognise an innovative dimension to the reassertion of racial science in the hands of intellectuals like J.D.J. Hofmeyr. His public statements maintained not only that natural selection and biological inequality applied universally but, crucially, that it was fully consistent with high apartheid. If culture and ethnicity were themselves shaped by underlying genetic differences, it followed that Verwoerdian apartheid's development of ethnic Bantustans were fully consonant with underlying biological principles; indeed, it could be argued that these perverse manifestations of divide and rule allowed organic differences in humanity to find full cultural and political expression. This kind of ethnocentric racism was not merely recidivist. It was anticipating the advent of ethology, popularised by Robert Ardrey's 1961 book *African Genesis*, in the claim that territorial segregation, aggression, and in-group preference characterised the behaviour of all social animals, man included. It was also adept in challenging the assumptions of postwar race 'equalitarianism'. Most important, it remained part of a nationalist movement that, however troubled, remained confident, defiant, and still very much in power.